



企鹅英语简易读物精选

著名短篇小说集

OUTSTANDING SHORT STORIES

EDGAR ALLAN POE
AND OTHERS



世界图书出版公司



企鹅英语简易读物精选 (大一学生)

Outstanding Short Stories

著名短篇小说集

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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。

Introduction

The stories in this collection were written in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by well-known writers from Britain, Ireland and the United States, and the collection presents the short story at its very best. A number of the writers represented here – Katherine Mansfield, Edgar Allan Poe, W. Somerset Maugham – are known above all for their short stories; others are more famous for their plays and novels. The stories are extremely varied in their subject matter. Some are about very ordinary people to whom something surprising happens, such as Fotheringay in ‘The Man Who Could Work Miracles’ by H. G. Wells, or Susan Bell in ‘The Courtship of Susan Bell’ by Anthony Trollope. Some contain unusual characters from the upper levels of society, like Lord Mountdrago in the Somerset Maugham story of the same name, or Oscar Wilde’s ‘model millionaire’, Baron Hausberg. In ‘Lord Emsworth and the Girl Friend’, P. G. Wodehouse presents two very different characters from opposite ends of the social scale, between whom an unusual and moving relationship develops. Some of the stories are light-hearted and amusing; others are serious. Some have happy endings; others end in misery and death. What the stories have in common is that they are excellent examples of the short story – the central features of character and situation are expressed in a few well-chosen words that hold the reader’s attention.

The English writer Herbert George Wells (1866–1946) is best remembered for his science fiction stories, but he also wrote about science, history and politics. His most famous books are *The Time Machine* (1895), *The Invisible Man* (1897) and *The War of the Worlds* (1898). His writings mirror the interest and excitement that was felt for science at the turn of the century. The combination of this feeling for the period and Wells’s far-reaching

imagination resulted in stories which make astonishing events seem quite believable.

Oscar Wilde (1854–1900) was an Irish writer of stories, plays and poetry. His mother, Lady Francesca Wilde, was a poet and society hostess. Wilde's childhood in Dublin was therefore quite unusual, and he met many of the leading figures of the day. He later studied at Oxford University, and began to write poetry and to develop his ideas on life and art. In 1905 he was sent to prison for what was then considered to be a sexual crime. When he was set free two years later, he wrote *The Ballad of Reading Gaol* (1898), the most powerful of his poems. He is best known now for a number of clever and amusing plays, particularly *Lady Windermere's Fan* (1892) and *The Importance of Being Ernest* (1895).

Pelham Grenville Wodehouse (1881–1975) was an English-born writer who later became an American citizen. For nearly the whole of his adult life he made a living by writing, producing nearly a hundred novels. He achieved international popularity with humorous stories about amusing characters in difficult situations. The best known of these characters are the helpless but likeable upper-class young man Bertie Wooster, and his manservant Jeeves, who helps him solve many of his problems. Wodehouse also wrote plays and musicals. In 1975 he received a title in recognition of his life's work.

Katherine Mansfield is the pen name of Kathleen Mansfield Beauchamp (1888–1923). Born in New Zealand, she went to London to study music and lived in Europe for most of her life. She had many unhappy love affairs, and in her later years she was struck by a lung disease that remained with her until she died. Some of her collections of short stories appeared after her death. She wrote sensitive, moving stories which often feature women and children as main characters.

Edgar Allan Poe (1809–49) led a short and unhappy life. He lost his parents at a young age and his wife after a short marriage,

and his work was affected by his sufferings. Although he is known for horror and crime stories, the one chosen for this collection is a light-hearted account of a battle between two newspaper editors in small-town America.

The great English writer Anthony Trollope (1815–82) also had an unhappy start in life. His schooldays were made miserable by the fact that his father was frequently in debt and, as a result, the family was forced to move several times. When his father died, his mother supported the family through her writing. Anthony Trollope wrote about 60 works in all, mostly novels, but also some travel books and collections of short stories. He is most famous for two important series of books: the Barchester series, which is based around the lives of church officials and their families in the fictional area of Barsetshire, and the Palliser series, set in the world of politics and government.

William Somerset Maugham (1874–1965) was born in Paris to an Irish family. His mother died when he was eight. After his father's death two years later, he was sent to England to live with an uncle. Maugham studied medicine in Germany and England before deciding to become a writer. During the First World War he served as an intelligence officer and developed a love of travelling that stayed with him for the rest of his life. His ability to involve the reader very quickly made him an excellent short story writer, and he produced a number of collections. His most famous novel is *Of Human Bondage* (1915).

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The Man Who Could Work Miracles *H. G. Wells*

Until he was thirty years old, Fotheringay did not believe in miracles. In fact he discovered his own unusual powers at the moment when he was claiming that miracles were quite impossible. He was having a drink at his local inn, and Toddy Beamish was driving him to the limits of his patience by disagreeing with everything he said.

