

ЛЕГКО ЧИТАЕМ ПО-АНГЛИЙСКИ

Бёрнетт Фрэнсис Ходжсон
МАЛЕНЬКИЙ ЛОРД
ФАУНТЛЕРОЙ

Burnett Frances Hodgson

LITTLE LORD
FAUNTLEROY



Издательство АСТ
Москва

I

Cedric himself **knew nothing about it all**¹. He knew that his papa was an Englishman; but then his papa had died when he was so little that he could not remember very much about him, except that he was big, and had blue eyes and a long mustache. Since his papa's death, Cedric had found out that it was best not to talk to his mamma about him. When his father was ill, Cedric had been sent away, and when he had returned, everything was over. His mother was pale and thin, and all the **dimples**² disappeared from her pretty face, and her eyes looked large and sad, and she was dressed in black.

"Dearest," said Cedric (like his papa always called her) — "dearest, is my papa better?"

"Yes, he is well," she sobbed; "he is quite, quite well, but we—we **have no one left but each other**³. No one at all."

Then, little as he was, he understood that his big, handsome young papa would not come back any more. His mamma was an orphan, and quite alone in the world when his papa had married her. She was very pretty, and was living as a companion to a rich old lady who was not kind to her. One day Captain Cedric Errol saw her and she looked so sweet and innocent and so sad that the Captain could not forget her. And after many strange things had happened, they knew each other well and loved each other very much, and were married, although their marriage **brought them the ill-will**⁴ of several persons. The one who was most angry of all was the Captain's father. He lived in England, and was a very rich and important old **nobleman**⁵, with a very bad temper and a very strong dislike to America and Americans. He had two sons older than Captain Cedric; and it was the law that the elder of these sons should **inherit**⁶ the family title and estates. If the eldest son died, the next one would be **heir**⁷; so, though he was a member of such a great family, it was a small chance that Captain Cedric would be very rich.

But it happened so that **Nature had given gifts**⁸ only to the youngest son. He was beautiful, brave and generous, and had the kindest heart in the world, and seemed to have the power to make everyone

¹ **knew nothing about it all** — ничего об этом не знал

² **dimples** — ямочки на щеках

³ **we have no one left but each other** — у нас с тобой больше никого нет

⁴ **brought them the ill-will** — навлек на них неприязнь

⁵ **nobleman** — дворянин, аристократ.

⁶ **to inherit** — наследовать

⁷ **heir** — наследник

⁸ **Nature had given gifts** — природа одарила талантами

love him. And it was not so with his elder brothers; they were not handsome, or very kind, or clever. The old Earl, their father, was constantly disappointed and **humiliated**¹ by them; his heir was no honor to his noble name. It was in one of his **fits of petulance**² that he sent the third son off to travel in America; **he thought he would send him away for a while**³, so that he should not be made angry by constantly contrasting him with his brothers, who were at that time giving him a lot of trouble.

But, after about six months, he began to feel lonely, and secretly wished to see his son again, so he wrote to Captain Cedric and ordered him home. The letter he wrote crossed on its way a letter the Captain had just written to his father, telling of his love for the pretty American girl, and of his intended marriage; and when the Earl received that letter he was very angry. For an hour he raged like a tiger, and then he sat down and wrote to his son, and ordered him never to come near his old home, nor to write to his father or brothers again. The Captain was very sad when he read the letter; he loved England, the home where he had been born, and even his **bad-tempered**⁴ father. He had a small house on a quiet street, and his little boy was born there, and everything was so good and cheerful, in a simple way, that he was never sorry for a moment that he had married the rich old lady's pretty companion just because she was so sweet and he loved her and she loved him. She was very sweet, indeed, and her little boy was like both her and his father. In the first place, he was always well, and so he never gave anyone trouble; in the second place, he had such a sweet temper and was so **charming**⁵ that he was a pleasure to everyone; and in the third place, he was so beautiful to look at. And his manners were so good, for a baby, that it was **delightful**⁶ to make his **acquaintance**⁷. He seemed to feel that everyone was his friend. And every month of his life he grew more handsome and more interesting. As he grew older, he had a great many unusual little ways which amused and interested people greatly. When he was quite little, he learned to read; and after that he used to lie on the hearth-rug, in the evening, and read aloud.

His greatest friend was the grocery man at the corner. His name was Mr. Hobbs, and Cedric admired and respected him very much. It was quite surprising how many things they found to talk about—the Fourth of July, for instance. It was, perhaps, Mr. Hobbs who gave him

¹ **humiliated** — униженный

² **fits of petulance** — приступы раздражительности

³ **he thought he would send him away for a while** — он решил отослать его на время

⁴ **bad-tempered** — вспыльчивый

⁵ **charming** — очаровательный

⁶ **delightful** — восхитительный

⁷ **acquaintance** — знакомство

his first interest in politics. Mr. Hobbs was fond of reading the newspapers, and so Cedric heard a great deal about what was going on in Washington; and Mr. Hobbs would tell him whether the President was doing his duty or not. And once, when there was an election, he found it all quite grand, and probably but for Mr. Hobbs and Cedric the country might have been wrecked.

