

Lesson 1 A puma at large

Pumas are large, cat-like animals which are found in America. When reports came into London Zoo that a wild puma had been spotted forty-five miles south of London, they were not taken seriously. However, as the evidence began to accumulate, experts from the Zoo felt obliged to investigate, for the descriptions given by people who claimed to have seen the puma were extraordinarily similar.

The hunt for the puma began in a small village where a woman picking blackberries saw 'a large cat' only five yards away from her. It immediately ran away when she saw it, and experts confirmed that a puma will not attack a human being unless it is cornered (adj. 被困得走投无路的) . The search proved difficult, for the puma was often observed at one place in the morning and at another place twenty miles away in the evening. Wherever it went, it left behind it a trail of dead deer and small animals like rabbits. Paw prints were seen in a number of places and puma fur was found clinging to bushes. Several people complained of 'cat-like noises' at night and a businessman on a fishing trip saw the puma up a tree. The experts were now fully convinced that the animal was a puma, but where had it come from ? As no pumas had been reported missing from any zoo in the country, this one must have been in the possession of a private collector and somehow managed to escape. The hunt went on for several weeks, but the puma was not caught. It is disturbing to think that a dangerous wild animal is still at large in the quiet countryside.

美洲狮是一种体形似猫的大动物，产于美洲。当伦敦动物园接到报告说，在伦敦以南 45 英里处发现一只美洲狮时，这些报告并没有受到重视。可是，随着证据越来越多，动物园的专家们感到有必要进行一番调查，因为凡是声称见到过美洲狮的人们所描述的情况竟是出奇地相似。

搜寻美洲狮的工作是从一座小村庄开始的。那里的一位妇女在采摘黑莓时的看见“一只大猫”，离她仅 5 码远，她刚看见它，它就立刻逃走了。专家证实，美洲狮非被逼得走投无路，是决不会伤人的。事实上搜寻工作很困难，因为常常是早晨在甲地发现那只美洲狮，晚上却在 20 英里外的乙地发现它的踪迹。无论它走哪儿，一路上总会留下一串死鹿及死兔子之类的小动物，在许多地方看见爪印，灌木丛中发现了粘在上面的美洲狮毛。有人抱怨说夜里听见“像猫一样的叫声”；一位商人去钓鱼，看见那只美洲狮在树上。专家们如今已经完全肯定那只动物就是美洲狮，但它是从哪儿来的呢？由于全国动物园没有一家报告丢了美洲狮，因此那只美洲狮一定是某位私人收藏豢养的，不知怎么设法逃出来了。搜寻工作进行了好几个星期，但始终未能逮住那只美洲狮。想到在宁静的乡村里有一头危险的野兽继续逍遥流窜，真令人担心。

Lesson 2 Thirteen equals one

Our vicar is always raising money for one cause or another, but he has never managed to get enough money to have the church clock repaired. The big clock which used to strike the hours day and night was damaged many years ago and has been silent ever since.

One night, however, our vicar woke up with a start: the clock was striking the hours! Looking at his watch, he saw that it was one o'clock, but the bell struck thirteen times before it stopped. Armed with a torch, the vicar went up into the clock tower to see what was going on. In the torchlight, he caught sight of a figure whom he immediately recognized as Bill Wilkins, our local grocer.

‘ Whatever are you doing up here Bill ?’ asked the vicar in surprise.

‘ I'm trying to repair the bell,’ answered Bill. ‘ I've been coming up here night after night for weeks now. You see, I was hoping to give you a surprise.’

‘ You certainly did give me a surprise!’ said the vicar. ‘ You've probably woken up everyone in the village as well. Still, I'm glad the bell is working again.

‘ That's the trouble, vicar,’ answered Bill. ‘ It's working all right, but I'm afraid that at one o'clock it will strike thirteen times and there's nothing I can do about it.’

‘ We'll get used to that Bill,’ said the vicar. ‘ Thirteen is not as good as one but it's better than nothing. Now let's go downstairs and have a cup of tea.’

我们教区的牧师总是为各种各样的事筹集资金。但始终未能筹足资金把教堂的钟修好。教堂的钟很大，以前不分昼夜打点报时，但很多年前遭到毁坏，从此便无声无息了。

一天夜里，我们的牧师突然被惊醒了，大钟又在“打点”报时了！他一看表，才1点钟，可是那钟一边敲了13下才停。牧师拿着一支电筒走上钟楼想去看看究竟发生了什么事情。借着电筒光。他看见一个人，马上认出那是本地杂货店主经比尔·威尔金斯。

“你究竟在这上面干什么，比尔？”牧师惊讶地问。

“我想把这口钟修好，”比尔回答说。“好几个星期了，我天天夜里到钟楼上。嗯，我是想让你大吃一惊。”

“你确实使我大吃了一惊！”牧师说，“也许同时你把村里所有的人都吵醒了。不过，钟又能报时了，我还是很高兴的。”

“问题就在这里，牧师，”比尔回答说。“不错，钟能报时了，但是，恐怕每到1点钟，它总要敲13下，对此我已无能为力了。”

“大家慢慢就习惯了，比尔，”牧师说。“下是不如13下好，但总比1下也不敲强。来，咱们下楼去喝杯茶吧。”

Lesson 3 An unknown goddess

Some time ago , an interesting discovery was made by archaeologists on the Aegean (adj. 爱琴海的 ; n.) island of Kea . An American team explored a temple which stands in an ancient city on the promontory of Ayia Irini . The city at one time must have been prosperous , for it enjoyed a high level of civilization . Houses--often three storeys high--were built of stone . They had large rooms with beautifully decorated walls . The city was even equipped with a drainage system , for a great many clay pipes were found beneath the narrow streets .

The temple which the archaeologists explored was used as a place of worship from the fifteenth century B.C. until Roman times. In the most sacred room of the temple, clay fragments of fifteen statues were found. Each of these represented a goddess and had, at one time, been painted. The body of one statue was found among remains dating from the fifteenth century B.C. Its missing head happened to be among remains of the fifth century B.C. This head must have been found in Classical times and carefully preserved. It was very old and precious even then. When the archaeologists reconstructed the fragments, they were amazed to find that the goddess turned out to be a very modern-looking woman. She stood three feet high and her hands rested on her hip. She was wearing a full-length skirt which swept the ground. Despite her great age, she was very graceful indeed, but, so far, the archaeologists have been unable to discover her identity.

不久之前，在爱琴海的基亚岛上，考古工作者有一项有趣的发现。一个美国考古队在阿伊亚·依里尼海角的一座古城里考察了一座庙宇。这座古城肯定一度很繁荣，因为它曾享有高度的文明，房子一般有 3 层楼高，用石块修建。里面房间很大，墙壁装饰华丽。城里甚至还敷设了排水系统，因为在狭窄的街道底下发现了许许多多陶土制作的排水管道。

考古工作者考察的这座庙宇从公元前 15 世纪直到罗马时代一直是祭祀祈祷的场所。在庙中最神圣的一间殿堂里发现了 15 尊陶雕像的碎片。每一尊雕像代表一位女神，而且一度上过色。其中有一尊雕像，她的躯体是在公元前 15 世纪的历史文物中发现的，而她那身异处的脑袋却碰巧是在公元前 5 世纪的文物中找到的。她的脑袋一定是在古希腊罗马时代就为人所发现，并受到精心的保护。即使在当时，它也属历史悠久的珍奇之物。考古工作者把这些碎片重新拼装起来后，惊奇地发现那位女神原来是一位相貌十分摩登的女郎。她身高 3 英尺，双手叉腰。身穿一条拖地长裙，尽管上了年纪，但体态确实优美。不过，考古工作者至今未能确定这位女神的身份。

Lesson 4 The double life of Alfred Bloggs

These days, people who do manual work often receive far more money than clerks who work in offices. People who work in offices are frequently referred to as 'white collar workers' for the simple reason that they usually wear a collar and tie to go to work. Such is human nature, that a great many people are often willing to sacrifice higher pay for the privilege of becoming white collar workers. This can give rise to curious situations, as it did in the case of Alfred Bloggs who worked as a dustman for the Ellesmere Corporation.

When he got married, Alf was too embarrassed to say anything to his wife about his job. He simply told her that he worked for the Corporation. Every morning, he left home dressed in a smart black suit. He then changed into overalls (n. 工作服) and spent the next eight hours as a dustman. Before returning home at night, he took a shower and changed back into his suit. Alf did this for over two years and his fellow dustmen kept his secret. Alf's wife has never discovered that she married a dustman and she never will, for Alf has just found another job. He will soon be working in an office as a junior clerk. He will be earning only half as much as he used to, but he feels that his rise in status is well worth the loss of money. From now on, he will wear a suit all day and others will call him 'Mr. Bloggs', not 'Alf'.

如今，从事体力劳动的人的收入一般要比坐办公室的人高出许多。坐办公室的之所以常常被称作“白领工人”，就是因为他们通常是穿着硬领白衬衫，系着领带去上班。许多人常常情愿放弃较高的薪水以换取做白领工人的殊荣，此乃人之常情。而这常常会引起种种奇怪的现象，在埃尔斯米尔公司当清洁工的艾尔弗雷德·布洛斯就是一个例子。

艾尔弗结婚时，感到非常难为情，而没有将自己的职业告诉妻子。他只说在埃尔斯米尔公司上班。每天早晨，他穿上一身漂亮的黑色西装离家上班，然后换上工作服，当 8 个小时清洁工。晚上回家前，他洗个淋浴，重新换上那身黑色西服。两年多以来，艾尔弗一直这样，他的同事也为他保守秘密。艾尔弗的妻子一直不知道她嫁给了一个清洁工，而且她永远也不会知道了，因为艾尔弗已找到薪职，不久就要坐办公室里工作了。他将来挣的钱只有他现在的一半。不过他觉得，地位升高了，损失点儿钱也值得。从此，艾尔弗可以一天到晚穿西服了。别人将称呼他为“布洛格斯先生”，而不再叫他“艾尔弗”了。

Lesson 5 The facts

Editors of newspapers and magazines often go to extremes to provide their readers with unimportant facts and statistics. Last year a journalist had been instructed by a well-known magazine to write an article on the president's palace in a new African republic. When the article arrived, the editor read the first sentence and then refused to publish it. The article began: 'Hundreds of steps lead to the high wall which surrounds the president's palace.' The editor at once sent the journalist a fax instructing him to find out the exact number of steps and the height of the wall.

The journalist immediately set out to obtain these important facts, but he took a long time to send them. Meanwhile, the editor was getting impatient, for the magazine would soon go to press. He sent the journalist two urgent telegrams, but received no reply. He sent yet another telegram informing the journalist that if he did not reply soon he would be fired. When the journalist again failed to reply, the editor reluctantly published the article as it had originally been written. A week later, the editor at last received a telegram from the journalist. Not only had the poor man been arrested, but he had been sent to prison as well. However, he had at last been allowed to send a cable in which he informed the editor that he had been arrested while counting the 1084 steps leading to the 15-foot wall which surrounded the president's palace.

报刊杂志的编辑常常为了向读者提供成立一些关紧要的事实和统计数字而走向极端。去年，一位记者受一家有名的杂志的委托写一篇关于非洲某个新成立共和国总统府的文章。稿子寄来后，编辑看第一句话就拒绝予以发表。文章的开头是这样的：“几百级台阶通向环绕总统的高墙。”编辑立即给那位记者发去传真，要求他核实一下台阶的确切数字和围墙的高度。

记者立即出发去核实这些重要的事实，但过了好长时间不见他把数字寄来，在此期间，编辑等得不耐烦了，因为杂志马上要付印。他给记者先后发去两份传真，但对方毫无反应。于是他又发了一份传真，通知那位记者说，若再不迅速答复，将被解雇。但记者还是没有回复。编辑无奈，勉强按原样发稿了。一周之后，编辑终于接到记者的传真。那个可怜的记者不仅被捕了，而且还被送进了监狱。不过，他终于获准发回了一份传真。在传真中他告诉编辑，就在他数通向 15 英尺高的总统府围墙的 1,084 级台阶时，被抓了起来。

Lesson 6 Smash-and-grab

The expensive shops in a famous arcade near Piccadilly were just opening. At this time of the morning, the arcade was almost empty. Mr Taylor, the owner of a jewellery shop was admiring a new window display. Two of his assistants had been working busily since 8 o'clock and had only just finished. Diamond necklaces and rings had been beautifully arranged on a background of black velvet. After gazing at the display for several minutes, Mr Taylor went back into his shop.

The silence was suddenly broken when a large car, with its headlights on and its horn blaring, roared down the arcade. It came to a stop outside the jeweler's. One man stayed at the wheel while two others with black stockings over their faces jumped out and smashed the window of the shop with iron bars. While this was going on, Mr Taylor was upstairs. He and his staff began throwing furniture out of the window. Chairs and tables went flying into the arcade. One of the thieves was struck by a heavy statue, but he was too busy helping himself to diamonds to notice any pain. The raid was all over in three minutes, for the men scrambled back into the car and it moved off at a fantastic speed. Just as it was leaving, Mr Taylor rushed out and ran after it throwing ashtrays and vases, but it was impossible to stop the thieves. They had got away with thousands of pounds worth of diamonds.

皮卡迪利大街附近的一条著名拱廊街道上，几家高档商店刚刚开始营业。在早晨这个时候，拱廊街上几乎空无一人。珠宝店主泰勒先生正在欣赏新布置的橱窗。他手下两名店员从早上 8 点就开始忙碌，这时刚刚布置完毕。钻石项链、戒指漂亮地陈列在黑色丝绒上面。泰勒先生站在橱窗外凝神欣赏了几分钟就回到了店里。

宁静突然被打破，一辆大轿车亮着前灯，响着喇叭，呼啸着冲进了拱廊街，在珠宝店门口停了下来。一人留在驾驶座上，另外两个用黑色长筒丝袜蒙面的人跳下车来。他们用铁棒把商店橱窗的玻璃砸碎。这开始发生时，泰勒先生正在楼上。他与店员动手向窗外投掷家具，椅子，桌子飞落花流水在拱廊街上。一个窃贼被一尊很重的雕像击中，但由于他忙着抢钻石首饰，竟连疼痛都顾不上了。这场抢劫只持续了 3 分钟，因为窃贼争先恐后地爬上轿车，以惊人的速度开跑了。就在轿车离开的时候，泰勒先生从店里冲了出来，跟在车后追赶，一边还往车上扔烟灰缸、花瓶。但他已无法抓住那些窃贼了。他们已带着价值数千镑的首饰逃之夭夭了。

Lesson 7 Mutilated ladies

Children often have far more sense than their elders. This simple truth was demonstrated rather dramatically during a civil defence exercise in a small town in Canada. Most of the inhabitants were asked to take part in the exercise during which they had to pretend that their city had been bombed. Air-raid warnings were sounded and thousands of people went into special air-raid shelters. Doctors and nurses remained above ground while Police patrolled the streets in case anyone tried to leave the shelters too soon.

The police did not have much to do because the citizens took the exercise seriously. They stayed underground for twenty minutes and waited for the siren to sound again. On leaving the air-raid shelters, they saw that doctors and nurses were busy. A great many people had volunteered to act as casualties. Theatrical make-up and artificial blood had been used to make the injuries look realistic. A lot of People were lying 'dead' in the streets. The living helped to carry the dead and wounded to special stations. A Child of six was brought in by two adults. The child was supposed to be dead. With theatrical make-up on his face, he looked as if he had died of shock. Some people were so moved by the sight that they began to cry. However, the child suddenly sat up and a doctor asked him to comment on his death. The child looked around for a moment and said, 'I think they're all crazy!'

这种事情在你身上出现过吗？你有没有把裤子塞洗衣机，然后又想在裤子的后兜有一张大面值的纸币？当你把裤子抢救出来时，你有没有发现那张纸币已经变得比白纸还白？当英国人犯这种错误时，他们不必感到绝望（而许多国家的人都有这种绝望的感觉）。对英国人来说，值得庆幸的是英国银行有一个残钞鉴别组，负责理那些把钱塞进机器或塞给狗的人提出的索赔要求。看起来，狗很喜欢咀嚼钱币。

最近的一个案例与简·巴特林有关，她的未婚夫约翰拥有一家生意兴隆家具店。有一天约翰的生意很好，他把一只装有 3,000 英镑的钱包放进微波炉内保存。然后，他和简一起去骑马。回家后，简用微波炉煮了晚饭，无意中之中把她未婚夫的钱包也一起煮了。可以想像他们发现一只煮得很好看的钱包，钞票已化成灰时的沮丧心情。约翰去找银行经理，经理把约翰的钱包和纸币的残留物送到英国银行在纽卡斯尔的一个专门部门——残钞鉴别组。他们鉴定了这些残留物。约翰拿回了 he 损失的全部数额。“只要有东西可供识别，我们会把钱还给人家的，”银行的一位女发言人说。“去年，我们对 21,000 起索赔要求支付了 150 万英镑。”

Lesson 8 A famous monastery

The Great St Bernard Pass connects Switzerland to Italy. At 2470 metres, it is the highest mountain pass in Europe. The famous monastery of St Bernard, which was founded in the eleventh century, lies about a mile away. For hundreds of years, St Bernard dogs have saved the lives of travellers crossing the dangerous Pass. These friendly dogs, which were first brought from Asia, were used as watch-dogs even in Roman times. Now that a tunnel has been built through the mountains, the Pass is less dangerous, but each year, the dogs are still sent out into the snow whenever a traveller is in difficulty. Despite the new tunnel, there are still a few people who rashly attempt to cross the Pass on foot.

During the summer months, the monastery is very busy, for it is visited by thousands of people who cross the Pass in cars. As there are so many people about, the dogs have to be kept in a special enclosure. In winter, however, life at the monastery is quite different. The temperature drops to -30 and very few people attempt to cross the Pass. The monks prefer winter to summer for they have more privacy. The dogs have greater freedom, too, for they are allowed to wander outside their enclosure. The only regular visitors to the monastery in winter are parties of skiers who go there at Christmas and Easter. These young people, who love the peace of the mountains, always receive a warm.

Welcome at St Bernard's monastery.

圣伯纳德大山口连接着瑞士与意大利，海拔 2,4730 米，是欧洲最高的山口。11 世纪建造的著名的圣伯纳德修道院位于离山口 1 英里远的地方。几百年来，圣伯纳德修道院驯养狗拯救了许多翻越这道山口的旅游者的生命。那些最先从亚洲引进的狗，待人友好，早在罗马时代就给人当看门狗了。如今由于山里开挖了隧道，翻越山口已不那么危险了。但每年还要派狗到雪山地里去帮助那些遇到困难的旅游者，尽管修通了隧道，但仍有一些人想冒险徒步跨越圣伯纳德山口。

夏天的几个月里，修道院十分忙碌，因为有成千上万的人驾车通过山口，顺道来修道院参观。由于来人太多，狗被关在专门的围栏里。然而到了冬天，修道院里的生活则是另一番景象。气温下降到零下度，试图跨越山口的人寥寥无几。修道士们喜欢冬天，而不太喜欢夏天。因为在冬天，他们可以更多地过无人打扰的生活。狗也比较自由，被放出围栏，四处遛达。冬天常来修道院参观的只有一批批滑雪者。他们在圣诞节或复活节到那儿去。这些热爱高山清静环境的年轻人每年都受到圣伯纳德道院的热烈欢迎。

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Lesson 9 Flying cats

Cats never fail to fascinate human beings. They can be friendly and affectionate towards humans, but they lead mysterious lives of their own as well. They never become submissive like dogs and horses. As a result, humans have learned to respect feline independence. Most cats remain suspicious of humans all their lives. One of the things that fascinates us most about cats is the popular belief that they have nine lives. Apparently, there is a good deal of truth in this idea. A cat's ability to survive falls is based on fact.

Recently the New York Animal Medical Centre made a study of 132 cats over a period of five months. All these cats had one experience in common: they had fallen off high buildings, yet only eight of them died from shock or injuries. Of course, New York is the ideal place for such an interesting study, because there is no shortage of tall buildings. There are plenty of high-rise windowsills to fall from! One cat, Sabrina, fell 32 storeys, yet only suffered from a broken tooth.

‘Cats behave like well-trained paratroopers,’ a doctor said. It seems that the further cats fall, the less they are likely to injure themselves. In a long drop, they reach speeds of 60 miles an hour and more. At high speeds, falling cats have time to relax. They stretch out their legs like flying squirrel. This increases their air-resistance and reduces the shock of impact when they hit the ground.

猫总能引起人们的极大兴趣。它们可以对人友好，充满柔情。但是，它们又有自己神秘的生活方式。它们从不像狗和马一样变得那么顺从。结果是人们已经学会尊重猫的独立性。在它们的一生中，大多数猫都对人存有戒心。最使我们感兴趣的一件事情就是一种通俗的信念——猫有九条命。显然，这种说法里面包含着许多真实性。猫在跌落时能够大难不死是有事实作为依据的。

最近，纽约动物医疗中心对 132 只猫进行了为期 5 个月的综合研究。所有这些猫有一个共同的经历：它们都曾从高层建筑上摔下来过，但只有其中的 8 只猫死于震荡或跌伤。当然，纽约是进行这种有趣的试验的一个理想的地方，因为那里根本不缺乏高楼大厦，有的是高层的窗槛从上往下坠落。有一只叫萨伯瑞的猫从 32 层楼上掉下来，但只摔断一颗牙。“猫就像训练有素的跳伞队员，”一位医生说。看起来，猫跌落距离越长，它们就越不会伤害自己。在一个长长的跌落过程中，它们可以达到每小时 60 里甚至更快的速度。在高速下落中，猫有时间放松自己。它们伸展四肢，就像飞行中的松鼠一样。这样就加大了空气阻力，并减少了它们着地时冲击力带来的震动。

Lesson 10 The loss of Titanic

The great ship, Titanic, sailed for New York from Southampton on April 10th, 1912. She was carrying 1316 passengers and a crew of 891. Even by modern standards, the 46,000 ton Titanic was a colossal ship. At that time, however, she was not only the largest ship that had ever been built, but was regarded as unsinkable, for she had sixteen water-tight compartments. Even if two of these were flooded, she would still be able to float. The tragic sinking of this great liner will always be remembered, for she went down on her first voyage with heavy loss of life.

Four days after setting out, while the Titanic was sailing across the icy waters of the North Atlantic, a huge iceberg was suddenly spotted by a look-out. After the alarm had been given, the great ship turned sharply to avoid a direct collision. The Titanic turned just in time, narrowly missing the immense wall of ice which rose over 100 feet out of the water beside her. Suddenly, there was a slight trembling sound from below, and the captain went down to see what had happened. The noise had been so faint that no one thought that the ship had been damaged. Below, the captain realized to his horror that the Titanic was sinking rapidly, for five of her sixteen water-tight compartments had already been flooded ! The order to abandon ship was given and hundreds of people plunged into the icy water. As there were not enough life-boats for everybody, 1500 lives were lost.

巨轮“泰坦尼克”号 1912 年 4 月 10 日从南安普敦起锚驶向纽约。船上载有 1,316 名乘客与 891 名船员。却使用现代标准来衡量，45,000 吨的“泰坦尼克”号与算得上一艘巨轮了。当时，这艘轮船不仅是造船史上建造的最大的一艘船，而且也被认为是不会沉没的。因为船由 16 个密封舱组成，即使有两个舱进水，仍可漂浮的水面上。然而，这艘巨轮首航就下沉，造成大批人员死亡。人们将永远记着这艘巨轮的沉没惨剧。

“泰坦尼克”起航后的第 4 天，它正行驶在北大西洋冰冷的海面上。突然，了望员发现一座冰山。警报响过不久，巨轮急转弯，以避免与冰山正面相撞。“泰坦尼克”这个弯拐得及时，紧贴着高出海面 100 英尺的巨大的冰墙擦过去。突然，从船舱下部传来一声微颤音，船长走下船舱去查看究竟。由于这个声音非常轻，没人会想到船身已遭损坏。在下面，船长惊恐地发现“泰坦尼克”号正在急速下沉，16 个密封舱已有 5 个进水。于是，他发出弃船的命令，几百人跳进了冰冷刺骨的海水里。由于没有足够的救生艇运载所有乘客，结果，1,500 人丧生。

Lesson 11 Not guilty

Going through the Customs is a tiresome business. The strangest thing about it is that really honest people are often made to feel guilty. The hardened professional smuggler, on the other hand, is never troubled by such feelings, even if he has five hundred gold watches hidden in his suitcase. When I returned from abroad recently, a particularly officious young Customs Officer clearly regarded me as a smuggler.

'Have you anything to declare?' he asked, looking me in the eye.

'No,' I answered confidently.

'Would you mind unlocking this suitcase please ?'

'Not at all,' I answered.

The Officer went through the case with great care. All the things I had packed so carefully were soon in a dreadful mess. I felt sure I would never be able to close the case again. Suddenly, I saw the Officer's face light up. He had spotted a tiny bottle at the bottom of my case and he pounced on it with delight.

'Perfume, eh?' he asked sarcastically. 'You should have declared that.' Perfume is not exempt from import duty.'

'But it isn't perfume,' I said. 'It's hair-oil.' Then I added with a smile, 'It's a strange mixture I make myself.' As I expected, he did not believe me.

'Try it!' I said encouragingly.

The Officer unscrewed the cap and put the bottle to his nostrils. He was greeted by an unpleasant smell which convinced him that I was telling the truth. A few minutes later, I was able to hurry away with precious chalk-marks on my baggage.

