

| 双语时代 |
英语文学精选书系



英语中篇小说 精选读本

李文俊 编译

英汉对照 单词注释

中国国际广播出版社

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The Withered Arm

Thomas Hardy

I A Lorn Milkmaid

It was an eighty-cow dairy, and the troop of milkers, regular and **supernumerary**, were all at work; for, though the time of year was as yet but early April, the feed lay entirely in water-meadows, and the cows were "in full pail." The hour was about six in the evening, and three-fourths of the large, red, **rectangular** animals having been finished off, there was opportunity for a little conversation.

"He do bring home his bride to-morrow, I hear. They've come as far as Anglebury to-day."

The voice seemed to proceed from the belly of the cow called Cherry, but the speaker was a milking-woman, whose face was buried in the **flank** of that motionless beast.

"Hav' anybody seen her?" said another.

There was a negative response from the first. "Though they say she's a rosy-cheeked, tisty-tosty little body enough," she added; and as the milkmaid spoke she turned her face so that she could glance past her cow's tail to the other side of the barton, where a thin, fading woman of thirty milked somewhat apart from the rest.

"Years younger than he, they say," continued the second, with also a glance of reflectiveness in the same direction.

"How old do you call him, then?"

"Thirty or so."

"More like forty," broke in an old milkman near, in a long white pinafore or "wropper," and with the brim of his hat tied down, so that he looked like a woman. "'A was born before our Great Weir was builded, and I hadn't man's wages when I laved water there."

The discussion waxed so warm that the purr of the milk-streams became **jerky**, till a voice from another cow's belly cried with authority, "Now then, what the Turk do it matter to us about Farmer Lodge's age, or Farmer Lodge's new mis'ess? I shall have to pay him nine pound a year for the rent of every one of these milchers, whatever his age or hers. Get on with your work, or 'twill be dark **afore** we have done. The evening is pinking in a'ready." This speaker was the dairyman himself,

萎缩的胳膊

托马斯·哈代

一 遭遗弃的挤奶姑娘

supernumerary

[sjuːpəˈnju:mərəri]

n. 临时雇工

rectangular

[rekˈtæŋɡjələ]

adj. 矩形的

flank

[flæŋk]

n. 腰窝, 肋

jerky

[ˈdʒɜ:ki]

adj. 急拉的, 急动的

afore

[əˈfɔ:]

prep. 在前

这是一个有八十头奶牛的牛奶场，一群挤奶工，正式的和临时的，都在干活；季节虽然还不过是四月初，可放牧全在那些水浇地牧场上，所以那些奶牛个个都是“满桶奶的”。时间大约到了傍晚六点钟，那些大个头、红颜色、长方块的畜生，有四分之三已经挤完了奶，这样大家就有机会聊聊天了。

“我听说，他明天真要把新娘子带回家来啦。他们今天已经从安格伯瑞动身了。”

声音仿佛发自那头叫作樱桃的母牛的肚子，不过说话的人可是一个挤奶妇，她的脸埋在那头一动不动的母牛肋条上。

“有谁瞧见过她吗？”另一个人问。

先说话的那个人说，没有。“可他们说，她真够得上是玫瑰脸蛋儿，樱草花球小身段儿。”她又这样加了一句。这个挤奶妇一边说，一边转过脸去，这样，她就可以隔着她那头母牛的尾巴对场院的那一边瞟上一眼。那里有一个姿色渐衰的瘦削女人，大约三十岁模样，和别人多少分开了一点，正在挤奶。

“他们说，比他小好些岁呢。”第二个人接着说，也对那个方向投去若有所思的一瞥。

“那么，你说他多大岁数了？”

“三十上下吧。”

“更像四十岁。”旁边一个年岁大的挤奶男工插了一句，他罩了一件大白围裙或者说“工作罩衣”，帽檐向下耷拉着，看起来像是一个女人。“他出世的时候，水坝还没筑，我在那里提水的时候，还没拿大人的工资呢。”

议论越来越热闹，牛奶往下流的声音变得断断续续的了，这时从另一头母牛肚子那儿传来颇有权威的声音：“嗨，嗨，农场主洛吉的年纪，或者洛吉的新太太，究竟和咱们有啥关系？不管他或者她是多大岁数，反正我租他的这些奶牛，每头牛每年都得交他九镑。接着干你们的活儿吧，要不，咱们干不完天就黑了。晚霞已经把天都照红啦。”说这话的人是牛奶场的老板，这些挤奶的女工和

by whom the milkmaids and men were employed.

