

英文

English Collection

爱藏

05

惊悚故事

Thrilling Stories

# 天黑请闭眼

Close Your Eyes In The Night

突然听到身后有一些动静，  
她立刻扭过头，  
只见亡夫的画像里有一只眼睛在转动。

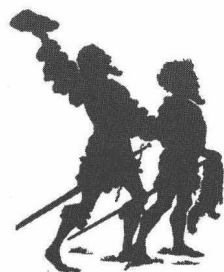
艾柯◎编译

文化艺术出版社  
Culture and Art Publishing House

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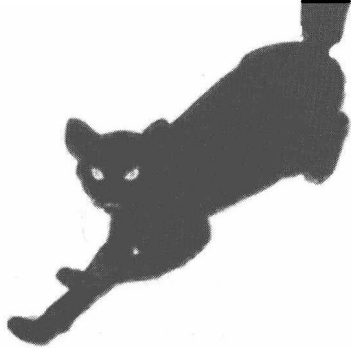


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# 黑猫

## The Black Cat



埃德加·爱伦·坡 / *Edgar Allen Poe*

这些小动物在一起,最喜欢喂养和爱抚它们。这种怪癖也随着我的长大而发展。成年后,这成了我的主要乐事之一。对于那些喜欢忠实敏锐的狗的人来说,无须多费口舌解释其中的无穷乐趣。这种动物有一种无私的、自我牺牲的爱,对于那些常常遭遇寡情薄义的人来说,这一定会触动其内心。

我结婚很早,很庆幸我的妻子与我志趣相投。她看到我钟爱小宠物,遇到满意的小动物总不会放过机会。我们养了小鸟、金鱼、良种狗、小兔子,还有一只小猴和一只猫。

这只猫非常大,很漂亮,全身黑毛,非常聪明。我妻子的内心就有些迷信,说到这只猫的智能灵性,她总会提及些古老传说,认为黑猫都是巫婆伪装而成的。我并不是说她在这一点上非常认真,这只是我顺便想到而已。

这只猫名叫普路托。它是最爱的宠物和玩伴。我独自喂养它,它跟着我到屋子里的每个角落,我上街它也要跟着,我想尽办法都赶不走它。

我们的友情就以这种方式维持了好几年。在这期间,因为嗜酒成瘾,我的脾气性情彻底变坏了。我变得越来越喜怒无常、急躁不安,从不顾他人的感受,竟恶言恶语地辱骂妻子,最后还对她施加暴力。当然,我养的那些宠物也都感到我的脾气变坏了。我不仅忽略它们,还虐待它们。那些兔子,那只小猴,甚至那只狗,偶然或者出于想与主人亲热跑到我面前,我也毫无顾忌地虐待它们。然而,对于普路托我还心存爱护,没有虐待。不过我的病情加重了——再没有有像酗酒那样严重的病了——尽管,普路托也老了,脾气也有些倔了,但它也不得不忍受我的坏脾气了。

一天晚上,我酩酊大醉地从一个常去的酒吧回到家,我认为这只猫躲着我,便一把抓住它。它被我的恐怖表情惊吓住了,在我的手上轻轻咬了一口,留下牙印。我立刻怒火中烧,失去控制,原本善良的灵魂一下子飞出我的躯体。我酒性大发,变得凶神恶煞一般。我从背心的口袋里掏出一把小刀,打开刀子,抓住那只可怜的畜生的喉咙,凶残地把它的眼珠剜了出来!当我写到这可恶的罪行时,我面红耳赤,战栗发抖。

第二天,我恢复理智,从晚上愤怒的情绪火焰中清醒过来,对自己所犯下

的罪行感到恐惧与懊悔。但这最多不过是一种微弱模糊的感觉。我的灵魂仍旧没有被触动。我又开始沉迷于滥饮，很快就忘记了自己的所作所为。

这时，那只猫的伤势慢慢恢复，失去眼珠的眼窠真是十分可怕的，但它看上去再也不感到痛了。它像往常一样在屋里走动，正如我想的那样，它一见我走近，就恐慌地拼命逃走。我的内心还残留着一点良心，看到曾经如此热爱我的动物竟然这样嫌恶我，不免感到伤心。但不久这种伤心之情就转化为愤怒之火了。再后来，邪念又起，最后终于一发不可收拾。哲学上没有研究过这种邪念，但我深信不疑，邪念是人的一种原始本能——一种无法摆脱的原始功能，或者说是情感，决定了人类的性格。谁没有无数次地发现自己正在做可耻的蠢事，而且没有任何缘由，心里明明知道不应该却偏要做？我们难道没有那种永久的邪念，对抗我们的判断，明知犯法还要去以身试法？就是这种邪念，断送了我的一生。正是内心这种难解的渴望，渴望自寻烦恼，违背本性，仅仅为做恶而做恶，促使我继续伤害那只无辜的动物，最终使其送了命。一天早上，我残忍到用套索套住它的脖子，并挂在树枝上，我眼含泪水，心里痛苦懊悔。我把它挂在树上是因为我知道它曾经爱过我，没有冒犯过我。我知道这样是在犯罪，一种让我的灵魂永远不得超生的死罪。如果有这种可能，就连慈悲为怀的上帝都无法宽恕我的罪行。

