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Circle Games

Frank Brennan 著

圆圈故事集



第2级

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及同等水平的英语学习者



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原版系列编辑 Philip Prowse

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龚源来 竺芬芳 编译

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Contents 目录

Before reading / 读前思考 / 6

Quick Man Tan / 快手谭 / 7

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The Trishaw Man / 三轮车夫 / 35

Beautiful Thing / 漂亮东西 / 42

After reading / 读后活动 / 55

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“剑桥双语分级阅读·小说馆”是从剑桥大学出版社引进，由英语语言教学专家及小说作家合力专为非英语国家的英语学习者而创作的分级系列读物。创作过程历时二十余年，出版后受到世界各地英语教师和英语学习者的喜爱，许多读本重版十余次，二十余年来畅销不衰，成为全球英语学习者首选的优秀读本。

本系列读物之所以受到英语教师和英语学习者的喜爱，是缘于它本身所具有的、其他同类读物不可替代的特色。其中最突出的特色包括以下方面：

1. 它是原创英语读物，而非改编自普通作品的读物。因此，阅读这个系列读物，我们读到的是原汁原味的真实英语，而非人为改编过的二手英语。

2. 它是当代优秀短篇小说，而非上个或上上个世纪的小说。因此，读这个系列读物，我们读到的是当今活的、学了就能用的英语，而非穿越时空的、学了难以用的英语；了解的是我们同时代英语国家人们、而非隔代人的生活、文化、风土人情和价值观。

3. 它是专为非英语国家的英语学习者量身定制的读物，而非为英语母语者而写的大众读物。因此，这个系列读物，是最适合英语学习的读物。

4. 它是英美知名小说家和英语语言教学专家合力创作的读物，小说家保障了读物的可读性与可欣赏性，英语语言教学专家保障了读物语言作为英语学习得材料的科学性与可学性。本系列中的很多小说都在世界上颇具影响力的“语言学习文学奖 (Language Learner Literature Award)”评选中获得大奖。因此，阅读这个系列读物，我们会在欣赏小说的同时，自然而然地、有效地提高自己的英语水平。

5. 它的故事题材丰富多彩——包括侦探、情感、历险、悬疑、人文、科幻、喜剧等，读者可以随心选择自己喜欢的类别进行阅读；它的故事内容生动有趣，故事情节引人入胜、扣人心弦，一旦开始阅读，就想一口气读完，使阅读真正升华到“悦读”。

6. 它附赠的音频材料无与伦比——它不是普通英语母语者的朗读录音，而是专业配音员的演绎再创作。听着它，我们犹如在听广播剧、听评书，又仿佛是在听电影、听话剧……这种聆听英语的享受将彻底扫除学生对英语听力的畏难心理。

7. 它的读本中，既有英式英语，也有美式英语，对应的音频材料也相应分为英音和美音。读者可根据自己的喜好来选择。

8. 它一百多个读本七个级别的划分，是根据“欧洲共同语言参考框架 (CEF)”和“剑桥大学外语考试部 (ESOL)”的标准来确定的，是建立在科学研究和实践的基础之上的分级。读者可根据自己的英语基础选择相应级别的读本来学习。(这七个级别与中国学生英语基础水平的大致对应关系，请参见图书封底表格。)

为了更好地帮助中国学生学习和欣赏，“剑桥双语分级阅读·小说馆”从剑桥大学出版社原版引进后增加了如下内容：

1. 增加了适量的辅助学习工具，包括“读前思考”“读后活动”“学习指导”三个板块，其中“学习指导”板块又包括生词、短语和表达、文化点滴、阅读练习四项内容。增加这些内容的宗旨是全方位帮助学生提升英语阅读能力，扩充词汇量，扫除阅读中的文化障碍，提高对英语小说的鉴赏能力。

2. 增加了小说全文的参考译文。出于语言学习的考虑，译文尽量采用直译，保证两种语言句子的基本对应，避免文学式意译。

值得一提的是，所增加的辅助学习内容和参考译文，全部由来自全国不同省市著名中学教学一线的英语教师完成，包括人大附中、北大附中、清华附中、黄冈中学、上海中学等三十余所中学。这些一线教师的加盟，确保了所加内容与中国学生的英语学习特点和学习需求相吻合，为学生阅读和欣赏读物、提高英语水平给予恰到好处的助力。