现在的海关官员往往相当宽容。但是，当你通过绿色通道，没有任何东西需要申报时，他们仍可以拦住你。甚至是最诚实的人也常弄得觉得有罪似的，而老练的职业走私犯却使手提箱里藏着 500 只金表，却也处之泰然。最近一次，我也出国归来，碰上一位特别好管闲事的年轻海关官员，他显然把我当成走私犯。

“您有什么需要申报的吗？”他直盯着我的眼睛问。

“没有。”我自信地回答说。

“请打开这只手提箱好吗？”

“好的。”我回答说。

那位官员十分仔细地把箱子检查了一遍。所有细心包装好的东西一会儿工夫就乱成一团。我相信那箱子再也关不上了。突然，我看到官员脸上露出了得意的神色。他在我的箱底发现了一只小瓶，高兴地一把抓了起来。

“香水，嗯？”他讥讽地说道，“你刚才应该申报，香水要上进口税的。”

“不，这不是香水，”我说，“是发胶。”接着我脸带微笑补充说：“这是一种我自己配制的奇特的混合物。”

“你就闻一闻吧！”我催促说。

海关官员拧开瓶盖，把瓶子放到鼻子底下。一股怪味袭来，使他相信了我说的真话。几分钟后，我终于被放行，手提划着宝贵的粉笔记号的行李，匆匆离去。

Lesson 12 Life on a desert island

Most of us have formed an unrealistic picture of life on a desert island. We sometimes imagine a desert island to be a sort of paradise where the sun always shines. Life there is simple and good.

Ripe fruit falls from the trees and you never have to work. The other side of the picture is quite the opposite. Life on a desert island is wretched. You either starve to death or live like Robinson Crusoe, waiting for a boat which never comes. Perhaps there is an element of truth in both these pictures, but few of us have had the opportunity to find out.

Two men who recently spent five days on a coral island wished they had stayed there longer. They were taking a badly damaged boat from the Virgin Islands to Miami to have it repaired. During the journey, their boat began to sink. They quickly loaded a small rubber dinghy with food, matches, and tins of beer and rowed for a few miles across the Caribbean until they arrived at a tiny coral island. There were hardly any trees on the island and there was no water, but this did not prove to be a problem. The men collected rain-water in the rubber dinghy. As they had brought a spear gun with them, they had plenty to eat. They caught lobster and fish every day, and, as one of them put it 'ate like kings'. When a passing tanker rescued them five days later, both men were genuinely sorry that they had to leave.

我们许多人对于荒岛生活有一种不切实际的想法。我们有时想象荒岛是阳光终日普照的天堂。在那里，生活简单又美好。成熟的水果从树上掉下来，人们根本无需劳动。另一种想法恰恰相反，认为荒岛生活很可怕，要么饿死，要么像鲁滨孙那样，天天盼船来，却总没见船影。也许，这两种都像都有可信之处。但很少有人能有机会去弄个究竟。

最近有两个人在一座珊瑚岛上呆了 5 天，他们真希望在那儿再多呆一些日子。他们驾着一条严重损坏的小船从维尔京群岛阿密修理。途中，船开始下沉，他们迅速把食物、火柴、罐装啤酒往一只救生筏上装。然后在加勒比海上划行了几英里，到了一座珊瑚岛上。岛上几乎没有一颗树，也没有淡水，但这不算什么问题。他们用橡皮艇蓄积雨水。由于他们随身带了一支捕鱼枪，因此，吃饭不愁。他们天天捕捉龙虾和鱼，正如其中一位所说，吃得“像国王一样好”。5 天后，一条油轮从那儿路过，搭救了他们。这二位不得不离开那个荒岛时，还真的感到遗憾呢！

Lesson 13 It ' s only me

After her husband had gone to work, Mrs Richards sent her children to school and went upstairs to her bedroom. She was too excited to do any housework that morning, for in the evening she would be going to a fancy dress party with her husband. She intended to dress up as a ghost and as she had made her costume the night before, she was impatient to try it on. Though the costume consisted only of a sheet, it was very effective. After putting it on, Mrs Richards went downstairs. She wanted to find out whether it would be comfortable to wear.

Just as Mrs Richards was entering the dining-room, there was a knock on the front door. She knew that it must be the baker. She had told him to come straight in if ever she failed to open the door and to leave the bread on the kitchen table. Not wanting to frighten the poor man, Mrs Richards quickly hid in the small store-room under the stairs. She heard the front door open and heavy footsteps in the hall. Suddenly the door of the store-room was opened and a man entered. Mrs Richards realized that it must be the man from the Electricity Board who had come to read the meter. She tried to explain the situation, saying ' It's only me ', but it was too late. The man let out a cry and jumped back several paces. When Mrs Richards walked towards him, he fled, slamming the door behind him.

理查兹夫人等丈夫上班走后，把孩子送去上学，然后来到楼上自己的卧室。那天上午，她兴奋得什么家务活都不想做，因为晚上她要同丈夫一起参加一个化装舞会。她打算装扮成鬼的模样。头天晚上她已把化装服做好，这时她急于想试试。尽管化装服仅由一个被单制成，却十分逼真。理查兹夫人穿上化装服后下了楼，想看穿起来是否舒服。

理查兹夫人刚刚走进餐厅，前门就传来敲门声。她知道来了一定面包师。她曾告诉过面包师，如果她不去开门，他可直接进门，把面包放在厨房的桌上。理查兹夫人不想吓唬这个可怜人，便赶紧躲到了楼梯下的小储藏室里。她听见前门被打开，走廊里响起重重的脚步声。突然贮藏门开了，一个男人走了进来。理查兹夫人这才想到一定是供电局来人查电表了。她说了声“是我，别怕！”然后想进行一番解释，但已来不及了。那人大叫了一声，惊退了几步。理查兹夫人朝他走去，只见他“砰”的一声关上门逃走了。

Lesson 14 A noble gangster

There was a time when the owners of shop and businesses in Chicago had to pay large sums of money to gangsters in return for 'protection'. If the money was not paid promptly, the gangsters would quickly put a man out of business by destroying his shop. Obtaining 'protection money' is not a modern crime. As long ago as the fourteenth century, an Englishman, Sir John Hawkwood, made the remarkable discovery that people would rather pay large sums of money than have their life work destroyed by gangsters.

Six hundred years ago, Sir John Hawkwood arrived in Italy with a band of soldiers and settled near Florence. He soon made a name for himself and came to be known to the Italians as Giovanni Acuto. Whenever the Italian city-states were at war with each other, Hawkwood used to hire his soldiers to princes who were willing to pay the high price he demanded. In times of peace, when business was bad, Hawkwood and his men would march into a city-state and, after burning down a few farms, would offer to go away if protection money was paid to them. Hawkwood made large sums of money in this way. In spite of this, the Italians regarded him as a sort of hero. When he died at the age of eighty, the Florentines gave him a state funeral and had a picture painted which was dedicated to the memory of 'the most valiant soldier and most notable leader, Signor Giovanni Hawkwood'.

曾经有一个时期，芝加哥的店主和商行的老板们不得不拿出大笔的钱给歹徒以换取“保护”。如果交款不及时，歹徒们就会很快捣毁他的商店，让他破产。榨取“保护金”并不是一种现代的罪恶行径。早在14世纪，英国人约翰·霍克伍德就有过非凡的发现：“人们情愿拿出大笔的钱，也不愿毕生的心血毁于歹徒之手。”

600年前，约翰·霍克伍德爵士带着一队士兵来到意大利，在佛罗伦萨附近驻扎下来，很快就出了名。意大利人叫他乔凡尼·阿库托。每次意大利各城邦之间打仗，霍克伍德把他的士兵雇佣给愿给他出高价的君主。和平时期，当生意萧条时，霍克伍德便带领士兵进入某个城邦，纵火烧毁一两个农场，然后提出，如向他们缴纳保护金，他们便主动撤离。霍克伍德用这种方法挣了大笔钱。尽管如此，意大利人还是把他视作某种英雄。他80岁那年死去时，佛罗伦萨人为他举行了国葬，并为他画像以纪念这位“骁勇无比的战士、杰出的领袖乔凡尼·阿库托先生。”

Lesson 15 Fifty pence worth of trouble

Children always appreciate small gifts of money. Father, of course, provides a regular supply of pocket-money, but uncles and aunts are always a source of extra income. With some children, small sums go a long way. If sixpences are not exchanged for sweets, they rattle for months inside money-boxes. Only very thrifty children manage to fill up a money-box. For most of them, sixpence is a small price to pay for a satisfying bar of chocolate.

My nephew, George, has a money-box but it is always empty. Very few of the sixpences I have given him have found their way there. I gave him sixpence yesterday and advised him to save it. Instead, he bought himself sixpence worth of trouble. On his way to the sweet shop, he dropped his sixpence and it rolled along the pavement and then disappeared down a drain. George took off

his jacket, rolled up his sleeves and pushed his right arm through the drain cover. He could not find his sixpence anywhere, and what is more, he could not get his arm out. A crowd of people gathered round him and a lady rubbed his arm with soap and butter, but George was firmly stuck. The fire-brigade was called and two firemen freed George using a special type of grease. George was not too upset by his experience because the lady who owns the sweet shop heard about his troubles and rewarded him with a large box of chocolates.

孩子们总是喜欢得到一些零花钱。爸爸妈妈当然经常给孩子零花钱，但是，舅舅阿姨也是孩子们额外收入来源。对于有些孩子来说，少量的钱可以花很长一段时间。如果 50 便士不拿来换糖吃，则可以放在储蓄罐里叮当响上好几月。但是能把储蓄罐装满的只有屈指可数的几个特别节俭的孩子。对大部分孩子来说，用 50 便士来买一大块好的巧克力，是算不了什么的。

我的外甥乔治有一个储蓄罐，但总是空空的。我给了不少 50 便士的硬币，但没有几个存到储蓄罐里。昨天，我给了他 50 便士让存起来，却拿这钱给自己买了 50 便士的麻烦。在他去糖果店的路上，50 便士掉在地上，在人行道上跳了几下，掉进了阴沟里。乔治脱掉外套，卷起袖子，将右胳膊伸进了阴沟盖。但他摸了半天也没找到那 50 便士硬币，他的胳膊反倒退不出来了。这时在他周围上了许多人，一位女士在乔治胳膊上抹了肥皂，黄油，但乔治的胳膊仍然卡得紧紧的。有人打电话叫来消防队，两位消防队员使用了一种特殊的润滑剂才使乔治得以解脱。不过，此事并没使乔治过于伤心，因为糖果店老板娘听说了他遇到的麻烦后，赏给他一大盒巧克力。

Lesson 16 Mary had a little lamb

Mary and her husband Dimitri lived in the tiny village of Perachora in southern Greece. One of Mary's prize possessions was a little white lamb which her husband had given her. She kept it tied to a tree in a field during the day and went to fetch it every evening. One evening, however, the lamb was missing. The rope had been cut, so it was obvious that the lamb had been stolen. When Dimitri came in from the fields, his wife told him what had happened. Dimitri at once set out to find the thief.

He knew it would not prove difficult in such a small village. After telling several of his friends about the theft, Dimitri found out that his neighbour, Aleko, had suddenly acquired a new lamb. Dimitri immediately went to Aleko's house and angrily accused him of stealing the lamb. He told him he had better return it or he would call the police. Aleko denied taking it and led Dimitri into his back-yard. It was true that he had just bought a lamb, he explained, but his lamb was black. Ashamed of having acted so rashly, Dimitri apologized to Aleko for having accused him. While they were talking it began to rain and Dimitri stayed in Aleko's house until the rain stopped. When he went outside half an hour later, he was astonished to find that the little black lamb was almost white. Its wool, which had been dyed black, had been washed clean by the rain !

玛丽与丈夫迪米特里住在希腊南部一个叫波拉考拉的小村庄里。 玛丽最珍贵的财产之一就是丈夫送给她的一只白色小羔羊。白天，玛丽把羔羊拴在地里的一颗树上，每天晚上把它牵回家。可是，一天晚上，那只小羔羊失踪了。绳子被人割断，很明显小羔羊是被人偷走了。

迪米特里从地里回来，妻子把情况跟他一说，他马上出去找偷羔羊的人。他知道在这样一个小村庄里抓住小偷并不困难。把失窃的事告诉几个朋友后，迪米特里发现他的邻居阿列科家突然多了一只小羔羊。迪米特里立刻去了阿列科家，气呼呼地指责他偷了羔羊，告诉他最好把羊交还，否则就去叫警察。阿列科不承认，并把迪米特里领进院子。不错，他的确刚买了一只羔羊，阿列科解释说，但他的羔羊是黑色的。迪米特里为自己的鲁莽而感到不好意思，向阿列科道了歉，说是错怪了他。就在他俩说话的时候，天下起了雨，迪米特里便呆在阿列科家里避雨，一直等到雨停为止。半小时后，当 he 从屋里出来时，他惊奇地发现小黑羔羊全身几乎都变成白色。原来羊毛上染的黑色被雨水冲掉了！

Lesson 17 The longest suspension bridge in the world

Verrazano, an Italian about whom little is known, sailed into New York Harbour in 1524 and named it Angouleme. He described it as 'a very agreeable situation located within two small hills in the midst of which flowed a great river.' Though Verrazano is by no means considered to be a great explorer, his name will probably remain immortal, for on November 21st, 1964, the greatest bridge in the world was named after him.

The Verrazano Bridge, which was designed by Othmar Ammann, joins Brooklyn to Staten Island. It has a span of 4260 feet. The bridge is so long that the shape of the earth had to be taken into account by its designer. Two great towers support four huge cables. The towers are built on immense underwater platforms made of steel and concrete. The platforms extend to a depth of over 100 feet under the sea. These alone took sixteen months to build. Above the surface of the water, the towers rise to a height of nearly 700 feet. They support the cables from which the bridge has been suspended. Each of the four cables contains 26,108 lengths of wire. It has been estimated that if the bridge were packed with cars, it would still only be carrying a third of its total capacity. However, size and strength are not the only important things about this bridge. Despite its immensity, it is both simple and elegant, fulfilling its designer's dream to create 'an enormous object drawn as faintly as possible'.

1524 年，一位鲜为人知的意大利人维拉萨诺驾船驶进纽约港，并将该港名为安古拉姆。他对该港作了这样的描述：“地理位置十分适宜，位于两座小山的中间，一条大河从中间流过”。虽然维拉萨诺绝对算不上一个伟大的探险家，但他的名字将流芳百世，因为 1964 年 11 月 21 日建成的一座世界上最长的吊桥是以他的名字命名。

维拉萨诺大桥由奥斯马·阿曼设计，连结着布鲁克林与斯塔顿岛，桥长 4,260 英尺。由于桥身太长，设计者不得不考虑了地表的形状。两座巨塔支撑着 4 根粗大的钢缆。塔身建在巨大的水下钢盘混凝土平台上。平台深入海底 100 英尺。仅这两座塔就花了 16 个月才建成。塔身高出水面将近 700 英尺。高塔支撑着钢缆，而钢缆又悬吊着大桥，4 根钢缆中的每根由 26,108 股钢绳组成。据估计，若桥上摆满了汽车，也只不过是桥的总承载力的 1/3。然而，这座桥重要特点不仅是它的规模与强度。尽管此桥很大，但它的结构简单，造型优美，实现了设计者企图创造一个“尽量用细线条勾画出一个庞然大物”的梦想。

Lesson 18 Electric currents in modern art

Modern sculpture rarely surprises us any more. The idea that modern art can only be seen in museums is mistaken. Even people who take no interest in art cannot have failed to notice examples of modern sculpture on display in public places. Strange forms stand in gardens, and outside buildings and shops. We have got quite used to them. Some so-called 'modern' pieces have been on display for nearly fifty years.

In spite of this, some people--including myself--were surprised by a recent exhibition of modern sculpture. The first thing I saw when I entered the art gallery was a notice which said: 'Do not touch the exhibits. Some of them are dangerous!' The objects on display were pieces of moving sculpture. Oddly shaped forms that are suspended from the ceiling and move in response to a gust of wind are quite familiar to everybody. These objects, however, were different. Lined up against the wall, there were long thin wires attached to metal spheres. The spheres had been magnetized and attracted or repelled each other all the time. In the centre of the hall, there were a number of tall structures which contained coloured lights. These lights flickered continuously like traffic lights which have gone mad. Sparks were emitted from small black boxes and red lamps flashed on and off angrily. It was rather like an exhibition of prehistoric electronic equipment. These Peculiar forms not only seemed designed to shock people emotionally, but to give them electric shocks as well !

现代雕塑不再使我们感到惊讶了。那种认为现代艺术只能在博物馆里才能看到的观点是错误的。即使是对艺术不感兴趣的人也不会注意到在公共场所展示的现代艺术品。公园里、大楼和商店外竖立着的奇形怪状的雕塑，对这些，我们已经司空见惯了。有些所谓的“现代”艺术品在那里已经陈列了近 80 年了。

尽管如此，最近举办的一次现代雕塑展览还是使一些人（包括我在内）大吃一惊。走进展厅首先看到的是一张告示，上面写着“切勿触摸展品，某些展品有危险！”展品都是些活动的雕像。人们所熟悉的是悬挂在天花板上、造型奇特、随风飘荡的雕塑品。这些展品却使人大开眼界。靠墙排列着许多细长的电线，而电线又连着金属球。金属球经过磁化，互相之间不停地相互吸引或相互排斥。展厅中央是装有彩色灯泡的许多高高的构件，灯泡一刻不停地闪烁着，就像失去了控制的红绿灯。小黑盒子里进出火花，红色灯泡发怒似地忽明忽暗。这儿倒像是在展览古老的电子设备。好像设计这些奇形怪状的展品不仅是为了给人感情上的强烈刺激，而且还想给人以电击似的！

Lesson 19 A very dear cat

Kidnappers are rarely interested in Animals, but they recently took considerable interest in Mrs Eleanor Ramsay's cat. Mrs Eleanor Ramsay, a very wealthy old lady, has shared a flat with her cat, Rastus, for a great many years. Rastus leads an orderly life. He usually takes a short walk in the evenings and is always home by seven o'clock. One evening, however, he failed to arrive. Mrs Ramsay got very worried. She looked everywhere for him but could not find him.

Three day after Rastus' disappearance, Mrs Ramsay received an anonymous letter. The writer stated that Rastus was in safe hands and would be returned immediately if Mrs Ramsay paid a ransom of &1000. Mrs Ramsay was instructed to place the money in a cardboard box and to leave it outside her door. At first, she decided to go to the police, but fearing that she would never see Rastus again --the letter had made that quite clear--she changed her mind. She drew &1000 from her bank and followed the kidnapper's instructions. The next morning, the box had disappeared but Mrs Ramsay was sure that the kidnapper would keep his word. Sure enough, Rastus arrived punctually at seven o'clock that evening. He looked very well, though he was rather thirsty, for he drank half a bottle of milk. The police were astounded when Mrs Ramsay told them what she had done. She explained that Rastus was very dear to her. Considering the amount she paid, he was dear in more ways than one!

绑架者很少对动物感兴趣。最近，绑架者却盯上了埃莉诺·拉姆齐太太的猫。埃莉诺·拉姆齐太太是一个非常富有的老妇人，多年来，一直同她养的猫拉斯一起住在一所公寓里。拉斯特斯生活很有规律，傍晚常常出去溜达一会儿，并且总是在 7 点钟以前回来。可是，有一天晚上，它出去后再也没回来。拉姆齐太太急坏了，四处寻找，但没有找着。

拉斯特斯失踪 3 天后，拉姆齐太太收到一封匿名信。写信人声称拉斯特斯安然无恙，只要拉姆齐太太愿意支付 1,000 英镑赎金，可以立即将猫送还。他让拉姆齐太太把钱放在一个纸盒里，然后将纸盒放在门口。一开始拉姆齐太太打算报告警察，但又害怕再也见不到拉斯特斯——这点，信上说得十分明白——于是便改变了主意。她从银行取出 1,000 英镑，并照绑架者的要求做了。第二天早晨，放钱的盒子不见了。但拉姆齐太太确信绑架者是会履行诺言的。果然，当天晚上 7 点正，拉斯特斯准时回来了。它看上去一切正常，只是口渴得很，喝了半瓶牛奶。拉姆齐太太把她所做告诉了警察，警察听后大为吃惊。拉姆齐太太解释说她心疼她的猫拉斯特斯。想到她所花的那笔钱，她的心疼就具有双重意义了。

Lesson 20 Pioneer pilots

In 1908 Lord Northcliffe offered a prize of £1000 to the first man who would fly across the English Channel. Over a year passed before the first attempt was made. On July 19th, 1909, in the early morning, Hubert Latham took off from the French coast in his plane the 'Antoinette IV'. He had travelled only seven miles across the Channel when his engine failed and he was forced to land on the sea. The 'Antoinette' floated on the water until Latham was picked up by a ship.

Two days later, Louis Bleriot arrived near Calais with a plane called 'No. XI'. Bleriot had been making planes since 1905 and this was his latest model. A week before, he had completed a successful overland flight during which he covered twenty-six miles. Latham, however did not give up easily. He, too, arrived near Calais on the same day with a new 'Antoinette'. It looks as if there would be an exciting race across the Channel. Both planes were going to take off on July 25th, but Latham failed to get up early enough. After making a short test flight at 4.15 a.m., Bleriot set off half an hour later. His great flight lasted thirty seven minutes. When he landed near Dover, the first person to greet him was a local policeman. Latham made another attempt a week later and got within half a mile of Dover, but he was unlucky again. His engine failed and he landed on the sea for the second time.

1908 年，诺斯科克利夫勋爵拿出 1,000 英镑，作为对第一个飞越英吉利海峡的人的奖励。然而一年多过去了才有人出来尝试。1909 年 7 月 19 日凌晨，休伯特·莱瑟姆驾驶“安特瓦特 4 号”飞机从法国海岸起飞，但他只在海峡上空飞行 7 英里，引擎就发生了故障，他只好降落在海面上。“安特瓦特”号飞机在海上漂浮，后来有船经过，莱瑟姆方才获救。

两天之后，路易斯·布莱里奥驾驶一名为“号 1”的飞机来到加来附近。布莱里奥从 1905 年起便开始研制飞机，“号 1”飞机是他制作的最新型号。一周以前，他曾成功地进行了一次 26 英里的陆上飞行。但是莱瑟姆不肯轻易罢休。同一天，他驾驶一架新的“安特瓦特”号飞机来到了加来附近。看来会有一场激烈的飞越英吉利海峡的竞争。两天飞机都打算在 7 月 25 日起飞，但莱瑟姆那天起床晚了。布莱里奥凌晨 4 点 15 分作了一次短距离试飞，半小时后便正式出发了。他这次伟大的飞行持续 37 分钟。当他在多佛着陆后，第一个迎接他的是当地一名警察。莱瑟姆一周以后也作了一次尝试，飞到离多佛不到半英里的地方。这次他又遭厄运，因引擎故障第二次降落在海面上。

Lesson 21 Daniel Mendoza

Boxing matches were very popular in England two hundred years ago. In those days, boxers fought with bare fists for Prize money. Because of this, they were known as 'prize-fighters'. However, boxing was very crude, for there were no rules and a prize-fighter could be seriously injured or even killed during a match.

One of the most colourful figures in boxing history was Daniel Mendoza who was born in 1764. The use of gloves was not introduced until 1860 when the Marquis of Queensberry drew up the first set Of rules. Though he was technically a prize-fighter, Mendoza did much to change crude prize-fighting into a sport, for he brought science to the game. In his day, Mendoza enjoyed tremendous popularity. He was adored by rich and poor alike.

Mendoza rose to fame swiftly after a boxing-match when he was only fourteen years old. This attracted the attention of Richard Humphries who was then the most eminent boxer in England. He offered to train Mendoza and his young pupil was quick to learn. In fact, Mendoza soon became so successful that Humphries turned against him. The two men quarrelled bitterly and it was clear that the argument could only be settled by a fight. A match was held at Stilton where both men fought for an hour. The public bet a great deal of money on Mendoza, but he was defeated. Mendoza met Humphries in the ring on a later occasion and he lost for a second time. It was not until his third match in 1790 that he finally beat Humphries and became Champion of England. Meanwhile, he founded a highly successful Academy and even Lord Byron became one of his pupils. He earned enormous sums of money and was paid as much as £100 for a single appearance. Despite this, he was so extravagant that he was always in debt. After he was defeated by a boxer called Gentleman Jackson, he was quickly forgotten. He was sent to prison for failing to pay his debts and died in poverty in 1836.

两百年前，拳击比赛在英国非常盛行。当时，拳击手们不戴手套，为争夺奖金而搏斗。因此，他们被称作“职业拳击手”。不过，拳击是十分野蛮的，因为当时没有任何比赛规则，职业拳击手有可能在比赛中受重伤，甚至丧命。

拳击史上最引人注目的人物之一是丹尼尔·门多萨，他生于 1764 年。1860 年昆斯伯里侯爵第一次为拳击比赛制定了规则，拳击比赛这才用上了手套。虽然门多萨严格来讲不过是个职业拳击手，但在把这种粗野的拳击变成一种体育运动方面，他作出了重大贡献。是他把科学引进了这项运动。门多萨在全盛时期深受大家欢迎，无论是富人还是穷人都对他崇拜备至。

门多萨在 14 岁时参加一场拳击赛后就一举成名。这引起当时英国拳坛名将理查德·汉弗莱斯的注意。他主动提出教授门多萨，而年少的门多萨一学就会。事实上，门多萨不久便名声大振，致使汉弗莱斯与他反目为敌。两个人争吵不休，显而易见，只有较量一番才能解决问题。于是两人在斯蒂尔顿设下赛场，厮打了一个小时。公众把大笔赌注下到了门多萨身上，但他却输了。后来，门多萨与汉弗莱斯再次在拳击场上较量，门多萨又输了一场。直到 1790 年他们第 3 次对垒，门多萨才终于击败汉弗莱斯，成了全英拳击冠军。同时，他建立了一所拳击学校，办得很成功，连拜伦勋爵也成了他的学生。门多萨挣来大笔大笔的钱，一次出场费就多可达 100 英镑。尽管收入不少，但他挥霍无度，经常债台高筑。他在被一个叫杰克逊绅士的拳击手击败后很快被遗忘。他因无力还债而被捕入狱，最后于 1836 年在贫困中死去。

Lesson 22 By heart

Some plays are so successful that they run for years on end. In many ways, this is unfortunate for the poor actors who are required to go on repeating the same lines night after night. One would expect them to know their parts by heart and never have cause to falter. Yet this is not always the case.

