

# LOVE and LIFE

英语阅读文选



## 涉世之初(下)

### LIFE ON THE EDGE



海洋出版社

爱与生命——英语阅读文选

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## LIFE ON THE EDGE (2)

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## 前 言

在 21 世纪,不懂英语即为文盲。英语的学习已成为每位青年朋友的日修课程。同时,我们内心也渴望了解自己的人生,知道自己是什么样的人,有着怎样的未来,如何去把握自己的人生。我们为这些既渴望学习英语、了解西方文化,同时又渴望洞察人生的青年朋友编写了这套英语阅读系列丛书——“爱与生命”。

这套丛书的优点有两方面:

一方面,从文章的形式来看有两个特色:首先,文章风格主要为“论述型”、“推理型”,与大学英语四、六级、TOEFL、GRE、PETS 等考试的阅读文章风格基本一致。通过阅读这些文章,可增强英语语感,扩大阅读量,提高阅读速度。其次,阅读是扩充单词量的最佳途径,为了方便同学记忆单词,加深对文章的理解,我们还将较生僻的单词和常用的短语、句型作了注解、分析,使一般的大学生在注解的帮助下都能完全读懂每一篇文章。“熟能生巧”,大量的语篇阅读必定对学生的写作能力和技巧的提高大有裨益。

另一方面,从文章的内容来看,“爱与生命”丛书是专门根据青年朋友的成长需要而设计的一套英语读物。在我们青年人心中,经常问这样的问题:

- \* 我为什么活在这个世界上?
- \* 我是谁? 我的性格是什么?
- \* 生命的目的和意义是什么?
- \* 如何得到真正的、永恒的爱情?
- \* 友谊如何才能“地久天长”?
- \* 婚姻意味着什么?
- \* “随心所欲”等于自由和幸福吗?

“爱与生命”英语阅读系列丛书沿着这些问题,深入青

年人的内心。不同于以往的“英语文学名著”、“实用英语”或“娱乐英语”的是，她直接谈论青年人最关心的人生观问题，围绕人生的价值、意义和目的，深入探讨个性成长、友谊、恋爱、婚姻、职业、社会道德等严肃主题，并提出与之相应的青年人的责任、义务和使命，使大家对我们的生命以及生命中的爱有更深刻的认识，更有利于培养健康的人格和高尚的品德。

为了使读者学习纯正的英文，编者在选材上尽量避免删节。应当指出，本书有的观点虽然肤浅，甚至是错误的，但全书的主流是积极向上的，希望读者在学习英语的同时，对其观点加以鉴别、分析，取其精华，去其糟粕。

站在生命的起跑线上，青年朋友面临许多关键性的问题，如社会角色、教育、婚姻、职业、信仰、生命的意义等等。转眼之间，年青的一代就会成为世界上商业、企事业单位和政府部门的生力军，领导和治理社会的重担将落在他们的肩上，他们要将人类历史的车轮推进到另一个时代。但他们准备好迎接这一挑战了吗？这里，我们与你共同讨论青年人在关键的10年（16~26岁）中将会遇到的一些问题，主要包括择业、爱情、金钱、权力、感情等等，对这些问题的解答将会对你以后的生活产生重大影响。《涉世之初》这本书帮助青年人作出正确的人生选择，牢牢地把握自己的生活，并追寻一个丰富多彩的未来。对于积极寻求人生意义的年青一代来说，这本书的出版的确是一个好消息。

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1

# GETTING ALONG WITH YOUR PARENTS

我们现在要将注意力转移到你和你父母的关系上。这对于处在关键 10 年(16 ~ 26 岁)的年轻人来说,是一个至关重要的问题。无可否认,现代家庭中父母和子女经常出现矛盾冲突,这种冲突从子女 13 岁开始,18 岁差不多达到顶峰,有的甚至持续到二十几岁,对“斗争”双方,都造成了无法想象的痛苦和伤害。试想一下,双方明明真心关爱,却无法和谐相处,反而麻烦频出,这不能说不是人生的一大困惑与憾事。如果你感到与父母沟通出现困难,或是想更好地理解父母长辈,请您继续阅读。

**W**e'll focus our attention now on the relationship between you and your parents. It's another vitally important topic for those working their way through the

critical decade. As I'm sure you've observed, the teen years can take a family to the brink of civil war. It can be awful! The battles often begin as early as thirteen years of age and reach their greatest intensity about eighteen. For some, fighting is still occurring in the twenties, and it inflicts terrible pain on both generations. whether the conflict comes early or late, nothing else in life can match this era for its ability to alienate<sup>①</sup> people who honestly love and need each other.

