

ENGLISH

天津外国语学院

《文化译丛》编辑部 编译

中学生英汉对照读物

CHINESE

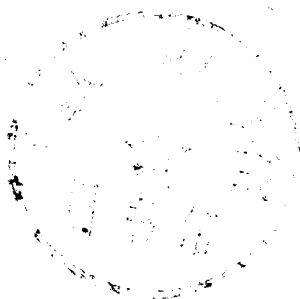
天津人民出版社



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天津人民出版社 出版

(天津市赤峰道124号)

天津新华印刷一厂印刷 天津市新华书店发行

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787×1092 毫米 32开本 5.5印张 125千字

1983年3月第1版 1983年3月第1次印刷

印数：1—27,800

统一书号：7072·1264

定 价：0.46 元

出版说明

本书是根据中学生学习外语的需要而编写的英汉对照读物,选材特别注意思想性、知识性和趣味性。原文选自美国《读者文摘》,语言规范、描写生动。全书共收十六篇文章,其中有世界著名文学家、科学家的生平传记,优美、寓意深刻的小故事以及结合生活实际的科普知识小品。译文大都由富有教学经验和具有相当翻译水平的大学教师执笔,注意了既忠实于原文又不“硬译”“死译”,并经天津外国语学院刘缘子、邢惕夫两位同志校阅。这本对照读物不仅能提高读者对英语的理解和汉语的表达能力,从英汉两种语言的对比中借鉴翻译技巧,还能扩大知识面,丰富文化生活,加强精神文明的修养。

编 者

一九八二年七月

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The Day I Met Midnight

It was my first day on the ranch in California's San Fernando Valley. I was 20, that spring of 1912, and I was going to learn to be a cowboy. In my new cowboy clothes and hat, I felt sure that everybody was looking at me. I sat on the top rail of the corral and watched the cowboys as they roped their horses and led them outside to be saddled.

A white mustang among the horses still in the corral looked good to me. He was a beauty — fine head and neck, good legs, strong body. Just my kind of horse, I thought, and I wondered whose he was.

Just then the boss walked up. "Can you ride, kid?" he asked me.

The boss's name was George. He was six feet tall and his cowboy hat made him seem even taller. He had looked at me the day before as though he didn't think much of me. But he finally hired me, on trial, at \$30 a month and meals and bed.

"Yes, some," I said.

I was careful not to say more than that. Back home

on our farm in Wisconsin my father had taught us boys what he knew about horses. He had made us train them without using saddles— he said they became gentler that way.

So I thought I knew something about horses. But these men knew a lot more than I did. Also, one of them had said to me the night before: "Sometimes these cowboys aren't very nice to a newcomer. They'll put you on a horse that will try hard to throw you."

The Kid on Trial

The boss spoke again. "Anything there you'd like to ride, kid?"

I pointed to the white mustang. "He looks good to me," I said.

George threw a rope. The mustang turned quickly, but too late. The loop went around his neck and George pulled him over to us. Then he tied a short piece of rope around the mustang's neck and handed the other end of the rope to me.

"We call him Midnight", George said. "When you get him cleaned up, take him down to the barn and I'll give you a saddle, a bridle and a rope."

I led Midnight outside and tied him to the rail, then got a brush. I did pretty well cleaning him until I started to brush his left leg. His kick was quick and sudden, but I jumped back in time. I stepped around and looked

at his head. He was looking me right in the eye, and I knew he wasn't afraid.

You can tell what a horse is like by looking at his head. Midnight had small ears, and his wide-spaced eyes meant he had good sense. There was a bold, proud look in his eyes, too. With a head like that, he couldn't be really bad, I thought. But he was at war against men.

"That's good enough," George said. He was on his horse with his rope in his hand. The loop was open and ready to throw.

I walked to Midnight's head and untied him. It was then I noticed that no one was on horseback except George; the others were busy with their saddles or bridles. They were waiting to see whether I would lead or ride the mustang to the barn.