Nothing more was said publicly about Farmer Lodge's wedding, but the first woman murmured under her cow to her next neighbour, "'Tis hard for *she*," signifying the thin worn milkmaid aforesaid.

"O no," said the second. "He ha'n't spoke to Rhoda Brook for years."

When the milking was done they washed their pails and hung them on a many-forked stand made as usual of the peeled limb of an oak-tree, set upright in the earth, and resembling a **colossal** antlered horn. The majority then dispersed in various directions homeward. The thin woman who had not spoken was joined by a boy of twelve or thereabout, and the twain went away up the field also.

Their course lay apart from that of the others, to a lonely spot high above the water-meads, and not far from the border of Egdon Heath, whose dark countenance was visible in the distance as they drew nigh to their home.

"They've just been saying down in **barton** that your father brings his young wife home from Anglebury to-morrow," the woman observed. "I shall want to send you for a few things to market, and you'll be pretty sure to meet 'em."

"Yes, mother," said the boy. "Is father married then?"

"Yes...You can give her a look, and tell me what she's like, if you do see her."

"Yes, mother."

"If she's dark or fair, and if she's tall—as tall as I. And if she seems like a woman who has ever worked for a living, or one that has been always well off, and has never done anything, and shows marks of the lady on her, as I expect she do."

"Yes."

They crept up the hill in the twilight and entered the cottage. It was built of mud-walls, the surface of which had been washed by many rains into channels and depressions that left none of the original flat face visible; while here and there in the **thatch** above a rafter showed like a bone **protruding** through the skin.

She was kneeling down in the chimney-corner, before two pieces of turf laid together with the heather inwards, blowing at the red-hot ashes with her breath till the turves flamed. The radiance lit her pale cheek, and made her dark eyes, that had once been handsome, seem handsome anew. "Yes," she resumed, "see if she is dark or fair, and if you can, notice if her hands be white; if not, see if they look as though she had ever done housework, or are milker's hands like mine."

The boy again promised, **inattentively** this time, his mother not observing that he was cutting a notch with his pocket-knife in the beech-backed chair.

男工都是他雇的。

谁也没有再公然大声议论农场主洛吉的婚事了，不过第一个说话的女工仍在她那头牛下面对她的近邻嘀咕：“她可不好受啦。”她指的是刚才提到的那个瘦削憔悴的挤奶女工。

“啊，不会的，”第二个说，“他已经有几年没跟若达·布茹克说话了。”

挤完了奶，他们刷净了自己的奶桶，把它们挂在奶桶架上。它像通常的奶桶架一样，是用一根剥了皮的橡树枝做的，上面装着许多钩子，直直地竖在地上，像一盘巨大的鹿角。大多数人都朝着四面八方回家去了。那个一言未发的瘦女人，和一个大约十二岁的男孩走到一起，他们俩也顺着那块场地走上去了。

他们走的路和别人不同，通向水浇牧场上面一块高出来的孤零零的地方，离爱敦荒原的边缘不远，当他们走到家门附近的时候，可以远远看见荒原那黑糊糊的影子。

“他们刚才在场院里说，你爸爸明天要把他那个年轻的媳妇从安格伯瑞带回来了，”那个女人说，“我想打发你到市场上去干点事儿，你准保可以碰见他们。”

“好吧，妈妈，”男孩说，“那么爸爸结婚了吗？”

“是……你可以看她一眼。要是你真看到她了，就告诉我她什么样。”

“好吧，妈妈。”

“她是长得黑还是白，个儿高不高——是不是跟我一样高。还有，她看起来是不是像一个靠干活儿吃饭的女人，或者是一个富裕惯了的人，从来没有干过什么活儿，显出一副太太的样子，就像我想的那样。”

“好。”

