

英语简易读物

[美] 约翰·根室(原作)
杰奎琳·库柏(改写)

向死亡挑战

DEATH BE NOT PROUD

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贺 若 惠 宇 注释

陕西人民出版社

John Gunther

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约翰·格伦·史密斯著
杰·史密斯·史密斯改写
贺若愚字注释

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前 言

约翰·根室 (John Gunther, 1901—1970)，美国当代新闻记者兼作家，1901年生于芝加哥市，1922年毕业于芝加哥大学，1955年获葛底斯堡学院文学博士学位。根室是一位多产的作家，主要作品有：《欧洲内幕》(1936)，《亚州内幕》(1939)，《美国内幕》(1947)，《今日俄国内幕》(1958)，《罗斯福的回顾》(1950)和《会见苏俄》(1962)等。

《向死亡挑战》是作家为爱子约翰尼写的回忆录，叙述了身患恶疾的孩子在绝境中和死神顽强搏斗的可歌可泣的故事。

这里向读者推荐的是杰奎琳·克拉特·库珀改编的简写本，1971年列入梯型读物丛书 (A Ladder Edition) 出版 (梯型读物是为把英语作为第二语言学习的人准备的难度不等的简易读物)。注释工作集中在难句理解及一些较为复杂的句子结构和短语方面，对于美国英语也予以适当注意。

我们希望，这一富有教益、语言通俗的初级读物，会受到初学英语的我国读者、特别是青年同志的欢迎。

注 释 者

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JOHNNY came home from school to visit us in December 1 of 1945, and he seemed healthy and well. He was 16 and growing in body and mind,^① too, as children seem to do suddenly. We had been together a lot, and before going on the train to return to school in January, he said, "Pop, those were the best days I ever had!" He did not often speak of his own feelings so freely, and I was pleased.^②

Then in March, 1946, he came to visit us again. Frances—his mother—and I took him to see several of the best shows in New York. He went to hear various talks on physics, and Frances took him to the public dinner given by the City of New York to honor the great English leader, Winston Churchill^③. He played games, busied himself with chemistry, and read the first pages of *Inside U.S.A.*, a book I had started to write.

I thought he seemed tired, but I was not troubled by it. I believed it to be the result of the busy life at Deerfield, together with the fact that he was growing from boyhood to manhood.^④ He had his usual visit with Dr. Traeger, our family doctor, who told us he was perfectly healthy. He also saw an eye doctor. This was

important. Johnny had had some trouble with his eyes the summer before and had been told what to do to try and strengthen them. The eye doctor found nothing wrong; indeed, his eyes were much better now.

The day after his visit with Dr. Traeger, Johnny suddenly told us that he had difficulty moving his neck. If this had happened before Dr. Traeger saw him, I would have been more troubled. But since we had just been told he was in good health, we were not especially worried. Indeed, he was able to move his neck by the next day. Johnny then returned to school, a little sad that his visit at home was ended, but happy and looking forward to returning to school.⑥

Early in the year, a boy at Deerfield became ill with polio,⑥ a very serious illness, which often begins with a person being unable to move his neck. ⑦ The school, as it always did in such cases, quickly told all families about this.

Then in the third week of April, I heard from Dr. Johnson, the school doctor. He told me that Johnny was unable to move his neck, but they did not believe he had polio. We should not worry, he said, boys often have this kind of thing. Indeed, Dr. Johnson said, he was telling us about Johnny's neck only because we knew there was polio at school. And he did not want us to think the boy was sick with anything like that.

I spoke to Johnny over the telephone for a moment. He was lonely and unhappy at being away from his class work for a week.⑧ But except for that, all was well. He was going into a nearby town the next day to have

a medical test. Dr. Johnson asked me to learn from Dr. Traeger when the last time was that he had given Johnny that test,⑨ and what the result was. I told Frances all this and did not think much about it any more.

Later we discovered that Johnny might not have gone to the doctor at school, since he never told anyone when he was ill. But one of his friends, noticing that he could not move his neck, forced him to go. Then, wisely, Dr. Johnson put him in the sick-room so that he could be watched more closely. Had this not happened,⑩ Johnny might have died that day.

