

先知双语经典
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[美] 欧·亨利 著
徐翰林 译

THE LAST LEAF
最后一片叶

流传最广泛的短篇小说集

中国对外翻译出版公司


现代短篇小说之父的巨作 美国生活的幽默百科全书

The Last Leaf

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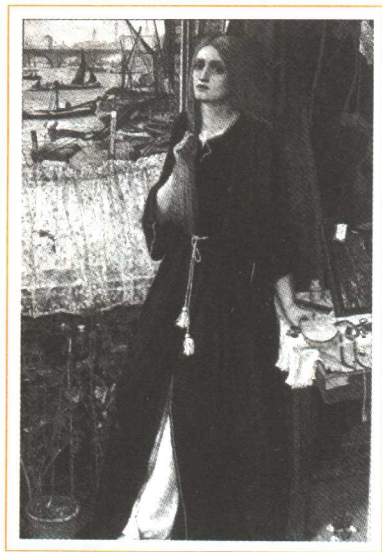
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麦琪的礼物

The Gift of the Magi

——元八角七分钱,这就是全部的积蓄了,其中还有六角是一分一分的硬币。这些硬币全都是在杂货店老板、菜贩子和肉店老板那儿软磨硬泡一分两分抠下来的。这种讨价还价的交易简直让人丢尽了颜面。黛拉反反复复数了三次,还是一元八角七分,而第二天就是圣诞节了。

显然,她只能扑倒在破旧的小睡椅上抱头痛哭了,事实上黛拉也这样做了。这也激起了她精神上的感慨:生活就是哭泣、抽噎和微笑,而哭泣占据着统治地位。

当这位女主人逐渐从悲伤的第一个阶段平静下来之后,趁她还没有进入第二个阶段,让我们来看看这个家吧。一套带家具的公寓,每周租金八美元。尽管用乞丐这个词形容不太确切,可这个寒酸的小团体看起来也的确称得上这个词。

楼下的门道里有个信箱,可里面从没装过信,有一个电钮,可至今也没看见有人用手指哄它响过,还有一张名片,上面写着“詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬先生”。

“迪林厄姆”是主人先前春风得意之际一时兴起





加上去的,那时他一周能挣三十美元。现在,他的收入缩减到二十美元,而那些字母也似乎严肃地思索着是否缩减为谦逊而讲求实际的字母D。可是,每当詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬回家走上他的小楼时,詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬太太,也就是刚才介绍给诸位

的黛拉,总是热烈地拥抱他,并称他“吉姆”。当然,那是再好不过的了。

黛拉哭完了,往脸上涂了点粉。她站在窗前,呆呆地望着窗外灰蒙蒙的后院,一只灰猫正沿着灰色的篱笆走着。明天就是圣诞节了,可她只有一元八角七分钱为吉姆买礼物。几个月来她尽了最大努力,才一分一分地积攒了这点儿钱。二十元要花一周实在是

不够。花费的总比预算的多。只有一元八角七分给吉姆买礼物。她的吉姆啊,她曾经花费了多少幸福的时光筹划着送他一件可心的礼物啊!这应该是一件精巧、希奇而又珍贵的礼物,至少要配得上她的吉姆才行。

房间的两扇窗子之间有一面穿衣镜。你也许见过每周租金八美元的公寓的壁镜吧。非常单薄而灵巧的人才有可能从一连串纵影长条里得到自己容貌的概念。黛拉身材苗条,早已掌握了这门照镜的艺术。

突然,她从窗前转过身来,站在镜子前,两眼闪动着晶莹的光亮,可不到二十秒钟就黯然失色了。她迅速解开头发,让它披散下来。

目前,詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·扬家有两件令主人引以为豪的东西:一件是吉姆的金表,那是他祖父传给父亲,父亲又传给他的;另一件则是黛拉的秀发。如果示巴女王住



The last leaf

在天井对面的公寓里，总有一天，黛拉会将秀发披开露于窗外晾晒，那便会令女王的所有珠宝黯然失色；如果地下室堆满财宝，而所罗门又是守门人，吉姆要是每次路过那儿时掏出金表，所罗门准会嫉妒得吹胡子瞪眼。

