

中学英语拾级读物

**GRADED
ENGLISH
READERS**

第七级

**Modern
Chinese Stories**

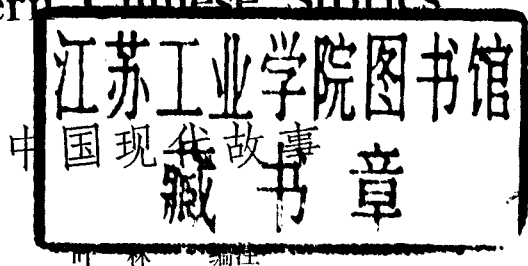
中国现代故事

第 4 册

中学英语拾级读物
第七级 第四册

Graded English Readers
Stage VII No. 4

Modern Chinese Stories



外语教学与研究出版社

《中学英语拾级读物》第七级 第四册

中国现代故事

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前 言

受国家教育委员会中学司委托,由上海外国语学院、北京外国语学院、北京师范大学、华东师范大学所属的四家大学出版社联合编辑、出版的《中学英语拾级读物》(简称《拾级读物》或《GE》)与读者见面了,这是我国中学英语教学的一项重要配套工程,旨在促进中学英语教学的改革。

取名《拾级读物》,不仅因为它有十个级别五十本书,而且还寓有“循序渐进,拾级而上”之意。中学生从初二开始阅读,逐级向上攀登,便可达到借助词典读懂浅近原著的水平。

《拾级读物》每册的词汇量、字数及对应年级大致如下:

级别	词汇量	每册大约字数	对应年级
一	500—700	10万	初二
二	600—900	10万	初二、初三
三	800—1200	12万	初三
四	1000—1500	12万	高一
五	1400—1800	12万	高一、高二
六	1700—2000	12万	高二、高三
七	2000—2500	14万	重点中学高三
八	2500—3000	16万	外国语学校高三
九	3000—3500	18万	高材生、中学教师
十	3000—3500	18万	高材生、中学教师

阅读是学好任何一种语言的必由之路,也是获取信息的主要渠道。只做习题,不大量阅读是学不好英语的。近年来不少

学生为了应付考试，花费大量的精力和时间去做各种各样的复习题、模拟试题，但收效甚微，对外语能力的提高并无多大益处，这是外语教学中的一种偏向。《拾级读物》的出版正是为了给中学英语教学提供一套可读性与系统性相结合的课外读物。

《拾级读物》主要供学生自己阅读，但教师可根据学生的实际水平帮助他们选择使用，并进行适当的辅导。特别在阅读方法上教师可作示范性的讲示，引导学生逐步摆脱语法和汉语的束缚，在此过程中，一是抓篇章大意和故事情节；二是注意学过语言现象的再现和在新环境下的发展。对不易理解之处，要启发学生先根据上下文去琢磨，实在影响阅读时再查阅词典。对不影响理解全文的语言难点则要舍得放过。只有这样，才能培养学生良好的阅读习惯，保持他们阅读的兴趣，提高他们阅读的速度。

《拾级读物》的级别是衡量中学生英语阅读水平的客观尺度。为了便于检查，我们还准备编写一套相应的测试材料和教学参考书。

《拾级读物》除供中学生使用外，还可作为中学英语教师培训、进修的教材。

第七级共五册，书目如下：(1)《奥·亨利短篇故事》；(2)《哈代作品选》；(3)《英美短篇小说》；(4)《中国现代故事》；(5)《世界名人小传》。

本册承北京外国语学院邓炎昌教授审改，谨致谢忱。

鉴于编者水平有限，本读物在选材、注释等各方面肯定有不少缺点，敬请广大师生、各界读者不吝指正，供我们再版时参考。

《中学英语拾级读物》编辑委员会

一九八七年五月

中学英语拾级读物 第七级 第四册

中国现代故事 (简写本)

