


The Gift of the Magi

# 麦琪的礼物

含泪的微笑  
美国生活的幽默百科全书

欧·亨利/著 O. Henry 



欧·亨利短篇小说精选

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1862年，美国最著名短篇小说家之一的欧·亨利(O. Henry)降生于美国北卡罗来纳州的一个小镇。他三岁丧母，15岁走向社会，人生之路崎岖、艰苦而不幸，一生从事过牧童、药剂师、会计员、办事员、制图员、出纳员等多种职业。1901年开始专门从事写作。

曲折的人生、丰富的经历、独特的视角和敏锐的观察，使欧·亨利情不自禁地把社会的各种现象形象地概括在自己的作品中。他善于描写美国社会尤其是纽约百姓的生活，如下层劳动群众生活的贫穷艰辛，道貌岸然的上流骗子，巧取豪夺的金融寡头，肆无忌惮的买卖官爵，小偷、强盗、流浪汉的生活，以及失业、犯罪等等。

他的作品构思新颖，语言诙谐；又因描写了众多的人物，富于生活情趣，被誉为“美国生活的幽默百科全书”。由于一生坎坷的经历，他独特的幽默中充满辛酸的笑声，在夸张、嘲讽、诙谐之中，含有抑郁、凄楚的情绪。他善于戏剧性地设计情节，埋下伏笔，作好铺垫，勾勒矛盾，最后在结尾处出现一个出人意料的结局，使读者感到豁然开朗，既在意料之外，又在情理之中。

欧·亨利一生中创作了300余部短篇小说和一部长篇小说，其中的一些名篇如《麦琪的礼物》、《最后一片藤叶》、《爱的牺牲》、《警察与赞美诗》、《带家具出租的房间》等使他获得了世界声誉，曾被评论界誉为美国现代短篇小说之父。

由于大量佳作出版，欧亨利名利双收，但他宁愿过默默无闻的孤独生活。他在去世前的一封信中写道：“我希望叙述自己平生的人，不是讲给听众或牧师听，而是这样：假定他流落在大海的孤岛上，再没有获救的希望，他讲故事只给自己听，说出自己的事迹、经历和见解。”

由于痛苦的心境和呕心沥血的写作，欧·亨利48岁时便于纽约病逝，从而结束了短暂而不平凡的一生。

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# 麦琪的礼物

*The Gift of the Magi*

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## The Gift of the Magi

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**<sup>1</sup> the grocer and the vegetable man and the butcher until one's cheeks burned with the silent imputation of **parsimony**<sup>2</sup> 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**<sup>3</sup> 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**<sup>4</sup> **squad**<sup>5</sup>

In the **vestibule**<sup>6</sup> below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no mortal finger could **coax**<sup>7</sup> a ring. Also **appertaining**<sup>8</sup> thereunto was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

## 麦琪的礼物

一元八角七分。这是全部了，其中的六角还是一分分的铜板。这些零钱是从杂货店老板、菜贩子和肉店老板那儿软磨硬泡地一分两分地扣下来，直弄得自己满脸臊红，深感这种斤斤计较的交易实在让人难堪。德拉数了三次，都是一元八角七分，而第二天就是圣诞节了。

除了扑倒在破旧的小睡椅上大哭，显然没有别的选择。德拉这样做了。一种精神上的感慨油然而生：生活就是由哭泣、抽噎和微笑组成的，尤以抽噎居多。

当这个家庭主妇的状态逐渐平静下来的时候，还是让我们来看看她的家吧。一套带家具的公寓房，每周租金八美元。虽然不能说是绝对难以形容，其实跟贫民窟也差不了多少。

楼下的门道里有个信箱，可从来没有装过信；还有一个电钮，也从没有人按响过电铃。那儿还帖着一张名片，上面印着“詹姆斯·迪林汉姆·杨先生”。

- 1 bulldoze /'bʊldəʊz/ v. 强迫某人做某事
- 2 parsimony /'pɑːsɪməni/ n. 吝啬；小气
- 3 instigate /ɪnstɪ'geɪt/ v. 使开始；使产生
- 4 mendicancy /'mendɪkənsɪ/ n. 乞讨；行乞
- 5 squad /skwɒd/ n. 小队
- 6 vestibule /'vestɪbjʊl/ n. 前厅；门厅
- 7 coax /kəʊks/ v. 劝诱；诱得
- 8 appertain /,ɪpə'teɪn/ v. 涉及；关系到

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, though, they were thinking seriously of contracting to a modest and **unassuming**<sup>1</sup> D. But whenever Mr. James Dillingham Young came 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**<sup>2</sup>— something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honor of being owned by Jim.

