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# O. HENRY'S AMERICAN SCENES

## 奥·亨利 短篇小说选



人民教育出版社

简易英语读物

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E·张伯伦(E. Chamberlain)改写

陈国芳 注释

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奥·亨利(1862—1910, 他的真实姓名为William Sydney Porter) 是19世纪美国著名短篇小说家。在他三十多岁从事银行工作时, 曾被错误地指控为偷盗银行钱财, 关进了监狱。在三年的监狱生活和此后的一生中, 他一直从事短篇故事写作, 成功地赢得了声誉。他写了大约300篇短篇小说, 大部分内容都是揭露资本主义社会的矛盾和人际关系中的冲突, 并提出了当时美国的社会问题, 但对造成这些问题的根源, 他却让读者自己去寻找和回答。他笔锋锐利, 文字流畅, 故事结局往往出人意外, 发人深思。

《奥·亨利短篇小说选》(O. Henry's American Scenes) 是基于一千个英语单词上改写的, 共15篇。我们把它介绍给读者并作了较为详细的注释。书中《Gift of Magi》《Cop and Anthem》和《The Last Leaf》的故事内容都曾在高中英语课本中出现过, 深为广大青少年所熟悉和喜爱。其他如《Two Thanksgiving Day Gentlemen》《From the Cabby's Seat》《The Green Door》等都是从不同角度同情弱者, 为穷人说话, 其语言之诙谐, 文笔之优美, 使人读后回味无穷。希望本书能有助于广大英语学习爱好者提高阅读英语小说的兴趣和能力。

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## THE GIFT<sup>1</sup> OF THE MAGI<sup>2</sup>

*mg*

One dollar<sup>3</sup> and eighty-seven cents<sup>4</sup>. That was all. She had put it aside, one cent and then another and then another, in her careful buying of meat and other food. Della<sup>5</sup> counted<sup>6</sup> it three times. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was nothing to do but fall on the bed and cry. So Della did it.

While the lady of the home is slowly growing quieter, we can look at the home. Furnished rooms at a cost of \$8 a week.<sup>7</sup> There is little more to say about it.

In the hall below was a letter-box too small to

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1. gift [gift] *n.* 赠品; 礼品。 2. Magi ['meidgai] (复) (由东方来朝拜初生基督的) 三贤人。 3. dollar ['dɒlə] *n.* 元(美国、加拿大等国的货币单位, 符号为\$或\$)。 4. cent [sent] *n.* (100 cents=1 dollar)。 5. Della ['dela] 德拉(人名)。 6. count ['kaunt] *vt.* 点; 数。 7. Furnished rooms ... a week. 配有家具的房间一周要花8美元。

hold a letter. There was an electric bell<sup>1</sup>, but it could not make a sound. Also there was a name beside the door: "Mr. James Dillingham Young<sup>2</sup>."

When the name was placed there, Mr. James Dillingham Young was being paid \$30 a week. Now, when he was being paid only \$20 a week, the name seemed too long and important. It should perhaps have been "Mr. James D. Young." But when Mr. James Dillingham Young entered the furnished rooms, his name became very short indeed. Mrs. James Dillingham Young put her arms warmly about him and called him "Jim." You have already met her. She is Della.

Della finished her crying and cleaned the marks<sup>3</sup> of it from her face. She stood by the window and looked out with no interest. Tomorrow would be Christmas Day, and she had only \$1.87 with which to buy Jim a gift. She had put aside as much as she could for months, with this result. Twenty dollars a week is not much. Everything had cost more than she had expected.<sup>4</sup> It always happened like that.

Only \$1.87 to buy a gift for Jim. Her Jim. She

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1. electric bell 电铃。 2. Mr. James Dillingham Young  
[dʒeɪmz dɪlɪŋhæm jʌŋ] 詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·杨先生。

3. mark [mɑ:k] n. 泪痕。 4. Everything had cost ...  
had expected. 什么都比她想象的要贵得多。

had had many happy hours planning something nice for him. Something nearly good enough. Something almost worth the honor<sup>1</sup> of belonging<sup>2</sup> to Jim.

There was a looking-glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen the kind of looking-glass that is placed in \$8 furnished rooms. It was very narrow. A person could see only a little of himself at a time. However, if he was very thin and moved very quickly, he might be able to get a good view<sup>3</sup> of himself. Della, being quite thin, had mastered this art.<sup>4</sup>

Suddenly she turned from the window and stood before the glass. Her eyes were shining brightly, but her face had lost its color. Quickly she pulled down her hair and let it fall to its complete length<sup>5</sup>.

The James Dillingham Youngs were very proud of two things which they owned. One thing was Jim's gold watch. It had once belonged to his father. And, long ago, it had belonged to his father's father. The other thing was Della's hair.

