



经典文库 英汉对照

SELECTED STORIES OF  
ANTON CHEKHOV

# 契诃夫中短篇小说选

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[俄罗斯]契诃夫◎著 青 闰 段宇竞◎译

天津社会科学院出版社

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# 前 言

安东·巴甫洛维奇·契诃夫（1860—1904），十九世纪末俄国伟大的批判现实主义作家、幽默讽刺大师、短篇小说巨匠和著名剧作家。他和莫泊桑、欧·亨利并称为世界三大短篇小说之王。

契诃夫一生创作了七八百篇短篇小说。他的每一篇小说都像一把剪刀，短小精悍，情节生动，笔调幽默，寓意深刻。他善于从日常生活中发现具有典型意义的人和事，通过幽默可笑的情节进行高度的艺术概括，塑造出完整的典型形象，以小见大，以此来客观反映当时的俄国社会。他的代表作《变色龙》《套中人》堪称俄国文学史上精湛完美的艺术珍品，前者成为见风使舵、奴颜媚骨、善于变脸、投机钻营者的代名词；后者成为因循守旧、抱残守缺、畏首畏尾、害怕变革者的符号象征。契诃夫以卓越的讽刺幽默才华为世界文学人物画廊中增添了两个不朽的艺术形象。

契诃夫发表在1886年的小说《万卡》，可以算是《苦恼》的姊妹篇，都属于抒情的心理短篇小说。他用独特的文笔写出了令所有读者心酸的故事，表达了自己那颗为劳苦人命运担忧的善良内心，写出了小人物战战兢兢、卑躬屈膝的心态和面貌，故事里的万卡只是一个九岁的可怜男孩，在城里当学徒，饱受折磨，过着凄惨的生活，就在圣诞节前夜，当万卡觉得快活不下去时，他给爷爷写了一封信，叙述了自己经历痛苦，苦苦哀求爷爷把他带回去，并认认真真地在信封上写好了地址，然后满怀希望，把信郑重其事地投入了邮箱，然而这封信永远寄不到他爷爷的手里，万卡只能苦苦等待，永远没有结果。这篇故事处处透着苦楚，即便是幽默的地方，也暗含辛酸，令人扼腕，引人深思，振聋发聩，使人警醒。

契诃夫的写作艺术在欧洲文学中属于最有力、最优秀的一类。他不是“写”小说或编小说，而是在“吐”小说、“流”小说。他无需编故事，甚至也不要构思，

他能从任何角度开篇，又能从任何章节断流，但都天衣无缝、自然胶合。他的人物不请自来，他的情节随手拈来。仿佛他只要拿起笔，就像拧开了水龙头一样，小说如水一般源源流出……契诃夫之所以能随意地“流”小说，是因为他独特的叙述方法。这种叙述方法是按照生活的本来面目去处理，用眼睛和耳朵去追寻，文字像音符那样流动。简洁、自然、质朴构成了清纯的文风，单刀直入，不拖泥带水，高度浓缩与深入浅出的表现，更增添了作品的韵味。

契诃夫的小说抒发了他对丑恶现实的不满以及对美好未来的向往，把褒与贬、苦与乐融化在作品当中，可见他生活在一个多么阴暗的时代，而他就是这个阴暗时代的一根点燃的蜡烛。契诃夫的短篇小说，在经历了时间的洗礼之后，依然散发着独特的魅力，黑色幽默的小说似乎已经成为契诃夫的代名词。