本书选收中国当代著名作家创作的优秀长篇故事《求》(第一部)和短篇故事《满月儿》、《谁生活得更美好》、《因为有了她》的英语译述文。这些故事分别描写当代农村姑娘、青年工人和解放前爱国知识分子的生活、经历和思想。内容生动有趣,而且有比较深刻的社会内涵和一定的教育意义。为适应中学英语读物的需要,编注时在文字上、格式上作了不同程度的更动或删除。语言通顺规范,用词浅易明白,可供高中三年级学生和具有中等水平的英语学习者阅读。

中学英语拾级读物是受国家教育委员会中学司委托编辑的。

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Quest (Part I)*

1

I, Liao Lingzhi,¹ was born in 1925, but as to my place of birth nobody in my old Jiangxi² home knew; they only knew that I was born in a foreign land. From the time I began to remember things, I often heard my grandfather say that I was a girl of "unknown origin".³ My grandfather never spoke a word about my father, nor did anybody dare to say anything about my father in front of him. It was as though he never had such a son.

My father's name was Liao Jizong.⁴ He ran away from his Nanchang⁵ home when he was 16 because the family discipline was too strict. He later went abroad with a French missionary⁶ and there had been no news from him for many years since. My grandmother died soon after her only son left and the family was left with my grandfather and my three aunts. They set up a girls' school in Nanchang and led a hard life on the pitiful sum of school fees.

One day at dusk, when the family was having their evening meal, a modestly-dressed woman suddenly appeared in the small courtyard with a small child in her arms. The young

woman spoke perfect mandarin⁷ and apparently was not a native of Nanchang county. She introduced herself as Liao Ji-



zhong's wife and claimed the child in her arms to belong to the third generation of the Liao family. When my grandfather heard this, he threw his chopsticks on the table. He tried his best to control his temper, but could not help himself to declare loudly:

"I do not have a son named Liao Jizong! Our family does not receive an unwelcome guest."⁸ He pushed his rice-bowl forward, spilled a lot of rice on the table and rushed into his room with a bang on the door.

With my grandfather gone, my three aunts and my First Aunt's husband rushed forward to look at me and ply my mother with questions about my father. My mother said that since leaving home, my father had drifted about abroad, trying to

make a living by selling his paintings. He could not afford to keep his only child, so he let my mother bring me to Nanchang to be brought up at his old home. My mother only stayed in Nanchang for a single night, and the next morning before day-break, she got up and went away without saying good-bye to anybody. I was left behind, at that time only three years old.

My mother also left 100 *yuan* and the address of her elder sister, Ouyang Yun,⁹ who lived in Beiping (Beijing).¹⁰ She also told my aunts that they could get in contact with their brother through her sister, who knew English. Letters could be forwarded,¹¹ of course, without telling my grandfather about them.

Starting from the day of my arrival, my grandfather neither spoke to nor even looked at me. I was very afraid of him and tried my best to hide from him.

My eldest aunt was married, and her daughter Meizhi,¹² was three months younger than me. She and I were cousins, and we looked somewhat alike, but she was prettier and more mild-tempered. My grandfather was very fond of Meizhi, and during meals, he would coax her and give her the choicest bits of food,¹³ while totally ignoring me as though I did not exist.

In my grandfather's school there was a 30-year-old woman who was a *gongyou*, a worker friend, a term used in those days for a maid of all work. She came from the countryside and had unbound feet. She did not have a name and was called "the Woman from Jiang Family".¹⁴ She worked as cleaner to

the whole school and rang the bell for the start and finish of each class. She also bought and cooked food as well as did all the washing for the whole family. After my arrival she was given a new task: to look after and sleep with me.

I was then a 3-year-old child who found herself suddenly separated from her mother and in a new environment. I used to follow this Jiang woman about, crying all the time: "I want Mama! I want Mama!" A few days later I stopped crying but still repeatedly said to her: "Want Mama!" Another few days passed, and my words were shortened to "Mama! Mama!" And that was how I gradually started to call her "Mama".