A famous actor in a highly successful play was once cast in the role of an aristocrat who had been imprisoned in the Bastille for twenty years. In the last act, a gaoler would always come on to the stage with a letter which he would hand to the prisoner. Even though the noble was expected to read the letter at each performance, he always insisted that it should be written out in full.

One night, the gaoler decided to play a joke on his colleague to find out if, after so many performances, he had managed to learn the contents of the letter by heart. The curtain went up on the final act of the play and revealed the aristocrat sitting alone behind bars in his dark cell. Just then, the gaoler appeared with the precious letter in his hands. He entered the cell and presented the letter to the aristocrat. But the copy he gave him had not been written out in full as usual. It was simply a blank sheet of paper. The gaoler looked on eagerly, anxious to see if his fellow-actor had at last learnt his lines. The noble stared at the blank sheet of paper for a few seconds. Then, squinting his eyes, he said: 'The light is dim. Read the letter to me.' And he promptly handed the sheet of paper to the gaoler. Finding that he could not remember a word of the letter either, the gaoler replied: 'The light is indeed dim, sire. I must get my glasses.' With this, he hurried off the stage. Much to the aristocrat's amusement, the gaoler returned a few moments later with a pair of glasses and the usual copy of the letter which he proceeded to read to the prisoner.

有些剧目十分成功，以致连续上演好几年。这样一来，可怜的演员们可倒霉了。因为他们需要一夜连着一夜地重复同样的台词。人们以为，这些演员一定会把台词背得烂熟，绝不会临场结巴的，但情况却并不总是这样。

有一位名演员曾在一出极为成功的剧目中扮演一个贵族角色，这个贵族已在巴士底狱被关押了 20 年。在最后一幕中，狱卒手持一封信上场，然后将信交给狱中那位贵族。尽管那个贵族每场戏都得念一遍那封信。但他还是坚持要求将信的全文写在信纸上。

一天晚上，狱卒决定与他的同事开一个玩笑，看看他反复演出这么多场之后，是否已将信的内容记熟了。大幕拉开，最后一幕戏开演，贵族独自一人坐在铁窗后阴暗的牢房里。这时狱卒上场，手里拿着那封珍贵的信。狱卒走进牢房，将信交给贵族。但这回狱卒给贵族的信没有像往常那样把全文写全，而是一张白纸。狱卒热切地观察着，急于想了解他的同事是否记熟了台词。贵族盯着纸看了几秒钟，然后，眼珠一转，说道：“光线太暗，请给我读一下这封信。”说完，他一下子把信递给狱卒。狱卒发现自己连一个字也记不住，于是便说：“陛下，这儿光线的确太暗了，我得去眼镜拿来。”他一边说着，一边匆匆下台。贵族感到非常好笑的是：一会儿工夫，狱卒重新登台，拿来一副眼镜以及平时使用的那封信，然后为那囚犯念了起来。

Lesson 23 One man's meat is another man's poison

People become quite illogical when they try to decide what can be eaten and what cannot be eaten. If you lived in the Mediterranean, for instance, you would consider octopus a great delicacy. You would not be able to understand why some people find it repulsive. On the other hand, your stomach would turn at the idea of frying potatoes in animal fat-- the normally accepted practice in many northern countries. The sad truth is that most of us have been brought up to eat certain foods and we stick to them all our lives.

No creature has received more praise and abuse than the common garden snail. Cooked in wine, snails are a great luxury in various parts of the world. There are countless people who, ever since their early years, have learned to associate snails with food. My friend, Robert, lives in a country where snails are despised. As his flat is in a large town, he has no garden of his own. For years he has been asking me to collect snails from my garden and take them to him. The idea never appealed to me very much, but one day, after a heavy shower, I happened to be walking in my garden when I noticed a huge number of snails taking a stroll on some of my prize plants. Acting on a sudden impulse, I collected several dozen, put them in a paper bag, and took them to Robert. Robert was delighted to see me and equally pleased with my little gift. I left the bag in the hall and Robert and I went into the living-room where we talked for a couple of hours. I had forgotten all about the snails when Robert suddenly said that I must stay to dinner. Snails would, of course, be the main dish. I did not fancy the idea and I reluctantly followed Robert out of the room. To our dismay, we saw that there were snails everywhere: they had escaped from the paper bag and had taken complete possession of the hall! I have never been able to look at a snail since then.

在决定什么能吃而什么不能吃的时候，人们往往变得不合情理。比如，如果你住在地中海地区，你会把章鱼视作是美味佳肴，同时不能理解为什么有人一见章鱼就恶心。另一方面，你一想到动物油炸土豆就会反胃，但这在北方许多国家却是一种普通的烹饪方法。不无遗憾的是，我们中的大部分人，生来就只吃某几种食品，而且一辈子都这样。

没有一种生物所受到的赞美和厌恶会超过花园里常见的蜗牛了。蜗牛加酒烧煮后，便成了世界上许多地方的一道珍奇的名菜。有不计其数的人们从小就知道蜗牛可做菜。但我的朋友罗伯特却住在一个厌恶蜗牛的国家中。他住在大城市里的一所公寓里，没有自己的花园。多年来，他一直让我把我园子里的蜗牛收集起来给他捎去。一开始，他的这一想法没有引起我多大兴趣。后来有一天，一场大雨后，我在花园里漫无目的散步，突然注意到许许多多蜗牛在我的一些心爱的花木上慢悠悠的蠕动着。我一时冲动，逮了几十只，装进一只纸袋里，带着去找罗伯特。罗伯特见到我很高兴，对我的薄礼也感到满意。我把纸袋放在门厅里，与罗伯特一起进了起居室，在那里聊了好几个钟头。我把蜗牛的事已忘得一干二净，罗伯特突然提出一定要我留下来吃晚饭，这才提醒了我。蜗牛当然是道主菜。我并不喜欢这个主意，所以我勉强跟着罗伯特走进了起居室。使我们惊愕的是门厅里到处爬满了蜗牛：它们从纸袋里逃了出来，爬得满厅都是！从那以后，我再也不能看一眼蜗牛了。

Lesson 24 A skeleton in the cupboard

We often read in novels how a seemingly respectable person or family has some terrible secret which has been concealed from strangers for years. The English language possesses a vivid saying to describe this sort of situation. The terrible secret is called 'a skeleton in the cupboard'. At some dramatic moment in the story the terrible secret becomes known and a reputation is ruined. The reader's hair stands on end when he reads in the final pages of the novel that the heroine, a dear old lady who had always been so kind to everybody, had, in her youth, poisoned every one of her five husbands.

It is all very well for such things to occur in fiction. To varying degrees, we all have secrets which we do not want even our closest friends to learn, but few of us have skeletons in the cupboard. The only person I know who has a skeleton in the cupboard is George Carlton, and he is very proud of the fact. George studied medicine in his youth. Instead of becoming a doctor, however, he became a successful writer of detective stories. I once spent an uncomfortable week-end which I shall never forget at his house. George showed me to the guestroom which, he said, was rarely used. He told me to unpack my things and then come down to dinner. After I had stacked my shirts and underclothes in two empty drawers, I decided to hang in the cupboard one of the two suits I had brought with me. I opened the cupboard door and then stood in front of it petrified. A skeleton was dangling before my eyes. The sudden movement of the door made it sway slightly and it gave me the impression that it was about to leap out at me. Dropping my suit, I dashed downstairs to tell George. This was worse than 'a terrible secret'; this was a real skeleton! But George was unsympathetic. 'Oh, that,' he said with a smile as if he were talking about an old friend. 'That's Sebastian. You forget that I was a medical student once upon a time.'

在小说中，我们经常读到一个表面上受人尊重的人物或家庭，却有着某种多年不为人所知的骇人听闻的秘密。英语中有一个生动的说法来形容这种情况。惊人的秘密称作“柜中骷髅”。在小说的某个戏剧性时刻，可怕的秘密泄漏出来，接着便是某人的声誉扫地。当读者到小说最后几页了解到书中女主人公，那位一向待大家很好的可爱的老妇人年轻时一连毒死了她的 5 个丈夫时，不禁会毛骨悚然。

这种事发生在小说中是无可非议的。尽管我们人人都有各种大小秘密。连最亲密的朋友都不愿让他们知道，但我们当中极少有人有柜中骷髅。我所认识的唯一的在柜中藏骷髅的人便是乔治·卡尔顿，他甚至引以为自豪。乔治年轻时学过医，然而，他后来没当上医生，却成了一位成功的侦探小说作家。有一次，我在他家里度周末，过得很不愉快。这事我永远不会忘记。乔治把我领进客房，说这间很少使用。他让我打开行装后下楼吃饭。我将衬衫、内衣放进两个空抽屉里，然后我想把随身带来的两套西服中的一套挂到大衣柜里去。我打开柜门，站在柜门前一下惊呆了。一具骷髅悬挂在眼前，由于柜门突然打开，它也随之轻微摇晃起来，让我觉得它好像马上要跳出柜门朝我扑过来似的。我扔下西服冲下楼去告诉乔治。这是比“骇人听闻的秘密”更加惊人的东西，这是一具真正的骷髅啊！但乔治却无动于衷。“噢，是它呀！他笑着说道，俨然在谈论一位老朋友。“那是塞巴斯蒂安。你忘了我以前是学医的了。”

Lesson 25 The Cutty Sark

One of the most famous sailing ships of the nineteenth century, the Cutty Sark, can still be seen at Greenwich. She stands on dry land and is visited by thousands of people each year. She serves as an impressive reminder of the great ships of the past. Before they were replaced by steam-ships, sailing vessels like the Cutty Sark were used to carry tea from China and wool from Australia. The Cutty Sark was one of the fastest sailing ships that has ever been built. The only other ship to match her was the Thermopylae. Both these ships set out from Shanghai on June 18th, 1872 on an exciting race to England. This race, which went on for exactly four months, was the last of its kind. It marked the end of the great tradition of ships with sails and the beginning of a new era.

The first of the two ships to reach Java after the race had begun was the Thermopylae, but on the Indian Ocean, the Cutty Sark took the lead. It seemed certain that she would be the first ship home, but during the race she had a lot of bad luck. In August, she was struck by a very heavy storm during which her rudder was torn away. The Cutty Sark rolled from side to side and it became impossible to steer her. A temporary rudder was made on board from spare planks and it was fitted with great difficulty. This greatly reduced the speed of the ship, for there was danger that if she travelled too quickly, this rudder would be torn away as well. Because of this, the Cutty Sark lost her lead. After crossing the equator, the captain called in at a port to have a new rudder fitted, but by now the Thermopylae was over five hundred miles ahead. Though the new rudder was fitted at tremendous speed, it was impossible for the Cutty Sark to win. She arrived in England a week after the Thermopylae. Even this was remarkable, considering that she had had so many delays. There is no doubt that if she had not lost her rudder she would have won the race easily.

人们在格林威治仍可看到 19 世纪最有名的帆船之一“卡蒂萨克”号。它停在陆地上，每年接待成千上万的参观者。它给人们留下深刻的印象，使人们回忆起历史上的巨型帆船，在蒸汽船取代帆船之前。“卡蒂萨克”号之类的帆船被用来从中国运回茶叶，从澳大利亚运回羊毛。“卡蒂萨克”号是帆船制造史上建造的最快的一艘帆船。唯一可以与之一比高低的是“塞姆皮雷”号帆船。两船于 1872 年 6 月 18 日同时从上海启航驶往英国，途中展开了一场激烈的比赛。这场比赛持续了整整 4 个月，是这类比赛中的最后一次，它标志着帆船伟大传统的结束与一个新纪元的开始。

比赛开始后，“塞姆皮雷”号率先抵达爪哇岛。但在印度洋上，“卡蒂萨克”号驶到了前面。看来，它首先返抵英国是确信无疑的了，但它却在比赛中连遭厄运。8 月份“卡蒂萨克”号遭到一场特大风暴的袭击，失去了一只舵。船身左右摇晃，无法操纵。船员用备用的木板在船上赶制了一只应急用的舵，并克服重重困难将舵安装就位，这样一来，大大降低了船的航速。因为船不能开得太快，否则就有危险，应急舵也会被刮走。因为这个缘故，“卡蒂萨克”号落到了后面。跨越赤道后，船长将船停靠在一个港口，在那儿换了一只舵。但此时，“塞姆皮雷”号早已在 500 多英里之遥了。尽管换装新舵时分秒必争，但“卡蒂萨克”号已经不可能取胜了，它抵达英国时比“塞姆皮雷”号晚了 1 个星期。但考虑到路上的多次耽搁，这个成绩也已很不容易了。毫无疑问，如果中途没有失去舵，“卡蒂萨克”号肯定能在比赛中轻易夺冠。

Lesson 26 Wanted: a large biscuit tin

No one can avoid being influenced by advertisements. Much as we may pride ourselves on our good taste, we are no longer free to choose the things we want, for advertising exerts a subtle influence on us. In their efforts to persuade us to buy this or that product, advertisers have made a close study of human nature and have classified all our little weaknesses. Advertisers discovered years ago that all of us love to get something for nothing.

An advertisement which begins with the magic word FREE can rarely go wrong. These days, advertisers not only offer free samples but free cars, free houses, and free trips round the world as well. They devise hundreds of competitions which will enable us to win huge sums of money. Radio and television have made it possible for advertisers to capture the attention of millions of people in this way.

During a radio programme, a company of biscuit manufacturers once asked listeners to bake biscuits and send them to their factory. They offered to pay \$2 a pound for the biggest biscuit baked by a listener. The response to this competition was tremendous. Before long, biscuits of all shapes and sizes began arriving at the factory. One lady brought in a biscuit on a wheelbarrow. It weighed nearly 500 pounds. A little later, a man came along with a biscuit which occupied the whole boot of his car. All the biscuits that were sent were carefully weighed. The largest was 713 pounds. It seemed certain that this would win the prize. But just before the competition closed, a lorry arrived at the factory with a truly colossal biscuit which weighed 2400 pounds. It had been baked by a college student who had used over 1000 pounds of flour, 800 pounds of sugar, 200 pounds of fat, and 400 pounds of various other ingredients. It was so heavy that a crane had to be used to remove it from the lorry. The manufacturers had to pay more money than they had anticipated, for they bought the biscuit from the student for \$4800.

没有人能避免受广告的影响。尽管我们可以自夸自己的鉴赏力如何敏锐，但我们已经无法独立自主地选购自己所需的东西了。这是因为广告在我们身上施加着一种潜移默化的影响。做广告的人在力图劝说我们买下这种产品或那种产品之前，已经仔细地研究了人的本性，并把人的弱点进行了分类。

做广告的人们多年前就发现我们大家都喜欢免费得到东西。凡是用“免费”这个神奇的词开头的广告很少会失败的。目前，做广告的人不仅提供免费样品，而且还提供免费汽车，免费住房，免费周游世界。他们设计数以百计的竞赛，竞赛中有人可赢得巨额奖金。电台、电视使做广告的人可以用这种手段吸引成百万人的注意力。

有一次，在电台播放的节目里，一个生产饼干的公司请听众烘制饼干送到他们的工厂去。他们愿意以每磅 10 美元的价钱买下由听众烘制的最大的饼干。这次竞赛在听众中引起极其热烈的反响。不久，形状各异，大小不一的饼干陆续送到工厂。一位女士用手推车运来一个饼干，重达 500 磅左右。相隔不一会儿，一个男子也带来一个大饼干，那个饼干把汽车的行李箱挤得满满的。凡送来的饼干都仔细地称量。最重的一个达 713 磅，看来这个饼干获奖无疑了。但就在竞赛截止时间将到之际，一辆卡车驶进了工厂，运来了一个特大无比、重达 2,400 磅的饼干。它是由一个大学生烘制的，用去 1,000 多磅的面粉、800 磅食糖、200 磅动物脂肪及 400 磅其他各种原料。饼干份量太重了，用了一台起重机才把它从卡车上卸下。饼干公司不得不付出比他们预计多得多的钱，因为为买下那学生烘制的饼干他们支付了 24,000 美元。

Lesson 27 Nothing to sell and nothing to buy

It has been said that everyone lives by selling something. In the light of this statement, teachers live by selling knowledge, philosophers by selling wisdom and priests by selling spiritual comfort. Though it may be possible to measure the value of material goods in terms of money, it is extremely difficult to estimate the true value of the services which people perform for us. There are times when we would willingly give everything we possess to save our lives, yet we might grudge paying a surgeon a high fee for offering us precisely this service. The conditions of society are such that skills have to be paid for in the same way that goods are paid for at a shop. Everyone has something to sell.

Tramps seem to be the only exception to this general rule. Beggars almost sell themselves as human beings to arouse the pity of passers-by. But real tramps are not beggars. They have nothing to sell and require nothing from others. In seeking independence, they do not sacrifice their human dignity. A tramp may ask you for money, but he will never ask you to feel sorry for him. He has deliberately chosen to lead the life he leads and is fully aware of the consequences. He may never be sure where the next meal is coming from, but he is free from the thousands of anxieties which afflict other people. His few material possessions make it possible for him to move from place to place with ease. By having to sleep in the open, he gets far closer to the world of nature than most of us ever do. He may hunt, beg, or steal occasionally to keep himself alive; he may even in times of real need, do a little work; but he will never sacrifice his freedom. We often speak of tramps with contempt and put them in the same class as beggars, but how many of us can honestly say that we have not felt a little envious of their simple way of life and their freedom from care?

据说每个人都靠出售某种东西来维持生活。根据这种说法，教师靠卖知识为生，哲学家靠卖智慧为生，牧师靠卖精神安慰为生。虽然物质产品的价值可以用金钱来衡量，但要估算别人为我们所提供的服务的价值却是极其困难的。有时，我们为了挽救生命，愿意付出我们所占有的一切。但就在外科大夫给我们提供了这种服务后，我们却可能为所支付的昂贵的费用而抱怨。社会上的情况就是如此，技术是必须付钱去买的，就像在商店里要花钱买商品一样。人人都有东西可以出售。

在这条普遍的规律前面，好像只有流浪汉是个例外，乞丐出售的几乎是他本人，以引起过路人的怜悯。但真正的流浪并不是乞丐。他们既不出售任何东西，也不需要从别人那儿得到任何东西，在追求独立自由的同时，他们并不牺牲为人的尊严。流浪汉可能会向你讨钱，但他从来不要你可怜他。他是故意在选择过那种生活的，并完全清楚以这种方式生活的后果。他可能从不知道下顿饭有无着落，但他不像有人那样被千万桩愁事所折磨。他几乎没有什么财产，这使他能够轻松自如地在各地奔波。由于被迫在露天睡觉，他比我们中许多人都离大自然近得多。为了生存，他可能会去打猎、乞讨，偶尔偷上一两回；确实需要的时候，他甚至可能干一点儿活，但他决不会牺牲自由。说起流浪汉，我们常常带有轻蔑并把他们与乞丐归为一类。但是，我们中有多少人能够坦率地说我们对流浪汉的简朴生活与无忧无虑的境况不感到有些羡慕呢？

Lesson 28 Five pounds too dear

Small boats loaded with wares sped to the great liner as she was entering the harbour. Before she had anchored, the men from the boats had climbed on board and the decks were soon covered with colourful rugs from Persia, silks from India, copper coffee pots, and beautiful hand-made silver-ware. It was difficult not to be tempted. Many of the tourists on board had begun bargaining with the tradesmen, but I decided not to buy anything until I had disembarked.

I had no sooner got off the ship than I was assailed by a man who wanted to sell me a diamond ring. I had no intention of buying one, but I could not conceal the fact that I was impressed by the size of the diamonds. Some of them were as big as marbles. The man went to great lengths to prove that the diamonds were real. As we were walking past a shop, he held a diamond firmly against the window and made a deep impression in the glass. It took me over half an hour to get rid of him.

The next man to approach me was selling expensive pens and watches. I examined one of the pens closely. It certainly looked genuine. At the base of the gold cap, the words 'made in the U.S.A.' had been neatly inscribed. The man said that the pen was worth £10, but as a special favour, he would let me have it for £8. I shook my head and held up a finger indicating that I was willing to pay a pound. Gesticulating wildly, the man acted as if he found my offer outrageous, but he eventually reduced the price to £3. Shrugging my shoulders, I began to walk away when, a moment later, he ran after me and thrust the pen into my hands. Though he kept throwing up his arms in despair, he readily accepted the pound I gave him. I felt especially pleased with my wonderful bargain--until I got back to the ship. No matter how hard I tried, it was impossible to fill this beautiful pen with ink and to this day it has never written a single word !

当一艘大型班船进港的时候，许多小船载着各种杂货快速向客轮驶来。大船还未下锚。小船上的人就纷纷爬上客轮。一会儿工夫，甲板上就摆满了色彩斑斓的波斯地毯。印度丝绸。铜咖啡壶以及手工制作的漂亮的银器。要想不为这些东西所动心是很困难的。船上许多游客开始同商贩讨价还价起来，但我打定主意上岸之前什么也不买。

我刚下船，就被一个人截住，他向我兜售一枚钻石戒指。我根本不想买，但我不能掩饰这样一个事实：其钻石之大给我留下了深刻的印象。有的钻石像玻璃球那么大。那人竭力想证明那钻石是真货。我们路过一家商店时，他将一颗钻石使劲地往橱窗上一按，在玻璃上留下一道深痕。我花了半个多小时才摆脱了他的纠缠。

向我兜售的第二个人是卖名贵钢笔和手表的。我仔细察看了一枝钢笔，那看上去确实不假，金笔帽下方整齐地刻有“美国制造”字样。那人说那支笔值 50 英镑，作为特别优惠，他愿意让我出 30 英镑成交。我摇摇头，伸出 5 根手指表示我只愿出 5 镑钱。那人激动地打着手势，仿佛我的出价使他不能容忍。但他终于把价钱降到了 10 英镑。我耸耸肩膀掉头走开了。一会儿，他突然从后追了上来，把笔塞到我手里。虽然他绝望地举起双手，但他毫不迟疑地收下了我付给他的 5 镑钱。在回到船上之前，我一直为我的绝妙的讨价还价而洋洋得意。然而不管我如何摆弄，那枝漂亮的钢笔就是吸不进墨水来。直到今天，那枝笔连一个字也没写过！

Lesson 29 Funny or not?

Whether we find a joke funny or not largely depends on where we have been brought up. The sense of humour is mysteriously bound up with national characteristics. A Frenchman, for instance, might find it hard to laugh at a Russian joke. In the same way, a Russian might fail to see anything amusing in a joke which would make an Englishman laugh to tears.

Most funny stories are based on comic situations. In spite of national differences, certain funny situations have a universal appeal. No matter where you live, you would find it difficult not to laugh at, say, Charlie Chaplin's early films. However, a new type of humour, which stems largely from America, has recently come into fashion. It is called 'sick humour'. Comedians base their jokes on tragic situations like violent death or serious accidents. Many people find this sort of joke distasteful. The following example of 'sick humour' will enable you to judge for yourself.

A man who had broken his right leg was taken to hospital a few weeks before Christmas. From the moment he arrived there, he kept on pestering his doctor to tell him when he would be able to go home. He dreaded having to spend Christmas in hospital. Though the doctor did his best, the patient's recovery was slow. On Christmas day, the man still had his right leg in plaster. He spent a miserable day in bed thinking of all the fun he was missing. The following day, however, the doctor consoled him by telling him that his chances of being able to leave hospital in time for New Year celebrations were good. The man took heart and, sure enough, on New Year's Eve he was able to hobble along to a party. To compensate for his unpleasant experiences in hospital, the man drank a little more than was good for him. In the process, he enjoyed himself thoroughly and kept telling everybody how much he hated hospitals. He was still mumbling something about hospitals at the end of the party when he slipped on a piece of ice and broke his left leg.

我们觉得一则笑话是否好笑，很大程度取决于我们是在哪儿长大的。幽默感与民族有着神秘莫测的联系。譬如，法国人听完一则俄国笑话可能很难发笑。同样的道理，一则可以令英国人笑出泪来的笑话，俄国人听了可能觉得没有什么可笑之处。

大部分令人发笑的故事都是根据喜剧情节编写的。尽管民族不同，有些滑稽的情节却能产生普遍的效果。比如说，不管你生活在哪里，你看查理·卓别林的早期电影很难不发笑。然而，近来一种新式幽默流行了起来，这种幽默主要来自美国。它被叫作“病态幽默”。喜剧演员根据悲剧情节诸如暴死，重大事故等来编造笑话。许多人认为这种笑话是低级庸俗的。下面是个“病态幽默”的实例，你可据此自己作出判断。

圣诞节前几周，某人摔断了右腿被送进医院。从他进医院那一刻时，他就缠住医生，让医生告诉他什么时候能回家。他十分害怕在医院过圣诞。尽管医生竭力医治，但病人恢复缓慢。圣诞节那天，他的右腿还上着石膏，他在床上郁郁不乐地躺了一天，想着他错过的种种欢乐。然而，第二天，医生安慰他说，出院欢度新年的可能性还是很大的，那人听后振作了精神。果然，除夕时他可以一瘸一拐地去参加晚会了。为了补偿住院这一段不愉快的经历，那人喝得稍许多了一点。在晚会上他尽情娱乐，一再告诉大家他是多么讨厌医院。晚会结束时，他嘴里还在嘟哝着医院的事，突然踩到一块冰上滑倒了，摔断了左腿。

Lesson 30 The death of a ghost

For years villagers believed that Endley farm was haunted. The farm was owned by two brothers, Joe and Bert Cox. They employed a few farm hands, but no one was willing to work there long. Every time a worker gave up his job, he told the same story. Farm labourers said that they always woke up to find the work had been done overnight. Hay had been cut and cow sheds had been cleaned. A farm worker, who stayed up all night, claimed to have seen a figure cutting corn in the moonlight. In time, it became an accepted fact that the Cox brothers employed a conscientious ghost that did most of their work for them.

