

阳光英语系列丛书

(美) Bettie B. Youngs 著

品尝生活的浆果

Taste-Berry Tales



外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS

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品尝生活的浆果

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前言

“少年心事当拿云”，当然没有错，但少年时，也并不是只有拿云的心思，还有许许多多的故事，有许许多多的困惑和迷茫。

当你遇到生活中的种种难题，一定会有父母、老师或长辈站出来为你释疑解惑。但拿着他们给的“标准答案”，你是否会觉得意犹未尽？因为尽管长辈的答案浸淫了他们数十年的人生经验，但你更想知道的是同样的故事是否也发生在跟你同龄的人身上，你更想了解同龄人面对同样的问题会如何应对。

“阳光英语”系列丛书即是以青少年的眼光和见解来看待青少年成长路上遇到的种种困扰。其释疑解惑不是长辈的说教，而是同龄人对问题的见解。这是这套丛书跟其他面向青少年的丛书最不同的地方。

本套丛书共分为四本，其中三本的英文书名里都有“taste berry”，何为“taste berry”？原书作者解释如下：There is a fruit called the *Richardella dulcisica*, better known as the “taste berry”. When eaten, the taste buds experience whatever is being consumed — even distasteful foodstuffs — as sweet and delicious. 大意是说“taste berry”是一种神奇的浆果，用它做调味剂，任何食物都会变成美味，就算是原本味道不佳的食物也不例外。

有人说生活就像五味俱全的一顿大餐，没有人知道下一口会尝到什么。我们希望这套丛书能成为读者生活中的“taste berry”。当你尝到生活的苦咸滋味，看看同龄人的相似经历与应对方法，或许能让你对自己的生活有另一番领悟。

顾名思义，*Taste-Berry Tales*（《品尝生活的浆果》）这本书就是能让你从生活之“苦”中品出“甜”的一个个温情小故事。本书与其他三本的不同之处在于它不仅适合青少年阅读，相信对于有一定人生阅历的读者也会有所启迪。

在我们这个迅速发展的社会里，每个人似乎都在希望和恐惧之间挣扎。这个社会崇尚个人成功，而为了别人甘愿奉献自己的人没有得到应有的赞扬。于是有人说如今的时代是一个看不到希望的时代，真的是这样吗？当有人对特蕾莎嬷嬷说，“在加尔各答的大街上也许还有希望存在，但在纽约的街头我看不到希望。”特蕾莎嬷嬷的回答是“不！不是这样！有许多人都愿意并且随时准备要帮助他人。”是的，相信读过本书你一定会对这个社会多一份信心。我们都是人生道路上的旅者，如果每个人都能成为“taste berry”，互相鼓励，互相支持，人生的路途就会变得更加“甜蜜”！

编者

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1

What \$300 Can Buy

300 美元的价值



Allan is a friend of mine. A good friend. Even so, he's the kind of person that you can tolerate only so long before he gets on your nerves.¹ But on his birthday, I called him as I do every year.

"Happy birthday, Allan!" I chirped² when he answered his phone.

"Right," he replied bleakly. "What can be *happy* about turning fifty? With my luck, the cost of my life insurance will go up!"³

"Let me take you out for dinner," I suggested.

"Do I have to wear a suit?" he moaned.

"No," I replied. "Slacks⁴ and a great sports coat will be fine."

"Well, okay then," he conceded.

I took him to a nice Italian restaurant, one of his few favorites.

I'd arranged for the waiters to present a cupcake with a candle in the center to Allan and sing "Happy Birthday" to him after dinner.

"Oh, Lord!" Allan said, rolling his eyes and squirming⁵ in his chair as they sang. "How long will they go on?" Though he tried not to look self-conscious, he was thoroughly annoyed. It was great fun watching!

"The 'Happy Birthday' song is usually pretty short," I informed him, really enjoying all this. "And I've asked them to sing it through only three times⁶."

When the birthday choir left the table, I presented my friend with a gift, a simple, safe-to-give-to-any-man present.⁷

"Bloomingdale's?" he screeched when he saw the store's customary wrapping with its name emblazoned on it. "You bought it at Bloomingdale's?" Fumbling with the wrapping paper, he added, "I know this cost an arm and a leg." The instant he saw that it was a designer sweatshirt, he ordered, "You've got to take it back. You know they've marked this thing up twenty times more than it's worth!"⁸

"If you don't like it or if it doesn't fit, exchange it," I instructed. Looking him directly in the eyes, I ordered, "Under no circumstances are you to take it back and hand me a store credit in my name — as you did with the last birthday gift I bought you!"⁹

"I like the sweatshirts I buy at Wal-Mart," he retorted. "You can buy a good sweatshirt for \$15 or less at Wal-Mart. Why spend more?"

