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BENEDICTION

祝福

魯迅原著

柳無垢英譯

世界英語編譯社刊

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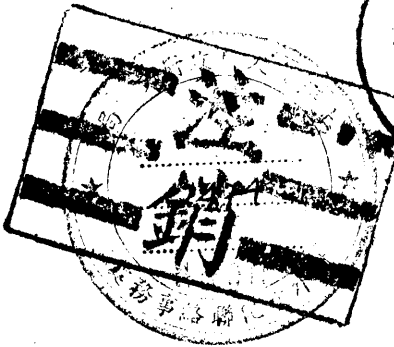


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祝 福

舊歷的年底畢竟最像年底，村鎮上不必說，就在天空中也顯出將到新年的氣象來。灰白色的沈重的晚雲中間時時發出閃光，接着一聲鈍響，是送竈的爆竹；近處燃放的可就更強烈了，震耳的大音還沒有息，空氣裏已經散滿了幽微的火藥香。

我是正在這一夜回到我的故鄉魯鎮的。雖說故鄉，然而已沒有家，所以只得暫寓在魯四老爺的宅子裏。他是我的本家，比我長一輩，應該稱之曰『四叔，』是一個講理學的老監生。

他比先前並沒有什麼大改變，單是老了些，但也還未留鬍子，一見面是寒暄，寒暄之後說我『胖了，』說我『胖了』之後即大罵其新黨。但我知道，這並非借題在罵我：因為他所罵的還是康有為。但

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The end of the year according to the lunar calendar is, after all, the right time for a year to end. A strange almost-new-year sort of atmosphere seems to overlay everything; pale grey clouds at evening, against which flash the hot little fires of crackers giving a thunderous boost to the kitchen god's ascent into heaven. And as one draws into it the scene grows noisier, and scattered on the air is the sting of gunpowder.

On such a night I return to Lo Ching—my 'home town' as I call it, but in reality I have no home there at all. I stay with Lo Shih Lao-yeh, a relative one generation older than myself, a fellow who ought to be called "Fourth Uncle," according to the Chinese family way of reckoning. He is a *chien-sheng*, and talks all the time about the old virtues and the old ethics.

I find him not much changed; a little aged of course, but still without a whisker. We exchange salutations. After the "How are you?" he tells me I've grown fat. With that done, he at once commences a tirade against the 'new party.'

是，談話是總不投機的了，于是不多久，我便一個人剩在書房裏。

第二天我起得很遲，午飯之後，出去看了幾個本家和朋友；第三天也照樣。他們也都沒有什麼大改變，單是老了些；家中卻一律忙，都在準備着『祝福。』這是魯鎮年終的大典，致敬盡禮，迎接福神，拜求來年一年中的好運氣的。殺雞，宰鵝，買豬肉，用心細細的洗，女人的臂膊都在水裏浸得通紅，有的還帶着絞絲銀鐲子。煮熟之後，橫七豎八的插些筷子在這類東西上，可就稱爲『福禮』了，五更天陳列起來，並且點上香燭，恭請福神們來享用；拜的卻只限于男人，拜完自然仍然是放爆竹。年年如此，家家如此，——只要買得起福禮和爆竹之類的，——今年自然也如此。天色愈陰暗了，下午竟下起雪來，雪花大的有梅花那麼大，滿天飛舞，夾着煙靄和忙碌的氣色，將魯鎮亂成一團糟。我回到四叔的書房裏時，瓦楞上已經雪白，房裏也映得較光明，極分明的顯出壁上掛着的朱榻的大『壽』字，陳搏老祖寫的；一邊的對聯已經脫落，鬆鬆的捲了放在長桌上，一邊的還在，

But I know that the phrase to him still means poor Kang Yu-wei, and not the Renaissance, of which he probably has not even heard. We have at any rate nothing in common, and before long I am left alone in the study.

Next day I get up very late, and after lunching go out to call on some relatives and friends. The day after is the same, and the day after that. None of them has changed much, each is a little older, and everywhere they are busily preparing for New Year prayers-of-blessing. It is a great thing in Lo Ching: every one exerts himself to show reverence, exhausts himself in performing rites, and falls down before the god of benediction to ask favours for the year ahead. There is much chicken-killing, geese-slaughtering, and pork-buying; women go round with their arms raw and red from soaking in hot water preparing such fowl. When they are thoroughly cooked they are placed on the altar, with chopsticks punched into them at all angles, and offered up as sacrifices at the sixth watch. Incense sticks and red candles are lighted, and the men (no women allowed) make obeisance and piously invite the blessingspirits to eat

道是『事理通達心氣和平。』我又無聊賴的到窗下的案頭去一翻，只見一堆似乎未必完全的康熙字典，一部近思錄集註和一部四書攬。無論如何，我明天決計要走了。

away. And after this, of course, the crackers. Every year it is that way, and the same in every home—except those of the miserable poor who cannot buy either sacrifices or candles or crackers—and this year is like any other. The sky is dark and gloomy, and in the afternoon snow falls—flakes like plum blossoms darting and dancing across a screen of smoke and bustle, and making everything more confused. By the time I return home the roof-tiles are already washed white, and inside my room seems brighter. The reflection from the snow also touches up the large crimson character, Longevity, which hangs on a board against the wall. It is said to be the work of the legendary Chen Tuan Lao-tso. One of the scrolls has fallen down and is rolled up loosely and lying on the long table, but the other still admonishes me: “Understand deeply the reason of things, be moderate, and be gentle in heart and manner.” On the desk under the window are incomplete volumes of the *K'ang Hsi Dictionary*, a set of *Recent Thoughts*, with collected commentaries, and the *Four Books*. How depressing! I decide to return to-morrow, at the very latest, to the city.

況且，一想到昨天遇見祥林嫂的事，也就使我不能安住。那是下午，我到鎮的東頭訪過一個朋友，走出來，就在河邊遇見她；而且見她瞪着的眼睛的視線，就知道明明是向我走來的。我這回在魯鎮所見的人們中，改變之大，可以說無過于她的了：五年前的花白的頭髮，即今已經全白，全不像四十上下的人；臉上瘦削不堪，黃中帶黑，而且消盡了先前悲哀的神色，彷彿是木刻似的；只有那眼珠間或一輪，還可以表示她是一個活物。她一手提着竹籃，內中一個破碗，空的；一手拄着一支比她更長的竹竿，下端開了裂：她分明已經純乎是一個乞丐了。

我就站住，豫備她來討錢。

『您回來了？』她先這樣問。

『是的。』

『這正好。你是識字的，又是出門人，見識得多。我正要問你一件事——』她那沒有精采的眼睛忽

The incident with Hsiang-lin Sao also has very much disturbed me. This afternoon I went to the eastern end of the town to visit a friend, and while returning I encountered her at the edge of the canal. The look in her staring eyes showed clearly enough that she was coming after me, so I waited. Although other folk I used to know in Lo Ching have apparently changed little, Hsiang-lin Sao was no longer the same. Her hair was all white, her face was alarmingly lean, hollow, and burnt a dark yellow. She looked completely exhausted, not at all like a woman not yet forty, but like a wooden thing with an expression of tragic sadness carved into it. Only the movement of her lustreless eyes showed that she still lived. In one hand she carried a bamboo basket: inside it was an empty broken bowl; and she held herself up by leaning on a bamboo pole. She had apparently become a beggar.

I stood waiting to be asked for money.

“So—you’ve come back?”

“Yes.”

