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世界优秀故事选



中级英语读物丛书

World's Best Stories

**世界优秀故事选**

江苏人民出版社

封面设计: 周 翔

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## 编 者 的 话

为了帮助高中学生以及具有同等英语程度的读者较快地学好英语，我们编辑了这套《中级英语读物》丛书，由江苏人民出版社分辑出版。丛书内容包括：《世界优秀故事选》、《英语幽默与语言游戏》、《英美名诗选》、《现代英语散文选》、《国外英语课文选》、《外国寓言童话选》、《外国神话与传说》、《英语科普小品选》以及《英语国家概况》等。选材不求系统、全面，主要是向读者提供一些英语注释读物，作为学习英语的辅助材料。

本辑《世界优秀故事选》根据国外较新版本精选了故事二十三篇，因篇幅较大，分上、下两册出版。本书为上册，共十五篇。其中不少是蜚声国外文坛的名篇佳作和脍炙人口的民间传说。它们以各种各样的题材，从各种不同的角度，反映了形形色色的社会生活面貌，表现了有关国家人民的习俗爱憎和他们的理想、憧憬和斗争，给我们展示了一幅幅绚丽多彩的画卷。入选故事有的原来是非英语国家的，经当代英美作者改写或翻译成英语，语言规范，朴素简洁，比较口语化，有助于读者学习当代英语，提高英语阅读能力。为了便于读者了解作品内容，我们对作品中的难句及某些语言现象加了必要的注释，并对作品内容以及某些作者作了扼要介绍。

由于水平有限，本书注释中可能有欠妥或错误之处，希望读者批评指正。

编 者

一九八二年九月

# CONTENTS

## 目 次

1. The Strong Man and the Dwarf  
巨人和矮子..... 1
2. Mrs. Moodie and the Tea-Tray  
穆德尔太太与茶盘..... 8
3. The Blind Mole  
瞎眼鼹鼠..... 13
4. Hans the Tailor and the Talking Animals  
裁缝汉斯与会说话的动物..... 21
5. The Fish-hook of Pearl  
珍珠鱼钩..... 45
6. S. Mark and the Fisherman  
圣马克和老渔翁..... 54
7. Thunder and Anansi  
雷公和安南西..... 68
8. The Knight of the Lions  
狮子骑士..... 76
9. What the Stars Reveal..... 94  
星星的启示
10. Little Lasse  
小拉斯..... 107

11. The Tale of the Ghost Ship	
鬼船的传说.....	126
12. Peck's Bad Boy and His Pa	
坏孩子佩克和他的爸爸.....	151
13. Cheapside	
契普赛德.....	165
14. Teret�, the Boy in the Moon	
月中少年特里特.....	185
15. A White Heron	
白鹭.....	196

## The Strong Man and the Dwarf

THERE came from far-off lands a strong man who had nowhere met his match<sup>1</sup>, and he challenged any one in the whole kingdom to wrestle with him. The king gathered his folk together, but, to his wonder<sup>2</sup>, could not for a long time find anybody ready to face the strong man till, at last, there stood forth a weak, insignificant-looking<sup>3</sup> dwarf who offered to wrestle with the giant.

Haughtily looking down on his adversary, the giant carelessly turned away, thinking that he was befooled<sup>4</sup>. But the dwarf asked that his strength should be put to the proof<sup>5</sup> before the struggle began.

The giant angrily seized a stone and, clasping it in his fingers, squeezed moisture out of it<sup>6</sup>.

The dwarf cunningly replaced the stone by a sponge of the same appearance<sup>7</sup>, and squeezed still more moisture out of it.

The giant then took another stone and threw it so violently on the ground that it became dust.

The dwarf took a stone, hid it under the ground,

and threw on the ground a handful of flour, to the great astonishment of the giant<sup>8</sup>.

Stretching forth his hand to the dwarf, the giant said, "I never expected to find so much strength in such a small man, I will not wrestle with you, but give me your hand in token of friendship and brotherhood<sup>9</sup>."

