



普通高等教育“十一五”国家级规划教材

英语专业精品教材

CONTEMPORARY COLLEGE ENGLISH 现代大学英语

总主编：杨立民 主 编：李又文

第二版 Second Edition

1 2 3 4

阅 读
Companion
Reader

外语教学与研究出版社

FOREIGN LANGUAGE TEACHING AND RESEARCH PRESS



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第二版编者说明

在国内，英语专业的学生长久以来一直有一门专业必修课就是泛读。这是一门相对于精读课而言的阅读课程。“泛”与“精”相比，显然前者侧重于量多、面广，求理解而非精细分析；而后者则强调量少而精，求细致透彻的研读，词、句、章节的推敲揣摩。泛读通常被认为是精读的一种补充，是在精读“美文”的基础上泛泛而读各式各样的“杂文”。这种定义上的泛读在人们日常的阅读习惯中所占的比例是极大的。

精读课对学好英语的重要性毋庸置疑。但是精读的量毕竟有限，从精读课本上学到的词语、句型、语法等众多的语言现象都需要在泛读中得到巩固。泛读量大、面广的特色还决定了泛读过程中能吸收大量的语言知识和文化知识，从而为听、说、写、译等各种语言技能的全面训练奠定基础。由此可见，泛读对学好英语的作用是举足轻重的。

然而，读什么、怎样读才能达到泛读的目的呢？编者认为：首先，泛读的题材、体裁要尽可能多样，文章的语言要地道、漂亮，揭示的主题要耐人寻味；更主要的是文章本身要能激发读者的阅读兴趣，令读者爱不释手，每每想起还会反复阅读。以上要求也正是我们选编本书的原则。如何读才能事半功倍涉及到培养良好的阅读习惯的问题。首先，阅读需要长期坚持，需要读够一定量，经常读；其次，泛读的方法应有别于精读，阅读过程中应尽可能避免不必要的中断，不要养成一碰到生词就查词典的习惯，而应逐渐培养根据上下文猜测词义的能力，以求连贯地、快速地、大量地阅读。所以，好的阅读教材应能够在阅读材料的难点部分为读者提供帮助，排除一些最主要的理解障碍，帮助学习者养成良好的阅读习惯。应广大师生的要求，第二版中新增了作家简介、课后练习及参考答案。

本书是“现代大学英语”系列教材中与精读教材配合使用的整套四册阅读的第二册，入选的每篇文章都经过了精心筛选。无论是从类型、题材的多样性，还是文章的趣味性、可读性而言，这些材料都称得上是精品。其中有多篇文章的作者是世界知名的作家，如：Ernest Hemingway 的“A Clean, Well-Lighted Place”，Roald Dahl 的“Lamb to the Slaughter”，William S. Maugham 的“Mr. Know-All”，Guy De Maupassant 的“The Jewels”，Mark Twain 的“The Income-Tax Man”，Frank O'Connor 的“My Oedipus Complex”等等。本书的第二个特点是我们在每一篇文章的难点部分作了详细的注释，尤其是对一些阅读欣赏的微妙之处加以点睛阐释，相信读者读后会有不同一般的感受。

本书可供英语专业一年级学生和相当水平的英语自学者作为精读课本的配套阅读教材使用。因所选文章篇幅不一，学习者可根据自己的英语水平决定阅读进度。读本中不乏可供反复阅读的经典之作，且这些作品所用词汇基本在初学者词汇量范围之内，学习者在阅读欣赏之余，也可以细加揣摩，学习遣词造句的方法，提高自己的写作能力。本书也可以根据不同需要选作泛读课的教材。教师可以配合阅读技巧的讲解，挑选课后设置的各类问题，以检测学生的阅读理解程度，并就相关的话题展开课堂讨论，交流阅读心得，引导学生进行更进一步阅读等等。

总之，我们希望通过本书为初学者提供一些经过认真挑选的文章，使学习者在轻松愉快的阅读之中扩大阅读面，养成良好的阅读习惯，培养阅读兴趣，为英语水平的不断提高打下良好的基础。编写者虽都是有相当教龄的专业英语教师，但错误难免，希望使用者不吝赐教。

编者

2010年元月于北外

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1

I'll Never Understand My Wife

by Steven James



I'll never understand my wife.

