**第三届全国青年创新翻译大赛**

**D组——英译中【原文】**

My wife and I, blundering into a furniture showroom just slightly smaller than the state of Delaware, found ourselves ambushed by a chipmunk of a man. He was barely over five feet tall, his dark hair thinning in patches, and his robin’s-egg-blue blazer as unstylish and unattractive as any blazer I’ve ever seen. But he had clear, direct eyes, and an irresistible slow, spreading smile.

That was my initial assessment. What he saw, perhaps, were two shy, middle-class pigeons with “easy sale” tattooed on their foreheads.

The gentleman introduced himself as Howie, “your furniture consultant for today,” pumped my hand and winked at my spouse. “You want a comfortable chair, yes? One you can sit in and relax?”

He was, it seemed, not just a furniture consultant but a mind reader as well, having intuited by my mere explanation “we’re looking at chairs” that Renita and I had absolutely no interest in an uncomfortable chair that made us squirm and kept us endlessly tense.

“I’m going to take you around,” he announced, a trace of Brooklyn in his voice. “We have over three-thousand chairs in our showroom today. I’m going to show you all of them.”

Howie was a bit pushy, slick, and peculiar, and yet it was somehow impossible not to like the man. His gaze was warm and neighborly. He had that slow, spreading smile. I don’t understand how it all works, but within moments of entering Howie’s magnetic field, I wanted to befriend him. I wanted him to be my grandfather, even though I suspected that if he were my grandfather, the piece of butterscotch candy he would pull for me from his pocket would be ten-year-old and lint covered.

Yes, I would love him anyway.

Howie told me he was the top salesperson for the entire Mid-Atlantic region. I didn’t doubt him for one second.

A few minutes into our hunt, when I rejected the whole category of chair that I call “marshmallow-puffy recliner,” Howie turned, extended his hands palms upward and promised, “I’m not going to make you buy something you don’t want.”

It didn’t make sense to me at the time—why ever would I buy something I didn’t want?—but after thirty minutes with Howie, I understood that I might have done just that. He had that certain power.

We passed through the giant circular showroom, rejecting chair after chair. “You like this one?” Howie would ask. He would pause then, study my face, and before I could form an answer, he would say, “Of course not, I knew you wouldn’t!”

Along the way, my wife and I let it slip that we had just moved into town. Howie, it turned out, was about to leave, for a better furniture consultant job down South. We mentioned our small, untrainable pup.

“You have small dog? I have a small dog!”

Howie could not have been more delighted had I just revealed that I was his long lost son, orphaned at birth.

“You need a fence? I’m selling my fence.”

Yes, he actually tried to sell me his fence. This was no halfhearted salesperson.

Still, we were nearing the end of the showroom, and he was beginning to seem worried. I had explained my stubborn dislike of busy fabric, my abhorrence of gratuitous puffiness, my disdain for Queen Anne, and we had so far come up empty.

“Wait. You’ll like this one.”

He pointed to a maroon recliner at the end of a row, not puffy in any way, a simple, understated pattern.

“Sit down, relax.”

I did.

We left that day with a comfortable chair, with a small sofa to match, and with an order for a home entertainment cabinet—one where you could close the doors and not look at your ugly television and stereo. We didn’t know we needed the cabinet and sofa until Howie told us so.

My budget for the day was $700.

Howie kept us within that budget, give or take an extra $1,800 or so.

Howie wanted me to have a comfortable chair. Putting my middle-aged bottom in a soft, commodious seat brought him some sort of pleasure. He wasn’t just trying to sell. He honestly thought that a comfortable chair was going to be a very good thing for me. Like all extraordinary salesmen, he truly believed.