After this the giant asked the dwarf to go home with him, but first he asked the dwarf why he had not pressed his hand in a brotherly manner. The dwarf replied that he was unable to moderate the force of his pressure<sup>10</sup>, and that more than one man had already died from the fearful force of his hand. The new brothers then set out<sup>11</sup> together. On their way to the giant's house they came to a stream which had to be forded.

The dwarf, fearing to be carried away by the current<sup>12</sup>, told the strong man that he was suffering from belly-ache, and did not therefore wish to go into the cold water, so he asked to be carried over.

In the midst of the stream the strong man, with the dwarf on his shoulders, suddenly stopped and said, "I have heard that strong people are heavy, but I do not feel you on my shoulders. Tell me how this is, for God's sake."

"Since we have become brothers," replied the



dwarf, "I have no right to press with all my weight upon you, and did I not support myself by holding on to the sky with one hand, you could never carry me<sup>13</sup>."

But the strong man, wishing to test his strength, asked the dwarf to drop his hand for a moment, whereupon the dwarf took from his pocket two nails and stuck the sharp points of them in the shoulders of the strong man.

The giant could not endure the pain. He begged the dwarf to lighten his burden at once and lay hold of<sup>14</sup> heaven with one hand again.

When they had reached the other side the two new friends soon came to the strong man's house. The giant, wishing to give a dinner to the dwarf, proposed that they should share the work of getting it ready—that one of them should take the bread out of the oven, while the other went to the cellar for wine.

The dwarf saw in the oven an immense loaf which he could never have lifted, so he chose to go to the cellar for wine. But when he had descended he was unable even to lift the weights on the top of the jars, so thinking that by this time the giant would have taken the loaf out of the oven, he cried, "Shall I bring up all the jars?"

The giant, alarmed lest the dwarf should spoil his whole year's stock of wine by digging the jars out of the ground where they were buried, rushed down into the cellar<sup>15</sup>, and the dwarf went upstairs.



But great was the astonishment of the dwarf when he found that the bread was still in the oven, and that he must take it out, willy-nilly<sup>16</sup>. He succeeded with difficulty in dragging a loaf to the edge of the oven, but then he fell with the hot bread on top of him<sup>17</sup>, and, being unable to free himself, was almost smothered<sup>18</sup>.

Just then the giant came in and asked what had happened. The dwarf replied, "As I told you this morning, I am suffering from a stomach-ache, and, in order to soothe the pain, I applied the hot loaf as a plaster<sup>19</sup>." Then the giant came up and said, "Poor fellow! How do you feel now, after your plaster?" "Better, thank God," replied the dwarf. "I feel so much better that you can take off the loaf<sup>20</sup>." The giant lifted the loaf, and the two then sat down to dinner. Suddenly the giant sneezed so hard that the dwarf was blown up to the roof, and seized a beam so that he should not fall down again<sup>21</sup>. The giant looked up with astonishment<sup>22</sup> and asked, "What does this mean?" The dwarf angrily replied, "If you do such a vulgar thing again I shall pull this beam out and break it over your stupid head." The giant made humble excuses<sup>23</sup>, and promised that he would never sneeze again during dinner-time, he then brought a ladder by which the

dwarf came down.

(From *Georgian Folk Tales*, translated by  
Marjory Wardrop)

〔注 释〕

1. met his match; 遇上对手。
2. to his wonder; 使他感到惊讶的是。
3. insignificant-looking; 不起眼的; 微不足道的。
4. Haughtily looking down on his adversary, the giant...  
that he was befooled; 巨人态度傲慢地低头朝对手瞧了一眼,  
心想他们是在戏弄自己, 便漫不经心地转身就走。
5. his strength should be put to the proof; 应该先试一试他的  
力气。短语“put to the proof”作“试验, 考查, 检查”解。
6. squeezed moisture out of it; 从石头里挤出水来。
7. a sponge of the same appearance; 一块形状同那块石头一  
模一样的海绵。
8. to the great astonishment of the giant; 使巨人大吃一惊。
9. give me your hand in token of friendship and brother-  
hood; 让我们握手以表示友好的兄弟情谊。习语“in token of”  
意为“以表示…”。
10. he was unable to moderate the force of his pressure;  
他没法调节手的握力。
11. set out; 动身上路。
12. fearing to be carried away by the current; 生怕自己被急  
流卷走。短语动词“carry away”作“(水)把…冲走”解。
13. and did I not support myself...never carry me. = if I did  
not support myself by holding on to the sky with one  
hand, you could never carry me. 要不是我一只手拉住夫,  
那你根本就背不动我。此句为虚拟条件句, 不用连词“if”, 故