他们在苍茫暮色中爬上那座小山，走进自己的农舍。农舍四面是土墙，多次雨水冲刷，已经把墙面冲出一道道的沟纹和凹洼，原来那种平整的墙面，一点也看不见了，而上面铺草的房顶，时而露出一根椽子，像是一根骨头戳破了皮肤露在外面。

她跪在炉灶旁边，两块泥煤架在前面，煤块中间放着石楠的干枝，她用力吹那堆红热的余烬，一直吹到泥煤燃起了火苗。火光照亮了苍白的脸颊，使她那对曾经看起来很漂亮的眼睛，好像又漂亮起来了。“是的，”她接着又说起来，“看她长得是黑还是白，还有，要是能够看得到，留神一下她那双手白不白，要是不白，就看看它们是不是做过家务活，或者是像我这双挤奶的手。”

男孩照样答应了，这次有点心不在焉，他母亲没有注意到，他正在用一把小刀，在山毛榉木靠背椅上刻一道凹痕。

colossal

[kə'ləsl]

adj. 巨大的，庞大的

barton

['bɑ:tn]

n. 农家的庭院

thatch

[θætʃ]

n. 茅草屋顶

protrude

[prə'tru:d]

v. 突出

inattentively

[,ɪnə'tentɪvli]

adv. 不注意地

II The Young Wife

The road from Anglebury to Holmstoke is in general level; but there is one place where a sharp ascent breaks its monotony. Farmers homeward-bound from the former market-town, who trot all the rest of the way, walk their horses up this short incline.

The next evening while the sun was yet bright a handsome new gig, with a lemon-coloured body and red wheels, was spinning westward along the level highway at the heels of a powerful mare. The driver was a yeoman in the prime of life, cleanly shaven like an actor, his face being toned to that bluish-vermilion hue which so often graces a thriving farmer's features when returning home after successful dealings in the town. Beside him sat a woman, many years his junior—almost, indeed, a girl. Her face too was fresh in colour, but it was of a totally different quality—soft and **evanescent**, like the light under a heap of rose-petals.

Few people travelled this way, for it was not a main road, and the long white riband of gravel that stretched before them was empty, save of one small scarce-moving speck, which presently resolved itself into the figure of a boy, who was creeping on at a snail's pace, and continually looking behind him—the heavy bundle he carried being some excuse for, if not the reason of, his **dilatoriness**. When the bouncing gig-party slowed at the bottom of the incline above mentioned, the pedestrian was only a few yards in front. Supporting the large bundle by putting one hand on his hip, he turned and looked straight at the farmer's wife as though he would read her through and through, pacing along abreast of the horse.

The low sun was full in her face, rendering every feature, shade, and **contour** distinct, from the curve of her little nostril to the colour of her eyes. The farmer, though he seemed annoyed at the boy's persistent presence, did not order him to get out of the way; and thus the lad preceded them, his hard gaze never leaving her, till they reached the top of the ascent, when the farmer trotted on with relief in his lineaments—having taken no outward notice of the boy whatever.

"How that poor lad stared at me!" said the young wife.

"Yes, dear; I saw that he did."

"He is one of the village, I suppose?"

"One of the neighbourhood. I think he lives with his mother a mile or two off."

"He knows who we are, no doubt?"

"O yes. You must expect to be stared at just at first, my pretty Gertrude."

"I do, —though I think the poor boy may have looked at us in the hope we might relieve him of his heavy load, rather than from curiosity."

"O no," said her husband off-handedly. "These country lads will carry a

二 年轻媳妇

从安格伯瑞到霍姆斯托克的大道，基本都是平路，只有一个地方有个很陡的上坡道，使它显得不那么单调。赶集回家的农夫，都是一路让马小跑着，到了这段短短的陡坡，才赶着马缓慢爬坡。

