

ENGLISH PARTY

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戴 L 字架的劳迪 Rowdy of the Cross L

(美) B. M. Bower 著

阳 程 王 莹 主编

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责任编辑:胡丽娟

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著 者	<i>B. M. Bower</i> (美)
主 编	阳 程 王 莹
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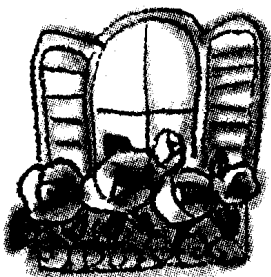
前 言

当今时代,英语已成为国际社会的标准语言,成为走向世界的通行证。英语阅读则是人们开阔眼界、及时获取信息、把握机会,甚至增添生活乐趣的手段。而对英语原版名著的阅读无疑是感受浓郁的异域文化,了解多姿多彩的风土人情,并掌握地道英语的最佳途径。

为此,我们精选了这一套英文原版名著,纯正地道的英语,将会带您进入一个绚丽多彩的世界。

读者在阅读英语原著时应该注意:

可以使用词典,但不要逢词必查。没有词典的帮助阅读会非常困难,但是,只有把心思用在意义的解读上时,读者才能摆脱词汇量的束缚,才会知道哪些词该查,哪些词不该查,哪些地方该详细地看,哪些地方该跳过去;也只



有在抛开了积累词汇学习英语等基本想法之后,才能够做到词汇的高度积累,语法体系的高度完善,英语水平的高度发展。

本丛书选文精心,可读性强,相信读者在阅读后英语水平一定会有大幅度的提高。

编 者

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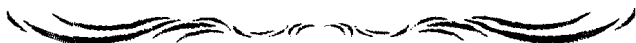
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CHAPTER 1 Lost in a Blizzard.

1

“Rowdy” Vaughan—he had been christened Rowland by his mother, and rechristened Rowdy by his cowboy friends, who are prone to treat with much irreverence the names bestowed by mothers—was not happy. He stood in the stirrups and shook off the thick layer of snow which clung, damp and close-packed, to his coat. The dull yellow folds were full of it; his gray hat, pulled low over his purple ears, was heaped with it. He reached up a gloved hand and scraped away as much as he could, wrapped the long-skirted, “sour-dough” coat around his numbed legs, then settled into the saddle with a shiver of distaste at the plight he was in, and wished himself back at the Horseshoe Bar.



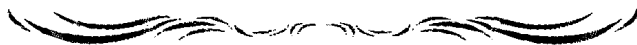


Dixie, standing knee-deep in a drift, shook himself much after the manner of his master; perhaps he, also, wished himself back at the Horseshoe Bar. He turned his head to look back, blinking at the snow which beat insistently in his eyes; he could not hold them open long enough to see anything, however, so he twitched his ears pettishly and gave over the attempt.

“It’s up to you, old boy,” Rowdy told him resignedly. “I’m plumb lost; I never was in this damn country before, anyhow—and I sure wish I wasn’t here now. If you’ve any idea where we’re at, I’m dead willing to have you pilot the layout. Never mind Chub; locating his feed when it’s stuck under his nose is his limit.”

Chub lifted an ear dispiritedly when his name was spoken; but, as was usually the case, he heard no good of himself, and dropped his head again. No one took heed of him; no one ever did. His part was to carry Vaughan’s bed, and to follow unquestionably where Vaughan and Dixie might lead. He was cold and tired and hungry, but his faith in his master was strong; the responsibility of finding shelter before the dark came down rested not with him.

Vaughan pressed his chilled knees against Dixie’s ribs, but





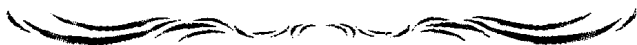
the hand upon the reins was carefully non-committal; so that Dixie, having no suggestion of his master's wish, ventured to indulge his own. He turned tail squarely to the storm and went straight ahead. Vaughan put his hands deep into his pockets, snuggled farther down into the sheepskin collar of his coat, and rode passive, enduring.

They brought up against a wire fence, and Vaughan, rousing from his apathy, tried to peer through the white, shifting wall of the storm. "You're a swell guide—not," he remarked to the horse. "Now you, you hike down this fence till you locate a gate or a corner, or any darned thing; and I don't give a cuss if the snow does get in your eyes. It's your own fault."

3

Dixie, sneezing the snow from his nostrils, turned obediently; Chub, his feet dragging wearily in the snow, trailed patiently behind. Half an hour of this, and it seemed as if it would go on forever.

