

Sara and the In-Between

夢と現実のはざまで
By Thersa Matsuura

登場人物

● Sara: 物語の主人公。米国人と日本人のハーフの少女。
田舎の祖母の家で暮らす

Sara didn't speak. So she watched silently as a group of fellow **ninth graders** snatched her pencil case out of her book bag and **busted** it under the heels of their black **penny loafers**. Sara was tired. Exhausted. All she wanted was to go home. But she couldn't.

"You think you're so special with your fancy hair, **permed and dyed**," said the group's leader, with her too-short **bangs** and **over-plucked eyebrows**. Sara had been trying to avoid fights with the girl since she had arrived at the school.

She reached up and touched her hair. She hated it. Her American mother had beautiful hair, sandy blond and curly. Sara's wasn't curly or even wavy. It wasn't sleek and straight like the hair the models on TV had either. No, Sara's hair was **untamable frizzy**. And to make matters worse, it was a most boring shade of **dishwater brown**. Nothing special or fancy at all.

Just then across the courtyard a bunch of sweaty, **rough-talking** boys spilled out from the gym. It was the kendo team, finished with practice for the day. The girl bullies **turned their heads in unison**. Sara took the opportunity to flee from the fight. A few **half-hearted** shouts followed her, but it was obvious she was already forgotten. For now at least.

Slowly, she headed back to her grandparents' creepy, 100-year-old house. As a child she had been terrified of the place and cried whenever her parents announced a visit for Obon or the New Year's holidays. She believed ghosts were

Chapter 1 The Bullies

hiding everywhere: in the wide rooms of cool, sweet-smelling tatami mats, the narrow halls of darkened and **discolored** wood, the too-low ceilings, and the corners that **held tight to impenetrable shadows**. Sometimes she thought she heard voices and saw eyes peeking out of the torn holes in the yellowing shoji-paper. Those were the silly thoughts of a child. But, even as a teen, Sara still thought the house was spooky.

That night over dinner her grandparents **prodded with** their usual gentle questions, then **shared long gazes** during the silences that followed. Sara didn't talk. Sara wanted to talk. She wanted to bring up what happened at school that day, but she was still unable to fight the **seizing knots in her throat** that kept her words from rising. She chewed the salty, pink salmon flesh, smiled her half smile, and held back the tears **welling** in her eyes.

"It'll be better tomorrow," her grandmother said.

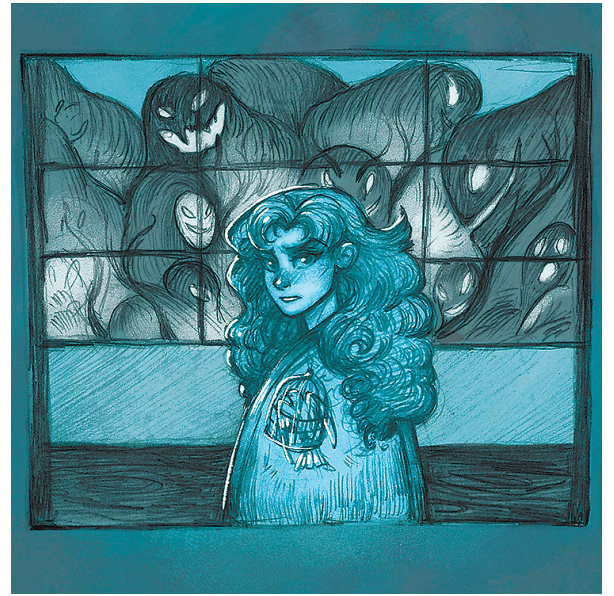
Sara wanted to believe it would be better tomorrow, but couldn't see it and couldn't imagine ever being happy again. It felt like she was drowning in the sea and this moment right now was the last gulp of air before she **went under**.

Sara nodded and slowly used her chopsticks to roll the blackened fish skin into the shape of a rose. Her mother had the most spectacular climbing rose bush on the veranda of their apartment in the city. It was an oasis of quiet beauty in the middle of all that gray and noise. She wondered what had happened to it. Was someone watering and fertilizing it, or had it been chopped up and thrown into the trash?

That night in her futon, head buried in the lavender-scented pillow, Sara cried for the first time since she came to her grandparents' home. That weakness must have loosened something or attracted something, because that was also the first night **The Shudders** hit her. In that narrow place between awake and asleep all of a sudden there was a rumble in her chest, like a bird trapped in a too-small cage. Like something trying to get out.