“That’s good—and very timely. Tell me, you are a scholar, a man who has seen the world,”

然發光了。

我萬料不到她卻說出這樣的話來，詫異的站着。

『就是——』她走近兩步，放低了聲音，極祕密似的切切的說，『一個人死了之後，究竟有沒有魂靈的？』

我很悚然，一見她的眼釘着我的，背上也就遭了芒刺一般，比在學校裏遇到不及豫防的臨時考，教師又偏是站在身旁的時候，惶急得多了。對於魂靈的有無，我自己是向來毫不介意的；但在此刻，怎樣回答她好呢？我在極短期的躊躇中，想，這裡的人照例相信鬼，然而她，卻疑惑了，——或者不如說希望：希望其有，又希望其無……。人何必增添末路的人的苦惱，爲她起見，不如說有罷。

a man of knowledge and experience"—her faded eyes very faintly glowed—"tell me, I just want to ask you one thing."

I could not, in ten thousand tries, have guessed what she would ask. I waited, shocked and puzzled, saying nothing.

She moved nearer, lowered her voice, and spoke with great secrecy and earnestness. "It is this: after a person dies is there indeed such a thing as the *soul*?"

Involuntarily I shuddered. Her eyes stuck into me like thorns. Here was a fine thing! I felt more embarrassed than a schoolboy given a surprise examination, with the teacher standing right beside him. Whether there was such a thing as the 'soul' had never bothered me, and I had speculated little about it. How could I reply? In that brief moment I remembered that many people in Lo Ching believed in some kind of spirits, and probably she did too. Perhaps I should just say it was rather doubtful—but no, it was better to let her go on hoping. Why should I burden a person obviously on the 'last road' with even more pain? Better for her sake say yes.

『也許有罷，——我想。』我于是吞吞吐吐的說。

『那麼，也就有地獄了？』

『阿！地獄？』我很喫驚，只得支梧着，『地獄？——論理，就該也有。——然而也未必，……誰來管這等事……。』

『那麼，死掉的一家的人，都能見面的？』

『唉唉，見面不見面呢？……』這時我已知道自己也還是完全一個愚人，什麼躊躇，什麼計畫，都擋不住三句問。我卽刻膽怯起來了，便想全翻過先前的話來，『那是，……實在，我說不清……。其實，究竟有沒有魂靈，我也說不清。』

我乘她不再緊接的問，邁開步便走，慇懃的逃回四叔的家中，心裏很覺得不安逸。自己想，我這答話

"Perhaps," I stammered. "Yes, I suppose there is."

"Then there is also a *hell*?"

"Ah—hell?" She had trapped me, and I could only continue placatingly, "Hell? Well, to be logical, I dare say there ought to be. But, then, again—there may not be. What does it matter?"

"Then in this hell do all the deceased members of a family come together again, face to face?"

"H'mm? Seeing face to face, eh?" I felt like a fool. Whatever knowledge I possessed, whatever mental dexterity, was utterly useless; here I had been confounded by three simple questions. I made up my mind to extricate myself from the mess, and wanted to repudiate everything I had said. But somehow I could not do so in the gaze of her intensely earnest and tragic eyes. "That is to say . . . in fact, I cannot definitely say. Whether there is a soul or not in the end I am in no position to deny or affirm."

With that she did not persist, and, taking advantage of her silence, I strode away with long

怕于她有些危險。她大約因為在別人的祝福時候，感到自身的寂寞了，然而會不會含有別的什麼意思的呢？——或者是有了什麼豫感了？倘有別的意思，又因此發生別的事，則我的答話委實該負若干的責任……。但隨後也就自笑，覺得偶爾的事，本沒有什麼深意義，而我偏要細細推敲，正無怪教育家要說是生着神經病；而況明明說過『說不清，』已經推翻了答話的全局，即使發生什麼事，于我也毫無關係了。

『說不清』是一句極有用的話。不更事的勇敢的少年，往往敢于給人解決疑問，選定醫生，萬一結果不佳，大抵反成了怨府，然而一用這說不清來作結束，便事事逍遙自在了。我在這時，更感到這一句話的必要，即使和討飯的女人說話，也是萬不可省的。

steps and hastened back to Fourth Uncle's home, feeling very depressed. I could not help thinking that perhaps my replies would have an evil effect on her. No doubt her loneliness and distress had become all the more unbearable at this time, when every one else seemed to be praying for benediction—but perhaps there was something else on her mind. Perhaps something that had recently happened to her. If so, then my answers might be responsible . . . for what? I soon laughed about the whole thing, and at my absurd habit of exaggerating the importance of casual happenings. Educators unquestionably would pronounce me mentally unbalanced. Hadn't I, after all, made it clear that all I could say was, "Cannot definitely say"? Even should all my replies be refuted, even if something happened to the woman, it could in no way concern me.

"Cannot definitely say" is a very convenient phrase. Bold and reckless youths often venture so far as to offer a positive opinion on critical questions for others, but responsible people, like officials and doctors, have to choose their words carefully, for if events belie their opinion then

但是我總覺得不安，過了一夜，也仍然時時記憶起來，彷彿懷着什麼不祥的豫感；在陰沈的雪天裏，在無聊的書房裏，這不安愈加強烈了。不如走罷，明天進城去。福興樓的清燉魚翅，一元一大盤，價廉物美，現在不知增價了否？往日同游的朋友，雖然已經雲散，然而魚翅是不可不喫的，即使只有我一個……。無論如何，我明天決計要走了。

我因為常見些但願不如所料，以為未必竟如所料的事，卻每每恰如所料的起來，所以很恐怕這事也一

it becomes a serious affair. It is much more advisable to say, "Cannot definitely say"; obviously it solves everything. This encounter with the woman mendicant impresses upon me the importance of that practice, for even in such cases the deepest wisdom lies in ambiguity.

Nevertheless, I continue to feel troubled, and when the night is gone I wake up with the incident still on my mind. It is like an unlucky presentiment of a movement of fate. Outside the day is still gloomy, with flurrying snow, and in the dull study my uneasiness gradually increases. Certainly I must go back to the city to-morrow. . . . To be sure, there is still unsampled the celebrated pure-cooked fish-fins at Fu Shing Lou—excellent eating and very cheap at only a dollar a big salver. Has the price by now increased? Although many of my boyhood friends have melted away like clouds in the sky, there must remain, at least, the incomparable fish-fins of Lo Ching, and these I must eat, even though I eat alone. . . All the same, I am returning to-morrow. . . .

Because I have so often seen things happen exactly as I predicted—but hoped against, and

律。果然，特別的情形開始了。傍晚，我竟聽到有些人聚在內室裏談話，彷彿議論什麼事似的，但不一會，說話聲也就止了，只有四叔且走而且高聲的說，

『不早不遲，偏偏要在這時候，——這就可見是一個謬種！』

我先是詫異，接着是很不安，似乎這話于我有關係。試望門外，誰也沒有。好容易待到晚飯前他們的短工來沖茶，我纔得了打聽消息的機會。

『剛纔，四老爺和誰生氣呢？』我問。

『還不是和祥林嫂？』那短工簡捷的說。

tried to believe improbable—so I am not unprepared for this occasion to provide no exception. Towards evening some of the family gather in an inner room, and from fragments of their talk I gather they are discussing some event with no little annoyance. Presently all the voices cease except one, that of Fourth Uncle, who thunders out above the thud of his own pacing feet:

“Not a day earlier nor a day later, but just at this season she decides upon it. From this alone we can see that she belongs to a species utterly devoid of human sense!”

My curiosity is soon followed by a vague discomfort, as if these words have some special meaning for me. I go out and look into the room, but every one has vanished. Suppressing my increasing impatience, I wait till the servant comes to fill my teapot with hot water. Not until then am I able to confirm my suspicions.

“Who was it Fourth Uncle was blowing up about a while ago?”

“Could it after all have been any other than Hsiang-lin Sao?” he replies in the brief and positive manner of our language.