Mr. Hobbs took him to see a great **torchlight procession**¹, and many of the men who carried torches remembered afterward a **stout**² man who held on his shoulder a handsome little shouting boy, who waved his cap in the air.

It was not long after this election, when Cedric was between seven and eight years old, that the very strange thing happened which made such a wonderful change in his life.

He was in the middle of their conversation with Mr. Hobbs, who was telling him how he hated lords and marquises, calling them **grasping tyrants**³, when Mary, an old servant of Mrs. Erroll, appeared.

She looked almost pale and as if she were excited about something.

“Come home, darling,” she said; “the mistress is waiting for you.”

“Does she want me to go out with her, Mary?” he asked. “Good morning, Mr. Hobbs. I’ll see you again.”

When he reached his own house there was a **coupe**⁴ standing before the door and someone was in the little **parlor**⁵ talking to his mamma. A tall, thin old gentleman with a sharp face was sitting in an armchair. His mother was standing nearby with a pale face, and he saw that there were tears in her eyes.

“Oh! Ceddie!” she cried out, and ran to her little boy and caught him in her arms and kissed him in a worried way. “Oh! Ceddie, darling!”

The tall old gentleman stood up from his chair and looked at Cedric with his sharp eyes. He rubbed his thin chin with his skinny hand as he looked.

¹ **torchlight procession** — факельное шествие

² **stout** — крепкий

³ **grasping tyrants** — жадные тираны

⁴ **coupe** — двухместная карета

⁵ **parlor** — гостиная

“And so,” he said at last, slowly,—“and so this is little Lord Fauntleroy.”

II

There was never a more amazed little boy than Cedric during the week that followed; there was never such a strange or unreal week. In the first place, the story his mamma told him was a very interesting one. He was **obliged**¹ to hear it two or three times before he could understand it. It began with earls: his grandpapa, whom he had never seen, was an earl; and his eldest uncle, if he had not been killed by a fall from his horse, would have been an earl, too, in time; and after his death, his other uncle would have been an earl, if he had not died suddenly, in Rome, of a fever. After that, his own papa, if he had lived, would have been an earl, but, since they all had died and only Cedric was left, it appeared that HE was to be an earl after his grandpapa's death—and for the present he was Lord Fauntleroy.

When Mr. Havisham—who was the family lawyer of the Earl of Dorincourt, and who had been sent by him to bring Lord Fauntleroy to England—came the next day, Cedric heard many things. But, somehow, it did not comfort him to hear that he was to be a very rich man when he grew up. He was worried about his friend, Mr. Hobbs, and he went to see him at the store soon after breakfast.

He found him reading the morning paper, and he came to him with a serious look.

“Hello!” said Mr. Hobbs. “Morning!”

“Good morning,” said Cedric.

He did not climb up on the high chair as usual, but sat down on a cracker-box and was so silent for a few moments that Mr. Hobbs finally looked up **inquiringly**² over the top of his newspaper.

“Hello!” he said again.

Cedric gathered all his strength of mind together.

“Mr. Hobbs,” he said, “do you remember what we were talking about yesterday morning?”

¹ **obliged** — обязанный

² **inquiringly** — вопросительно

“Well,” replied Mr. Hobbs,—“it seems to me it was England.”

“Yes,” said Cedric; “but just when Mary came for me, you know?”

“You said,” he continued, “that you wouldn’t let lords and marquises to come to your shop and sit around on your cracker-barrels.”

“So I did!” returned Mr. Hobbs, stoutly. “And I meant it. Let them try it—that’s all!”

“Mr. Hobbs,” said Cedric, “one is sitting on this box now!”

Mr. Hobbs almost jumped out of his chair.

“What!” he exclaimed.

“Yes,” Cedric announced, **with due modesty**¹; “I am one—or I am going to be. I won’t lie to you. Mr. Havisham came all the way from England to tell us about it. My grandpapa sent him.”

Mr. Hobbs stared wildly at the innocent, serious little face before him.

“Who is your grandfather?” he asked.

Cedric put his hand in his pocket and carefully took out a piece of paper.

“I couldn’t easily remember it, so I wrote it down on this,” he said. And he read aloud slowly: “‘John Arthur Molyneux Errol, Earl of Dorincourt.’ That is his name, and he lives in a castle—in two or three castles, I think. And my papa, who died, was his youngest son; and I shouldn’t have been a lord or an earl if my papa hadn’t died; and my papa wouldn’t have been an earl if his two brothers hadn’t died. But they all died, and there is no one but me, and so I have to be one; and my grandpapa has sent for me to come to England.”

“Wha—what did you say your name was?” Mr. Hobbs asked.

“It’s Cedric Errol, Lord Fauntleroy,” answered Cedric. “That was what Mr. Havisham called me. He said when I went into the room: ‘And so this is little Lord Fauntleroy!’”

¹ **with due modesty** — с должной скромностью

“Well,” said Mr. Hobbs, “I’ll be—jiggered!”¹”

This was an exclamation he always used when he was very much astonished or excited. He could think of nothing else to say just at that puzzling moment.

“You think,” said Mr. Hobbs, “there’s no getting out of it?”

