

美文名篇
双语阅读

最美丽的英文

The most Beautiful English

在温情回忆中感悟人生，在英文学习中收获亲情

感悟父爱

全集

王姿萱 编译

父爱其实很简单，它像白酒，辛辣而热烈，容易让人醉在其中；它像咖啡，苦涩而醇香，容易让人为之振奋；它像茶，平淡而亲切，容易让人在不知不觉中上瘾。即使是丹青高手，也难以勾勒出父亲那坚挺的脊梁；即使是文学泰斗，也难以刻画尽父亲那不屈的精神；即使是海纳百川，也难以包罗尽父亲对儿女的关爱！

哈尔滨出版社
HARBIN PUBLISHING HOUSE



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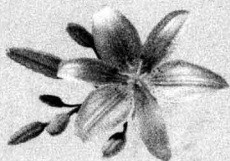
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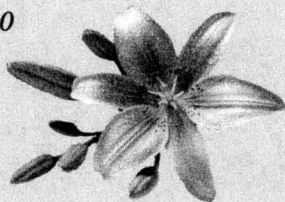
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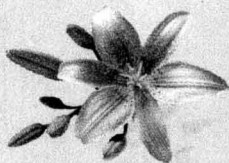
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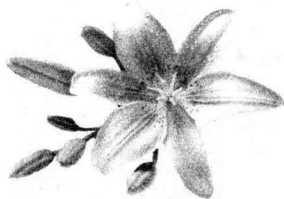
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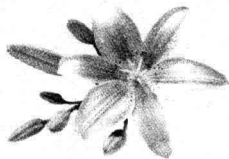
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第一卷 一盒子的吻

Part 1 A Box Full of Kisses





The Old Man and the Dog

Anonymous

Saying goodbye to Meg was the hardest thing I've ever done.

She'd been part of my life for so long, always there when I needed her.

Throughout the last fifteen years, she'd been my closest friend, sharing my joy and sadness.

She'd seen me marry and divorce, have two children, lose my mother and nurse my father through a long illness. That was so much in one lifetime.

We buried her in her favourite corner of the garden, beneath the flowering cherry tree. Matthew made a little cross out of wood and Laura carefully printed her name in red crayon.

Friends are always full of good advice at times like that. Get another dog is one of the favourites—but you can't replace a friend like that.

My father had been left almost helpless after a stroke. I'd nursed him back to health, but I was beginning to feel that we'd taken a step backwards.

A month after Meg's passing, I took a tray into the garden for Dad. He liked to sit on the bench in the sunshine.

"Tea and biscuits, Dad." I said cheerfully.

He turned away, startled, but not before I'd seen the tear on his cheek.

"What a lovely day." I bubbled, giving him time to compose himself.

"Yes, Jill." he said at last, "It's beautiful."

"Try to eat something, Dad."

He sighed and looked up at the sky.

"The children will be home from school soon." I smiled, "Then you'll have a fight on



your hands if you want a biscuit.”

He chuckled softly and I had to swallow the lump which had risen in my throat.

“I love you, Dad.” I rested my hand on his shoulder, “Please, don’t give up.”

“I don’t know what you mean.” he shrugged.

“Yes, you do. You’ve fought every inch of the way, you were winning, too, but lately, it’s as if you’ve just given up.”

He heaved a sigh and picked up a biscuit, nibbling at it before grinning at me.

Dad’s decline puzzled the doctor, too.

“I’m sorry. There’s nothing physically wrong with your father, apart from what’s left over from the stroke. And mentally, well, I really don’t think there’s anything to worry about.”

The doctor was right. Dad’s blood tests came back clear, and other tests showed nothing wrong. He should have been continuing to get better—but he wasn’t.

I tried all kinds of new meals to tempt his failing appetite. I ever persuaded him to come for a drive in the car, but as soon as we got home, he’d sink back into apathy and I’d think, I’m losing him again.

What made it so much harder to bear was the fact that I remembered him so well as a young man. He’d been so full of energy and life, carrying me on his shoulders, chasing me around the park and catching me up in his arms.

He set off for a walk and always, I’d run out of the house behind him. He’d had such a zest for life that it broke my heart to see him now, sitting out in the garden, a blanket over his knees, gazing miserably into space.

When he first came to live with us after the stroke, he’d been bed-ridden. I smiled as I remembered how Meg had finally got him up.

Dear Meg. She’d brought in a stick from the garden and trotted straight upstairs with it!

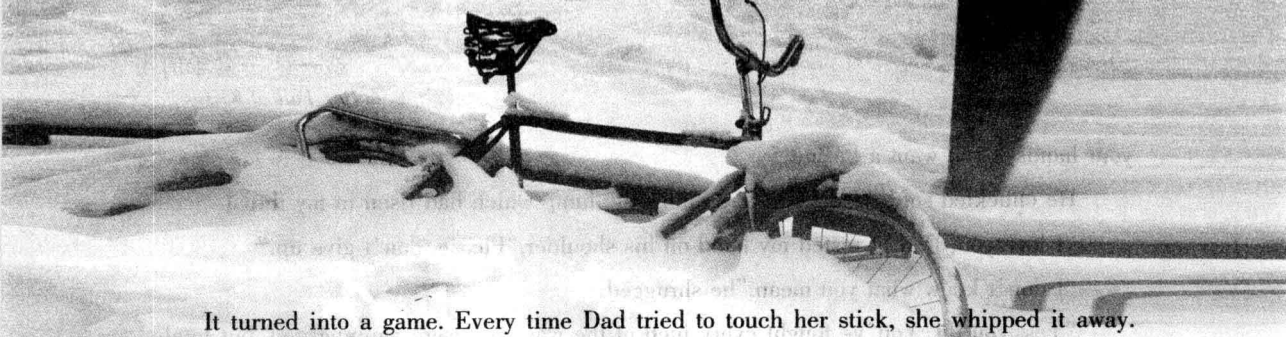
I followed her, wondering what on earth she was up to. She deposited the stick on Dad’s bed, then stepped back, wagging her tail like mad.

