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编著

当代美国短文赏读

——走近自然

上海交通大学出版社



要 目 录

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走近自然

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上海交通大学出版社

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内 容 提 要

动物是人类的亲密朋友。读完本书,你会在精神上获得多方面的享受,会欣赏到文风各异的篇章,会提高英语阅读水平。

全书分鹰击长空、绿化人间、“杞人”忧天、天灾新说、亲如家人、大象悲歌、救死扶伤、宠物珍闻、海上奇观、亲近自然、旅游记趣、人类挚友等 12 个篇章。每个篇章的各个单篇文章在正文之前有导读;正文的难词均作注释;正文后特设三项内容:Headache Sentences(难句解疑,包括译文及注解);Useful Words & Phrases(从正文中选取并作点评演示);Structural Issues(主要对文中出现的最具实用性的句型作举一反三的解析)。

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——走近自然

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前言

在美国首都度过的第一个清晨是那样地令人回味。

夜投华盛顿的一家旅馆(14th Street, N. W. /Crown Plaza),我已看不清四周景致。翌日清晨,步出旅馆大堂,左侧便见一个绿化地带。面积有一个足球场大,巨树参天,林木苍绿。我小跑入内,在一株大树下晨练。忽然,几只毛茸茸的小家伙“嚙、嚙”地窜到眼前的树干上,我惊退三步,定神细看,是几只小松鼠!虚惊过后,我继续晨练,小松鼠越聚越多,在树干上攀上爬下,好不热闹;个个圆睁双眼,对我抱有十分的好奇。不远处,一群灰鸽在水泥道上信步觅食。身后的喷泉哗哗响着,白色的水柱冲高五、六米。空气湿润,纯净如洗。此刻,我神清气爽,胸怀旷荡,不敢相信这竟是一种身居“闹市”的感受——大自然,近在咫尺!

偌大一个好去处,竟是空荡荡的,好久才见一金发老妇在园内溜达,手牵一狗。久闻:在美国,没有孩子的家庭不稀奇,而没有宠物的家庭倒是稀奇的。晨练后,我同她闲聊,谈得“入港”时,我向老妇证实此言。不料,老妇人竟提高嗓门指着她的爱犬说:Yes! How can I live without my Peak!?

走马看花,得来的感受固然新鲜,但是,静读此书,您会更真切看见当代美国人如何“走近自然”。编辑此书,我一次次被书中的真实故事打动——或挥泪作叹、或拍案称奇、或独坐静思。

20多年前,国门刚刚打开。那时,对“四个现代化”的憧憬似乎就是林立的摩天高楼。记得有一部电影叫《庐山恋》,男主角在含鄱口写生,居然“无中生有”地画上了无数高楼,以示对“摆脱贫穷,实现四化”的渴望。

光阴荏苒,今日之国人已经戏称城市中林立的高楼为“钢筋水

泥丛林”；“回归自然”之心日炽。沪上一家旅行社标新立异，举办“罗布泊旅游”节目，开始担心“客源”不足，不想后来旅行社门庭若市，旅行团不得不“超编”开拔。

人类社会演变在继续。精神和物质的文明程度越高，人们的日常生活“走近自然”的程度也就越高。

美国的“宠物现象”是一种值得研究的属于文化范畴的现象，它在相当程度上折射了人和自然的关系。

然而，此间种种现象对我们认识“宠物现象”产生了令人扼腕的误导：

若干大款，精神空乏，素养有限，出重金购买宠物后，或娇纵于豪宅；或招摇于街市。其心“穷”得只有两个字：时髦。

打开《现代汉语词典》(1996 修订本)，第 176 页赫然对“宠物”注释如下：指家庭豢养的受人喜爱的小动物，如猫、狗等。在编辑此书之前，笔者对此不会持异议。现在读之，却觉得这个释义实在失之宽泛，失之浮浅。

对美国社会的“宠物现象”缺乏认识，没有研究，就很难全面了解美国。读者朋友，本书又为您打开了一扇窗户。

以下两段文字不谋而合，用了同样的动词(teach)：... she taught me... / Smoky had taught us... 您能相信其中的 she / Smoky 是一条狗和一只猫吗？

a. In the ten years I had Megan, she taught me that the elemental bonds of nature are as powerful as anything the scientific establishment has to offer—and more mysterious. (摘自 My Four-Legged Partner in Healing)

b. I thought of the many things Smoky had taught us about trust, affection and struggling against the odds when everything says you can't win. She reminded us that it's not what's outside that counts—it's what's inside, deep in our hearts. (摘自 The Ugliest Cat in the World)

在 The Pig Who Loved People 一文中,家住纽约的 Bette 病休在家。她得了怪病:agoraphobia。词典对此词的解释是:[心]广场恐怖;陌生环境恐怖。一日,友人送来一头宠物小猪。Bette 和小猪朝夕为伴,不久竟康复如初。

“老鼠过街,人人喊打”。且慢,请读一读这位美国人痛失“爱鼠”后写下的文字:

As I took her almost weightless body in my hand and carried it out to the meadow, I felt a genuine sadness. She had given me much. She had stirred my imagination and opened a window on a Lilliputian world(小人国).