If a queen had lived in the rooms near theirs,

- 
1. honor ['ɒnə] *n.* 荣誉。 2. belong [bi'lɒŋ] *vi.* 属;附属。 3. view [vju:] *n.* 视力;视线。 4. Della, being ...this art. 德拉因很瘦,能清楚地看到她自己。 5. let it fall to its complete length 把头发全放了下来。 length [lɛŋθ] *n.* 长;长度。



Della would have washed and dried her hair where the queen could see it.<sup>1</sup> Della knew her hair was more beautiful than any queen's jewels and gifts.

If a king had lived in the same house, with all his riches, Jim would have looked at his watch every time they met. Jim knew that no king had anything so valuable<sup>2</sup>.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her, shining like a falling stream of brown water. It reached below her knee. It almost made itself into a dress for her.<sup>3</sup>

And then she put it up on her head again, nervously<sup>4</sup> and quickly. Once she stopped for a moment and stood still while a tear or two ran down her face.

She put on her old brown coat. She put on her old brown hat. With the bright light still in her eyes, she moved quickly out the door and down to the street.

Where she stopped, the sign said: "Mrs. Sofronie<sup>5</sup>."

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1. If a queen ... could see it. 如果有个皇后住在他们房间附近的话, 德拉一定会在皇后看得见的地方, 把头发洗净、吹干。(这是一句假设性虚拟语气句子, 又如下一句: If a king ... they met.)。 2. valuable ['væljuəbl] *adj.* 值钱的; 有价值的。  
3. It almost made ... a dress for her. 秀发本身几乎为她制做了一件外衣。 4. nervously ['nɜ:vəsli] *adv.* 紧张不安地; 神经质地。 5. Sofronie [sə'frɒni] 索芙朗妮(人名)。

## Hair Articles of all Kinds."

Up to the second floor Della ran, and stopped to get her breath<sup>1</sup>.

Mrs. Sofronie, large, too white, cold-eyed, looked at her.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Mrs. Sofronie. "Take your hat off and let me look at it."

Down fell the brown waterfall.

"Twenty dollars," said Mrs. Sofronie, lifting the hair to feel its weight<sup>2</sup>.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

Oh, and the next two hours seemed to fly. She was going from one shop to another, to find a gift for Jim.

She found it at last. It surely had been made for Jim and no one else.<sup>3</sup> There was no other like it in any of the shops, and she had looked in every shop in the city.

It was a gold watch chain<sup>4</sup>, very simply made. Its value was in its rich and pure material. Because

---

1. get her breath 她喘口气。 2. weight [weit] n. 重量。  
3. It surely had been made ... no one else. 这件礼品当然是为杰姆制作的,而不是为其他什么人。 4. chain [tʃein]  
n. 链;表链。

it was so plain and simple, you knew that it was very valuable. All good things are like this.

It was good enough for The Watch.

As soon as she saw it, she knew that Jim must have it. It was like him. Quietness and value—Jim and the chain both had quietness and value. She paid twenty-one dollars for it. And she hurried home with the chain and eighty-seven cents.

With that chain on his watch, Jim could look at his watch and learn the time anywhere he might be. Though the watch was so fine, it had never had a fine chain. He sometimes took it out and looked at it only when no one could see him do it.

When Della arrived home, her mind quieted a little<sup>1</sup>. She began to think more reasonably. She started to try to cover the sad marks of what she had done. Love and large-hearted giving, when added together, can leave deep marks. It is never easy to cover these marks, dear friends—never easy.

Within forty minutes her head looked a little better. With her short hair, she looked wonderfully like a schoolboy. She stood at the looking-glass for a long time.

“If Jim doesn’t kill me,” she said to herself,

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1. her mind quieted a little 她的心情平静了一些。

“before he looks at me a second time, he’ll say I look like a girl who sings and dances for money. But what could I do—oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?”

At seven, Jim’s dinner was ready for him.

Jim was never late. Della held the watch chain in her hand and sat near the door where he always entered. Then she heard his step in the hall and her face lost color for a moment. She often said little prayers<sup>1</sup> quietly, about simple everyday things. And now she said: “Please God, make him think I’m still pretty.”

The door opened and Jim stepped in. He looked very thin and he was not smiling. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two—and with a family to take care of! He needed a new coat and he had nothing to cover his cold hands.

Jim stopped inside the door. He was as quiet as a hunting dog when it is near a bird.<sup>2</sup> His eyes looked strangely at Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not understand. It filled her with fear. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor anything she had been ready for. He simply looked at her

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1. prayer [ˈpreə] n. 祈祷。      2. He was as quiet as ... near a bird. 他平静得就像一条要靠近一只鸟的猎狗那样。

with that strange expression on his face.

Della went to him.

"Jim, dear," she cried, "don't look at me like that. I had my hair cut off and sold it. I couldn't live through Christmas without giving you a gift. My hair will grow again. You won't care, will you? My hair grows very fast. It's Christmas, Jim. Let's be happy. You don't know what a nice—what a beautiful nice gift I got for you."