Allan is so Allan.

I met him at a social gathering twenty years ago, right around the time he started a business manufacturing floppy diskettes for the computer industry. Eventually, the tiny little company he began in his office at home moved into his garage, and then took over an entire five-story office building. Five years ago, he sold the company

for \$35 million, retaining the division that manufactured replacement parts. This he did so that, in his words, he'd "have an income, and something to do."

As well as being wealthy, Allan is very handsome and, though extremely shy, he's a friendly sort of fellow, very likable. He has never married but would like nothing more. "I'm rich and good looking," he candidly remarked to me last year, "but I've only had four dates in the last five years. What is so wrong with me that I can't find someone to love?"

Unfortunately, he counts pennies as if his present or immediate future faced financial devastation.¹⁰ He never plays with carefree abandon, nor relaxes in a spirit of leisure. He doesn't give, doesn't spend, doesn't seem to enjoy life.¹¹

注释

1. 但即便如此,你也只能在短时间内容忍他的脾气,然后就会被他烦得冒火。**get on one's nerves**: 惹得某人心烦。

2. **chirp**: 尖声尖气地讲出。

3. 他冷冷地说道:“人到五十岁还有什么可快乐的呢?运气不错,花在人寿保险上的钱又要涨了!”
bleakly: 缺乏热情的,冷冷的。

4. **slacks**: [常作复数] 便裤,宽松长裤。

5. **squirm**: 蠕动,扭动。

6. **sing it through only three times**: 从头到尾唱三遍。

7. 演唱组唱完生日歌离开后,我给我的朋友送上一个礼物,一个简单的、送给谁都不会出错的礼物。

safe: 这里是“有把握的,不会出错的”意思。

8. **Bloomingdale's**: 一家为富人服务的高档百货店;**emblazon**: 用纹章装饰,这里指在包装上印上店名;**an arm and a leg**: 〈俚〉过高的代价;**designer**: (产品)由设计师专门设计的,标出设计师姓名的。

9. 无论如何,你不许像上次那样,把我送你的生日礼物退给商店,然后还给我一张写着名字的记账卡。

10. 不幸的是,他精打细算地过日子,就好像他现在或在不久的将来就要面临财政崩溃一样。**devastation**: 荒废,破坏。

11. 他从来不随便扔东西,在闲暇时刻也从未放松过。他不送礼,不消费,似乎也不享受生活。

Maybe it's one of the reasons he's had four dates in five years.

Allan called a week later to say thanks for the birthday dinner and gift, and to tell me that, yes, he had taken the sweatshirt back and a gift certificate was being mailed to me in my name. What I said to him may have been because of what he did, or maybe it was just the extra long week I'd had. Or maybe it was because, as I listened to Allan complain and complain, I was put off by all the negativity. "Allan," I said in exasperation, "you know I'm your friend, and you know I'd do anything for you, but really, your woebegone attitude is getting very old. All you do is focus on how miserable you are. Pardon my saying so, but I think your 'poor me' shtick is very selfish. I'm going to make a suggestion. I know this is going to be a major undertaking for you, but I'm going to suggest it anyway.¹² Tomorrow, take three \$100 bills and go to that grocery store that's near your house. Walk down several aisles observing the other people in the store as you walk. The moment you see a woman with several children, one you know has more bills than she can comfortably meet, walk up to her and, without saying anything other than 'I hope you have a great day, ma'am,' hand her one of those \$100 bills. Then smile and walk away. Just so long as you give it to a mother with a group of children.

"Then, walk up and down the aisle until you come to a senior citizen carefully reading and comparing the cost of two items, trying to decide which one is cheaper because he or she is obviously on a strict budget.¹³ I want you to take the second \$100 bill and give it to him, again just saying something like 'It's your lucky day. This is for you, spend it as you wish.' And once again, turn and walk away.

"Spend the last \$100 bill on yourself. Buy yourself something without fretting over the possibility that if you hunted long enough and hard enough you might have found it somewhere else for less.