第二天黄昏，太阳还挺亮，一辆崭新漂亮的轻便双轮马车，由一匹健壮的牝马拉着，沿着那条平川大道向西飞跑。这辆车车身是柠檬色的，车轮是红色的。赶车人是个年富力强的自耕农，胡子刮得干干净净，像个演戏的，脸色红里透青。一个兴旺发达的农夫，在镇上做了几笔顺手的买卖回家，常常就是这样满面生辉。他身旁坐着一个女人，比他年轻得多，简直可以说还是一个女孩儿。她的脸色也很光鲜，但那完全是另外一种性质——柔媚缥缈，像是从一堆玫瑰花瓣透过来的光辉。

evanescent

[i:və'nesnt]

adj. 渐消失的，易消散的

dilatoriness

['dilətərɪnɪs]

n. 迟缓

contour

['kɒntʊə]

n. 轮廓

没有什么人这样赶路，因为这不是一条主要的大道。在这条沙砾铺成的白色长带上，他们前面空空荡荡，只有一个几乎并不活动的小黑点，它渐渐地变成了一个男孩的模样，好似一只蜗牛正在慢慢向上爬，而且不断地回过头来朝后面张望。他背的那个沉重的包，如果说不是他步履缓慢的理由，也可以说是某种借口。那辆欢腾跳跃的轻便马车，来到前面提到的那个陡坡下面，放慢了速度，这时那个步行的男孩在前面不过几码的地方。他一只手放在屁股上托着那个大包，和马并排走着，同时回过头来，死死盯住农场主的媳妇，好像要把她仔仔细细捉摸个透似的。

夕阳迎面照在她的脸上，把她五官的每一个部分，从她那小巧鼻孔的曲线直到她那双眼睛的颜色都照得一清二楚。那个农场主，对男孩这样死乞白赖地盯着看，似乎感到恼火，可是并没有赶他走，吩咐他让路，因此这个小小子一直走在他们前面，他的眼睛一直死盯着她，等到他们到达坡顶，农场主脸上露出放下心来的神情，撒开马小跑起来——从外表上看，不再注意那个男孩究竟怎样了。

“看那可怜的男孩盯着我看的那副神情！”年轻媳妇说。

“是呀，亲爱的，我看见他是在盯着你瞧。”

“他是村里的人吧，我猜？”

“是附近的一个人。我想他是和他妈住在一两英里远的地方。”

“毫无疑问，他知道我们是谁吧？”

“啊，是的，你一定得预料到，刚开始人家会盯着你瞧，我漂亮的格楚德。”

“我料到了——不过我以为，这个可怜的男孩盯着我们瞧，可能是想让我们帮他带一下他背的那个沉重的大包，而不是出于好奇。”

“啊，不对，”她丈夫脱口而出，“这些乡下小子，只要东西一

hundredweight once they get it on their backs; besides, his pack had more size than weight in it. Now, then, another mile and I shall be able to show you our house in the distance—if it is not too dark before we get there.” The wheels spun round, and particles flew from their **periphery** as before, till a white house of ample dimensions revealed itself, with farm-buildings and ricks at the back.

Meanwhile the boy had quickened his pace, and turning up a by-lane some mile and half short of the white farmstead, ascended towards the leaner pastures, and so on to the cottage of his mother.

She had reached home after her day’s milking at the outlying dairy, and was washing cabbage at the doorway in the declining light. “Hold up the net a moment,” she said, without preface, as the boy came up.

He flung down his bundle, held the edge of the cabbagenet, and as she filled its meshes with the dripping leaves she went on, “Well, did you see her?”

“Yes; quite plain.”

“Is she ladylike?”

“Yes; and more. A lady complete.”

“Is she young?”

“Well, she’s growed up, and her ways be quite a woman’s.”

“Of course. What colour is her hair and face?”

“Her hair is lightish, and her face as comely as a live doll’s.”

“Her eyes, then, are not dark like mine?”

“No—of a bluish turn, and her mouth is very nice and red; and when she smiles, her teeth show white.”

“Is she tall?” said the woman sharply.

“I couldn’t see. She was sitting down.”

“Then do you go to Holmstoke church to-morrow morning: she’s sure to be there. Go early and notice her walking in, and come home and tell me if she’s taller than I.”

“Very well, mother. But why don’t you go and see for yourself?”

“I go to see her! I wouldn’t look up at her if she were to pass my window this instant. She was with Mr. Lodge, of course. What did he say or do?”

“Just the same as usual.”

“Took no notice of you?”

“None.”