I tied a rope around Midnight's nose, and before he knew it I was on his back. He went away from the corral in jumps and kicks, and suddenly the men were all in their saddles with George in the lead. Their shouts were enough to frighten any horse but somehow I kept Midnight's head up, and the ride ended at the barn. I quickly got off his back. I wanted no more riding until I got a saddle on him.

I stepped to his head to take the rope off his nose. As I put my hand on the rope, he rose up on his hind legs and struck me in the chest with his front hoofs. Before I could get up from the ground where I landed,

he came after me, his ears back and his teeth bared. I rolled out of reach under a nearby wagon.

Then I saw the reason for George's open loop. He roped that horse and pulled him in before I got my first full breath. He watched while I brushed the dirt off my clothes.

"Are you all right?" he asked.

"Yes, " I said. "Nice roping."

"Would you rather have another horse today and ride this one sometime when you feel better?"

I was angry all the way to my heels. "No. If I can ride that animal without a saddle, I can ride him all day. Show me a saddle and bridle. We are going to know each other a little better."

George turned to one of the cowboys. "Shorty, get a saddle and bridle. We'll start Slim and Midnight on their way to getting to know each other."

Well! Now it was "Slim" — not "Kid." Shorty got down from his horse and passed me with a grin. I tried to grin back. He returned with a good saddle and bridle. Midnight was difficult all through the job but George held his head and Shorty helped, and we finally got him saddled.

"Want me to hold him while you get on?" George asked me.

My left shoulder and arm felt almost all right again. I looked at Midnight. "I don't think so," I said. "Maybe

I can make him think it isn't important if I just step into the saddle." George smiled and took his hand off Midnight's bridle.

In the Saddle

Quietly, with the reins in my left hand, I took hold of the left side of the bridle, put my right hand on the saddle horn, and pulled Midnight toward me. As he started to turn, I went into the saddle. And, strangely enough, Midnight didn't seem to think it was important.

Then Joe, the foreman, gave us our orders for the day. We were to ride over the ranch and bring in every longhorn we could find. Someone wanted to buy all the longhorns the ranch would sell.

So we went to work. Midnight fought the reins the whole way, but he was surefooted and quick. We had already brought in a number of longhorns when suddenly I saw, rising above some brush, the longest pair of horns I had ever seen. As we came closer, the animal ran away from us.

Now a longhorn can run like a deer. My respect for Midnight rose higher when he ran ahead of that big longhorn, turned him and kept him going through the brush in the right direction.

Suddenly the longhorn jumped over something. We were going too fast to stop. We would either hit whatever it was or jump. I dug my heels into Midnight and

lifted the reins so that he would jump. But he chose that moment to fight the reins again. He ran right into the cactus that the longhorn had jumped over.

By the time I got Midnight stopped in an open sandy place, my right knee felt as though it were on fire from the cactus spines in it. I thought the horse was probably finished. Fortunately, I was wearing gloves and could pick the spines out of my knee immediately; they go in deeper if you move around. Then I got out of the saddle.

Midnight was full of spines from his nose to his hoofs. I knew from the pain in my knee how he must be feeling. He stood still, though, and looked at me with a question in his eyes that brought tears into mine.

Just then Joe, the foreman, rode up. He looked Midnight over carefully. "We can't get them out without tying him down," he said. "And if we do that, they'll just work into him deeper until they kill him. Better take your saddle off, Slim." He drew his gun.

Hope for Midnight?

"No, Joe, wait," I said. "I got him into this. I want to get him out if I can. Just stand by and let me try."

For a minute the foreman didn't say anything. "All right," he said finally. "But stay out of line with his head, because the first bad move he makes, I'm going to put a bullet in him."

I reached out to Midnight's nose and picked off two long spines. He moved his head a little with the pain and looked surprised, but he made no move to strike back at me. He stood quietly while I continued to work.

By the time I got his face and neck clean, his ears had come forward. On down I worked and he didn't move. Joe sat on his horse quietly, but now and then I heard him say something to himself.

Finishing the Job

Down to Midnight's front hoofs, back on his sides and under his body, down his hind legs — he stood as still as a stone. As I finished each part, I took off my gloves and ran my hands over him to make sure I had gotten all the spines. Finally I stepped around to Midnight's head and looked at Joe. He took a deep breath and put away his gun.

