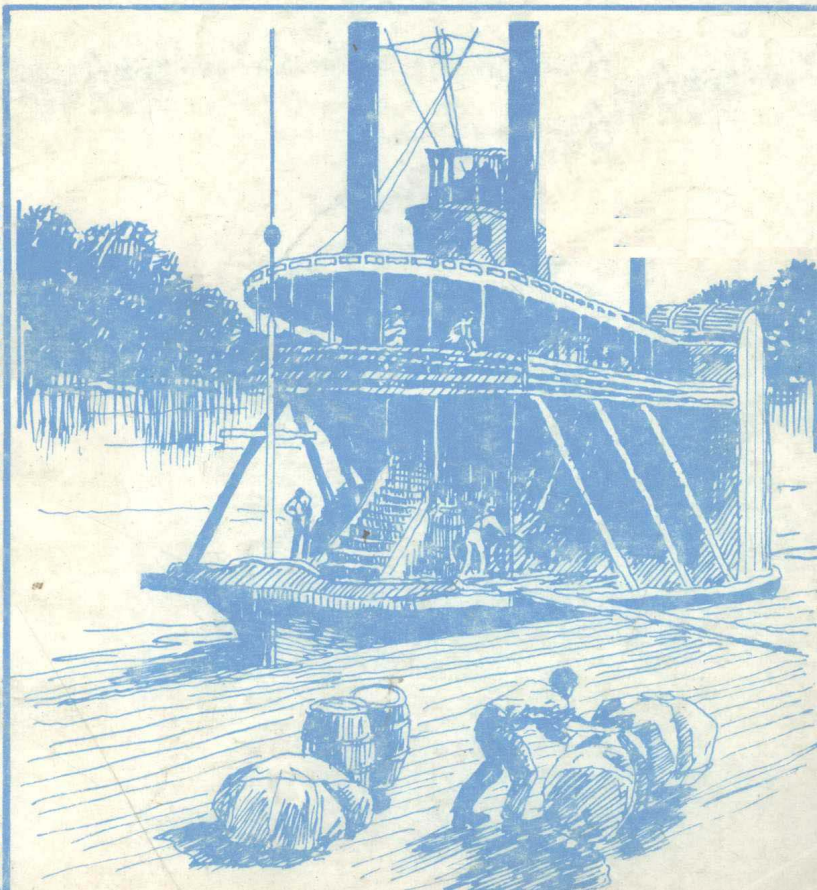


# GREAT AMERICAN STORIES 1



AN ESL/EFL READER

C.G. DRAPER



# **GREAT AMERICAN STORIES I**

## **An ESL/EFL Reader**

*beginning-intermediate to intermediate levels*

**C. G. Draper**

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# TO THE READER

This book starts at the beginning-intermediate level. It ends at the intermediate level. The first story in the book will be easy for you. The stories become more difficult, and the last story is the most difficult. The vocabulary list for the first four stories has 600 words. The list for the last three stories has 1000 words. The longest sentences in the first stories have 10 words. In the last stories, they have 17 words. There is new grammar in each story.

By working on this book, you will improve your

- reading skills
- vocabulary
- knowledge of English grammar
- writing skills

If you work on the book in a class with other students, you will also improve your speaking skills.

These stories were written in a more difficult form by seven of America's most famous writers. You will read

**about the writers' lives before you read their stories. After each story you will find**

- **2 reading skills exercises**
- **3 vocabulary and grammar exercises**
- **1 writing exercise**

**Good luck, and good reading!**

# TO THE TEACHER

*Great American Stories I* consists of seven careful adaptations of famous stories by classic American writers, and exercises on each story in reading skills, vocabulary, grammar, and writing.

The book is both graded and progressive—that is, the vocabulary, grammar, and internal structure of the stories increase in difficulty from the first story (which is at the beginning-intermediate level of proficiency) to the last (which is at the intermediate level). Structural, lexical, and sentence-length controls have been used throughout the book. For example, the head-word list for the first four stories contains 600 words, while that used for the final three contains 1000; maximum sentence length increases from 10 words in the first story to 18 in the last; and new grammatical structures are added story by story. Words from outside the head-word lists are introduced in a context that helps make their meaning clear; they are used again within the next 100 words of text, and then repeated at least three more times before the end of the story.

The book as a whole is designed to be incorporated into a 10–12 week course in ESL or EFL as part of the reading

program. The materials can be used either in or out of class for pleasure reading, controlled discussion, vocabulary development, grammar reinforcement, writing practice, and of course the acquisition of reading skills.