Next day the mother put a clean shirt on the boy, and started him off for Holmstoke church. He reached the ancient little pile when the door was just being opened and he was the first to enter. Taking his seat by the font, he watched all the **parishioners** file in. The well-to-do Farmer Lodge came nearly last, and his young wife, who accompanied him, walked up the aisle with the shyness natural to a modest woman who had appeared thus for the first time. As all other eyes

periphery

[pə'rifəri]

n. 外围

上肩，就可以背上一英担^①，再说，他那个包看起来很大，实际上并不那么重，好啦，再走上一英里，我就可以远远地指给你看我们住的那所房子——要是我们赶到那儿天还不太黑的话。”车轮滚滚向前，又像以前那样把砂土碾得向四周乱迸，终于出现了一所占地阔大的白房子，房后还有一些专为干农活儿用的房子和干草堆。

这时候，那个男孩加快了脚步，在离这所白色农庄还有差不多一英里半的地方，拐到一条小路上，向着那些比较贫瘠的草场爬上去，一直走到他母亲的那所村舍。

她干完了她当天在外面奶场上挤奶的活儿，已经回到家里，正借着渐渐昏暗的光线，在门洞里洗菜。“把这个网兜拿一会儿。”男孩刚一走进来，她没有先打招呼就这样说。

他赶忙扔下他那个大包袱，抓住盛菜网兜的边，她一边往兜里放正在滴水的卷心菜，一边继续说话：“怎么样，你看见她了吗？”

“嗯，挺清楚的。”

“她像个太太吗？”

“嘿，不单像，还是个不折不扣的太太呢。”

“她年轻吗？”

“嗯，她已经是大人啦。她那神气，十足是个女人。”

“当然。她的头发和脸蛋儿是什么颜色？”

“她头发是浅色的，脸蛋儿就像一个活的玩具娃娃。”

“她的眼睛，那么，不是像我的眼睛这样深颜色的吧？”

“不，是浅蓝色的，她的嘴长得挺俏挺红，笑起来露出一口白牙。”

“她个儿高吗？”她酸溜溜地问道。

“我看不见。她坐着呢。”

“那么，明天早晨你到霍姆斯托克教堂去，她准会去那儿。早点儿去，看着她走进来，回家来告诉我，她是不是比我高。”

“那好吧，妈妈。可是你干吗不自己去看看呢？”

“我去看她！她就是这会儿从我窗户前面走过去，我也不会抬头去看她。当然，她是和洛吉先生在一起。他说了些什么？做了些什么？”

“和平常一样。”

“没有注意你？”

“没有。”

第二天，母亲给孩子穿了一件干净的衬衫，打发他到霍姆斯托克教堂去。他到达这座小小的古老建筑的时候正赶上开门，他就第一个走了进去。他在洗礼盘旁边找了个座位，看着教区所有的教民鱼贯而入。阔气的农场主洛吉几乎是最后一个走进来的，伴随他的那个年轻的媳妇，走进教堂走廊，脸上带着羞涩的神情，这对于一个第一次在众人面前露面的端庄淑静的女人来说，也是自然而然的事。大家的目光都盯着她，所以这个年轻人的注视，现在也就没有

parishioner

[pə'riʃənə]

n. 教区居民

were fixed upon her, the youth's stare was not noticed now.

When he reached home his mother said, "Well?" before he had entered the room.

"She is not tall. She is rather short," he replied.

"Ah!" said his mother, with satisfaction.

"But she's very pretty—very. In fact, she's lovely." The youthful freshness of the yeoman's wife had evidently made an impression even on the somewhat hard nature of the boy.

"That's all I want to hear," said his mother quickly. "Now, spread the tablecloth. The hare you wired is very tender; but mind that nobody catches you. — You've never told me what sort of hands she had."

"I have never seen 'em. She never took off her gloves."

"What did she wear this morning?"

"A white bonnet and a silver-coloured gown. It whewed and whistled so loud when it rubbed against the pews that the lady coloured up more than ever for very shame at the noise, and pulled it in to keep it from touching; but when she pushed into her seat, it whewed more than ever. Mr. Lodge, he seemed pleased, and his waist-coat stuck out, and his great golden seals hung like a lord's; but she seemed to wish her noisy gown anywhere but on her."