The day she moved in with^① me, she started opening and closing my kitchen cabinets, gasping, "You don't have any shelf paper! We're going to have to get some shelf paper in here before I move my dishes in."

"But why?" I asked innocently.

"To keep the dishes clean," she answered matter-of-factly. I didn't understand how the dust would magically migrate off the dishes^② if they had sticky blue paper under them, but I knew when to be quiet.

Then came the day when I left the toilet seat up^③.

"We never left the toilet seat up in my family," she scolded. "It's impolite."

"It wasn't impolite in my family," I said sheepishly.

"Your family didn't have cats."^④

In addition to these lessons, I also learned how I was supposed to squeeze the toothpaste tube, which towel to use after a shower and where the spoons are supposed to go when I set the table. I had no idea I was so uneducated.

Nope, I'll never understand my wife.

She alphabetizes her spices^⑤, washes dishes before sending them through the dishwasher, and sorts laundry into different piles^⑥ before throwing it into the washing machine. Can you imagine?

She wears pajamas to bed. I didn't think anyone in North America still wore pajamas to bed. She has a coat that makes her look like Sherlock Holmes^⑦. "I could get you a new coat," I offered.

① move in with: 搬进来和……一起居住

② 我不明白灰尘怎么就会魔法般地从盘子上离去。

③ 没有把抽水马桶盖放下来。

④ 这句话的意思是她家里有猫，把马桶盖放下来是为了怕猫掉进马桶。

⑤ 她把调味品按字母顺序排列好。

⑥ 把要洗的衣服分成不同的几堆。

⑦ Sherlock Holmes: 舍洛克·福尔摩斯

- ① 到处背着一个小型货车一般大小的尿布包。
- ② 意思是她讲话简洁干脆。
- ③ playpen: *n.* (供婴儿在里面玩耍的) 游戏围栏
- ④ oddity: *n.* 古怪的人
- ⑤ snicker at: 对……窃笑
- ⑥ bumper sticker: 粘贴在汽车保险杠上的小标语
- ⑦ warranty registration cards: 产品质量保证书的登记卡
- ⑧ check: *v.* 在……旁边打钩

“No. This one was my grandmother’s,” she said, decisively ending the conversation.

Then, after we had kids, she acted even stranger. Wearing those pajamas all day long, eating breakfast at 1:00 P.M., carrying around a diaper bag the size of a minivan^①, talking in one-syllable paragraphs^②.

She carried our baby everywhere—on her back, on her front, in her arms, over her shoulder. She never set her down, even when other young mothers shook their heads as they set down the car seat with their baby in it, or peered down into their playpens^③. What an oddity^④ she was, clutching that child.

My wife also chose to nurse her even when her friends told her not to bother. She picked up the baby whenever she cried, even though people told her it was healthy to let her wail.

“It’s good for her lungs to cry,” they would say.

“It’s better for her heart to smile,” she’d answer.

One day a friend of mine snickered at^⑤ the bumper sticker^⑥ my wife had put on the back of our car: “Being a Stay-at-Home Mom Is a Work of Heart.”

“My wife must have put that on there,” I said.

“My wife works,” he boasted.

“So does mine,” I said, smiling.

Once, I was filling out one of those warranty registration cards^⑦ and I check^⑧ “homemaker” for my wife’s occupation. Big mistake. She glanced over it and quickly corrected me. “I am not a homemaker. I am not a housewife. I am a mother.”

“But there’s no category for that,” I stammered.

“Add one,” she said.

I did.

And then one day, a few years later, she lay in bed smiling when I got up to go to work.

