



企鵝英語簡易讀物精選

黑 猫

EDGAR ALLAN POE



THE
BLACK CAT
AND OTHER STORIES

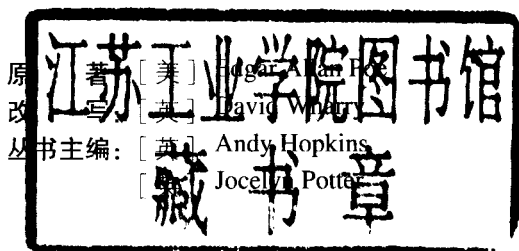
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企鹅英语简易读物精选 (高二学生)

The Black Cat
and Other Stories

黑 猫



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黑猫

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大量阅读简易读物 打好英语基础（代序）

北京外国语大学英语系历来都十分重视简易读物的阅读。我们要求学生在一、二年级至少要阅读几十本经过改写的、适合自己水平的英语读物。教学实践证明，凡是大量阅读了简易读物的学生，基础一般都打得比较扎实，英语实践能力都比较强，过渡到阅读英文原著困难也都比较小。这是我们几十年来屡试不爽的一条经验。

为什么强调在阅读英文原著之前必须阅读大量的简易读物呢？原因之一是简易读物词汇量有控制，内容比较浅易，而原著一般来说词汇量大，内容比较艰深。在打基础阶段，学生的词汇量比较小，阅读原著会遇到许多困难。在这种情况下，要保证足够的阅读量只能要求学生阅读简易读物。其次，简易读物使用的是常用词汇、短语和语法结构，大量阅读这类读物可以反复接触这些基本词语和语法，有助于他们打好基础，培养他们的英语语感。第三，简易读物大部分是文学名著改写而成，尽管情节和人物都大为简化，但依旧保留了文学名著的部分精华，仍不失为优秀读物。大量阅读这些读物对于拓宽学生视野、提高他们的人文素养大有帮助。

在这里我们还可以援引美国教学法家克拉申（Stephen Krashen）的一个著名观点。他认为，学生吸收外语有一个前提，即语言材料只能稍稍高于他们的语言理解水平，如果提供的语言材料难度大大超过学生的水平，就会劳而无功。这是克拉申关于外语学习的一个总的看法，但我们不妨把这个道理运用到阅读上。若要阅读有成效，必须严格控制阅读材料的难易度。目前学生阅读的英语材料往往过于艰深，词汇量过大，学生花了很多时间，而阅读量却仍然很小，进展缓慢，其结果是扼杀了学生的阅读兴趣，影响了他们的自信心。解决这个问题关键是向学生提供适合他们水平的、词汇量有控制的、能够引起他们兴趣的英语读物。“企鹅英语简易读物精选”是专门为初、中级学习者编写的简易读物。这是一套充分考虑到学生的水平和需要，为他们设计的有梯度的读物，学生可以循序渐进，逐步提高阅读难度和扩大阅读量，从而提高自己的英语水平。

应该如何做才能取得最佳效果呢？首先，要选择难易度适当的读物。如果一页书上生词过多，读起来很吃力，进展十分缓慢，很可能选的材料太难了。不妨换一本容易些的。总的原则是宁易毋难。一般来说，学生选择的材料往往偏难，而不是过于浅易。其次，要尽可能读得快一些，不要一句一句地分析，更不要逐句翻译。读故事要尽快读进去，进入故事的情节，就像阅读中文小说一样。不必担心是否记住了新词语。阅读量大，阅读速度适当，就会自然而然地记住一些词语。这是自然吸收语言的过程。再次，阅读时可以做一些笔记，但不必做太多的笔记；可以做一些配合阅读的练习，但不要在练习上花过多时间。主要任务还是阅读。好的读物不妨再读一遍，甚至再读两遍。你会发现在读第二遍时有一种如鱼得水的感觉。

青年朋友们，赶快开始你们的阅读之旅吧！它会把你带进一个奇妙的世界，在那里你们可以获得一种全新的感受，观察世界也会有一种新的眼光。与此同时，你们的英语水平也会随之迅速提高。

北京外国语大学英语教授、博士生导师 胡文仲

Introduction

How can I explain this fear? It was not really a fear of something evil . . . but then how else can I possibly describe it? Slowly, this strange fear grew into horror. Yes, horror. If I tell you why, you will not believe me. You will think I am mad.

'The Black Cat' is one of Edgar Allan Poe's most famous stories. Why is the man in the story afraid of his own black cat? Why does he kill it? And how does the cat punish him for his evil ways?

In 'The Oval Portrait' a man finds a portrait of a beautiful young woman in a lonely house. Who is this woman? Who painted her? And why is the man so frightened of her picture? What terrible secret does it hold?

In 'Berenice', a madman wants to marry his sick cousin with the beautiful teeth. He cannot stop thinking about those teeth! What really happens to Berenice in the end?