就在我犯下残忍罪行的那天晚上，我在睡梦中被失火的喊叫声惊醒。我床上的帘子都着火了，整间房子都在烈火中。我的妻子、一个仆人和我艰难地逃出那场大火。房子被彻底烧毁，我的所有财产都被大火吞灭。从那以后，我万念俱灰。

我还没有那么虚弱，还会去寻找这种灾难与罪行之间的因果关系。但我要详细列出事实，希望不要落下任何环节。火灾后的第二天，我去看了那片废墟。所有的墙壁，除了一面墙之外，其他都倒塌了。唯一没有倒塌的那面墙壁并不厚，立在房间的正中间，我的床头紧靠这面墙。墙上的石膏在很大程度上挡住了火势，我认为这是由于最近刚粉刷的缘故。墙周边聚集了一群人，不少人似乎在专心地看这面墙，不时地听到人们说“奇怪”、“异常”之类



的话,我感到好奇。我走近一看,只见那面白壁的表面赫然有个浅浮雕,那是一只巨大的猫的塑像。这只猫惟妙惟肖,它的脖子上还套着绳子。

我一看到这个鬼怪——认为它就是鬼怪——便惊恐万分。但最后一想便放下心来。我记得这只猫是被挂在房子临近的花园里。火警一响起,花园便挤满了人,肯定是哪个人把猫从树上放下来,从开着的窗子里扔到我的卧室里。这也许是为了让我从睡梦中醒来。其他倒下的墙把我残害的受害者压倒在新刷的灰泥上。石灰、焰火,还有尸体发出的氨气,共同作用而呈现出我所看到的浮雕。

对于这种令人惊心的事实,如果良心不能自圆其说,但于理而言,倒也说得过去。然而,这些在我的脑海中留下了深刻的印象。几个月来,我不能摆脱那只猫的幻觉。在这期间,我的心里又产生一些感伤以及似是而非的懊悔之情。我甚至后悔失去了这只猫,在经常出现猫的地方,我四处寻找一只外貌相似的猫来填补它的位置。

一天晚上,我呆滞地坐在一间下等酒吧里,突然注意到一个黑色的东西,睡在一个盛着金酒或朗姆酒的大桶上,这只大桶是房间里最重要的家当。我盯着大木桶的顶端好几分钟。令我吃惊的是,没有发现上面的那个东西。我靠近并用手摸了摸它。这是一只黑猫——个头非常大——完全和普路托一样大,长得也非常相似,除了一处:普路托全身没有一根白毛,而这只猫有一大片模糊的白斑,几乎覆盖了整个胸部。

我一摸它,它立刻跳起来,大声地叫着,蹭着我的手,因为我注意它而高兴起来。这只猫正是我苦苦寻找的。我立刻向老板提出要买下来,但是老板一点都不了解这只猫的来历,之前从未见过这只猫,无法开价。

我继续爱抚着这只猫。当我准备回家时,它流露出要跟着我的意思。我便让它这么跟着我,不时地弯腰拍拍它。它一到家就很乖,一下子成了我妻子的最爱。

可是,对我而言,我很快就喜欢不了它了。这出乎我的意料,我不知道怎么会这样,也不知道原因——很明显它很喜欢我,这让我觉得非常厌烦、恼火。

渐渐地,这种厌烦和恼怒的情绪升级为深恶痛绝。我躲避这只猫,某种羞愧之情以及对之前残忍罪行的记忆,阻止了我虐待它。几周以来,我没有打它或者暴力地虐待它,但是渐渐地、渐渐地,我看见它就万分厌恶,一见到它就悄悄溜开,就像躲瘟疫那样。

一天早上,我发现在它回家的第二天,就像普路托一样,失去了一颗眼珠。这加深了我对这只猫的憎恶,但是,这种情况使我的妻子愈发喜欢它了。正如我所说的,我的妻子非常富有同情心,这也曾经是我最突出的优点,也是我单纯快乐的源泉。