The exercises are so designed that the student must often return to the text to check comprehension, grammar models, or vocabulary points. Further, each story is preceded by a brief biographical paragraph about the story's author; and the first reading skills exercise following the story (an exercise in skimming or scanning) often focuses the reader's attention on that paragraph. In short, a main objective of the book is to involve the reader deeply in the text of each story, and, toward that end, to present exercises that are difficult if not impossible to complete without a thorough understanding of the text.

An answer key to the exercises is available from the publisher, Prentice-Hall, Inc., Englewood Cliffs, NJ 07632.

*C. G. D.*

**GREAT  
AMERICAN  
STORIES I**



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# THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

adapted from the story by

O. Henry

O. Henry's real name was William Sydney Porter. He was born in Greensboro, North Carolina, in 1862. He left school at the age of fifteen and worked in many different places. He also spent three years in prison because he took money from a bank. He started to write stories while he was in prison. O. Henry is famous for his stories with surprise endings. "The Gift of the Magi" is perhaps his most famous story. It is from the book *The Four Million*, stories about the everyday people of New York City. O. Henry died in 1910.

Della counted her money three times. She had only one dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And tomorrow would be Christmas. What Christmas gift could she buy with only one dollar and eighty-seven cents? Della lay down on the old bed and cried and cried.

Let's leave Della alone for a while and look at her home. The chairs and tables were old and poor. Outside there was a mailbox without mail, and a door without a doorbell. The name on the door said MR. JAMES DILLINGHAM YOUNG—Della's dear husband Jim.

Della knew that Jim would be home soon. She dried her eyes and stood up. She looked in the mirror. She began to comb her hair for Jim. She felt very sad. She wanted to buy Jim a Christmas gift—something good. But what could she do with one dollar and eighty-seven cents? She combed her hair in the mirror and thought. Suddenly she had an idea.

Now, Jim and Della had only two treasures. One was Jim's gold watch. The other was Della's hair. It was long and brown, and fell down her back. Della looked in the mirror a little longer. Her eyes were sad, but then she smiled. She put on her old brown coat and her hat. She ran out of the house and down the street. She stopped in front of a door which said, MME. SOPHRONIE. HAIR OF ALL KINDS. Madame Sophronie was fat and seemed too white. The store was dark.

"Will you buy my hair?" Della asked.

"I buy hair," said Madame. "Take off your hat. Let's see your hair."

Della's hair fell down like water. Mme. Sophronie lift-



ed Della's hair with a heavy hand. "Twenty dollars," she said.

"Give me the money now!" said Della.

Ah! the next two hours flew past like summer wind. Della shopped in many stores for the right gift for Jim. Then she found it—a chain for his gold watch. It was a good chain, strong and expensive. Della knew the chain would make Jim happy. Jim had a cheap chain for his watch, but this chain was much better. It would look good with the gold watch. The chain cost twenty-one dollars. Della paid for the chain, and ran home with eighty-seven cents.

At seven o'clock Della made coffee and started to cook dinner. It was almost dinner time. Jim would be home soon. He was never late. Della heard Jim outside. She looked in the mirror again. "Oh! I hope Jim doesn't kill me!" Della smiled, but her eyes were wet. "But what could I do with only one dollar and eighty-seven cents?"

The door opened, and Jim came in and shut it. His face was thin and quiet. His coat was old, and he had no hat. He was only twenty-two. Jim stood still and looked at Della. He didn't speak. His eyes were strange. Della suddenly felt afraid. She did not understand him. She began to talk very fast. "Oh, Jim, dear, why do you look so strange? Don't look at me like that. I cut my hair and sold it. I wanted to buy you a Christmas gift. It will grow again—don't be angry. My hair grows very fast. Say 'Merry Christmas,' dear, and let's be happy. You don't know what I've got for you—it's beautiful."

"You cut your hair?" Jim spoke slowly.

"I cut it and sold it," Della answered. "Don't you like me now? I'm still me, aren't I?"

"You say that your hair is gone?" Jim asked again.

"Don't look for it, it's gone," Della said. "Be good to me, because it's Christmas. Shall we have dinner now, Jim?"

Jim seemed to wake up. He smiled. He took Della in his arms.

Let us leave them together for a while. They are happy, rich or poor. Do you know about the magi? The magi were wise men who brought Christmas gifts to the baby



Jesus. But they could not give gifts like Jim's and Della's. Perhaps you don't understand me now. But you will understand soon.

Jim took a small box out of his pocket. "I love your short hair, Della," he said. "I'm sorry I seemed strange. But if you open the box you will understand." Della opened the box. First she smiled, then suddenly she began to cry. In the box were two beautiful combs. Combs like those were made



