

INTERMEDIATE ENGLISH SERIES

中级英语学习丛书

READING ENGLISH SHORT STORIES

英文短篇小说导读

丁往道 张莲英 曹玲岚 编注

人民教育出版社

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李维成 陈世华 编 李维成 陈世华 编

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《中级英语学习丛书》简介

目前,在我国现代化的进程中,全国大学和中学学生以及许多已经走上工作岗位的青年同志都在努力学习外语,这是十分可喜的现象。为了帮助已有中等程度的英语学习者进一步学好英语,我们将有计划地编写和出版一些书籍,向他们提供读物,介绍有关英语的知识,总称《中级英语学习丛书》。

这套丛书还有一个重要目的:供广大的中学英语教师选作进修和教学的辅助材料。中学英语教师的工作是光荣的,因为他们为面向现代化、面向世界、面向未来的教育事业作出直接贡献。他们的工作又是艰巨的,因为在非英语的环境中,要使学生从完全不懂英语到打下一定的英语基础,确非易事。我们希望这套丛书能对他们的工作和进修略有帮助。

从内容上说,丛书分两大类:背景知识类和语言知识类。前者用平易的英语编写,介绍历史、地理、人物、名著等方面的知识,既可用作读物,又可供教师用作课堂上讲解有关知识的参考资料。后者用中文编写,联系教与学的实际需要,讨论语音、语法、基本词汇等方面的问题。

热忱希望全国各地的读者,尤其是中学英语教师同志们,关心、支持和协助这套丛书的编辑出版工作,欢迎你们提出建议和批评。让我们共同努力,把这项工作做好。

《中级英语学习丛书》编写组

前 言

这是一本为具有中等英语水平的读者准备的读物。

书中所选的12篇故事，都是当代美国著名小说家的上乘之作。它们描写形形色色的人物，叙述普通的或离奇的情节，展现出丰富多彩的生活画面。在语言风格上，有的通俗，有的文雅，有的简朴，有的细致，多少反映了当代的文风。

在每篇故事之后有四项辅助材料：作者简介、注释、问题、评论。

用英文写的作者简介对作者的生平和作品提供简明扼要的介绍。

为了帮助读者理解，注释兼用英文和中文。英文部分着重解释，中文部分则是译文。注释以词组、句子和背景知识为主，包括少量词义难以判定或与常用的词义很不相同的单词。凡是在词典中容易找到恰当词义的单词便不注、译，留给读者自己去查，以利于养成使用工具书的良好习惯。

注释之后的四、五个问题，读者可用以检查自己的理解程度。如觉得有的问题不易回答，或对自己的看法没有把握，便可接着看下面的评论，也许可以从中得到启发。

评论是用英文写的，大致有两个部分：对故事人物及主题的分析，和对语言特点的分析。我们看一篇故事，总希望对之有比较深刻的理解，能领会作者的意图。但做到这一点并不容易。有时故事情节清楚了，它究竟说明什么问题，表达什么

思想，却捉摸不透。因此我们试图在评论中提出一些看法，供读者参考。至于我们的看法是否有可取之处，还有待于读者的鉴别。对于语言特点的分析是为了帮助读者识别不同的风格，发现英语中某些有规律性的现象。

希望这本书有助于提高理解和欣赏英文短篇小说及一般文章的能力，增加阅读文学作品的兴趣。欢迎读者对本书的选材、注释及评论提出意见，以便今后改进。

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Split Cherry Tree

by Jesse Stuart

"I don't mind staying after school," I says¹ to Professor Herbert, "but I'd rather you'd whip me with a switch² and let me go home early. Pa will whip me anyway for getting home two hours late."

"You are too big to whip," says Professor Herbert, "and I have to punish you for climbing up in that cherry tree. You boys knew better than that³! The other five boys have paid their dollar each. You have been the only one who has not helped pay for the tree. Can't you borrow a dollar?"

"I can't," I says. "I'll have to take the punishment. I wish it would be quicker punishment. I wouldn't mind."

Professor Herbert stood and looked at me. He was a big man. He wore a gray suit of clothes. The suit matched his gray hair.

"You don't know my father," I says to Professor Herbert. "He might be called a little old-fashioned. He makes us mind him⁴ until we're twenty-one years

old. He believes if you spare the rod you spoil the child⁵. I'll never be able to make him understand about the cherry tree. I'm the first of my people⁶ to go to high school."