"Not she! However, that will do now."

These descriptions of the newly-married couple were continued from time to time by the boy at his mother's request, after any chance encounter he had had with them. But Rhoda Brook, though she might easily have seen young Mrs. Lodge for herself by walking a couple of miles, would never attempt an excursion towards the quarter where the farmhouse lay. Neither did she, at the daily milking in the dairyman's yard on Lodge's outlying second farm, ever speak on the subject of the recent marriage. The dairyman, who rented the cows of Lodge, and knew perfectly the tall milkmaid's history, with manly kindness always kept the **gossip** in the cow-barton from annoying Rhoda. But the atmosphere thereabout was full of the subject during the first days of Mrs. Lodge's arrival, and from her boy's description and the casual words of the other milkers, Rhoda Brook could raise a mental image of the unconscious Mrs. Lodge that was realistic as a photograph.

III A Vision

One night, two or three weeks after the bridal return, when the boy was gone to bed, Rhoda sat a long time over the turf ashes that she had raked out in front of her to extinguish them. She contemplated so intently the new wife, as presented to her in her mind's eye over the **embers**, that she forgot the lapse of time. At last, wearied with her day's work, she too retired.

引起人们的注意了。

他到达家门口的时候，还没等走进屋子，他母亲就问：“怎么样？”

“她个儿并不高，还有点儿矮呢！”他回答说。

“啊！”他母亲满意地叫了一声。

“可是她很漂亮——很漂亮。说实话，她挺可爱。”自耕农的媳妇那种年轻鲜艳的神情，甚至对这个秉性多少有点儿严峻的男孩，显然留下了深刻的印象。

“这就是所有我想要听到的。”他母亲很快地说。“好啦，把桌布铺上。你用铁丝网套住的兔子很嫩，可是要小心，别让谁抓住你——你一直还没告诉我，她的手是什么样的。”

“我根本没见到。她一直没有脱下手套。”

“她今天早晨穿戴的什么？”

“一顶白帽子和一身银灰色的袍子。袍子蹭到教堂条凳上刺啦刺啦地响，声音那么大，那位太太自己听到这声音感到不好意思，脸红得比原先更厉害了，她把衣服拉起来，好让它别再蹭，可是她猛一下坐到位子上，那刺啦声更大了。洛吉先生，他好像很得意，他的背心露着，他那儿颗金晃晃的大印吊着，就像一个大老爷似的，可是他太太好像是希望她那件闹人的袍子放在哪里都成，就是别穿在她身上。”

“是吗！不管怎么说，现在这就够啦！”

以后，这个男孩每次偶然碰见这对新婚夫妇，他母亲都要他陆续把他们情况再讲一遍。若达·布茹克固然只要走上一两英里就可以很容易地亲自见到年轻的洛吉太太，但是她从没打算走这一点儿路，到农庄房舍所在的地方去。牛奶场的场院就在洛吉这远处的第二个农场里，她每天在场院挤奶的时候，也从来不提最近办的这桩婚事。牛奶场老板租了洛吉的奶牛，对这个高挑挤奶姑娘的身世也知道得清清楚楚，他怀着男子汉的善意，总是不让奶场场院里的这些流言蜚语引起若达苦恼。但是洛吉太太到达以后最初那些日子，周围的环境老是充满这个话题。而若达·布茹克从她孩子的描述和其他挤奶工人偶尔露出的只言片语，也能够心里描绘出对这个一无所知的洛吉太太的图像，就像照片那样逼真。

