The New Year’s Sacrifice

Lu Xun 鲁迅 1974: *The New Year’s Sacrifice* 祝福, illustrated by Yong Xiang 永祥, Hong Ren 洪仁, Yao Qiao  姚巧, translated by Stefanie Gondorf, Lena Henningsen, Charlotte Kräker, Jingying Li, Vivian / Ghost Tian, Beijing: Beijing renmin meishu chubanshe.

Preface to the 1957 edition

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内容说明

Explanation of the contents

祥林嫂年轻的时候死了丈夫，便到鲁四老爷家帮工。后来她婆婆又强迫她嫁人。不久她的第二个丈夫病死了，她的儿子被狼吃掉了，她被生活所逼，只好又回到鲁四老爷家里。鲁四老爷厌恶她死过两个丈夫，说她不干净，败坏风俗。她怪自己的命不好，听了柳妈的话，到土地庙里捐一条门槛，当撖替身赎罪，可是人家还一样鄙视她。她更加衰老了，精神更迟钝了，终于她被赶出了鲁家，变成乞丐死了。

After Xianglin’s wife lost her husband early in life, she comes to the Lu household as a servant. Later on, her mother-in-law forces her to remarry. Soon after, her second husband dies of illness, and her son is eaten by a wolf. She has no choice but to return to the Lu household. Mr. Lu loathes that she lost two husbands. He declares that she is tainted and would exert a bad moral influence. She also blames her own bad fate. After listening to Auntie Liu advice, she donates a threshold to the Temple of the Village God to atone for her sins, but people continue to despise her. She ages (prematurely) and becomes slow-witted. In the end, she is thrown out by the Lu family, turns into a beggar, and dies.

Further remark in the reprint:

本书由我社1957年首次出版，1963年修订再版，现根据读者需求，纳入“现代故事画库”系列 重新出版。

This book was first published by our publishing house in 1957, revised and republished in 1963. As requested by our readers, we have now included it into our “Image Repository of Modern Stories” series for a new edition.

1974 前言

Preface (to the 1974 version, which is translated below)

《祝福》描写了一个淳朴的劳动妇女祥林嫂。丈夫死后,她为了逃避被出卖的命运，便来到鲁镇，在地主鲁四家里做工。但不久仍被婆家绑回去，逼嫁到山村里。“她一路只是嚎，骂”，后来还“一头撞在香案角上”，不惜以自己的生命来反抗旧社会、旧礼教的压迫。当她再一次在鲁四家里出现，那是第二个丈夫病死，儿子被狼叼走之后。因她再嫁再寡，鲁四把她看成不祥之物，暗暗告诫家人不许她沾手祭品。镇上的人由于受到封建礼教的毒害，也跟着嘲笑她。柳妈又以“阴间”的锯刑来恐吓她，要她到土地庙捐一条门槛，当作赎罪的替身，给千人踏，万人跨。她为了自己的生存，不断挣扎，捐了门槛；但仍然无效，主人还是不许她摆设祭品。她从此精神失常，象一个木偶人。不久被鲁四赶走，成为乞丐。最后怀着对“阴间”的恐怖和疑惑，在年终“祝福”时，死在街头上。

“The New Year’s Sacrifice” describes the simple female worker Xianglin’s wife. After the death of her husband, she comes to Luzhen to work in the household of Landlord Lu to escape the fate of being sold off. But before long, she is kidnapped by the family of her mother-in-law and forced to remarry into a mountain village. “She howled and cursed the whole way”, and later also “bumped her head against the corner of the incense burner table”, to resist to the oppression of old society and old Confucian ethics with her own life. She appears for a second time at the Lu household after her second husband died of illness and her son was carried away by a wolf. Because she remarried and became a widow again, Mr. Lu considers her an inauspicious object and secretly tells his family members not to let her lend a hand in preparing the sacrifices. Poisoned by feudal Confucian ethics, the other people in town follow suit to sneer at her. Auntie Liu further threatens her with the torture of dismemberment in the “nether world”, and tells her to donate a threshold to the Temple of the Village God to be stepped on and passed over by 10.000 people as her replacement, in order to atone for her sins. She ceaselessly struggles for her survival and manages to donate a threshold. But it is of no use, the landlord still would not let her set out the sacrificial offerings. From then on, she is mentally deranged, as dumb as a puppet. Before long, she is thrown out by Mr. Lu and becomes a beggar. In the end, harboring terror and uncertainties about the “nether world” in her mind, she dies on the street at the time of the “New Year’s Sacrifice”.