No one suspected that there might be someone else on the farm who had never been seen. This was indeed the case. A short time ago, villagers were astonished to learn that the ghost of Endley had died. Everyone went to the funeral, for the 'ghost' was none other than Eric Cox, a third brother who was supposed to have died as a young man. After the funeral, Joe and Bert revealed a secret which they had kept for over forty years.

Eric had been the eldest son of the family. He had been obliged to join the army during the first World War. As he hated army life he decided to desert his regiment. When he learnt that he would be sent abroad, he returned to the farm and his father hid him until the end of the war. Fearing the authorities, Eric remained in hiding after the war as well. His father told everybody that Eric had been killed in action. The only other people who knew the secret were Joe and Bert. They did not even tell their wives. When their father died, they thought it their duty to keep Eric in hiding. All these years, Eric had lived as a recluse (隐遁者, 寂寞者). He used to sleep during the day and work at night, quite unaware of the fact that he had become the ghost of Endley. When he died, however, his brothers found it impossible to keep the secret any longer.

多年来,村民们一直认为恩得利农场在闹鬼。恩得利农场属于乔·考科斯和鲍勃·考科斯兄弟俩所有。他们雇了几个农工,但谁也不愿意在那儿长期工作下去。每次雇工辞职后都叙述着同样的故事。雇工们说,常常一早起来发现有人在夜里把活干了,干草已切好,牛棚也打扫干净了。有一个彻夜未眠的雇工还声称他看见一个人影在月光下收割庄稼。随着时间的流逝,考科斯兄弟雇了一个尽心尽责的鬼,他们家的活大部分都让鬼给干了,这件事成了公认的事实。

谁也没想到农场竟会有一个从未露面的人。但事实上确有人。不久之前,村民们惊悉恩得利农场的鬼死了。大家都去参加了葬礼,因为那“鬼”不是别人,正是农场主的兄弟埃里克·考科斯。人们以为埃里克年轻时就死了。葬礼之后,乔和鲍勃透露了他们保守了长达50多年的秘密。

埃里克是这家长子。年龄比他两个弟弟大很多,第二次世界大战期间被迫参军。他讨厌军旅生活,决定逃离所在部队。当他了解自己将被派遣出国时,他逃回农场,父亲把他藏了起来,直到战争结束。由于害怕当局,埃里克战后继续深藏不露。他的父亲告诉大家,埃里克在战争中被打死了。除此之外,只有乔与鲍知道这个秘密。但他俩连自己的妻子都没告诉。父亲死后,他们兄弟俩认为有责任继续把埃里克藏起来。这些年来,埃里克过着隐士生活,白天睡觉,夜里出来干活,一点不知道自己已成了恩得利家场的活鬼。他死后,他的弟弟们才觉得无法再保守这个秘密了。

Lesson 31 A lovable eccentric

True eccentrics never deliberately set out to draw attention to themselves. They disregard social conventions without being conscious that they are doing anything extraordinary. This invariably wins them the love and respect of others, for they add colour to the dull routine of everyday life.

Up to the time of his death, Richard Colson was one of the most notable figures in our town. He was a shrewd and wealthy business-man, but the ordinary town-folk hardly knew anything about this side of his life. He was known to us all as Dickie and his eccentricity had become legendary long before he died.

Dickie disliked snobs(势利小人) intensely. Though he owned a large car, he hardly ever used it, preferring always to go on foot. Even when it was raining heavily, he refused to carry an umbrella. One day, he walked into an expensive shop after having been caught in a particularly heavy shower. He wanted to buy a £300 fur coat for his wife, but he was in such a bedraggled condition that an assistant refused to serve him. Dickie left the shop without a word and returned carrying a large cloth bag. As it was extremely heavy, he dumped it on the counter. The assistant asked him to leave, but Dickie paid no attention to him and requested to see the manager. Recognizing who the customer was, the manager was most apologetic and 'reprimanded' the assistant severely. When Dickie was given the fur coat, he presented the assistant with the cloth bag. It contained £300 in pennies. He insisted on the assistant's counting the money before he left 72,000 pennies in all! On another occasion, he invited a number of important critics to see his private collection of modern paintings. This exhibition received a great deal of attention in the press, for though the pictures were supposed to be the work of famous artists, they had in fact been painted by Dickie. It took him four years to stage this elaborate joke simply to prove that critics do not always know what they are talking about.

真正古怪的人从不有意引人注意。他们不顾社会习俗，意识不到自己所作所为有什么特殊之处。他们总能赢得别人的喜爱与尊敬，因为他们给平淡单一的日常生活增添了色彩。

理查德·科尔森生前是我们镇上最有名望的人之一。他是个精明能干、有钱的商人，但镇上大部分人对他生活中的这一个方面几乎一无所知。大家都管他叫迪基。早在他去世前很久，他的古怪行为就成了传奇故事了。

迪基痛恨势利小人。尽管他有一辆豪华小轿车，但却很少使用，常常喜欢以步代车。即使大雨倾盆，他也总是拒绝带伞。一天，他遇上一场瓢泼大雨，淋得透湿。他走进一家高级商店，要为妻子买一块价值 300 英镑的手表。但店员见他浑身泥水的样子，竟不肯接待他。迪基二话没说就走了。一会儿，他带着一个大布口袋回到店里。布袋很沉，他重重地把布袋扔在柜台上。店员让迪基走开，他置之不理，并要求见经理。经理认出了这位顾客，表示了深深的歉意，还严厉地训斥了店员。店员为迪基拿出了那块手表，迪基把布口袋递给他，口袋里面装着 300 英镑的便士。他坚持要店员点清那些硬币后他才离去。这些硬币加在一起共有 30,000 枚！还有一次，他邀请一些著名评论家来参观他私人收藏的现代画。这次展览引起报界广泛注意，因为这些画名义上是名家的作品，事实上是迪基自己画的。他花了 4 年时间策划这出精心设计的闹剧，只是想证明评论家们有时并不解他们所谈论的事情。

Lesson 32 A lost ship

The salvage operation had been a complete failure. The small ship, Elkor, which had been searching the Barents Sea for weeks, was on its way home. A radio message from the mainland had been received by the ship's captain instructing him to give up the search. The captain knew that another attempt would be made later, for the sunken ship he was trying to find had been carrying a precious cargo of gold bullion.

Despite the message, the captain of the Elkor decided to try once more. The sea-bed was scoured with powerful nets and there was tremendous excitement on board when a chest was raised from the bottom. Though the crew were at first under the impression that the lost ship had been found, the contents of the sea-chest proved them wrong. What they had in fact found was a ship which had been sunk many years before.

The chest contained the personal belongings of a seaman, Alan Fielding. There were books, clothing and photographs, together with letters which the seaman had once received from his wife. The captain of the Elkor ordered his men to salvage as much as possible from the wreck. Nothing of value was found, but the numerous items which were brought to the surface proved to be of great interest. From a heavy gun that was raised, the captain realized that the ship must have been a cruiser. In another sea-chest, which contained the belongings of a ship's officer, there was an unfinished letter which had been written on March 14th, 1943. The captain learnt from the letter that the name of the lost ship was the Karen. The most valuable find of all was the ship's log book, parts of which it was still possible to read. From this the captain was able to piece together all the information that had come to light. The Karen had been sailing in a convoy to Russia when she was torpedoed by an enemy submarine. This was later confirmed by a naval official at the Ministry of Defence after the Elkor had returned home. All the items that were found were sent to the War Museum.

打捞工作彻底失败了。小船“埃尔科”号在巴伦支海搜寻了几个星期之后，正在返航途中。返航前，该船船长收到了大陆发来的电报，指示他们放弃这次搜寻。船长知道日后还会再作尝试，因为他试图寻找的沉船上载有一批珍贵的金条。

尽管船长接了电报，他还是决定再试一试。他们用结实的网把海床搜索了一遍。当一只箱子从海底被打捞上来时，甲板上人们激动不已。船员们开始认为沉船找着了，但海底沉箱内的物品证明他们弄错了。事实上，他们发现的是另一艘沉没多年的船。

木箱内装有水手艾伦·菲尔丁的私人财物，其中有书箱、衣服、照片以及水手收到的妻子的来信。“埃尔科”号船长命令船员们尽量从沉船中打捞物品，但没发现什么值钱的东西，不过打捞出来的众多的物品还是引起了大家极大的兴趣。从捞起的一门大炮来看，船长认为那艘船一定是艘巡洋舰。另一只海底沉箱中装的是船上一位军官的财物，其中有一封写于1943年3月14日的信，但没有写完。从这封信中船长了解到沉船船名是“卡伦”号。打捞到的东西中最有价值的是船上的航海日志，其中有一部分仍然清晰可读。据此，船长可以将所有的那些已经搞清的材料拼凑起来。“卡伦”号当年在为其他船只护航驶往俄国的途中突然遭到敌方潜水艇鱼雷的袭击。这一说法在“埃尔科”号返航后得到的国防部一位海军官员的证实。那次打捞到的所有物品均被送往军事博物馆。

Lesson 33 A day to remember

We have all experienced days when everything goes wrong. A day may begin well enough, but suddenly everything seems to get out of control. What invariably happens is that a great number of things choose to go wrong at precisely the same moment. It is as if a single unimportant event set up a chain of reactions. Let us suppose that you are preparing a meal and keeping an eye on the baby at the same time. The telephone rings and this marks the prelude to an unforeseen series of catastrophes. While you are on the phone, the baby pulls the table-cloth off the table smashing half your best crockery and cutting himself in the process. You hang up hurriedly and attend to baby, crockery, etc. Meanwhile, the meal gets burnt. As if this were not enough to reduce you to tears, your husband arrives, unexpectedly bringing three guests to dinner.

Things can go wrong on a big scale as a number of people recently discovered in Parramatta, a suburb of Sydney. During the rush hour one evening two cars collided and both drivers began to argue. The woman immediately behind the two cars happened to be a learner. She suddenly got into a panic and stopped her car. This made the driver following her brake hard. His wife was sitting beside him holding a large cake. As she was thrown forward, the cake went right through the windscreen and landed on the road. Seeing a cake flying through the air, a lorry-driver who was drawing up alongside the car, pulled up all of a sudden. The lorry was loaded with empty beer bottles and hundreds of them slid off the back of the vehicle and on to the road. This led to yet another angry argument. Meanwhile, the traffic piled up behind. It took the police nearly an hour to get the traffic on the move again. In the meantime, the lorry-driver had to sweep up hundreds of broken bottles. Only two stray dogs benefited from all this confusion, for they greedily devoured what was left of the cake. It was just one of those days!

我们大家都有过事事不顺心的日子。一天开始时，可能还不错，但突然间似乎一切都失去了控制。情况经常是这样的，许许多多的事情都偏偏赶在同一时刻出问题，好像是一件无关紧要的小事引起了一连串的连锁反应。假设你在做饭，同时又在照看孩子。这时电话铃响了。它预示着一连串意想不到的灾难的来临。就在你接电话时，孩子把桌布从桌子上扯下来，将家中最好的陶瓷餐具半数摔碎，同时也弄伤了他自己。你急急忙忙挂上电话，赶去照看孩子和餐具。这时，饭又烧糊了。好像这一切还不足以使你急得掉泪，你的丈夫接着回来了，事先没打招呼就带来 3 个客人吃饭。

就像许多人最近在悉尼郊区帕拉马塔发现的那样，有时乱子会闹得很大。一天傍晚交通最拥挤时，一辆汽车撞上前面一辆汽车，两个司机争吵起来。紧跟其后的一辆车上的司机碰巧是个初学者，她一惊之下突然把车停了下来。她这一停使得跟在后头的司机也来个急刹车。司机妻子正坐在他身边，手里托着块大蛋糕。她往前一冲，蛋糕从挡风玻璃飞了出去掉到马路上。此时，一辆卡车正好从后边开到那辆汽车边上，司机看见一块蛋糕从天而降，紧急刹车。卡车上装着空啤酒瓶。成百只瓶子顺势从卡车后面滑出车外落在马路上。这又引起一场唇枪舌剑的争吵。与此同时，后面的车辆排成了长龙，警察花了将近一个小时才使车辆又开起来。在这段时间里，卡车司机不得不清扫那几百只破瓶子。只有两只野狗从这一片混乱中得到好处，它们贪婪地吃掉了剩下的蛋糕。这就是事事不顺心的那么一天！

Lesson 34 A happy discovery

Antique shops exert a peculiar fascination on a great many people. The more expensive kind of antique shop where rare objects are beautifully displayed in glass cases to keep them free from dust is usually a forbidding place. But no one has to muster up courage to enter a less pretentious antique shop. There is always hope that in its labyrinth of musty, dark, disordered rooms a real rarity will be found amongst the piles of assorted junk that litter the floors.

No one discovers a rarity by chance. A truly dedicated searcher for art treasures must have patience, and above all, the ability to recognize the worth of something when he sees it. To do this, he must be at least as knowledgeable as the dealer. Like a scientist bent on making a discovery, he must cherish the hope that one day he will be amply rewarded.

My old friend, Frank Halliday, is just such a person. He has often described to me how he picked up a masterpiece for a mere £5. One Saturday morning, Frank visited an antique shop in my neighbourhood. As he had never been there before, he found a great deal to interest him. The morning passed rapidly and Frank was about to leave when he noticed a large packing-case lying on the floor. The dealer told him that it had just come in, but that he could not be bothered to open it. Frank begged him to do so and the dealer reluctantly prised it open. The contents were disappointing. Apart from an interesting-looking carved dagger, the box was full of crockery, much of it broken. Frank gently lifted the crockery out of the box and suddenly noticed a miniature Painting at the bottom of the packing-case. As its composition and line reminded him of an Italian painting he knew well, he decided to buy it. Glancing at it briefly, the dealer told him that it was worth £5. Frank could hardly conceal his excitement, for he knew that he had made a real discovery. The tiny painting proved to be an unknown masterpiece by Correggio and was worth thousands of pounds.

古玩店对许多人来说有一种特殊的魅力。高档一点的古玩店为了防尘，把文物漂亮地陈列在玻璃柜子里，那里往往令人望而却步。而对不太装腔作势的古玩店，无论是谁都不用壮着胆子才敢往里进。人们还常常有希望在发霉、阴暗、杂乱无章、迷宫般的店堂里，从杂乱地摆放在地面上的、一堆堆各式各样的破烂货里找到一件稀世珍品。

无论是谁都不会一下子就发现一件珍品。一个到处找便宜的人必须具有耐心，而且最重要的是看到珍品时要有鉴别珍品的能力。要做到这一点，他至少要像古董商一样懂行。他必须像一个专心致志进行探索的科学家那样抱有这样的希望，即终有一天，他的努力会取得丰硕的成果。

我的老朋友弗兰克·哈利戴正是这样一个人。他多次向我详细讲他如何只花 50 英镑便买到一位名家的杰作。一个星期六的上午，弗兰克去了我家附近的一家古玩店。由于他从未去过那儿，结果他发现许多有趣的东西。上午很快过去了，弗兰克正准备离去，突然看见地板上放着一只体积很大的货箱。古董商告诉他那只货箱刚到不久，但他嫌麻烦不想把它打开。经弗兰克恳求，古董商才勉强把货箱撬开了。箱内东西令人失望。除了一柄式样别致、雕有花纹的匕首外，货箱内装满陶器，而且大部分都已破碎。弗兰克轻轻地把陶器拿出箱子，突然发现在箱底有一幅微型画，画面构图与纸条使他想起一幅他所熟悉的意大利画，于是他决定将画买了下来。古董商漫不经心看了一眼那幅画，告诉弗兰克那画值 50 英镑。弗兰克几乎无法掩饰自己兴奋的心情，因为他明白自己发现了一件珍品。那幅不大的画原来是柯勒乔的一幅未被发现的杰作，价值几十万英镑。

Lesson 35 Justice was done

The word justice is usually associated with courts of law. We might say that justice has been done when a man's innocence or guilt has been proved beyond doubt. Justice is part of the complex machinery of the law. Those who seek it, undertake an arduous journey and can never be sure that they will find it. Judges, however wise or eminent, are human and can make mistakes.

There are rare instances when justice almost ceases to be an abstract conception. Reward or punishment are out quite independent of human interference. At such times, justice acts like a living force. When we use a phrase like it serves him right, we are, in part, admitting that a certain set of circumstances has enabled justice to act of its own accord.

When a thief was caught on the premises of a large fur store one morning, the shop assistants must have found it impossible to resist the temptation to say 'it serves him right'. The shop was an old-fashioned one with many large, disused fireplaces and tall, narrow chimneys. Towards midday, a girl heard a muffled cry coming from behind one of the walls. As the cry was repeated several times, she ran to tell the manager who promptly rang up the fire-brigade. The cry had certainly come from one of the chimneys, but as there were so many of them, the firemen could not be certain which one it was. They located the right chimney by tapping at the walls and listening for the man's cries. After chipping through a wall which was eighteen inches thick, they found that a man had been trapped in the chimney. As it was extremely narrow, the man was unable to move, but the firemen were eventually able to free him by cutting a huge hole in the wall. The sorry-looking, blackened figure that emerged, at once admitted that he had tried to break into the shop during the night but had got stuck in the chimney. He had been there for nearly ten hours. Justice had been done even before the man was handed over to the police.

“正义”这个词常常是同法庭连在一起的。当某人被证据确凿地证明无罪的时候，我们也许会说正义得到了伸张。正义是复杂的法律机器组成部分。那些寻求正义的人走的是一条崎岖的道路，从来没有把握他们最终将到正义。法官无论如何聪明与有名，毕竟也是人，也会出差错的。

在个别情况下，正义不再是一种抽象概念。奖惩的实施是不受人意志支配的。在这种时候，正义像一种有生命的力量行使其职能。当我们说“他罪有应得”这句话的时候，我们部分承认了某种特定的环境使得正义自动地起了作用。

一天上午，当一个小偷在一家大型珠宝店里被人抓住的时候，店员一定会忍不住说：“他罪有应得。”那是一座老式的、经过改造的房子，店里有许多废置不用的大壁炉和又高又窄的烟囱。快到中午的时候，一个女售货员听见从一堵墙里传出一种闷声闷气的叫声。由于这种喊叫声重复了几次，她跑去报告经理，经理当即给消防队挂了电话。喊叫声肯定是从烟囱里传出来的，然而，因为烟囱太多，消防队员无法确定到底是哪一个。他们通过叫击烟囱倾叫声而确定传出声音的那个烟囱。他们凿透了 18 英寸厚的墙壁，发现有个人卡在烟囱里。由于烟囱太窄，那人无法动弹。消防队员在墙上挖了个大洞，才终于把他解救出来。那个看来满脸沮丧、浑身漆黑的家伙从烟囱里一出来，就承认头天夜里他企图到店里行窃，但让烟囱卡住了。他已经在烟囱里被困了将近 10 个小时。甚至在那人还没被送交给警察之前，正义就已得到了伸张。

Lesson 36 A chance in a million

We are less credulous than we used to be. In the nineteenth century, a novelist would bring his story to a conclusion by presenting his readers with a series of coincidences --most of them wildly improbable. Readers happily accepted the fact that an obscure maid-servant was really the hero's mother. A long-lost brother, who was presumed dead, was really alive all the time and wickedly plotting to bring about the hero's down-fall. And so on. Modern readers would find such naive solutions totally unacceptable. Yet, in real life, circumstances do sometimes conspire to bring about coincidences which anyone but a nineteenth century novelist would find incredible.

A German taxi-driver, Franz Bussman, recently found a brother who was thought to have been killed twenty years before. While on a walking tour with his wife, he stopped to talk to a workman. After they had gone on, Mrs Bussman commented on the workman's close resemblance to her husband and even suggested that he might be his brother. Franz poured scorn on the idea, pointing out that his brother had been killed in action during the war. Though Mrs Bussman was fully acquainted with this story, she thought that there was a chance in a million that she might be right. A few days later, she sent a boy to the workman to ask him if his name was Hans Bussman. Needless to say, the man's name was Hans Bussman and he really was Franz's long-lost brother.

When the brothers were re-united, Hans explained how it was that he was still alive. After having been wounded towards the end of the war, he had been sent to hospital and was separated from his unit. The hospital had been bombed and Hans had made his way back into Western Germany on foot. Meanwhile, his unit was lost and all records of him had been destroyed. Hans returned to his family home, but the house had been bombed and no one in the neighbourhood knew what had become of the inhabitants. Assuming that his family had been killed during an air-raid, Hans settled down in a Village fifty miles away where he had remained ever since.

我们不再像以往那样轻易相信别人了。在 19 世纪，小说家常在小说结尾处给读者准备一系列的巧合——大部分是牵强附会，极不可能的。当时的读者却愉快地接受这样一些事实，一个低贱的女佣实际上是主人公的母亲；主人公一位长期失散的兄弟，大家都以为死了，实际上一直活着，并且正在策划暗算主人公；如此等等，现代读者会觉得这种天真的结局完全无法接受。不过，在现实生活中，有时确实会出现一些巧合，这些巧合除了 19 世纪小说家外谁也不会相信。

当我是个孩子的时候，我祖父给我讲了一位德国出租汽车司机弗朗兹·巴斯曼如何找到了据信已在 20 年前死去的兄弟的事。一次，他与妻子徒步旅行。途中，停下来与一个工人交谈，接着他们继续往前走。巴斯曼夫人说那工人与她丈夫相貌很像，甚至猜测他可能就是她丈夫的兄弟。弗朗兹对此不屑一顾，指出他兄弟已经在战争中阵亡了。尽管巴斯曼夫人熟知这个情况，但她仍然认为自己的想法仍有百万分之一的可能性。几天后，她派了一个男孩去问那人是否叫汉斯·巴斯曼。不出巴斯曼夫人所料，那人的名字真是汉斯·巴斯曼，他确实是弗朗兹失散多年的兄弟。兄弟俩团聚之时，汉斯说明了他活下来的经过，战争即将结束时，他负伤被送进医院，并与部队失去联系。医院遭到轰炸，汉斯步行回到了西德。与此同时，他所在部队被击溃，他的所有档案材料全部毁于战火。汉斯重返故里，但他的家已被炸毁，左邻右舍谁也不知原住户的下落，汉斯以为全家人都在空袭中遇难，于是便在距此 50 英里外的一座村子里定居下来，直至当日。

Lesson 37 The Westhaven Express

We have learnt to expect that trains will be punctual. After years of pre-conditioning, most of us have developed an unshakable faith in railway time-tables. Ships may be delayed by storms; air flights may be cancelled because of bad weather; but trains must be on time. Only an exceptionally heavy snow fall might temporarily dislocate railway services. It is all too easy to blame the railway authorities when something does go wrong. The truth is that when mistakes occur, they are more likely to be ours than theirs.

After consulting my railway time-table, I noted with satisfaction that there was an express train to Westhaven. It went direct from my local station and the journey lasted a mere hour and seventeen minutes. When I boarded the train, I could not help noticing that a great many local people got on as well. At the time, this did not strike me as odd. I reflected that there must be a great many people besides myself who wished to take advantage of this excellent service. Neither was I surprised when the train stopped at Widley, a tiny station a few miles along the line. Even a mighty express train can be held up by signals. But when the train dawdled at station after station, I began to wonder. It suddenly dawned on me that this express was not roaring down the line at ninety miles an hour, but barely chugging along at thirty. One hour and seventeen minutes passed and we had not even covered half the distance. I asked a passenger if this was the Westhaven Express, but he had not even heard of it. I determined to lodge a complaint as soon as we arrived. Two hours later, I was talking angrily to the station-master at Westhaven. When he denied the train's existence, I borrowed his copy of the time-table. There was a note of triumph in my voice when I told him that it was there in black and white. Glancing at it briefly, he told me to look again. A tiny asterisk conducted me to a footnote at the bottom of the page. It said: 'This service has been suspended.'

