

英语美文欣赏系列

心之馈赠

Gifts of the Heart

郭冬玲 程维华 编注



WUHAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

武汉大学出版社

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Day One



1



Mother Duck's Miracle

By Carolyn Griffin

While stopping to “make way for ducklings,” a family is reminded to slow down and think about what’s important.

“Just a couple hours now,” said Dad, “and we’ll soon be at our campsite①!” The year was 1950, and we were on our family vacation, doing our family thing—camping. I settled down in my corner of the back seat to take a nap. The rhythm of the moving car soothed② me into a deep sleep.

Wham! I woke with a start, my face on the floorboard of the back seat. Dad had braked sharply.

“What happened?” I asked. “Where are we?”

“Half an hour from our campsite,” he answered, “and I don’t know what the holdup③ is, but all the cars have stopped. I’ll see what’s going on.”

① campsite: 野营地, 露营地

② soothe: 使……平静, 使……缓和

③ holdup: 停顿, 延迟



Dad stepped out of the car. Mom, my little brother David and I waited. “Bet there’s been an accident!” David was excited.

Mom shook her head. “Probably a bear crossing the road,” she said. David bounced up and down in his seat. That was even better than an accident!

Dad came running back to the car. “Come on!” he said very excitedly. “Come on, kids! You’ve all got to see this!”

I jumped out of the car and ran to catch up with him. “What is it, Daddy?” I asked. He grinned^① and reached for my hand. “Come see, Carolyn,” he said.

I knew that, whatever it was, it was nice because my father was happy about it. I grabbed his hand and skipped excitedly along beside him. We walked past a dozen parked cars. Ahead, a group of people stood “ooh-ing” and “aah-ing.”

Looking in the same direction as everyone else, we saw a mother duck, sleek and proud, promenading^② up the middle of the road, nine little ducklings waddling after her. The babies were marching single file behind their mother, totally ignoring the people and automobiles.

No one from any of the stalled^③ cars appeared to mind waiting on a fearless mother duck and her nine ducklings parading up the highway as if it were exclusively^④ theirs.

We all followed Mrs. Duck and family a quarter of a mile up the

① grin: 露齿而笑

② promenade: 散步

③ stall: 停止, 延迟

④ exclusively: 专用地, 专用地

hill. There Mrs. Duck led her children off the road, over a small embankment^① and into a little creek winding its way down the mountainside.

I walked back to the car with the adults and listened to their conversation with strangers.

“Oh, you’re from Milwaukee? We lived there for four years!” They were discovering people and places they had in common.

I was quiet as we continued our journey, wondering about what we had just witnessed. Later in camp, I sat on a large rock next to my father, our feet dangling in the creek.

“Daddy?” I asked. “How did Mrs. Duck know that all those busy people would stop to let her walk along the road with her babies?”

Dad picked up a smooth stone, thoughtfully rubbed it between his thumb and forefinger, then skimmed it over the water.

“Well, honey,” he said, watching the little stone skim the water, “that’s one of God’s miracles. God used that mother duck and her babies to slow everyone down so they could enjoy life a little bit more. He arranges opportunities like this, sort of^② as a reminder to make people think about what’s important in life.”

I sat there for a moment, smiling over Dad’s words. Soon, Mom joined us, stuck her tired feet into the cool water and sighed, “Oh-h, that feels good!”

David wandered up and sat beside Mom, cuddling^③ close. We all relaxed there by the creek as the mountain breeze played a soothing

① embankment: 堤防, 堤坝

② sort of: 有几分地, 有那么点儿

③ cuddle: 拥抱, 搂抱



symphony^① in the trees above, just for us.

Yes, it truly was a miracle!

① symphony: 交响乐, 交响曲



2

Teacher's Lesson

Author Unknown

Please remember that wherever you go and whatever you do, you will have the opportunity to touch and/or change a person's outlook. Please, try to do it in a positive way.

There is a story many years ago of an elementary teacher. Her name was Mrs. Thompson. And as she stood in front of her 5th grade class on the very first day of school, she told the children a lie. Like most teachers, she looked at her students and said that she loved them all the same.