Through the swirl Vaughan could see the posts standing forlornly in the snow, with sixteen feet of blizzard between; at no time could he distinguish more than two or three at once, and there were long minutes when the wall stood, blank and shifting, just beyond the first post.





Then Dixie lifted his head and gazed questioningly before him, his ears pointed forward—sentient, strained—and whinnied shrill challenge. He hurried his steps, dragging Chub out of the beginnings of a dream. Vaughan straightened and took his hands from his pockets.

Out beyond the dim, wavering outline of the farthest post came answer to the challenge. A mysterious, vague shape grew impalpably upon the strained vision; a horse sneezed, then nickered eagerly. Vaughan drew up and waited.

4

“Hello!” he called cheerfully. “Pleasant day, this. Out for your health?”

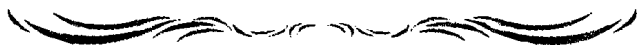
The shape hesitated, as though taken aback by the greeting, and there was no answer. Vaughan, puzzled, rode closer.

“Say, don’t talk so fast!” he yelled. “I can’t follow yuh.”

“Who—who is it?” The voice sounded perturbed; and it was, moreover, the voice of a woman.

Vaughan pulled up short and swore into his collar. Women are not, as a rule, to be met out on the blank prairie in a blizzard. His voice, when he spoke again, was not ironical, as it had been; it was placating.

“I beg your pardon,” he said. “I thought it was a man. I’m





looking for the Cross L; you don't happen to know where it is, do yuh?"

"No—I don't," she declared dismally. "I don't know where any place is. I'm teaching school in this neighborhood—or in some other. I was going to spend Sunday with a friend, but this storm came up, and I'm—lost."

"Same here," said Rowdy pleasantly, as though being lost was a matter for congratulation.

"Oh! I was in hopes—"

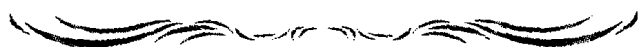
"So was I, so we're even there. We'll have to pool our chances, I guess. Any gate down that way—or haven't you followed the fence?"

5

"I followed it for miles and miles—it seemed. It must be some big field of the Cross L; but they have so very many big fields!"

"And you couldn't give a rough guess at how far it is to the Cross L?"—insinuatingly.

He could vaguely see her shake of head. "Ordinarily it should be about six miles beyond Rodway's, where I board. But I haven't the haziest idea of where Rodway's place is, you see; so that won't help you much. I'm all at sea in this snow." Her voice was





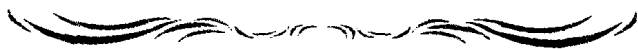
rueful.

“Well, if you came up the fence, there’s no use going back that way; and there’s sure nothing made by going away from it.—that’s the way I came. Why not go on the way you’re headed?”

“We might as well, I suppose,” she assented; and Rowdy turned and rode by her side, grateful for the plurality of the pronoun which tacitly included him in her wanderings, and meditating many things. For one, he wondered if she were as nice a girl as her voice sounded. He could not see much of her face, because **6** it was muffled in a white silk scarf. Only her eyes showed, and they were dark and bright.

When he awoke to the fact that the wind, grown colder, beat upon her cruelly, he dropped behind a pace and took the windy side, that he might shield her with his body. But if she observed the action she gave no sign; her face was turned from him and the wind, and she rode without speaking. After long plodding, the line of posts turned unexpectedly a right angle, and Vaughan took a long, relieved breath.

“We’ll have the wind on our backs now,” he remarked. “I guess we may as well keep on and see where this fence goes to.”





His tone was too elaborately cheerful to be very cheering. He was wondering if the girl was dressed warmly. It had been so warm and sunny before the blizzard struck, but now the wind searched out the thin places in one's clothing and ran lead in one's bones, where should be simply marrow. He fancied that her voice, when she spoke, gave evidence of actual suffering—and the heart of Rowdy Vaughan was ever soft toward a woman.

"If you're cold," he began, "I'll open up my bed and get out a blanket." He held Dixie in tentatively.

"Oh, don't trouble to do that," she protested; but there was that in her voice which hardened his impulse into fixed resolution.

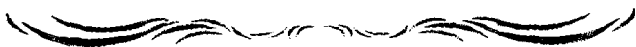
7

"I ought to have thought of it before," he lamented, and swung down stiffly into the snow.

Her eyes followed his movement with a very evident interest while he unbuckled the pack Chub had carried since sunrise and drew out a blanket.

"Stand in your stirrup," he commanded briskly, "and I'll wrap you up. It's a Navajo, and the wind will have a time trying to find a thin spot."

"You're thoughtful." She snuggled into it thankfully. "I was cold."