我们已经习惯于相信火车总是准点的。经过多年的适应，大多数人对火车时刻表产生了一种不可动摇的信念。轮船船期可能因风暴而推延，飞机航班可能因恶劣天气而取消，唯有火车必然是准点的。只有非同寻常的大雪才可能暂时打乱铁路运行。因此，一旦铁路上真出了问题，人们便不加思索地责备铁路当局。事实上，差错很可能是我们自己，而不是铁路当局的。

我查看了列车时刻表，满意地了解到有一趟去威斯特海温的快车。这是趟直达车，旅途总共才需 1 小时 17 分钟。上车后，我不禁注意到许多当地人也上了车。一开始，我并不感到奇怪，我想除我之外，想利用快车之便的也一定大有人在。火车开出几英里即在一个小站威德里停了下来。对此，我不觉得奇怪，因为即便是特别快车也可能被信号拦住。但是，当火车一站接着一站往前蠕动时，我便产生了怀疑。我突然感到这趟快车并没以时速 90 英里的速度呼啸前进，而是扑哧扑哧地向前爬行，时速仅 30 英里。1 小时 17 分过去了，走了还不到一半路程。我问一位乘客，这是不是开往威斯特海温的那趟快车，他说从未听说过有这么一趟快车。我决定到目的地就给铁路部门提意见。两小时后，我气呼呼地同威斯特海温站站长说起此事。他说根本没有这趟车。于是我借他本人的列车时刻表，我带着一种胜利者的调子告诉他那趟车白纸黑字。明明白白印在时刻表上。他迅速地扫视了一眼，让我再看一遍。一个小小的星形符号把我的目光引到了那页底部一个说明上。上面写着：“此趟列车暂停运行。”

Lesson 38 The first calendar

Future historians will be in a unique position when they come to record the history of our own times. They will hardly know which facts to select from the great mass of evidence that steadily accumulates. What is more they will not have to rely solely on the written word. Films, gramophone records, and magnetic tapes will provide them with a bewildering amount of information. They will be able, as it were, to see and hear us in action. But the historian attempting to reconstruct the distant past is always faced with a difficult task. He has to deduce what he can from the few scanty clues available. Even seemingly insignificant remains can shed interesting light on the history of early man.

Up to now, historians have assumed that calendars came into being with the advent of agriculture, for then man was faced with a real need to understand something about the seasons. Recent scientific evidence seems to indicate that this assumption is incorrect.

Historians have long been puzzled by dots, lines and symbols which have been engraved on walls, bones, and the ivory tusk of mammoths. The nomads who made these markings lived by hunting and fishing during the last Ice Age, which began about 35,000 B.C. and ended about 10,000 B.C. By correlating markings made in various parts of the world, historians have been able to read this difficult code. They have found that it is connected with the passage of days and the phases of the moon. It is, in fact, a primitive type of calendar. It has long been known that the hunting scenes depicted on walls were not simply a form of artistic expression. They had a definite meaning, for they were as near as early man could get to writing. It is possible that there is a definite relation between these paintings and the markings that sometimes accompany them. It seems that man was making a real effort to understand the seasons 20,000 years earlier than has been supposed.

未来的历史学家在写我们这一段历史的时候会别具一格。对于逐渐积累起来的庞大材料，他们几乎不知道选取哪些好，而且，也不必完全依赖文字材料。电影、录像、光盘和光盘驱动器只是能为他们提供令人眼花缭乱的大量信息的几种手段。他们能够身临其境般地观看我们做事，倾听我们讲话。但是，历史学家企图重现遥远的过去可是一项艰巨的任务，他们必须根据现有的不充分的线索进行推理。即使看起来微不足道的遗物，也可能揭示人类早期历史的一些有趣的内容。

历史学家迄今认为日历是随农业的问世而出现的，因为当时人们面临着了解四季的实际需要，但近期科学研究发现，好像这种假设是不正确的。

长期以来，历史学家一直对雕刻在墙壁上、骨头上、古代长毛象的象牙上的点、线和形形色色的符号感到困惑不解。这些痕迹是游牧人留下的，他们生活在从公元前约 35,000 年到公元前 10,000 年的冰川期的末期，以狩猎、捕鱼为生。历史学家通过把世界各地留下的这种痕迹放在一起研究，终于弄懂了这种费解的代码。他们发现代码与昼夜更迭和月亮圆缺有关，事实上是一种最原始的日历。大家早就知道，画在墙上的狩猎图景并不是单纯的艺术表现形式，它们有着一定的含义，因为它们已接近古代人的文字形式。有时，这种图画与墙壁上的刻痕共存，它们之间可能有一定的联系。看来人类早就致力于探索四季变迁了，比人们想像的要早 20,000 年。

Lesson 39 Nothing to worry about

The rough road across the plain soon became so bad that we tried to get Bruce to drive back to the village we had come from. Even though the road was littered with boulders and pitted with holes, Bruce was not in the least perturbed. Glancing at his map, he informed us that the next village was a mere twenty miles away. It was not that Bruce always underestimated difficulties. He simply had no sense of danger at all. No matter what the conditions were, he believed that a car should be driven as fast as it could possibly go.

As we bumped over the dusty track, we swerved to avoid large boulders. The wheels scooped up stones which hammered ominously under the car. We felt sure that sooner or later a stone would rip a hole in our petrol tank or damage the engine. Because of this, we kept looking back, wondering if we were leaving a trail of oil and petrol behind us.

What a relief it was when the boulders suddenly disappeared, giving way to a stretch of plain where the only obstacles were clumps of bushes. But there was worse to come. Just ahead of us there was a huge fissure. In response to renewed pleadings, Bruce stopped. Though we all got out to examine the fissure, he remained in the car. We informed him that the fissure extended for fifty yards and was two feet wide and four feet deep. Even this had no effect. Bruce engaged low gear and drove at a terrifying speed, keeping the front wheels astride the crack as he followed its zig-zag course. Before we had time to worry about what might happen, we were back on the plain again. Bruce consulted the map once more and told us that the village was now only fifteen miles away. Our next obstacle was a shallow pool of water about half a mile across. Bruce charged at it, but in the middle, the car came to a grinding halt. A yellow light on the dash-board flashed angrily and Bruce cheerfully announced that there was no oil in the engine!

穿越平原的道路高低不平，开车走了不远，路面愈加崎岖。我们想劝说布鲁斯把车开回我们出发的那个村庄去。尽管路面布满石头，坑坑洼洼，但布鲁斯却一点儿不慌乱。他瞥了一眼地图，告诉我们前面再走不到 20 英里就是一个村庄。这并不是说布鲁斯总是低估困难，而是他压根儿没有一点儿危险感。他认为不管路面情况如何，车必须以最高速度前进。

我们在尘土飞扬的道路上颠簸，车子东拐西弯，以躲开那些大圆石。车轮搅起的石块锤击车身，发出不祥的锤击声。我们想念迟早会飞起一个石块把油箱砸开一个窟窿，或者把发动机砸坏。因此，我们不时地掉过头，怀疑车后是否留下了机油和汽油的痕迹。

突然大石块不见了，前面是一片平地，唯一的障碍只有一簇簇灌木丛。这使我们长长地松了口气。但是更糟糕的事情在等着我们，离我们不远处，出现一个大裂缝。我们再次央求布鲁斯小心，他这才把车停了下来。我们纷纷下车察看那个大裂缝，他却呆在车上。我们告诉他那个大裂缝长 50 码，宽 2 英尺，深 4 英尺。这也没有对他产生任何影响。布鲁斯挂上慢档，把两只前轮分别搁在裂缝的两边，顺着弯弯曲曲的裂缝，以发疯的速度向前开去。我们还未来得及担心后果，车已重新开上了平地。布鲁斯又看了一眼地图，告诉我们那座村庄离我们只有 15 英里了。下一个障碍是一片约半英里宽的浅水塘。布鲁斯向水塘冲去，但车开到水塘当中，嘎吱一声停住了。仪表盘一盏黄灯闪着刺眼的光芒，布鲁斯兴致勃勃地宣布发动机里没油了！

Lesson 40 Who ' s who

It has never been explained why university students seem to enjoy practical jokes more than anyone else. Students specialize in a particular type of practical joke: the hoax. Inviting the fire-brigade to put out a non-existent fire is a crude form of deception which no self-respecting student would ever indulge in. Students often create amusing situations which are funny to everyone except the victims.

When a student recently saw two workmen using a pneumatic drill outside his university, he immediately telephoned the police and informed them that two students dressed up as workmen were tearing up the road with a pneumatic drill. As soon as he had hung up, he went over to the workmen and told them that if a policeman ordered them to go away, they were not to take him seriously. He added that a student had dressed up as a policeman and was playing all sorts of silly jokes on people. Both the police and the workmen were grateful to the student for this piece of advance information.

The student hid in an archway nearby where he could watch and hear everything that went on. Sure enough, a policeman arrived on the scene and politely asked the workmen to go away. When he received a very rude reply from one of the workmen, he threatened to remove them by force. The workmen told him to do as he pleased and the policeman telephoned for help. Shortly afterwards, four more policemen arrived and remonstrated with the workmen. As the men refused to stop working, the police attempted to seize the pneumatic drill. The workmen struggled fiercely and one of them lost his temper. He threatened to call the police. At this, the police pointed out ironically that this would hardly be necessary as the men were already under arrest. Pretending to speak seriously, one of the workmen asked if he might make a telephone call before being taken to the station. Permission was granted and a policeman accompanied him to a call-box. Only when he saw that the man was actually telephoning the police did he realize that they had all been the victims of a hoax.

谁也弄不清为什么大学生好像比任何人都更喜欢恶作剧。大学生擅长一种特殊的恶作剧——戏弄人。请消防队来扑灭一场根本没有的大火是一种低级骗局，有自尊心的大学生决不会去做。大学生们常常做的是制造一种可笑的局面，使大家笑上一场，当然受害者是笑不出来的。

最近有个学生看见两个工人在学校门外用风钻干活，马上打电话报告警察，说有两个学生装扮成工人，正在用风钻破坏路面。挂上电话后，他又马上来到工人那儿，告诉他们若有个警察来让他们走开，不要把他当回事，还对工人说，有个学生常装扮成警察无聊地同别人开玩笑。警察与工人都对那个学生事先通报情况表示感谢。

那个学生躲在附近一拱形的门廊里，在那儿可以看见、听到现场发生的一切。果然，警察来了，不礼貌地请工人离开此地；但其中一个工人粗鲁地回了几句。于是警察威胁要强行使他们离开。工人说，悉听尊便。警察去打电话叫人。一会儿工夫，又来了 4 个警察，规劝工人离开。由于工人拒绝停下手中的活，警察想夺风钻。两个工人奋力抗争，其中一个发了火，威胁说要去叫警察。警察听后讥讽地说，这大可不必，因为他俩已被逮捕了。其中一个工人装模作样地问道，在被带往警察局之前，是否可以打一个电话。警察同意了，陪他来到一个投币地电话前，当他看到那个工人真的是给警察挂电话，才恍然大悟，原来他们都成一场骗局的受害者。

Lesson 41 Illusions of Pastoral peace

The quiet life of the country has never appealed to me. City born and city bred, I have always regarded the country as something you look at through a train window, or something you occasionally visit during the week-end. Most of my friends live in the city, yet they always go into raptures at the mere mention of the country. Though they extol the virtues of the peaceful life, only one of them has ever gone to live in the country and he was back in town within six months. Even he still lives under the illusion that country life is somehow superior to town life. He is forever talking about the friendly people, the clean atmosphere, the closeness to nature and the gentle pace of living. Nothing can be compared, he maintains, with the first cock crow, the twittering of birds at dawn, the sight of the rising sun glinting on the trees and pastures. This idyllic pastoral scene is only part of the picture. My friend fails to mention the long and friendless winter evenings which are interrupted only by an occasional visit to the local cinema-virtually the only form of entertainment. He says nothing about the poor selection of goods in the shops, or about those unfortunate people who have to travel from the country to the city every day to get to work. Why people are prepared to tolerate a four hour journey each day for the dubious privilege of living in the country is beyond my ken. They could be saved so much misery and expense if they chose to live in the city where they rightly belong.

If you can do without the few pastoral pleasures of the country, you will find the city can provide you with the best that life can offer. You never have to travel miles to see your friends. They invariably live nearby and are always available for an informal chat or an evening's entertainment. Some of my acquaintances in the country come up to town once or twice a year to visit the theatre as a special treat. For them this is a major operation which involves considerable planning. As the play draws to its close, they wonder whether they will ever catch that last train home. The city dweller never experiences anxieties of this sort. The latest exhibitions, films, or plays are only a short bus ride away. Shopping, too, is always a pleasure. There is so much variety that you never have to make do with second best. Country people run wild when they go shopping in the city and stagger home loaded with as many of the necessities of life as they can carry. Nor is the city without its moments of beauty. There is something comforting about the warm glow shed by advertisements on cold wet winter nights. Few things could be more impressive than the peace that descends on deserted city streets at week-ends when the thousands that travel to work everyday are tucked away in their homes in the country. It has always been a mystery to me why city dwellers, who appreciate all these things, obstinately pretend that they would prefer to live in the country.

宁静的乡村生活从来没有吸引过我。我生在城市，长在城市，总认为乡村是透过火车车窗看到的那个样子了，或偶尔周末去游玩一下景象。我的许多朋友都住在城市，但他们只要一提起乡村，马上就会变得欣喜若狂。尽管他们都交口称赞宁静的乡村生活的种种优点，但其中只有一个人真去农村住过，而且不足6个月就回来了。即使他也仍存有幻觉，好像乡村生活就是比城市生活优越。他滔滔不绝地大谈友好的农民，洁净的空气，贴近大自然的环境和悠闲的生活节奏。他坚持认为，凌晨雄鸡第一声啼叫，黎明时分小鸟吱喳欢叫，冉冉升起的朝阳染红树木、牧场，此番美景无与伦比。但这种田园诗般的乡村风光仅仅是一个侧面。我的朋友没有提到在电视机前度过的漫长寂寞的冬夜——电视是唯一的娱乐形式。他也不说商店货物品种单调，以及那些每天不得不从乡下赶到城里工作的不幸的人们。人们为什么情愿每天在路上奔波4个

小时去换取值得怀疑的乡间的优点，我是无法理解的。要是他们愿意住在本来属于他们的城市，则可以让他们省去诸多不便与节约大量开支。

如果你愿舍弃乡下生活那一点点乐趣的话，那么你会发出城市可以为你提供生活最美好的东西。你去看朋友根本不用跋涉好几英里，因为他们都住在附近，你随时可以同他们聊天或在晚上一起娱乐。我在乡村有一些熟人，他们每年进城来看一回或几回戏，并把此看作一种特殊的享受。看戏在他们是件大事，需要精心计划。当戏快演完时，他们又为是否能赶上末班火车回家而犯愁。这种焦虑，城里人是从未体验过的。坐公共汽车几站路，就可看到最新的展览、电影、戏剧。买东西也是一种乐趣。物品种繁多，从来不必用二等品来凑合。乡里人进城采购欣喜若狂，每次回家时都买足了外来商品，直到拿不动方才罢休，连走路都摇摇晃晃的。城市也并非没有良辰美景。寒冷潮湿的冬夜里，广告灯箱发出的暖光，会给人某种安慰。周末，当成千上万进城上班的人回到他们的乡间寓所之后，空旷的街市笼罩着一种宁静气氛，没有什么能比此时的宁静更令人难忘了。城里人对这一切心里很明白，却偏要执拗地装出他们喜欢住在乡村的样子，这对我来说一直是个谜。

Lesson 42 Modern Cavemen

Cave exploration, or potholing, as it has come to be known, is a relatively new sport. Perhaps it is the desire for solitude or the chance of making an unexpected discovery that lures men down to the depths of the earth. It is impossible to give a satisfactory explanation for a pot-holer's motives. For him, caves have the same peculiar fascination which high mountains have for the climber. They arouse instincts which can only be dimly understood.

Exploring really deep caves is not a task for the Sunday afternoon Rambler. Such undertakings require the precise planning and foresight of military operations. It can take as long as eight days to rig up rope ladders and to establish supply bases before a descent can be made into a very deep cave. Precautions of this sort are necessary, for it is impossible to foretell the exact nature of the difficulties which will confront the potholer. The deepest known cave in the world is the Gouffre Berger near Grenoble. It extends to a depth of 3723 feet. This immense chasm has been formed by an underground stream which has tunnelled a course through a flaw in the rocks. The entrance to the cave is on a plateau in the Dauphine Alps. As it is only six feet across, it is barely noticeable. The cave might never have been discovered had not the entrance been spotted by the distinguished French potholer, Berger. Since its discovery, it has become a sort of potholers' Everest. Though a number of descents have been made, much of it still remains to be explored.

A team of potholers recently went down the Gouffre Berger. After entering the narrow gap on the plateau, they climbed down the steep sides of the cave until they came to a narrow corridor. They had to edge their way along this, sometimes wading across shallow streams, or swimming across deep pools. Suddenly they came to a waterfall which dropped into an underground lake at the bottom of the cave. They plunged into the lake, and after loading their gear on an inflatable rubber dinghy, let the current carry them to the other side. To protect themselves from the icy water, they had to wear special rubber suits. At the far end of the lake, they came to huge piles of rubble which had been washed up by the water. In this part of the cave, they could hear an insistent booming sound which they found was caused by a small water-spout shooting down into a pool from the roof of the cave. Squeezing through a cleft in the rocks, the potholers arrived at an enormous cavern, the size of a huge concert hall. After switching on powerful arc lights, they saw great stalagmites — some of them over forty feet high--rising up like tree-trunks to meet the stalactites suspended from the roof. Round about, piles of lime-stone glistened in all the colours of the rainbow. In the eerie silence of the cavern, the only sound that could be heard was made by water which dripped continuously from the high dome above them.

洞穴勘查——或洞穴勘探——是一项比较新的体育活动。 寻求独处的愿望或寻求意外发现的机会的欲望吸引人们来到地下深处。要想对洞穴探险者的动机作出满意的解释是不可能的。对洞穴探险者来说，洞穴有一种特殊的魅力，就像高山对登山者有特殊魅力一样。为什么洞空能引发人的那种探险本能，人们对此只能有一种模模糊糊的理解。

探测非常深的洞穴不是那些在星期日下午漫步的人所能胜任的。这种活动需要有军事行动般的周密部署和预见能力。有时需要花费整整 8 天时间来搭起绳梯，建立供应基地，然后才能到一个很深的洞穴里。作出这样的准备是必要的，因为无法预见到洞穴探险者究竟会遇到什么性质的困难。世界上最深的洞穴是格里诺布尔附近的高弗·伯杰洞，深达 3,723 英尺。这个深邃的洞穴是由一条地下暗泉冲刷岩石中的缝隙并

使之慢慢变大而形成的。此洞的洞口在丹芬阿尔卑斯山的高原上，仅 6 英尺宽，很难被发现。若不是法国著名洞穴探险家伯杰由于偶然的机会发现了这个洞口的话，这个洞也许不会为人所知。自从被发现以后，这个洞成了洞穴探险者的珠穆朗玛峰，人们多次进入洞内探险，但至今尚有不少东西有待勘探。

最近，一队洞穴探险者下到了高弗 . 伯杰洞里。他们从高原上的窄缝进去，顺着笔直陡峭的洞壁往下爬。来到一条狭窄的走廊上。他们不得不侧着身子往前走，有时过浅溪，有时游过深潭。突然，他们来到一道瀑布前，那瀑布奔泻而下，注入洞底一处地下湖里。他们跳入湖中，把各种器具装上一只充气的橡皮艇，听任水流将他们带往对岸。湖水冰冷刺骨，他们必须穿上一种特制的橡皮服以保护自己。在湖的尽头，他们见到一大堆一大堆由湖水冲刷上岸的碎石。在这儿，他们可以听见一种连续不断的轰鸣声。后来他们发现这是由山洞顶部的一个小孔里喷出的水柱跌落到水潭中发出的声音。洞穴探险者从岩石缝里挤身过去，来到一个巨大的洞里，其大小相当于一个音乐厅。他们打开强力弧光灯，看见一株株巨大的石笋，有的高达 40 英尺，像树干似地向上长着，与洞顶悬挂下来的钟乳石相接。周围是一堆堆石灰石，像彩虹一样闪闪发光。洞里有一种可怕的寂静，唯一的可以听见的声响是高高的圆顶上不间断地滴水的嘀嗒声。

Lesson 43 Fully insured

Insurance companies are normally willing to insure anything. Insuring public or private property is a standard practice in most countries in the world. If, however, you were holding an open air garden party or a fete it would be equally possible to insure yourself in the event of bad weather. Needless to say, the bigger the risk an insurance company takes, the higher the premium you will have to pay. It is not uncommon to hear that a ship-ping company has made a claim for the cost of salvaging a sunken ship. But the claim made by a local authority to recover the cost of salvaging a sunken pie dish must surely be unique.

Admittedly it was an unusual pie dish, for it was eighteen feet long and six feet wide. It had been purchased by a local authority so that an enormous pie could be baked for an annual fair. The pie committee decided that the best way to transport the dish would be by canal, so they insured it for the trip. Shortly after it was launched, the pie committee went to a local inn to celebrate. At the same time, a number of teenagers climbed on to the dish and held a little party of their own. Modern dances proved to be more than the disk could bear, for during the party it capsized and sank in seven feet of water.

The pie committee telephoned a local garage owner who arrived in a recovery truck to salvage the pie dish. Shivering in their wet clothes, the teenagers looked on while three men dived repeatedly into the water to locate the dish. They had little difficulty in finding it, but hauling it out of the water proved to be a serious problem. The sides of the dish were so smooth that it was almost impossible to attach hawsers and chains to the rim without damaging it. Eventually chains were fixed to one end of the dish and a powerful winch was put into operation. The dish rose to the surface and was gently drawn towards the canal bank. For one agonizing moment, the dish was perched precariously on the bank of the canal, but it suddenly overbalanced and slid back into the water. The men were now obliged to try once more. This time they fixed heavy metal clamps to both sides of the dish so that they could fasten the chains. The dish now had to be lifted vertically because one edge was resting against the side of the canal. The winch was again put into operation and one of the men started up the truck. Several minutes later, the dish was successfully hauled above the surface of the water. Water streamed in torrents over its sides with such force that it set up a huge wave in the canal. There was danger that the wave would rebound off the other side of the bank and send the dish plunging into the water again. By working at tremendous speed, the men managed to get the dish on to dry land before the wave returned.

保险公司一般说来愿意承保一切东西。 承办公共财产或私人财产保险是世界上大部分国家的正常业务。如果你要举办一次露天游园会或盛宴，为避免碰上不好的天气而遭受损失也同样可以保险，不用说，保险公司承担风险越大，你付的保险费也就越高。航运公司为打捞沉船而提出索赔，这是常有的事，但某地当局为打捞一只焙制馅饼的盘子提出索赔，倒是件新鲜的事儿。

这个馅饼盘子确实少见，有 18 英尺长，6 英尺宽。某地方当局买下它用来焙制一个巨大的馅饼为一年一度交易会助兴。馅饼委员会确认运输这只盘子的最佳方案是通过运河水运。于是，他们对这只盘子的运输安全投了保。盘子下水后不久，馅饼委员会成员们来到当地一家小酒店庆贺。就在这个时候，许多十几岁的孩子爬盘子举行他们自己的集会。他们跳起了舞，盘子难以承受。舞会进行过程中，盘子倾覆，沉入了 7 英尺深的水中。

馅饼委员会给当地汽车修理库老板打电话，他闻讯后开着一辆急修车前来打捞盘子。那些孩子们穿着湿衣服哆嗦，看着 3 个工人轮潜入水中以确定盘子的位置。他们没费多大事儿就找到了盘子。可是把盘子捞出却是一个很大的难题。盘子四边十分光滑，要在盘边拴上绳索或链条而同时又不损坏它是很难办到的。不过，他们终于将链条固定在盘子的一端，一台大功率的绞车开动起来。盘子慢慢浮出水面，被轻轻地拽向运河岸边。在令人忐忑不安的瞬间，盘子晃晃悠悠地上了岸，但它突然失去了平衡，又跌回水中。工人们只得再来一次。这次，他们用沉重的金属夹子把盘子夹住，以便往盘子上安装铁链。这次，盘子必须垂直吊出水面，因为盘子的一边紧靠着运河河岸。绞盘机再次启动，一位工人发动了急修车的引擎。几分钟后，盘子被成功地拽出了水面。波浪从盘子两侧急涌而出，在运河里掀起一股大浪。但是当波浪从河对岸折回来时，就有再次把盘子拖进水里的危险。工人们动作迅速，终于赶在那股大浪返回之前把盘子拽到了岸上。

Lesson 44 Speed and comfort

People travelling long distances frequently have to decide whether they would prefer to go by land, sea, or air. Hardly anyone can positively enjoy sitting in a train for more than a few hours. Train compartments soon get cramped and stuffy. It is almost impossible to take your mind off the journey. Reading is only a partial solution, for the monotonous rhythm of the wheels clicking on the rails soon lulls you to sleep. During the day, sleep comes in snatches. At night, when you really wish to go to sleep, you rarely manage to do so. If you are lucky enough to get a couchette, you spend half the night staring at the small blue light in the ceiling, or fumbling to find your passport when you cross a frontier. Inevitably you arrive at your destination almost exhausted. Long car journeys are even less pleasant, for it is quite impossible even to read. On motor-ways you can, at least, travel fairly safely at high speeds, but more often than not, the greater part of the journey is spent on narrow, bumpy roads which are crowded with traffic. By comparison, trips by sea offer a great variety of civilized comforts. You can stretch your legs on the spacious decks, play games, swim, meet interesting people and enjoy good food--always assuming, of course, that the sea is calm. If it is not, and you are likely to get sea-sick, no form of transport could be worse. Even if you travel in ideal weather, sea journeys take a long time. Relatively few people are prepared to sacrifice up to a third of their holidays for the pleasure of travelling on a ship.

Aeroplanes have the reputation of being dangerous and even hardened travellers are intimidated by them. They also have the grave disadvantage of being the most expensive form of transport. But nothing can match them for speed and comfort. Travelling at a height of 30,000 feet, far above the clouds, and at over 500 miles an hour is an exhilarating experience. You do not have to devise ways of taking your mind off the journey, for an aeroplane gets you to your destination rapidly. For a few hours, you settle back in a deep armchair to enjoy the flight. The real escapist can watch a free film show and sip champagne on some services. But even when such refinements are not available, there is plenty to keep you occupied. An aeroplane offers you an unusual and breathtaking view of the world. You soar effortlessly over high mountains and deep valleys. You really see the shape of the land. If the landscape is hidden from view, you can enjoy the extraordinary sight of unbroken cloud plains that stretch out for miles before you, while the sun shines brilliantly in a clear sky. The journey is so smooth that there is nothing to prevent you from reading or sleeping. However you decide to spend your time, one thing is certain: you will arrive at your destination fresh and uncrumpled. You will not have to spend the next few days recovering from a long and arduous journey.