“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Nothing. Everything is wonderful. I didn’t have to get up at all last night to calm the kids. And they didn’t crawl in bed with us.”

“Oh,” I said, still not understanding.

“It was the first time I’ve slept through the night in four years.” It was? Four years? That’s a long time. I hadn’t even noticed. Why hadn’t she ever complained? I would have.

One day, in one thoughtless moment, I said something that sent

her fleeing to the bedroom in tears. I went in to apologize. She knew I meant it because by then I was crying, too.

"I forgive you," she said. And you know what? She did. She never brought it up again. Not even when she got angry and could have hauled out the heavy artillery^①. She forgave, and she forgot^②.

Nope, I'll never understand my wife. And you know what? Our daughter is acting more and more like her mother every day.

If she turns out to be anything like her mom, someday there's going to be one more lucky guy in this world, thankful for the shelf paper in his cupboard.

① 字面意思是拖出重炮。这里是夸张和比喻的说法，意思是她可以翻旧账大闹一气，但她却没有这样做。

② forgive and forget 是一个惯用词组，意思是不念旧恶，不记仇。这里拆开用，起到了强调的效果。

About the author

Steven James (1954-) is one of the U.S.'s most innovative storytellers. He has written more than twenty books and is a full-time speaker, having appeared more than 1,500 times throughout North America, Europe and Asia since 1996. With a Master's Degree in Storytelling, he shares his unique blend of drama, comedy, and inspirational storytelling at events across the country. His debut novel of psychological suspense, *The Pawn*, reached #10 on the CBA fiction bestsellers list and is a finalist for the 2008 Christy Awards. In addition, he has written numerous critically acclaimed nonfiction books and hundreds of articles and stories that have appeared in more than 80 different publications.

Exercises

Questions for comprehension

1. The line "I'll never understand my wife" appears three times in the article. What are the things about the author's wife that he doesn't understand?
2. What was the author's wife trying to do when she moved in with him? Did the author think that the shelf paper would keep off the dust? What does the dialog between the couple suggest about their habits and personalities? When the author said he knew when to be quiet, what did he mean? Was he afraid of his wife? Or was he convinced by his wife?
3. Why did his wife look so shocked when the author left the toilet seat up? What was the author's reaction to that? What did that tell us about his wife's family and her upbringing?
4. What were the other lessons that his wife taught him? What kind of changes was his wife trying to bring to his life? What was his attitude towards these lessons? Did he really mean it when he said "I had no idea I was so uneducated"?

5. Why did the author find his wife wearing pajamas to bed a strange thing? Why didn't he give her a new coat? Why did she refuse to change the coat for anything else?
6. How did his wife's life change after she became a mother? Why wouldn't she take her friends' advice and let her baby cry? How did the author look at his wife in her new role as a mother?
7. Why did the author's friend snicker at the bumper sticker on the back of their car? What was the author's reaction to that? Why did the author's wife object to her being categorized as a "homemaker"? What is the difference between a "housewife" and a "mother" in her mind?
8. When his wife told him she hadn't slept through the night in four years, what was his reaction? Why hadn't she complained before?
9. What happened when he had to beg for his wife's forgiveness? Did he hurt her feelings terribly? How do you know? Did his wife forgive him? What kind of quality did that show about his wife? Is it easy to really forgive and forget?
10. Did it worry the author that his daughter was getting more and more like her mother? Why did he say his future son-in-law would be a lucky guy and should be "thankful for the shelf paper in the cupboard"?

Questions for discussion

1. What do you think is the proper role for a woman in the family? Should she be primarily a housewife or a homemaker or a mother? Are there any differences between these roles?
2. Do you think the author really means it when he says that he doesn't understand his wife? Does he find his wife strange throughout their married life? How does he view their differences eventually?
3. When the author talks about his wife's strange behavior, is he complaining or actually singing her praises? Does he consider himself lucky or unlucky to have married such a woman?
4. Is the tone adopted by the author ironical or humorous? Give examples.