At least, that's the way family life often plays out today. I'm sure there has always been friction<sup>②</sup> between parents and children, but the nature of it has changed radically. The culture that once was supportive and respectful of parents has now become the worst enemy of the family. Let me illustrate<sup>③</sup>.

The artistic<sup>④</sup> creations produced by a society at a given time don't spring from a vacuum<sup>⑤</sup>. They reflect the opinions and beliefs commonly held by its people. That being true, we can measure change in attitudes by looking at the evolution of music that has occurred in recent years. Let's go back to 1953 when the most popular song in the United States was sung by Eddie Fisher, and was titled "Oh, My Papa." Here's a portion of the lyrics:

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① *alienate* *vt.* 使疏远

② *friction* *n.* 摩擦; 冲突

③ *illustrate* *vt.* 举例说明

④ *artistic* *adj.* 精美的, 风雅的

⑤ *vacuum* *n.* 真空



Oh, my papa, to me he was so wonderful  
Oh, my papa, to me he was so good.  
No one could be so gentle and so lovable,  
Oh, my papa, he always understood.  
Gone are the days when he would take me on his knee  
And with a smile he'd change my tears to laughter.  
Oh, my papa, so funny and adorable<sup>①</sup>,  
Always the clown<sup>②</sup>, so funny in his way,  
Oh, my papa, to me he was so wonderful  
Deep in my heart I miss him so today,  
Oh, my papa. Oh, my papa.

That sentimental<sup>③</sup> song accurately reflected the way many people felt about their fathers at that time in our history. Oh sure, there were conflicts and disagreements, but family was family. When it was all said and done, parents were entitled to respect and loyalty, and they usually received them from their children.

## THAT WAS THEN ... THIS IS NOW

By the time I had reached college age, things were starting to change. The subject of conflict between parents and teenagers began to appear as a common theme in artistic creations. The movie *Rebel without a Cause* featured a screen

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① *adorable adj.* 值得崇拜的, 可爱的

② *clown n.* 小丑; 可笑的人

③ *sentimental adj.* 感伤的

idol<sup>①</sup> named James Dean who seethed<sup>②</sup> with anger at his “Old Man.” Marlon Brando starred in *The wild One*, another movie with rebellion as its theme. Rock-’n’-roll music portrayed it, too.

Some early rock-’n’-roll lyrics mixed rebellious messages with humor, such as a number-one hit from 1958 called “Yakety-Yak( Don’t Talk Back)”. But what began as musical humor turned decidedly bitter in the late sixties. Everyone in those days was talking about the “generation gap” that had erupted between young people and their parents. Teenagers and college students vowed they’d never again trust anyone over thirty, and their anger toward parents began to percolate<sup>③</sup>. The Doors released a song in 1968 entitled “The End,” in which Jim Morrison fanaticized about killing his father. It concludes with gunshots followed by horrible grunts and groans.

## **BUT WAIT! IT GETS WORSE!**

In 1984, Twisted Sister released “We’re Not Gonna Take It,” which referred to a father as a “disgusting slob” who was “worthless and weak.” Then he was blasted out the window of a second – story apartment. This theme of killing parents showed up regularly in the decade that followed. A group called Suicidal Tendencies released a

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① idol *n.* 偶像

② seeth *vi.* 激昂

③ percolate *vi.* 显得活跃

recording in 1983 called, “I Saw Your Mommy.” Here is an excerpt<sup>①</sup> of the gory lyrics<sup>②</sup>:

I saw your mommy and your mommy's dead.  
I watched her as she bled,  
Chewed-off toes on her chopped-off feet.  
I took a picture because I thought it was neat.