出远门的人常常需要决定是走旱路、水路，还是坐飞机。很少有人能够真正喜欢坐几个小时以上的火车。车厢很快就变得拥挤、闷热，想摆脱开旅途的困扰是很难的。看书只能解决部分问题。车轮与铁轨间单调的嘎吱声很快就会送你进入梦乡。白天是忽睡忽醒，到了夜晚，你真想睡了，却很难入睡。即使你走运弄到一个卧铺，夜间有一半时间你会盯着车顶那盏小蓝灯而睡不着觉；要不然就为查票摸索你的车票。一旦抵达目的地，你总是疲惫不堪。乘汽车作长途旅行则更加不舒服，因为连看书都几乎不可能。在公路上还好，你至少能以相当快的速度安全地向前行。但旅行的大部分时间都花在路上，而且只有很少的服务设施，交通也很拥挤。相比之下，坐船旅行或环游可以得到文明世界的各种享受。你可以在甲板上伸展四肢、做游戏，还能也很见到各种有趣的人，能享用各种美味佳肴——当然，这一切只有在大海风平浪静的情况下才有可能。如果大海肆虐起来，你就可能晕船，那种难受劲儿是任何一种别的旅行的方式都不会带

来的。即使风平浪静，坐船旅行也要占用很长时间。没有多少人会为享受坐船旅行的乐趣而牺牲假期的时间。

飞机以危险而著称，连老资格的旅行者也怕飞机。飞机另一个缺点是昂贵。但就速度与舒适而言，飞机是无与伦比的。腾云驾雾，在 30,000 英尺高空以 500 英里的时速旅行，这种经历令人心旷神怡。你不必想办法去摆脱旅途的困扰，因为飞机会迅速地把你送到目的地。几小时之内，你躺在扶手椅上，享受着旅途的欢乐。真正会享受的人还可以在某个航班上看一场电影和喝香槟。即使没有这些消遣条件，也总是有事可做。飞机上，你可以观察世界上非同寻常的奇妙的美景。你毫不费劲地飞越高山幽谷，你确能饱览大地的风貌。如果这种景色被遮住了，你可以观赏一下展现在你面前的、一望数英里的、连绵不断的云海，同时阳光灿烂，天空清澈明朗。旅途平稳，丝毫不妨碍你阅读或睡眠。不管你打算如何消磨时间，有件事是可以肯定的，即当你抵达目的地时，你感到精神焕发，毫无倦意，用不着因为漫长的旅途的辛苦而花几天时间休息来恢复精神。

Lesson 45 The power of press

In democratic countries any efforts to restrict the freedom of the press are rightly condemned. However, this freedom can easily be abused. Stories about people often attract far more public attention than political events. Though we may enjoy reading about the lives of others, it is extremely doubtful whether we would equally enjoy reading about ourselves. Acting on the contention that facts are sacred, reporters can cause untold suffering to individuals by publishing details about their private lives. Newspapers exert such tremendous influence that they can not only bring about major changes to the lives of ordinary people but can even overthrow a government.

The story of a poor family that acquired fame and fortune overnight, dramatically illustrates the power of the press. The family lived in Aberdeen, a small town of 23,000 inhabitants in South Dakota. As the parents had five children, life was a perpetual struggle against poverty. They were expecting their sixth child and faced with even more pressing economic problems. If they had only had one more child, the fact would have passed unnoticed. They would have continued to struggle against economic odds and would have lived in obscurity. But they suddenly became the parents of quintuplets, four girls and a boy, an event which radically changed their lives. The day after the birth of the five children, an aeroplane arrived in Aberdeen bringing sixty reporters and photographers. The news was of national importance, for the poor couple had become the parents of the only quintuplets in America.

The rise to fame was swift. Television cameras and newspapers carried the news to everyone in the country. Newspapers and magazines offered the family huge sums for the exclusive rights to publish stories and photographs. Gifts poured in not only from unknown people, but from baby food and soap manufacturers who wished to advertise their products. The old farmhouse the family lived in was to be replaced by a new \$100,000 home. Reporters kept pressing for interviews so lawyers had to be employed to act as spokesmen for the family at press conferences. The event brought serious changes to the town itself. Plans were announced to build a huge new highway, as Aberdeen was now likely to attract thousands of tourists. Signposts erected on the outskirts of the town directed tourists not to Aberdeen, but to 'Quint-City U.S.A.' The local authorities discussed the possibility of erecting a 'quint museum' to satisfy the curiosity of the public and to protect the family from inquisitive tourists. While the five babies were still quietly sleeping in oxygen tents in a hospital nursery, their parents were paying the price for fame. It would never again be possible for them to lead normal lives. They had become the victims of commercialization, for their names had acquired a market value. The town itself received so much attention that almost every one of the inhabitants was affected to a greater or less degree.

在民主国家里，任何限制新闻自由的企图都理所当然地受到谴责。然而，这种自由很容易被滥用。常人轶事往往比政治事件更能引起公众注意。我们都喜欢看关于别人生活的报道，但是否同样喜欢看关于自己生活的报道，就很难说了。记者按事实至上的论点行事，发表有关别人生活的细节，有时会给当事人造成极大的痛苦。新闻具有巨大的威力。它们不仅可以给寻常人家的生活带来重大的变化，甚至还能推翻一个政府。

下面这户穷人一夜之间出名发财的故事戏剧性地说明了新闻报道威力。这户人家住在南达科他州一个人口为 23,000 的小镇上，镇名为阿拜丁。家里已有 5 个孩子，全家人常年在贫困中挣扎。第 6 个孩子

即将问世，他们面临着更为严峻的经济问题。如果他们只添了 1 个孩子，这件事本来就不会引起任何人的注意。这家人会继续为克服经济上的拮据而奋斗，并默默无闻地活下去。但是他们出人意料生了个五胞胎，4 女 1 男。这事使他们的生活发生了根本的变化。五胞胎降生第二天，一架飞机飞抵阿拜丁，随机带来 60 名记者与摄影师。

这一家迅速出了名。电视摄像机和报纸把消息传送到全国。报纸、杂志出高价向他们购买文字、图片的独家报道权。不但素昧平生的人寄来了大量的礼物，而且婴儿食品、婴儿肥皂制造厂商为了替自己产品做广告也寄来了大量的礼物。这家人住的旧家舍将由一座价值 50 万美元的新住宅所取代。由于记者纷纷要求会见，他们不得不请了律师充当他们家的发言人举行记者招待会。眼下，五胞胎还静静地躺在医院婴儿室的氧气帐里，他们的父母却为这名声付出了代价，他们再也无法过正常的生活。他们成了商业化的受害者，因为他们的名字具有了市场价值。这些孩子立即成了商品，而不是 5 个新的家庭成员。

Lesson 46 Do it yourself

So great is our passion for doing things for ourselves, that we are becoming increasingly less dependent on specialized labour. No one can plead ignorance of a subject any longer, for there are countless do-it-yourself publications. Armed with the right tools and materials, newly-weds gaily embark on the task of decorating their own homes. Men of all ages spend hours of their leisure time installing their own fireplaces, laying-out their own gardens; building garages and making furniture. Some really keen enthusiasts go so far as to build their own record players and radio transmitters. Shops cater for the do-it-yourself craze not only by running special advisory services for novices, but by offering consumers bits and pieces which they can assemble at home. Such things provide an excellent outlet for pent-up creative energy, but unfortunately not all of us are born handymen.

Wives tend to believe that their husbands are infinitely resourceful and versatile. Even husbands who can hardly drive a nail in straight are supposed to be born electricians, carpenters, plumbers and mechanics. When lights fuse, furniture gets rickety, pipes get clogged, or vacuum cleaners fail to operate, wives automatically assume that their husbands will somehow put things right. The worst thing about the do-it-yourself game is that sometimes husbands live under the delusion that they can do anything even when they have been repeatedly proved wrong. It is a question of pride as much as anything else.

Last spring my wife suggested that I call in a man to look at our lawn-mower. It had broken down the previous summer, and though I promised to repair it, I had never got round to it. I would not hear of the suggestion and said that I would fix it myself. One Saturday afternoon, I hauled the machine into the garden and had a close look at it. As far as I could see, it only needed a minor adjustment: a turn of a screw here, a little tightening up there, a drop of oil and it would be as good as new. Inevitably the repair job was not quite so simple. The mower firmly refused to mow, so I decided to dismantle it. The garden was soon littered with chunks of metal which had once made up a lawn-mower. But I was extremely pleased with myself I had traced the cause of the trouble. One of the links in the chain that drives the wheels had snapped. After buying a new chain I was faced with the insurmountable task of putting the confusing jigsaw puzzle together again. I was not surprised to find that the machine still refused to work after I had reassembled it, for the simple reason that I was left with several curiously shaped bits of metal which did not seem to fit anywhere. I gave up in despair. The weeks passed and the grass grew. When my wife nagged me to do something about it, I told her that either I would have to buy a new mower or let the grass grow. Needless to say our house is now surrounded by a jungle. Buried somewhere in deep grass there is a rusting lawn-mower which I have promised to repair one day.

现在我们自己动手做事的热情很高，结果对于专业工人的依赖越来越少了。由于出版了不计其数的教人自己动手做事的书报杂志，没有人再能说对某事一无所知。新婚夫妇找来合适的工具和材料，喜气洋洋地开始布置新房。特别是男人，常利用空闲时间安装壁炉、布置花园、建造车库、制作家具。有些热衷于自己动手的人甚至自己组装电脑。为了满足自己动手热的需要，商店不仅为初学者提供专门的咨询服务，而且为顾客准备了各种零件，供他们买回家去安装。这些东西为人们潜在的创造力提供了一个绝妙的用武之地。但不幸的是，我们并非人人都是能工巧匠。

妻子常常认为她们的丈夫无比聪明能干。甚至那些连一枚钉子都钉不直的男人都被认为是天生的电工、木匠、水管工和机械师。每当电灯保险丝烧断、家具榫头松动、管道堵塞、吸尘器不动时，有些妻子认为丈夫总有办法。自己动手的例子中最糟糕的是，有时甚至是男人尽管接连失败却还误以为自己什么都行，原因就是要面子。

今年春天，妻子让我请人检查一下我家的割草机。那台割草机去年夏天就坏了，尽管我答应修，但一直没抽出时间，我不愿听妻子的建议，说我自己会修。一个星期六的下午，我把割草机拉到了花园里，仔细检查了一番。在我看来，只需稍加调整即可。这儿紧紧螺丝，那儿固定一下，再加几滴油，就会像新的一样了。事实上，修理工作远不是那么简单。修完后割草机还是纹丝不动。于是，我决定把它拆开。一会儿工夫，割草机便被拆成一个个金属零件，乱七八糟地堆在花园里。但我却非常高兴，因为我找到了毛病所在。驱动轮子的链条断了一节。我买来一根新链条后，面临的就是如何把这些令人眼花缭乱的拼板重新组装起来。等我装完后，那台割草机仍然一动不动，对此我倒并不感到吃惊。原因很简单，因为还剩下几个形状奇特的零件似乎哪里也装不上去。我无可奈何，只好罢休。几个星期过去了，草长了起来。妻子喋喋不休让我想点办法。我告诉她，要么买一台新割草机，要么让草长下去。不用说，我家现在已被丛林包围。深草丛中的某个地方有一台正在生锈的割草机，那就是我曾答应某日要修理的割草机。

Lesson 47 Through the earth's crust

Pollution is the price we pay for an overpopulated, over industrialized planet. When you come to think about it, there are only four ways you can deal with rubbish: dump it, burn it, turn it into something you can use again, attempt to produce less of it. We keep trying all four methods, but the sheer volume of rubbish we produce worldwide threatens to overwhelm us.

Rubbish, however, is only part of the problem of polluting our planet. The need to produce ever-increasing quantities of cheap food leads to a different kind of pollution. Industrialized farming methods produce cheap meat products: beef, pork and chicken. The use of pesticides and fertilizers produces cheap grain and vegetables. The price we pay for cheap food may be already too high: Mad Cow Disease (BSE) in cattle, salmonella in chicken and eggs, and listeria in dairy products. And if you think you'll abandon meat and become a vegetarian, you have the choice of very expensive organically-grown vegetables or a steady diet of pesticides every time you think you're eating fresh salads and vegetables, or just having an innocent glass of water!

However, there is an even more insidious kind of pollution that particularly affects urban areas and invades our daily lives, and that is noise. Burglar alarms going off at any time of the day or night serve only to annoy passers-by and actually assist burglars to burgle. Car alarms constantly scream at us in the street and are a source of profound irritation. A recent survey of the effects of noise revealed (surprisingly?) that dogs barking incessantly in the night rated the highest form of noise pollution on a scale ranging from 1 to 7. The survey revealed a large number of sources of noise that we really dislike. Lawn mowers whining on a summer's day, late-night parties in apartment blocks, noisy neighbours, vehicles of all kinds, especially large container trucks thundering through quiet villages, planes and helicopters flying overhead, large radios carried round in public places and played at maximum volume. New technology has also made its own contribution to noise. A lot of people object to mobile phones, especially when they are used in public places like restaurants or on public transport. Loud conversations on mobile phones invade our thoughts or interrupt the pleasure of meeting friends for a quiet chat. The noise pollution survey revealed a rather surprising and possibly amusing old fashioned source of noise. It turned out to be snoring! Men were found to be the worst offenders. It was revealed that 20% of men in their mid-thirties snore. This figure rises to a staggering 60% of men in their sixties. Against these figures, it was found that only 5% of women snore regularly, while the rest are constantly woken or kept awake by their trumpeting partners. Whatever the source of noise, one thing is certain: silence, it seems, has become a golden memory.

污染就是我们为这个人口过密，过度工业化的星球所付出的代价。当我们开始考虑垃圾问题时，我们只有 4 种对付垃圾的方法：倾倒、焚烧、把垃圾变成再生材料或试图少产生一些垃圾。我们一直在试这 4 种方式，但是，我们在世界范围内仅产生的垃圾的量就有把我们覆盖的危险。

然而，垃圾只是我们这个星球的污染问题的一个方面。日益增长的对廉价食物的需求导致了另一种形式的污染。工业化的农作方式生产出廉价的肉类制品——牛肉、猪肉和鸡肉。使用杀虫剂和化肥生产出廉价的谷物和蔬菜。为了廉价食物我们付出代价已经太高了：牛肉中的疯牛病，鸡肉和鸡蛋中的沙门氏菌，奶制品中的利斯特杆菌。如果你想放弃肉类而变成一位素食者，那么你可以两者择一：或是选用价格昂贵、有机培植的蔬菜，或是当你认为在享用新鲜色拉和新鲜蔬菜或饮用一杯无害的水的时候，实际上每次都不断吃进杀虫剂。

但是，还有一种更加隐蔽有害的污染，它专门影响城镇地区，侵袭我们的日常生活，那就是噪音。防盗警报器在白天和黑夜的任何时候都会响起来，它的作用只是骚扰过路行人，而实际上却帮助窃贼入室行窃。在街上，汽车的防盗警报不断对我们吼叫，这是人们极度烦躁的一个原因，最近一个有关噪音的作用的调查（令人吃惊地）指出，夜间连续不断的狗叫声，在一个从 1 级至 7 级刻度表上应列为最严重的噪声污染。这个调查揭示了我们所不喜欢的大量的噪声的来源：夏天呜呜作响的割草机，公寓楼里深夜聚会的喧哗声，大声吵闹的邻居，各式各样的车辆，特别是穿越寂静的村庄的集装箱卡车，从头顶飞过的飞机和直升机，被带到公共场所、音量开到最大的大功率收音机。新技术也为噪音作了它的贡献。许多人都反对移动式电话，特别是在如饭店，公共交通车等公共场所使用移动电话。用移动电话大声交谈干扰我们的思路，破坏我们和朋友在一起轻声聊天所得到的乐趣。这个有关噪音的污染调查还揭示了一种出人意外而同时可能会引人意外而同时可能会引人发笑的老式噪音源。它竟然是鼾声。人类是这方面的罪魁祸首。调查指出，20% 的 35 岁左右的男人打鼾；而到 60 岁这个年龄段，这个数字上升到令人惊愕的 60%。与这些数字相比，只有 5% 的女性经常打鼾；而其余则经常被与她们同睡、像吹号似地打着呼噜的男人吵醒或弄得睡不着。不管噪声来自何方，有一点是肯定的：看来寂静已变成一种珍贵的回忆。

Lesson 48 The silent village

In this much-travelled world, there are still thousands of places which are inaccessible to tourists. We always assume that villagers in remote places are friendly and hospitable. But people who are cut off not only from foreign tourists, but even from their own countrymen can be hostile to travellers. Visits to really remote villages are seldom enjoyable--as my wife and I discovered during a tour through the Balkans.

We had spent several days in a small town and visited a number of old churches in the vicinity. These attracted many visitors for they were not only of great architectural interest, but contained a large number of beautifully preserved frescoes as well. On the day before our departure, several bus loads of tourists descended on the town. This was more than we could bear, so we decided to spend our last day exploring the countryside. Taking a path which led out of the town, we crossed a few fields until we came to a dense wood. We expected the path to end abruptly, but we found that it traced its way through the trees. We tramped through the wood for over two hours until we arrived at a deep stream. We could see that the path continued on the other side, but we had no idea how we could get across the stream. Suddenly my wife spotted a boat moored to the bank. In it there was a boatman fast asleep. We gently woke him up and asked him to ferry us to the other side. Though he was reluctant to do so at first, we eventually persuaded him to take us.

The path led to a tiny village perched on the steep sides of a mountain. The place consisted of a straggling unmade road which was lined on either side by small houses. Even under a clear blue sky, the village looked forbidding, as all the houses were built of grey mud bricks. The village seemed deserted, the only sign of life being an ugly-looking black goat tied to a tree on a short length of rope in a field nearby. Sitting down on a dilapidated wooden fence near the field, we opened a couple of tins of sardines and had a picnic lunch. All at once, I noticed that my wife seemed to be filled with alarm. Looking up I saw that we were surrounded by children in rags who were looking at us silently as we ate. We offered them food and spoke to them kindly, but they remained motionless. I concluded that they were simply shy of strangers. When we later walked down the main street of the village, we were followed by a silent procession of children. The village which had seemed deserted, immediately came to life. Faces appeared at windows. Men in shirt sleeves stood outside their houses and glared at us. Old women in black shawls peered at us from door-ways. The most frightening thing of all was that not a sound could be heard. There was no doubt that we were unwelcome visitors. We needed no further warning. Turning back down the main street, we quickened our pace and made our way rapidly towards the stream where we hoped the boatman was waiting.

在这个旅游频繁的世界里，仍有成千上万个游人足迹未至的地方。人们总是以为偏僻的地方的村民们热情好客。但是，那些不但与外国旅游者隔绝，而且与本国同胞隔绝的人们有可能对游客抱有敌意。到真正偏僻的村庄去旅游并不是一件愉快的事情。我与妻子在一次周游巴尔干半岛时对此深有体会。

我们在一座小镇上逗留了几天，参观了附近的许多古老的教堂。这些教堂吸引大量游客，不仅是因为建筑风格奇特，而且还有大量保存完好的壁画。我们离开小镇的前一天，镇上来了几辆满载游客的公共汽车。人多得使我们难以忍受，于是我们决定利用最后一天去乡间一游。我们走上了一条出镇的小路，穿过几块农田，来到一片茂密的树林。我们原以为小路会到此突然终止。没想到它到树林中继续向前延伸。我

们在树林中跋涉了两个多小时，到了一条深溪边。我们可以看到小路在深溪对岸继续向前伸展，但却不知如何越过这道深溪。突然，妻子发现岸边泊着一条小船，船上有一船夫在呼呼大睡。我们轻轻地把他唤醒，请他把我们摆渡过溪。一开始，他很不愿意，但经劝说，终于同意了。

顺着小路，我们来到一个座落在陡峭山坡上的小村庄。这儿有一条未经修筑的弯弯曲曲的道路，路两边排列着一些矮小的农舍。农舍全用灰色的土坯建成，因此，即使在晴朗的蓝天底下，村庄看上去也会令人感到难以亲近。村里似乎无人居住，唯一的生命迹象是附近田里一只面目可憎的黑山羊，用一截短绳拴在一棵树上。我们在田边一堵东倒西歪的篱笆墙上坐下来，打开几听沙丁鱼罐头，吃了一顿野外午餐。突然，我注意到妻子十分惊恐。我抬头一看，发现我们被一群衣衫褴褛的小孩团团围住了，他们在默不作声地看着我们吃饭。我们给他们东西吃，客客气气地同他们交谈，但他们却一动也不动。我认为这不过是他们在陌生人面前表现出的害羞。后来，我们在村里的主要街道上行走的时候，一队默不作声的孩子跟在我们后头。刚才还似乎空荡荡的村庄一下子活跃了起来，窗口露出了一张张面孔，只穿着衬衣的男人们站在屋子外面凶狠地盯着我们，披黑纱巾的老妇人站在门口偷偷地瞅着我们。最令人害怕的是到处没有一点声音。毫无疑问，我们的来访是不受欢迎的。我们不需要进一步的警告了。便掉转身子，沿着那条主要街道加快步伐，快速地朝深溪边走去，希望船夫还在那儿等着我们。

Lesson 49 The Ideal Servant

It is a good thing my aunt Harriet died years ago. If she were alive today she would not be able to air her views on her favourite topic of conversation: domestic servants. Aunt Harriet lived in that leisurely age when servants were employed to do housework. She had a huge, rambling country house called 'The Gables'. She was sentimentally attached to this house, for even though it was far too big for her needs, she persisted in living there long after her husband's death. Before she grew old, aunt Harriet used to entertain lavishly. I often visited The Gables when I was a boy. No matter how many guests were present, the great house was always immaculate. The parquet floors shone like mirrors; highly polished silver was displayed in gleaming glass cabinets; even my uncle's huge collection of books was kept miraculously free from dust. Aunt Harriet presided over an invisible army of servants that continuously scrubbed, cleaned, and polished. She always referred to them as 'the shifting population', for they came and went with such frequency that I never even got a chance to learn their names. Though my aunt pursued what was, in those days, an enlightened policy in that she never allowed her domestic staff to work more than eight hours a day, she was extremely difficult to please. While she always decried the fickleness of human nature, she carried on an unrelenting search for the ideal servant to the end of her days, even after she had been sadly disillusioned by Bessie. Bessie worked for aunt Harriet for three years. During that time she so gained my aunt's confidence, that she was put in charge of the domestic staff.

Aunt Harriet could not find words to praise Bessie's industry and efficiency. In addition to all her other qualifications, Bessie was an expert cook. She acted the role of the perfect servant for three years before aunt Harriet discovered her 'little weakness'. After being absent from The Gables for a week, my aunt unexpectedly returned one afternoon with a party of guests and instructed Bessie to prepare dinner. Not only was the meal well below the usual standard, but Bessie seemed unable to walk steadily. She bumped into the furniture and kept mumbling about the guests. When she came in with the last course — a huge pudding—she tripped on the carpet and the pudding went flying through the air, narrowly missed my aunt, and crashed on the dining table with considerable force. Though this occasioned great mirth among the guests, aunt Harriet was horrified. She reluctantly came to the conclusion that Bessie was drunk. The guests had, of course, realized this from the moment Bessie opened the door for them and, long before the final catastrophe, had had a difficult time trying to conceal their amusement. The poor girl was dismissed instantly. After her departure, aunt Harriet discovered that there were piles of empty wine bottles of all shapes and sizes neatly stacked in what had once been Bessie's wardrobe. They had mysteriously found their way there from the wine-cellar!