Something you really like. I suggest a body massage, a facial and a pedicure.¹⁴ I think if you follow those instructions you'll find at least a glimmer in the right direction for snapping out of your depression."

These were not the words Allan wanted to hear. "What?" Allan roared, his tone indicating he thought I'd gone mad. "Why would I do that? I have to go now. I feel *worse* than when I called." With that, he hung up.

I thought I might not hear from him again.

Two months later, I answered my doorbell to find Allan standing on my doorstep. Grinning from ear to ear,¹⁵ he announced, "I did it! I spent the \$300 as you suggested. Care to hear about it?"

"Absolutely!" I said, inviting him in.

"It was a pretty interesting experience," he explained. His excitement over sharing the story quickly transformed into sincerity and empathy.¹⁶ "You should have seen the look on that mother's face," he said with a look of amazement now on his own.

注释

12. “艾伦，”我气愤地说，“你知道，我是你的朋友，我可以为你做任何事情，但是你这种愁眉苦脸的态度确实不合时宜。无论你有什么，你都只想着自己有多么不幸。请原谅我这样说，但是我觉得你那‘顾影自怜’的把戏非常自私。我有个建议，那对你来说是个艰巨的任务，但是我还是想说出来。” exasperation: 恼怒，愤怒；woebegone: (神情、样子等) 忧伤的，愁眉苦脸的；shlick: 把戏；undertaking: 任务。

13. senior citizen: 老年人 (尤指退休

者)；on a strict budget: 钱不多的。

14. 不要想着或许花更长时间、更多精力就能买到更便宜的东西而苦恼。给自己买点真正喜欢的东西。我建议你去做一次全身按摩，面部护理和足疗。fret: 苦恼，烦躁，发愁；massage: 按摩；facial: 面部按摩，美容；pedicure: 足疗，修脚。

15. grin from ear to ear: 咧嘴大笑。

16. 开始他是急切地要和别人分享他的故事，很快他的态度就由急切化为真诚与同情。sincerity: 真实，真挚；empathy: 同情，同感。



"And the kids that were with her! Five of them no less, and they looked to be under the age of ten — or maybe eight. Somewhere in that age range. I can't imagine what caring for that many small children must be like. My sister has two and it's more than she can handle. Plus, kids — at least my sister's — are very expensive. I mean, it's clothes, \$100 tennis shoes, food, and always a hand being held out wanting money for things like movies, the video arcade¹⁷, new sports equipment.

"And the older man, Philip," he said, moving right along, shaking his head as he chuckled with glee. As though transported back to that encounter in the store's aisle, Allan gazed thoughtfully at the floor as he spoke. "That was something. He reacted to the \$100 as though I was Santa Claus."¹⁸

"And the last \$100?" I questioned.

He held up his wrist proudly displaying a new watch.

"I'm proud of you, Allan," I said.

His face glowing, he said in delight, "I know what you were trying to teach me. I guess I'd gotten myself into a case of chronic self-pity and couldn't ever be happy because I didn't particularly like myself."¹⁹ He wagged his head as he marveled at his own folly.

"Allan," I said, feeling his satisfaction, "I'm genuinely pleased with you." Thinking of the last time we talked, I added, "When I asked you to do this, I was probably out of line, but I was just so frustrated with you. There are so many people who would love to have the opportunities you have and are willing to tolerate the downside of your life in exchange for it. I just felt that you were too wrapped up in yourself, and that maybe if you'd be concerned about another person for a minute, you'd find some happiness." Having tried to explain my logic, I apologized for my lack of patience, "But I am sorry for being short with you."²⁰

"Don't be sorry. It was a wonderful lesson," he reported

earnestly. "And you know what else I learned?"

"What's that?" I prompted.

"I learned that financial success is empty until it serves a purpose,"²¹ he stated thoughtfully. Then his face brightened again. "And that it's really great fun having money! You'll never guess what I did after I spent the first \$300." My expression coaxed him to go on.