3. 提供配套网络资源。本系列读物配有专题网页，读者可以在网页上了解读物的信息介绍、故事摘要、作者和编译者信息；可以通过“在线测试” (http://cdextras.cambridge.org/Readers/RPT_last.swf) 定位自己适合阅读哪个级别，再结合自己对题材和英式或美式英语的偏好，来选择具体的读本；还可以进行故事预览和试听，下载录音和拓展习题，与其他读者分享、交流读书心得。教师还可以分享教学经验并下载教案等相关资源 (www.blcup.com 和 www.camstory.cn)。

英语阅读是英语课堂的延伸和补充，也是培养英语语感、提高英语水平的有效途径。选择好的英语读物，收获的却不仅仅是语言的进步。欢迎年轻朋友们来到“剑桥双语分级阅读·小说馆”，打开一本本好书，品味一个个好故事，为实现梦想搭建桥梁。

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Contents 目录

Before reading / 读前思考 / 6

Quick Man Tan / 快手潭 / 7

The Wheel on the Wall / 墙上的舵轮 / 17

Special Clay / 特别的黏土 / 23

The Trishaw Man / 三轮车夫 / 35

Beautiful Thing / 漂亮东西 / 42

After reading / 读后活动 / 55

Learning guide / 学习指导 / 57

Translation / 参考译文 / 64

读前思考

1. Look at the front cover. What can you see? What do you think this book is about?
2. Read the titles of the five stories in this book. Guess what the five stories are about.
3. What do you think is the connection between the stories and the title of the book?

Quick Man Tan

Everybody called him 'Quick Man Tan' when he was a young man. That was a long time ago. Now people called him by his real name – Caleb Tan.

Caleb liked to talk about the old days. He talked to anybody who was interested. He told them that when he was younger he could catch a fly in his hand.



That was how quick he was. Sometimes tourists came to his café for coffee or maybe some chicken with rice. When they had a meal was best. Then

Caleb had more time to tell them how quick he once was. 'I was the best,' he told them. And, just to show them, he moved his hands in the air. He moved like the fighters in *kung fu* films.

'Nobody could fight like me,' he always said. 'I was the best in Singapore.' But he wasn't very quick now. He still knew what to do, but he was slower.

Usually, people smiled at him and finished their chicken with rice. But sometimes someone told Caleb he was a stupid old man. At those times he went back into the kitchen and May May, his wife, talked to them. 'Please don't mind my husband,' she laughed to them. 'He just likes to think of the old days. He *was* good when he was young. But he's old now. He forgets...' She laughed, but she didn't feel happy.

Caleb Tan was seventy years old. He had photographs of the Chinese Lion Dance all over the walls of his café. He was once a lion dancer himself. He danced with the best. He *was* the best. Everyone said so. Years ago, everybody wanted Quick Man Tan to dance the Lion Dance for them. It was their favourite dance and Caleb could dance it better than anybody else. At Chinese New Year he was everybody's favourite dancer. He danced under a big Chinese Lion's head made of paper. He moved his feet in a quick and beautiful way that everybody loved.

Then, after the dance, he did some fight moves. They looked like dances, too.

Caleb loved all the moves. But most of the fighting he did was in his head. He thought about fighting but he didn't often fight. He really could fight with his hands and feet. But he didn't fight very often. Only once or twice. That was enough for Caleb. He preferred to dance. He didn't really like fighting people. But he *did* like talking about it.

That was what he liked to do now – talk about the old days. The café was his business but all Caleb wanted to do was talk. As he got older, his hearing got worse and his voice got louder.

Caleb talked to anybody who wanted to listen. Sometimes he talked when people didn't really want to listen. May May knew that most of the things he said were not true. But Caleb believed it all. It was more real to him than his business was. To Caleb, his café was just a place where he could tell stories. But May May knew they needed the café. It made them just enough money to live on.

Sometimes Caleb did a Lion Dance with children who were interested. He was slow, but you could see how good he once was. All the children liked to see the old man. He was something from the old days. There were not many like him around now.