我的姑妈哈丽特好多年前就去世了，这倒是件好事。如果她活到今天，她将不能就她热衷的话题“佣人”发表意见了。哈丽特生活在一个悠闲的年代，家务事都由雇来的佣人代劳。她在乡下有一幢巨大杂乱的房子，叫作“山墙庄园”。她对这幢房子在感情上难舍难分。房子实在太大了，但在丈夫去世多年后，她仍然执意长年住在那儿。哈丽特姑妈年轻时，喜欢大摆宴席，招待宾客。我小时候常去“山墙庄园”作客。不管去多少宾客，大房子里总是收拾得干干净净。镶木地板洁如明镜，擦得发亮的银器陈列在明亮的玻璃柜里，连姑夫的大量藏书也保存得很好，奇迹般地一尘不染。哈丽特姑妈统率着一支看不见的佣人大军，他们不停地擦拭、清扫、刷洗。她称这些佣人叫“流动人口”，因为他们来匆匆，所以我甚至都没有

机会知道他们的姓名。姑妈待佣人在当时算是开明的，从来不让佣人每天工作超过 8 小时，但他们很难使她称心如意。她一方面总是批评人的本性朝三暮四，另一方面她又持之以恒地寻找一个理想的佣人。即使在贝西大大地伤她的心之后，她还在找，一直到她死去。

贝西在哈丽特家干了 3 年。在此期间，她赢得了姑母的赏识，甚至当上了大管家。哈丽特不知该用什么言辞来赞扬贝西的勤奋与高效。贝西除了有各种本领以外，还是一个烹饪大师。她担任“理想仆人”角色 3 年之后，哈丽特终于发现她有“小小的弱点”。一次，姑妈有一个星期没在“山墙庄园”住。一天下午，她出其不意地回来了，带来一大批客人，吩咐贝西准备晚饭。结果，不仅饭菜远不如平时做得好，而且贝西走起路来似乎东倒西歪。她撞到了家具上，嘴里还不断咕咕哝哝议论客人。当她端着最后一道菜——一大盘布丁——走进屋来时，在地毯上绊了一跤。布丁飞到半空，从姑母身边擦过，然后狠狠地砸在餐桌上。这件事引起了客人们的欢笑，但哈丽特却着实吓了一跳。她不得不认定贝西是喝醉了。客人们自然从贝西为他们开门那一刻起就看出来了，在好长一段时间里，即最后这个乱子发生前，他们努力克制才没笑出声来。贝西当即被解雇了。贝西走后，哈丽特姑妈发现在贝西以前用过的衣柜里整整齐齐地放着一堆堆形状各导、大小不一的酒瓶子。这些酒瓶神不知鬼不觉地从酒窖来到了这里。

Lesson 50 New Year Resolutions

The New Year is a time for resolutions. Mentally, at least, most of us could compile formidable lists of 'do's' and 'don'ts'. The same old favourites recur year in year out with monotonous regularity. We resolve to get up earlier each morning, eat less, find more time to play with the children, do a thousand and one jobs about the house, be nice to people we don't like, drive carefully, and take the dog for a walk every day. Past experience has taught us that certain accomplishments are beyond attainment. If we remain inveterate smokers, it is only because we have so often experienced the frustration that results from failure. Most of us fail in our efforts at self-improvement because our schemes are too ambitious and we never have time to carry them out. We also make the fundamental error of announcing our resolutions to everybody so that we look even more foolish when we slip back into our bad old ways. Aware of these pitfalls, this year I attempted to keep my resolutions to myself. I limited myself to two modest ambitions: to do physical exercises every morning and to read more of an evening. An all-night party on New Year's Eve, provided me with a good excuse for not carrying out either of these new resolutions on the first day of the year, but on the second, I applied myself assiduously to the task.

The daily exercises lasted only eleven minutes and I proposed to do them early in the morning before anyone had got up. The self-discipline required to drag myself out of bed eleven minutes earlier than usual was considerable. Nevertheless, I managed to creep down into the living-room for two days before anyone found me out. After jumping about on the carpet and twisting the human frame into uncomfortable positions, I sat down at the breakfast table in an exhausted condition. It was this that betrayed me. The next morning the whole family trooped in to watch the performance. That was really unsettling but I fended off the taunts and jibes of the family good-humouredly and soon everybody got used to the idea. However, my enthusiasm waned. The time I spent at exercises gradually diminished. Little by little the eleven minutes fell to zero. By January 10th, I was back to where I had started from. I argued that if I spent less time exhausting myself at exercises in the morning I would keep my mind fresh for reading when I got home from work. Resisting the hypnotizing effect of television, I sat in my room for a few evenings with my eyes glued to a book, one night, however, feeling cold and lonely, I went downstairs and sat in front of the television pretending to read. That proved to be my undoing, for I soon got back to my old bad habit of dozing off in front of the screen. I still haven't given up my resolution to do more reading. In fact, I have just bought a book entitled 'How to Read a Thousand Words a Minute'. Perhaps it will solve my problem, but I just haven't had time to read it!

新年是下决心的时候，至少在大多数人的心里会编排出一份“应做什么”和“不应做什么”的令人生畏的单子。相同的决心以单调的规律年复一年地出现。我们决心每天早晨起得早些；吃得少些；多花点时间与孩子们一起做游戏；做大量的家务；对不喜欢的人友善一些；小心驾车；每天都要带着狗散步；等等。以往的经验告诉我们有些事是办不到的。如果我们烟瘾大，戒不掉，那是因为屡戒屡败，失去信心。我们大多数人想自我完善却遭到失败，这是因为我们的规划过于宏大，而又根本没有时间去实施。我们还犯有一个根本性的错误，即把我们的决心向大家宣布。这样一旦滑回到那些老习惯上去，我们在别人的眼里会显得更加难堪。我深知这些问题，于是，今年我对自己的计划要严加保密，只给自己定下两项适中的任务；

每天早上锻炼身体，每天晚上多看点书。新年除夕举办的一次通宵晚会，使我理直气壮地在新年头一天免去了这两项任务。不过，新年第二天，我全力以赴地照着去做了。

早锻炼一共只有 11 分钟，我打算在别人起床之前进行。这就要求我比平时早 11 分钟把自己从床上拽起来，这种自我约束是很艰苦的。不过开头两天我还是成功地蹑手蹑脚地来到楼下起居室，被谁也没发现。我在地毯上跳来蹦过去，扭曲身子，摆出各种姿势，弄得浑身不舒服，然后坐到桌边吃早饭，一副筋疲力尽的样子。正是这副模样泄露了我的秘密。第二天早晨全家人结队来到起居室看我表演。这真叫人不好意思，但我心平气和地顶住全家人的嘲笑和奚落。不久，大家对我习以为常了，而这时我的热情却减退了。我花在锻炼上的时间逐渐减少，慢慢地从 11 分钟减到了零。到了 1 月 10 日，我恢复了原来的作息时

间。我辩解说，早晨少耗费精力锻炼，晚上下班回家看书时头脑更清醒些。有几天晚上，我极力摆脱了电视的诱惑，坐在自己的房间里，两眼盯在书上。可是，有一天夜里，我感到又冷又孤单，便来到楼下坐在电视机前假装看书。这下我可完了，因为不一会儿，我就恢复了以前的坏习惯，在屏幕前打起瞌睡来。但我还没有放弃多看些书的决心。事实上，我刚买来一本叫《一分钟读一千字的诀窍》的书。也许这本书能解决我的问题，但我一直还没时间去看这本书！

Lesson 51 Automation

Predicting the future is notoriously difficult. Who could have imagined, in the mid 1970s, for example, that by the end of the 20th century, computers would be as common in people's homes as TV sets? In the 1970s, computers were common enough, but only in big business, government departments, and large organizations. These were the so-called mainframe machines. Mainframe computers were very large indeed, often occupying whole air-conditioned rooms, employing full-time technicians and run on specially-written software. Though these large machines still exist, many of their functions have been taken over by small powerful personal computers, commonly known as PCs.

In 1975, a primitive machine called the Altair, was launched in the USA. It can properly be described as the first 'home computer' and it pointed the way to the future. This was followed, at the end of the 1970s, by a machine called an Apple. In the early 1980s, the computer giant, IBM produced the world's first Personal Computer. This ran on an 'operating system' called DOS, produced by a then small company named Microsoft. The IBM Personal Computer was widely copied. From those humble beginnings, we have seen the development of the user-friendly home computers and multimedia machines which are in common use today.

Considering how recent these developments are, it is even more remarkable that as long ago as the 1960s, an Englishman, Leon Bagrit, was able to predict some of the uses of computers which we know today. Bagrit dismissed the idea that computers would learn to 'think' for themselves and would 'rule the world', which people liked to believe in those days. Bagrit foresaw a time when computers would be small enough to hold in the hand, when they would be capable of providing information about traffic jams and suggesting alternative routes, when they would be used in hospitals to help doctors to diagnose illnesses, when they would relieve office workers and accountants of dull, repetitive clerical work. All these computer uses have become commonplace. Of course, Leon Bagrit could not possibly have foreseen the development of the Internet, the worldwide system that enables us to communicate instantly with anyone in any part of the world by using computers linked to telephone networks. Nor could he have foreseen how we could use the Internet to obtain information on every known subject, so we can read it on a screen in our homes and even print it as well if we want to. Computers have become smaller and smaller, more and more powerful and cheaper and cheaper. This is what makes Leon Bagrit's predictions particularly remarkable. If he, or someone like him, were alive today, he might be able to tell us what to expect in the next fifty years.

众所周知，预测未来是非常困难的。举个例子吧，在 20 世纪 70 年代中叶又有谁能想得到在 20 世纪末的时候，家庭用的计算机会像电视机一样普遍？在 70 年代，计算机已经相当普及了，但只用在大公司，政府部门和大的组织之中，它们被称为主机。计算机主机确实很大，常常占据了装有空调的多间房间，雇用专职的技师，而且得用专门编写的软件才能运行。虽然这种大计算机仍然存在，但它们的许多功能已被体积小但功能齐全的个人电脑——即我们常说的 PC 机——所代替了。

1975 年，美国推出了一台被称为“牛郎星”的原始机型。严格地说起来，它可以被称为第一台“家用电脑”，而且它也指明了今后的方向。70 年代末，在牛郎星之后又出现了一种被称为“苹果”的机型。80 年代初，计算机行业的王牌公司美国国际商用机器公司（IBM）生产出了世界上第一台个人电脑。这种电脑采用了一种被称为磁盘操作系统（DOS）的工作程序，而这种程序是由当时规模不大的微软公司生产的。

IBM 的个人电脑被大规模地模仿。从那些简陋的初级阶段，我们看到了现在都已普及的、使用简便的家用电脑和多媒体的微机的发展。

想一想这些发展的时间多么短，就更觉得英国人莱昂·巴格瑞特有着非凡的能力。他在 60 年代就能预言我们今天知道的计算机的一些用途。巴格瑞特根本不接受计算机可以学会自己去“思考”和计算可以“统治世界”这种想法，而这种想法是当时的人们都愿意相信的。巴格瑞特预示有一天计算机可以小到拿在手上，计算机可以使办公室人员和会计免除那些枯燥、重复的劳动。计算机的所有这些功能现在都变得很平常。当然了，莱昂·巴格瑞特根本没有什么可能预测到国际交互网——就是把计算机连结到电话线路上，以便和世界上任何一个地方的人立即进行联系的一个世界范围的通讯系统——的发展。他也无法预测到我们可以利用国际交互网获取有关任何已知专题的信息，以便在家里的屏幕上阅读，如果愿意的话甚至可以将其打印出来。计算机已经变得体积越来越小，功能越来越多，价格越来越低，这就是莱昂·巴格瑞特的预测非凡的地方。如果他或是像他的什么人今天还活着的话，他大概可以告诉我们下一个 50 年后会发生什么事情。

Lesson 52 Mud is mud

My cousin, Harry, keeps a large curiously shaped bottle on permanent display in his study. Despite the fact that the bottle is tinted a delicate shade of green, an observant visitor would soon notice that it is filled with what looks like a thick greyish substance. If you were to ask Harry what was in the bottle, he would tell you that it contained perfumed mud. If you expressed doubt or surprise, he would immediately invite you to smell it and then to rub some into your skin. This brief experiment would dispel any further doubts you might entertain. The bottle really does contain perfumed mud. How Harry came into the possession of this outlandish stuff makes an interesting story which he is fond of relating. Further- more, the acquisition of this bottle cured him of a bad habit he had been developing for years.

Harry used to consider it a great joke to go into expensive cosmetic shops and make outrageous requests for goods that do not exist. He would invent fanciful names on the spot. On entering a shop, he would ask for a new perfume called 'Scented Shadow' or for 'insoluble bath cubes'. If a shop girl told him she had not heard of it, he would pretend to be considerably put out. He loved to be told that one of his imaginary products was temporarily out of stock and he would faithfully promise to call again at some future date, but of course he never did. How Harry managed to keep a straight face during these performances is quite beyond me.

Harry does not need to be prompted to explain how he bought his precious bottle of mud. One day, he went to an exclusive shop in London and asked for 'Myrolite'. The shop assistant looked puzzled and Harry repeated the word, slowly stressing each syllable. When the girl shook her head in bewilderment, Harry went on to explain that 'myrolite' was a hard, amber-like substance which could be used to remove freckles. This explanation evidently conveyed something to the girl who searched shelf after shelf. She produced all sorts of weird concoctions, but none of them met with Harry's requirements. When Harry put on his act of being mildly annoyed, the girl promised to order some for him. Intoxicated by his success, Harry then asked for perfumed mud. He expected the girl to look at him in blank astonishment. However, it was his turn to be surprised, for the girl's eyes immediately lit up and she 'fetched several botties which she placed on the counter for Harry to inspect. For once, Harry had to admit defeat. He picked up what seemed to be the smallest bottle and discreetly asked the price. He was glad to get away with a mere five guineas and he beat a hasty retreat, clutching the precious bottle under his arm. From then on, Harry decided that this little game he had invented might prove to be expensive. The curious bottle which now adorns the bookcase in his study was his first and last purchase of rare cosmetics.

我的堂兄哈里在他的书房里一直摆着一只形状古怪的大瓶子。尽管那只瓶子呈淡绿色，但细心的客人很快就会发现瓶里装的是一种看上去黏稠，颜色发灰的东西。要是你问哈里瓶里装着什么，他会告诉你是香水泥。如果你表示怀疑或惊奇，他会立即请你闻一闻，然后取出一些抹在你的皮肤上。这一简单的试验会消除你可能存有的一切疑虑。瓶里装的确是香水泥。哈里如何得到这种稀奇古怪的东西的，这里有个有趣的故事，而且他挺爱把它讲给别人听。此外，得到这瓶香水泥还治好了他多年的一个坏习惯。

哈里曾认为走进一家名贵化妆品商店，荒唐地提出要买一种根本不存在的商品是件开心的事儿。他会当场编造出一些稀奇古怪的货名。他走进商店后，会提出要一种名叫“香影”的新型香水或什么“不溶浴皂”。要是女售货员告诉他从未听说过这些东西，他会装出十分遗憾和不安的样子。他爱听售货员说他想

像出来的那种东西暂时脱销，于是他就煞有介事地许诺改天再来光顾。当然，他再也不会来了。我实在想像不出哈里在这些表演中是怎样装出一本正经的样子的。

毋须暗示哈里就会向你讲起他买下那瓶珍贵香水泥的经过。一天，他去伦敦一家高级商店要买一种叫“密诺莱特”的东西，店员露出诧异的神色。哈里又慢慢地，一字一顿说了一遍这个词，那个女售货员还是迷惑不解地摇了摇头。哈里便进一步解释“密诺莱特”是一种质地坚硬、状似琥珀的东西，可以用来除去雀斑。他的解释显然对女售货员有些启示。她一个货架接着一个货架地寻找，拿出各种各样稀奇古怪的化妆品，但没有一样能够符合哈里的要求。哈里装出不高兴的样子时，女售货员答应为他定货。哈里为他的骗术而感到洋洋得意，又提出要买香水泥。他原想女售货员会惊奇地望着他，不知所措，没料到这回该轮到他自己吃惊了。因为那女售货员听完哈里的话后，马上眼睛一亮，拿出几瓶东西放在柜台上让哈里挑选。哈里只好认输。他挑出一个看上去最小的瓶子，谨慎地问了价。他庆幸自己只破费了 20 英镑便得以脱身。他把那宝贵的瓶子放在腋下夹着，溜之大吉。从那以后，他认识到自己发明的小小恶作剧是要付出很大的代价的。在他书房的书柜里摆着那瓶形状古怪的香水泥就是他第一次也是最后一次购买的稀有化妆品。

Lesson 53 vIn the public interest

The Scandinavian countries are much admired all over the world for their enlightened social policies. Sweden has evolved an excellent system for protecting the individual citizen from high-handed or incompetent public officers. The system has worked so well, that it has been adopted in other countries like Denmark, Norway, Finland, and New Zealand. Even countries with large populations like Britain and the United States are seriously considering imitating the Swedes.

The Swedes were the first to recognize that public officials like civil servants, collectors can make mistakes or act over-zealously in the belief that they are serving the public. As long ago as 1809, the Swedish Parliament introduced a scheme to safeguard the interest of the individual. A parliamentary committee representing all political parties appoints a person who is suitably qualified to investigate private grievances against the State. The official title of the person is 'Justiteombudsman', but the Swedes commonly refer to him as the 'J.O.' or 'Ombudsman'. The Ombudsman is not subject to political pressure. He investigates complaints large and small that come to him from all levels of society. As complaints must be made in writing, the Ombudsman receives an average of 1200 letters a year. He has eight lawyer assistants to help him and he examines every single letter in detail. There is nothing secretive about the Ombudsman's work, for his correspondence is open to public inspection. If a citizen's complaint is justified, the Ombudsman will act on his behalf. The action he takes varies according to the nature of the complaint. He may gently reprimand an official or even suggest to parliament that a law be altered. The following case is a typical example of the Ombudsman's work.

A foreigner living in a Swedish village wrote to the Ombudsman complaining that he had been ill-treated by the police, simply because he was a foreigner. The Ombudsman immediately wrote to the Chief of Police in the district asking him to send a record of the case. There was nothing in the record to show that the foreigner's complaint was justified and the Chief of Police stoutly denied the accusation. It was impossible for the Ombudsman to take action, but when he received a similar complaint from another foreigner in the same village, he immediately sent one of his lawyers to investigate the matter. The lawyer ascertained that a policeman had indeed dealt roughly with foreigners on several occasions. The fact that the policeman was prejudiced against foreigners could not be recorded in the official files. It was only possible for the Ombudsman to find this out by sending one of his representatives to check the facts. The policeman in question was severely reprimanded and was informed that if any further complaints were lodged against him, he would be prosecuted. The Ombudsman's prompt action at once put an end to an unpleasant practice which might have gone unnoticed.

斯堪的纳维亚半岛各国实行开明的社会政策，受到全世界的推崇。在瑞典，已逐渐形成了一种完善的制度以保护每个公民不受专横的和不胜任的政府官员的欺压。由于这种制度行之有效，已被其他国家采纳。

是瑞典人首先认识到政府工作人员如文职人员、警官、卫生稽查员、税务人员等等也会犯错误或者自以为在为公众服务而把事情做过了头。早在 1809 年，瑞典议会就建立一个保护公民利益的制度。议会内有一个代表各政党利益的委员会，由它委派一位称职的人选专门调查个人对国家的意见。此人官衔为“司法特派员”，但瑞典人一般管他叫“J.O.”，即“司法特派员”。司法特派员不受任何政治压力的制约。他听取社会各阶层的各种大小意见，并进行调查。由于意见均需用书面形式提出，司法特派员每年平均收

到 1,200 封信。他有 8 位律师作他的助手协助工作，每封信都详细批阅。司法特派员的工作没有什么秘密可言，他的信件是公开的，供公众监督。如果公民的意见正确，司法特派员便为他伸张正义。司法特派员采取的行动因意见的性质不同而有所不同。他可以善意地批评某位官员，也可以甚至向议会提议修改某项法律。下述事件是司法特派员工作的一个典型例子。

一个住在瑞典乡村的外国人写信给司法特派员，抱怨说他受到警察的虐待，原因就是因为他是个外国人。司法特派员立即写信给当地警察局长，请他寄送与此事有关材料。材料中没有任何文字记载证明外国人所说的情况符合事实，警察局长矢口否认这一指控。司法特派员难以处理。但是，当他又收到住在同一村庄的另一个外国人写的一封内容类似的投诉信时，他立即派出一位律师前去调查。律师证实有个警察确实多次粗鲁地对待外国人。警察歧视外国人的事在官方档案中不可能加以记载，司法特派员只有派他的代表去核对事实才能了解真相。当时的警察受到严厉的斥责，并被告知，如果再有人投诉他，他将受到起诉。司法特派员及时采取的行动，迅速制止了这一不愉快的事件，不然这件事可能因未得到人们注意而不了了之。

Lesson 54 Instinct or cleverness?

We have been brought up to fear insects. We regard them as unnecessary creatures that do more harm than good. Man continually wages war on them, for they contaminate his food, carry diseases, or devour his crops. They sting or bite without provocation; they fly uninvited into our rooms on summer nights, or beat against our lighted windows. We live in dread not only of unpleasant insects like spiders or wasps, but of quite harmless ones like moths. Reading about them increases our understanding without dispelling our fears. Knowing that the industrious ant lives in a highly organized society does nothing to prevent us from being filled with revulsion when we find hordes of them crawling over a carefully prepared picnic lunch. No matter how much we like honey, or how much we have read about the uncanny sense of direction which bees possess, we have a horror of being stung. Most of our fears are unreasonable, but they are impossible to erase. At the same time, however, insects are strangely fascinating. We enjoy reading about them, especially when we find that, like the praying mantis, they lead perfectly horrible lives. We enjoy staring at them entranced as they go about their business, unaware (we hope) of our presence. Who has not stood in awe at the sight of a spider pouncing on a fly, or a column of ants triumphantly bearing home an enormous dead beetle?

Last summer I spent days in the garden watching thousands of ants crawling up the trunk of my prize peach tree. The tree has grown against a warm wall on a sheltered side of the house. I am especially proud of it, not only because it has survived several severe winters, but because it occasionally produces luscious peaches. During the summer, I noticed that the leaves of the tree were beginning to wither. Clusters of tiny insects called aphides were to be found on the underside of the leaves. They were visited by a large colony of ants which obtained a sort of honey from them. I immediately embarked on an experiment which, even though it failed to get rid of the ants, kept me fascinated for twenty-four hours. I bound the base of the tree with sticky tape, making it impossible for the ants to reach the aphides. The tape was so sticky that they did not dare to cross it. For a long time, I watched them scurrying around the base of the tree in bewilderment. I even went out at midnight with a torch and noted with satisfaction (and surprise) that the ants were still swarming around the sticky tape without being able to do anything about it. I got up early next morning hoping to find that the ants had given up in despair. Instead, I saw that they had discovered a new route. They were climbing up the wall of the house and then on to the leaves of the tree. I realized sadly that I had been completely defeated by their ingenuity. The ants had been quick to find an answer to my thoroughly unscientific methods!

我们自幼就在对昆虫的惧怕中长大。我们把昆虫当作害多益少的无用东西。人类不断同昆虫斗争，因为昆虫弄脏我们的食物，传播疾病，吞噬庄稼。它们无缘无故地又叮又咬；夏天的晚上，它们未经邀请便飞到我们房间里，或者对着露出亮光的窗户乱扑乱撞。我们在日常生活中，不但憎恶如蜘蛛、黄蜂之类令人讨厌的昆虫，而且憎恶并无大害的飞蛾等。阅读有关昆虫的书能增加我们对它们的了解，却不能消除我们的恐惧的心理。即使知道勤奋的蚂蚁生活具有高度组织性的社会里，当看到大群蚂蚁在我们精心准备的午餐野餐上爬行时，我们也无法抑制对它们的反感。不管我们多么爱吃蜂蜜，或读过多少关于蜜蜂具有神秘的识别方向的灵感的书，我们仍然十分害怕被蜂蜇。我们的恐惧大部分是没有道理的，但去无法消除。同时，不知为什么昆虫又是迷人的。我们喜欢看有关昆虫的书，尤其是当我们了解螳螂等过着一种令人生

畏的生活时，就更加爱读有关昆虫的书了。我们喜欢入迷地看它们做事，它们不知道（但愿如此）我们就在它们身边。当看到蜘蛛扑向一只苍蝇时，一队蚂蚁抬着一只巨大的死甲虫凯旋归时，谁能不感到敬畏呢？

去年夏天，我花了好几天时间站在花园里观察成千只蚂蚁爬上我那棵心爱的桃树的树干。那棵树是靠着房子有遮挡的一面暖墙生长的。我为这棵树感到特别自豪，不仅因为它度过了几个寒冬终于活了下来，而且还因为它有时结出些甘甜的桃子来。到了夏天，我发现树叶开始枯萎，结果在树叶背面找到成串的叫作蚜虫小虫子。蚜虫遭到一窝蚂蚁的攻击，蚂蚁从它们身上可以获得一种蜜。我当即动手作了一项试验，这项试验尽管没有使我摆脱这些蚂蚁，却使我着迷了 24 小时。我用一条胶带把桃树底部包上，不让蚂蚁接近蚜虫。胶带极粘，蚂蚁不敢从上面爬过。在很长一段时间里，我看见蚂蚁围着大树底部来回转悠，不知所措。半夜，我还拿着电筒来到花园里，满意地（同时惊奇地）发现那些蚂蚁还围着胶带团团转。无能为力。第二天早上，我起床后希望看见蚂蚁已因无望而放弃了尝试，结果却发现它们又找到一条新的路径。它们正在顺着房子的外墙往上爬，然后爬上树叶。我懊丧地感到败在了足智多谋的蚂蚁的手下。蚂蚁已很快找到了相应的对策，来对付我那套完全不科学的办法！

Lesson 55 From the earth: greetings

Recent developments in astronomy have made it possible to detect planets in our own Milky Way and in other galaxies. This is a major achievement because, in relative terms, planets are very small and do not emit light. Finding planets is proving hard enough, but finding life on them will prove infinitely more difficult. The first question to answer is whether a planet can actually support life. In our own solar system, for example, Venus is far too hot and Mars is far too cold to support life. Only the Earth provides ideal conditions, and even here it has taken more than four billion years for plant and animal life to evolve.

Whether a planet can support life depends on the size and brightness of its star, that is its 'sun'. Imagine a star up to twenty times larger, brighter and hotter than our own sun. A planet would have to be a very long way from it to be capable of supporting life. Alternatively, if the star were small, the life-supporting planet would have to have a close orbit round it and also provide the perfect conditions for life forms to develop. But how would we find such a planet? At present, there is no telescope in existence that is capable of detecting the presence of life. The development of such a telescope will be one of the great astronomical projects of the twenty-first century.