尽管我厌恶这只猫,但它对我的喜欢与日俱增。它顽固地坚持与我寸步不离,这让人难以理解。我坐到哪里,它就会在我的椅子边蜷着,或跳到我的膝盖上,爱恋般地在我的身上撒娇,令人厌恶。我一站起来走,它就跑到我两脚之间,差点把我绊倒。要不就是用它那又长又尖的爪子抓住我的衣服,爬上我的胸口。这种时候,虽然我恨不得一拳揍死它,但我还是克制住自己,一半是因为我之前犯下罪行的记忆,但主要的原因是:说实话,因为这只猫让我感到非常恐惧。

这种恐惧并不是害怕身体上的邪恶,但也很难说清楚。我自己几乎羞于承认——是的,即使在牢笼里,我也羞于承认。这只猫激起我的恐惧和害怕,这种纯粹幻觉进一步加深我的恐惧感。我的妻子不止一次让我注意那片白毛的痕迹。我说过,这是它与我杀害的那只猫的唯一明显区别。你们应该记得这个标记,虽然白毛面积大,但是,它看起来那么模糊,不知不觉中,它竟然变为清晰的轮廓。很长一段时间,我的理智竭力将其当做幻觉,而这时,那斑迹显示出一种东西,一种我害怕说出的东西。正因为这点,我憎恨、害怕这个怪物。如果我有足够的勇气,早就摆脱它了——它竟然成了可怕的影子,一种恐怖的东西——绞刑台!哎,多么可悲恐怖的刑具!让人痛苦送命的刑具!

此时的我成为一个无比悲惨的可怜虫。一只畜生——我轻蔑地杀死了它的同类;一只畜生竟然这样对我——作为按照上帝形象创造出来的人——给我带来如此不堪忍受的灾祸!无论日夜,我知道自己再也不敢安宁

了。在白天,这个畜生片刻不离我;晚上,我开始不断地从恐怖的梦中惊醒,发现这个东西正在我的脸上吐着热气,并压在我的身上,这具体化的噩梦让我无法摆脱,一直压在我的心头!

在这种压力的折磨下,我的内心残余的那点微弱的良心也消失了。邪念成了我的唯一——最黑暗、最邪恶的想法。我平常脾气就喜怒无常,而今发展为憎恶一切事物和一切人。我盲目放纵自我,常常抑制不住地突然发火。我那毫无怨言的妻子,经常遭遇虐待。

有一天,为了一些家务事,她陪着我到老房子的地窖中去,我们因为贫穷不得不住在老房子里。这只猫也跟着我走下那陡峭的台阶,差点让我摔了跟头,气得我发疯了。我愤怒地举起斧头,对着这只猫砍了下去,不过对这只猫我还有一些恐惧。当然,如果我要真想砍死它,这只猫肯定当场就毙命。但是这只斧子被我的妻子伸手拦住。当时我正在火头上,被这一拦,立马暴怒,从她的手中抽出胳膊,朝她的脑袋砍了一斧头。她一声没吭就当场死了。

完成了这可怕的谋杀,我立刻仔细地藏匿尸体。我知道白天和黑夜都无法将尸体运出房子,可能会被邻居看见。我想了很多计划。一会儿我想把尸体切成小块烧掉,一会儿我又决定在地窖里挖一个墓穴。我又想到院子里的井,还打算把尸体放进箱子,当成装货那样,照往来的习惯,让搬运工把它搬出屋子。最后,我突然想到万全之策。我决定将尸体砌进地窖——据记载,中世纪的僧侣就是这样把受害者砌进墙里的。

这个地窖用来藏尸再好不过了。它的墙壁结构很松,最近用粗灰泥全部刷新过,因为空气很潮湿,灰泥还没有干,而且,有一堵墙因为有个假烟囱或者说是壁炉而凸出一块,里面被填满了,和地窖其他的部分相似。我可以很容易地将这个地方挖开,把尸体塞进去,再像之前那样把墙完全砌上,这样肉眼就无法看出任何破绽了。

这个想法的确不错。我用一根撬杠,毫不费力地把砖撬掉了,然后仔细把尸体紧贴着内墙放好,我撑着尸体让它不掉下来,然后毫不费劲地把墙按照原来的样子砌好。我拿来了石灰、黄沙和头发,做好一切防范。我准备好了

一种与旧灰泥分辨不出的新灰泥,非常仔细地把它涂在新砌的砖墙上。一切完毕。我看到一切顺利,感到非常满意。这面墙看不出有一丝动过的痕迹,地上的垃圾我也非常仔细地收拾干净。我得意地四下看看,自语道:“至少我没有白忙活呀。”

下一步就是要找到那只招惹这起悲惨灾难的牲畜,我最终决定要置它于死地。如果我能遇见它,毫无疑问就是它的死期。但它很狡猾,乘我刚才暴怒之时,就警觉地逃走了。而我现在正怒火中烧,它自然不敢出现。这只讨厌的畜生终于消失,我的心头一阵放松,这种高兴劲实在难以形容和想象。到了晚上,那只猫还没有出现。这样自从这猫来到这个屋子,我很少能像今晚这样安静地酣睡一晚,尽管内心背负着杀人的负担!

