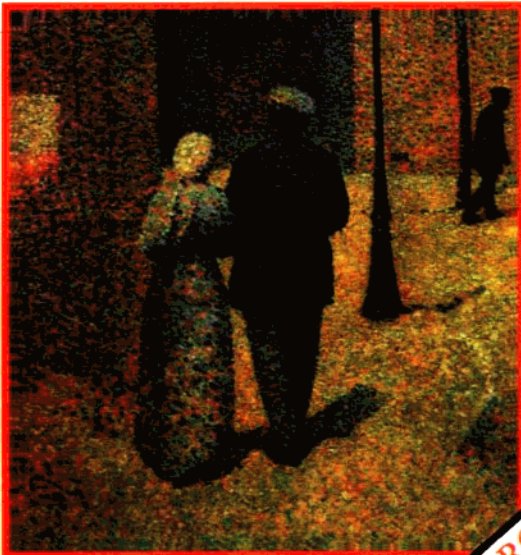


AAA 精释英语阅读系列·4级

第一辑·2

麦琪的礼物

吉林科学技术出版社



IMPROVE YOUR
ENGLISH

麦琪的礼物

欧·亨利，本名威廉·西德尼·波特，1862年生于美国北卡罗来纳州的格林斯博罗，1910年在纽约病逝。作为美国最为多产的短篇小说作家之一，欧·亨利的作品以其新颖的构思，诙谐的语言，悬念突变的手法以及出人意料的结局而著称。所有这一切都来自作家本人丰富的人生阅历以及他对周围人和事物的细心观察和深刻了解。

年轻时，波特曾从事过许多不同的工作。他在得克萨斯州奥斯汀第一国民银行工作时被控贪污公款，被迫逃往洪都拉斯。1897年他返回奥斯汀被捕，受审后在俄亥俄州的哥伦布监狱服刑三年。就是在这里，波特发现了自己的写作才能，开始尝试写作并且以许多不同的笔名发表作品，其中欧·亨利是他最常使用的一个。获释后他在纽约定居，继续自己成功的文学创作生涯。

短篇小说在美国曾一度是最受大众欢迎的一种写作形式。在此期间欧·亨利创作了大量的作品表现20世纪初的美国社会。这些作品构思巧妙，描写生动，文字简炼，悬念设置出人意料，集矛盾和怪异、幽默为一体，被誉为“美国生活的幽默百科全书”。在他创作的近300篇短篇小说中，《白菜与皇帝》（1904）和《四百万》（1906）被公认为是最优秀的两部小说集。

致 读 者

许多家长常常抱怨自己的孩子不爱学习英语。为了孩子学好英语,送他们参加各种学习班,甚至请家庭教师。但是,孩子的成绩还是上不去,往往事倍功半。

一位心理学家说过,学习的最大动力是兴趣。没有兴趣的学习,学什么也是注定学不好的。

说惯了自己的母语去学习英语,最大的困扰是枯燥、乏味。除了课堂上学过的单词和课文,什么也看不到,或者看不懂。在书店里买不到适于少年儿童初学英语可以阅读的书籍。

现在,我们出版的《AAA 精释英语阅读系列》,就是一套能激起学生学习兴趣的阅读书。这套引进 Libreria Meravigli Edirrie 的简化英语读物,全都是由英语专家根据世界名著,简化词汇量,编辑而成的。所选编的故事都十分生动有趣,为世界各国孩子们所喜爱,书上提供的练习也颇具趣味性。

全套书共分 4 级。1 级的词汇量为 300 个单词,就是说只要掌握 300 个单词就可以阅读;2 级的词汇量为 500 个单词;3 级的词汇量为 600~1000 个单词;随着词汇量的增多,就可以阅读 4 级了。在结构设计上,

本书也独具特色。1~3级左边是故事,右边是练习;4级左边是故事,右边是生词,书后是练习。设计这些练习和游戏,帮助学习语法知识,检验理解能力,不再需要多余的作业,一扫学生学习英语通常出现的恐惧感,使学生在学习中不知不觉地克服了畏难情绪,增加了安全感(Assurance)。