At about three in the afternoon on Thursday, April 25, we heard the telephone ring in our New York home. Just a moment before, I had finished the first part of my book, and I planned to telephone Johnny that night to tell him.

Quickly, without preparing us for bad news,⑪ Dr. Johnson said, "We have brought a doctor in from the town of Springfield to see your son. Dr. Hahn is a neurologist⑫. Here he is."

Dr. Hahn said, "I think your child has a brain tumor."

It was as though I had received a blow. I was so surprised that all I could think to say was, "But that's very dangerous, isn't it?"

Dr. Hahn said, "Yes, it is dangerous!" Explaining why he thought Johnny had a brain tumor, he told me not to lose a moment's time. I was to talk to Dr. Tracy Putnam, who had much experience treating tumors. Indeed, before talking to me, he and Dr. Johnson had

tried to call Dr. Putnam. During the next half hour I was busy at the telephone.⑨ I talked to Dr. Traeger, I talked to the doctors again at the school, I talked to Frances, who was away from home at the time, I was able to talk to Dr. Putnam, I spoke to Dr. Traeger once more, and at 4 : 30 in the afternoon I was waiting in Dr. Putnam's office.

We met Frances in New Haven, Connecticut. Driving as fast as we could, on a rainy night when it was difficult to see out the window, we reached Deerfield at about ten o'clock. Dr. Putnam said little as we sat in the car, with fear in our hearts.⑩ Five minutes after we arrived at the school I knew Johnny was going to die. ⑪

I can't explain this except by saying that I saw it on the faces of the three doctors, especially Dr. Hahn's. I never met this good doctor again, but I will never forget how he kept his face turned the other way while he talked. Nor will I forget the way he said good-by. He would not let his face show all that he knew would happen to Johnny.⑫ They were things that I did not know, and that Frances did not know, and that neither of us should know, for as long as possible.

Johnny himself was happy. They had not told him that we were coming, he jumped up in bed as we entered, surprised to see us. I saw that his right eye seemed to be lower than his left. Johnny thought he had polio. He tried to smile.

Frances stayed with him, while I talked to the doctors. Later we told her that Johnny had some kind of pressure, or something pressing inside his head, and

that he must have an operation as soon as possible. This was all the doctors decided to tell us at this time. She received the news quietly, ⑦ and returned to Johnny. I could not look at his eye, it seemed so lifeless. Then I was told what had happened from the beginning.

Not knowing that Johnny was as ill as this, ⑧ Dr. Johnson had sent him to the town of Greenfield that morning for some tests. Dr. Johnson sent a nurse with him.

It was good she was there, because she noticed that Johnny's steps seemed a little unsure. ⑨ When he walked through a door, he came too close to the wall on the left side. ⑩ Then she looked at him more closely and saw that the movements of his two eyes were not the same. This made her afraid, and she told Dr. Johnson about it. After looking at his eyes, Dr. Johnson quickly asked Dr. Hahn to come.

Dr. Hahn took what is called a spinal tap, ⑪ that is, he took some fluid from Johnny's backbone. From this test he learned that fluid was pressing very hard upon the brain and upon the nerve that makes us able to see.

This was to be only the first of many times that Johnny would have such tests. ⑫ They can be fearful and painful. And there were all the other tests, too. Some lasted a full hour, with every movement in the body being carefully studied. Almost every week for fifteen months, Johnny had some kind of test. For month after painful month, there were bandages to be changed every day. Day after day, with never a moment's rest, he did everything the doctors told him to do.

Yet, I can say honestly that Johnny never showed that he was in pain, or that he was afraid, or that he was unhappy. Indeed, he usually acted in a completely different way. He became angry sometimes, but he never cried. Soon, he became interested, as a quickminded child^② would, in his own illness, and especially in the various methods the doctors used. He demanded to know the reason for everything they did, and he helped them as much as he could. It was not long before he began to look at himself as though he were another person, on whom new tests were being tried for the first time. ^②

And there were so many doctors! We had 32 or 33 before he died, including some of the most famous in the world. Every doctor who dealt with him, except perhaps one, loved him. I truly think several would have gladly given their own lives to save him. ^②

But very soon we discovered several things about doctors. One is that they don't often tell you everything. Another is that there is much that they don't know, even about one small part of an illness. But those doctors were wonderful. They tried everything that was known in their effort to make Johnny well. Indeed, they tried some things that had never been tried before. But it is surprising how much is still unknown in medicine. ^② There are still things in Johnny's illness that no doctor can explain completely.