而此刻，黛拉那美丽的秀发飘散下来，波浪起伏，熠熠生辉，宛如一道褐色的瀑布。那秀发一直垂到膝下，好似她的一条长裙。随后，她迅速而紧张地把头发梳好。她犹豫着，静静地站在那里，眼泪一滴两滴地溅落到那红色的破旧的地毯上。

她披上了那件褐色的旧外套，戴上褐色的旧帽子，眼中还残留着晶莹的泪花。她裙子一摆，飘然出门，下楼来到街上。

她在一块招牌前停下了脚步，那招牌上写着“索佛罗尼夫人——专营各式头发”。黛拉跑上楼梯，喘息着定了定神。那位夫人身材肥硕，面色苍白，冷若冰霜，与“索佛罗尼”的雅称极不般配。

“你买我的头发吗？”黛拉问。

“买，”那夫人说，“把帽子摘下来，先让我看看。”

起伏的褐色瀑布一泻而下。

“二十元，”那夫人边说边内行地捋起那云丝柔缕。

“快给我钱，”黛拉说。

啊，接下来的两个小时有如长了玫瑰色的翅膀，愉快地飞逝而过——别理会这胡诌的比喻了——她正搜罗着各家商店，忙着为吉姆买礼物呢。

她终于找到了！那简直是专门为吉姆定做的，决非别人！她跑遍了所有商店，哪儿



也没有这样的东西。那是一条白金怀表短链，镂刻着花纹，朴素而高雅——正如一切好的东西，全无俗艳的装饰，仅凭本身的质量——正配得上那块金表。她一见那条表链就知道它属于吉姆。它就像吉姆本人，儒雅而高贵——这形容用于两者都很合适。二十一元，她买下了，拿了剩下的八角七分匆匆赶回家。只要金表配上这条链子，无论在什么场合，吉姆都可以毫无顾虑地看时间了。尽管那表华贵，但表链是用旧皮带代替的，所以有时他只能羞愧而匆忙地瞥上一眼。

黛拉回家后，她的狂喜变得有点儿谨慎和理智了。她找出烫发钳，点燃煤气炉，开始补救因为爱情加慷慨而造成的毁坏。这通常是一项惊人的工作，亲爱的朋友——简直是件了不起的工程。

不到四十分钟，她的头上就布满了细小而紧贴头皮的卷发，使她活像个逃学的男孩儿。她仔细而挑剔地长时间地看着镜中的自己。

“看吉姆不把我杀掉，他要是瞅上我一眼的话！”她自言自语道，“他准会说像我科尼岛上歌舞团里卖唱的姑娘。但我有什么办法呢——唉，一元八角七分能做什么呢！”

七点钟时咖啡煮好了，煎锅也放在炉子上热着，随时准备煎肉排。

吉姆一贯准时回家。黛拉手里握着对折的表链，坐在门口吉姆进来时必经的桌角上。随后，她听到楼梯下面传来了他的脚步声，她紧张得脸色苍白。她习惯于为日常琐事默默祈祷。这时，她低声默念：“上帝啊，求你让他认为我还是那样漂亮吧！”

门开了，吉姆迈步而入再随手把门关上。他看起来很瘦削，又非常严肃。可怜的人，才二十二岁，却要承担一个家庭的重任！他该买件新大衣了，而他连副手套也没有啊。

吉姆站在门口，像猎犬嗅到了鹌鹑的气味，一动不动。他盯着黛拉，神情不可琢磨，令她毛骨悚然。那不是愤怒，也不是惊讶，又不是不满，更不是厌恶，全然不是她预料中的任何一种表情。他只是带着这种怪怪的神情怔怔地盯着她。



The last leaf



黛拉一扭腰，从桌子上跳下来，向他走去。

“吉姆，亲爱的，”她叫道，“别那样看着我，我把头发剪掉买了，因为不送你一件礼物我无法过圣诞节。它还会长出来的，你不会介意的，是吗？我只能这么做了。我的头发长得非常快。快说圣诞快乐吧，吉姆！让我们快快乐乐的。你肯定猜不出我给你买了一件多漂亮多精美的礼物！”