『祥林嫂？怎麼了？』我又趕緊的問。

『老了。』

『死了？』我的心突然緊縮；幾乎跳起來，臉上大約也變了色。但他始終沒有擡頭，所以全不覺。我也就鎮定了自己，接着問——

『什麼時候死的？』

『什麼時候？——昨天夜裏，或者就是今天罷。——我說不清。』

『怎麼死的？』

『怎麼死的？——還不是窮死的？』他澹然的回答，仍然沒有擡頭向我看，出去了。

然而我的驚惶卻不過暫時的事，隨着就覺得要來的事，已經過去，並不必要仰仗我自己的『說不清』和他之所謂『窮死的』的寬慰，心地已經漸漸輕鬆；不過偶然之間，還似乎有些負疚。晚飯擺出來了，四叔儼然的陪着。我也還想打聽些關於祥林嫂的消息，但知道他雖然讀過『鬼神者二氣之良能也，』而忌諱仍然極多，當臨近祝福時候，是萬不可提起死亡疾病之

“What has happened to her?” I demand in an anxious voice.

“Aged.”

“Dead?” My heart twinges and seems to jump back; my face burns. But he doesn't notice my emotion at all, doesn't even lift his head, so that I control myself to the end of further questioning.

“When did she die then?”

“When? Last night—or possibly to-day. I cannot definitely say.”

“What did she die of?”

“What did she die of? Could it indeed be anything else than that she has been strangled to death by poverty?” His words are absolutely colourless, and without even looking at me he goes out.

My terror at first is great, but I reason that this is a thing which was bound to happen very soon, and it is merely an accident that I even know about it. I further reassure my conscience by recalling my non-committal “Cannot definitely say,” and the servant's report that it was simply a case of “strangled to death by poverty.” Still, now and then I feel a prick of guilt, I don't

類的話的；倘不得已，就該用一種替代的隱語，可惜我又不知道，因此屢次想問，而終于中止了。我從他儼然的臉色上，又忽而疑他正以為我不早不遲，偏要在這時候來打攪他，也是一個謬種，便立刻告訴他明天要離開魯鎮，進城去，趁早放寬了他的心。他也不很留。這樣悶悶的喫完了一餐飯。

know exactly why, and when I sit down beside the dignified old Fourth Uncle I am continually thinking of opening a discussion about Hsianglin Sao. But how to do it? He still lives in a world of religious interdicts, and at this time of year these are like an impenetrable forest. You cannot, of course, mention anything connected with death, illness, crime, and so on, unless it is absolutely imperative. Even then such references must be disguised in a queer riddle-language in order not to offend the hovering ancestral spirits. I torture my brain to remember the necessary formula, but, alas, I cannot recall the right phrases, and at length have to give it up. Fourth Uncle throughout the meal wears an austere look on his face. At last I suspect that he regards me also as "belonging to a species utterly devoid of human sense", since "neither a day earlier, nor a day later, but just at this season" I have put in an appearance. To loosen his heart and save him further anxiety I tell him that I have determined to return to-morrow. He doesn't urge me to stay very enthusiastically, and I conclude that my

冬季日短，又是雪天，夜色早已籠罩了全市鎮。人們都在燈下匆忙，但窗外很寂靜。雪花落在積得厚厚的雪褥上面，聽去似乎瑟瑟有聲，使人更加感得沈寂。我獨坐在發出黃光的菜油燈下，想，這百無聊賴的祥林嫂，被人們棄在塵芥堆中的，看得厭倦了的陳舊的玩物，先前還將形骸露在塵芥裏，從活得有趣的人們看來，恐怕要怪訝她何以還要存在，現在總算被無常打掃得乾乾淨淨了。魂靈的有無，我不知道；然而在現世，則無聊生者不生，即使厭見者不見，爲人爲己，也還都不錯。我靜聽着窗外似乎瑟瑟作響的雪花聲，一面想，反而漸漸的舒暢起來。

surmise was correct. And thus in a cheerless mood I finish my meal.

The short day is ended, the curtain of snow dropping over it earlier than usual even in this month, and the black night falls like a shroud over the whole town. People still busy themselves under the lamplight, but just beyond my window there is the quiet of death. Snow lies like a down mattress over the earth, and the still falling flakes make a faint *suh-suh* sound that adds to the intense loneliness and the unbearable melancholy. Sitting alone under the yellow rays of the rape-oil lamp, my mind goes back again to that blown-out flicker, Hsiang-lin Sao. This woman who once stood among us in this house, thrown now, like an old toy, discarded by a child, on to the dust-heap. For those who find the world amusing, for the kind for whom she is created, no doubt if they think about her at all it is simply to wonder why the devil she should so long have had the effrontery to continue to exist. Well, she has obliged them by disappearing at last, swept away thoroughly by Wu Chang, and a very tidy job. I don't know whether there is such a thing as the 'soul'

然而先前所見所聞的她的半生事迹的斷片，至此也聯成一片了。

二

她不是魯鎮人。有一年的冬初，四叔家裏要換女工，做中人的衛老婆子帶她進來了，頭上紮着白頭繩，烏裙，藍夾襖，月白背心，年紀大約二十六七，臉色青黃，但兩頰卻還是紅的。

衛老婆子叫她祥林嫂，說是自己母家的鄰舍，死了當家人，所以出來做工了。四叔皺了皺眉，四嬸已經知道了他的意思，是在討厭她是一個寡婦。但看她模樣還周正，手脚都壯大，又只是順着眼，不開一句口，很像一個安分耐勞的人，便不管四叔的皺眉，將

that lives on after death. but it would be a great improvement if people like Hsiang-lin Sao were never born, would it not? Then nobody would be troubled, neither the despised nor those who despise them.

Listening to the *suh-suh* of the leafy autumnal snow I go on musing, and gradually find some comfort in my reflections. It is like putting together an intricate puzzle, but in the end the incidents of her life fit together into a single whole.

II

Hsiang-lin Sao was not a native of Lo Ching. She arrived in early winter one year with Old Woman Wei, who bargained in the labour of others. Fourth Uncle had decided to change the servant, and Hsiang-lin Sao was Old Woman Wei's candidate for the job.

She wore a white scarf wrapped round her head, a blue jacket, a pale green vest, and a black skirt. She was perhaps twenty-six or twenty-seven, still quite young and rather pretty, with ruddy cheeks and a bronzed face. Old Woman Wei said that she was a neighbour

他留下了。試工期內，她整天的做，似乎閒着就無聊，又有力，簡直抵得過一個男子，所以第三天就定局，每月工錢五百文。

大家都叫她祥林嫂；沒問她姓什麼，但中人是衛家山人，既說是鄰居，那大概也就姓衛了。她不很愛說話，別人問了纔回答，答的也不多。直到十幾天之後，這纔陸續的知道她家裏還有嚴厲的婆婆；一個小叔子，十多歲，能打柴了；她是春天沒了丈夫的；他本來也打柴爲生，比她小十歲；大家所知道的就只是這一點。

of her mother's. Her husband had died, she explained, and so she had to seek work outside. Fourth Uncle wrinkled up his brow, and his wife, looking at him, knew what he meant. He didn't like hiring a widow. But Fourth Aunt scrutinized her carefully, noting that her hands and feet looked strong and capable, and that she had honest, direct eyes. She impressed her as a woman who would be content with her lot, and not likely to complain about hard work; and so in spite of her husband's wrinkled brow Fourth Aunt agreed to give her a trial. For three days she worked as if leisure of any kind bored her; she proved very energetic and as strong as a man. Fourth Aunt then definitely hired her, the wage being five hundred cash per month.

