

ЛЕГКО ЧИТАЕМ ПО-АНГЛИЙСКИ

Лучшие  
истории  
о любви

Best love stories

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комментарии и словарь  
И.С. Маевской*

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В этой книге подобраны лучшие истории о любви, которые превратят изучение английского языка в увлекательное занятие. Вас ждут шесть рассказов классиков английского языка: «Дары волхвов» и «Из любви к искусству» О. Генри, «Последняя красавица юга» и «Три часа между рейсами» Ф. Скотта Фицджеральда, «Соловей и роза» О. Уайльда, «Цвет яблони» Д. Голсуорси. Чтение коротких историй поможет легко и без напряжения погрузиться в мир настоящего английского языка и пополнить словарный запас.

Тексты подобраны для уровня 4 (для продолжающих верхней ступени) и снабжены комментариями. В конце книги предлагается англо-русский словарь.

Издание рассчитано на всех, кто стремится читать на английском языке.

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## **The Gift of the Magi**

*O. Henry*

One dollar and eighty-seven cents. That was all. And sixty cents of it was in pennies. Three times Della counted it. One dollar and eighty-seven cents. And the next day would be Christmas.

There was clearly nothing left to do but flop down on the shabby little couch and howl. So Della did it. Which instigates the moral reflection that life is made up of sobs, sniffles, and smiles, with sniffles predominating.

While the mistress of the home is gradually turning from the first stage to the second, take a look at the home. A furnished flat at \$8 per week. In the vestibule below was a letter-box into which no letter would go, and an electric button from which no finger could coax a ring. Also there was a card bearing the name "Mr. James Dillingham Young."

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 powdered her cheeks. She stood by the window and looked out dully at a grey cat walking a grey fence in a grey 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 happy hours she had spent planning for something nice for him, something just a little bit near to being worthy of the honour of being owned by Jim.

There was a pier-glass<sup>1</sup> between the windows of the room. Suddenly Della stopped before the glass. Her eyes were shining brilliantly, but her face had lost its colour 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 and that King Solomon himself, with all his

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<sup>1</sup> pier-glass — трюмо

treasures, would have envied. The other was Della's hair, which could depreciate all the jewels and gifts that belonged to the Queen of Sheba<sup>1</sup>.

So now Della's beautiful hair fell about her. Shining like a cascade of brown waters, it reached below her knee. And then she did it up again nervously and quickly. Once she faltered for a minute and stood still while a tear or two splashed on the old red carpet.

She put on her old brown jacket and her old brown hat. With a whirl of skirts and with the brilliant sparkle still in her eyes, she ran out of the door and down the stairs to the street.

Where she stopped the sign read: 'Mme Sofronie. Hair Goods of All Kinds.' One Eight up Della ran, and collected herself, panting.

"Will you buy my hair?" asked Della.

"I buy hair," said Madame, large, too white, chilly. "Take your hat off and let's have a sight at the looks of it."

Down rippled the brown cascade.

"Twenty dollars," said Madame, lifting the mass with a practised hand.

"Give it to me quick," said Della.

The next two hours she was ransacking the stores for Jim's present.

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<sup>1</sup> **the Queen of Sheba** — царица Савская

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. It was a platinum fob chain<sup>1</sup> simple in design. 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 78 cents. With that chain on his watch Jim might be properly anxious about the time in any company. Although the watch was grand, he sometimes looked at it on the sly<sup>2</sup> because of the old leather strap that he used in place of a chain.

When Della reached home her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason<sup>3</sup>. She got out her curling irons<sup>4</sup> and lighted the gas and went to work repairing the ravages made by generosity added to love.

Within forty minutes her head was covered with tiny, close-lying curls that made her look wonderfully like a truant schoolboy<sup>5</sup>. She looked at her reflection in the mirror long, carefully, and critically.

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<sup>1</sup> **fob chain** — цепочка для карманных часов

<sup>2</sup> **on the sly** — украдкой

<sup>3</sup> **her intoxication gave way a little to prudence and reason** — её возбуждённость уступила место предусмотрительности и благоразумию

<sup>4</sup> **curling irons** — щипцы для завивки волос

<sup>5</sup> **truant schoolboy** — школьник, прогуливающий уроки

“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<sup>1</sup>. But what could I do — oh! what could I do with a dollar and eighty-seven cents?”