同时，契诃夫认为：“天才的姊妹是简练”，“写作的本领就是把写得差的地方删去”。他提倡客观叙述，说“越是客观，给人的印象就越深”。他信任读者的想象和理解能力，主张让读者自己从形象体系中琢磨作品的涵义。1891年，他在一封信里说：“我要是文学家，就需要生活在人民中间……我至少需要一点点社会生活和政治生活，哪怕很少一点点也好。”契诃夫曾在一封信中告诫一位作家朋友避免小说创作概括化和平常化：“我认为，对于自然的真正描写应该相当简略并与主题存在相关性。应该避免落入俗套。在描写自然时，要抓住细节，而且要达到这样一种程度：即使闭上眼睛，也仍能看到你描写的场景。因此，当你坐下来写作时，请记住，不是‘一杯饮料’，而是‘一杯马丁尼’；不是‘一只狗’，而是‘一只长卷毛狗’；不是‘一束花’，而是‘一束玫瑰’；不是‘一个滑雪者’，而是‘一位含苞待放的少女’……不是‘一幅画’，而是一幅‘马奈的奥林匹亚’。”可以说，契诃夫对小说人物神情、动作、心理的刻画会随着情节的推进适时恰当变化，人物的举手投足、一颦一笑、一波一澜都表现得精细、生动、形象、传神。

十九世纪九十年代和二十世纪初期是契诃夫创作的全盛时期。这一时期他的创作中逐渐响起了“不能再这样生活下去！”的呼声。《套中人》（1898年）里揭示了八十年代反动力量对社会的压制及他们的保守和虚弱，并鞭挞了当时存在的套中人习气。在《醋栗》（1898年）和《姚内奇》（1898年）里，他刻画了自私自利、蜷伏于个人幸福小天地的庸人的空虚和堕落，并指出“人需要的不是三尺土地，也不是一座庄园，而是整个地球、整个大自然，在广大的天地中，人才能尽情发挥自由精神的所有品质和特点”。

契诃夫的创作在后期转向戏剧，主要作品有《伊凡诺夫》（1887）、戏剧《海鸥》（1896）、《万尼亚舅舅》（1896）、《三姊妹》（1901）和《樱桃园》

(1903)，这些作品反映了俄国1905年大革命前夕知识分子的苦闷和追求，大都取材于中等阶级的小人物。其剧作含有浓郁的抒情味和丰富的潜台词，令人回味无穷。契诃夫戏剧创作的题材、倾向和风格与他的抒情心理小说基本相似，不追求离奇曲折的情节，描写平凡的日常生活和人物，从中揭示社会生活的重要方面。他的现实主义富有鼓舞力量和深刻的象征意义，“海鸥”和“樱桃园”都是他独创的艺术象征。

高尔基对契诃夫评价道：“只需一个词，就能创造一个形象；只需一句话，就可以创造一个短篇故事，而且是绝妙的短篇故事。”列夫·托尔斯泰称赞“契诃夫是用散文写作的普希金”。法国作家亨利·特罗亚说契诃夫是“第一个低声向读者倾诉的作家”。

焦作大学 青闰

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## A Chameleon

The police superintendent Otchumyelov is walking across the market square wearing a new overcoat and carrying a parcel under his arm. A red-haired policeman strides after him with a sieve full of confiscated gooseberries in his hands. There is silence all around. Not a soul in the square...The open doors of the shops and taverns look out upon God's world disconsolately, like hungry mouths; there is not even a beggar near them.

"So you bite, you damned brute?" Otchumyelov hears suddenly. "Lads, don't let her go! Biting is prohibited nowadays! Hold her! Ah...ah!"

There is the sound of a dog yelping. Otchumyelov looks in the direction of the sound and sees a dog, hopping on three legs and looking about her, run out of Pitchugin's timber-yard. A man in a starched cotton shirt, with his waistcoat unbuttoned, is chasing her. He runs after her, and throwing his body forward falls down and seizes the dog by her hind legs. Once more there is a yelping and a shout of "Don't let go!" Sleepy countenances are protruded from the shops, and soon a crowd, which seems to have sprung out of the earth, is gathered round the timber-yard.

"It looks like a row, your honour..." says the policeman.