祥林嫂的一生是受压迫受欺辱的一生，是不断挣扎和反抗的一生，但以孔孟之道为反动理论基础的封建社会的四大绳索——政权、族权、神权和夫权却紧紧地束缚她。她不仅在物质上、肉体上受尽压榨和摧残，而且在精神上也受尽种种鄙视和嘲笑；不仅生前哀哀无告，还须怀着恐怖走向死亡——对于她，不是意味着悲惨生活的结束，而是成了另一种最大的恐怖的开始，这就深刻揭露了封建礼教和迷信勾结一起残酷压迫劳动人民的本质。祥林嫂的形象，是鲁迅深刻地概括了封建社会千百万被压迫人民的遭遇而写成的一个悲惨的典型人物，它有力地控诉了孔老二反动礼教的思想实质和封建主义制度的野蛮性和残酷性。杀人不见而血的刽子手鲁四，就是孔老二的徒子徒孙。鲁迅先生写这篇作品，就是为了号召人民向这些吃人的势力进行斗争。

The life of Xianglin’s wife was a life filled with oppression and humiliation, a life of constant struggle and resistance. But the four major feudal bonds – political authority, kinship authority, theocratic authority and patriarchic authority – bound her tightly to the Confucian and Menzian doctrines, which serve as the basis of the reactionary feudal society. She not only suffered severely from material and physical oppression and destruction, but also suffered psychologically from all sorts of contempt and mockery. Not only did she suffer unspeakable grief during her lifetime, moreover, but she faced death with horror as well - for her, death did not mean the end of a tragic life, but the beginning of even greater terror of a different kind. This profoundly uncovers the collusive nature of feudal Confucian ethics and superstition in mercilessly suppressing the working people. The figure of Xianglin’s wife is an epitome of the billions of people oppressed by feudal society. It is also a typical tragic character created by Lu Xun that powerfully denounces the reactionary essence of the Confucian ethical ideology, as well as the cruel and barbaric nature of the feudal system. Mr. Lu, the executioner who kills without the shedding of blood is a disciple of Confucius. Lu Xun wrote this work in order to call on the people to struggle against these cannibalistic forces.

       在当前批林批孔的斗争中，《祝福》对于识破孔孟之道的反动本质有着一定的意义，困此我们编绘这本连环画出版。

In the current struggle to criticize Lin Biao and Confucius, “The New Year’s Sacrifice” is of considerable significance in revealing the reactionary nature of the Confucian and Menzian doctrines, therefore we compile and publish this *lianhuanhua*.

1. 有一年初冬，鲁镇鲁四老爷家里要换女工，做中人的卫老婆子带来了一个女工，年纪大约二十六，七岁，脸色青黄，但两颊却还是红的。

One year in early winter, the family of Mr. Lu in the town of Luzhen wanted to change their female worker. Old Wei, who acted as a middlewoman, brought a female worker, roughly 26 or 27 years old. She had a sallow face, but her cheeks were still reddish.

2. 卫老婆子叫她祥林嫂，说是自己母家的邻舍，死了当家人，所以出来做工。鲁四老爷皱了皱眉，鲁四太太已经知道了他的意思，是在讨厌她是一个寡妇。

Old Wei called her Xianglin’s wife, said she was her maternal family’s neighbour, and she came out to work because her husband had died. Mr. Lu frowned, and his wife immediately knew what he meant, that he disliked the status of Xianglin’s wife as a widow.