Of all the doctors, the chief was Dr. Tracy Putnam, this gentle and understanding man^② whom we took by car to Deerfield that first evening. I did not know then how famous he was. I did not even know he was a surgeon.

At that time he held two important positions in New York.Ⓢ He was a teacher of neurology at one of the big colleges there, and he was also chief neurologist at one of the largest hospitals. Dr. Putnam is probably the most careful and experienced man in the science of neurology that I have ever met. That a person of this importance should leave his work and go to a child's bedside, shows what kind of a man he is.Ⓢ

Again I remember the white wooden building at Deerfield with the tall trees outside, beaten by a strong wind; Johnny's small room, almost too small for his bed, the lights darkened because of the lateness of the hour.Ⓢ I can see the doctors walking softly, and the nurses talking in low voices, the first talk the doctors had when they would not let Frances or me into the room. I remember how long it lasted, while we stood outside, unable to believe what was happening. I remember Johnny's own smile, and his words, "I know it can't be really serious, or they would have taken me to a hospital."

Dr. Putnam ordered Johnny to be brought into New York,Ⓢ and we left early the next morning. To keep Johnny warm, as we lifted him into the car, the nurse pulled his dark covers over his face. Frances helped her. I did not want to watch. It was a long ride in the cold, unfriendly rain,Ⓢ Frances held Johnny's hand while he tried to sleep.

The hospital Johnny was taken to is especially for illnesses of the nervous system. It is a tall, yellow-brown building which stands near the Hudson River,Ⓢ just below the silvery George Washington Bridge. That building!

For more than a year, it enclosed all our hopes and fears, all our dreams.Ⓐ A pleasant room with a broad view of the river was ready, and Johnny was gently put into a bed. In a moment we became part of the world of a large modern hospital, and everything that happens there.

The next morning Johnny was well enough to talk about the trip to the hospital. His eye seemed better. But later that day he began to have a very bad headache. It was the only strong pain he suffered during the whole course of his illness—a small kindness perhaps, but one to be very thankful for.

The brain controls pain in other parts of the body, but there are no nerves in the brain that would make it feel anything.Ⓑ You could cut a person's brain apart bit by bit, and there would be no pain to the person. It is when the material around the brain presses upon something or is pressed by something that the head feels pain.Ⓒ This is what happened that day. Johnny spoke angrily about the fearful pain, and tried to explain it.

"Pop, I feel as though a long sharp stick were cutting through my head."

He could not be given the usual medicines to kill the pain because they might change the results of the tests which were being done.Ⓓ After a long time he was given an injection and also some other medicine that helped him.

A great number of difficult tests were necessary, tests which showed pictures of the brain, tests which studied its movements, and eye tests, too. They all left Johnny very weak,Ⓔ but they were necessary to show the

position of the tumors^③ so that the surgeon would reach the right place. In one of these tests, the surgeon cuts holes through the bones of the head. This test can only be done on the operating table, just before the operation begins.

During this time, five doctors, all of them surgeons in neurology, asked us questions. Had Johnny, at any time, received a blow to the head? Did he have difficulty keeping food inside him? ^④Did he become very cold, or start to shake? Did he see double.^④ Were his movements strange or unusual? Was there anything unusual in his sense of taste, smell, or hearing? We answered, deeply troubled, "No...No."

More than anything, Johnny suffered from not being allowed to drink water. He was only given as little as possible, because the less he had to drink, the less force there would be pressing inside his head. There were more and more tests. Johnny asked weakly, "Are all these tests necessary? Why can't those doctors work together?"