◆ あらすじ ◆

日本のある田舎町。住み慣れた東京の自宅を離れ、一人だけ祖母の家で暮らしながら地元の中学校に通うことになった少女のサラ。日本人の父と米国人の母の間に生まれ、ほかの生徒たちと違う容姿のため毎日いじめに遭う。心を閉ざしてしまい、口がきけなくなった彼女の身の回りで不思議な現象が起きるようになる。



松浦 テリーサ

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米国出身のホラー小説家。これまで怪奇短編集を米国で出版し、そのうち「The Carp-Faced Boy and Other Tales」は2017年、米国で最も優れたホラー作品に贈られるブラム・ストーカー賞の最終選考に残った。静岡県在住。

ninth grader(s) (米国の学校で) 中学3年生	抜き過ぎた眉毛	りつかんだ
bust(ed) ぶっ壊した	untamable frizzy 扱いにくいほどの縮れ毛	prod(ded) with 〜で(話すように)促した
penny loafers (複数形で) ペニーローファー。靴ひものない革靴の一種。甲の部分にペニー硬貨を差し込む習慣があったのが由来	dishwater brown 食器を洗った後の水のような茶色	share(d) long gaze(s) 長い間互いを見合った
perm(ed) and dye(d) パーマをかけ、染めた	rough-talking 荒っぽい言葉遣いをする	seizing...throat のど元に押さえつけられた固まり
bang(s) 切りそろえた前髪	turn(ed)...unison 同時に振り向いた	well(ing) (涙などが)浮かぶ
over-plucked eyebrow(s)	half-hearted やる気のない	went(go) under 水面下に沈む
	discolored 変色した	The Shudders 身震い。サラが体験する不思議な出来事の前触れ
	held(hold)...shadow(s) 真っ暗な影をしか	

辞書 BIKI 再入門

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眠れる英英辞典活用法

皆さんの英英辞典は本棚で眠っていませんか？「英英辞典＝知らない単語を調べるもの」と思い込むのは禁物です。では試しに、以下の定義が示す単語は何かを考えてみてください。

(1) a chemical substance used for killing insects

(2) something or someone that is not included in a general statement or does not follow a rule or pattern

(3) to keep a person or animal apart from others for a period of time in case they are carrying a disease

(3例とも Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English、以下 LDOCE から)

(1) は chemical substance が「化学物質」と分かれば「昆虫を殺すための化学物質」と解釈できます。でも、これを insecticide (殺虫剤) と結びつけるのは意外に厄介です。(2) について

も included (含まれた) のほかに難しい単語はありませんが、「一般論に含まれない、あるいは規則や型に沿わない物や人」から exception (例外) を思いつく人は少数派です。

(3) は to (〜すること) で始まっているので動詞と判断できます。「病気を持っているかもしれないので人や動物を一定期間、他から離れた状態にしておくこと」ということです。難しいですね。これは quarantine (隔離する) の定義です。

定義が抽象的だったり、未知の単語があったりすると、学習者の理解度は格段に落ちます。

そこで英英初心者にお薦めなのが、知らない単語の意味を調べるのではなく、あえて知っている単語を引いて、その定義からいろいろな表現を学ぶという語彙(ごい)力増強法です。まずは、学習者向け英英辞典(書名に learner や study が含まれる辞書)を用意して、試しに sunglasses を引いてみましょう。

sunglasses: a pair of glasses with dark glass in them that you wear to protect your eyes from bright sunlight (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary)

知っている単語なら、定義の内容は予測できるので、文構造や単語が少々難解でもほとんど問題ないはずです。上の場合なら、protect one's eyes from bright sunlight が「強い日差しから目を守る」だと理解するのは容易ですね。protect A from B (AをBから守る) というコロケーション

がわかるだけではなく、たとえば We use curtains to protect our eyes from bright sunlight. のように「カーテン」の説明にも応用できます。次に lemon を引いてみましょう。

lemon: a yellow fruit with sour juice that is used for giving flavour to food and drink (Oxford Wordpower Dictionary)

「レモン」の定義からは「Aに風味を加える、味付けする」(give flavor to A。米語つづりは flavor) という表現が学べます。ここから、I use this dressing to give more flavor to my salad. (サラダにより風味を加えるのに、このドレッシングを使います) のような応用文が可能で

こうした使い方に慣れてくると、ある表現を調べるのに、和英や英和ではなく英英辞典を用いる習慣がついてきます。たとえば、「自分の口座からお金を引き出す」という表現を一気に入手するには、下記のような ATM の定義が便利です。

ATM (automated teller machine): a machine outside a bank that you use to get money from your account (LDOCE)

「口座」は account、「引き出す」は get を使って get money from one's account でとりあえずOKだと分かります。このように、英英辞典を使って、知っている単語の定義から様々な表現を学ぶ方法を実践してみてください。

■次回は7月21日号に掲載します