3. 但鲁四太太看祥林嫂模样还周正，手脚都壮大，很像一个安分耐劳的人，便不管四老爷的皱眉，将她留下试工了。

But Mrs. Lu thought her appearance very presentable, with strong hands and feet, and she looked like an honest and hard-working person, so she and kept her for a trial period regardless of Mr. Lu’s frown.

4. 试工期内，祥林嫂 整天的做，似乎闲着就无聊，她又有力，简直抵得过一个男子，所以第三天就定局，每月钱五百文。

During the trial period, Xianglin’s wife worked around the clock and seemed to get bored whenever she was idle. Besides, she was so strong that she could compete over a man, so on the third day, it was settled that she would stay and earn 500 wen per month.

5. 祥林嫂不很爱说话，别人问了才回答，答的也不多。直到十几天之后，别人陆续的知道：她家里还有严厉的婆婆，一个小叔子；她是春天没了丈夫的，她丈夫活着时打柴为生，比她小十岁。大家所知道的也就只是这一点。

Xianglin’s wife did not talk much and answered only when addressed, and her answers were brief. A dozen days had passed before other people learned bit-by-bit, that she had a harsh mother-in-law at home and a younger brother-in-law; she had lost her husband in the spring; her husband, 10 years younger than her, had gathered firewood for a living before he died. These were all that people knew about her.

6. 日子很快的过去了，她的做工却毫没有松懈。人们都说鲁四老爷家里雇着了女工， 实在比勤快的男人还勤快。到年底，扫尘，洗地， 杀鸡，宰鹅，彻夜的煮福礼， 全是一人担当，竟没有添短工。她的口角边渐渐的有了笑影，脸上也白胖了。

The days passed quickly, but her work never slacked off. Everyone said the female worker employed by Mr. Lu indeed was more diligent than a diligent man. By the end of the year, sweeping the dust, washing the ground, killing the chickens, slaughtering the geese, and preparing blessing ceremonies all night long, all of which were done by her alone without additional short-term helpers. The corners of her mouth gradually had a hint of a smile, her face also grew fairer and plumber.

7. 新年才过，祥林嫂从河边淘米回来时，忽而失了色，说刚才远远的看见一个男人在对岸徘徊，很像夫家的堂伯，恐怕是正为寻她而来了。鲁四太太很惊疑，打听底细，她又不说。

Just after the new year, once when Xianglin’s wife came back from rinsing rice by the river, she suddenly went pale and said that she just saw from afar a man pacing up and down on the other side of the riverband, who looked very similar to her husband’s cousin. She was afraid that he had come to find her. Mrs. Lu was suspicious, but when she asked for details, Xianglin’s wife would not say anything.

8. 鲁四老爷一知道，就皱一皱眉，对四太太说：这不好。恐怕她是逃出来的！

When Mr. Lu found out about this, he frowned and said to his wife: “This isn’t good. I’m afraid she ran away from her family!”

9. 此后大约十几天，卫老婆子忽而带了一个女人来了，说是祥林嫂的婆婆。那女人虽是山里人模样，然而应酬很从容，说她特地来叫她的儿媳回家去，因为开春事务忙，家中人手不够。

About ten days later, Old Wei suddenly brought a woman, saying that she was the mother-in-law of Xianglin’s wife. Although the woman looked like a peasant from the mountains, her social manner was very decent. She explained that she was here to take her daughter-in-law back home as her family was short of labor in the start of a busy spring.

10. 鲁四老爷说：“既是她的婆婆要她回去，那有什么话可以说呢。”于是算清了工钱，祥林嫂一文没有用，都交给婆婆。那女人又取了衣服，道过谢，出去了。其实已经是正午。

Mr. Lu said, “now that her mother-in-law wants her to go home, what can we say?” Then they settled her wages. As Xianglin’s wife had not used a single coin, the entire sum was handed over to her mother-in-law. The woman picked up the clothes of Xianglin’s wife, thanked Mr. Lu, and then left. It was already midday.