2°

A New Millennium

by J. M. DeGross



I'm driving south on Interstate 81^①, returning home from a business trip. It's January. The rain is pouring down. I'm in northern Virginia and I'm worried about freezing conditions. I see a small herd of Black Angus heifers^②

walking along barbed wire, up a hill that has those three crosses on the top. They're a Bible belt thing—the crosses that is^③. And I'm thinking maybe Black Angus live an odd life, maybe they don't. Just then my cell phone rings.

It's my wife, but at first I can't understand her. Her voice is all wobbly^④ and the rain is noisy. Then I get it^⑤. She's crying—the words trying to get out between tears. My wife almost never cries. I remember one other time, when her aunt decided to tell her she wasn't her daddy's daughter. She cried on and off^⑥ for a couple of months back then.

Right away I think something has happened to her, or maybe one of the kids. "Honey, what's the matter?" I say.

"Wolf just killed the cat." She's barely able to get it out^⑦.

Wolf is our dog—a German Shepherd^⑧. He's usually sweet, but he's never liked the cat—the cat that showed up a couple of days before the new millennium. I was setting up for the fireworks display—putting the launchers in place for the airbursts I'd fire off^⑨ in celebration at midnight, when this little cat appeared. She purred and meowed and rubbed up against my arms, but she was a mess—hair all tangled and matted^⑩, and she smelled awful.

① 81号州际高速公路

② Black Angus = Aberdeen Angus: 阿伯丁安格斯牛 (苏格兰产黑色无角肉用牛); heifer: *n.* 小母牛

③ 它们是“圣经地带”常见的东西, 我说的是那些十字架。“圣经地带”指美国南部及中西部历史上基督教势力最强的地方。

④ wobbly: *a.* 不稳定的

⑤ get it: 明白了

⑥ on and off: 断断续续地

⑦ get it out: 说出

⑧ German Shepherd: 德国牧羊犬

⑨ 把放花炮的发射器装好。

⑩ 身上的毛乱糟糟地缠结在一起。

- ① (冲着猫叫的) 主要是 Wolf, 它 4 岁, 好动爱闹。
- ② Lab = Labrador: 拉布拉多猎狗
- ③ stand up to: 勇敢地对抗
- ④ predator: *n.* 食肉动物; bobcat: *n.* 美洲野猫, 山猫之类
- ⑤ cocked: *a.* 竖起的
- ⑥ 简称就叫 Millie, K.B. 表示 “kick butt” (〈俚〉享受快活时光)。
- ⑦ 最后决定叫她 Millie。
- ⑧ Millie 受过不少罪。
- ⑨ coyote: *n.* 一种产于北美大草原的小狼, 山狗
- ⑩ 给她一个旧隔热柜栖身。
- ⑪ a mean drunk: 一个可恶的醉鬼
- ⑫ 把可怜的小东西 (猫) 扔下了露台。

Now I have to tell you, we live on a mountain in the middle of nowhere—no neighbors for miles. My wife saw the cat standing by me and she smiled. “I know that cat,” she said. “I’ve seen her in the woods. I’ll bet it was two or three months ago,” and she sounded proud.

“She looks hungry,” I said, and I don’t know why we both thought it was a she. We didn’t think she had claws, either, but she did. She just never showed them. And of course the dogs were barking at her—mostly, Wolf, who’s four and frisky^①. Blue, our other dog is a working Black Lab^②. He’s old and he’s seen a lot of dying. You could tell he only barked at the cat because when Wolf got started, he thought he was supposed to.

You should have seen that cat, no bigger than a half-year old kitten, stand up to^③ those dogs. They were twenty times her size. She’d growl and hiss—I mean really growl, like a predator—a bobcat^④. She never backed off. She’d bat Wolf so fast and so hard on the nose that you could hear the contact-thump, and he’d back off and just look at her with his head cocked^⑤ to one side in confusion or something. I only saw her run from him once, and that was so she could get under a chair and then stand her ground. So, I never worried about him getting her. She was too fast and too tough, and she wanted to be with us. That’s what I thought. And I guess I thought Wolf wouldn’t kill another creature. I don’t know why.