I was not sad for Mouse because of her death, but sad for me because I knew I would miss her.

国人鄙视“狗”久矣!《汉语成语词典》收入了这样7个成语:狗苟蝇营;狗急跳墙;狗尾续貂;狗眼看人低;狗仗人势;狗彘不如;狗嘴里吐不出象牙。

然而,本书记录的四条“狗”,个个都是好样的!

a. 昔闻导盲犬(guide dogs),今知助聋犬(hearing-ear dog)。Montana 州的 Ellen 自幼失聪,社会的歧视扭曲了她的性格。然而,“助聋犬”Meko 方便了她的生活,而且重塑了她的个性!

b. Megan 跟随 Allen(一名兽医)10 年。Allen 行医,Megan 则成了忙前忙后的得力助手。Allen 如此赞颂 Megan:She seemed to possess a special gift for reaching out to others, an unlimited capacity to love.

c. Richard 是美国的一位新闻工作者,无妻室儿女,孑然一身,惟有一犬(Ernie)伴其左右。Richard 的日常工作和精神生活都离不开 Ernie,Richard 如此评说他和 Ernie 的关系:

When people asked me if I owned Ernie, I was jarred by the question, for I couldn't imagine owning Ernie any more than I could imagine owning a wife or child.

d. Olden 是一只德国牧羊狗——世界最享盛名的优良犬种。它成了美国 Oklahoma 州 Altus 市的警察 Miller 的助手。

在一次追捕杀人犯的行动中, Miller 突然发现自己面对凶犯黑洞洞的枪口!

说时迟,那时快:... suddenly a thundering bark rang out and Olden burst around the corner, tearing straight for Madden. The gunman fired and fled.

Miller 因此得救,而 Olden 却倒在血泊之中!

本书的另一主编 Rosemary 是这样看待美国的宠物现象的:

And, yes, pets do play an important part in American life. I'd say that for many of us they soften the rough edges of dealing with the world by being our loyal, loving friends who bring a graceful simplicity and affection to our quiet times.

说来令人不信,本书有一点惊人的相似之处:

本书的许多“宠物”是主人在其九死一生的危急时刻拯救出来的。最典型的是 Smoky (the ugliest cat)。一日,作者和三个孩子在一个正在焚烧的垃圾坑前见到:

Suddenly a large cardboard box, which had been wired shut, burst into flames and exploded. With a long, piercing meow (猫叫声), the animal imprisoned within shot into the air like a flaming rocket and dropped into the ash-filled crater (坑).

纸箱被火点燃,箱中的猫拼死跳出,比喻“(shot into the air) like a flaming rocket”不可谓不精彩,但是,读者却笑不出来。因为,它毕竟是一条生命!

烟熏火燎,猫已不成其猫,然而,“我们”还是把它带回了家。此后,就演绎出人生一个难得的故事。

大洋彼岸的这些“偶然”,岂不同此间“善有善报”之说相吻合?

除了“宠物”外,本书收入了不少野生动物的见闻和故事,它们

同样感人,同样发人深省。

Colorado 州现仅存 falcon (游隼)6 对! 因此,州野生动物部门雇人去观察这些游隼以便提出保护对策。受雇人极为敬业,在人迹罕至的烟囱岩,对其中一对 falcon 作了长达两个多月的跟踪观察。

雌隼 Jenny 失踪了,雄隼 Arthur 陷入无限痛苦。作者绘其形、写其神、拟其音,其哀其戚,令人动容:He (指雄隼 Arthur)did not hunt or eat. Unmoving, he made a forlorn statue on the cliff from sunrise to sunset.

Migrants of the Sky (苍天候鸟)一文写美国马萨诸塞州一受伤的孤雁如何获得“爱情”,并繁衍后代的动人故事。35 年过去,在此诞生的黑雁已达 500 多只,蔚为壮观的一群!

人间世代传唱优美动人的“梁祝”爱情。殊不知,动物世界也有忠贞不渝的“伉俪”之爱,让人窃羨的“比翼”之情!