"The day after my big spending spree — " catching himself, his eyes instantly met my eyes and he amended his statement. "Well, okay, my 'little' spending spree — a brochure arrived in the mail from a local animal shelter. It had a heart-wrenching photo of this skinny, malnourished, yet full-of-spirit dog on the cover, with a caption that read, 'Please give me a home.'²² The picture inspired me to —"

注释

17. video arcade: (内设电视游戏机等) 游乐中心。

18. 真是让人欣慰, 他拿到 100 美元时的反应就像看到了圣诞老人! something: 聊以自慰的事, 还算幸运的事; Santa Claus: 圣诞老人。

19. 他神采奕奕, 高兴地说: "我知道你的用意。我觉得自己陷入了一种长期自怜的状态, 总也快乐不起来, 因为我从未真正喜欢过自己。"

20. 回想起上次我们谈话的情景, 我又说道: "我让你这样做的时候, 可能是有些过分了, 但我当时对你实在是恼火。有很多人渴望得到你拥有的机会, 也愿意经历你的人生, 即便条件是要忍受你人生中的挫折。我只是觉得你完全陷入了自我的圈子中, 如果你能关心别人一点

儿, 你就会找到快乐。" 解释了我的理由之后, 我又为自己缺乏耐心而道歉: "我为当时的粗暴态度向你道歉。" be out of line: 举止不当; downside: 下降趋势, 这里指人一生中的挫折; be wrapped up in: 专心致志于……, 对……倾注全部注意力; be short with: 对……粗暴无礼。

21. 我认识到赚钱只有为某个目的服务时才有意义。financial success: 经济上的成功, 即赚很多钱; serve a purpose: 为某个目的服务。

22. 册子的封面是一只瘦骨嶙峋、营养不良、却精神抖擞的小狗的照片, 上面的说明文字是 "请给我一个家吧", 看了让人心疼。heart-wrenching: 令人心疼的; skinny: 皮包骨的, 极瘦的; malnourished: 营养不良的; caption: (图片的) 说明文字。

"Let me guess!" I interrupted, laughing at how much fun this "project" had been for him. "You now own a dog!"

"No," he chuckled. "I didn't go that far, but I did visit the shelter. You should see all the dogs and cats — and kittens and puppies — the shelter provides for and houses. I don't understand how people can mistreat defenseless animals. Some of them were sick, undernourished, and most all of them were craving attention. The number of animals that are abandoned every year is unbelievable. The shelter depends on donations to care for them, so when I saw the work they were doing, I mean, it's such a good cause —"²³

"So you donated to them, too?" I guessed correctly, laughing at the joyful grin on his face as he nodded. "You're on a roll!" I teased.²⁴ "And look at you! I couldn't be more thrilled to see how happy you are!"

"Thank you for giving me the wake-up call²⁵," he said, the look in his eyes growing serious. "It was insightful. Actually, it's changed my life. Most especially the experience with Philip. When I came upon him in the store, because his vision was so bad, he was holding a can really close to his face trying to read the label on the can. He had cataracts and was darn near blind because of them. When Philip told me that he didn't have a driver's license because of the loss of his sight, I offered him a ride home. You should have seen the terrible place he lived in — an old tattered shanty of a trailer. As we arrived, he apologized for the way the place looked, explaining that retirement had been more expensive than he'd imagined, and then his wife had ongoing health problems that added up to huge medical bills — which their insurance only covered partially. It was obvious he had no money, though he'd once had a successful little franchise, a copy-center place.²⁶ I never used it, but I do remember it. It was on the corner where that new hotel sits."

“Is his wife well now?” I asked.

“No,” Allan responded softly. “He lost Beth just three years ago.”

I took note of the fact that Allan had taken Philip to heart. Obviously they had more than a passing conversation.²⁷ He knew of Beth and felt deeply for Philip.

“It seems that with every passing year life gets worse for Philip,” Allan said. “And though money isn’t the answer to all of his problems, it can go a long way toward fixing some of them—like his eyesight for instance. I found out that without cataract surgery

注释

23. “不是”，他咯咯笑着，“我倒没那么做，不过我的确去了动物收容所。你真应该看看那些收容所收留的猫狗——还有小猫小狗。我不明白人们为什么会虐待孤弱无助的动物。有些动物生病了、营养不良，而且它们大多数都渴望人们的关注。每年遭遗弃的动物多得令人难以置信。收容所依靠捐赠来照顾它们。所以，当我看到工作人员所做的，我是说，那真是项了不起的事业……” chuckle: 咯咯地轻声笑；crave: 渴望得到，迫切需要；donation: (给慈善机关等的) 捐赠，赠品，捐款；cause: 事业，奋斗的目标。