Otchumyelov makes a half turn to the left and strides towards the crowd. He sees the aforementioned man in the unbuttoned waistcoat standing close by the gate of the timber-

## 变色龙

警官奥楚梅洛夫穿着新大衣，腋下夹着一只小包，正穿过集市广场。一名红发警察大步走在他身后，两手端着一只筛子，里面放满了没收的醋栗。周围一片寂静，广场上没有一个人……商店和酒馆敞开的门，神情愁闷地面对着上帝创造的这个世界，就像一张张饥饿的嘴；附近连一个乞丐都没有。

“原来你敢咬人，你这该死的畜生！”奥楚梅洛夫突然听到有人喊。“小伙子们，别放它走！现在严禁咬人！抓住它！啊……啊！”

这时传来一只狗的叫声。奥楚梅洛夫循声望去，只见一只狗一边三条腿跳着从皮楚京的木料场跑出来，一边四下张望着，一个身穿浆硬棉布衬衣、没扣马甲的人正在追它。他紧追其后，纵身向前扑倒，抓住了那只狗的两条后腿。狗叫声和“别放开！”的喊声再次传来。一张张睡眼惺忪的面孔纷纷从店铺里伸出来，木料场四周很快就围了一群人，这群人像是从地下冒出来似的。

“看样子出了乱子，长官……”警察说。

奥楚梅洛夫向左半转过身，朝人群大步走去。他看到上面提到的那个没扣马甲

yard, holding his right hand in the air and displaying a bleeding finger to the crowd. On his half-drunken face there is plainly written: "I'll pay you out, you rogue!" and indeed the very finger has the look of a flag of victory. In this man Otchumyelov recognises Hryukin, the goldsmith. The culprit who has caused the sensation, a white borzoi puppy with a sharp muzzle and a yellow patch on her back, is sitting on the ground with her fore-paws outstretched in the middle of the crowd, trembling all over. There is an expression of misery and terror in her tearful eyes.

"What's it all about?" Otchumyelov inquires, pushing his way through the crowd. "What are you here for? Why are you waving your finger...? Who was it shouted?"

"I was walking along here, not interfering with anyone, your honour," Hryukin begins, coughing into his fist. "I was talking about firewood to Mitry Mitritch, when this low brute for no rhyme or reason bit my finger...You must excuse me, I am a working man...Mine is fine work. I must have damages, for I shan't be able to use this finger for a week, may be...It's not even the law, your honour, that one should put up with it from a beast...If everyone is going to be bitten, life won't be worth living..."

"H'm. Very good," says Otchumyelov sternly, coughing and raising his eyebrows. "Very good. Whose dog is it? I won't let this pass! I'll teach them to let their dogs run all over the place! It's time these gentry were looked after, if they won't obey the regulations! When he's fined, the blackguard, I'll teach him what it means to keep dogs and such stray cattle! I'll give him a lesson! ...Yeldyrin," cries the superintendent, addressing the policeman, "find out whose dog this is and draw up a report! And the dog must be strangled. Without delay! It's

的人站在木料场门口，右手举在空中，给人群看他的一根血淋淋的手指。他那张半醉的脸上明显露出：“我要报复你，你这杂种！”那根手指头看起来就像一面胜利的旗帜。奥楚梅洛夫认出这个人金匠赫留金。引起这场轰动的罪魁祸首是一只白色小狼犬，只见它尖嘴巴，背上有一块黄色斑点，卧在人群中央的地上，前爪伸展，浑身发抖，泪汪汪的眼睛里露出痛苦和恐惧的神情。

“到底是怎么回事？”奥楚梅洛夫挤过人群问道。“你在这里干什么？你为什么晃手指……？刚才是谁嚷嚷的？”

“长官，我刚才正在这里走，没有妨碍任何人，”赫留金一边嘴抵拳头咳嗽，一边开口说道。“我跟米特里·米利利奇正谈木材的事儿，这时这个该死的畜生无缘无故咬了我的手指……你一定要原谅我，我是个干活的人……我的活儿精细。我必须赔偿金，因为我一礼拜都不能动用这根手指，也许……长官，就连法律也没有规定，人应该对畜生忍气吞声……要是人人都被狗咬，生活就不值得过了……”

“嗯。很好，”奥楚梅洛夫一边咳嗽扬眉，一边严肃地说，“很好。这是谁家的狗？我不会就这么放过他们！我要教训他们，放狗到处乱跑！该管管这些贵族了，只要他们不遵守法规！等这个混蛋一被罚款，我就教训他：放养狗等流浪家畜意味着什么！我一定要教训他！……叶尔特林，”警官对警察喊道，“去查查这是谁家的狗，拟个报告！这条狗必须勒死。赶快！这肯定是一条疯狗。……我问，这是谁家的狗？”

sure to be mad... Whose dog is it, I ask?"