We called her K.B. Millennium—Millie for short and the K.B. stood for “kick butt”^⑥. We came up with some other names, too. My wife suggested “Freedom”, “like in the song,” she said (she even sang the line: “Freedom’s just another word for nothing left to lose.”). And our five-year-old granddaughter wanted to call her Tabby, but we settled on Millie.^⑦

Millie had it rough^⑧, surviving in those woods with bears and coyotes^⑨. It was cold and I knew she wanted in the house because she’d try to follow me in, but we didn’t need a house cat. So we agreed, if she wanted to, she could hang around outside. We fed her plenty and we gave her an old insulated cooler for shelter^⑩. She seemed content.

Then at the millennium party somebody was a mean drunk^⑪—tossed the little thing off the deck^⑫ during the fireworks display. It’s forty feet down from the deck to the first treetops on the mountain. I

didn't see it happen—didn't know about it till the next morning because I was too busy with the fireworks. One of our other guests said Millie hissed and cried out in the air and then they heard breaking branches and more cat-sounds as she crashed somewhere down in the dark—yes, just a mean drunk. I might have stopped it if I had known.

She wasn't around on the First^①, so we thought she had died from the fall. I left on the business trip feeling badly. But she showed up again a day or so later. My wife called to tell me (long distance service is free on the cell phone). That's when my wife noticed Millie was pissing blood^②, so she took her to the vet who verified^③ that Millie was a she, had claws, and serious internal injuries.

Now the rain is really pelting^④ the car, and my wife is saying that Wolf got her. "Millie didn't even try to run," she says. "It was awful. He grabbed her and shook her—I yelled to make him let go. Then I wrapped her in a towel and held her." My wife is really sobbing now. "She was lying on my lap with her little paws crossed and she was shaking and blood was coming out of her mouth and she just gasped and died." My wife gets it all out in one breath.

"I'm so sorry, Darling," I say. And I wish I could say something more meaningful, but with the rain and all, I'm having a time^⑤. "I guess the dog didn't know any better^⑥," I say. Then there's a lot of static and we lose our connection^⑦.

Now I'm terribly sad, too, thinking about that little cat—such a hard life—and I can't see with all the rain. But it gets worse because this idea hits me out of nowhere—she only had a borrowed life. Borrowed things have to be returned, I'm thinking. And I don't know why, but something borrowed and something blue^⑧ runs through my head. Maybe that's all she had—nothing old or new. Then a memory of our little daughter who died ten or fifteen minutes after she was born oozes out. She didn't come with all her parts and when the doctor saw what she looked like, he tossed her onto the stainless steel sink in the delivery room^⑨. I suppose he meant well^⑩, but I remember her gasps and her trembling—then she was still^⑪ (and I remember how normal her tiny hands looked). My wife didn't see—she was doped up^⑫. But I did. And then there was my sister who died from hate and alcohol—no old and no new in her life, only defeat—maybe like Black Angus. These thoughts are flying by in forms resembling shadows at warp^⑬ speed.

① the First: 指新千年的第一天

② piss blood: 尿血

③ verify: v. 查证

④ pelt: v. (雨) 急落

⑤ have a time: 不方便, 不自在

⑥ 我想那狗犯了糊涂。

⑦ 电话里有许多静电声, 随后通话就断了。

⑧ blue: a. 忧郁的

⑨ delivery room: 产房

⑩ 他是好意。

⑪ 静止不动了。

⑫ 被全身麻醉了。

⑬ warp: n. (科幻小说中的) 翘曲飞行

① stray cat: 走失的猫

② make out: 辨认出

③ 把车开到 80 迈 (即时速 80 英里, 美国的州际高速公路限速一般为 75 迈)。

The phone rings again. "I don't know what happened," I say.

My wife apologizes for the tears.