* * *

Chinese New Year was always a busy time for everybody. It was one of the few times of the year when the café could do good business. May May worked more than ever at New Year. This year she really wanted Caleb to help her. She couldn't do everything. Sometimes people left the café after waiting too long for their food. All Caleb did was talk. People wanted their coffee and lunch, not his stories.

For Caleb, Chinese New Year was his favourite time. He had lots of people to listen to his stories. Sometimes other Lion Dancers came to the café. Then he shouted with happiness as he told them how to dance. And, of course, how he could dance better than anybody else.

'You see, my friends,' called out Caleb to a table full of bored tourists, 'it's all in the way you move. Like a circle, like a wheel – like this...' And Caleb then turned round with his hands in front of him. His hands went right into May May and what she was carrying. The food was for a table full of tourists next to him. Everything fell to the floor. May May did her best to help the tourists but they left. Other people left, too. For once, Caleb was quiet and helped her.

May May was unhappy.

'It's not right!' May May told her husband that night. 'While you tell your stories I do all the work! There is too much for me and Henry to do.'

Henry was the cook. He was also their only son. He cooked everything. He was very good, but he had a lot to do in the kitchen. He needed someone to help him.

Henry dreamed of having the café to himself one day. He was already forty years old and still not married. There was no wife to help. There were no grandchildren to do little jobs. There was not enough money to pay for help.

Henry was a little like his father. He had his dreams. But he kept his dreams about the café to himself. In his head, he was always far away while he worked.

But now Henry was asleep. He couldn't hear his parents shouting. He couldn't hear Caleb tell May May to be quiet. He couldn't hear the hurt in his mother's voice. All Henry could hear was the sound of cooking in his dreams.

* * *

The words *Gong Xi Fa Chai* were written in red and yellow letters all over Singapore. This was Chinese for 'Happy New Year'. Sometimes old friends of Caleb and May May left *hong bao* in the café at this time. *Hong bao* are little red bags, usually with money inside. People always did this at Chinese New Year. Sometimes people left money, sometimes not. But they always left something. Poorer friends left oranges in place of money. Oranges are lucky. But May May was pleased when they got money. They always needed money. This year they got a lot of oranges.

Henry and May May wanted the café to do well this New Year. Henry worked very hard. He cooked more good food than he usually did. Lots of people came to the café. And Caleb couldn't talk to *all* of them. May May smiled a lot. She was busy but she was happy. Maybe business was getting better after all.

This time, Caleb *did* try to help. He brought coffee and food to the tables. He smiled as he worked. But then a young father with his children asked about the Lion Dance photographs on the walls. Caleb stopped what he was doing. He started to talk. May May heard him but she couldn't stop him. She was too busy. She wanted Caleb to get back to work before he did anything stupid.

It was early afternoon and there were lots of hungry people in the café. It was hot. But that didn't stop the rain. The rain started all at once. It came down and down on the roof of the café and made a loud, heavy sound. More people came in. They wanted to get out of the rain and have something to eat or drink. Caleb was happy. He could tell his stories while people stayed out of the rain. They could enjoy a good story while they ate their lunch. Why not? He thought it was good for business.

A young father and his two small children listened as Caleb talked. And talked. And talked. They were getting hungry. Caleb started to show them moves

from the Lion Dance. ‘You turn, like a wheel – see?’ Caleb told them in a loud voice. His hands moved in front of him. His feet moved, too. People were looking at him. Not all of them knew what he was doing. It just looked strange to them. And all the time the heavy rain fell.

By this time the café was full of people and all the tables were full. Some people were standing. They just wanted to be out of the rain. There wasn’t much room for May May to do her work. People were talking and enjoying themselves while the rain fell outside.

Then a large young man pushed his way into the café. He was wearing a big jacket and he was very wet. His right hand was under his jacket and a bag was in his left hand. It was a travel bag – the kind tourists use to put passports and money in. The man looked afraid and he looked around him all the time. By mistake he pushed against a table. The man at the table was reading a magazine.

‘Hey, watch where you’re going!’ said the man with the magazine in an angry voice. But the large young man brought his hand out from under his jacket. He had a dangerous-looking knife in it. He held the knife against the face of the man with the magazine.