I saw your mommy, and your mommy's dead.  
I saw her lying in a pool of red;  
I think it's the greatest thing I'll ever see ——  
Your dead mommy lying in front of me.

For sheer banality<sup>③</sup>, nothing yet produced can match “Momma's Gotta Die Tonight,” by Ice-T and Body Count. The album sold 500,000 copies and featured its wretched lyrics on the CD jacket. Most of them are unfit to quote here, but they involved graphic descriptions of the rapper's mother being burned in her bed, then beaten to death with a baseball bat she had given him as a present, and finally the mutilation<sup>④</sup> of the corpse into “little bitty pieces”. What incredible violence! There was not a hint of guilt or remorse<sup>⑤</sup> expressed by the rapper while telling us of this murder. In fact, he called his mother a “racist b \_ h,” and laughed

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① excerpt *n.* 摘录

② gory lyrics 血腥的歌词

③ banality *n.* 平凡,平庸

④ mutilation *n.* 毁损

⑤ remorse *n.* 悔恨

while chanting, “Burn, Mama, burn”. My point is that the most popular music of our culture went from the inspiration of “Oh, My Papa” to the horrors of “Momma’s Gotta Die Tonight” in scarcely more than a generation. And we have to wonder, where do we go from here?

## **BOMBARDED<sup>①</sup> BY ANTIFAMILY RHETORIC<sup>②</sup>**

One thing is certain: Your generation has been bombarded with more antifamily rhetoric than any that preceded it. When added to equally disturbing messages about drug usage, sex, and violence against women, the impact has to be considered formidable<sup>③</sup>. Remember that teenagers (and preteens) not only hear such lyrics once or twice. The words are burned into their minds. They are memorized, sung, and quoted. And the rock stars who perform them become idols to many impressionable teenagers.

MTV, which promotes the worst stuff available, is telecast into 231,000,000 households in seventy-five countries, more than any other cable program. Though it will not be popular for me to say it, I believe many of the problems that plague<sup>④</sup> your generation can be traced to this venom<sup>⑤</sup> pumped into its veins by the entertainment industry in gener-

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① bombard *vt.* 质问; 攻击某人

② rhetoric *n.* 花言巧语

③ formidable *adj.* 难以克服的

④ plague *vt.* 使苦恼, 使麻烦

⑤ venom *n.* 毒液, 仇恨

al.

Although I never identified with those who hated their parents, there were times when I thought my folks were “yakyety – yaking” too much. I remember working with my father one day when I was fifteen years old. We were cutting the grass and cleaning the garage on a very hot day. For some reason, Dad was particularly cranky that afternoon. He crabbed at me for everything I did, even when I hustled. Finally, he yelled at me for something petty, and that did it. I threw down my rake and quitted.

Defiantly, I walked across our property and down the street while my dad demanded that I come back. It was one of the few times I ever took him on like that! I meandered<sup>①</sup> around town for a while, wondering what would happen when I finally went home. Then I strolled over to my cousin's house on the other side of town. That night, I admitted to his father that I'd had a bad fight with my dad and he didn't know where I was. My uncle persuaded me to call home and assure my parents that I was safe. With knees quaking, I phoned my dad.

“Stay there,” he said. “I'm coming over.”

To say that I was scared would be an understatement<sup>②</sup>. In a short time Dad arrived and asked to see me alone.

“Bo,” he began, “I didn't treat you right this afternoon. I was riding your back for no good reason, and I want you to know I'm sorry. Your mom and I want you to come

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① meander *vi.* 漫步

② understatement *n.* 轻描淡写, 有节制的陈述

home now.”

He made a friend for life.

Not all family fights end so lovingly, of course. In fact, I'll bet you've been through some tough moments of your own. How about it? Have you had royal shootouts with your mom and dad? Do you harbor deep resentment for things they've said or done? Have you wounded them by your defiance<sup>①</sup> and independence? Are there scars on your relationship that you wish weren't there? Why does it have to be that way?

Admittedly, some of those to whom I am writing have been abused by their parents and their anger is rooted in that pain. But let's assume you are not one of them. Your mother and father love you like crazy and would endure any sacrifice to give you what you need. Why, then, are there such strong negative feelings between you? Let's take a moment to examine the causes of family feuds<sup>②</sup> and offer a few suggestions for improvement.