 11. 好一会，四太太这才惊叫起来：“啊呀，米呢？祥林嫂不是去淘米的么？”于是大家分头寻淘箩。四太太先到厨下，再到堂前，后到卧房，全不见淘箩的影子。

After a while, Mrs. Lu cried out, “Ah, where is the rice? Didn’t Xianglin’s wife go out to rinse the rice?” People scattered up to look for the rice basket. Mrs. Lu checked the kitchen, then the hall, afterwards the bedroom, but she didn’t see even a shadow of it.

12. 四老爷踱出门外，也不见，直到河边，才见淘箩平平正正的放在岸上，旁边还有一株菜。

Mr. Lu checked outside, and did not find any trace of it either. He finally found it placed neatly on the river bank, with a bunch of vegetables next to it.

13. 看见的人报告说，河里面上午就停了一只白篷船，篷是全盖起来的。待到祥林嫂出来淘米，刚刚要跪下去，船里便突然跳出两个男人来，像是山里人，一个抱住她，一个帮着，拖进船去。

Bystanders reported that there had been a boat moored on the river since the morning, fully covered with a white canopy. When Xianglin’s wife knelt down to wash the rice, two men looking like peasants from the mountains suddenly jumped out of the boat. One man caught her and, with the help of the other, dragged her into the boat.

14. 又说，祥林嫂还哭喊了几声，此后便再也没有什么声息，大约给用什么堵住了罢。接着就走上两个女人来，一个不认识，一个就是卫老婆子。窥探舱里，不很分明，祥林嫂像是捆了躺在船板上。

They continued to report, that Xianglin’s wife cried out a few times and then fell into silence. Her mouth was probably stuffed by something. Afterwards, two women appeared, one of them unknown, the other one Old Wei. The bystanders peeped in. It was not quite clear, but Xianglin’s wife seemed to be tied up lying on the deck.

15. 午饭之后，卫老婆子又来了。四老爷说：“可恶！”四太太愤愤地说：“你自己荐她来，又合伙劫她去，成个什么样子？你拿我们家里开玩笑么？”

Old Wei came again after lunch. Mr. Lu said, “How dreadful is this!” Mrs. Lu said angrily, “It was you yourself who recommended her to work here, and now you just helped others to kidnap her back, what is this? Are you trying to make a joke out of our family?”

16. 卫老婆子连忙说：“啊呀啊呀! 我真上当。对不起，四老爷，四太太。她来求我荐地方，我哪里料得到是瞒着她的婆婆的呢。这一回我一定荐一个好的来折罪……。”

Old Wei answered hurriedly, “Ah, ah! I was fooled. I apologize for this, Mr. and Mrs. Lu. She had come to me and begged for a work recommendation. How could I have known that she concealed this from her mother-in-law? Next time, I will find someone better to make up for the mistake.”

17. 原来祥林嫂瞒着她婆婆出来做工, 她婆婆要给小儿子娶媳妇，不把她嫁了就没有钱做聘礼，所以把她许给了贺家墺的贺老六。祥林嫂回家之后，她婆婆就逼她上轿。

As it turned out, Xianglin’s wife had left for work without telling her mother-in-law. Her mother-in-law wanted to find a wife for her younger son, and without the income from marrying her off they could not afford to pay the bride price. Xianglin's wife was thus promised to He Laoliu of Hejia Village. After Xianglin’s wife came home, her mother-in-law forced her to enter the bridal sedan chair.

18. 祥林嫂不依，她婆婆就叫小儿子把她用绳子一捆，塞在花轿里。祥林嫂一路只是嚎，骂，花轿抬到贺家墺， 她喉咙已经全哑了。

Xianglin’s wife would not comply, so her mother-in-law told the younger son to tie her up with a rope and shove her into the sedan chair. Xianglin’s wife howled and cursed the whole way, so by the time they arrived at Hejia Village, she was completely hoarse.