But that was impossible, because there in the front row, slumped in his seat, was a little boy named Teddy Stoddard. Mrs. Thompson had watched Teddy the year before and noticed that he didn't play well with the other children, that his clothes were messy and that he constantly needed a bath. And Teddy could be unpleasant. It got to the point where Mrs. Thompson would actually take delight in marking his papers with a broad red pen, making bold X's^① and then putting a big

① making bold X's: (用红笔)打上粗粗的叉



“F”^① at the top of his papers.

At the school where Mrs. Thompson taught, she was required to review each child's past records and she put Teddy's off until last. However, when she reviewed his file, she was in for a surprise.

Teddy's first grade teacher wrote, “Teddy is a bright child with a ready laugh. He does his work neatly and has good manners. . . he is a joy to be around. ”

His second grade teacher wrote, “Teddy is an excellent student, well liked by his classmates, but he is troubled because his mother has a terminal^② illness and life at home must be a struggle. ”

His third grade teacher wrote, “His mother's death has been hard on him. He tries to do his best but his father doesn't show much interest and his home life will soon affect him if some steps aren't taken. ”

Teddy's fourth grade teacher wrote, “Teddy is withdrawn and doesn't show much interest in school. He doesn't have many friends and sometimes sleeps in class. ”

By now, Mrs. Thompson realized the problem and she was ashamed of herself. She felt even worse when her students brought her Christmas presents, wrapped in beautiful ribbons and bright paper, except for Teddy's. His present was clumsily wrapped in the heavy, brown paper that he got from a grocery bag^③.

Mrs. Thompson took pains^④ to open it in the middle of the other presents. Some of the children started to laugh when she found a

① “F”: Fail (不及格)

② terminal: 末期的, 晚期的

③ grocery bag: 食品杂货袋

④ take pains: 耐心, 尽力

rhinestone bracelet^① with some of the stones missing, and a bottle that was one quarter full of perfume. But she stifled^② the children's laughter when she exclaimed how pretty the bracelet was, putting it on, and dabbing^③ some of the perfume on her wrist.

Teddy Stoddard stayed after school that day just long enough to say, "Mrs. Thompson, today you smelled just like my Mom used to." After the children left she cried for at least an hour. On that very day, she quit teaching reading, writing, and arithmetic^④. Instead, she began to teach children.

Mrs. Thompson paid particular attention to Teddy. As she worked with him, his mind seemed to come alive. The more she encouraged him, the faster he responded. By the end of the year, Teddy had become one of the smartest children in the class and, despite her lie that she would love all the children the same, Teddy became one of her "teacher's pets."

A year later, she found a note under her door, from Teddy, telling her that she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life. Six years went by before she got another note from Teddy. He then wrote that he had finished high school, third in his class, and she was still the best teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Four years after that, she got another letter, saying that while things had been tough at times, he'd stayed in school, had stuck with^⑤

① rhinestone bracelet: 人造钻石手镯

② stifle: 制止, 抑制

③ dab: 轻拍, 涂

④ arithmetic: 算术

⑤ stick with: (口) 坚持做(某事)



it, and would soon graduate from college with the highest of honors. He assured Mrs. Thompson that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had in his whole life.

Then four more years passed and yet another letter came. This time he explained that after he got his bachelor's degree, he decided to go a little further. The letter explained that she was still the best and favorite teacher he ever had. But now his name was a little longer—the letter was signed, Theodore F. Stoddard, M. D. ①

The story doesn't end there. You see, there was yet another letter that spring. Teddy said he'd met this girl and was going to be married. He explained that his father had died a couple of years ago and he was wondering if Mrs. Thompson might agree to sit in the place at the wedding that was usually reserved for② the mother of the groom. Of course, Mrs. Thompson did. And guess what? She wore that bracelet, the one with several rhinestones missing. And she made sure she was wearing the perfume that Teddy remembered his mother wearing on their last Christmas together.

They hugged each, and Dr. Stoddard whispered in Mrs. Thompson's ear, "Thank you, Mrs. Thompson, for believing in me. Thank you so much for making me feel important and showing me that I could make a difference."

Mrs. Thompson, with tears in her eyes, whispered back. She said, "Teddy, you have it all wrong. You were the one who taught me that I could make a difference. I didn't know how to teach until I met you."

① M. D. : (缩写)医学博士

② be reserved for: 留作,供……专用