'So *you* say,' answered Beamish whenever Fotheringay spoke.

There were present, besides these two, a very dusty cyclist; the innkeeper, Cox; and fat Miss Maybridge, who served behind the bar. She was standing with her back to Mr Fotheringay, washing glasses; the others were watching him.

'Listen, Mr Beamish,' said Mr Fotheringay, annoyed by his opposition. 'Let us clearly understand what a miracle is. It's something against the laws of nature done by the power of Will, something that couldn't happen without being specially willed.'

'So *you* say,' said Mr Beamish.

The cyclist agreed with Mr Fotheringay, but the innkeeper did not express an opinion.

'For example,' said Mr Fotheringay, 'here would be a miracle. That lamp, in the normal course of nature, couldn't burn like that upside down, could it, Beamish?'

'*You* say it couldn't,' said Beamish.

'And you?' said Fotheringay. 'You don't mean to say - ?'

'No,' said Beamish at last. 'No, it couldn't.'

'Very well,' said Mr Fotheringay. 'Then here comes someone, perhaps myself, and stands here, perhaps, and says to that lamp, as I might do, collecting all my will - "Turn upside down without breaking, and go on burning steadily," and - Hullo!'

It was enough to make anyone say 'Hullo!' The impossible had

happened. The lamp hung upside down in the air, burning quietly with its flame pointing down. It was as solid as ever a lamp was.

Mr Fotheringay stood with a finger stretched out and the troubled face of one expecting a terrible crash. The cyclist, who was sitting next to the lamp, jumped away. Miss Maybridge turned and cried out. For nearly three seconds the lamp remained as it was. A faint cry of pain came from Mr Fotheringay. 'I can't keep it up,' he said, 'any longer.' The lamp suddenly fell, broke on the floor, and went out.

It was lucky that it had a metal container, or the whole place would have been on fire. Mr Cox was the first to speak, remarking that Mr Fotheringay was a fool. Fotheringay himself was astonished at what had happened. The conversation which followed gave no explanation of the matter, and the general opinion agreed with Mr Cox's view that Fotheringay was a fool for playing such a trick. His own mind was terribly confused, and he rather agreed with them.

He went home red-faced and hot. He watched each of the ten street lamps nervously as he passed it. It was only when he found himself in his bedroom that he was able to think clearly.

He had taken off his shoes and was sitting on the bed, saying for the seventeenth time, 'I didn't want the thing to turn over,' when he remembered that just by saying the commanding words, he had willed the thing to happen. He decided to try his new powers again.

He pointed to the candle and collected his thoughts together, though he felt that he was behaving foolishly. But in a second that feeling disappeared. 'Be raised up,' he said. The candle rose up, hung in the air for a moment, and then fell with a crash on his table, leaving him in darkness.

For a time Mr Fotheringay sat there, perfectly still. 'It did happen,' he said. 'And how I'm going to explain it, I don't know.'

He felt in his pockets for a match. He could find none, so he felt on the table. He tried his coat, and there were none there, and then it came to his mind that miracles were possible even with matches. He stretched out a hand. 'Let there be a match in that hand,' he said. He felt a light object fall across his hand, and his fingers closed on a match.

After several useless attempts to light this, he threw it down; and then he realized that he could have willed it to be lit. He did so, and saw it burning on the table. He picked it up quickly, and it went out. He became more adventurous and put the candle back in its place. 'Be lit!' said Mr Fotheringay, and immediately the candle burst into flame. For a time he looked at it and then he looked carefully into the mirror.

'What about miracles now?' said Mr Fotheringay, speaking to his own shadowed face.

Mr Fotheringay was becoming very confused. So far as he could understand, he had only to will things and they would happen. After his first experiences, he wished to be more careful. But he lifted a sheet of paper into the air, and turned a glass of water pink and then green, and got himself a new toothbrush. By the early hours of the morning he had decided that willpower must be unusual and strong. The fears of his first discovery were now mixed with pride and thoughts of how he could use his powers to his advantage. He heard the church clock strike one, and undressed in order to get into bed without further delay. As he struggled to undress, he had a wonderful idea. 'Let me be in bed,' he said, and found himself there. 'Undressed,' he said and, finding the sheets cold, added quickly, 'and in a soft woollen nightshirt. Ah!' he said with pleasure. 'And now let me be comfortably asleep ...'

He awoke at his usual hour, and wondered if his experiences had been a dream. He decided to test his skills again. He had three eggs for breakfast; two were supplied by his housekeeper; one was a much better egg, laid, cooked and served by his own

unusual will. He hurried off to work very excited. All day he could do no work because of his astonishing new self-knowledge, but this did not matter because he did all the work by a miracle in the last ten minutes.