"No, it's okay, it's very sad," I say. "It's like Millie had a borrowed life." And I hear the tears get started on the other end, again. I have to pull off the road for a few minutes. I can't believe we're so sad over a stray cat^①.

It stops raining and I can just make out^② the sun because it's going down behind the mountains. And then I'm thinking, maybe Millie let Wolf get her—wanted him to, like the hate and alcohol got to my sister. The line is quiet. "Honey, are you there?" I say.

"I'm still here," she says.

I start to drive. Before I know it, I'm doing eighty^③ and we're both crying. What's left of the sun creates odd long shadows and the static starts again.

"I wish I could have been there for you," I say. I'm shouting into the phone.

"I know," she says.

The phone goes dead again and I have this really bad feeling because it's getting dark fast, and colder, too. Then I see a herd of dairy cattle—black and white ones. They're all huddled together in a barnyard. I figure they're waiting to be let into the barn—to be milked and fed and for some reason this makes me feel better. After a while I slow down, and I start watching road signs, looking for a place to eat and rest. And I'm hoping they'll have a payphone so I can call my wife back. I'm thinking, maybe we'll do better with a payphone, maybe not.

Exercises

Questions for comprehension

1. What was the narrator worried about when driving home from a business trip? Where was he and what time of the year was it? What did he see? Were those things delightful to the eye? What feelings and thoughts did they trigger in his mind? What did he mean by saying that Black Angus maybe lived *an odd life*? Was he referring to the beef cattle or the county in Scotland?

2. What did the narrator's wife call him for? Is she a sentimental woman by nature? Does she cry often? When was the last time she cried and why? Did the fact that she was not the natural daughter of her father have anything to do with her feelings toward the cat?
3. Had the cat been raised as a pet like Wolf? How did the narrator find her? Was she welcomed by the dogs in the household? What kind of character did the cat have?
4. Why was the cat named K.B. Millennium? Does the name bear any good will of the couple? What happened to her at the millennium party? What was the narrator's reaction to the incident? Was he very concerned about the cat? What do you make of the tone when he said "I *might* have stopped it if I had known"?
5. Did the mean drunk kill the cat immediately? When did she come back home and in what condition? Did the narrator's wife succeed in saving the cat's life? Who eventually killed her? Did the cat try to defend herself or run away this time?
6. How did the narrator's wife feel about the death of the cat? Did the narrator share his wife's feelings? Can you understand why the couple felt so sad over the death of a cat?
7. What painful memories of the narrator did the tragic death of the cat reawaken? How did his daughter and sister die? How do you understand the narrator when he said, "She only had a borrowed life"? Did this idea also apply to his daughter and sister?
8. The narrator says "maybe Millie let Wolf get her—wanted him to, like the hate and alcohol got to my sister." Does this make sense to you? How do you understand this?
9. When the narrator said that there was a lot of static and they lost connection, do you think that was the real reason why they couldn't continue their conversation? Why did the narrator suddenly start to drive eighty miles an hour? Why did he have to pull off the road for a few minutes?
10. At the end of the story, the narrator said, "maybe we'll do better with a payphone, maybe not." What did he mean? Did he really believe that the payphone may have better connection than the cell phone?

Questions for discussion

1. How do you understand the title of the story? How is the word "millennium" relevant to the story and its theme?
2. How do you look at the emotional bond between humans and their pets?
3. Is the writer really talking about how this sentimental old couple mourn over the death of a stray cat here?