After the bad headache the first day, only one thing really hurt him. That was when he had to have all his hair cut close to his head,^⑤ the morning of the operation. This can be very painful, and Johnny gave a loud cry and took my hand. Then he asked how he could return to his school, because short haircuts are not allowed there. He looked at his hairless head and tried to laugh, but only a nervous little sound came out.

Johnny's operation—the first operation—was on Monday, April 29, 1946. He went up to the operating

room at 11:00 in the morning, and came down at 5:20 in the afternoon. Brain operations last a long time because of all the careful preparations that are necessary, but these six hours were the longest Frances and I have ever spent. Two nurses asked us, without thinking how the question would pain us, "Is he your only child? "

Between the Friday and Monday, @ I had tried to learn something about brain tumors. I read through several books full of long and difficult language, and asked Dr. Traeger's opinion almost every hour. We are very thankful to this fine doctor, who never appeared worried or hopeless and who loved Johnny very much. Everything he did was for Johnny, and he acted as a kind of chief for all the other doctors during the whole illness.

A tumor is a growth. My first question was whether or not Johnny had what is called cancer. All cancers are tumors, but not all tumors are cancers. In one way, Johnny did have cancer, in another he did not. A brain tumor, though it may strike the nerves in the backbone, never spreads through the body as cancer does. But a tumor of the brain, if it is cancerous, will spread inside the bony covering of the brain until the brain is destroyed. @ Therefore, the tumor must be taken out as quickly as possible. Also, because the brain rests within the hard covering of bone, there is no space for the tumor to grow. The bone must be cut into, or death will result because the tumor will press harder and harder on the brain.

Opening the skull to take out all, or part, of a brain tumor is an operation which must be done with the great-

est care and perfection. The method is to find the position of the tumor, and take out as much of it as possible. While the surgeon is working, other things must be done to stop too great a loss of blood, which would kill the person.® Although preparations may be difficult, taking out the growth is not always a difficult operation.

But it is the kind of tumor the surgeon may discover that makes all the difference, and there are about 50 different kinds. The position of the tumor is also of great importance. A tumor which is near the outer covering of the head will be easier to take out than one that is deep inside.

In the beginning it was thought that Johnny's tumor was in a deep, and therefore bad, position. When I was in Deerfield, I asked Dr. Johnson what kind of an operation would be necessary. Shaking his head he replied, "There have been very few successful operations in that part of the head."

But the doctors discovered that Johnny's tumor was near the outer covering, which made the operation seem less fearful. It was fearful enough, however. Another difference among tumors is that some grow more quickly than others, and appear again later. It was a bad sign that Johnny's seemed to have grown so quickly. Another difference is that some have a firm, enclosed form and can be lifted out in one piece. These are easier to take out than those with many thin parts which may reach out everywhere in the brain. They are almost impossible to take out. If the surgeon cuts too deep, the person dies of loss of blood. Or, if a lot of healthy brain material has

to be destroyed, the person will be better dead. ④

Dr. Traeger left his own work for a day when Dr. Putnam asked him to be present at the operation. This was no small thing for a busy doctor to do. To the last moment, we hoped so much for good news. Dr. Putnam had explained that he would know little until he began the operation. Indeed, it was possible that Johnny might not have a tumor at all, and that what was pressing on the brain might be a blood clot⑤, blood which had gathered and hardened. Even if it was a tumor, it might be of the simplest kind, and not dangerous.

At 4:30 that afternoon, Dr. Traeger came down and found us near Johnny's room. I looked at his face and knew the news was bad. Dr. Traeger had aged five years in those five hours.⑥ We were both having difficulty controlling our feelings. I asked him only one question, "Was the tumor easy to take out?" He answered, "No."

Dr. Putnam came down a few minutes later, walking quickly, but looking like men I have seen after a battle. I heard him call, "Where are the mother and father?" He walked with me along the hall. "The tumor was about the size of an apple. I got half of it out."

What strange sort of thing is a brain? How could a dangerous object the size of an apple⑦ have lived in Johnny's head without making him sicker? The answer may be found in the fact that, after the operation, Johnny seemed almost well, although half the tumor was still there. The material that forms part of the brain has no feeling, and Johnny's tumor lay in this kind of ma-