每篇故事短小精悍,既保留了世界名著的原貌,又使孩子们能一睹名著风采。每个故事独立成册,不要用多少时间就能读完一册。“瞧,今天我又读了一本世界名著!”孩子们多高兴啊!这种学习上的成就感(Achievement),无疑是学好英语的强大动力所在。

从阅读1级开始吧!你只要掌握300个词汇就足够了。再增加200个词汇,就奔向2级;再增加100个词汇,就奔向3级……当你进入了AAA精释英语系列,就像踏上了高速行驶的列车,用难以置信的加速度(Acceleration)闯入英语世界。

祝你成功!

编者

AAA 精释英语阅读系列

顾问委员会

特邀顾问	冯存礼	吴颖	赵文学	丁薇
顾问	曹福海	孙元清	张继昌	何润伟
	杨振享	李继尧	李魁梦	杨振德
	牛序芳	郑君威		

目 录

麦琪的礼物	2
黑檀的买主	14
财神与爱神	28
吝啬的情人	60
导读一	81
导读二	85

O. Henry

The Gift of the Magi

O. Henry, pseudonym of William Sidney Porter, was born in Greensboro, USA in 1862 and died in New York in 1910. One of the most prolific American short-story writers, he was, above all, famous for the unexpected concluding "twist" he would give to his stories which were based on his own various adventurous experiences and his acute capacity of observation of people and their habits.

After a youth spent in passing from one occupation to another, he was accused of embezzling funds from the First National Bank of Austin, Texas, where he worked and so he fled to Honduras. He returned to Austin in 1897 and after being tried and sentenced he spent three years in the Columbus prison in Ohio where he discovered his vocation for writing and began to publish his first works under different pseudonyms, O. Henry being the most used. When he was released he settled in New York where he continued his successful literary career.

In a period when the short story was the most popular narrative form in America, Henry produced a vast quantity, the best of which combine paradox and the grotesque with vivid description and authentic narrative tension. "*Cabbages and Kings*" (1904) and "*The Four Million*" (1906) are considered his best collections.

La Spiga
LANGUAGES

THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

ONE DOLLAR AND EIGHTY SEVEN CENTS. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Pennies saved one and two at a time by bulldozing the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of parsimony that such close dealing implied. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually subsiding from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. It did not exactly beggar description, but it certainly had that word on the lookout for the mendicancy squad.

In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could coax a ring. Also appertaining thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr James Dillingham Young".

The "Dillingham" had been flung to the breeze during a former period of prosperity when its possessor was being paid \$30 per week. Now, when the income was shrunk to \$20, the letters of "Dillingham" looked blurred, as though they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and unassuming D. But whenever Mr James Dillingham Young came home and reached his flat above he was called "Jim" and greatly hugged by Mrs James Dillingham Young, already introduced to you as Della. Which is all very good.

Della finished her cry and attended to her cheeks with the powder rag. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a gray cat walking a gray fence in a gray backyard. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day and she had only

Gift: something given. **Magi:** three wise men who brought offerings to the infant Jesus.

bulldozing: intimidating, forcing. **grocer:** person selling tea, food etc... **butcher:** person selling meat. **cheeks:** sides of face below eyes. **burned:** *here*, became hot with embarrassment. **Imputation:** suggestion. **parsimony:** extreme care in spending. **close:** careful, not generous. **dealing:** business relations. **but:** except. **flop down:** fall down. **shabby:** in bad condition. **couch:** sofa, divan. **howl:** cry. **Instigates:** causes, stimulates. **made up of:** composed of. **sobs:** acts of drawing in breath irregularly while crying. **sniffles:** acts of breathing in noisily. **mistress:** woman in position of authority. **subsiding:** going. **stage:** *here*, state. **second:** *i.e.* sniffles. **furnished flat:** rented flat with furniture provided. **beggar description:** make words seem poor and inadequate. **lookout:** watch, search. **mendicancy:** poor, begging. **squad:** group of people. **vestibule:** entrance hall.