全球知名的 Oria Douglas-Hamilton 女士“爱象如子”,她在 Rescue of A Newborn(拯救幼象)一文中以饱含柔情的笔触述说一个拯救幼象的故事。当她亲见获救的幼象嬉戏于丛林时,竟悲从中来。她坦露心迹,令读者不忍卒读:

Would she survive to enjoy ripe old age like Virgo, or would she be gunned down and made into something to sell—a stool from her foot, gloves from her ears, a chess set from her tusks and a paperweight from the tip of her trunk?

无独有偶,Playful Genius of the Sea(大海中顽皮的精灵)一文作者的笔饱蘸着对海豚的爱,此爱在文章收尾时走向高潮。遗憾的是,炽热的爱也同样带着几分无奈、几多伤感、几许惶惑:

... suddenly, the sea around us exploded with dolphins. A dozen of them leaped and twisted, showing us with spray. They are so powerful and graceful and exuded such joy that we roared with delight. For about 20 minutes, they wove their magic around us. Then, as suddenly as they had come, they were gone. The sea now

seemed empty and lifeless. Even the sun's sparkle (光辉) on the waves appeared dull. Is this, we wondered, what the world would be like without dolphins?

“自然”是一个大概念。除动物外，本书不忘对植物以及别的自然现象的涉猎。翻开本书，您会乐大自然所赐之乐，忧大自然所怀之忧！

英语毕竟不是我们的母语，而大量阅读则是我们全面提高英语实践能力的一条真正捷径。本套丛书的编撰目的就是为我国读者提供佳句连篇、美词叠出的最新美国短文。

在获得丰富信息的同时，细读本书的另一种享受是：细咀慢嚼地道出色的表达。

A Promise of Spring (春之希望) 的作者思想深邃，文笔纯熟，风格清俊！文章开头如此写雪景：

Nothing. No tracks but my own are stitched into the dusting of fresh snow, white as birch bark, that fell during the night.

Nothing 一词，独立篇首。暗示：天地间只剩下白茫茫一片！后句的动词 stitched 写活了雪地里的一行脚印！stitched：用得让人叫绝！

A Wing and a Prayer (死而复生一黄蜂) 一文似一微缩盆景，然读后方知其妙，回味更叹其绝！作者仅叙事，无议论，却让读者心潮澎湃，思绪飞越。

英语数词除用于夸张外，尚可用于量化事实，令叙事清晰，概念凸现。What Good Is a Tree? (树有何益?) 一文作者极谙此道，全篇对数词的运用如鱼得水。请读下句：

A leafy canopy shades about 30 percent of the average American city. But in many cities only one tree is replaced for every four that die.

句中的三个数词 (30 percent / one tree / every four) 令表达精神抖擞。

本书对所有难句不仅提供了美国教授的 paraphrase,而且附有汉译。读者不妨对英译汉和英汉对比这些命题作若干思考。

譬如,英汉各自的表达优势何在?

笔者以为,英语的优势似在其对词汇的转义运用。动词 thaw [注:thaw 一词出现在本书的 A Promise of Spring(春之希望)一文中,对该词的详析请参见该文后的 Useful Words & Phrases 一栏]的本义是“(冰、雪等)融化;(江河等)解冻”。而以下两句中 thaw 的活用令汉语“自叹弗如”!

a. After a good meal, he began to thaw out and tell us more about himself. (他称心地吃了一餐后,变得活跃起来,又告诉了我们有关他个人的事。)

b. Offer the visitor a cup of tea. That will thaw him out. (给客人倒杯茶,这会使他变得不那么拘束。)

汉语是一种意境语言。几个汉字的简单排列,就能出意境,出画面,出情趣。这使英语难以望其项背!

本书的 House of Butterflies(蝴蝶屋)有这样一段十分优美的文字:

In the humid heat of a tropical forest, only the trickle of a gentle waterfall disturbs the hush as a kaleidoscope of butterflies performs an endless aerial ballet among the palms, oleander and hibiscus overhead. (在潮湿闷热的热带森林中,只有潺潺流水打破这里的沉寂。此时,五彩缤纷的蝴蝶在头顶上的棕榈树、夹竹桃和木槿树间表演着永不谢幕的空中芭蕾。)

原句里的 endless aerial ballet 直译是:永无休止的空中芭蕾。而相应的汉译表述可以是:永不谢幕的空中芭蕾。“永不”谢幕”两字,是 endless 无可比拟的。因为,“谢幕”两字足以在我们的头脑里营设一幅画面,渲染一种气氛!查《汉英词典》,“谢幕”的英语说法则“淡如水”: answer a curtain call; response to a curtain call; acknowledge the applause.