There was a **pier**<sup>3</sup> glass between the windows of the room. Perhaps you have seen a pier glass in an \$8 flat. A very thin and very **agile**<sup>4</sup> person may, by observing his reflection<sup>4</sup> in a rapid sequence of **longitudinal**<sup>5</sup> 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



“迪林汉姆”这个名号是主人先前春风得意之时，一时兴起加上去的，那时候他每星期能挣 30 美元。如今，当收入缩减到每周 20 美元的时候，他们正在严肃地考虑着是否将其缩写成朴实而又谦逊的“迪”为好。不过，每当詹姆斯·迪林汉姆·杨回家，走进楼上的房间时，他的太太，就是前面说道的德拉，总是称他为“吉姆”，再给他一个热烈的拥抱。这当然是很好的。

德拉停止哭泣，往面颊上涂了些粉。她站在窗前，呆呆地看着灰蒙蒙的后院里一只灰色的猫正在灰色的篱笆上行走。明天就是圣诞节，她只有一元八角七分给吉姆买一份礼物。这些钱是她花了好几个月的功夫，尽了最大的努力一分分攒下来的。一周 20 美元实在经不住花。支出总比预算的要多。总是如此。只有一元八角七分给吉姆买礼物。她的吉姆。为了买一件像样的东西给他，她兴致勃勃地筹划了好多天。一件精致、珍奇、货真价实的礼物——至少应该够得上被吉姆所拥有。

房间的两扇窗子之间有一面壁镜。你也许见过每周租金八美元的公寓里的壁镜吧。一个瘦小而灵巧的人，通过观察一连串纵向的影象，就会对自己的容貌得出一个差不多精确的判断。德拉身材苗条，早已掌握了这门艺术。

突然，她旋风般地从窗口转过身去，站到壁镜前。她的双眼晶

- 1 unassuming /'ʌnə'sju:miŋ/ *adj.* 不爱炫耀的；谦逊的
- 2 sterling /'stɜ:lɪŋ/ *adj.* 优秀的；杰出的
- 3 pier /piə/ *n.* 窗户之间的墙
- 4 agile /'ædʒaɪl/ *adj.* 机敏的；灵巧的
- 5 longitudinal /lɔŋdʒɪ'tju:dɪnl/ *adj.* 纵向的；纵观的

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<sup>1</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> been the janitor<sup>3</sup>, 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.

莹闪烁，可她的脸却在 20 秒钟之内失色。她急速地弄散头发，将它完全散落开来。

现在，詹姆斯·迪林厄姆·杨夫妇俩拥有两样特别引以为豪的东西。一件是吉姆家传三代的金表，另一件就是德拉的一头秀发。如果示巴女王住在天井对面的公寓里，总有一天德拉会把头发披散下来，露出窗外晾干，让女王的珍珠宝贝黯然失色；如果所罗门王当了守门人，他所有的金银财宝都堆在地下室，吉姆每次从那儿走过，准会摸出金表看看，好让所罗门王忌妒得要死。

❶ Sheba /'ʃi:bə/ 基督教《圣经》中朝觐所罗门王以测其智慧的示巴女王

❷ King Solomon 所罗门国王，以智慧著称

❸ janitor /'dʒænitə/ n. 苏格兰英语，看门人，看管人



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**<sup>1</sup> 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: "Mne. 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 yer hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade<sup>2</sup>.

"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**<sup>3</sup> the stores for Jim's present.

此刻，德拉的一头秀发散落在身上，如褐色的瀑布一般闪着光亮。头发一直垂到膝盖下，好像是给她披上了一件长袍。接着，她又神经质地快速把头发梳起来。她迟疑了一会儿，静静地站在那儿，一两滴眼泪溅落在破旧的红地毯上。

穿上那件有些发旧的褐色外衣，戴上那顶褐色的旧帽子，眼睛里闪着晶莹的泪花，她裙子一摆走出房门，下楼来到街上。

她来到一块招牌前停下，只见上面写着：“索弗朗妮夫人——经营各种头发”。德拉奔上一段楼梯，气喘吁吁地定了定神。那位夫人身形高大，面色苍白，冷冰冰的模样，和“索弗朗妮”的名字极不相配。

“你要买我的头发吗？”德拉问。

“我买头发，”夫人说。“摘掉帽子，让我看看样子。”

那褐色的瀑布泼撒下来。

“20元，”夫人一边说，一边很内行地抓起头发。

“快给我钱，”德拉说。

呵，接下来的两个小时犹如长了玫瑰色翅膀一样飞逝而过。请不要理会这胡乱的比喻。德拉正为了送给吉姆的礼物挨家店铺地搜寻。

❶ falter /'fɔ:ltə/ v. 踌躇；犹豫

❷ cascade /kæ'skeɪd/ n. 大量落下；大量悬垂

❸ ransack /'rænsæk/ v. 洗劫；到处搜索

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**<sup>1</sup> fob chain simple and chaste in design, properly proclaiming its value by substance alone and not by **meretricious**<sup>2</sup> **ornamentation**<sup>3</sup>— 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**<sup>4</sup> 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**<sup>5</sup> task.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a **truant**<sup>6</sup> schoolboy. 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?”