Everybody called her simply Hsiang-lin Sao, without asking for her surname. The Old Woman Wei was, however, a native of Wei Chia Shan (Wei Family Mountain), and since she claimed that Hsiang-lin Sao came from that village no doubt her surname also was Wei. Like most mountaineers, she talked little, and only answered others' questions in monosyllables, and so it took more than ten days to pry out of

日子很快的過去了，她的做工卻毫沒有懈，食物不論，力氣是不惜的。人們都說魯四老爺家裏僱着了女工，實在比勤快的男人還勤快。到年底，掃塵，洗地，殺雞，宰鴨，徹夜的煮福禮，全是一人擔當，竟沒有添短工。然而她反滿足，口角邊漸漸的有了笑影，臉上也白胖了。

新年纔過，她從河邊淘米回來時，忽而失了色，說剛纔遠遠地看見一個男人在對岸徘徊，很像夫家的堂伯，恐怕是正爲尋她而來的。四嬸很驚疑，打聽底細，她又不說。四叔一知道，就皺一皺眉，道：

her the bare facts that there was still a severe mother-in-law in her home; that her young brother-in-law cut wood for a living; that she had lost her husband, ten years her junior, in the previous spring; and that he also had lived by cutting firewood. This was about all people could get out of her.

Day followed day, and Hsiang-lin Sao's work was just as regular. She never slackened up, she never complained about the food, she never seemed to tire. People agreed that Old Lord Lo Shih had found a worthy worker, quick and diligent, more so in fact than a man. Even at New Year she did all the sweeping, dusting, washing, and other household duties, besides preparing geese and chickens and all the sacrifices, without any other help. She seemed to thrive on it. Her skin became whiter, and she fattened a little.

New Year had just passed when one day she came hurrying up from the canal, where she had been washing rice. She was much agitated. She said she had seen, on the opposite bank, a man who looked very much like her late husband's first cousin, and she was afraid he had come to take her away. Fourth Aunt was alarmed

『這不好。恐怕她是逃出來的。』

她誠然是逃出來的，不多久，這推想就證實了。

此後大約十幾天，大家正已漸漸忘卻了先前的事，衛老婆子忽而帶了一個三十多歲的女人進來了，說那是祥林嫂的婆婆。那女人雖是山裏人模樣，然而應酬很從容，說話也能幹，寒暄之後，就賠罪，說她特來叫她的兒媳回家去，因為開春事務忙，而家中只有老的和小的，人手不夠了。

『既是她的婆婆要她回去，那有什麼話可說呢。』四叔說。

and suspicious. Why should he be coming for her? Asked for details, Hsiang-lin Sao could give none. Fourth Uncle, when he heard the story, wrinkled his brow and announced:

“This is very bad. It looks as though she has run away, instead of being ordered.”

And, as it turned out, he was correct. She was a runaway widow.

Some ten days later, when everybody was gradually forgetting the incident, Old Woman Wei suddenly appeared, accompanied by a woman who, she claimed, was Hsiang lin Sao's mother-in-law. The latter seemed not at all like a tongue-bound mountaineer, but knew how to talk, and after a few courtesy words got to the subject of her business at once. She said she had come to take her daughter-in-law back home. It was spring, there was much to be done at home, and in the house at present were none but the very old and the very young. Hsiang-lin Sao was needed.

“Since it is her own mother-in-law who requests it, how can we deny the justice of it?” said Fourth Uncle.

于是算清了工錢，一共一千七百五十文，她全存在主人家，一文也還沒有用，便都交給她的婆婆。那女人又取了衣服，道過謝，出去了。其時已經是正午。

『阿呀，米呢？祥林嫂不是去淘米的麼？……』

好一會，四孀這纔驚叫起來。她大約有些餓，記得午飯了。

于是大家分頭尋淘籬。她先到廚下，次到堂前，後到臥房，全不見淘籬的影子。四叔踱出門外，也不見，直到河邊，纔見平平正正的放在岸上，旁邊還有一株菜。

Hsiang-lin Sao's wage, therefore, was figured out. It was discovered that altogether one thousand seven hundred and fifty cash were due. She had let the sum accumulate with her master, not taking out even a single cash for use. Without any more words, this amount was handed over to the mother-in-law, although Hsiang-lin Sao was not present. The woman also took Hsiang-lin Sao's clothes, thanked Fourth Uncle, and left. It was then past noon. . . .

"*Ai-ya!* The rice? Didn't Hsiang-lin Sao go out to scour the rice?"

Fourth Aunt, some time later, cried out this question in a startled way. She had forgotten all about Hsiang-lin Sao until her hunger reminded her of rice, and the rice reminded her of the former servant.

Everybody scattered and began searching for the rice basket. Fourth Aunt herself went first to the kitchen, next to the front hall, and then into the bedroom, but she didn't see a shadow of the object of her search. Fourth Uncle wandered outside, but he saw nothing of it either till he came near the canal. There, upright on the

看見的人報告說，河裏面上午就泊了一隻白篷船，篷是全蓋起來的，不知道甚麼人在裏面，但事前也沒有人去理會他。待到祥林嫂出來淘米，剛剛要跪下去，那船裏便突然跳出兩個男人來，像是山裏人，一個抱住她，一個幫着，拖進船去了。祥林嫂還哭喊了幾聲，此後便再沒有什麼聲息，大約給用什麼堵住了罷。接着就走上兩個女人來，一個不認識，一個就是衛婆子。窺探艙裏，不很分明，她像是捆了躺在船板上。

『可惡！然而……。』四叔說。

bank, with a cabbage near by. lay the missing basket.

Apparently not until then had anyone thought to inquire in what manner Hsiang-lin Sao had departed with her mother-in-law. Now eyewitnesses appeared who reported that early in the morning a boat, carrying a white canopy, anchored in the canal, and lay there idly for some time. The awning hid the occupants, and no one knew who was in it. Presently Hsiang-lin Sao came to the bank, and just as she was about to kneel down for water two men quickly jumped out, grabbed her, and forcibly put her inside the boat. They seemed to be mountain people, but they certainly took her against her will; she cried and shouted for help several times. Afterwards she was hushed up, evidently with some kind of gag. Nothing more happened until the arrival of two women, one of whom was Old Woman Wei. Nobody saw very clearly what had happened to Hsiang-lin Sao, but those who peered in declared that she seemed to have been bound and thrown on the deck of the cabin.

“Outrageous!” exclaimed Fourth Uncle. On

這一天是四嬸自己煮午飯；他們的兒子阿牛燒火。

午飯之後，衛老婆子又來了。

『可惡！』四叔說。

『你是什麼意思？虧你還會再來見我們。』四嬸洗着碗，一見面就憤憤的說，『你自己薦她來，又合夥劫她去，鬧得沸反盈天的，大家看了成個什麼樣子？你拿我們家裏開玩笑麼？』

『阿呀阿呀，我真上當。我這回，就是爲此特地來說說清楚的。她來求我薦地方，我那里料得到是瞞着她的婆婆的呢。對不起，四老爺，四太太，總是我老發昏不小心，對不起主顧。幸而府上是向來寬洪大量，不肯和小人計較的。這回我一定薦一個好的來折罪。……』

reflection, however, he simply ended impotently, "But after all . . ."

Fourth Aunt herself had to prepare the food that day, and her son Ah Niu made the fire.

In the afternoon Old Woman Wei reappeared.

"Outrageous!" Fourth Uncle greeted her.

"What is this? How wonderful! You have honoured us once more with your presence!" Fourth Aunt, washing dishes, angrily shouted at the old bargain-maker. "You yourself recommend her to us, then you come with companions to abduct her from the household. This affair is a veritable volcanic eruption. How do you suppose it will look to outsiders? Are you playing a joke at our expense, or what is it?"

"*Ai-ya! Ai-ya!* I have surely been fooled and tricked. I came here to explain to you. Now how was I to know she was a rebel? She came to me, begged me to get her work, and I took her for genuine. Who would have known that she was doing it behind her mother-in-law's back, without in fact even asking for permission? I'm unable to look in your face, my lord and my lady. It's all my fault, the fault of a careless

『然而……。』四叔說。

于是祥林嫂事件便告終結，不久也就忘卻了。只有四嬭，因為後來僱用的女工，大抵非嬾即饑，或者饑而且嬾，左右不如意，所以也還提起祥林嫂。每當這些時候，她往往自言自語的說，『她現在不知道怎麼樣了？』意思是希望她再來。但到第二年的新正，她也就絕了望。

新正將盡，衛老婆子來拜年了，已經喝得醉醺醺的，自說因為回了一趟衛家山的娘家，住下幾天，所

old fool. I can't look you in the face, . . . Fortunately, your home is generous and forgiving, and will not punish insignificant people like myself too strictly, eh? And next time the person I recommend must be doubly good to **make** up for this sin——”

“But——” interjected Fourth Uncle, who, however, could get no farther.