"I fancy it's General Zhigalov's," says someone in the crowd.

"General Zhigalov's, h'm...Help me off with my coat, Yeldyrin...it's frightfully hot! It must be a sign of rain...There's one thing I can't make out, how it came to bite you?" Otchumyelov turns to Hryukin. "Surely it couldn't reach your finger. It's a little dog, and you are a great hulking fellow! You must have scratched your finger with a nail, and then the idea struck you to get damages for it. We all know...your sort! I know you devils!"

"He put a cigarette in her face, your honour, for a joke, and she had the sense to snap at him... He is a nonsensical fellow, your honour!"

"That's a lie, Squinteye! You didn't see, so why tell lies about it? His honour is a wise gentleman, and will see who is telling lies and who is telling the truth, as in God's sight...And if I am lying let the court decide. It's written in the law...We are all equal nowadays. My own brother is in the gendarmes...let me tell you..."

"Don't argue!"

"No, that's not the General's dog," says the policeman, with profound conviction, "the General hasn't got one like that. His are mostly setters."

"Do you know that for a fact?"

"Yes, your honour."

"I know it, too. The General has valuable dogs, thoroughbred, and this is goodness knows what! No coat, no shape...A low creature. And to keep a dog like that! ...where's the sense of it? If a dog like that were to turn up in Petersburg or Moscow, do you know what would

“我看这是日加洛夫将军家的！”人群里有个人说道。

“日加洛夫将军家的，嗯……帮我把外套脱下来，叶尔特林……天真热！一定是快要下雨了……有一件事我搞不明白，它怎么会咬你呢？”奥楚梅洛夫转向赫留金。

“它肯定够不到你的手指。它是小狗，你却人高马大！一定是你让钉子划破了手指，就突然想起了这个主意，想因此获得一笔赔偿金。我们全都了解……你这种人！我了解你们这些恶棍！”

“长官，是他把烟按到它的脸上寻开心；它有辨别力，就咬了他一口……他是个无聊的人，长官！”

“这是撒谎，斜眼！你看不见，为什么撒谎？长官是聪明人，一定会看出谁在撒谎、谁在说实话，就像当着上帝的面……要是我撒谎，就让法院判决好了。法律上写有……我们现在人人平等。我的亲弟弟在宪兵队……我告诉你……”

“别吵了！”

“不，这不是将军家的狗，”那名警察深信不疑地说。“将军没有这种狗。他家的狗大多是塞特种猎狗。”

“你确定？”

“是的，长官。”

“这我也知道。将军养的都是名贵的纯种狗，谁知道这是什么东西！要毛没毛，

happen? They would not worry about the law, they would strangle it in a twinkling! You've been injured, Hryukin, and we can't let the matter drop...We must give them a lesson! It is high time...!"

"Yet maybe it is the General's," says the policeman, thinking aloud. "It's not written on its face... I saw one like it the other day in his yard."

"It is the General's, that's certain!" says a voice in the crowd.

"H'm, help me on with my overcoat, Yeldyrin, my lad...the wind's getting up...I am cold...You take it to the General's, and inquire there. Say I found it and sent it. And tell them not to let it out into the street...It may be a valuable dog, and if every swine goes sticking a cigar in its mouth, it will soon be ruined. A dog is a delicate animal...And you put your hand down, you blockhead. It's no use your displaying your fool of a finger. It's your own fault..."

"Here comes the General's cook, ask him...Hi, Prohor! Come here, my dear man! Look at this dog...Is it one of yours?"

"What an idea! We have never had one like that!"