19. 拉出轿来，贺老六的哥哥和祥林嫂的小叔子使劲的擒住她，也还拜不成天地。

After being pulled out of the sedan chair, He Laoliu’s brother and her late husband’s brother exerted all their strength to restrain her, nonetheless they still could not make her complete the kowtows of the wedding ceremony.

20. 他们一不小心，一松手，祥林嫂就一头撞在香案角上，头上碰了一个大窟窿，鲜血直流，用了两把香灰,包上两块红布还止不住血。

When they, for a second, accidentally loosened their grip, Xianglin’s wife rammed her head into the corner of the incense burner table. She struck a large hole into her head, and fresh blood was flowing. They put two handfuls of incense ash on the wound and wrapped it with two pieces of red cloth, but they still could not stop the blood flow.

21. 直到他们七手八脚地将她和贺老六反关在新房里，她还是骂。

Even when they, with many other people lending hands, finally managed to lock her and He Laoliu up in the bridal chamber, she still kept on cursing.

22. 后来，祥林嫂到底拗不过，这才依顺了。贺老六有的是力气，会做活，房子是自家的，上头又没有婆婆，别人都说她交了好运。到年底，她就生了一个胖儿子，取名阿毛。

At last, Xianglin’s wife was unable to resist any longer, and she obeyed. He Laoliu had strength, he could work, the house was his family’s, and there was no mother-in-law over her head, so others said that she hit the jackpot. At the end of the year, she gave birth to a plump son named Ah Mao.

23. 不料过了三年，贺老六染上伤寒症，本来已经好了的，吃了一碗冷饭，复发了，年纪青青的丧了命。

Unexpectedly, after three years, He Laoliu caught typhoid fever. He had already recovered, but after eating a bowl of cold rice, he relapsed and died at a young age.

24. 祥林嫂打柴，摘茶， 养蚕，苦苦的扶养着儿子阿毛。

Xianglin’s wife gathered firewood, plucked tea, raised silkworms, struggling to raise her son Ah Mao.

25. 第二年春天，这一日，祥林嫂一清早起来就开了门，拿小篮盛了一篮豆，叫阿毛坐在门槛上剥豆子。

One day in the following spring, Xianglin’s wife opened the door early in the morning, scooped a basketful of beans into a small basket, and called Ah Mao to sit at the threshold and shell beans.

26. 她自己就在屋后劈柴，淘米，米下了锅，要蒸豆了，她这才叫阿毛。

She herself was at the back of the house chopping firewood and rinsing rice. After putting the rice into the pot, it was time to steam the beans, and only then did she call Ah Mao.

27. 没有应，她出来一看，只见豆撒得一地，没有她的阿毛了。

When there was no response, she went outside to look. All that could be seen were beans scattered all over the ground. Her Ah Mao was gone.

28. 她各处去问，都没有，她急了，央人出去寻。

She asked around everywhere, but no one had seen him. She became worried, and begged people to go search for him.

29. 直到下半天，寻来寻去寻到山墺里，看见刺柴上挂着一只阿毛的小鞋。大家都说：“糟了，怕是遭了狼了。”

Until the afternoon, they searched all over and reached a mountain clearing, where they saw one of Ah Mao’s little shoes hanging on a thorny branch. They all said: “Oh no, it looks like a wolf got him.”

30. 再寻进去，阿毛果然躺在草窠里，肚里的五脏已经都给狼吃空了，手上还紧紧地捏着那只小蓝。

Continuing the search, they indeed found Ah Mao lying in a grassy den, his guts already eaten away by the wolf. His hand was still tightly grasping the small basket.

31. 现在，祥林嫂只剩了一个光身了。

Now, Xianglin’s wife was left with nothing but her lone self.