And so the affair of Hsiang-lin Sao came to an end, and indeed she herself would have been entirely forgotten were it not that Fourth Aunt had such difficulty with subsequent servants. They were too lazy, or they were gluttonous, or in extreme cases they were both lazy and gluttonous, and in truth were totally undesirable, “from the extreme left to the extreme right.” In her distress, Fourth Aunt always mentioned the exemplary Hsiang-lin Sao. “I wonder how she is living?” she would say, inwardly wishing that some misfortune would oblige her to return to work. By the time the next New Year rolled round, however, she had given up hope of ever seeing her again.

Towards the end of the holidays Old Woman Wei called one day to k'ou-t'ou and offer felici-

以來得遲了。她們問答之間，自然就談到祥林嫂。

『她麼？』衛老婆子高興的說，『現在是交了好運了。她婆婆來抓她回去的時候，是早已許給了賀家墘的賀老六的，所以回家之後不幾天，也就裝在花轎裏擡去了。』

『阿呀，這樣的婆婆！……』四嬭驚奇的說。

『阿呀，我的太太！你真是大戶人家的太太的話。我們山裏人，小戶人家，這算得什麼？她有小叔子，也得娶老婆。不嫁了她，那有這一注錢來做聘禮？她的婆婆倒是精明強幹的女人呵，很有打算，所以就將她嫁到裏山去。倘許給本村人，財禮就不多；惟獨肯嫁進深山野墘裏去的女人少，所以她就到手了

tations. She had already drunk herself into semi-intoxication, and was in a garrulous mood. She explained that because of a visit to her mother's home in Wei Village, where she had stayed for several days, she was late this year in paying her courtesy calls. During the course of the conversation their talk naturally touched upon Hsiang-lin Sao.

"She?" the old woman cried shrilly and with alcoholic enthusiasm. "There's a lucky woman! You know, when her mother-in-law came after her here she had at that time already been promised to a certain Hu Lao-liu, of Hu Village. After staying in her home only a few days she was loaded again into the Flowery Sedan Chair and borne away!"

"*Ai-ya*, what a mother!" Fourth Aunt exclaimed.

"*Ai-ya*, my lady! You speak from behind a lofty door. We mountaineers, of the small-doored families, for us what does it matter? You see, she had a young brother-in-law, and he had to be married. If Hsiang-lin Sao was not married off first, where would the family get money enough for the brother-in-law's presents to his

八十千。現在第二個兒子的媳婦也娶進了，財禮只花了五十，除去辦喜事的費用，還剩十多千。嚇，你看，這多麼好打算？……』

『祥林嫂竟肯依？……』

『這有什麼依不依。——鬧是誰也總要鬧一鬧的；只要用繩子一網，塞在花轎裏，擡到男家，捺上花冠，拜堂，關上房門，就完事了。可是祥林嫂真出格，聽說那時實在鬧得厲害，大家還都說大約因為在唸書人家做過事，所以與衆不同呢。太太，我們見得多了：回頭人出嫁，哭喊的也有，說要尋死覓活的也有，擡到男家鬧得拜不成天地的也有，連花燭都砸了的也有。祥林嫂可是異乎尋常，他們說她一路只是

betrothed? So you understand the mother-in-law is by no means a stupid woman, but keen and calculating. Moreover, she married the daughter-in-law to an inner mountain dweller. Why? Don't you see? Marrying her to a local man, she would have got only a small betrothal gift, but, since few women want to marry deep into the mountains, the price is higher. Hence the husband actually paid eighty thousand cash for Hsiang-lin Sao! Now the son of the family has also been married, and he gave his bride presents costing but five thousand cash. After deducting the cost of the wedding there still remained over ten thousand cash profit. Is she clever or not? Good figuring, eh?"

"And Hsiang-lin Sao—she obeyed all right?"

"Well, it wasn't a question of obedience with her. Anybody in such a situation has to make a protest, of course. They simply tie her up, lift her into the Flowery Sedan Chair, bear her away to the groom's home, forcibly put the Flowery Hat on her head, forcibly make her *k'ou-t'ou* in the ancestral hall, forcibly 'lock her up' with the man—and the thing is done." "Ai-ya!" "But Hsiang-lin Sao was unusually

豪，罵，擡到賀家塢，喉嚨已經全啞了。拉出轎來，兩個男人和她的小叔子使勁的擒住她也還拜不成天地。他們一不小心，一鬆手，阿呀，阿彌陀佛，她就一頭撞在香案角上，頭上碰了一個大窟窿，鮮血直流，用了兩把香灰，包上兩塊紅布還止不住血呢。直到七手八腳的將她和男人反關在新房裏，還是罵，阿呀呀，這真是……。」她搖一搖頭，順下眼睛，不說了。

rebellious. I heard people say that she made a terrific struggle. In fact, it was said that she was different from most woman, probably because she had worked in your home—the home of a scholar. My lady, I have seen much in these years. Among widows who remarry I have seen the kind who cry and shout. I have seen those who threaten suicide. There is in addition the kind who, after being taken to the groom's home, refuse to make the *k'ou-t'ou* to Heaven and Earth, and even go so far as to smash the Flowery Candles used to light the bridal chamber! But Hsiang-lin Sao was like none of those demonstrators. "From the beginning she fought like a tigress. She screamed and she cursed, and by the time she reached Hu Village her throat was so raw that she had almost lost her voice. She had to be dragged out of the sedan chair. It took two men to get her into the ancestral hall, and still she would not *k'ou-t'ou*. Only for one moment they carelessly loosened their grip on her, and; *ai-ya!* by Buddha's name! she knocked her head a sound whack on the incense altar, and cut a deep gash from which blood spurted out thickly! They used two handfuls of incense ash

『後來怎麼樣呢？』四嬸還問。

『聽說第二天也沒有起來。』她擡起眼來說。

『後來呢？』『後來？——起來了。她到年底就生了一個孩子，男的，新年就兩歲了。我在娘家這幾天，就有人到賀家壩去，回來說看見他們娘兒倆，母親也胖，兒子也胖；上頭又沒有婆婆；男人所有的是力氣，會做活；房子是自家的。——唉唉，她真是交了好運了。』

從此之後。四嬸也就不再提起祥林嫂。

三

但有一年的秋季，大約是得到祥林嫂好運的消息

on the wound, and bound it up with two thicknesses of red cloth, and still it bled. Actually, she struggled till the very last, when they locked her with her husband in the bridal room, and even then she cursed! This was indeed a *protest*. *Ai-ya*, it really was!" She shook her gnarled head, bent her gaze on the floor, and was silent.

"How was it afterwards?"

"They say she did not get up the first day, nor the second." "Afterwards?"

"After that? Oh, she finally got up. At the end of the year she bore him a child, a boy. While I was at my mother's home I saw some people who had returned from Hu Village, and they said they had seen her. Mother and son were both fat. Above their heads was fortunately no mother-in-law. Her husband, it seems, is strong and a good worker. He owns his own house. *Ai-ya*, she is a lucky one indeed."

From that time on Fourth Aunt gave up any thought of Hsiang-lin Sao's excellent work, or at any rate she ceased to mention her name.