coax: persuade, make. **appertaining:** belonging. **thereunto:** in relation to (the letter-box). **bearing:** with.

flung to the breeze: put in triumphantly.
income: money received.
shrunk: become smaller.
blurred: indistinct.

unassuming: modest, unpretentious. **whenever:** on any occasion.
hugged: embraced.

attended: gave care to.
powder: substance to give the skin colour. **rag:** piece of cloth.
dully: without interest. **gray:** colour between black and white.
fence: wood or metal barrier. **backyard:** area behind a house.

\$1.87 with which to buy Jim a present. She had been saving every penny she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week doesn't go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated. They always are. Only \$1.87 to buy a present for Jim. Her Jim. Many a happy hour she had spent planning for something nice for him. Something fine and rare and sterling — something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier-glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very agile person may, by observing his reflection in a rapid sequence of longitudinal strips, obtain a fairly accurate conception of his looks. Della, being slender, had mastered the art.

Suddenly she whirled from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its color within twenty seconds. Rapidly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its full length.

Now, there were two possessions of the James Dillingham Youngs in which they both took a mighty pride. One was Jim's gold watch that had been his father's and his grandfather's. The other was Della's hair. Had the Queen of Sheba lived in the flat across the airshaft, Della would have let her hair hang out the window some day to dry just to depreciate Her Majesty's jewels and gifts. Had King Solomon been the janitor, with all his treasures piled up in the basement, Jim would have pulled out his watch every time he passed, just to see him pluck at his beard from envy.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her rippling and shining like a cascade of brown waters. It reached below her knee and made itself almost a garment for her. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the worn red carpet.

On went her old brown jacket; on went her old brown

present: gift. **saving:** keeping for future use.

Expenses: money used for something.

planning for: thinking of.

rare: uncommon. **sterling:** of value.

worthy: having merit. **owned:** possessed.

pler-glass: long mirror.

strips: long, narrow pieces.

fairly: quite, moderately. **conception:** idea. **looks:** appearance.

slender: slim. **mastered:** become expert at.

whirled: moved quickly.

before: in front of.

mighty: great.

pride: feeling of satisfaction.

airshaft: passage for ventilation.

depreciate: reduce in value.

Had King Solomon been: if King Solomon had been. **janitor:**

person who takes care of a building, doorkeeper. **piled up:** ac-

cumulated. **basement:** underground part of building. **pulled out:**

taken out. **pluck at:** pull. **envy:** feeling of discontent at another's

fortune. **about:** here, around. **rippling:** undulating, waving.

knee: joint in the leg. **garment:** article of clothing.

faltered: hesitated.

tear: water from the eye. **splashed:** fell.

worn: in bad condition. **carpet:** floor covering.

On went: she put on.

hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she fluttered out the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: "Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds." One flight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting. Madame, large, too white, chilly, hardly looked the "Sofronie".

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair — said Madame. — Take yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars — said Madame, — lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours tripped by on rosy wings. Forget the hashed metaphor. She was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else. There was no other like it in any of the stores, and she had turned all of them inside out. It was a platinum fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by meretricious ornamentation — as all good things should do. It was even worthy of The Watch. As soon as she saw it she knew that it must be Jim's. It was like him. Quietness and value — the description applied to both. Twenty-one dollars they took from her for it, and she hurried home with the 87 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Grand as the watch was, he sometimes looked at it on the sly on account of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason. She got out her curling irons and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love. Which is always a tremendous task, dear friends — a mammoth task.

whirl: quick movement. **sparkle**: flash of light.
fluttered: moved quickly.

flight: set of stairs between one floor and another.
collected herself: recovered control of herself. **panting**: taking short, quick breaths. **chilly**: rather cold.

yer: (*slang*) your.
sight: look. **looks**: appearance.
rippled: moved undulatingly.

tripped by: danced with quick steps, *here*, passed quickly. **rosy**: colour of roses. **wings**: organs of flight. **hashed**: mixed up, confused. **ransacking**: searching.

turned ... inside out: looked very carefully.
fob: pocket watch. **chain**: flexible length of metal links. **chaste**: simple, pure. **properly**: in the right way. **meretricious**: attractive on the surface but of little value.
worthy: having sufficient value.
Quietness: calm.
applied: was appropriate.
hurried: went quickly.