As the day passed, his state of mind changed from wonder to pleasure. It was clear that he must be careful how he lifted anything that was breakable, but in other ways his powers seemed more exciting the more he thought about them. He increased his personal property by making new things for himself, but he could see that he must be careful about that too. People might wonder how he got them.

After supper he went out for a walk on a quiet street to try a few miracles in private by the gas works.

His attempts could perhaps have been more interesting, but apart from his willpower Mr Fotheringay was not a very interesting man. He stuck his walking stick into the ground and commanded the dry wood to grow flowers. The air was immediately full of the smell of roses, but his satisfaction ended when he heard footsteps. He was afraid that someone would discover his powers, and he said quickly to the stick, 'Go back.' What he meant was, 'Change back', but the stick went backwards at high speed, and there came a shout of anger.

'Who are you throwing rose bushes at, you fool?' cried a voice.

'I'm sorry,' said Fotheringay. He saw Winch, one of the three local policemen, coming towards him.

'What do you mean by it?' asked the policeman. 'Hullo! It's you, is it? The man who broke the lamp at the inn!'

'I don't mean anything by it,' Said Mr Fotheringay. 'Nothing at all.'

'Why did you do it, then? Do you know that stick hurt?'

For the moment Fotheringay could not think why he had done it. His silence seemed to anger Mr Winch. 'You've been attacking the police, young man, this time. That's what *you've* done.'

'Listen, Mr Winch,' said Mr Fotheringay, angry and confused. 'I'm very sorry. The fact is . . .'

'Well?'

He could think of no answer except the truth. 'I was working a miracle.'

'Working a . . . ! Listen! Don't talk nonsense. Working a miracle! Really! Miracle! Well, that's very funny! You're the man who doesn't believe in miracles . . . The fact is, this is another of your foolish tricks. Now I tell you -'

But Mr Fotheringay never heard what Mr Winch was going to tell him. He realized that he had given his valuable secret to the whole world. He became violently angry and shouted, 'Listen, I've had enough of this. I'll show you a foolish trick. Disappear! Go now!'

He was alone.

Mr Fotheringay performed no more miracles that night, and he did not trouble to see what had happened to his flowering stick. He returned to the town, afraid and very quiet, and went to his bedroom. 'Good heavens!' he said. 'It's a powerful gift - an extremely powerful gift. I didn't mean to go that far. I wonder where Winch has gone.'

He sat on the bed and took off his shoes. He had a happy thought and sent the policeman to San Francisco, and went to bed. In the night he dreamt of Winch's anger.

The next day Fotheringay heard two interesting pieces of news. Someone had planted a most beautiful climbing rose near Mr Gomshott's house, and everyone was looking for Policeman Winch.

Mr Fotheringay was thoughtful all that day, and performed no miracles except some to help Winch, and the miracle of completing his day's work on time. Most of the time he was thinking of Winch.

On Sunday evening he went to church, and strangely enough the minister, Mr Maydig, spoke about 'things that are not lawful'.

Mr Fotheringay was not a regular churchgoer but decided to tell Mr Maydig about his powers, and to ask his advice.

Mr Maydig, a thin, excitable man with a long neck, was pleased when the young man asked to speak to him. He took him to his study, gave him a comfortable seat and, standing in front of a cheerful fire, asked Mr Fotheringay to state his business.

At first Mr Fotheringay found some difficulty in opening the subject. 'You will hardly believe me, Mr Maydig ...' and so on for some time. He tried a question at last, and asked Mr Maydig his opinion of miracles.

'You don't believe, I suppose,' said Fotheringay, 'that some common sort of person – like myself, for example – might have something strange inside him that made him able to do things by willpower?'

'It's possible,' said Mr Maydig. 'Something of that sort, perhaps, is possible.'

'If I may try with something here, I think I can show you what I mean,' said Mr Fotheringay. 'Now that pot on the table, for example. I want to know whether this is a miracle or not.'

He pointed to the pot and said, 'Be a bowl of flowers.'

The pot did as it was ordered.

Mr Maydig jumped violently at the change, and stood looking from Fotheringay to the flowers. He said nothing. Slowly he leaned over the table and smelt the flowers; they were fresh and very fine. Then he looked at Fotheringay again.

'How did you do that?' he asked.

Mr Fotheringay said, 'I just told it – and there you are. Is that a miracle, or what is it? And what do you think is the matter with me? That's what I want to ask.'

'It's a most astonishing thing.'

'And last week I didn't know I could do things like that. It came quite suddenly. It's something strange about my will, I suppose.'

'Is that – the only thing? Could you do other things besides that?'

'Oh, yes!' said Mr Fotheringay. 'Anything.' He thought a little. 'Look!' He pointed. 'Change into a bowl of fish. You see that, Mr Maydig?'

'It's unbelievable. You are either a most unusual . . . But no . . .'