“I’m afraid not,” answered Cedric. “My mamma says that my papa would wish me to do it. But if I have to be an earl, there’s one thing I can do: I can try to be a good one. I’m not going to be a tyrant. And if there is ever to be another war with America, I will try to stop it.”

His conversation with Mr. Hobbs was a long and serious one. Once having got over the first shock, Mr. Hobbs was not as angry as might have been expected; he had asked a great many questions. As Cedric could answer but few of them, he tried to answer them himself, and explained many things in a way which would probably have astonished Mr. Havisham, if he could have heard it.

When Mr. Havisham first told Mrs. Errol what he had come for, she turned very pale.

“Oh!” she said; “will he have to be taken away from me? We love each other so much! He is such a happiness to me! He is all I have. I have tried to be a good mother to him.” And her sweet young voice trembled, and the tears rushed into her eyes.

The lawyer cleared his throat.

“I am obliged to tell you,” he said, “that the Earl of Dorincourt is not—is not very friendly toward you. He is an old man, and his **prejudices**² are very strong. His plan is that Lord Fauntleroy will be educated under his own supervision; that he will live with him. The Earl is attached to Dorincourt Castle, and spends a great deal of time there. He is a victim to **inflammatory gout**³, and is not fond of London. Lord Fauntleroy will, therefore, be likely to live at Dorincourt. The Earl offers you a home Court Lodge, which is not very far from the castle. He also offers you a suitable income. Lord Fauntleroy will be allowed to visit you; the only **stipulation**⁴ is that you will not visit him or enter the

¹ I’ll be jiggered! — Будь я проклят!

² prejudices — предрассудки

³ inflammatory gout — воспалительная подагра

⁴ stipulation — условие

park gates. You see you will not be really separated from your son, and I assure you, madam, the terms are not so harsh. The advantage of such surroundings and education as Lord Fauntleroy will have, I am sure you must see, will be very great.”

She went to the window and stood with her face turned away for a few moments, and he saw she was trying to calm herself down.

“Captain Errol was very fond of Dorincourt,” she said at last. “He loved England, and everything English. It was always a grief to him that he was parted from his home. He would wish—I know he would wish that his son should know the beautiful old places, and be brought up in such a way as would be suitable to his future position.”

Then she came back to the table and stood looking up at Mr. Havisham very gently.

“My husband would wish it,” she said. “It will be best for my little boy. I know—I am sure the Earl would not be so unkind as to try to teach him not to love me; and I know—even if he tried—that my little boy is too much like his father to be harmed. He has a warm, faithful nature, and a true heart. So long as we may see each other, I will not suffer very much.”

“Madam,” he said aloud, “I respect your consideration for your son. He will thank you for it when he is a man. I assure you Lord Fauntleroy will be most carefully guarded, and every effort will be used to guarantee his happiness.”

“I hope,” said the tender little mother, in a rather broken voice, “that his grandfather will love Ceddie. The little boy has a very tender nature; and he has always been loved.”

Mr. Havisham cleared his throat again. He could not quite imagine old Earl loving anyone very much. He knew, too, that if Ceddie were at all a credit to his name, his grandfather would be proud of him.

“Lord Fauntleroy will be comfortable, I am sure,” he replied. “It was with a view to his happiness that the Earl desired that you should be near enough to him to see him often.”

He did not think it would be **discreet**¹ to repeat the exact words the Earl had used, which were in fact neither polite nor friendly.

¹ **discreet** – разумно

When the door opened, Mr. Havisham actually hesitated for a moment before looking at Cedric. It would, perhaps, have seemed very strange to a great many people who knew him, if they could have known the interesting sensations that passed through Mr. Havisham when he looked down at the boy, who ran into his mother's arms. He recognized in an instant that he was one of the finest and handsomest little fellows he had ever seen.

Cedric **did not know he was being observed**¹, and he only behaved himself in his ordinary manner. He shook hands with Mr. Havisham in his friendly way when they were introduced to each other, and he answered all his questions with the **unhesitating readiness**² with which he answered Mr. Hobbs.

That morning Mr. Havisham had quite a long conversation with Cedric. He asked Mrs. Errol to leave him and Cedric together. Mr. Havisham sat in an armchair on one side of the open window; on the other side was another still larger chair, and Cedric sat in that and looked at Mr. Havisham. There was a short silence after Mrs. Errol went out, and Cedric seemed to be studying Mr. Havisham, and Mr. Havisham was certainly studying Cedric. He could not make up his mind as to what an elderly gentleman should say to a little boy, who wore short **knickerbockers**³ and red stockings on legs which were not long enough to hang over a big chair when he sat well back in it.

But Cedric relieved him by suddenly beginning the conversation himself.

“Do you know,” he said, “I don't know what an earl is?”

“Don't you?” said Mr. Havisham.

“No,” replied Ceddie. “And I think when a boy is going to be one, he need to know it. Don't you?”

“Well—yes,” answered Mr. Havisham.

“Would you mind,” said Ceddie respectfully—“would you mind explaining it to me? What made him an earl?”

¹ **did not know he was being observed** — не знал, что его изучали

² **unhesitating readiness** — решительная готовность

³ **knickerbockers** — бриджи