"You must take the punishment," says Professor Herbert. "You must stay two hours after school today and two hours after school tomorrow. I am allowing you twenty-five cents an hour. That is good money for a high school student. You can sweep the school-house floor, wash the blackboards, and clean windows. I'll pay the dollar for you."

I couldn't ask Professor Herbert to loan me a dollar. He never offered to loan it to me. I had to stay and help the janitor and work out my fine⁷ at a quarter an hour⁸.

I thought as I swept the floor, "What will Pa do to me? What lie can I tell him when I go home? Why did we ever climb that cherry tree and break it down for anyway? Why did we run crazy over the hills away from the crowd? Why did we do 'all of this? Six of us climbed up in a little cherry tree after one little lizard! Why did the tree split and fall with us? It should have been a stronger tree! Why did Eif Crabtree just happen to be below us plowing and catch us in his cherry tree? Why wasn't he a better

man than to charge us six dollars for the tree?"

It was six o'clock when I left the schoolhouse. I had six miles to walk home. It would be after seven when I got home. I had all my work to do when I got home. It took Pa and me both to do the work. Seven cows to milk. Nineteen head of cattle⁹ to feed, four mules, twenty-five hogs, firewood and stovewood to cut, and water to draw from the well. He would be doing it when I got home. He would be mad and wondering what was keeping me!

I hurried home. I would run under the dark, leafless trees. I would walk fast uphill. I would run down the hill. The ground was freezing. I had to hurry. I had to run. I reached the long ridge that led to our cow pasture. I ran along this ridge. The wind dried the sweat on my face. I ran across the pasture to the house.

I threw down my books in the chipyard. I ran to the barn to spread fodder on the ground for the cattle. I didn't take time to change my clean school clothes for my old work clothes. I ran out to the barn. I saw Pa spreading fodder on the ground to the cattle. That was my job. I ran up to the fence. I says, "Leave that for me, Pa. I'll do it, I'm just a little late."

"I see you are," says Pa. He turned and looked at me. His eyes danced fire¹⁰. "What in th' world has kept you so? Why ain't you been here¹¹ to help me with this work? Make a gentleman out'n¹² one boy in th' family and this is what you get! Send you to high school and you get too onery fer th' buzzards to smell!"¹³

I never said anything. I didn't want to tell why I was late from school. Pa stopped scattering the bundles of fodder. He looked at me. He says, "Why are you gettin' in here this time o' night? You tell me or I'll take a hickory withe to you¹⁴ right here on th' spot!"¹⁵

I says, "I had to stay after school." I couldn't lie to Pa. He'd go to school and find out why I had to stay. If I lied to him it would be too bad for me.

"Why did you haf to stay atter school?"¹⁶ says Pa.

I says, "Our biology class went on a field trip¹⁷ today. Six of us boys broke down a cherry tree. We had to give a dollar apiece to pay for the tree. I didn't have the dollar. Professor Herbert is making me work out my dollar. He gives me twenty-five cents an hour. I had to stay in this afternoon. I'll have to stay in tomorrow afternoon!"

"Are you telling me th' truth?" says Pa.

"I'm telling you the truth," I says. "Go and see for yourself."

"That's jist¹⁸ what I'll do in th' mornin'," says Pa. "Jist whose cherry tree did you break down?"

"Eif Crabtree's cherry tree!"

"What was you doin' clear out¹⁹ in Eif Crabtree's place?" says Pa. "He lives four miles from th' county high school. Don't they teach you no books²⁰ at that high school? Do they jist let you get out and gad over th' hillsides²¹? If that's all they do I'll keep you at home, Dave. I've got work here fer you to do!"

"Pa," I says, "spring is just getting here. We take a subject in school where we have to have bugs, snakes, flowers, lizards, frogs, and plants. It is biology. It was a pretty day today. We went out to find a few of these. Six of us boys saw a lizard at the same time sunning on a cherry tree. We all went up the tree to get it. We broke the tree down. It split at the forks²². Eif Crabtree was plowing down below us. He ran up the hill and got our names. The other boys gave their dollar apiece. I didn't have mine. Professor Herbert put mine in for me²³. I have to work it out at school."

"Poor man's son, huh," says Pa. "I'll attend to

that myself in th' mornin'. I'll take keer o' 'im²⁴. He ain't from this county nohow²⁵. I'll go down there in th' mornin' and see 'im. Lettin' you leave your books and gallivant²⁶ all over th' hills. What kind of a school is it nohow! Didn't do that, my son, when I's a little shaver²⁷ in school. All fared alike²⁸, too."