Assumed Identities^①

by Timothy David

① assumed identity: 虚拟身份

② 为了一个笨头笨脑的啦啦队员而甩了我。dump: v. 〈非正式〉抛弃; air-headed: a. 〈俚〉愚蠢的; 另: 在美国, 中学和大学的啦啦队员一般都是女孩子。

③ senior year: 这里指高中的最后一年。

④ 他没胆量告诉我。have the guts: 〈俚〉有胆量。

⑤ 他的那些一块儿赛车的朋友。

⑥ relate: v. 讲, 告诉

⑦ to say the least: [插入语] 至少可以这样说。

⑧ reek of: 发出……的臭味

⑨ algae: n. 藻类, 海藻

⑩ stampede: v. 飞跑, 十分冲动地跑



I came home from school yesterday afternoon feeling sad and sorry for myself. My boyfriend of nearly two years had dumped me for an airheaded cheerleader^②. That wasn't supposed to happen. Our senior year^③ is supposed to be

special. Actually, he didn't have the guts^④. Three of his jockey friends^⑤ were more than happy to relate^⑥ the news to me. I hate all of them.

My heart was broken to say the least^⑦. There was nothing I hated more than being lonely. I walked home slowly from school on an old dirt road that paralleled a shallow canal. It reeked of^⑧ dying fish and dried up algae^⑨. The sun had been unrelenting for weeks. I stopped in front of the doorstep of my family's house, wiping my feet carefully on the welcome mat and brushing the dust off my clothes.

"Why are you home from school so late, young lady?" came the first thing out of my father's mouth when I opened the door. It wasn't a question. It was more like an accusation.

I walked by him without saying a word. I wasn't ready to deal with this.

"Don't you walk away from me! You are nothing but trouble, you know that? Go to your room right now."

I gave him a "wish you were dead" look and stampeded^⑩ straight to my room. Good, that's where I wanted to be anyway. My father had been so mean and discriminating for many months now. I really couldn't stand the sight of him anymore. I hated him at that moment too. I hated all men.

My bedroom door slammed shut and was locked right away. No way^① I was letting anyone in. I turned my computer on and took off my shoes as it connected to the Internet. I needed to talk to someone, anyone who would listen.

Making myself comfortable in a small swivel chair^②, I searched for a chat room for people locally. I found one easily and clicked on the romance section. I needed to feel loved at that moment, even if it was all phony^③. When asked to enter a log-on name^④ I typed in Lonely Heart, for that's what I was. There's no way I would ever give out^⑤ my real name on the internet. Too many crazy people out there.

"Hello Lonely, what brings you here this afternoon?" came a message on my screen.

I looked closer for the name of this guy. Loneliness. "Well I see we have something in common. I just came to find someone to talk to," I typed back in my slow hunt-and-peck method^⑥.

"Same here," came his quick reply. "What do you want to talk about?"

Then on the spur of the moment^⑦ I just told him everything bad about my day and my life. The words came out freely and I really didn't expect him to understand my feelings. Men never understand.

"Just a minute," he answered. "I need to do something really quick but I'll be right back." He wasn't coming back. I didn't blame him. Should have known better than to think a man would listen to me.^⑧

There was a pounding on my bedroom door at that moment. I jumped up in my chair half-startled. "Tatiana?" came my father's all too well known accusing voice. "There's leftovers in the refrigerator for supper when you get hungry. I'll be in my study room if you need me." And then he was gone. Good riddance.^⑨

"I know how you feel," magically appeared on my screen a few seconds later. I couldn't believe it. He really did come back. "I feel much the same way as you do. My family hates me. I have no friends. They will never understand how much I really love them," he typed quickly.

"Why don't you just tell them?" I asked.

"I can't."

I decided not to push him any further about it. We made small talk about our feelings and what we wanted from life. This man did understand me. This conversation was a blessing to me.

① no way: 不, 决不

② swivel chair: 转椅

③ phony: *a.* 不真实的

④ 在键盘上输入 (进聊天室的) 网上用名。

⑤ give out: 公开

⑥ hunt-and-peck: 〈美口〉看着键盘打字

⑦ on the spur of the moment: 一时冲动

⑧ (我) 早就应该明白不要指望一个男人来听我说这些。know better than: 很明白 (而不至于……), 不应该蠢到…… (这句中用了虚拟语气)

⑨ 谢天谢地! 正好是个摆脱! (这里表现了女主人公讨厌其父亲的情绪)