In 'The Mask of the Red Death', Prince Prospero tries to shut his door against the face of Death. How does the 'Red Death' get into his large and beautiful house? What will happen to him and all his friends when they meet the stranger with the death mask?

Four horror stories from the strange and terrible mind of Edgar Allan Poe. Four stories that will stop you sleeping at night. Four stories that you will never, never forget . . .

No writer knew more about pain and horror than Edgar Allan Poe. He lived most of his life afraid of the things in his own mind. And he wrote some of the most frightening horror stories ever written.

He was born Edgar Poe on 19 January 1809 in Boston, USA.

When he was two years old his mother died and his father died or left the family (nobody knows exactly what happened to him). Poe went to live with a rich family called the Allans in Richmond, Virginia. Mrs Allan loved him like a real son, but her husband never understood Poe and was unkind to him. The family moved to England for five years from 1815 to 1820, and Poe went to one of the best schools in the country. In 1826 he went back to Virginia and went to university there. But when he was a student there his life started to go badly wrong. John Allan refused to pay for his university education because the boy was spending too much money. This hurt Poe very deeply. The dislike between him and John Allan grew and in 1827 he left the Allans' home for ever.

Poe became a successful soldier for a few years, and then went to Baltimore to earn money by writing for newspapers and magazines. He also worked on a magazine in Richmond, Virginia but he didn't go back to his old home. In 1835, when Poe was twenty-six, he married his young cousin, Virginia Clemm, who was fourteen years old. Their married life together was difficult. Poe worked hard but he didn't earn much money and never stayed long in one job. He was a nervous man, he drank too much all his life, and he believed that he was mad.

In 1847, Virginia died after a long illness. Poe's home life ended and he began to drink more than before. In September 1849, he disappeared and was later found in a street in Baltimore. He was taken to hospital, where he died on 7 October 1849. He was buried in Baltimore, next to his wife.

Poe had a very unhappy life, and when he died he was still a poor man. But by the end of his life he was beginning to be a very popular and successful writer. Many people were starting to read and enjoy his stories and poems – stories like *The Raven* (1845).

However, he never made any money from his writing when he was alive. Since his death, Poe has become one of the most famous of all American writers. His stories and poems are now read by people all over the world.

Poe's stories, like the four in this book, are frightening stories of horror and imagination. People read them in American magazines from 1831, and in books called *Tales of the Grotesque and Arabesque* (1840) and *Tales* (1845). Some of his most famous stories are in this Penguin reader. Other famous stories are 'The Fall of the House of Usher', 'The Murders in the Rue Morgue', and 'The Pit and the Pendulum'.

Poe had a strange imagination and one of the saddest lives in all of literature. His terrible stories touch our deepest human fears and are difficult to forget.



*This is a true story, as true as I sit here writing it – as true as
I will die in the morning.*

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The Black Cat

You are not going to believe this story. But it is a true story, as true as I sit here writing it – as true as I will die in the morning. Yes, this story ends with *my* end, with my death tomorrow.

I have always been a kind and loving person – everyone will tell you this. They will also tell you that I have always loved animals more than anything. When I was a little boy, my family always had many different animals round the house. As I grew up, I spent most of my time with them, giving them their food and cleaning them.

I married when I was very young, and I was happy to find that my wife loved all of our animal friends as much as I did. She bought us the most beautiful animals. We had all sorts of birds, gold fish, a fine dog and *a cat*.

The cat was a very large and beautiful animal. He was black, black all over, and *very* intelligent. He was so intelligent that my wife often laughed about what some people believe; some people believe that all black cats are evil, enemies in a cat's body.

Pluto – this was the cat's name – was my favourite. It was always I who gave him his food, and he followed me everywhere. I often had to stop him from following me through the streets! For years, he and I lived happily together, the best of friends.

But during those years I was slowly changing. It was that evil enemy of Man called *Drink* who was changing me. I was not the kind, loving person people knew before. I grew more and more selfish. I was often suddenly angry about unimportant things. I began to use bad language, most of all with my



I hit my wife sometimes. And by that time, of course, I was often doing horrible things to our animals.

wife. I even hit her sometimes. And by that time, of course, I was often doing horrible things to our animals. I hit all of them – but never Pluto. But, my illness was getting worse – oh yes, drink is an illness! Soon I began to hurt my dear Pluto too.

I remember that night very well. I came home late, full of drink again. I could not understand why Pluto was not pleased to see me. The cat was staying away from me. My Pluto did not want to come near me! I caught him and picked him up, holding him strongly. He was afraid of me and bit my hand.

Suddenly, I was not myself any more. Someone else was in my

body: someone evil, and mad with drink! I took my knife from my pocket, held the poor animal by his neck and cut out one of his eyes.

The next morning, my mind was full of pain and horror when I woke up. I was deeply sorry. I could not understand how I could do such an evil thing. But drink soon helped me to forget.