32. 到秋天，贺老六的哥哥竟来收屋，把她赶了出来。

When autumn came, He Laoliu’s older brother took over the house and threw her.

33. 祥林嫂走投无路，只好拎了一只荸荠式的圆篮，一个小铺盖，又到鲁镇来找卫老婆子。

Xianglin’s wife had nowhere to go, carrying around a basket shaped like a water chestnut and a small bedroll, she came again to Luzhen looking for Old Wei.

34. 卫老婆子又将她带来鲁四老爷家里来了。四太太踌踌了一会，便叫祥林嫂拿圆篮和铺盖到下房去。四老爷照例皱皱眉，但鉴于向来雇用女工之难，也就并不大反对。

Old Wei brought her to Mr. Lu’s house again. His wife hesitated for a while, but eventually told Xianglin’s wife to bring her basket and bedroll to the servant’s room. Mr. Lu frowned as usual, but in view of the difficulty of employing female workers, he did not oppose.

35. 四老爷只是暗暗告诫四太太说，祥林嫂这种人虽然似乎很可怜，但是败坏风俗，用她帮忙还可以，祭祀时候可用不着她沾手，否则，不干不净，祖宗不是吃的。

Mr. Lu cautioned his wife in private, that although someone like Xianglin’s wife seems pitiful, she exerts a bad moral influence. It is okay to use her help, but she should not lend a hand during the sacrifices. Otherwise, the ancestors would not eat on because of her taints.

36. 鲁四老爷家里最重大的事件是祭祀，祥林嫂先前最忙的时候也就是祭祀，这回她却清闲了。桌子放在堂中央，她去分配酒杯和筷子。四太太慌忙地说：“祥林嫂， 你放着罢！我来摆。“

Sacrificing to the ancestors was the biggest event for the family of Mr. Lu. Previously, the sacrifices were also the busiest time for Xianglin’s wife. This time, however, she had nothing to do. The table was set in the centre of the hall, and she went to distribute glasses and chopsticks. Mrs. Lu rushed to say: “Xianglin’s wife, leave it there! I’ll do it.”

37. 她只好缩了手，又去取烛台，四太太慌忙地说：“祥林嫂，你放着罢！我来拿。“

She was forced to withdraw her hand and went to pick up a candlestick. Mrs. Lu said in a panic: “Xianglin’s wife, leave it there! I’ll get it.”

38. 她转了几个圆圈，终于没有事情做，只得疑惑的走开。她在这一天可做的事只不过坐在灶下烧火。

After making a few rounds around the house, finally, there was nothing left for her to do but to walk away in confusion. All she could do on this day was to sit by the stove and tend to the fire.

39. 镇上的人们仍然叫她祥林嫂，但音调和先前很不同；也还和她讲话，但笑容却冷冷的了。她全不理会那些事，只是直着眼睛，和大家讲她的儿子遭狼的故事，讲完就淌下眼泪来，声音也呜咽了。

Townspeople still called her Xianglin’s wife, but the tone was very different from before. They still talked with her, but their smiles had turned cold. She ignored those things, and with straight eyes she told everyone the story of how her son had been attacked by a wolf. When she finished her tale, she shed tears and her voice choked with sobs.

40. 这故事倒颇有效，男人听了，往往收起笑容，没趣的走开了；女人们却像宽恕了她似的，脸上立刻改换了鄙薄的神气，还要陪出许多眼泪来。

This story worked quite effectively. The men would stop smiling and walk away uninterestedly after they heard it. The women would seem to forgive her, immediately changing the contemptuous looks on their faces, and shedding tears along with her.