'I could change it into anything,' said Mr Fotheringay. 'Be a bird, will you?'

In another moment a blue bird was flying round the room and Mr Maydig had to bend his head every time it came near him. 'Stop there, will you?' said Mr Fotheringay; and the bird hung still in the air. 'I could change it back to a bowl of flowers,' he said, and after placing the bird on the table he worked that miracle. 'I expect you want your pot back,' he said, and brought back the pot.

Mr Maydig said nothing while he watched all these changes, but he gave a small cry every now and then. He picked up the pot carefully, examined it, and put it back on the table. 'Well!' was the only expression of his feelings.

'Now after that, it's easier to explain what I wanted to ask you,' said Mr Fotheringay; and he told the whole story to Mr Maydig, beginning with the lamp at the inn and several times mentioning Winch. Mr Maydig listened carefully, and interrupted when Fotheringay was talking about the third egg he had caused to appear at breakfast.

'It's possible,' said Maydig, 'but astonishing. The power to work miracles is a gift and a very rare gift. Yes – yes. Go on. Go on.'

Mr Fotheringay went on to talk about Winch. 'It's this that troubles me most,' he said, 'and I'm in need of advice mostly about Winch. Of course he's in San Francisco – wherever San Francisco may be – but it's awkward for both of us, Mr Maydig. I don't see how he can understand what has happened, and he must be very angry with me. He may be trying to come back

here to get me. I send him back by a miracle every few hours, when I think of it. Of course he won't be able to understand that, and if he buys a ticket every time it will cost him a lot of money. I've done the best I could for him. But I'm in a very difficult position.'

Mr Maydig looked serious. 'Yes, you are. How are you going to end it?' He became confused. 'But we'll leave Winch for a little and discuss the whole subject,' continued Mr Maydig. 'I don't think this is criminal at all. No, it's just miracles, miracles of the very highest class.'

He began to walk around. Mr Fotheringay sat with his arm on the table and his head on his arm, looking worried. 'I don't see what I can do about Winch,' he said.

'If you can work miracles,' said Mr Maydig, 'you can solve the problem of Winch. My dear sir, you are a most important man – a man of the most astonishing possibilities. The things you could do ...'

'Yes, I've thought of a thing or two,' said Mr Fotheringay. 'But I thought it better to ask someone.'

'Quite right,' said Mr Maydig. He stopped and looked at Fotheringay. 'It's almost an unlimited gift. Let us test your powers.'

And so, though it is hard to believe, in the little study on the evening of Sunday, 10 November, 1896, Mr Fotheringay, urged on by Mr Maydig, began to work miracles. The reader's attention is specially called to the date. He will object – probably he has already objected – that certain events in this story are improbable; that if these things had really happened they would have been in the newspapers long ago. The details which follow now will be particularly hard to accept, because they show, among other things, that he or she, the reader, must have been killed in a strange and violent manner in the past. As a matter of fact the reader *was* killed. In the remaining part of this story that will become perfectly clear, and every reasonable reader will accept the fact.

At first the miracles worked by Mr Fotheringay were little things with cups and such things. After he and Mr Maydig had worked several of these, their sense of power grew, their imagination increased, and they wanted to do greater things. Their first larger miracle was connected with the meal to which Mr Maydig led Mr Fotheringay. It was not a good meal, and Mr Maydig was expressing his sorrow at this when Mr Fotheringay saw his opportunity.

‘Don’t you think, Mr Maydig,’ he said, ‘I might . . .?’

‘My dear Fotheringay! Of course! I didn’t think.’

Mr Fotheringay waved his hand. ‘What shall we have?’ he said, and following Mr Maydig’s orders produced a much better meal.

They sat for a long time at their supper, talking as equals. ‘By the way,’ said Mr Fotheringay, ‘I might be able to help you with *all* your meals.’ He put some food into his mouth. ‘I was thinking that I might be able to work a miracle on your housekeeper, Mrs Minchin.’

Mr Maydig put down his glass and looked doubtful. ‘She strongly objects to being troubled, you know, Mr Fotheringay. And – as a matter of fact – it’s after 11 o’clock, and she’s probably in bed and asleep.’

Mr Fotheringay considered these objections. ‘I don’t see why it shouldn’t be done in her sleep.’

For a time Mr Maydig opposed the idea, and then he agreed. Mr Fotheringay gave his orders, and the two gentlemen went on with their meal, feeling slightly anxious. While they were talking of Mrs Minchin, they heard some strange noises coming from upstairs. Mr Maydig left the room quickly. Mr Fotheringay heard him calling the housekeeper and then his footsteps going softly up to her.

In a minute or two Mr Maydig returned, his face smiling. ‘Wonderful!’ he said. ‘Wonderful!’

He began walking around the room. ‘Poor woman! A most