Slowly the cat got better. Soon he felt no more pain. There was now only an ugly dry hole where the eye once was. He began to go round the house as usual again. He never came near me now, of course, and he ran away when I went too close.

I knew he didn't love me any more. At first I was sad. Then, slowly, I started to feel angry, and I did another terrible thing . . .

I had to do it – I could not stop myself. I did it with a terrible sadness in my heart – because I knew it was evil. And that was *why* I did it – yes! I did it *because I knew it was evil*. What did I do? I caught the cat and hung him by his neck from a tree until he was dead.

That night I woke up suddenly – my bed was on fire. I heard people outside shouting, 'Fire! Fire!' Our house was burning! I, my wife and our servant were lucky to escape. We stood and watched as the house burned down to the ground.

There was nothing left of the building the next morning. All the walls fell down during the night, except one – a wall in the middle of the house. I realized why this wall did not burn: because there was new plaster on it. The plaster was still quite wet.

I was surprised to see a crowd of people next to the wall. They were talking, and seemed to be quite excited. I went closer and looked over their shoulders. I saw a black shape in



I saw a black shape in the new white plaster. It was the shape of a large cat, hanging by its neck.

the new white plaster. It was the shape of large cat, hanging by its neck.

I looked at the shape with complete horror. Several minutes passed before I could think clearly again. I knew I had to try to think clearly. I had to know why it was there.

I remembered hanging the cat in the garden of the house next door. During the fire the garden was full of people. Probably, someone cut the dead cat from the tree and threw it through the window – to try and wake me. The falling walls pressed the animal's body into the fresh plaster. The cat burned completely, leaving the black shape in the new plaster. Yes, I was sure that was what happened.

But I could not forget that black shape for months. I even saw it in my dreams. I began to feel sad about losing the animal. So I began to look for another one. I looked mostly in the poor parts of our town where I went drinking. I searched for another black cat, of the same size and type as Pluto.

One night, as I sat in a dark and dirty drinking-house, I noticed a black object on top of a cupboard, near some bottles of wine. I was surprised when I saw it. 'I looked at those bottles a few minutes ago,' I thought, 'and I am sure that object was not there before . . .'

I got up, and went to see what it was. I put my hand up, touched it, and found that it was a black cat – a very large one, as large as Pluto. He looked like Pluto too – in every way but one: Pluto did not have a white hair anywhere on his body; this cat had a large white shape on his front.

He got up when I touched him, and pressed the side of his head against my hand several times. He liked me. This was the animal I was looking for! He continued to be very friendly and later, when I left, he followed me into the street. He came all the way home with me – we now had another house – and came

inside. He immediately jumped up on to the most comfortable chair and went to sleep. He stayed with us, of course. He loved both of us and very soon he became my wife's favourite animal.

But, as the weeks passed, I began to dislike the animal more and more. I do not know why, but I hated the way he loved me. Soon, I began to hate him – but I was never unkind to him. Yes, I was very careful about that. I kept away from him because I remembered what I did to my poor Pluto. I also hated the animal because he only had one eye. I noticed this the morning after he came home with me. Of course, this only made my dear wife love him more!

But the more I hated the cat, the more he seemed to love me. He followed me everywhere, getting under my feet all the time. When I sat down, he always sat under my chair. Often he tried to jump up on my knees. I wanted to murder him when he did this, but I did not. I stopped myself because I remembered Pluto, but also because I was *afraid* of the animal.

How can I explain this fear? It was not really a fear of something evil . . . but then how else can I possibly describe it? Slowly, this strange fear grew into horror. Yes, *horror*. If I tell you why, you will not believe me. You will think I am mad.

Several times, my wife took the cat and showed me the white shape on his chest. She said the shape was slowly changing. For a long time I did not believe her, but slowly, after many weeks, I began to see that she was right. The shape *was* changing. Its sides were becoming straighter and straighter. It was beginning to look more and more like an object . . . After a few more weeks, I saw what the shape was. It was impossible not to see! There, on his front, was the shape of an object I am almost too afraid to name . . . It



*There, on the cat's front was the shape of that terrible machine of pain
and death – the gallows!*

was that terrible machine of pain and death – yes, the
GALLOWS!*

I no longer knew the meaning of happiness, or rest. During
the day, the animal never left me. At night he woke me up
nearly every hour. I remember waking from terrible dreams and
feeling him sitting next to my face, his heavy body pressing down
on my heart!

I was now a very different man. There was not the smallest
piece of good left in me. I now had only evil thoughts – the
darkest and the most evil thoughts. I hated everyone and
everything, my dear wife too.

One day she came down into the cellar with me to cut some
wood (we were now too poor to have a servant). Of course, the

* *Gallows*. The place where criminals are hanged.



I tried to cut the animal in two. My wife stopped my arm with her hand. This made me even more angry.