III

In the autumn, two years after Old Woman

之後的又過了兩個新年，她竟又站在四叔家的堂前了。棹上放着一個荸薺式的圓籃；簷下一個小鋪蓋。她仍然頭上紮着白頭繩，烏裙，藍夾襖，月白背心，臉色青黃，只是兩頰上已經消失了血色，順着眼，眼角上帶些淚痕，眼光也沒有先前那樣精神了。而且仍然是衛老婆子領着，顯出慈悲模樣，絮絮的對四嬸說，

『……這實在是叫作「天有不測風雲，」她的男人是堅實人，誰知道年紀青青，就會斷送在傷寒上？本來已經好了的，喫了一碗冷飯，復發了。幸虧有兒子；她又能做，打柴摘茶養蠶都來得，本來還可以守着，誰知道那孩子又會給狼啣去的呢？春天快完了，村上倒反來了狼，誰料到？現在她只剩了一個光身了。大伯來收屋，又趕她。她真是走投無路了，只好來求老主人。好在她現在已經再沒有什麼牽掛，太太家裏又湊巧要換人，所以我就領她來。——我想，熟

Wei had brought news of Hsiang-lin Sao's extraordinary good luck, our old servant stood once more in person before the hall of Fourth Uncle's home. On the table she laid a round chestnut-shaped basket and a small bedding-roll. She still wore a white scarf on her head, a black skirt, a blue jacket, and 'moon-white' vest. Her complexion was about the same, except that her cheeks had lost all their colour. Traces of tears lay at the corners of her eyes, from which all the old brightness and lustre seemed washed away. Moreover, with her once more appeared Old Woman Wei, wearing on her face an expression of commiseration. She babbled to Fourth Aunt:

"So it is truly said, 'Heaven holds many an unpredictable wind and cloud.' Her husband was a strong and healthy man. Who would have guessed that at a green age he would be cut down by fever? He had actually recovered from the illness, but ate a bowl of cold rice, and it attacked him again. Fortunately she had the son. By cutting wood, plucking tea-leaves, raising silkworms—and she is skilled at each of these jobs—she could make a living. Could any one have predicted that the child itself would be carried off by

門熟路，比生手實在好得多……。」

『我真傻，真的，』祥林嫂擡起她沒有神采的眼睛來，接着說。『我單知道下雪的時候野獸在山奧裏沒有食喫，會到村裏來；我不知道春天也會有。我一清早起來就開了門，拿小籃盛了一籃豆，叫我們的阿毛坐在門檻上剝豆去。他是很聽話的，我的話句句聽；他出去了。我就在屋後劈柴，淘米，米下了鍋，要蒸豆。我叫阿毛，沒有應，出去一看，只見豆撒得一地，沒有我們的阿毛了。他是不到別家去玩的；各處去一問，果然沒有。我急了，央人出去尋。直到下

a wolf? A fact! By a wolf! "It was already late spring, long after the time when anyone fears a wolf. Who could have anticipated this one's boldness? *Ai-ya!* And now she is left only her one bare body. Her late husband's elder brother-in-law took possession of the house, and everything in it, and he drove her out without a cash. She is, in fact, in the 'no-road no-destination' predicament, and can but return to beg you to take her in once more. She no longer has any connexions (such as a mother-in-law) whatever. Knowing you want to change servants, I brought her along. Since she already knows your ways, it's certain she'll be more satisfactory than a raw hand."

"I was truly stupid, truly," said Hsiang-lin Sao in a piteous voice, and lifting up her faded eyes for a moment. "I only knew that when the snow lies on the mountains the wild animals will sometimes venture into the valleys and will even come into the villages in search of food. I did not know that they could be so fierce long after the coming of spring. I got up early one morning, took a small basket of beans, and told little Ah Mao to sit in the doorway and string the beans. He was very bright, and he was obedient.

半天，尋來尋去尋到山奧裏，看見刺柴上掛着一隻他的小鞋。大家都說，糟了，怕是遭了狼了。再進去；他果然躺在草窠裏，肚裏的五臟已經都給喫空了，手上還緊緊的捏着那隻小籃呢。……』她接着但是嗚咽，說不出成句的話來。

四嬸起初還躊躇，待到聽完她自己的話，眼圈就有些紅了。她想了一想，便教拿圓籃和鋪蓋到下房

He always listened to every word, and this morning he did so, and I left him in the door. I myself went behind the house to chop kindling and to scour rice. I had just put the rice in the boiler and was ready to cook the beans, so I called to Ah Mao. He didn't answer. I went round to the door, but there was no Ah Mao; only beans scattered on the ground. He never wandered to play, but I hurried to each door to ask for him. Nobody had seen him. I was terror-stricken! I begged people to help me hunt for him. All the morning and into the afternoon we moved back and forth, looking into every corner. Finally we found one of his little shoes hanging on a thorn bush. From that moment every one said that he had been seized by a wolf, but I would not believe it. After a little while, going farther into the mountains, we . . . found . . . him. Lying in a grassy lair was his body, with the five organs missing. But the bean basket was still tightly clutched in his little hand." Here she broke down, and could only make incoherent sounds, without stringing a sentence together.

Fourth Aunt had at first hesitated, but after hearing this story her eyes reddened, and she

去。衛老婆子彷彿卸了一肩重擔似的嘯一口氣；祥林嫂比初來時候神氣舒暢些，不待指引，自己馴熟的安放了鋪蓋。她從此又在魯鎮做女工了。

大家仍然叫她祥林嫂。

然而這一回，她的境遇卻改變得非常大。上工之後的兩三天，主人們就覺得她手脚已沒有先前一樣靈活，記性也壞得多，死屍似的臉上又整日沒有笑影，四嬸的口氣上，已頗有些不滿了。當她初到的時候，四叔雖然照例皺過眉，但鑑于向來僱用女工之難，也就並不大反對，只是暗暗地告誡四嬸說，這種人雖然似乎很可憐，但是敗壞風俗的，用她幫忙還可以，祭祀時候可用不着她沾手，一切飯菜，只好自己做，否則，不乾不淨，祖宗是不喫的。

instantly told the widow to take her things to the servants' quarters. Old Woman Wei sighed with relief, as if she had just put down a heavy bundle. Hsiang-lin Sao quieted somewhat, and without waiting for a second invitation she took her bedding-roll into the familiar room.

Thus she once more became a worker in Lo Ching, and everybody still called her Hsiang-lin Sao, after her first husband.

But she was no longer the same woman. After a few days her mistress and master noticed that she was heavy of hand and foot, that she was listless at her work, that her memory was bad, and over her corpse-like face all day there never crossed the shadow of a smile. One could tell by Fourth Aunt's tone of voice that she was already dissatisfied, and with Fourth Uncle it was the same. He had, as usual, wrinkled his brow in disapproval when she had first arrived, but since they had been having endless difficulties with servants he had raised no serious objection to the re-employment of Hsiang-lin Sao. Now, however, he informed Fourth Aunt that, though the woman's case seemed indeed very lamentable, and it was permissible because of that to give her

四叔家裏最重大的事件是祭祀，祥林嫂先前最忙的時候也就是祭祀，這回她卻清閒了。桌子放在堂中央，繫上桌幃，她還記得照舊的去分配酒盃和筷子。

『祥林嫂，你放着罷！我來擺。』四嬸慌忙的說。

他訕訕的縮了手，又去取燭臺。

『祥林嫂，你放着罷！我來拿。』四嬸又慌忙的說。

她轉了幾個圓圈，終於沒有事情做，只得疑惑的走開。她在這一天可做的事是不過坐在灶下燒火。

鎮上的人們也仍然叫她祥林嫂，但音調和先前很不同；也還和她講話，但笑容卻冷冷的了。她全不理會那些事，只是直着眼睛，和大家講她自己日夜不忘

Work, still she was obviously out of tune with Heaven and earth. 181 She must not, therefore, be allowed to pollute precious vessels with her soiled hands, and especially on ceremonial occasions. Fourth Aunt herself must prepare all food. Otherwise the ancestral spirits would be offended and, likely as not, 182 refuse to touch a crumb.