"You've cut off your hair?" asked Jim slowly. He seemed to labor to understand what had happened.<sup>1</sup> He seemed not to feel sure he knew.

"Cut it off and sold it," said Della. "Don't you like me now? I'm me, Jim. I'm the same without my hair."

Jim looked around the room.

"You say your hair is gone?" he said.

"You don't have to look for it," said Della. "It's sold, I tell you—sold and gone, too. It's the night before Christmas, boy. Be good to me, because I sold it for you.<sup>2</sup> Maybe the hairs of my head could be counted," she said, "but no one could ever count my

---

1. He seemed to labor ... had happened. 他好象在努力使自己明白发生了什么事。

2. Be good to me ... for you. 请对我好些, 因为我是为你才卖掉头发的。

love for you. Shall we eat dinner, Jim?"

Jim put his arms around his Della. For ten seconds let us look in another direction. Eight dollars a week or a million dollars a year—how different are they? Someone may give you an answer, but it will be wrong. The magi brought valuable gifts, but that was not among them. My meaning will be explained soon.

From inside his coat, Jim took something tied in paper<sup>1</sup>. He threw it upon the table.

"I want you to understand me, Dell," he said. "Nothing like a haircut could make me love you any less. But if you'll open that, you may know what I felt when I came in."

White fingers pulled off<sup>2</sup> the paper. And then a cry of joy; and then a change to tears.<sup>3</sup>

For there lay The Combs<sup>4</sup>—the combs that Della had seen in a shop window and loved for a long time. Beautiful combs, with jewels, perfect for her beautiful hair. She had known they cost too much for her to buy them.<sup>5</sup> She had looked at them without the

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1. Jim took something tied in paper 杰姆取出用纸包着的  
东西。 2. pull off 撕掉。 3. And then a cry of  
joy; and ... tears. 接着一声惊叫, 泪水满面。 4. The  
combs [kəʊm] 一套梳子。 5. She had known ... for her  
to buy them. 她知道这套梳子太贵, 对她来说是买不起的。

least hope of owning them.<sup>1</sup> And now they were hers, but her hair was gone.

But she held them to her heart, and at last was able to look up and say: "My hair grows so fast, Jim!"

And then she jumped up and cried, "Oh, oh!"

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful gift. She held it out to him in her open hand. The gold seemed to shine softly as if with her own warm and loving spirit.<sup>2</sup>

"Isn't it perfect, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You'll have to look at your watch a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how they look together."

Jim sat down and smiled.

"Della," said he, "let's put our Christmas gifts away and keep them a while. They're too nice to use now. I sold the watch to get the money to buy the combs. And now I think we should have our dinner."

The magi, as you know, were wise men—wonderfully wise men—who brought gifts to the newborn Christ-child<sup>3</sup>. They were the first to give Christmas

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1. She had looked at them ... owing them. 她曾不止一次地看过这些梳子,但丝毫没有想得到它们的奢望。

2. The gold seemed to shine ... loving spirit. 那金表链如同她那温暖炽热的爱情一样闪烁着柔和的光亮似的。

3. the newborn Christ-child 新生基督婴儿。

gifts. Being wise, their gifts were doubtless wise ones. And here I have told you the story of two children who were not wise. Each sold the most valuable thing he owned in order to buy a gift for the other. But let me speak a last word to the wise of these days: Of all who give gifts, these two were the most wise.<sup>1</sup> Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are the most wise. Everywhere they are the wise ones. They are the magi.

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1. Of all who give gifts, ... the most wise. 在所有赠送礼物的人中，这两个人是最聪明的。



## TWO THANKSGIVING DAY<sup>1</sup>

### GENTLEMEN

There is one day that is ours. There is one day when all Americans go back to the old home and eat a big dinner. Bless<sup>2</sup> the day. The President gives it to us every year.

Sometimes he talks about the people who had the first Thanksgiving. They were the Puritans<sup>3</sup>. They were some people who landed on our Atlantic shore. We don't really remember much about them.

But those people ate a large bird called turkey<sup>4</sup> on the first Thanksgiving Day. So we have turkey for Thanksgiving dinner, if we have enough money to buy turkey. That is a tradition<sup>5</sup>.

Yes. Thanksgiving Day is the one day of the year that is purely American<sup>6</sup>.

- 
1. Thanksgiving Day (基督教) 感恩节(在美国为每年十一月的最后一个星期四)。 2. bless [bles] *vt.* 保佑; 降福。 3. Puritan ['pjʊərɪtən] *n.* 清教徒。 4. turkey ['tɜ:ki] *n.* 火鸡。 5. tradition [trə'dɪʃən] *n.* 传统; 惯例。 6. that is purely American 那是纯系美国人的节日。