It is impossible to look for life on another planet using earth-based telescopes. Our own warm atmosphere and the heat generated by the telescope would make it impossible to detect objects as small as planets. Even a telescope in orbit round the earth, like the very successful Hubble telescope, would not be suitable because of the dust particles in our solar system. A telescope would have to be as far away as the planet Jupiter to look for life in outer space, because the dust becomes thinner the further we travel towards the outer edges of our own solar system. Once we detected a planet, we would have to find a way of blotting out the light from its star, so that we would be able to 'see' the planet properly and analyse its atmosphere. In the first instance, we would be looking for plant life, rather than 'little green men'. The life forms most likely to develop on a planet would be bacteria. It is bacteria that have generated the oxygen we breathe on earth. For most of the earth's history they have been the only form of life on our planet. As Earth-dwellers, we always cherish the hope that we will be visited by little green men and that we will be able to communicate with them. But this hope is always in the realms of science fiction. If we were able to discover lowly forms of life like bacteria on another planet, it would completely change our view of ourselves. As Daniel Goldin of NASA observed, 'Finding life elsewhere would change everything. No human endeavor or thought would be unchanged by it.'

天文学方面最新发展使得我们能够在银河系和其他星系发现行星。这是一个重要的成就，因为相对来说，行星很小，而且也不发光。寻找行星证明相当困难，但是要在行星上发现生命会变得无比艰难。第一个需要解答的问题是一颗行星是否有能够维持生命的条件。举例来说，在我们的太阳系里，对于生命来说，金星的温度太高，而火星的温度则太低。只有地球提供理想的条件，而即使在这里，植物和动物的进化也用了 40 亿年的时间。

一颗行星是否能够维持生命取决于它的恒星——即它的“太阳”——的大小和亮度。设想一下，一颗恒星比我们的太阳还要大，还要亮，还要热 20 倍，那么一颗行星为了维持生命就要离开它的恒星非常远。反之，如果恒星很小，维持生命的行星就要在离恒星很近的轨道上运行，而且要有极好的条件才能使

生命得以发展，但是，我们如何才能找到这样一颗行星呢？现在，没有一台现存的望远镜可以发现生命的存在。而开发这样一台望远镜将会是 21 世纪天文学的一个重要的研究课题。

使用放置在地球上的望远镜是无法观察到其他行星的生命的。地球周围温暖的大气层和望远镜散出的热量使得我们根本不可能找到比行星更小的物体。即使是一台放置在围绕地球的轨道上的望远镜——如非常成功的哈勃望远镜——也因为太阳系中的尘埃微粒而无法胜任。望远镜要放置在木星那样遥远的行星上才有可能在外层空间搜寻生命。因为我们越是接近太阳系的边缘，尘埃就越稀薄。一旦我们找到这样一颗行星，我们就要想办法将它的恒星射过来的光线遮暗，这样我们就能彻底“看见”这颗行星，并分析它的大气层。首先我们要寻找植物，而不是那种“小绿人”。行星上最容易生存下来的是细菌。正是细菌生产出我们在地球上呼吸的氧气。在地球上发展的大部分进程中，细菌是地球上唯一的生命形式。作为地球上的居民，我们总存有这样的希望：小绿人来拜访我们，而我们可以和他们交流。但是，这种希望总是只在科幻小说中存在。如果我们能够在另一颗行星上找到诸如细菌的那种低等生命，那么这个发现将彻底改变我们对我们的看法。正如美国国家航空和宇宙航空局的丹尼尔·戈尔丁指出的“在其他地方发现生命会改变一切。任何人类的努力和想法都会发生变化。”

Lesson 56 The river beside our farm

The river which forms the eastern boundary of our farm has always played an important part in our lives. Without it we could not make a living. There is only enough spring water to supply the needs of the house, so we have to pump from the river for farm use. We tell the river all our secrets. We know instinctively, just as beekeepers with their bees, that misfortune might overtake us if the important events of our lives were not related to it.

We have special river birthday parties in the summer. Sometimes we go up-stream to a favourite backwater, some- times we have our party at the boathouse, which a predecessor of ours at the farm built in the meadow hard by the deepest pool for swimming and diving. In a heat-wave we choose a midnight birthday party and that is the most exciting of all. We welcome the seasons by the river- side, crowning the youngest girl with flowers in the spring, holding a summer festival on Midsummer Eve, giving thanks for the harvest in the autumn, and throwing a holly wreath into the current in the winter.

After a long period of rain the river may overflow its banks. This is a rare occurrence as our climate seldom goes to extremes. We are lucky in that only the lower fields, which make up a very small proportion of our farm, are affected by flooding, but other farms are less favourably sited, and flooding can sometimes spell disaster for their owners.

One bad winter we watched the river creep up the lower meadows. All the cattle had been moved into stalls and we stood to lose little. We were, however, worried about our nearest neighbours, whose farm was low lying and who were newcomers to the district. As the floods had put the telephone out of order, we could not find out how they were managing. From an attic window we could get a sweeping view of the river where their land joined ours, and at the most critical juncture we took turns in watching that point. The first sign of disaster was a dead sheep floating down. Next came a horse, swimming bravely, but we were afraid that the strength of the current would prevent its landing anywhere before it became exhausted. Suddenly a raft appeared, looking rather like Noah's ark, carrying the whole family, a few hens, the dogs, a cat, and a bird in a cage. We realized that they must have become unduly frightened by the rising flood, for their house, which had sound foundations, would have stood stoutly even if it had been almost submerged. The men of our family waded down through our flooded meadows with boathooks, in the hope of being able to grapple a corner of the raft and pull it out of the current towards our bank. We still think it a miracle that they were able to do so.

形成我们农场东部边界的一条河流一直在我们生活中发挥着重要作用。要是没有这条河，我们就无法生存下去。泉水只能满足家庭生活用水，因此我们必须从河里抽水以用于农业生产。我们向那条河倾诉我们的秘密。我们本能地懂得，就像养蜂人和他的蜜蜂那样，要是我们不把生活中的重大的事件告诉那条河，就可能大祸临头。

夏天，我们为这条河举办特殊的生日宴会。有时，我们溯流而上来到我们喜爱的回水河汊举办；有时在船坞举办。那船坞是农场一位前辈在一块草地上盖的，草地紧挨着一个专供游泳、跳水的深水池。天气炎热时，我们便选择在半夜举办生日聚会，这种聚会是最令人激动的。我们在河边迎接一年四季。春天在河边为最年轻的姑娘戴上花冠，夏天在河边欢庆“仲夏前夜”，秋天在河边丰收而感恩，冬天往河中抛撒一个冬表花环。

久雨这后，河水会泛滥成灾，但是在我们这里，气候很少发生异常，河水极少泛滥。值得庆幸的是，只有低洼的受到洪水影响，而低洼地在我们农场比例很小。其他农场地势欠佳，洪水有时会给农场主带来灾难。

有一年冬天，天气不好，我们眼看着河水浸没了地势较低的草场。所有的牲口已提前转移到畜圈里，没有造成什么损失。不过，我们很为我们的近邻担心。他们的农场地势低洼，而且他们又新来乍到。由于洪水造成了电话中断，我们无法了解他们情况。从顶楼窗口看去，我们农场与他们农场接壤处的那段河流一览无余。在最紧急的时刻，我们轮流监视那段河流的险情。灾难的第一迹象是一只死羊顺流而下，接着一匹活马勇敢地与水搏击。但我们担心，洪水力量将使它上岸之前就筋疲力尽了。突然，出现了一只筏子，看起来很像诺亚方舟，上面载着他们全家老小，还有几只母鸡、几只狗，一只猫与一只鸟笼，那里头有一只小鸟。我们意识到他们一定是被不断上涨的洪水吓坏了。因为他们的房子地基牢固，即使洪水几乎灭顶也不会倒塌。我家的男人们手拿船篙过被水淹没草场，希望能够钩住筏子一角，将它拽出激流，拖回岸边。他们终于成功了。至今我们仍认为这是个奇迹。

Lesson 57 The return of the native

I stopped to let the car cool off and to study the map. I had expected to be near my objective by now, but everything still seemed alien to me. I was only five when my father had taken me abroad, and that was eighteen years ago. When my mother had died after a tragic accident, he did not quickly recover from the shock and loneliness. Everything around him was full of her presence, continually re-opening the wound. So he decided to emigrate. In the new country he became absorbed in making a new life for the two of us, so that he gradually ceased to grieve. He did not marry again and I was brought up without a woman's care; but I lacked for nothing, for he was both father and mother to me. He always meant to go back one day but not to stay. His roots and mine had become too firmly embedded in the new land. But he wanted to see the old folk again and to visit my mother's grave. He became mortally ill a few months before we had planned to go and, when he knew that he was dying, he made me promise to go on my own.

I hired a car the day after landing and bought a comprehensive book of maps, which I found most helpful on the cross country journey, but which I did not think I should need on the last stage. It was not that I actually remembered anything at all. But my father had described over and over again what we should see at every milestone, after leaving the nearest town, so that I was positive I should recognize it as familiar territory. Well, I had been wrong, for I was now lost.

I looked at the map and then at the milometer. I had come ten miles since leaving the town, and at this point, according to my father, I should be looking at farms and cottages in a valley, with the spire of the church of our village showing in the far distance. I could see no valley, no farms, no cottages and no church spire--only a lake. I decided that I must have taken a wrong turning somewhere. So I drove back to the town and began to retrace the route, taking frequent glances at the map. I landed up at the same corner. The curious thing was that the lake was not marked on the map. I felt as if I had stumbled into a nightmare country, as you sometimes do in dreams. And, as in a nightmare, there was nobody in sight to help me. Fortunately for me, as I was wondering what to do next, there appeared on the horizon a man on horseback, riding in my direction. I waited till he came near, then I asked him the way to our old village. He said that there was now no village. I thought he must have misunderstood me. so I repeated its name. This time he pointed to the lake. The village no longer existed because it had been submerged, and all the valley too. The lake was not a natural one, but a man made reservoir.

我停下车，让汽车发动机冷却一下，同时查看一下地图。我本想离目的地已经不远，但周围一切对我仍很陌生。我 5 岁那年，父亲就带我出了国，那是 18 年前的事了。当时我母亲在一次事故中惨死，父亲未能很快从悲痛与孤独中恢复过来。他身边的一切都是母亲的影子不断勾起他的伤感。于是他决定移居他国。在这个新的国家里，父亲专心致志地为我们俩开创一种新的生活，慢慢地不伤心了。父亲没有再娶，因此，我在没有母亲的环境里长大成人。但我却什么都不缺，他既当父亲又当母亲。他总想将来回国看看，但又不愿长期住下去，因为他与我一样已经把根深深地扎在异国的土地上。但是，他想看一看家乡父老乡亲，为我的母亲扫墓。就在他计划回国的前几个月，他突然身患绝症。他知道自己已奄奄一息，于是他要我答应一定单独回故乡一趟。

我下飞机后租了一辆车，并买了一本详尽的地图册。在乡间行车途中，我觉得它非常有用，但快到家了，我倒觉得它没什么用了。这倒并非是我背熟了地图，而是父亲曾详细给我讲了，在过了离故乡最近的

那个小镇后，在每一个路标处可见到些什么。因此，我相信这段路对我来说会是很熟悉的。唉，实际我错了，我现在迷路了。

我看了看地图，又查了一下里程表。从小镇出来，我走了 10 英里。照父亲的说法，我面前应是一个山谷，有农场与村舍，还可远远望见老家村子里的教堂的尖顶。可现在我却看不出山谷，看不见农舍，也看不见教堂尖顶，看见只是一片湖泊。我想一定是什么地方拐错了弯儿。于是我驾车返回小镇，重新按路线行驶。结果又来到刚才那个拐弯处。奇怪的是那个湖没有在地图上标出。我感到自己就像平时作梦那样迷迷糊糊地闯进了恶梦境地。就像在恶梦里一样，见不到一个人可以帮助我。不过，我是幸运的，正当我走投无路之时，从天边出现一个骑马的人向我骑来。等他走近了，问他去老家的路。他说那村子已经没有了。我想他一定误解了我的意思，于是又说一遍村庄的名字。这次他用手指了一下那个湖。村庄已不复存在，因为已经为水所淹，山谷也被水淹没了。这不是一个天然湖泊，是一座人工修建的水库。

Lesson 58 A little spot of bother

The old lady was glad to be back at the block of flats where she lived. Her shopping had tired her and her basket had grown heavier with every step of the way home. In the lift her thoughts were on lunch and a good rest; but when she got out at her own floor, both were forgotten in her sudden discovery that her front door was open. She was thinking that she must reprimand her daily maid the next morning for such a monstrous piece of negligence, when she remembered that she had gone shopping after the maid had left and she knew that she had turned both keys in their locks. She walked slowly into the hall and at once noticed that all the room doors were open, yet following her regular practice she had shut them before going out. Looking into the drawing room, she saw a scene of confusion over by her writing desk. It was as clear as daylight then that burglars had forced an entry during her absence. Her first impulse was to go round all the rooms looking for the thieves, but then she decided that at her age it might be more prudent to have someone with her, so she went to fetch the porter from his basement. By this time her legs were beginning to tremble, so she sat down and accepted a cup of very strong tea, while he telephoned the police. Then, her composure regained, she was ready to set off with the porter's assistance to search for any intruders who might still be lurking in her flat.

They went through the rooms, being careful to touch nothing, as they did not want to hinder the police in their search for fingerprints. The chaos was inconceivable. She had lived in the flat for thirty years and was a veritable magpie at hoarding; and it seemed as though everything she possessed had been tossed out and turned over and over. At least sorting out the things she should have discarded years ago was now being made easier for her. Then a police inspector arrived with a constable and she told them of her discovery of the ransacked flat. The inspector began to look for fingerprints, while the constable checked that the front door locks had not been forced, thereby proving that the burglars had either used skeleton keys or entered over the balcony. There was no trace of fingerprints, but the inspector found a dirty red bundle that contained jewellery which the old lady said was not hers. So their entry into this flat was apparently not the burglars' first job that day and they must have been disturbed. The inspector then asked the old lady to try to check what was missing by the next day and advised her not to stay alone in the flat for a few nights. The old lady thought he was a fussy creature, but since the porter agreed with him, she rang up her daughter and asked for her help in what she described as a little spot of bother.

老妇人回到了她居住的公寓楼，心里很高兴。去商店买东西把她搞得筋疲力尽；在回家的路上，她每走一步，就感到手里的篮子又重了一点。她乘上电梯后，只想着午餐和好好休息一下。但她到自己的楼层走出电梯后，就把这两件事忘了个干净，因为她突然发现她家的大门开着。她心想明天上午一定要好好训斥那个干家务的帮手，她竟如此疏忽大意。但突然记起来了，帮手是在她出去买东西之前走的，她还记得曾用了两把钥匙把大门锁上了。她慢慢地走进前厅，立即发现所有的房门都敞开着，而她记得在出门买东西前，她按老规矩是把房门一一锁上的。她往起居室里看去，写字台边一片狼籍。事情很清楚，在她外出时，窃贼曾闯进家门。她第一个条件反射是各个房间搜寻一下窃贼，但转念一想，像她这个年纪，最好找个人一起去。于是她到地下室去找看门的人。这时她两腿累得开始发抖，于是坐了下来，喝了一杯浓茶。与此同时，看门的人给警察挂了电话。此刻老妇人也镇定了下来，准备在看门人的协助下搜寻可能仍躲藏在她房里的窃贼。

他俩搜遍这每一个房间，小心翼翼地不接触任何东西，因为他们怕妨碍警察寻找指纹。房间里的紊乱状况是无法想像的。老妇人在这套公寓里住了 30 年，她又是个名副其实的收藏家。看来她的每一件东西都被翻了出来，并且被里里外外看了遍。这样一来，她倒是容易将那些几年前就该扔掉的东西找出来了。过了一会儿，一位巡官带着一名警察来了。她向他们讲述了发现公寓遭劫的经过。巡官开始搜寻指纹，警察经检查发现大门锁头并无撬过的迹象。由此可以证明，窃贼或者是用万能钥匙，或者是翻越阳台进来的。巡官没有发现指纹，却发现了一个装有珠宝的、肮脏的红包袱。老妇人说那不是她的。很明显，闯进这套公寓的窃贼那天并不是首次作案，而且他一定受了惊吓。巡官请老妇人在次日之前设法查清丢了些什么，并劝她几夜之内不要独自一人在公寓过夜。老妇人觉得巡官大惊小怪，但既然看门人也同意他的意见，她只得打电话向女儿求援，说她碰到了一点儿小麻烦。

Lesson 59 Possession amassing and collecting

People tend to amass possessions, some-times without being aware of doing so. Indeed they can have a delightful surprise when they find something useful which they did not know they owned. Those who never have to change house become indiscriminate collectors of what can only be described as clutter. They leave un- wanted objects in drawers, cupboards and attics for years, in the belief that they may one day need just those very things. As they grow old, people also accumulate belongings for two other reasons, lack of physical and mental energy, both of which are essential in turning out and throwing away, and sentiment. Things owned for a long time are full of associations with the past, perhaps with relatives who are dead, and so they gradually acquire a value beyond their true worth.

Some things are collected deliberately in the home in an attempt to avoid waste. Among these I would list string and brown paper, kept by thrifty people when a parcel has been opened, to save buying these two requisites. Collecting small items can easily become a mania. I know someone who always cuts out from newspapers sketches of model clothes that she would like to buy, if she had the money. As she is not rich, the chances that she will ever be able to afford such purchases are remote; but she is never sufficiently strongminded to be able to stop the practice. It is a harmless habit, but it litters up her desk to such an extent that every time she opens it, loose bits of paper fall out in every direction.

Collecting as a serious hobby is quite different and has many advantages. It provides relaxation for leisure hours, as just looking at one's treasures is always a joy. One does not have to go outside for amusement, since the collection is housed at home. Whatever it consists of, stamps, records, first editions of books, china, glass, antique furniture, pictures, model cars, stuffed birds, toy animals, there is always something to do in connection with it, from finding the right place for the latest addition to verifying facts in reference books. This hobby educates one not only in the chosen subject, but also in general matters which have some bearing on it. There are also other benefits. One wants to meet like-minded collectors, to get advice, to compare notes, to exchange articles, to show off the latest find. So one's circle of friends grows. Soon the hobby leads to travel, perhaps to a meeting in another town, possibly a trip abroad in search of a rare specimen, for collectors are not confined to any one country. Over the years one may well become an authority on one's hobby and will very probably be asked to give informal talks to little gatherings and then, if successful, to larger audiences. In this way self-confidence grows, first from mastering a subject, then from being able to talk about it. Collecting, by occupying spare time so constructively, makes a person contented, with no time for boredom.

人们喜欢收藏东西，有时并没有意识到自己在这样做。确实，一旦无意之中从自己的收藏品中找到某件有用的东西时，可以给人一种惊喜的感觉。那些从来不必搬家的人们成了一种无所不容的收藏家。他们专门收藏那些只能被称作杂货的东西。他们在抽屉里，碗柜中、阁楼上堆放着一些不用的东西，一放就是好几年，相信总有一天需要的正好是那些东西。人们年老之后也喜欢收藏东西，不过是出于两个不同的原因：一是体力，精力均告不佳，这二者是清除无用的东西必不可少的因素；另一原因是感情因素。东西搁得时间久了，便会充满着与过去岁月的联系，比方说与死去的亲戚有关。因此这些东西慢慢获得了一种超出它本身的价值。

居家度日，有目的地收藏某些东西是为了防止浪费。这些东西中我想举出线绳和包装纸为例。节俭的人们打开包裹后便把这两样必备的东西收藏起来。省得日后去买。收集小玩艺儿很容易着迷。我认识一个人，她总喜欢从报纸上剪下流行服装的图样，等以后有钱时去买服装。由于她并不富裕，她买得起这些服装的可能性十分渺茫。但她又缺乏足够坚强的意志把这一收集活动停下来。这种习惯无害，只把写字台里堆得满满当当，以致每次打开抽屉总能带出许多纸片四处飞扬。

作为一种严肃的业余爱好的收藏活动完全是另外一回事，它具有许多益处。它可以使人在闲暇中得到休息，因为欣赏自己收藏的珍品总会充满了乐趣。人们不必走到户外去寻求娱乐，因为收藏品都是存放在家中。不管收藏品是什么，邮票、唱片、头版书籍、瓷器、玻璃杯、老式家具、绘画、模型汽车、鸟类标本，还是玩具动物，从为新增添的收藏品寻找摆放位置到核对参考书中的事实，总归有事可做。这种爱好不仅能使人从选择的专题中受到教育，而且也能从与之有关的一般事物中获得长进。除此之外，还有其他的益处。收藏者要会见情趣相投的收藏者，以获取教益，交流经验、交换收藏品，炫耀自己的最新收藏。朋友的圈子就这样不断扩大。用不了多久，有这种爱好的人便开始旅行，也许是去另一个城市参加会议，也可能是出国寻找一件珍品，因为收藏家是不分国籍的。一人积了多年经验会成为自己这种爱好的权威，很可能应邀在小型集会上作非正式的讲话。如果讲得好，可能向更多人发表演说。这样，你自信心不断增强，先是因为掌握一门学问，接下来是因为能够就此发表见解。收藏活动通过富有建设性地利用业余时间使人感到心满意足，不再有无聊之日。

Lesson 60 The importance of Punctuality

Punctuality is a necessary habit in all public affairs of a civilized society. Without it, nothing could ever be brought to a conclusion; everything would be in a state of chaos. Only in a sparsely-populated rural community is it possible to disregard it. In ordinary living there can be some tolerance of unpunctuality. The intellectual, who is working on some abstruse problem, has everything coordinated and organized for the matter in hand. He is therefore forgiven, if late for a dinner party. But people are often reproached for unpunctuality when their only fault is cutting things fine. It is hard for energetic, quick-minded people to waste time, so they are often tempted to finish a job before setting out to keep an appointment. If no accidents occur on the way, like punctured tyres, diversions of traffic, sudden descent of fog, they will be on time. They are often more industrious, useful citizens than those who are never late. The over-punctual can be as much a trial to others as the unpunctual. The guest who arrives half an hour too soon is the greatest nuisance. Some friends of my family had this irritating habit. The only thing to do was ask them to come half an hour later than the other guests. Then they arrived just when we wanted them.

If you are catching a train, it is always better to be comfortably early than even a fraction of a minute too late. Although being early may mean wasting a little time, this will be less than if you miss the train and have to wait an hour or more for the next one; and you avoid the frustration of arriving at the very moment when the train is drawing out of the station and being unable to get on it. An even harder situation is to be on the platform in good time for a train and still to see it go off without you. Such an experience befell a certain young girl the first time she was travelling alone.

She entered the station twenty minutes before the train was due, since her parents had impressed upon her that it would be unforgivable to miss it and cause the friends with whom she was going to stay to make two journeys to meet her. She gave her luggage to a porter and showed him her ticket. To her horror he said that she was two hours too soon. She felt in her handbag for the piece of paper on which her father had written down all the details of the journey and give it to the porter. He agreed that a train did come into the station at the time on the paper and that it did stop, but only to take on water, not passengers. The girl asked to see a timetable, feeling sure that her father could not have made such a mistake. The porter went to fetch one and arrived back with the stationmaster, who produced it with a flourish and pointed out a microscopic 'o' beside the time of the arrival of the train at his station; this little 'o' indicated that the train only stopped for water. Just as that moment the train came into the station. The girl, tears streaming down her face, begged to be allowed to slip into the guard's van. But the stationmaster was adamant: rules could not be broken. And she had to watch that train disappear towards her destination while she was left behind.

准时是文明社会中进行一切社交活动时必须养成的习惯。不按时将一事无成，事事都会陷入混乱不堪的境地。只有在人口稀少的农村，才可以忽视准时的习惯。在日常生活中人们可以容忍一定程度的不按时。一个专心钻研某个复杂问题的知识分子，为了搞好手头的研究，要把一切都协调一致，组织周密。因此，他要是赴宴迟到了会得到谅解。但有些人不按时常常因为掐钟点所致，他们常常受到责备，精力充沛、头脑敏捷的人极不愿意浪费时间，因此他们常想做完一件事后再去赴约。要是路上没有发生如爆胎、改道、

突然起雾等意外事故，他们决不会迟到。他们与那些从不迟到的人相比，常常是更勤奋有用的公民。早到的人同迟到的人一样令人讨厌。客人提前半小时到达是令人讨厌的。我家有几个朋友就有这令人恼火的习惯。唯一的办法就是请他们比别的客人晚来半小时。这样，他们可以恰好在我们要求的时间到达。

如果赶火车，早到总比晚到好，哪怕早到一会儿也好。虽然早到可能意味着浪费一点时间，但这比误了火车等上一个多小时坐下班车浪费的时间要少，而且可以避免那种正好在火车驶出站时赶到车站，因上不去车而感到的沮丧。更难堪的情况是虽然及时赶到站台上，却眼睁睁地看着那趟火车启动，把你抛下。一个小姑娘第一次单独出门就碰到了这种情况。

在火车进站 20 分钟前她就进了车站。因为她的父母再三跟她说，如果误了这趟车，她的东道主朋友就得接她两趟，这是不应该的。她把行李交给搬运工并给他看了车票。搬运工说她早到了两个小时，她听后大吃一惊。她从钱包里摸出一张纸条，那上面有她父亲对这次旅行详细说明，她把这张纸条交给了搬运工。搬运工说，正如纸条所说，确有一趟火车在那个时刻到站，但它只停站装邮件，不载旅客。姑娘要求看到时刻表，因为她相信父亲不能把这么大的事弄错。搬运工跑回去取时刻表，同时请来了站长。站长拿着时刻表一挥手，指着那趟列车到站时刻旁边一个很小的圆圈标记。这个标记表示列车是为装邮件而停车。正当这时，火车进站了。女孩泪流满面，央求让她不声不响地到押车员车厢里去算了。但站长态度坚决，规章制度不能破坏，姑娘只得眼看那趟火车消逝在她要去的方向而撇下了她。