"There's no need to waste time asking," says Otchumyelov. "It's a stray dog! There's no need to waste time talking about it...Since he says it's a stray dog, a stray dog it is...It must be destroyed, that's all about it."

"It is not our dog," Prohor goes on. "It belongs to the General's brother, who arrived the other day. Our master does not care for hounds. But his honour is fond of them..."

要样没样……一个下等货。养这种狗！……辨别力到哪里去了？这种狗要是出现在彼得堡或莫斯科，你们知道会发生什么？他们才不会考虑什么法律，转眼就会勒死它！赫留金，你受了伤，我们不能就这样完事……我们一定要教训他们！该是时候了……！”

“不过，说不定它就是将军家的，”那名警察一边想，一边说道。“它的脸上又没写……前几天我在将军家的院子里就见过这样一条狗。”

“毫无疑问，它就是将军家的！”人群中一个声音说道。

“嗯，帮我穿上外套，叶尔特林，我的小伙子……起风了……我很冷……你带它到将军家去，到那里问一下。就说是我发现后送去的。告诉他们别再把它放到街上来……它说不定是一条名贵狗，要是每个下流胚都拿雪茄烟戳到它的嘴里，它马上就毁掉了。狗是娇气的动物……你把手放下来，你这笨蛋！别再让你那根蠢手指出洋相了。这是你自己的错……”

“将军家的厨师来了，问问他……喂，普罗霍尔！过来，亲爱的！看看这条狗……是你们家的吗？”

“什么话！我们从来没有这样的狗！”

“不必浪费时间问了，”奥楚梅洛夫说。“这是一条流浪狗！不必浪费时间讨论它了……既然他说这是流浪狗，那就是流浪狗……务必灭了它，就这样。”

“这不是我们的狗，”普罗霍尔继续说道。“这是将军哥哥的狗，将军的哥哥是前几天到的。我们的主人不喜欢猎犬。不过，他的哥哥喜欢……”

“You don't say his Excellency's brother is here? Vladimir Ivanitch?” inquires Otchumyelov, and his whole face beams with an ecstatic smile. “Well, I never! And I didn't know! Has he come on a visit?”

“Yes.”

“Well, I never...He couldn't stay away from his brother...And there I didn't know! So this is his honour's dog? Delighted to hear it...Take it. It's not a bad pup...A lively creature...Snapped at this fellow's finger! Ha-ha-ha...Come, why are you shivering? Rrr...Rrrr...The rogue's angry...a nice little pup.”

Prohor calls the dog, and walks away from the timber-yard with her. The crowd laughs at Hryukin.

“I'll make you smart yet!” Otchumyelov threatens him, and wrapping himself in his greatcoat, goes on his way across the square.

“莫非将军老爷的哥哥来了？弗拉基米尔·伊凡内奇？”奥楚梅洛夫问，满脸洋溢出异常欣喜的微笑。“噢，我从不知道！我竟不知道！他是来做客的吧？”

“是的。”

“噢，我从不知道……他不可能不上他兄弟这里来……我竟然还不知道！这么说，这是他老人家的狗？很高兴听到这件事……把它带去吧。这是一条不错的小狗……一只活泼的家伙……咬了这家伙的手指一口！哈哈……嗨，你干嘛发抖？呜呜……呜呜……小淘气生气了……一条漂亮的小狗……”

普罗霍尔把狗叫过来，带着它离开了木料场……那群人都嘲笑赫留金。

“回头再收拾你！”奥楚梅洛夫威胁他说，说完裹紧大衣，穿过广场，走了。

## Vanka

Vanka Zhukov, a boy of nine, who had been for three months apprenticed to Alyahin the shoemaker, was sitting up on Christmas Eve. Waiting till his master and mistress and their workmen had gone to the midnight service, he took out of his master's cupboard a bottle of ink and a pen with a rusty nib, and, spreading out a crumpled sheet of paper in front of him, began writing. Before forming the first letter he several times looked round fearfully at the door and the windows, stole a glance at the dark ikon, on both sides of which stretched shelves full of lasts, and heaved a broken sigh. The paper lay on the bench while he knelt before it.