三 幻 象

新人回家两三个星期后一天晚上，男孩上床睡了，若达把泥煤灰耙出来放在面前，好让它们熄灭，她在那堆泥煤余火前面坐了很长时间。她就着那些余烬，按照她想象的模样，心里想着那个新媳妇，思考得那样聚精会神，竟忘记时间过去了多久，最后，由于一天工作的疲累，她也去睡觉了。

gossip

['gɒsɪp]

n. 闲话

ember

['embə]

n. 灰烬，余烬



But the figure which had occupied her so much during this and the previous days was not to be banished at night. For the first time Gertrude Lodge visited the supplanted woman in her dreams. Rhoda Brook dreamed—since her **assertion** that she really saw, before falling asleep, was not to be believed—that the young wife, in the pale silk dress and white bonnet, but with features shockingly distorted, and wrinkled as by age, was sitting upon her chest as she lay. The pressure of Mrs. Lodge's person grew heavier; the blue eyes peered cruelly into her face, and then the figure thrust forward its left hand mockingly, so as to make the wedding-ring it wore glitter in Rhoda's eyes. Maddened mentally, and nearly suffocated by pressure, the sleeper struggled; the incubus, still regarding her, withdrew to the foot of the bed, only, however, to come forward by degrees, resume her seat, and flash her left hand as before.

Gasping for breath, Rhoda, in a last desperate effort, swung out her right hand, seized the confronting **spectre** by its obtrusive left arm, and whirled it backward to the floor, starting up herself as she did so with a low cry.

"O, merciful heaven!" she cried, sitting on the edge of the bed in a cold sweat; "that was not a dream—she was here!"

She could feel her antagonist's arm within her grasp even now—the very flesh and bone of it, as it seemed. She looked on the floor **whither** she had whirled the spectre, but there was nothing to be seen.

Rhoda Brook slept no more that night, and when she went milking at the next dawn they noticed how pale and **haggard** she looked. The milk that she drew quivered into the pail; her hand had not calmed even yet, and still retained the feel of the arm. She came home to breakfast as wearily as if it had been supper-time.

"What was that noise in your chimner, mother, last night?" said her son. "You fell off the bed, surely?"

"Did you hear anything fall? At what time?"

"Just when the clock struck two."

She could not explain, and when the meal was done went silently about her household work, the boy assisting her, for he hated going afield on the farms, and she indulged his reluctance. Between eleven and twelve the garden-gate clicked, and she lifted her eyes to the window. At the bottom of the garden, within the gate, stood the woman of her vision. Rhoda seemed **transfixed**.

"Ah, she said she would come!" exclaimed the boy, also observing her.

"Said so—when? How does she know us?"

"I have seen and spoken to her. I talked to her yesterday."

"I told you," said the mother, flushing indignantly, "never to speak to anybody in that house, or go near the place."

"I did not speak to her till she spoke to me. And I did not go near the place. I met her in the road."

assertion

[ə'sɜːʃən]

n. 主张, 断言**spectre**

['spektə]

n. 幽灵, 幻影**whither**

[(h)wiðə]

adv. 到哪里**haggard**

['hæɡəd]

adj. 憔悴的**transfix**

[træns'fiks]

v. 使呆住

但是, 这一天和前些天来一直萦回在她心中的形象, 即使在夜晚也无法赶开。梦中, 那个取她的地位而代之的格楚德·洛吉第一次来看她了。若达·布茹克在睡着以前确信自己真看见她了, 而这是不足信的。她梦见这个年轻媳妇穿了一身浅灰色的衣服, 戴着一顶白帽子, 但是面容却歪歪扭扭, 一塌糊涂, 好像年纪很大, 满脸皱纹。她躺在那儿, 这个新媳妇就坐在她的胸脯上。洛吉太太的身体压得越来越重, 那双蓝眼睛冷酷无情地死盯着她的脸, 然后这个影子又嘲弄地向前伸出左手, 好让她戴的那个结婚戒指在若达的眼前熠熠闪耀。睡觉人的精神狂乱, 给压得几乎透不过气来, 她拼命挣扎。一会儿压在她身上的那个梦魔退到床脚去了, 可是仍然死盯着她, 随后又逐渐移上前来, 重新坐在她胸脯上, 又像刚才那样晃着左手。

若达使劲喘着气, 最后拼命挣扎, 抽出自己的右手, 猛地抓住面前这个影子伸出的左臂, 迅速把它向后拧着朝地上摔, 她自己一下坐起来, 同时发出一声低沉的叫喊。

“啊, 善心的老天爷呀!” 她叫喊着, 坐在床边, 出了一身冷汗。“这不是做梦——她到这儿来了!”