My new Mama was from a poor family. When she was only a few months old, she was given to another poor family to be a child daughter-in-law,¹⁵ waiting for her future husband to be born. She experienced more misfortune than other woman who had also been child daughters-in-law, because soon after her husband had grown old enough to be properly married to her, he was press-ganged into the army of a certain warlord,¹⁶ and had not been heard of since.

Her aged parents-in-law would not allow her to remarry because they depended on her to make a living. She had to send every cent of her salary of 5 *yuan* per month to her parents-in-law, otherwise they would not allow her to come to the city to work. She was considered to be lucky because if she had stayed at home, her work would be even heavier.

I and my new Mama could not understand each other at first: I spoke Mandarin while she talked in Jiangxi dialect.

But I could tell that she was pleased to hear me call her Mama. As for me, a 3-year-old child who had lost her own Mama, I now felt quite happy to have found somebody that I could call Mama. The sound of the single syllable *ma* means to children the world over and from time immemorial — mother's love, safety and absolute trust.

My three aunts enjoyed a certain amount of renown in the medium-sized provincial town of Nanchang. In fact, these three gifted and goodlooking daughters of the old scholar Liao were the talk of the town for quite a number of years. My Second Aunt was the most beautiful of the three, and many people came to my grandfather, wanting to act as the go-between¹⁷ for his second daughter. My grandfather refused them all, saying that his daughter was too young.

Actually my Second Aunt was already over 20, and in those days many girls were married off at the age of 17 or 18. The truth was my three aunts and the husband of my First Aunt were main props of the school. They were like the four legs of a table, without one of which the whole would collapse.

My Third Aunt was the most lively and lovable of the three. She often liked to say: "How unlucky I am! In all stories in all countries, whenever and wherever there were three daughters, it was always the third daughter that was the most beautiful. But our family is an exception. The second daughter is the most beautiful, while the youngest is an ugly duck-

ding!"¹⁸ Of course, she knew she was not bad-looking.

My First Aunt was the most gifted and capable. It was rumoured that on her wedding night, taking the example from Su Xiaomei¹⁹ (younger sister of a famous Song Dynasty poet), she only opened her bridal chamber to the bridegroom after he had composed two lines of poetry to match those of her own. I never believed this, because her husband, my uncle, always taught mathematics, physics and chemistry in the school. He would refuse to compose a line of poetry even with a sword at his neck.

My grandfather's school had 4 classes and 5 teachers, namely, my grandfather, my three aunts and my First Aunt's husband. They worked hard and earned little, but they managed to scrape enough money to send cousin Meizhi to the kindergarten.²⁰ In those days only well-to-do families could afford to send their children to such a modern institution.

With Meizhi gone, I had nobody to play with. I could only go to the noisiest classroom, stand by the door and listen to what was going on. It happened that the noisiest classroom was usually the one where my grandfather was teaching ancient Chinese prose. His teaching method was first of all to translate the ancient prose into the vernacular,²¹ and then to recite the ancient prose aloud sentence by sentence with the whole class reciting after him in chorus.

My grandfather taught selections from ancient prose and Tang poetry²² to all the four classes and he never knew he had me as an auditor²³ outside all the four classrooms. I soon

learned all he taught by heart, although I could not read a single character. Sometimes, before going to bed, I would stealthily recite a few passages of ancient prose or poetry to Mama. She was very pleased and started to call me Lingzi²⁴ (which in Chinese means clever child).

Good days don't last long. About a year later, my reciting ancient prose finally caused trouble.

One hot summer day with the temperature in the classrooms over 90 degrees Fahrenheit,²⁵ it was time for end of term examinations. Grandfather was examining girls on their knowledge of Tang poems. His method of examining was to recite the first line of a poem aloud and then call on a student to stand up and finish reciting the poem.

It was the turn for a small thin girl to recite the following poem:

Asleep in spring I did not heed the dawn

Till the birds broke out singing everywhere.

Last night, in the clamour of wind and rain ...

The poor girl could only remember the first three lines. She stuttered trying to recall the fourth and last line.