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<sup>2</sup>.

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 of saying little silent prayers 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<sup>3</sup>! He needed a new overcoat and he was without gloves.

Jim stepped inside the door. His eyes were fixed upon Della, and there was an expression in them that she could not read, and it terrified

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<sup>1</sup> **Coney Island chorus girl** — хористка с Кони-Айленда

<sup>2</sup> **chops** — мясные котлеты (куски мяса на кости)

<sup>3</sup> **to be burdened with a family** — быть обременённым семьёй

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.

“Jim, darling,” Della cried, “don’t look at me that way. I had my hair cut off and sold it 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 beautiful, nice gift I’ve got for you.”

“You’ve cut off your hair?” asked Jim, laboriously, as if he had not arrived at that obvious fact yet.

“Cut it off and sold it,” said Della. “Don’t you like me just as well, anyhow? I’m me without my hair, ain’t I?”

Jim looked about the room curiously.

“You say your hair is gone?” he said.

“You needn’t look for it,” said Della. “It’s sold, I tell you — sold and gone, too. It’s Christmas Eve, boy. Be good to me, for it went for you. Maybe the hairs of my head were numbered,” she went on with a sudden serious sweetness, “but nobody could ever count my love for you. Shall I put the chops on, Jim?”

Out of his trance Jim seemed quickly to wake. He embraced his Della. Then he drew a package from his overcoat pocket and threw it upon the table.

“Don’t make any mistake, Dell,” he said, “about me. I don’t think there’s anything in the way of a haircut or a shave or a shampoo that could make me like my girl any less. But if you unwrap that package you may see why you had me going a while at first<sup>1</sup>.”

Della unwrapped the package. And then an ecstatic scream of joy; and then, alas!<sup>2</sup> a quick feminine change to hysterical tears and wails.

There lay The Combs — the set of combs that Della had admired for long in a Broadway window<sup>3</sup>. Beautiful tortoise-shell<sup>4</sup> combs, with jewelled rims<sup>5</sup> — just the shade to wear in the beautiful vanished hair. They were expensive combs, she knew, and she had never hoped to possess them. And now, they were hers, but the tresses that should have adorned the desired adornments were gone.

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<sup>1</sup> **why you had me going a while at first** — почему я сначала так опешил

<sup>2</sup> **alas!** — увы!

<sup>3</sup> **in a Broadway window** — в витрине магазина на Бродвее

<sup>4</sup> **tortoise-shell** — черепаховый

<sup>5</sup> **with jewelled rims** — украшенные по краям драгоценными камнями

But she hugged them to her bosom<sup>1</sup>, and finally she was able to look up with a smile and say: “My hair grows so fast, Jim!”

And then Della leaped up and cried, “Oh, oh!”

Jim had not yet seen his beautiful present. She held it out to him eagerly upon her open palm.

“Isn’t it a dandy<sup>2</sup>, Jim? I hunted all over town to find it. You’ll have to look at the time a hundred times a day now. Give me your watch. I want to see how it looks on it.”

Instead of obeying, Jim tumbled down on the couch and put his hands under the back of his head and smiled.

“Dell,” said he, “let’s put our Christmas presents away and keep them a while. They’re too nice to use just at present. I sold the watch to get the money to buy your combs. And now suppose you put the chops on.”

The magi, as you know, were wise men — wonderfully wise men — who brought gifts to the Babe in the manger. They invented the art of giving Christmas presents. Being wise, their gifts were no doubt wise ones. And here I have related to you the uneventful chronicle of two foolish children in a flat who most

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<sup>1</sup> she hugged them to her bosom — она прижала их к груди

<sup>2</sup> Isn’t it a dandy? — Разве это не прелесть?

unwisely sacrificed for each other the greatest treasures of their house. But in a last word to the wise of these days let it be said that of all who give gifts these two were the wisest. Of all who give and receive gifts, such as they are wisest. Everywhere they are wisest. They are the magi.



## A service of love

*O. Henry*

When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard.

That is our premise. This story shall draw a conclusion from it, and show at the same time that the premise is incorrect. That will be a new thing in logic, and a feat in story-telling somewhat older than the great wall of China.