第二天,第三天过去了,那只折磨我的猫还没现身。我又可以像自由人那样呼吸。那个恶魔害怕了,永远逃离了。我再也看不见它了!我高兴之极!我的罪行没有给我带来什么不安。经过几次调查,我都有准备地回答了。甚至还搜查过一次,当然,什么也没有发现。我觉得未来高枕无忧。

谋杀后的第四天,一群警察不期而至,再次严密地搜查了房子。不过我认为自己藏匿的地方不可能被猜到,很安全,所以一点都不慌张。那些警察命令我陪他们搜查。他们没有放过任何隐蔽的地方或任何一个角落。最后搜到第三、第四遍,他们转向地窖。我一点不紧张,泰然自若,就像清白者那样平静。我从地窖的一端走向另一端。我将双臂抱于胸前,若无其事地来回走动。警察非常放心,正准备离开。我心花怒放,感觉有一肚子话要说,庆祝胜利,同时也让他们更加放心我是无罪的。

“先生们,”当这群人下楼梯的时候,我最终说道,“我非常高兴澄清了嫌疑。我祝福你们都健康,给你们请安。顺便说一下,这间屋子结构非常牢固。”(我极度地想说话,不知道自己都说了什么)“可以说这屋子的结构非常棒。这些墙壁——你们要走了吗,先生们——这些墙非常牢固地砌在一起。”说到这里,我脑子一热,虚张声势,举起手中的棍子,猛地敲打藏着我妻子尸体的那堵墙。

上帝保佑,把我从虎口中拯救出来吧!我敲墙的余音未完,就听见如同从坟墓里发出来的声音。那哭声,一开始压抑得断断续续,就像小孩子的抽噎,很快就成了持续不断的高声尖叫,声音异常,惨绝人寰,一声号叫,一声痛哭,半是恐怖,半是得意,就好像地狱里的冤鬼痛苦的叫声,和魔鬼诅咒的狂喜呼声混在一起。

说到我当时的想法,实在太荒唐了。我晕头昏脑,踉踉跄跄地走到对面那面墙。那时,台阶上的警察都害怕起来,呆若木鸡。一会儿,就有10多条粗壮的手臂在拆那堵墙。那墙完全倒塌。尸体已经腐烂,凝结着血块,直立在大家的面前。在尸体头上,坐着那可怕的畜生,张着血盆大口,独眼里冒着火。它发出的声音,将我推向了绞刑:我把这只怪物也砌到墙里去了!

For the most wild, yet most homely narrative which I am about to pen, I neither expect nor solicit belief. Mad indeed would I be to expect it, in a case where my very senses reject their own evidence. Yet, mad am I not —and very surely do I not dream. But to-morrow I die, and to-day I would unburthen my soul. My immediate purpose is to place before the world, plainly, succinctly, and without comment, a series of mere household events. In their consequences, these events have terrified —have tortured —have destroyed me. Yet I will not attempt to expound them. To me, they have presented little but Horror —to many they will seem less terrible than baroques. Hereafter, perhaps, some intellect may be found which will reduce my phantasm to the common-place —some intellect more calm, more logical, and far less excitable than my own, which will perceive, in the circumstances I detail with awe, nothing more than an ordinary succession of very natural causes and effects.

From my infancy I was noted for the docility and humanity of my disposition. My tenderness of heart was even so conspicuous as to make me the jest of my companions. I was especially fond of animals, and was indulged

by my parents with a great variety of pets. With these I spent most of my time, and never was so happy as when feeding and caressing them. This peculiar of character grew with my growth. and in my manhood, I derived

length, I even offered her personal violence. My pets, of course, were made to feel the change in my disposition. I not only neglected, but ill-used them. For Pluto, however, I still retained sufficient regard to restrain me from maltreating him, as I made no scruple of maltreating the rabbits, the monkey, or even the dog, when by accident, or through affection, they came in my way. But my disease grew upon me —for what disease is like Alcohol! —and at length even Pluto, who was now becoming old, and consequently somewhat peevish —even Pluto began to experience the effects of my ill temper.