These ancestral sacrifices were, in fact, the most important affairs in Fourth Uncle's home, for he still rigidly adhered to 183 the old beliefs. Formerly they had been busy times for Hsiang—lin Sao also, and so the next time the altar was placed in the centre of the hall and covered with a fine cloth she began to arrange the wine cups and bowls and chopsticks on it exactly as before.

"Hsiang—lin Sao," Fourth Aunt cried, rushing in, "never mind that. 184 I'll fix the things."

Puzzled, she withdrew and proceeded to take out the candlesticks. "Never mind that, either. I'll get the sticks," Fourth Aunt said again.

的故事——

『我真傻，真的，』她說。『我單知道雪天是野獸在深山裏沒有食吃，會到村裏來；我不知道春天也會有。我一大早起來就開了門，拿小籃盛了一籃豆，叫我們的阿毛坐在門檻上剝豆去。他是很聽話的孩子，我的話句句聽；他就出去了。我就在屋後劈柴，淘米，米下了鍋，打算蒸豆。我叫，「阿毛！」沒有應。出去一看，只見豆撒得滿地，沒有我們的阿毛了。各處去一問，都沒有。我急了，央人去尋去，直到下半年，幾個人尋到山奧裏，看見刺柴上掛着一隻他的小鞋。大家都說，完了，怕是遭了狼了。再進去；果然是他躺在草窠裏，肚裏的五臟已經都給吃空了，可憐他手裏還緊緊的捏着那隻小籃呢。……』她於是淌下眼淚來，聲音也嗚咽了。

這故事倒頗有效，男人聽到這裡，往往斂起笑

Hsi ng-lin Sao Walked about several times in a rather dazed manner, and ended up by finding nothing to do, 185 for Fourth Aunt Was always ahead of her.

She Went away suspiciously. She found the only use they had for her that day Was to sit in the kitchen and keep the fire burning.

People in Lo Ching continued to call her Hsiang-lin Sno, but there Was a different tone in their voices. They still talked With her, but smiled in a cool Way, and With faint contempt. She did not seem to notice, or perhaps did not care. She only stared beyond them, and talked always about the thing that day and night clung to her mind.

"I Was truly stupid, truly," she Would repeat. "I only knew that When the snow lies on the mountains the Wild animals Will sometimes venture into the valleys and will even come into the villages in search of food. I did not know that they could be so fierce long after the coming of spring...." Retelling her story in the same words, she Would end up sobbing and striking her breast.

Every one Who heard it Was moved, and even

容，沒趣的走了開去；女人們卻不獨寬恕了她似的，臉上立刻改換了鄙薄的神氣，還要陪出許多眼淚來。有些老女人沒有在街頭聽到她的話，便特意尋來，要聽她這一段悲慘的故事。直到她說到嗚咽，她們也就一齊流下那停在眼角上的眼淚，歎息一番，滿足的去了，一面還紛紛的評論着。

她就只是反覆的向人說她悲慘的故事，常常引住了三五個人來聽她。但不久，大家也都聽得純熟了，便是最慈悲的唸佛的老太太們，眼裏也再不見有一點淚的痕迹。後來全鎮的人們幾乎都能背誦她的話，一聽到就煩厭得頭痛。

『我真傻，真的，』她開首說。

『是的，你是單知道雪天野獸在深山裏沒有食喫，纔會到村裏來的。』他們立即打斷她的話，走開去了。

the sneering men, listening, would loosen their smiles and go off in depressed spirits. The women not only forgot all their contempt for her, but at the moment forgave her entirely for her black sins--remarrying and causing the death not only of a second husband but also of his child--and in many cases ended by joining with her in weeping at the end of the tragic narrative. She talked of nothing else, only this incident that had become the central fact of her life, and she told it again and again.

Before long, however, the entire population of Lo Ching had heard her story not once but several times, and the most generous old women, even the Buddha-chanters, could not muster up a tear when she spoke of it. Nearly everybody in the town could recite the story word for word, and it bored them excessively to hear it repeated.

"I was truly stupid, truly," she would begin.

"Yes, you only knew that when the snow lies on the mountains the wild animals will sometimes venture into the valleys and will even come into the villages in search of food. . ." Her audience would recite the next lines, cruelly cutting her short, and walk away.

她張着口怔怔的站着，直着眼睛看他們，接着也就走了，似乎自己也覺得沒趣。但她還妄想，希圖從別的事，如小籃，豆，別人的孩子上，引出她的阿毛的故事來。倘一看見兩三歲的小孩子，她就說：

『唉唉，我們的阿毛如果還在，他就有這麼大了。……』

孩子看見她的眼光就喫驚，牽着母親的衣襟催她走。於是又只剩下她一個，終於沒趣的也走了。後來大家又都知道了她的脾氣，只要有孩子在眼前，便似笑非笑的先問她，道：

『祥林嫂，你們的阿毛如果還在，不是也就有這麼大了麼？』

她未必知道她的悲哀經大家咀嚼賞鑑了許多天，早已成爲渣滓，只值得煩厭和唾棄；但從人們的笑影

With her mouth hanging open, Hsiang-lin Sao would stand stupefied for a while, stare as if seeing some one for the first time, and then drag away slowly as if weary of her continued existence. But her obsession gave her no rest, and she ingenuously tried to interest others in it by indirect approaches. Seeing a bean, a small basket, or other people's children, she would innocently lead up to the tragedy of Ah Mao. Looking at a child three or four years old, for instance, she would say:

"If Ah Mao were still here, he would be just about that size."

Frightened by the wild light in Hsiang-lin Sao's eyes, the children signalled for a retreat by pulling on their mother's skirts. She would therefore soon find herself alone again, and falter off until the next time. Pretty soon every one understood these tactics too, and made fun of her. When they saw her staring morosely at an infant they would look at her mockingly.

"Hsiang-lin Sao, if our Ah Mao were still here, wouldn't he be just about that big?"

Probably she had not suspected that her misery had long since ceased to afford any

上，也仿佛覺得這又冷又尖，自己再沒有開口的必要了。她單是一瞥他們，並不回答一句話。

四

魯鎮永遠是過新年，臘月二十以後就忙起來了。四叔家裏这回須僱男短工，還是忙不過來，另叫柳媽做幫手。殺雞，宰鵝；然而柳媽是善女人，喫素，不殺生的，只肯洗器皿。祥林嫂除燒火之外，沒有別的事，卻閒着了，坐着只看柳媽洗器皿。微雪點點的下來了。

『唉唉，我真傻，』祥林嫂看了天空，歎息着，獨語似的說。

vicarious enjoyment for anyone, and that the whole episode had now become loathsome to her former sympathizers, but the meaning of this kind of mockery pierced her armour of pre-occupation at last, and she understood. She glanced at the jester, but did not utter a word of response.

IV

Lo Ching never loses its enthusiasm for the celebration of New Year. Promptly after the twentieth of the Twelfth Moon the festivities begin. Next year at this time Fourth Uncle hired an extra male worker, and in addition a certain Liu Ma, to prepare the chickens and geese. This Liu Ma was a 'good woman,' a Buddhist vegetarian who really kept her vow not to kill living creatures. Hsiang-lin Sao, whose hands were polluted, could only feed the fire and sit watching Liu Ma working over the sacred vessels. Outside a fine snow was matting the earth.

"*Ai-ya*, I was truly stupid," sighed Hsiang-lin Sao, staring despondently at the sky.