Joe Larrabee was born in the Middle West pulsing with a genius for pictorial art<sup>1</sup>. At six he drew a picture of the town pump with a citizen passing it hastily. This effort was framed and hung in the drug store window. At twenty he left for New York with a flowing necktie and a capital tied up somewhat closer.

Delia Caruthers did things in six octaves so promisingly in a pine-tree village in the South

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<sup>1</sup> a genius for pictorial art — талант живописца

that her relatives chipped in enough in her chip hat for her to go “North” and “finish.”

Joe and Delia met in an atelier where a number of art and music students had gathered to discuss Wagner, music, Rembrandt’s works, pictures, wall paper and Chopin.

Joe and Delia fell in love with each other and in a short time were married — for (see above<sup>1</sup>), when one loves one’s Art no service seems too hard.

Mr. and Mrs. Larrabee began housekeeping in a flat. It was a lonesome flat — something like the A sharp<sup>2</sup> way down at the left-hand end of the keyboard. And they were happy; for they had their Art, and they had each other. Flat-dwellers shall confirm my dictum that theirs is the only true happiness. If a home is happy it cannot fit too close<sup>3</sup>.

Joe was painting in the class of the great Magister. His fees are high; his lessons are light — his high-lights have brought him fame. Delia was studying under Rosenstock — you know his reputation as a disturber of the piano keys.

They were very happy as long as their money lasted. So is every — but I will not be cynical. Their aims were very clear and defined. Joe was

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<sup>1</sup> **see above** — СМОТРИ ВЫШЕ

<sup>2</sup> **A sharp** — ЛЯ ДИЕЗ (НОТА)

<sup>3</sup> **it cannot fit too close** — ОН НЕ МОЖЕТ БЫТЬ СЛИШКОМ ТЕСНЫМ

to become capable very soon of turning out pictures that old gentlemen with thin side-whiskers and thick wallets would fight in his studio for the privilege of buying. Delia was to become familiar and then contemptuous with Music, so that when she saw the orchestra seats and boxes unsold she could have sore throat and lobster in a private dining-room and refuse to go on the stage.

But the best, in my opinion, was the home life in the little flat — the ardent, voluble chats after the day's study; the cozy dinners and fresh, light breakfasts; the interchange of ambitions; the mutual help and inspiration; and — overlook my artlessness — stuffed olives and cheese sandwiches at 11 p.m.

But after a while Art grew weak. Money was lacking to pay Mr. Magister and Herr Rosenstock their prices. When one loves one's Art no service seems too hard. So, Delia said she must give music lessons to keep the chafing dish bubbling<sup>1</sup>.

For two or three days she went out looking for pupils. One evening she came home excited.

"Joe, dear," she said, joyfully, "I've a pupil. And, oh, the loveliest people! General — General A. B. Pinkney's daughter — on Seventy-first street. Such a splendid house, Joe — you should see the front door! And inside! Oh, Joe, I never saw anything like it before.

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<sup>1</sup> to keep the chafing dish bubbling — чтобы удержаться на плаву

“My pupil is his daughter Clementina. I dearly love her already. She’s a delicate thing — dresses always in white; and the sweetest, simplest manners! Only eighteen years old. I’m to give three lessons a week; and, just think, Joe! \$5 a lesson. I don’t mind it a bit; for when I get two or three more pupils I can resume my lessons with Herr Rosenstock. Now, smooth out that wrinkle between your brows, dear, and let’s have a nice supper.”

“That’s all right for you, Dele,” said Joe, “but how about me? Do you think I’m going to let you hustle for wages while I wander in the regions of high art? By no means! I guess I can sell papers or lay cobblestones<sup>1</sup>, and bring in a dollar or two.”

Delia came and hung about his neck.

“Joe, dear, you are silly. You must keep on at your studies. It is not as if I had quit my music and gone to work at something else. While I teach I learn. I am always with my music. And we can live as happily as millionaires on \$15 a week. You mustn’t think of leaving Mr. Magister.”

“All right,” said Joe. “But I hate for you to be giving lessons. It isn’t Art. But you’re a trump and a dear<sup>2</sup> to do it.”

“When one loves one’s Art no service seems too hard,” said Delia.

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<sup>1</sup> **lay cobblestones** — укладывать булыжник

<sup>2</sup> **you’re a trump and a dear** — ты умница и прелесть