"How is it that you don't know such an easy poem!" Grandfather shouted at her angrily.

I was sweating with anxiety for her outside the classroom window, I could not help myself and prompted her in a low voice:

*How many flowers have fallen do you suppose?*²⁶

"Who is making trouble outside?" Grandfather shouted

in a loud voice. I became very frightened and ran away to the kitchen to hide behind a pile of firewood. Mama asked me what had happened and I said:

"I caused a lot of trouble and Grandpa will just about kill me!"

When supper time came, I was afraid to go to the table because I did not dare to confront my grandfather. Meizhi came to look for me but I refused to go. Then my First Aunt came and Mama told her the situation. First Aunt dragged me to the supper table, assuring me that grandfather would not beat me. At the supper table, I hung my head, not daring to look up, while First Aunt told everybody everything.

Everybody was surprised and thought the story incredible. I was only 5 years old at the time. Third Aunt said gaily: "I'm going to test you. *The bright moon shone before my bed ...* You follow with the rest."

I thought it was frost on the ground.

I raised my head to gaze at the clear moon,

Bowed my head remembering my old home.²⁷

This four-lined short poem was one of my favorites and I knew it especially well. Then grandfather ordered me to recite passages from *Mencius* and *The Analects of Confucius*.²⁸

"Enough! Enough!" Grandfather time and again stopped my recitation.

Silence fell while everybody waited for grandfather's final judgement. About a minute passed, it seemed to me to be an hour. I didn't dare raise my head. At last, grandfather said:

"Next term she will go to the kindergarten with Meizhi."

From then on, everybody was in a holiday mood during the rest of the supper. They seemed to be celebrating the fact that I had been formally accepted as a member of the family.

To go to the kindergarten, I must have a proper name. My mother had left word that my name was Yisheng,²⁹ which in Chinese means "born abroad". People thought it an unsuitable name for a girl, and when Mama started to call me Lingzi, everybody followed example. At the supper table that night, there was much discussion among my three aunts trying to find two characters similar in sound to Lingzi which could be used as a proper name. Again it was grandfather who made the final decision. He chose the two characters Lingzhi which means "soar aloft".

After his pronouncement about my new name, grandfather picked up a piece of meat with his chopsticks and put it into Meizhi's bowl. This he had been doing every evening. Then, for the first time since I came, he also picked a piece of meat for me. Young as I was, my eyes were filled with tears, a drop of which fell on the small piece of meat.

Teacher Zhao³⁰ was a pretty young woman who taught my class in the kindergarten. She was very good at drawing, so everyday our class had a drawing lesson.

One spring afternoon after class, my First Aunt's husband came to the kindergarten to fetch Meizhi and me home. Teacher Zhao said to him:

"Can I take Liao Lingzhi to my home for a visit? We live

just behind your school. In fact, half of the branches of the peach tree in your backyard stretch into our courtyard. We'll bring Liao Lingzhi back to you before supper. Is that OK?"

"Of course you can. Has she been naughty?"

Teacher Zhao smiled and came over to take my hand, and said: "No. Nothing like that. My elder brother would like to have a look at the child. He used to be a good friend of her father's."

Teacher Zhao had a mother, an elder brother and a younger brother around 10. They all lived in a small room in a neighbourhood compound. There was a marked family resemblance among all its four members. They all had small, thin figures, but their eyes were big and bright. The small room had only space for two wooden beds and a not very big table. All the walls were covered with water colours.

As soon as Teacher Zhao's elder brother saw me, he exclaimed: "Oh! You look so like your father!"

He also told me that he saw my drawing-book last year, which had inspired³¹ him greatly. I asked him what "inspired" meant. He pointed to the pictures hanging on the walls and said: "Most of these pictures were painted after I had seen your drawings."

I said: "How could that be true? These paintings are much better than my drawings."

He led me to their courtyard and said: "Look, your family's peach blossoms are flowering into our courtyard. How beautiful they are this spring." He then took out an envelope from