“你已经把头发剪了？”吉姆吃力地问，似乎绞尽脑汁也没弄明白眼前的事实。

“剪掉了，卖了，”黛拉说，“但无论如何，你仍会喜欢我的。没有头发，我也还是我啊，不是吗？”

吉姆神情古怪，四下张望。

“你是说你的头发没了？”他几乎白痴似地问道。

“不用找了，”黛拉说，“已经卖掉了，告诉你，我已经卖掉了，没有啦。今晚是圣诞节，乖乖，对我好一些，这是为了你呀。也许我的头发数得清，”她突然用一种严肃与温柔继续说，“但是我对你的爱没有人能数得清。让我把牛排放进锅里好吗，吉姆？”

吉姆好像突然从恍惚中惊醒过来，一把把他的黛拉揽在怀里。别急，先让我们花十秒钟从另一个角度审慎地思索一下某些微不足道的小事吧。房租每周八元，还是每年一百万元——这又有什么差别呢？数学家或是智者给的答案也许是错误的。麦琪带来

了珍贵的礼物，但是缺少了那件东西——这句晦涩的话，后文将有所交代。

吉姆从大衣口袋里掏出一个小包，扔在桌上。

“别误会我，黛尔，”他说，“无论长发短发，修面还是洗头，都丝毫不能减少我对我公主的爱。可如果你打开那个包，你就会明白刚才我为什么懵懂发呆了！”

白皙的手指轻巧地解开绳子，打开纸包，紧接着是一声欣喜若狂的尖叫，哎呀！然后突然变成了女性神经质的泪水和哭泣，男主人只得千方百计来抚慰了。

因为那儿放着的是梳子——一套梳子啊，鬟梳，后梳，一应俱全。那是很久以前黛拉在百老汇的橱窗里见过并渴望已久的东西。这些美丽的发梳是用纯玳瑁制成的，用珠宝镶着边儿——颜色正好与她失去的秀发相配。她明白，这套梳子很昂贵，而她仅仅是羡慕神往，却从未奢望过据为己有。现在，这一切居然属于自己了！可那对此渴望已久的秀发却已经不见踪影了。

但她依然把梳子紧紧贴在胸前，好一会儿，她才抬起泪水迷蒙的双眼，微笑着说：“我的头发长得飞快，吉姆！”

接着，黛拉跳起来，像只被烫的小猫，叫着，“哦，哦！”

吉姆还没有见着他那精美的礼物呢。她急切地把手摊开伸向他。那没有知觉的贵重金属似乎也反射着她那欢快而炽热的心。

“漂亮极了，不是吗，吉姆？我搜遍全城才找到它。现在，你可以每天看上一百次时间了。快把手表给我，我要看看它们配在一起是什么样子。”





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吉姆并没照做，而是倒在旧睡椅上，头枕双手，微微发笑。

“黛拉，”他说，“让我们把圣诞礼物放到一边保存一会儿吧。它们实在太好了，可现在派不上什么用场。我把金表卖了，给你买了发梳。现在，你做牛排吧。”

众所周知，麦琪是位智者——智慧超群——他们把礼物带给出生在马槽里的耶

稣，从而开始了圣诞节赠送礼物的习俗。因为他们是智者，毫无疑问，他们的礼物也是明智的，如果两样东西完全一样，还可能

有交换的权利。在这里，我这笨拙之笔向诸位讲述了公寓套间里两个傻孩子平淡无奇的故事，他们极不明智地为对方牺牲了自己最宝贵的东西。不过，让我对如今的聪明人说一句话。在一切赠送礼物的人当中，他们两个是最聪明的。在一切馈赠又接受礼品的人当中，像他俩那样的人也是最聪明的。无论在什么地方，他俩都是最聪明的，他们就是麦琪。





The Gift of the Magi

最后一片叶

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



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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 \$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 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 ye 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



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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.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant school-boy. 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