甚至到这时候, 她都能感觉到她的胳膊在她紧握的手掌中挣扎——好像真是有骨头有肉似的。她看看地上, 她曾经把鬼影摔在那儿, 但是地上什么也看不见。

若达·布茹克那天夜里再也没睡。第二天清早她去挤牛奶的时候, 大家注意到, 她的脸色惨白, 显得疲乏不堪。她挤出的牛奶颤颤悠悠地流进牛奶桶, 她的手到那时还没有平静下来, 仍然感觉到那只胳膊。她回家吃早饭, 就好像是到了吃晚饭的时候那样困。

“妈妈, 昨天晚上你屋子里有声音, 怎么啦?” 她儿子问她, “你真从床上滚下来了吧?”

“你听见什么东西摔下来吗? 什么时候?”

“刚好钟敲两点的时候。”

她无法解释, 吃过早饭就一声不响地干起家务活来, 男孩帮着她干, 因为他讨厌到外面农场地里去, 他不愿去, 她也就惯着他。十一二点钟的时候, 园子的门咔嚓一响, 她抬头望着窗户, 园子尽头门口站着她幻觉中的那个女人。若达好像一下子呆住了。

“啊, 她说过她要来的!” 男孩也看到了这个女人, 大声喊着。

“这样说过——什么时候? 她怎么知道我们?”

“我见过她, 和她说过话。我昨天和她说过话。”

“我不是告诉过你了吗,” 妈妈满脸通红愤怒地说, “不要和那所房子里的什么人说话, 也不要走到那所房子跟前去。”

“我没和她说话, 是她先和我说的。我也没有走到那所房子跟前, 我在大路上碰到她的。”

“What did you tell her?”

“Nothing. She said, ‘Are you the poor boy who had to bring the heavy load from market?’ And she looked at my boots, and said they would not keep my feet dry if it came on wet, because they were so cracked. I told her I lived with my mother, and we had enough to do to keep ourselves, and that’s how it was; and she said then, ‘I’ll come and bring you some better boots, and see your mother.’ She gives away things to other folks in the meads besides us.”

Mrs.Lodge was by this time close to the door—not in her silk, as Rhoda had dreamt of in the bed-chamber, but in a morning hat, and gown of common light material, which became her better than silk. On her arm she carried a basket.

The impression remaining from the night’s experience was still strong. Brook had almost expected to see the wrinkles, the scorn, and the cruelty on her visitor’s face. She would have escaped an interview had escape been possible. There was, however, no backdoor to the cottage, and in an instant the boy had lifted the latch to Mrs.Lodge’s gentle knock.

“I see I have come to the right house,” said she, glancing at the lad, and smiling. “But I was not sure till you opened the door.”

The figure and action were those of the **phantom**; but her voice was so indescribably sweet, her glance so winning, her smile so tender, so unlike that of Rhoda’s midnight visitant, that the latter could hardly believe the evidence of her senses. She was truly glad that she had not hidden away in sheer aversion, as she had been inclined to do. In her basket Mrs.Lodge brought the pair of boots that she had promised to the boy, and other useful articles.

At these proofs of a kindly feeling towards her and hers Rhoda’s heart reproached her bitterly. This innocent young thing should have her blessing and not her curse. When she left them a light seemed gone from the dwelling. Two days later she came again to know if the boots fitted, and less than a fortnight after that paid Rhoda another call. On this occasion the boy was absent.

“I walk a good deal,” said Mrs.Lodge, “and your house is the nearest outside our own parish. I hope you are well. You don’t look quite well.”

Rhoda said she was well enough, and, indeed, though the paler of the two, there was more of the strength that endures in her well-defined features and large frame than in the soft-cheeked young woman before her. The conversation became quite **confidential** as regarded their powers and weaknesses; and when Mrs.Lodge was leaving, Rhoda said, “I hope you will find this air agree with you, ma’am, and not suffer from the damp of the water-meads.”

The younger one replied that there was not much doubt of it, her general health being usually good. “Though, now you remind me,” she added, “I have one little **ailment** which puzzles me. It is nothing serious, but I cannot make it out.”

She uncovered her left hand and arm, and their outline confronted Rhoda’s