41. 她就只是反复的向人说她悲惨的故事，倘一看见两三岁的小孩子，她就想引出她的阿毛的故事来，说：“唉唉！我们的阿毛如果还在，也就有这么大了。……”

She just kept telling people again and again about her tragedy. Whenever she saw a two- or three-year-old child, she would bring up the story about her Ah-mao, and say, “Ah ah! If our Ah-mao were still alive, he would be around that age…”

42. 但不久，全镇的人们几乎都能背诵她的话，一听到就烦厌得头痛，立即打断她的话，走开去了，让她张着口怔怔地站着。

But before long, almost everyone in town could recite her words. As soon as they heard it, they instantly turned very annoyed, interrupted her at once, walked away, and left her standing in a daze with her mouth hanging open.

43. 从此她死尸似的脸上就整日没有笑影，主人们觉得她手脚也没有先前那样灵活，口气上更有些不满了。

From then on, the smile had disappeared from her corpse-like face. Her employers found her work not as efficient as before, therefore their tone towards her became more dissatisfied.

44. 转眼又到了年底，腊月二十以后，鲁四老爷家里又要忙着过新年了，这回另叫柳妈做帮手。柳妈是善女人，吃素，不肯杀鸡宰鹅，只管洗器皿。祥林嫂除烧火之外，没有别的事，闲坐着看柳妈洗器皿。

In the blink of an eye, it was the end of another year. After the 20th day of the twelfth lunar month, the Lu household was busy with the New Year’s celebration again. This time, they found an extra help, Auntie Liu. Auntie Liu was a Buddhist vegetarian woman who refused to kill chickens and geese, but merely washed the vessels. Xianglin’s wife had nothing to do except tend the fire, so she sat idly watching Auntie Liu wash the vessels.

45. 柳妈看着祥林嫂说：“你和你第二个男人过活不到两年，倒落了一件罪名。你将来到阴司去，那两个死鬼的男人还要争， 你给谁好呢？阎罗大王只好把你锯开来，分给他们。”

Auntie Liu looked at Xianglin’s wife and said: “You and your second husband were together for less than two years, yet you are guilty of a great sin. When you arrive in the nether world, the ghosts of those two husbands will fight, whom will you be given to? The great king Yama will have to saw you apart and divide you between them.”

46. 她听了柳吗的话，脸上就显出恐怖的神色来。柳吗接着说：“我想，你不如及早抵当。你到土地庙里。去捐一条门槛，当作你的替身，给千人踏，万人跨，赎了这一世的罪名，免得死了去受苦。”

When she heard Auntie Liu’s words, a look of horror appeared on her face. Auntie Liu continued: “I think, it would be better if you go to compensate for it as soon as possible. Go to the Temple of the Village God. Donate a threshold, make it as your substitute, let thousands of people step on it, let tens of thousands of people cross over it in order to atone for your sins in life, so that you will not have to suffer in death.”

47. 头天晚上，祥林嫂想着柳妈的话，越想越怕，到天亮才蒙胧睡去，又做了一个恶梦。第二天，早饭之后，她便到镇西头的土地庙里去求捐门槛。庙祝起初不允许，直到她急得流泪，才勉强答应了。价目是大钱十二千。

That evening, Xianglin’s wife thought about Auntie Liu’s words, the more she thought about it the more afraid she became. Only at dawn did she fall into a hazy sleep, and even then she had a nightmare. The next day, after breakfast, she went to the Temple of the Village God at the west end of town to ask to donate a threshold. At first, the temple attendant did not give his permission, only when she shed tears out of fear did he grudgingly agree. The price was twelve thousand large copper coins.

48. 从此，她整日紧闭了，默默的跑街，扫地，洗菜，淘米。快够一年，她才从四太太手里支取了历来积存的工钱，换算了十二元鹰洋，又请假镇西头去。

From then on, she became entirely closed off, silently walking the streets, sweeping the floor, washing vegetables and rinsing rice. It was almost a year later when she asked Mrs. Lu for her accumulated wages, adding up to 12 yuan and again took leave to go to the west end of the town.