她终于找到了。那准是专为吉姆特制的，决非为别人。她把各家商店找了个遍，哪儿也没找到这样的东西——一条并不花哨、镂刻着花纹的白金表链。优质的东西都是这样，只以货色见长，从不以装饰来炫耀。而且它正配得上吉姆那只金表。德拉一见到这条表链，就知道它一定是属于吉姆的。它就像吉姆的人一样，文静而又珍贵——这种形容对两者都恰如其份。她花 21 美元把表链买下来，匆匆赶回家，手里只剩下八角七分钱。金表配这条链子，无论在任何场合，吉姆都可以大大方方地拿出来看时间了。这只表尽管华丽珍贵，却一直是条用旧皮带代替表链，吉姆有时只是偷偷地瞥上一眼时间。

到家之后，德拉的陶醉有点儿变得审慎和理智了。她找出烫发铁钳，点燃煤气，开始修补因爱情加慷慨所带来的破坏。亲爱的朋友们，这永远是件极其艰巨的任务，简直是件了不起的任务呵。

不到四十分钟，她的头上便布满了紧贴头皮的一绺绺小卷发，使她看上去活像个逃学的小男孩。她在镜子里盯着自己瞧了又瞧，谨慎地、苛刻地来回审视。

“假如吉姆看上一眼不把我杀掉的话，”她自言自语，“肯定会说我看上去像康奈岛合唱队的卖唱姑娘。可是我能怎么办呢——唉，只有一元八角七分，我能怎么办呢？”

① platinum /'plætɪnəm/ *n.* 铂；白金

② meretricious /mə'ri:tʃəs/ *adj.* 华而不实的；虚有其表的

③ ornamentation /ɔ:nə'men'teɪʃən/ *n.* 装饰；点缀

④ intoxication /ɪn,tɒksɪ'keɪʃən/ *n.* 令人陶醉；令人头脑迷糊

⑤ mammoth /'mæməθ/ *adj.* 极其巨大的；庞大的

⑥ truant /'tru:ənt/ *n.* 旷课的小学生

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 that he always entered. Then she heard his step on the stair away down on the first flight, and she turned white for just a moment. She had a habit for saying little silent prayer about the simplest everyday things, and now she whispered: "Please God, make him think I am still pretty."

The door opened and Jim stepped in and closed it. He looked thin and very serious. Poor fellow, he was only twenty-two — and to be burdened with a family! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stopped inside the door, as immovable as a **setter**<sup>1</sup> at the scent of **quail**<sup>2</sup>. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified her. It was not anger, nor surprise, nor disapproval, nor horror, nor any of the sentiments that she had been prepared for. He simply stared at her fixedly with that peculiar expression on his face.

Della **wriggled**<sup>3</sup> off the table and went for him.

"Jim, darling," she cried, "don't look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold because I couldn't have lived through Christmas without giving you a present. It'll grow out again — you won't mind, will you? I just had to do it. My hair grows awfully fast. Say 'merry Christmas!' Jim, and let's be happy. You don't know what a nice — what a beautiful, nice gift I've got for you."



七点整，咖啡已煮好，煎锅放在炉子后面热着，准备做肉排用。

吉姆回家一贯准时。德拉把表链叠握在手里，坐在离吉姆进门最近的桌子角上。随后，她听到楼下的楼梯上响起了吉姆的脚步声，她的脸色一阵惨白。她有个习惯，常为了最简单的日常事儿而默默祈祷。此刻她心里默念着：“求求上帝，让他觉得我还是漂亮的。”

门开了，吉姆走进来，随手关上门。他看上去瘦削而又严肃。可怜的人，他才 22 岁，就挑起了家庭的重担！他需要添件新大衣了，连手套也没有呢。

吉姆在门内站住，像猎犬嗅到了鹌鹑的气味似的，纹丝不动。他双眼紧盯在德拉身上，脸上的神情让她无法理解，令她大为惊慌。那神情既不是愤怒，也不是惊讶，又不是不满，更不是嫌恶，是一种她无论如何都没有预料到的神情。他仅仅是面带着这种神情死死地盯着她。

德拉一扭腰从桌角上跳下来，向他走过去。

“吉姆，亲爱的，”她喊道，“别这样盯着我。我把头发剪掉卖了，因为不送你一件礼物，我无法过圣诞节。头发会再长起来的——你不会介意的，是吗？我非这么做不可。我的头发长得快极了。说‘圣诞快乐’，吉姆，让我们高高兴兴的。你肯定猜不着我给你买了一件多么好、多么美丽精致的礼物呢！”

❶ setter/'setə/ n. 蹲伏猎狗，体大毛长，有几个品种

❷ quail/'kweil/ n. 鹌鹑

❸ wriggle/'rigl/ v. 扭动身体