

家庭篇

American Family Life

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走近美国人的生活



Approaching American Life

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前言

为帮助广大青年学生和英语爱好者学习地道的美国英语,并了解美国人的大众文化与日常生活,以及美国主要大都市的特点和风景名胜,我们编写了《走近美国人的生活》这套丛书。本丛书的《社交篇》、《家庭篇》和《教育篇》的英文材料均选自最近几年全美各地报刊杂志的生活专栏,以咨询问答的形式编排,内容涉及家庭生活、人际关系、恋爱婚姻、身体健康和教育理念等各个方面。每篇短文后面附若干中文注释,主要解释该文中的背景和语言点,包括俚语、谚语、行话以及特殊口语表达方式等方面的难点和重点。《旅游篇》详细介绍了美国 20 个主要大都市的地貌、经济、文化、风俗、宗教及风景名胜,内容选自美国城市导游介绍,文中部分英文生词后加了中文,文后附有中文注释,以帮助读者深透理解材料的内容并学到一定的语言知识。

本丛书选材广泛、内容丰富、语言精辟、用词优美、原汁原味,从几个侧面展示了美国人日常生活中的喜怒哀乐、风土人情及都市名胜。所选材料难度适

中,适合于具有中等以上英语水平的读者阅读和学习。

本丛书是作为一种休闲读物来编写的。读者阅读此书,既是一种消遣,又可以学习美国的语言和文化知识,还可以了解美国人的生活状况及都市名胜,实在是一举多得。

本丛书的编著者有的曾在美国留学数年,有的正在美国工作,对美国的社会、文化及民情均做过认真的研究。编写这套丛书,就是想把美国人生活的几侧面原原本本地介绍给国内读者,使大家不出国门便能“走近美国人的生活”。

编者



• 1 •

DEAR MRS. ADVICE:

My husband is a **letteraholic**¹. He writes to old girlfriends he hasn't seen in years and women he finds in coffee shops. He **romances**² them with his poetry, and sometimes, he sends roses. Recently, I caught him pulling feathers from my **canary**³ and sending them as sensitive gifts from "Nature Boy." Last week, I found a letter he hadn't mailed. It was an invitation to "have coffee and get better acquainted." That's the first step. The second step is lunch. Then, he tries to get them in bed. He keeps a post office box for some of the women's letters, and others come to our home with no **return address**⁴. Several times a week, I will pick up the phone, and the caller will hang up. Of course, I know it's one of his lady friends. I have accepted the fact that my husband will never change and **am resigned to**⁵ a life that





includes his chasing women. I just wish these women would **give me a break**⁶. If they call and I answer, they can ask for my husband, and I will get him, no questions asked. The same goes for those letters without return addresses. Women who **slip around with**⁷ married men should be aware that the wives almost always know what's going on. So, please **give us credit for**⁸ having some sense. We have subscribed to the Mrs. Advice's formula, "Ask yourself, would your life be better with him or without him?" Most of us have decided we would be better off with him.

MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

Many women would throw the **bum**⁹ out and suffer financial consequences that can be devastating, especially if there are children. My applause for handling this situation in the way that is best for you.

②



注释

1. letteraholic 沉湎于写信的人;有写信癖好的人(aholic 是美语中一个常见后缀,表示“沉湎于…的人”。例如:sleepaholic 瞌睡虫,beeraholic 啤酒狂,teloholic 电视迷,filmoholic 影迷,alcoholic 酒鬼,workaholic 工作狂)
2. to romance 追求;谈情说爱



3. canary 金丝雀
4. return address 寄信人地址
5. to be resigned to 准备承受或容忍某事物
6. give me a break 饶了我吧;别骚扰我
7. slip around with 跟…打得火热;和…鬼混
8. give sb. credit for 给某人以赞扬或肯定
9. bum 懒汉;对某件事物特别迷恋的人





• 2 •

DEARE MRS. ADVICE:

Unlike some of your **overeducated readers**¹ in the Boston area, I enjoy your “how we met” stories. Mine is different. It’s the story of how I met the wrong man. There’s a lesson here, and I hope you will print my letter. Maybe it will be of help to some other **vulnerable woman**². I wish I had seen one like it in your column—it might have saved me a ton of grief. We met at a party. He told me his name, and made me spell it to make sure I would remember it. He asked if I wanted a drink. When I said, “I’d like a beer,” he told me I would have to stop drinking beer if I wanted to hold his interest. He then asked how late he could call me. I said, “Midnight.” He called at 1 a. m. We started to date. Soon, he insisted we cut back on visiting my parents and my friends. They were “boring.” Before I met his par-



ents for the first time, he gave me orders—“**Don ’ t wear your best outfit**³. I don ’ t want them to think you are extravagant or vain about your appearance, or clothes crazy.” When things turned serious and he asked me to marry him, I said I would love to have an **engagement ring**⁴. He said, “Engagement rings don ’ t mean anything. They are just pieces of jewelry that women like to **show off**⁵.” He also refused to wear a wedding ring, saying, “Real men don ’ t wear wedding rings.” I thought that statement was odd. I knew several “real men” who wore wedding rings. Like a fool, I married him, anyway. After 20 years of **being put down**⁶ and belittled, I divorced him. Looking back, I can see the pattern of an **emotional abuser**⁷. Please let your women readers know that men who belittle them are in a very real sense abusers. I realize now that I was the victim of such a man, and didn ’ t even know it.

MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

Thank you for pointing out that **a controlling man is an emotional abuser**⁸. Too often, the woman is flattered that he is so interested **in every facet of her life**⁹. When he becomes overbearing, she continues to hang on to him, because she is afraid of being alone. If you see



yourself in this letter, ask yourself that well-known Mrs. Advice question, “Are you better off with him, or without him¹⁰?” An honest answer could save you a lifetime of grief¹¹.



注释

1. overeducated readers 受过太多教育的读者
2. vulnerable woman 易受诱骗的女性
3. Don't wear your best outfit. 别穿最好的服装。
4. engagement ring 订婚戒指
5. show off 炫耀
6. be put down 被奚落
7. emotional abuser 情感上的虐待者
8. A controlling man is an emotional abuser. 支配型的男人都是情感虐待者。
9. in every facet of one's life 生活的每个方面
10. Are you better off with him, or without him? 你是有他更好还是没他更好?
11. An honest answer could save you a lifetime of grief. 诚实的回答能帮你避免终生的悲伤。



• 3 •

DEARE MRS. ADVICE:

My ex-husband and I divorced 18 years ago. He told me he no longer loved me and that **family life was not for him**¹. He agreed to **counseling**², but, of course, it was a waste of time. The counselor later told me it was obvious that I wanted counseling to save the marriage, but my ex agreed to it only to appease me, and intended on getting a divorce once the charade was over. We had been married 14 years and had two children, ages 7 and 5. It was not easy for me. My ex remarried six months after the divorce was final. I married again 10 years later. My 23-year-old daughter recently asked her father why we were divorced. He replied, "Because your mother was **having an affair**³." I am furious with him for telling such a lie. Fortunately, my daughter did not believe him, but it's possible he has



repeated that same lie to everyone he knows. I get angry every time I think about it, but don't know if I should confront him. Please, tell me what to do.

MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

Don't waste your time and energy on a **confrontation**⁴. It has been said that a lie can travel halfway around the world before the truth can put on its shoes. You now know that your ex is a **cad**⁵ and a liar. What more is there to learn? A confrontation would probably result in a denial, plus more "he said ... she said." Who needs it? Congratulate yourself for **unloading the bum**⁶, and enjoy your freedom.



注释

1. Family life was not for him. 家庭生活对他来说不适合。
2. counseling 咨询
3. have an affair 有婚外情
4. confrontation 当面对质
5. cad (美俚)无赖
6. unload the bum 摆脱那个混蛋



• 4 •

DEARE MRS. ADVICE:

I have been married for eight years, I have two children, and my marriage has been in trouble for at least two years. **We are totally incompatible¹**. He wants to try to work things out, but I haven't loved him for two years. I have met another man, though I am not involved with him, and **he is everything my husband is not²**. I would not want another serious relationship if I get divorced, but it's nice to know I would not lack for male companionship. How do I know if I should end my marriage? I don't like the feeling of knowing it would destroy my children.

DEAR READER:

If your kids really are the main concern, then you focus on what is best for them. If they are younger and won't be leaving home for many years, you need to de-



cide what will be least crushing to their happiness and development. If you wish them to have successful intimate partnerships as adults, then you'll work on your own now. It may not be fixable, but I guarantee it can be better than what you have now. **As for Mr. Perfect, what I do know is that a new relationship does not have a fair chance when it's commenced in the middle of a shaky one³.** Back away from the glow.



注释

1. We are totally incompatible. 我们根本合不来。
2. He is everything my husband is not. 他拥有所有我丈夫所没有的品德。
3. As for Mr. Perfect, what I do know is that a new relationship does not have a fair chance when it's commenced in the middle of a shaky one.
至于要找十全十美的男人,我所知道的是:现有的感情关系还在摇摆不定之中就去寻求新的感情寄托是不大可能的。



• 5 •

DEARE MRS. ADVICE:

I am a 40-year-old **professional woman**¹, married to a wonderful man. After **numerous failed attempts**² to become pregnant, we have decided to **adopt**³ two infants from China. The problem is my 74-year-old widowed father. I am his **only child**⁴, and he is completely against our adopting children. Dad has told us repeatedly that if we go through with the adoptions, **he will cut us out of his will**⁵ and have no further contact with me or my husband. I have told my father that his money is not important to me, but I would like his approval so he can enjoy being a grandfather. He will not listen to anything I say, and **whenever we bring up the subject, he explodes in anger**⁶. We expect the adoption to go through within a few months. Should we continue to talk to Dad about this in the hope that he will change his mind, or should we





just keep quiet?

MRS. ADVICE SAYS:

It sounds as if Grampa's mind is not only closed, but **nailed shut**⁷. Say nothing more about the subject. I'll bet when the child puts his **chubby arms**⁸ around Grampa's neck, he will **thaw out**⁹. If this doesn't happen, don't press the issue. Just figure it is his loss.



注释

1. professional woman 职业女性
2. numerous failed attempts 不计其数的失败尝试
3. adopt 抱养
4. only child 独生子女(复数: only children)
5. He will cut us out of his will. 他将从遗嘱中删去我们的名字。
6. Whenever we bring up the subject, he explodes in anger. 每当我们提起这个话题时,他总是勃然大怒。
7. be nailed shut 被钉死
8. chubby arms 胖乎乎的小手
9. thaw out (态度)变缓和