24. “你可真是一发不可收啊！”我打趣道。be on a roll: 在连续势头中；tease: 逗弄，取笑，这里是“打趣”的意思。

25. wake-up call: 催醒电话，这里喻指令人醒悟的话语、提醒，类似于中文的“醍醐灌顶”。

26. 他得了白内障，几乎失明。当菲利普告诉我他因为视力不好而没有驾照时，我把他送回了家。你真该看看他住的地方——一个又旧又破的、由拖车改成的棚子。到那儿后，他为家里的环境感到抱歉，说退休之后的花费远比他想像的要多，而且他的妻子总是生病，这加起来就意味着高昂的医疗费用——而他们的保险只够支付一部分。虽然他曾经有过一个成功的小小的特许经营店——一个复印中心，但他现在显然没钱。cataract: 白内障；darn: 这里相当于damn，“很糟糕”的意思；driver's license: 驾驶执照；tattered: 破烂的，破旧的；shanty: 简陋的小木屋，棚屋；trailer: 拖车，挂车；ongoing: 连续不断的；medical bill: 医疗费用的账单；franchise: 特许经营权。

27. 我注意到阿伦很关注菲利普的情况。显然他们那次不仅仅是随便聊聊。take note of: 注意；take sb. to heart: 非常喜欢某人，这里是“关注，重视”的意思；passing: 短暂的，一时的。

Philip's eyesight would deteriorate to the point of not being able to see at all.²⁸ So I contacted a good friend, Dr. Lee Nordan, an excellent eye surgeon, and asked him to evaluate Philip's health and ability to undergo surgery. Well, Philip was a good candidate, so first we did his right eye, and four weeks later we did his left eye."

"We?" I questioned.

"Well, Lee did the surgery, but you know," he shrugged modestly, "I covered the bill."

"How wonderful for Philip," I said, duly impressed.

"Yes, it really is," Allan admitted. "And not just for him, but for me, too."

It was from this vantage point²⁹ that I noticed Allan's great-looking boots.

"Nice boots!" I commented.

"Oh, thanks," he said. "Philip was wearing an old pair of nice-looking boots, and when I mentioned that I liked the style, he told me that some fifteen years ago he'd had them made for him. I thought, *What a great idea.*" Laughing playfully he said, "So, I ordered a pair custom made just for me." He looked down at the fine leather cowboy boots he sported, then hopped to his feet to model them with a cocky smile, saying, "It's amazing what \$300 can buy!" He grew thoughtful and added, "In the process of spending the \$300, I learned to like myself. Giving is about appreciating. One benefit of having money is for stuff like this," he said, pointing to his boots, "and also to use for *others*. It's been a long time — if there ever was a time — since I enjoyed myself more than I did assisting Philip to have better vision and a better life or even the mother in the store, though a hundred dollars won't go very far with growing children. Thanks for leading me to the experience. I needed it. It was a godsend³⁰, really. Now, do you

know any great women?” he asked lightheartedly. “I’d sure like to meet the *right* woman!”

What Allan didn’t tell me, but what I later learned, was that when Philip came home from the recovery center after his second cataract operation, it was a new, though modest, trailer home that he came home to — courtesy of Allan!³¹

Allan took Philip to heart — to his heart — and in his heart found compassion for Philip’s predicament.³² This in turn ignited Allan’s desire to share and to help others. He became a taste berry for Philip, and because of it discovered one ingredient of the happiness for which he hungered: giving of himself.

As Allan said, “It’s amazing what \$300 can buy.”

注释

28. 虽然钱不能解决所有问题，但至少可以对解决一些问题大有帮助，比如菲利普的视力。我发现如果没有白内障手术，他的视力可能会恶化到什么也看不见。*go a long way*: 有很大作用，大有帮助；*deteriorate*: 恶化，衰退。

29. *vantage point*: 观点，见解，看法。

30. *godsend*: 天赐之物，令人喜出望外的事物。

31. 阿伦没有告诉我，不过后来我知道了——当菲利普做完第二次白内障手术从康复中心回家时，迎接他的是一个虽然简朴，却是崭新的拖车小屋——这是阿伦的礼物。*recovery center*: 康复中心；*modest*: 朴素的，简朴的；*courtesy*: 好意，恩惠，帮助。

32. *compassion*: 同情，怜悯；*predicament*: 困难，困境。