『祥林嫂，你又來了。』柳媽不耐煩的看着她的臉，說。『我問你：你額角上的傷疤，不就是那時撞壞的麼？』

『唔唔。』她含糊的回答。

『我問你：你那時怎麼後來竟依了呢？』

『我麼？……』

『你呀。我想：這總是你自己願意了，不然。……』

『阿阿，你不知道他力氣多麼大呀。』

『我不信。我不信你這麼大的力氣，真會拗他不過。你後來一定是自己肯了，倒推說他力氣大。』

『阿阿，你……你倒自己試試看。』她笑了。

柳媽的打皺的臉也笑起來，使她蹙縮得像一個核桃；乾枯的小眼睛一看祥林嫂的額角，又釘住她的眼。祥林嫂似乎很局促了，立刻斂了笑容，旋轉眼光，自去看雪花。

"Hsiang-lin Sao, you are back on the same trail!" Liu Ma interrupted, with some exasperation. "Listen to me, is it true you got the scar by knocking your forehead against the altar in protest?"

"Um-huh."

"I ask you this: If you hated it that much, how was it that later on you actually submitted?"

"I?"

"Ah, you! It seems to me you must have been halfwilling, otherwise——"

"Ha, ha! You don't understand how great were his muscles."

"No, I don't. I don't believe that strength such as your own was not enough to resist him. It is clear to me that you must have been ready for it yourself."

"Ah—*you!* I'd like to see you try it yourself, and see how long you could struggle."

Liu Ma's old face crinkled into a laugh, so that it looked like a polished walnut. Her dry eyes rested on Hsiang-lin Sao's scar for a moment, and then sought out her eyes. She spoke again.

『祥林嫂，你實在不合算。』柳媽詭祕的說。『再一強，或者索性撞一個死，就好了。現在呢，你和你的第二個男人過活不到兩年，倒落了一件大罪名。你想，你將來到陰司去，那兩個死鬼的男人還要爭，你給了誰好呢？閻羅大王只好把你鋸開來，分給他們。我想，這真是……。』

她臉上就顯出恐怖的神色來，這是在山村裏所未會知道的。

『我想，你不如及早抵當。你到土地廟裏去捐一條門檻，當作你的替身，給千人踏，萬人跨，贖了這一世的罪名，免得死了去受苦。』

她當時並不回答什麼話，但大約非常苦悶了，第

“You are really not very clever, One more effort that time really to kill yourself would have been better for you. As it is, you lived with your second man less than two years, and that is all you got for your great crime. Just think about it: when you go into the next world you will be held in dispute between the spirits of your two husbands. How can the matter be settled? Only one way: Yen Lu-t'a, the Emperor of Hell, can do nothing else but saw you in half and divide you equally between the two men. That, I think, is a fact.”

An expression of mingled fear and astonishment crept over Hsiang-lin Sao's face. This was something she had not considered before, had never even heard in her mountain village.

“My advice is that you'd better make amends before it is too late. Go to the Tu-ti Temple and contribute money for a threshold. This threshold, stepped on by a thousand, stepped over by ten thousand, can suffer for you and perhaps atone for the crime. Thus you may avoid suffering after death.”

Hsiang-lin Sao did not say a word, but felt

二天早上起來的時候，兩眼上便都圍着大黑圈。早飯之後，她便到鎮的西頭的土地廟裏去求捐門檻。廟祝起初執意不允許，直到她急得流淚，纔勉強答應了。價目是大錢十二千。

她久已不和人們交口，因為阿毛的故事是早被大家厭棄了的；但自從和柳媽談了天，似乎又即傳揚開去，許多人都發生了新趣味，又來逗她說話了。至于題目，那自然是換了一個新樣，專在她額上的傷疤。

『祥林嫂。我問你：你那時怎麼竟肯了？』一個說。

『唉，可惜，白撞了這一下。』一個看着她的疤，應和道。

她大約從他們的笑容和聲調上，也知道是在嘲笑她，所以總是瞪着眼睛，不說一句話，後來連頭也不回了。她整日緊閉了嘴唇，頭上帶着大家以為恥辱的記號的那傷痕，默默的跑街，掃地，洗菜，淘米。快夠一年，她纔從四嬸手裏支取了歷來積存的工錢，換

intolerably crushed with pain. Next day dark shadows encircled her eyes. Right after breakfast she went off to the Tu-ti Temple to beg the priest to let her buy a new threshold. He stubbornly refused at first, and only when she released a flood of tears would he consider it. Then, unwillingly, he admitted that it might be arranged for twelve thousand cash.

She had long since stopped talking with the villagers, who shunned her and the tiresome narrative of Ah Mao's death, but news soon spread that there was a development in her case. Many people came now and inquisitively referred to the scar on her forehead.

"Hsiang-lin Sao, I ask you this: Why was it that you submitted to the man?"

"Regrettable, regrettable," sighed another, "that the knock was not deep enough."

She understood well enough the mockery and irony of their words, and she did not reply. She simply continued to perform her duties in silence. Near the end of next year's service she drew the money due to her from Fourth Aunt, exchanged it for twelve silver dollars, and asked

算了十二元鷹洋，請假到鎮的西頭去。但不到一頓飯時候，她便回來，神氣很舒暢，眼光也分外有神，高興似的對四嬸說，自己已經在土地廟捐了門檻了。

冬至的祭祖時節，她做得更出力，看四嬸裝好祭品，和阿牛將桌子擡到堂屋中央，她便坦然的去拿酒盃和筷子。

『你放着罷，祥林嫂！』四嬸慌忙大聲說。

她像是受了炮烙似的縮手，臉色同時變作灰黑，也不再去取燭臺，只是失神的站着。直到四叔上香的時候，教她走開，她纔走開。這一回她的變化非常大。

第二天，不但眼睛窵陷下去，連精神也更不濟了。而且很膽怯，不獨怕暗夜，怕黑影，即使看見

permission to visit in the west end of the town. Before the next meal she returned, much altered. Her face no longer seemed troubled, her eyes held some life in them for the first time in months, and she was in a cheerful mood. She told Fourth Aunt that she had bought a threshold for the temple.

During the Coming-of-Winter Festival she worked tirelessly, and on the day of making sacrifices she was simply bursting with energy. Fourth Aunt brought out the holy utensils, and Ah Niu carried the altar to the centre of the room. Hsiang-lin Sao promptly went over to bring out the wine cups and chopsticks.

"Never mind," Fourth Aunt cried out. "Don't touch them."

She withdrew her hand as if it had been burned, her face turned ashen, and she did not move, but stood as if transfixed. She remained standing there, in fact, until Fourth Uncle came in to light the offertory incense, and ordered her away.

From that day she declined rapidly. It was not merely a physical impoverishment that

人，雖是自己的主人，也總惴惴的，有如在白天出穴游行的小鼠；否則獸坐着，直是一個木偶人。不半年，頭髮也花白起來了，記性尤其壞，甚而至于常常忘卻了去淘米。

『祥林嫂怎麼這樣了？倒不如那時不留她。』四孀有時當面就這樣說，似乎是警告她。

然而她總如此，全不見有伶俐起來的希望。他們子是想打發她走了，教她回到衛老婆子那里去。但當我還在魯鎮的時候，不過單是這樣；看現在的情狀，可見後來終於實行了。然而她是從四叔家出去就成了乞丐的呢，還是先到衛老婆子家然後再成乞丐的呢？那我可不知道。

ensued, but the spark of life in her was dimmed almost to extinction. She became extremely nervous, and developed a morbid fear of darkness or the sight of anyone, even her master or mistress. She became altogether as timid and frightened as a little mouse that has wandered from its hole to blink for a moment in the glaring light of day. In half a year her hair lost all its colour. Her memory became so clouded that she sometimes forgot even to scour the rice.

“What has got into her? How has she become like that? It’s better not have her around,” Fourth Aunt began saying in her presence.

But “become like that” she had, and there did not seem to be any possibility of improving her. They talked of sending her away, or of returning her to the management of Old Woman Wei. Nothing came of it while I was still in Lo Ching, but the plan was soon afterwards carried out. Whether Old Woman Wei actually took charge of her for a while after she left Fourth Uncle’s home or whether she at once became a beggar I never learned.

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