49. 回来的时候，她神气舒畅，眼光也分外有神，高兴似的对四太太说，她已经在土地庙捐了门槛了。

When she came home, her spirit was entirely free from worry, and her eyes were exceptionally bright, looking happy she told Mrs. Lu that she had already been at the Temple of the Village God and donated a threshold.

50. 可是到冬至的祭祖时节，祥林嫂看四太太装好祭品，便坦然去拿酒杯和筷子。不料四太太照旧慌忙地大声说：“你放着罢，祥林嫂！“

When it came to the winter solstice and the sacrifices to the ancestors, Xianglin’s wife saw Mrs. Lu preparing the sacrificial offerings and went to get the wine cups and chopsticks. But to her surprise, Mrs. Lu, as before, rushed to say: “Leave it there, Xianglin’s wife!”

51. 她像是受了炮烙似的缩了手，脸色同时变作灰黑，也不再去取烛台，只是失神的站着。

She withdrew her hand as if it had been branded with red-hot metal, her face instantly became ashen, and she did not try again to fetch the candlestick, but just stood there dejectedly.

52. 直到四老爷上香的时候，叫她走开，她才走开。她疑惑的想：难道自己已经在土地庙捐了门槛，还不能赎了这一世的罪名么？… …

Only when Mr. Lu burned the joss sticks and ordered her to leave did she leave. Feeling uncertain, she thought: Could it be that despite having already paid for a threshold in contribution to the village temple, she still could not redeem herself from the sins of this life? …

53. 这一回她的变化非常大，第二天，不但眼睛凹陷下去，连精神也更不济了，而且很胆怯，有如在白天出穴游行的小鼠；否则呆坐着简直是一个木偶人。

This time, there was a huge change in her. The next day, her eyes were sunken down, her spirit further wasted away, and she became very timid, like a mouse wandering out of its hole in daytime; on other occasions she sat blankly, like a puppet.

54. 不到半年，她头发也花白起来了，记性尤其坏，甚而至于常常忘却了去淘米。四太太有时当面就说：“祥林嫂怎么这样了？倒不如那时不留她。”似乎是警告她，想打发她走了。

Within half a year, her hair started to turn white, her memory became particularly poor, even to the point that she frequently forgot to go and rinse rice. Mrs. Lu sometimes said right in front of her: “How come Xianglin’s wife becomes like this? It would have been better if we hadn’t kept her.” It was as if she was warning her that she wanted to dismiss her.

55. 不久，四太太终于停了祥林嫂的工，叫她回到卫老婆子那里去。镇上谁家都不肯雇用她，卫老婆子也没法收留，祥林嫂就成了乞丐。她头发全白，不像四十上下的人了。

Before long, Mrs. Lu finally suspended Xianglin’s wife’s work and told her to return to Old Wei’s. No household in town was willing to employ her, and Old Wei was unable to take her in, so Xianglin’s wife became a beggar. Her hair turned completely white, and she did not look like a person in their forties anymore.

56. 她见到识字的人，就用眼钉着问：“一个人死了之后，究竟有没有魂灵的？… … 死掉的一家人，真的都能见面么？… …” 但是，有谁能回答她呢！就是答得出，又能给她多少安慰呢！

When she came across someone literate, she fixed her stare at him and asked: “When a person dies, do they actually have a soul? … Dead families, can they truly meet each other? … ” But, who could answer her! Even if they gave an answer, how much comfort could this give her!

57. 转眼又到了年底，鲁镇的人家照例都又在“祝福”。这天天色阴暗，雪花乱糟糟的飞舞着，当鲁四老爷家里迎过福神，正在大放爆竹的时候，祥林嫂倒在河边，静悄悄的死了。

In the blink of an eye, it was the end of another year, the households of Luzhen were as usual all “performing the new year’s sacrifice”. The day was gloomy, the snowflakes danced wildly in the air, just as the Lu household welcomed the God of Fortune, right when the fireworks were being set off, Xianglin’s wife collapsed by the river bank and died quietly.

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