"Dear grandfather, Konstantin Makaritch," he wrote, "I am writing you a letter. I wish you a happy Christmas, and all blessings from God Almighty. I have neither father nor mother, you are the only one left me."

Vanka raised his eyes to the dark ikon on which the light of his candle was reflected, and vividly recalled his grandfather, Konstantin Makaritch, who was night watchman to a family called Zhivarev. He was a thin but extraordinarily nimble and lively little old man of sixty-five, with an everlastingly laughing face and drunken eyes. By day he slept in the servants' kitchen, or made jokes with the cooks; at night, wrapped in an ample sheepskin, he walked round the grounds and tapped with his little mallet. Old Kashtanka and Eel,

## 万卡

九岁男孩万卡·茹科夫被送到靴匠阿利亚欣这里当学徒已经三个月了，圣诞节前夜，他端坐在那里。等老板夫妇和工人们都去做午夜祷告后，他从老板的小柜里取出一瓶墨水和一支带有锈笔尖的钢笔，然后在面前铺开一张皱巴巴的纸，开始写了起来。写第一个字母之前，他胆战心惊地回了好几次头去看门口和窗户，还偷瞟了一眼黑色圣像，圣像两边摆满了鞋楦的架子，纸铺在长凳上，他就跪在凳前。

“亲爱的爷爷康斯坦丁·马卡雷奇，”他写道，“我在给你写信。祝你圣诞节快乐，愿上帝保佑你万事如意。我没爸没妈，就剩下你一个人了。”

万卡抬眼看着黑色圣像，只见烛光映照在圣像上面。他清晰地想起了祖父康斯坦丁·马卡雷奇，马卡雷奇是日瓦列夫家的守夜人。他是一个身材瘦小却又异常机敏活泼的六十五岁老人，始终笑容满面，醉眼迷离。白天，他在仆人的厨房里睡觉，或者跟厨娘们开玩笑；夜里，他裹上宽松的羊皮袄，绕着庄园四周走来走去，敲着梆子。他身后跟着两条耷拉着脑袋的狗——老卡什坦卡和泥鳅。泥鳅之所以被这么叫，是因为它浑身黑色，身子像黄鼠狼那样长。泥鳅异常恭顺亲热，无论是对生人还是主人，

so-called on account of his dark colour and his long body like a weasel's, followed him with hanging heads. This Eel was exceptionally submissive and affectionate, and looked with equal kindness on strangers and his own masters, but had not a very good reputation. Behind his submissiveness and meekness was hidden the most Jesuitical cunning. No one knew better how to creep up on occasion and snap at one's legs, to slip into the store-room, or steal a hen from a peasant. His hind legs had been nearly pulled off more than once, twice he had been hanged, every week he was thrashed till he was half dead, but he always revived.

At this moment grandfather was, no doubt, standing at the gate, screwing up his eyes at the red windows of the church, stamping with his high felt boots, and joking with the servants. His little mallet was hanging on his belt. He was clasping his hands, shrugging with the cold, and, with an aged chuckle, pinching first the housemaid, then the cook.

“How about a pinch of snuff?” he was saying, offering the women his snuff-box.

The women would take a sniff and sneeze. Grandfather would be indescribably delighted, go off into a merry chuckle, and cry: “Tear it off, it has frozen on!”

They give the dogs a sniff of snuff too. Kashtanka sneezes, wriggles her head, and walks away offended. Eel does not sneeze, from submissiveness, but wags his tail. And the weather is glorious. The air is still, fresh, and transparent. The night is dark, but one can see the whole village with its white roofs and coils of smoke coming from the chimneys, the trees silvered with hoar frost, the snowdrifts. The whole sky spangled with gay twinkling stars, and the Milky Way is as distinct as though it had been washed and rubbed with snow for a holiday...