One night, returning home, much intoxicated, from one of my haunts about town, I fancied that the cat avoided my presence. I seized him; when, in his fright at my violence, he inflicted a slight wound upon my hand with his teeth. The fury of a demon instantly possessed me. I knew myself no longer. My original soul seemed, at once, to take its flight from my body; and a more than fiendish malevolence, gin-nurtured, thrilled every fibre of my frame. I took from my waistcoat-pocket a pen-knife, opened it, grasped the poor beast by the throat, and deliberately cut one of its eyes from the socket! I blush, I burn, I shudder, while I pen the damnable atrocity.

When reason returned with the morning —when I had slept off the fumes of the night's debauch —I experienced a sentiment half of horror, half of remorse, for the crime of which I had been guilty; but it was, at best, a feeble and equivocal feeling, and the soul remained untouched. I again plunged into excess, and soon drowned in wine all memory of the deed.

In the meantime the cat slowly recovered. The socket of the lost eye presented, it is true, a frightful appearance, but he no longer appeared to suffer any pain. He went about the house as usual, but, as might be expected, fled in extreme terror at my approach. I had so much of my old heart left, as to be at first grieved by this evident dislike on the part of a creature which had once so loved me. But this feeling soon gave place to irritation. And then came, as

if to my final and irrevocable overthrow, the spirit of Perversess. Of this spirit philosophy takes no account. Yet I am not more sure that my soul lives, than I am that perverseness is one of the primitive impulses of the human heart — one of the indivisible primary faculties, or sentiments, which give direction to the character of Man. Who has not, a hundred times, found himself committing a vile or a silly action, for no other reason than because he knows he should not? Have we not a perpetual inclination, in the teeth of our best judgment, to violate that which is Law, merely because we understand it to be such? This spirit of perverseness, I say, came to my final overthrow. It was this unfathomable longing of the soul to vex itself —to offer violence to its own nature —to do wrong for the wrong's sake only —that urged me to continue and finally to consummate the injury I had inflicted upon the unoffending brute. One morning, in cool blood, I slipped a noose about its neck and hung it to the limb of a tree; —hung it with the tears streaming from my eyes, and with the bitterest remorse at my heart; —hung it because I knew that it had loved me, and because I felt it had given me no reason of offence; —hung it because I knew that in so doing I was committing a sin —a deadly sin that would so jeopardize my immortal soul as to place it —if such a thing were possible —even beyond the reach of the infinite mercy of the Most Merciful and Most Terrible God.

On the night of the day on which this cruel deed was done, I was aroused from sleep by the cry of fire. The curtains of my bed were in flames. The whole house was blazing. It was with great difficulty that my wife, a servant, and myself, made our escape from the conflagration. The destruction was complete. My entire worldly wealth was swallowed up, and I resigned myself thenceforward to despair.

I am above the weakness of seeking to establish a sequence of cause and effect, between the disaster and the atrocity. But I am detailing a chain of



facts —and wish not to leave even a possible link imperfect. On the day succeeding the fire, I visited the ruins. The walls, with one exception, had fAllan in. This exception was found in a compartment wall, not very thick, which stood about the middle of the house, and against which had rested the head of my bed. The plastering had here, in great measure, resisted the action of the fire —a fact which I attributed to its having been recently spread. About this wall a dense crowd were collected, and many persons seemed to be examining a particular portion of it with every minute and eager attention. The words “strange! ”、“singular! ” and other similar expressions, excited my curiosity. I approached and saw, as if graven in bas relief upon the white surface, the figure of a gigantic cat. The impression was given with an accuracy truly marvellous. There was a rope about the animal’s neck.

When I first beheld this apparition —for I could scarcely regard it as less —my wonder and my terror were extreme. But at length reflection came to my aid. The cat, I remembered, had been hung in a garden adjacent to the house. Upon the alarm of fire, this garden had been immediately filled by the crowd —by some one of whom the animal must have been cut from the tree and thrown, through an open window, into my chamber. This had probably been done with the view of arousing me from sleep. The falling of other walls had compressed the victim of my cruelty into the substance of the freshly-spread plaster; the lime of which, had then with the flames, and the ammonia from the carcass, accomplished the portraiture as I saw it.

Although I thus readily accounted to my reason, if not altogether to my conscience, for the startling fact just detailed, it did not the less fall to make a deep impression upon my fancy. For months I could not rid myself of the phantasm of the cat; and, during this period, there came back into my spirit a half-sentiment that seemed, but was not, remorse. I went so far as to regret the loss of the animal, and to look about me, among the vile haunts which I