## **THERE IT IS AGAIN ... POWER!**

At the risk of revisiting issues we have already covered, the basic source of conflict between generations is that old bugaboo<sup>③</sup> of power. It is defined as control – control of others, control of our circumstances, and especially control of

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① defiance *n.* 违抗

② feud *n.* 宿怨

③ bugaboo *n.* 莫名的恐惧

ourselves. The lust for it lies deep within the human spirit. We all want to be the boss, and that impulse begins very early in life. Studies show that one-day-old infants actually “reach” for control of the adults around them. Even at that tender age, they behave in ways designed to get their guardians to meet their needs.

The desire for power is apparent when a toddler<sup>①</sup> runs from his mother in a supermarket or when a ten-year-old refuses to do his or her homework or when a husband and wife fight over money. We see it when an elderly woman refuses to move to a nursing home. The common thread between these examples is the passion to run our own lives—and everything else if given the chance. People vary in the intensity of this urge, but it seems to motivate all of us to one degree or another.

As implied in a previous chapter, the grab for control is what produces most of the conflict between parents and teenagers. Many adolescents<sup>②</sup> are not willing to wait for a gradual transfer of power as they develop in maturity<sup>③</sup>, responsibility, and experience. They want to run things now. And often, they insist on sampling the adult vices that have been denied them.

Mothers and fathers face a terrible dilemma<sup>④</sup> when this occurs. They must continue to lead their underaged kids. That is their Godgiven responsibility as parents – and, it’s

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① toddler *n.* 初学走路的孩子

② adolescent *n.* 青年, 青春期的

③ maturity *n.* 成熟

④ dilemma *n.* 左右为难的状况

the law of the land. But parents are limited in what they can force their kids to do. Furthermore, teenagers vary tremendously in their degree of maturity. Some sixteen-year-olds could handle independence and freedom. Others lacking supervision would wreck their lives in a matter of weeks. That sets up a terrible struggle that leaves everyone exhausted, hurt, and angry.

There are some approaches that have been successful in lessening<sup>①</sup> this conflict. The religious group known as the Amish have developed a unique tradition that has succeeded for them. Their children are kept under very tight control when they are young. Strict discipline and harsh standards of behavior are imposed from infancy. When children turn sixteen years of age, however, they enter a period called Rumspringa<sup>②</sup>. Suddenly, all restrictions<sup>③</sup> are lifted. They are free to drink, smoke, date, marry, or behave in ways that horrify their parents. Some do just that. But most don't. They are even granted the right to leave the Amish community if they choose. But if they stay, it must be in accordance with the social order. The majority accept the heritage of their families, not because they must, but because they choose to.

Although I admire the Amish and many of their approaches to child-rearing, I believe the Rumspringa concept is implemented too quickly for children raised in a more

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① lessen *vt.* 减轻

② Rumspringa *n.* 跑, 奔跑

③ restriction *n.* 约束, 限制



open society. To take a teenager overnight from rigid control to complete emancipation<sup>①</sup> is an invitation to anarchy<sup>②</sup>. It works in the controlled environment of Amish country, but it is usually disastrous<sup>③</sup> for the rest of us. I've seen families grant "instant adulthood" to their adolescents, to their regret. The result has been similar to what occurred in African colonies when European leadership was suddenly withdrawn. Bloody revolutions were often fought in the power vacuum that was created.

## THE TRANSFER OF POWER

If it doesn't work to transfer power suddenly to young people, how can they be established as full-fledged adults without creating a civil war in the process? I have recommended to your parents that they begin granting independence literally in toddlerhood. When a child can tie his shoes, he should be permitted – yes, required – to do it. When she can choose her clothes, she should make her own selections within reason. When he can walk safely to school, he should be allowed to do so. Each year, more responsibility and freedom (they are companions) must be given to the child so that the final release in early adulthood is merely a small, final release of authority. This is the theory, at least. Pulling it off is sometimes quite another matter.

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① emancipation *n.* 解放;解除

② anarchy *n.* 混乱,无秩序

③ disastrous *adj.* 造成灾难的,悲惨的