"Thank you," I said, and I meant it.

"It's the strangest thing I ever saw," said Joe. He looked at his watch, then off to where the men were moving the longhorns to the corrals. "It's time for dinner. Let's go."

As we rode, he told me a little about Midnight's history. He had been one of the wild horses that ran around in the country beyond the ranch. And he had never stopped fighting. This morning, Joe said, was the first time he had ever seen Midnight use his front hoofs

and teeth on a man though. "I suppose it was the rope you tied around his nose that made him do it."

"I suppose it was," I said. "He just doesn't like men."

"No, he doesn't like men. And if you had been treated the way he has, since he first met men, you wouldn't like them either."

Fun at Dinner

We watered our horses and led them to the rail where the other horses were. Then we went to eat dinner.

When I entered the big dining room, I was greeted with shouts. Everybody had something to say about my riding. The parts of the saddle and the bridle were carefully explained to me. I was told what the reins were for and how to use them.

Nothing was said about the cactus. But Krimpy, the ranchhouse joker, added: "If you're going to follow a longhorn into the brush, ride the longhorn and give your horse a rest."

Because they were joking with me, I knew that I was no longer on trial with them. It was their way of saying: "Well done! You're one of us now."

After dinner we started a game of ball. I was standing far back, shouting at Krimpy to throw the ball to me. Suddenly everybody stopped and looked at me. I

thought they were going to play a joke of some kind and stepped back a little farther. I received a push in the back that almost threw me to the ground.

A Friendly Visit

I turned and saw Midnight, standing quietly looking at me. He had walked away from the other horses, his reins following along behind him on the ground.

I said, very gently, "Midnight, what are you doing here?"

He walked forward two steps and put his head against my chest where, earlier in the day, he had struck me with his hoofs. He began to move his head slowly up and down against my chest. My hands came up and found the soft places behind his ears.

I could hear the cowboys coming closer to us and could hear their words of wonder. At one time or another, Midnight had given most of them a lot of trouble, and they couldn't believe their eyes.

A gentle laugh from George broke the quiet. "Well, Slim, it looks as though you and Midnight got to know each other, all right."

"Yes," was all I could say. Tears came to my eyes again.

Joe broke it up with, "Let's go, men." Then, as they turned away, he said a last word. "I don't want to see any of you putting a rope on Midnight He's Slim's horse

from now on."

I am an old man now, and those days are far gone. But I can see Midnight as clearly now as I did that wonderful day he put his head against my chest to thank me and to say that he was sorry and wanted to be friends. He gave me the love of his wild heart as none of the many other horses I've known ever could.

骏马“午夜”

一九一二年春，我初到加利福尼亚州圣费尔南多山谷里的牧场。那时我二十岁，正打算学着当一名牛仔。我头戴一顶新的牛仔帽，身穿一套崭新的牛仔服，觉得人人都在瞅着我。我坐在畜栏的栏杆上，看着别的牛仔用套索把马套住，然后把它们牵出去装上马鞍。

畜栏里还留着一匹白野马，我看着挺不错的。它真是一匹骏马，脑袋和颈部长得很漂亮，四条腿也很出色，而且身体壮健。我想，正是我喜欢的那种马，不知它是谁的。

在这个当口，老板走过来问我道：“小家伙，会骑马吗？”

老板名叫乔治，身高六英尺，再加上那顶牛仔帽，就更显得高大了。头一天他看着我的那副神气，好象有点瞧不起我，可到底还是雇用了我做试工，三十块钱一个月，管吃管住。

“会一点儿，”我说。

我留神别说得过了头。在威斯康星州我们老家的农场里，父亲曾把他所知道的有关马的知识传授给了我们男孩子。他让我们驯马时别用马鞍子，他说这样它们会更驯良一些。

所以，我觉得我对马多少还懂一些，但这些人懂得比我多得多。况且，头一天晚间有一个牛仔对我说：“这些牛仔们有时候有点欺生，他们会让你骑上一匹总想摔人的马。”