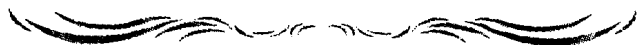




Vaughan tucked it around her with more care than haste. He was pretty uncomfortable himself, and for that reason he was the more anxious that the girl should be warm. It came to him that she was a cute little schoolma'am, all right; he was glad she belonged close around the Cross L. He also wished he knew her name—and so he set about finding it out, with much guile.

"How's that?" he wanted to know, when he had made sure that her feet—such tiny feet—were well covered. He thought it lucky that she did not ride astride, after the manner of the latter-day young woman, because then he could not have covered her so completely. "Hold on! That windy side's going to make trouble. He unbuckled the strap he wore to hold his own coat snug about him, and put it around the girl's slim waist, feeling idiotically happy and guilty the while. "It don't come within a mile of you," he complained; "but it'll help some."

Sheltered in the thick folds of the Navajo, she laughed, and the sound of it sent the blood galloping through Rowdy Vaughan's body so that he was almost warm. He went and scraped the snow out of his saddle, and swung up, feeling that, after all, there are worse things in the world than being lost and hungry in a blizzard, with a sweet-voiced, bright-eyed little schoolma'am who





can laugh like that.

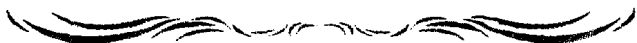
"I don't want to have you think I may be a bold, bad robber-man," he said, when they got going again. "My name's Rowdy Vaughan—for which I beg your pardon. Mother named me Rowland, never knowing I'd get out here and have her nice, pretty name mutilated that way. I won't say that my behavior never suggested the change, though. I'm from the Horseshoe Bar, over the line, and if I have my way, I'll be a Cross L man before another day." Then he waited expectantly.

"For fear you may think I'm a—a robber-woman," she answered him solemnly—he felt sure her eyes twinkled, if only he could have seen them— "I'm Jessie Conroy. And if you're from over the line, maybe you know my brother Harry. He was over there a year or two."

9

Rowdy hunched his shoulders—presumably at the wind. Harry Conroy's sister, was she? And he swore. "I may have met him," he parried, in a tone you'd never notice as being painstakingly careless. "I think I did, come to think of it."

Miss Conroy seemed displeased, and presently the cause was forthcoming. "If you'd ever met him," she said, "you'd hardly forget him." (Rowdy mentally agreed profanely.) "He's the best





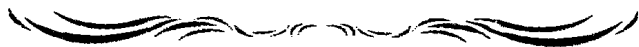
rider in the whole country—and the handsomest. He—he's splendid! And he's the only brother I've got. It's a pity you never got acquainted with him."

"Yes," lied Rowdy, and thought a good deal in a very short time. Harry Conroy's sister! Well, she wasn't to blame for that, of course; nor for thinking her brother a white man. "I remember I did see him ride once," he observed. "He was a whirlwind, all right—and he sure was handsome, too."

Miss Conroy turned her face toward him and smiled her pleasure, and Rowdy hovered between heaven and—another place. He was glad she smiled, and he was afraid of what that subject might discover for his straightforward tongue in the way of pitfalls. It would not be nice to let her know what he really thought of her brother.

"This looks to me like a lane," he said diplomatically. "We must be getting somewhere; don't you recognize any landmarks?"

Miss Conroy leaned forward and peered through the clouds of snow dust. Already the night was creeping down upon the land, stealthily turning the blank white of the blizzard into as blank a gray—which was as near darkness as it could get, because of the snow which fell and fell, and yet seemed never to find an abiding-





place, but danced and swirled giddily in the wind as the cold froze it dry. There would be no more damp, clinging masses that night; it was sifting down like flour from a giant sieve; and of the supply there seemed no end.

"I don't know of any lanes around here," she began dubiously, "unless it's—"

Vaughan looked sharply at her muffled figure and wondered why she broke off so suddenly. She was staring hard at the few, faint traces of landmarks; and, bundled in the red-and-yellow Navajo blanket, with her bright, dark eyes, she might easily have passed for a slim young squaw.

Out ahead, a dog began barking vaguely, and Rowdy turned eagerly to the sound. Dixie, scenting human habitation, stepped out more briskly through the snow, and even Chub lifted an ear briefly to show he heard.

"It may not be any one you know," Vaughan remarked, and his voice showed his longing; "but it'll be shelter and a warm fire—and supper. Can you appreciate such blessings, Miss Conroy? I can. I've been in the saddle since sunrise; and I was so sure I'd strike the Cross L by dinner-time that I didn't bring a bite to eat. It was a sheep-camp where I stopped, and the grub didn't

