

托福阅读备考必读素材：一生最珍贵的四个人

There was a rich merchant who had 4 wives. He loved the 4th wife the most and adorned her with rich robes and treated her to delicacies. He took great care of her and gave her nothing but the best.

从前，一位富有的商人娶了四个老婆。他最爱他的小老婆，给她华丽的衣裳和美味佳肴。他对她体贴入微，把最好的东西都给了她。

He also loved the 3rd wife very much. He's very proud of her and always wanted to show her off to his friends. However, the merchant is always in great fear that she might run away with some other men.

商人也很爱第三位老婆。他为她感到骄傲，并常把她作为在朋友面前炫耀的资本。但他同时也忧心忡忡，怕她与其他男人跑了。

He too, loved his 2nd wife. She is a very considerate person, always patient and in fact is the merchant's confidante. However, the merchant faced some problems, he always turned to his 2nd wife and she would always help him out and tide him through difficult times.

当然，商人也爱二老婆，她既善解人意又耐心。事实上，她是商人的红颜知己。每每遇到困难，他就会找她，而她也总能帮助他走出困境，度过难关。

Now, the merchant's 1st wife is a very loyal partner and has made great contributions in maintaining his wealth and business as well as taking care of the household. However, the merchant did not love the first wife and although she loved him deeply, he hardly took notice of her.

至于大老婆，她是一位忠诚的伴侣，替他照料生意、打理家务，忙里忙外，可谓劳苦功高。然而，尽管她爱得这么深，商人却偏不钟情于她，甚至没把她放在心上。

One day, the merchant fell ill. Before long, he knew that he was going to die soon. He thought of his luxurious life and told himself, "Now I have 4 wives with me. But when I die, I'll be alone. How lonely I'll be!"

一日，商人得了重病，他自知将不久于人世。当他回顾自己奢华的一生，不禁心中怅然：“现在我虽然有四个老婆相伴，但死后却要孤零零一人。多寂寞啊！”

Thus, he asked the 4th wife, "I loved you most, endowed you with the finest clothing and showered great care over you. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

于是，他问小老婆：“我最疼你，给你买最漂亮的衣服，还对你呵护备至。现在我要离开这个世界了，你愿意随我而去，与我相伴吗？”

"No way!" replied the 4th wife and she turned away without another word.

“绝不可能！”她丢下一句话，径自走开了。

The answer cut like a sharp knife right into the merchant's heart. The sad merchant then asked the 3rd wife, "I have loved you so much for all my life. Now that I'm dying, will you follow me and keep me company?"

小老婆的回答如一把尖刀插在商人心上。伤心的商人继而问第三个老婆：“我一直对你宠爱有加。如今，我将不久于人世，你愿意随我而去，与我相伴吗？”

"No!" replied the 3rd wife. "Life is so good over here! I'm going to remarry when you die!" The merchant's heart sank and turned cold.

“不！”她拒绝道，“人间的生活多么美好啊！你死后我会改嫁他人！”商人的心倏地下沉，渐渐变冷。

He then asked the 2nd wife, "I've always turned to you for help and you've always helped me out. Now I need your help again. When I die, will you follow me and keep me company?"

他再转向二老婆，问道：“我过去常常求助于你，你也总能为我排忧解难。现在我想再请你帮一次忙。我死后，你愿意随我而去，与我相伴吗？”

"I'm sorry, I can't help you out this time!" replied the 2nd wife. "At the very most, I can only send you to your grave." The answer came like a bolt of thunder and the merchant was devastated.

“很抱歉，这一次我帮不了你，”她说，“我最多只能让你入土为安。”这句话犹如晴天霹雳，商人彻底绝望了。

Then a voice called out: "I'll leave with you. I'll follow you no matter where you go." The merchant looked up and there was his first wife. She was so skinny, almost like she suffered from malnutrition. Greatly grieved, the merchant said, "I should have taken much better care of you while I could have!"

这时，旁边传来一个声音：“我愿意随你一同离去。无论你到哪里，我都会跟着你。”商人抬起头，看到了自己的大老婆。她是那么消瘦，一副营养不良的样子。商人悲痛万分，他说：“我过去就应该好好地珍惜你啊！”

Actually, we all have 4 wives in our lives.

其实，我们每个人的一生都有四位爱人相伴。

The 4th wife is our body. No matter how much time and effort we lavish in making it look good, it'll leave us when we die.

小老婆代表我们的躯体。无论我们花费多少的时间和精力想去装扮她，我们死后它终会弃我们而去。

Our 3rd wife is our possessions, status and wealth. When we die, they all go to others.

第三位老婆代表财产、地位与金钱。一旦我们撒手西去，它终究会转向他人。

The 2nd wife is our family and friends. No matter how close they had been there for us when we're alive, the furthest they can stay by us is up to the grave.

二老婆则代表了我们的家人与朋友。我们活着的时候，无论他们与我们多么亲近，他们最多也只能到墓前送我们最后一程。

The 1st wife is in fact our soul, often neglected in our pursuit of material, wealth and sensual pleasure.

至于大老婆，她则是我们的灵魂。当我们沉迷于追求物质、金钱或感官享受的时候，她常常会被遗忘在一旁。

Guess what? It is actually the only thing that follows us wherever we go. Perhaps it's a good idea to cultivate and strengthen it now rather than to wait until we're on our deathbed to lament.

结果呢？她才是唯一与我们永远相伴的。也许从现在开始，我们就应该悉心照顾好她，而不是等到临终之际才悔恨不已。