这又是一本中美学者通过 E-mail 携手合作而成的读物。Rosemary Adang 执教于美国西雅图的 Highline Community College。现代通讯的杰作使我们频频联络,反复磋商,愉快合作,在较短的时间里完成了本书的选材、编写等项工作。

两位主编在编辑此书的过程中可谓“字斟句酌”。例如,在本书的 House of Butterflies 一文中,出现了单词 Postpak。笔者发 E-mail 向 Rosemary 求教。Rosemary 作复如下:

Ronggui,

“Postpak” also appears to be a brand name for a type of packaging. I am not familiar with it, so I called our postal information office but to no avail. The clerk there wasn't familiar with it, so she looked up the term in a glossary of postal terminology, but she didn't find it there. She said that she thought it might be a brand name of a product used by a private carrier. The use of the term in context is fairly clear—a brand name for a highly protective packaging product.

张韧弦同学为本书超出大学英语四级词汇的生词作了注释,同时还以高度负责的精神对全书的初稿作了反复校改。上海译文出版社词典编辑室主任张福基先生为本书的若干疑难词汇提供了汉译。没有他们的参与,本书就难以以现在的面目问世!在此特向他们表示最诚挚的谢意。

限于编者的水平,书中欠当之处在所难免,恳望广大读者不吝赐教。

毛荣贵

1998 年初春

于上海交大东川花苑

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鹰击长空



Chimney Rock's Proud Falcons

By Marcy Cottrell Houle

现代人,尤其是闹市居民,距离动物世界实在太遥远了!如果只是从书本、电视或画册上去了解动物,那简直是人生的一大缺憾!

友人读罢此文认为其可读性为“上”,而笔者则想将它定为“上上”!

什么是 Falcons?《英汉大词典》的释义:隼(注:读音相当于“笋”),游隼。《现代汉语词典》对“隼”的释义是:鸟类的一科,翅膀窄而尖,嘴短而宽,上嘴弯曲并有齿状突起。飞得很快,善于袭击其他鸟类,是凶猛的鸟。

本文所讲是美国 Colorado 州的游隼: the American peregrine falcon。它在美国人的心目中地位不凡: Because of their beauty, power and courage, peregrines have long been a symbol of freedom.

不幸的是,在美国 Colorado 州现仅存 six pairs! 因此: The state's Division of Wildlife hired me to observe the falcons and recommend ways to manage them. (州野生动物部门雇我去观察这些游隼以便提出保护它们的方法)。作者虽受雇而去,但其工作却极为投入,在人迹罕至的烟囱岩,对 falcon 作了两个多月的观察,留下了精彩的文章!

6月初,“我”来到了烟囱岩,饶有情趣地给游隼命名: I named the male Arthur... Naturally his mate... Jenny.

从以下一句我们得知, falcon \neq eagle, 而且两者是天敌:

On my sixth day, he circled high in the air, then shot like an arrow toward a golden eagle many times his size to drive this enemy from his territory.

作者在目击了一场隼鹰之间的“空战”后，感叹道：

The falcons' flight had been pure energy, a bolt of lightning.

当读者正忘情地欣赏它们夫唱妇随、共哺后代的平静生活时，不幸发生了：

As the chicks grew, Jenny and Arthur intensified their hunting. But on June 20, Jenny disappeared. As the days passed with no sign of her, my apprehension mounted.

10 日后，仍不见 Jenny 归。以下的描写真揪读者的心！

By July 1, Arthur was acting peculiarly. He was hunting less and, after feeding the nestlings, would perch alone for hours.

人类有口诉真爱，动物无言亦有情！

Jenny 的失踪使 Arthur 陷入无限痛苦。作者绘其形、写其神、绘其音，其哀其戚，令人动容：He did not hunt or eat. Unmoving, he made a forlorn statue on the cliff from sunrise to sunset.

“我”不得不驱车 10 英里，通过电话向我的 supervisor 报告这一情况。不料，一家小餐馆的女主人向“我”传达了“噩耗”：

Near our house is a telephone pole where a falcon sat almost every day. One morning, though, I noticed feathers scattered around the base of the pole. I'll bet somebody killed it.

于是，读者与作者产生了共鸣：The situation at Chimney Rock began to seem hopeless.

果如所料：Arthur disappeared as well. It was over, I thought.

且慢，奇迹发生了：Suddenly I saw him! He was bringing food. A catharsis had occurred overnight. For the next weeks he hunted with almost palpable intensity. Arthur was not defeated!