都用同样善意的目光瞧着，但名声并不很好。它的恭顺温和后面隐藏着极其阴险狡猾的用意。哪条狗都不如它善于一有机会就悄悄逼近，有时在人腿上猛咬一口，有时溜进储藏室，或者偷吃农民的母鸡。它的两条后腿已经不止一次险些被人打断，曾有两次它还被吊起来，每星期都被打得半死，但总是起死回生。

此刻，爷爷肯定正站在大门口，眯紧眼睛瞧教堂的红窗，跺着高统毡靴，跟仆人们开玩笑。他的小梆子挂在腰带上。他冻得握手、耸肩，拧一下女仆，捏一下厨娘，发出苍老的嗤嗤笑声。

“来嗅点鼻烟怎么样？”说着，他献上鼻烟盒让女人们嗅。

女人们总是一嗅就打喷嚏。爷爷常常乐不可支，爆发出开心的笑声，喊道：“快擦掉，冻上了！”

他也给狗嗅鼻烟。卡什坦卡直打喷嚏，扭扭头，不快地走开。泥鳅出于恭顺，不打喷嚏，只是摇尾巴。天气宜人。空气静止不动，新鲜透明。尽管夜色黑暗，但整个村子和村里的白屋顶，烟囱里冒出的袅袅青烟，披着银霜的树木，一处处的雪堆，都能看见。

整个天空布满了欢快闪烁的星星，银河清晰可见，仿佛有人为过节用雪擦洗过一样……

Vanka sighed, dipped his pen, and went on writing: "And yesterday I had a wiggling. The master pulled me out into the yard by my hair, and whacked me with a boot-stretcher because I accidentally fell asleep while I was rocking their brat in the cradle. And a week ago the mistress told me to clean a herring, and I began from the tail end, and she took the herring and thrust its head in my face. The workmen laugh at me and send me to the tavern for vodka, and tell me to steal the master's cucumbers for them, and the master beats me with anything that comes to hand. And there is nothing to eat. In the morning they give me bread, for dinner, porridge, and in the evening, bread again; but as for tea, or soup, the master and mistress gobble it all up themselves. And I am put to sleep in the passage, and when their wretched brat cries I get no sleep at all, but have to rock the cradle. Dear grandfather, show the divine mercy, take me away from here, home to the village. It's more than I can bear. I bow down to your feet, and will pray to God for you for ever, take me away from here or I shall die."

Vanka's mouth worked, he rubbed his eyes with his black fist, and gave a sob.

"I will powder your snuff for you," he went on. "I will pray for you, and if I do anything wrong you can thrash me like Sidor's goat. And if you think I've no job, then I will beg the steward for Christ's sake to let me clean his boots, or I'll go for a shepherd-boy instead of Fedka. Dear grandfather, it is more than I can bear, it's simply no life at all. I wanted to run away to the village, but I have no boots, and I am afraid of the frost. When I grow up big I will take care of you for this, and not let anyone annoy you, and when you die I will pray for the rest of your soul, just as for my mammy's.

万卡叹了口气，蘸了蘸墨水，继续写道：“昨天我挨了一顿痛打。主人揪着我的头发把我拽到院子里，用靴撑狠狠地打我，因为我在摇摇篮时不小心睡着了。一周前，女主人吩咐我洗一条青鱼，我从鱼尾开始洗。于是，她夺过那条青鱼，把鱼头戳到了我的脸上。工人们嘲笑我，打发我去酒馆打伏特加酒，唆使我去偷主人的黄瓜给他们。主人抓到什么就拿什么打我。什么吃的也没有。早上他们给我面包，午饭给我稀粥，晚上又是面包；至于茶或汤，主人和女主人自己都喝得一干二净。他们让我睡在过道里，他们那个讨厌的娃娃一哭，我就根本睡不成觉了，我不得不摇那个摇篮。亲爱的爷爷，发发上帝的慈悲，把我从这里带回家，带到村子里去吧。我再也受不了了。我给你磕头了，我会永远为你向上帝祈祷，带我离开这里吧，不然我会死的。”