将助动词 “did” 提前。

14. lay hold of: 用手抓住。

15. The giant, alarmed lest the dwarf should spoil...rushed down into the cellar: 唯恐矮子在埋酒坛的地方乱刨, 把他一年里喝的酒给毁了, 巨人便连忙奔进地下室去。主句是 The giant rushed down into the cellar. alarmed 是过去分词, 修饰主语 the giant; 连词 lest 起连接状语从句的作用, 在被连接的状语从句里常用 “should” 或原形动词。

16. willy-nilly: 不管愿不愿意。

17. he fell with the hot bread on top of him: 他仰天跌倒在地, 发烫的面包压在他的身上。

18. was almost smothered: 几乎把他给闷死。

19. in order to soothe the pain, I applied the hot loaf as a plaster: 为了镇痛, 我把烫面包当膏药用。

20. I feel so much better that you can take off the loaf: 我感觉好多了, 你可以把面包拿掉了。

21. Suddenly the giant sneezed...not fall down again: 蓦然间, 巨人一个喷嚏把矮子吹上了屋顶, 矮子连忙抓住房梁, 好不让自己摔下地。

22. The giant looked up with astonishment: 巨人惊讶地朝上望去。

23. The giant made humble excuses: 巨人态度谦恭地连声表示道歉。

〔内容提要〕 这是一篇格鲁吉亚民间传说。故事讲一个其貌不扬的矮子, 他能够扬长避短, 凭自己的聪明才智, 巧妙地斗败四肢发达然而头脑简单的巨人。故事形象地说明了在一定条件下, 小可以转化成大, 弱者可以变为强者的道理。故事生动有趣, 很有启发意义。

## Mrs. Moodle and the Tea-tray

I WONDER whether any of you remember Mrs. Moodle and her poodle, Troodle, and her funny maid, Boodle?

Well, in case<sup>1</sup> you don't, I must remind you that Mrs. Moodle was a very nice, comfortable old thing<sup>2</sup>, who wore a dress made of lovely shiny black satin<sup>3</sup>, with little frills all the way up<sup>4</sup>, and a bonnet with a pink rose in it<sup>5</sup>. And she always carried an open umbrella. *Now* do you remember?

Well, one morning Mrs. Moodle was reading her paper, and this is what she saw,

"Why go abroad for winter sports? You can enjoy all the thrills of tobogganing in your own home by sliding down the stairs on a tea-tray<sup>6</sup>."

"What a wonderful idea<sup>7</sup>," said Mrs. Moodle. "I shall certainly try it at once."

So Boodle was told to bring the tin tray from the kitchen dresser<sup>8</sup>. It was a very nice tray, with a gold border all round it<sup>9</sup>.

"Why go abroad for winter sports, Boodle?" said Mrs. Moodle.

"I'm sure I don't know, mum<sup>10</sup>," said Boodle.

"That's just it, Boodle," said Mrs. Moodle.

"Give me the tea-tray."

Mrs. Moodle spent a delightful morning tobogganing down the stairs. The stairs went from the first floor into the hall in one perfectly straight flight. I don't know how many times she climbed up and tea-trayed down. She seemed to get quicker and quicker at it. Boodle was in the kitchen; she couldn't be persuaded to have a go<sup>11</sup>, but she could hear Mrs. Moodle arrive each time with a bump on the rug<sup>12</sup> at the foot of the stairs and slide across the hall.

She slid right up to the front door.