"Pa, please don't go down there," I says, "just let me have fifty cents and pay the rest of my fine! I don't want you to go down there! I don't want you to start anything with Professor Herbert!"

"Ashamed of your old Pap, are you, Dave," says Pa, "atter th' way I've worked to raise you! Tryin' to send you to school so you can make a better livin' than I've made.

"I'll straighten this thing out²⁹ myself! I'll take keer o' Professor Herbert myself? He ain't got no right³⁰ to keep you in and let the other boys off jist because they've got th' money! I'm a poor man. A bullet will go in a professor same as it will any man. It will go in a rich man same as it will a poor man. Now you get into this work before I take one o' these withes and cut the shirt off'n your back³¹!"

I thought once I'd run through the woods above the barn just as hard as I could go. I thought I'd leave high school and home forever! Pa could not

catch me! I'd get away! I couldn't go back to school with him. He'd have a gun and maybe he'd shoot Professor Herbert. It was hard to tell what he would do. I could tell Pa that school had changed in the hills from the way it was when he was a boy, but he wouldn't understand. I could tell him we studied frogs, birds, snakes, lizards, flowers, insects. But Pa wouldn't understand. If I did run away from home it wouldn't matter to Pa. He would see Professor Herbert anyway. He would think that high school and Professor Herbert had run me away³² from home. There was no need to run away. I'd just have to stay, finish foddering the cattle, and go to school with Pa the next morning.

I would take a bundle of fodder³³, remove the hickory-withe band from around it, and scatter it on rocks, clumps of green briars, and brush³⁴, so the cattle wouldn't tramp it under their feet. I would lean it up against the oak trees and the rocks in the pasture just above our pigpen on the hill. The fodder was cold and frosty where it had set out in the stacks. I would carry bundles of the fodder from the stack until I had spread out a bundle for each steer. Pa went to the barn to feed the mules and throw corn in the pen to the hogs.

The moon shone bright in the cold March sky. I finished my work by moonlight. Professor Herbert really didn't know how much work I had to do at home. If he had known he would not have kept me after school. He would have loaned me a dollar to have paid my part on the cherry tree. He had never lived in the hills. He didn't know the way the hill boys had to work so that they could go to school. Now he was teaching in a county high school where all the boys who attended were from hill farms.

After I'd finished doing my work I went to the house and ate my supper. Pa and Mom had eaten. My supper was getting cold. I heard Pa and Mom talking in the front room. Pa was telling Mom about me staying in after school.

"I had to do all th' milkin' tonight, chop th' wood myself. It's too hard on me³⁵ attar I've turned ground³⁶ all day. I'm goin' to take a day off³⁷ tomorrow and see if I can't remedy things a little. I'll go down to that high school tomorrow. I won't be a very good scholar³⁸ fer Professor Herbert nohow. He won't keep me in attar school. I'll take a different kind of lesson down there and make 'im acquainted with it."

"Now, Luster," says Mcm, "you jist stay away

from there. Don't cause a lot o' trouble. You can be jailed fer a trick like that. You'll get th' Law atter you³⁹. You'll just go down there and show off⁴⁰ and plague your own boy Dave to death⁴¹ in front o' all th' scholars!"

"Plague or no plague," says Pa, "he don't take into consideration what all I haf to do here, does he? I'll show 'im it ain't right to keep one boy in and let the rest go scot-free⁴². My boy is good as th' rest, ain't he? A bullet will make a hole in a schoolteacher same as it will anybody else. He can't do me that way and get by with it⁴³. I'll plug 'im first⁴⁴. I aim to go down there bright and early in the mornin' and get all this straight! I aim to see about bug larnin⁴⁵ and this runnin' all over God's creation huntin' snakes, lizards, and frogs. Ransackin th' country and goin' through cherry orchards and breakin' th' trees down atter lizards! Old Eif Crabtree ought to a-poured th' hot lead to 'em⁴⁶ instead o' chargin' six dollars fer th' tree! He ought to a-got old Herbert th' first one!"

I ate my supper. I slipped upstairs and lit the lamp. I tried to forget the whole thing. I studied plane geometry. Then I studied my biology lesson. I could hardly study for thinking about Pa. "He'll go to school with me in the morning. He'll take a gun