Grand: splendid.
on the sly: secretly. **on account of**: because of.
leather strap: long narrow piece of leather.
gave way ... to: was replaced by.
curling irons: instruments for curling hair.
ravages: damage.

mammoth: immense. **task**: job.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

"If Jim doesn't kill me — she said to herself, — before he takes a second look at me, he'll say I look like a Coney Island chorus girl. But what could I do — oh, what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

At 7 o'clock the coffee was made and the frying-pan was on the back of the stove hot and ready to cook the chops.

Jim was never late. Della doubled the fob chain in her hand and sat on the corner of the table near the door that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit of saying little silent prayers about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty".

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two — and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door, as immovable as a setter at the scent of quail. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della wriggled off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling — she cried, — don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again — you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'Merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice —

close-lying: short. **curls**: coils, twists of hair.

truant schoolboy: child who stays away from school without good reason.

Coney Island: island off the south shore of Long Island, New York; site of a large amusement park. **chorus girl**: girl who dances in chorus of a musical comedy.

frying-pan: pan with long handle used for frying.

stove: cooker.

chops: slices of meat on the bone.

doubled: folded.

step: footstep; noise of feet.

flight: set of stairs. **turned**: became.

whispered: said quietly.

stepped in: entered.

fellow: man.

to be burdened with a family: with the responsibility of a family.

immovable: still, not moving. **setter**: type of hunting dog.

scent: smell. **quail**: small bird.

stared ... fixedly: looked for a long time.

peculiar: strange.

wriggled off: got off with quick movements. **went for**: went towards.

grow out: become long.

awfully: here, very. **fast**: quickly.

what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that patent fact yet even after the hardest mental labor.

"Cut it off and sold it — said Della. — Don't you like me just as well, anyhow? I'm me without my hair, ain't I?"

Jim looked about the room curiously.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said, with an air almost of idiocy.

"You needn't look for it — said Della. — It's sold, I tell you — sold and gone, too. It's Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs on my head were numbered — she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, — but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?"

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He enfolded his Della. For ten seconds let us regard with discreet scrutiny some inconsequential object in the other direction. Eight dollars a week or a million a year — what is the difference? A mathematician or a wit would give you the wrong answer. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. This dark assertion will be illuminated later on.

Jim drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

"Don't make any mistake, Dell — he said, — about me. I don't think there's anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you'll unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first."

White fingers and nimble tore at the string and paper. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas! a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails, necessitating the immediate employment of all the comforting powers of the lord of the flat.

For there lay The Combs — the set of combs, side and

laboriously: with difficulty.

patent: obvious.

anyhow: in any way. **ain't I**: (*not standard*) aren't I.

Christmas Eve: the day before Christmas.

for: because.

were numbered: could be counted.

put ... on: start cooking.

enfolded: put his arms around. **regard**: look at.

scutiny: detailed examination. **Inconsequential**: unimportant.

wit: person with intelligence.

dark: *here*, mysterious.

illuminated: made clear.

drew: look out **package**: parcel. **threw**: put carelessly.

haircut: act of cutting hair.

unwrap: take off the paper from.

had me going a while: shocked me.

nimble: agile. **tore at**: pulled violently. **string**: thin cord.

scream: cry. **alas**: *exclamation of pity*.

walls: loud cries.

employment: use.

Combs: pieces of plastic, bone or metal with narrow pointed teeth along one side, used on hair.