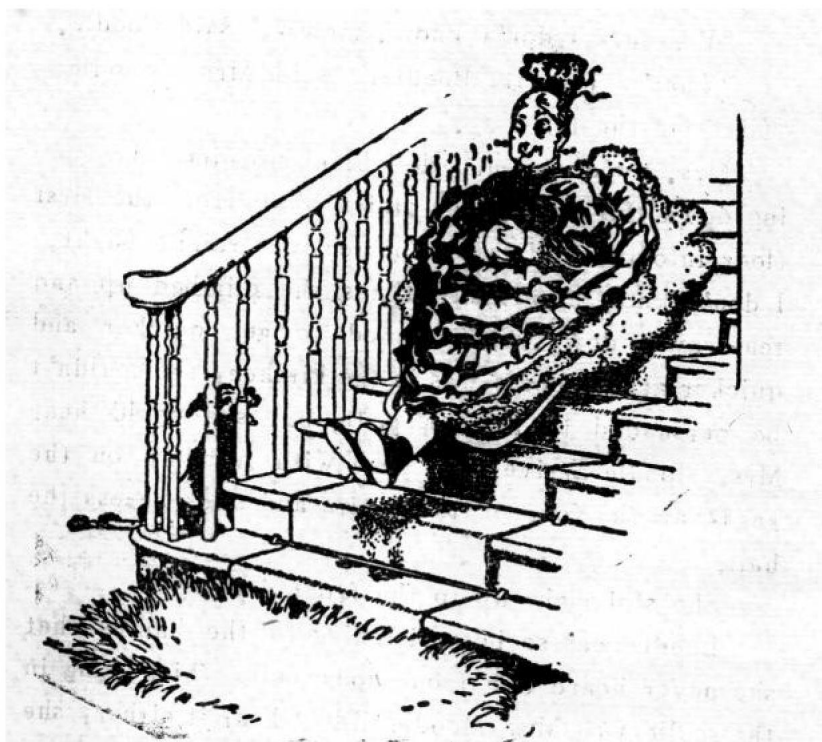
Boodle was so busy listening to the bumps that she never heard the front-door bell, which rang in the scullery<sup>13</sup>. Mrs. Moodle didn't hear it either; she was far too excited. Once, twice, it rang.

Then the person on the doorstep grew impatient.

He turned the handle. The door opened, and he came forward into the hall. And just at that moment Mrs. Moodle came flying down the stairs on her tea-tray.

"Look out!" she yelled. But it was too late.

She dashed, tea-tray and all, right into the legs of the stranger who had come in, and sent him



sprawling on to his back<sup>14</sup>.

He picked himself up<sup>15</sup>, and Mrs. Moodle picked *herself* up, and neither of them spoke for a minute.

The stranger was too annoyed and astonished to speak<sup>16</sup>, I think. Mrs. Moodle was too confused.

At last the stranger found his voice<sup>17</sup>.

"Are you Mrs. Moodle?" he gasped<sup>18</sup>.

"Yes," said Mrs. Moodle.

"Well, I never<sup>19</sup>," said the stranger. And he



turned round and walked out of the front door, and was never seen again.

Boodle says she's sure he was Mrs. Moodle's long-lost cousin from Australia who had come to give her half his fortune<sup>20</sup>. He had a little black bag, which she says they always have.

Mrs. Moodle sometimes wonders whether he *was* a long-lost cousin. But he's never come back.

(Rose Fyleman)

〔注 释〕

1. in case: 如果。
2. old thing: 老家伙。在英语口语中, “thing” 这个词作“家伙, 东西”解, 用来指人或动物, 带有怜悯、亲昵或轻蔑等感情色彩。
3. a dress made of lovely shiny black satin: 一件用漂亮、闪光的黑缎缝成的衣裙。短语动词“make of”意为“用…制造”。
4. with little frills all the way up: 衣裙上下褶纹叠起。
5. a bonnet with a pink rose in it: 一顶无边女帽上插了朵粉红色的玫瑰花。
6. Why go abroad for winter sports? ...down the stairs on a tea-tray: 何必到国外去作冬季运动? 你在家坐着茶盘在楼梯上滑行一样可以享受到惊人的乐趣。动词“toboggan”原意为“坐平底雪橇滑行”。
7. What a wonderful idea: 这倒是个绝妙的主意。
8. the kitchen dresser: 厨房食具柜。
9. with a gold border all round it: 四周镶着金边。
10. mum [口]=[美] mom, 作“太太”解。
11. to have a go: 试一下。