Dad lifted his head from the pillow.

“What’s this?”

She barked ever so softly and nudged the stick with her nose.

“For me?” Dad chuckled, reaching for it, but Meg was too quick and snatched the stick back.



It turned into a game. Every time Dad tried to touch her stick, she whipped it away. At last, she dropped it on the floor. This time, Meg let him pick it up.

"Jill! "Dad shouted, "Jill! "

When I got to him he was laughing. "Would you help me down the stairs?" he asked, "I'd like to sit out in the garden. I can throw the stick for Meg."

"Of course, Dad." I'd been thrilled and from that moment on, he'd progressed in leaps and bounds.

Meg had been a friend to me, a playmate to the children, but she'd been so much more to Dad. She'd been with him all the time, keeping him company for the hours he had to spend alone. No wonder he'd declined. He had time to sit and brood and think, and sadness had settled all around him.

The following day, I settled Dad in the garden and left the children playing under his watchful eyes.

"I won't be long." I promised, "You'll be all right, Dad? If you want anything, Matthew can get it for you."

"Thanks, love." Dad smiled, "Don't worry. I'll keep an eye on things."

I could never replace Meg, I knew that. But I could, perhaps, fill a void in Dad's life.

I'd never been to an animal home before and wasn't prepared for the shock. Not only dogs, but also cats, a couple of ponies, three pygmy goats and several rabbits wanted new homes.

Two sisters ran the place. Hardly aware of what I was doing, I found myself pouring out my life story to them.

Babs, one of the two nurses, led me to the end of the row of pens. There, in the very end, I saw Sadie sitting in the corner. She wasn't sitting quietly. She was howling—a sad, heart-broken noise. As soon as she saw us, she stopped and came over to me, staring at me through the wire. She seemed to be weighing me up.

When I poked my fingers through the bars, she shied away from them. I spoke softly to her, coaxing her to come to me. After what seemed an age, she came forward and licked

my fingers.

"She's very gentle." I remarked, wondering how she would take to my noisy children. I'd already lost my heart to her in a way I never imagined possible!

"Her owners moved away." Babs said, "They put her in boarding kennels, saying they'd be back in a week but they never returned. She won't give her trust easily, but if she's given enough love—well, who knows?"

"How cruel! "I gasped, "How could they?"

"Oh, it could have been a lot worse." Babs continued, "She was never physically hurt, but her confidence has taken a terrible battering. She needs constant reassurance and can't bear to be alone."

"She'd never be alone." I said and Sadie wagged her tail as if she understood, "And in our house, believe me, there's no shortage of love! "

When I got home, Matthew and Laura were out of sight. Dad, as always, was staring into space. He didn't even bother to read any more, but seemed to spend his whole life just watching time slip away.

"Dad..."

He turned and looked up at me, taking a moment or two to register that I wasn't alone. I looked at Dad's face. He stared at the dog and for an awful moment, I thought he was going to reject her. But Dad could never be cruel... He stretched out his hand and called to her.

"Come on, lass," he said softly, "I won't hurt you."

At last, she ventured up to him and sniffed at his blanket.

"What's her name?" Dad asked me.

"Sadie."

"Hello, Sadie."

She sat beside him, pressing against his legs while he stroked her head. He'd never tired of doing that, just as he'd never tired of petting Meg.

"She needs a lot of love." I said and explained why.

Dad looked really angry for a moment. He could never stand any kind of cruelty, to animals, children or even over adults.

"Well!" he said softly, "We'll just have to make it up to her. What made you get another dog?"

“Well, I...”

“No, it’s all right.” Dad patted my hand, “I know how you miss Meg. The children do, too. She’ll be company for you and you’ll be able to go for nice long walks again. Perhaps I’ll be able to take a turn with the walks. I don’t intend to spend the rest of my life sitting here!”

It was the first time in months he’d given any thought to the future. It warmed my heart.

“I couldn’t go far at first.” he went on, “But if I gradually build up my strength...”

Matthew and Laura appeared then and Sadie brightened up. She ran to greet them as if they were long-lost friends. When I looked at Dad, he was laughing.

I thought of the people who had abandoned Sadie and wondered if they really knew just what they were missing. It was their loss, our gain. We were her family now and we’d never let her down. I think she knew that.

In fact, in a strange way, Sadie seemed to take over where Meg left off.

Dad didn’t take her out of the garden, but he’d walk up and down with her, chatting all the time. She’d gaze up at him, entranced.

Yesterday marked the anniversary of Meg’s death. A year has passed. A new era has begun.

The children planted some snowdrops beneath the cherry tree, determined that Meg should never be forgotten. We all shed a few tears.

Then the miracle I’d waited so long for happened. Dad walked slowly into the kitchen and took Sadie’s lead down from its hook.

Sadie barked merrily and turned round and round in circles until she almost fell over. She seemed to sense that this was a special occasion.

“Right, anyone coming for a walk?”

He’s only ever walked her round the garden before. Longer walks were left to me or the children. I held my breath.

“I’ll come.” Matthew grabbed for his coat.

“And me.” Laura was already pushing her arms into the sleeves of her jacket.

I stood at the window and watched their slow progress down the road. Dad in the middle holding tight to Sadie’s lead, a child on either side of him. He got halfway down the road, and then stopped. My heart stopped with him.