万卡的嘴唇抽动了一下，他用黑乎乎的拳头揉了揉眼睛，抽噎起来。

“我愿意为你搓鼻烟，”他接着写道，“我愿意为你祈祷。要是我做错了什么事，你可以像抽西多尔的山羊那样抽打我。要是你认为我没活干，那我就恳求管家让我给他擦皮靴，或者替费季卡去放牧。亲爱的爷爷，我再也受不了了，简直活不了了。我本想跑回村子，但我没有靴子，我怕严寒。等我长大了，我愿意照顾你，不让任何人惹你生气。等你死了，我就为你的灵魂祷告，就像为我妈妈的灵魂祷告那样。



“Moscow is a big town. It’s all gentlemen’s houses, and there are lots of horses, but there are no sheep, and the dogs are not spiteful. The lads here don’t go out with the star, and they don’t let anyone go into the choir, and once I saw in a shop window fishing-hooks for sale, fitted ready with the line and for all sorts of fish, awfully good ones, there was even one hook that would hold a forty-pound sheat-fish. And I have seen shops where there are guns of all sorts, after the pattern of the master’s guns at home, so that I shouldn’t wonder if they are a hundred roubles each... And in the butchers’ shops there are grouse and woodcocks and fish and hares, but the shopmen don’t say where they shoot them.

“Dear grandfather, when they have the Christmas tree at the big house, get me a gilt walnut, and put it away in the green trunk. Ask the young lady Olga Ignatyevna, say it’s for Vanka.”

Vanka gave a tremulous sigh, and again stared at the window. He remembered how his grandfather always went into the forest to get the Christmas tree for his master’s family, and took his grandson with him. It was a merry time! Grandfather made a noise in his throat, the forest crackled with the frost, and looking at them Vanka chortled too. Before chopping down the Christmas tree, grandfather would smoke a pipe, slowly take a pinch of snuff, and laugh at frozen Vanka... The young fir trees, covered with hoar frost, stood motionless, waiting to see which of them was to die. Wherever one looked, a hare flew like an arrow over the snowdrifts... Grandfather could not refrain from shouting: “Hold him, hold him...hold him! Ah, the bob-tailed devil!”

When he had cut down the Christmas tree, grandfather used to drag it to the big house,

“莫斯科是一座大城。全都是老爷们的房子，有好多马，却没有羊，狗也不凶。这里的男孩子不跟着星星出门，他们不让任何人加入唱诗班。有一次，我看到一个橱窗里出售钓鱼钩，都安有钓线，各种各样的鱼都能钓，好得不得了，有一个钓鱼钩甚至能钓得起一条四十磅重的大鲶鱼。我还看到一些商店有各种各样的枪，跟主人家的枪的样式一样，所以每支枪恐怕要卖一百卢布……肉铺里有松鸡、山鹑、鱼、兔子，但肉铺里的人不说是从哪里打来的。

“亲爱的爷爷，等他们在大房子里摆圣诞树时，给我弄一个镀金的核桃，存放在那只小绿箱里。向奥尔佳·伊格纳季耶芙娜小姐要，就说是送给万卡的。”

万卡声音颤抖地叹了口气，又凝视着窗户。他想起爷爷总是走进森林去给主人家砍圣诞树，而且是带着孙子一起去。那真是一段快乐时光啊！爷爷的喉咙里发着声响，林木冻得噼啪直响，看着这些，万卡也发出了咯咯的笑声。在砍倒圣诞树前，爷爷常常抽一袋烟，慢慢地嗅一捏鼻烟，冲冻僵的万卡发笑……那些披着白霜的小杉树站在那里一动不动，等着看它们当中谁先死去。不知从哪里飞身跑来一只野兔，像箭一样越过雪堆……爷爷禁不住喊道：“抓住它，抓住它……抓住它！啊，短尾巴鬼！”

砍倒圣诞树后，爷爷常常拖到大房子里，开始着手装点它……其中最忙活的是奥尔佳·伊格纳季耶芙娜小姐，她是万卡最喜爱的人。万卡的母亲佩拉格娅健在时，在