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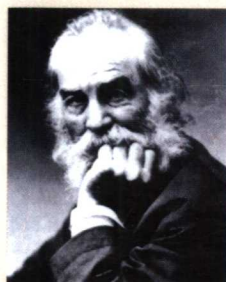
新世纪高等院校英语专业本科生系列教材

总主编 戴炜栋

# 美国文学欣赏

APPRECIATING AMERICAN LITERATURE

吴定柏 编注



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上海外语教育出版社 外教社  
SHANGHAI FOREIGN LANGUAGE EDUCATION PRESS

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# 前言

美国文学的发展虽然只有 200 多年的历史,但是在这段历史时期里涌现出数不胜数的优秀作家,为世人奉献了耐人寻味的不朽篇章。学习语言,欣赏文学,读一些美国文学作品的原著是一举多得的途径。读者不仅可以藉此提高语言文学水平,而且可以开阔眼界,陶冶情操,增进文化修养。

《美国文学欣赏》共收录 37 位美国作家的 44 篇作品。它们代表美国各个历史时期、不同文学流派及不同群体的名家名作,具有一定的代表性。编写本书的目的是为英语语言文学专业的学生和美国文学爱好者提供学习和欣赏名家名作的机会。本书每篇体例包括作者介绍、作品原文、作品介绍、注释和讨论题五个部分。作者介绍简明扼要;作品原文有全文,也有节选;作品介绍画龙点睛,点到为止,然系一家之言,并非定论;注释清楚明了;讨论题自由开放。这样的体例最适合以学生为中心的讨论式教学模式。本书若与文学史《美国文学大纲》配合使用,则教学效果更好。作为教材,此书教学内容可供一个学期使用,当然,作为一般性的英语读物,也可以单独使用。

本人受上海外语教育出版社和全国高等院校英语专业本科生教材编写委员会的委托编写《美国文学欣赏》,深感荣幸。在编写工作中,该社编校人员为本书编写提出了宝贵意见,使本人受益匪浅,在此表示感谢。高筠女士在本书编写过程中做了大量的打字和整理工作,本人也在此致以谢意。

尽管本人尽了最大的努力,但是限于学术水平,本书一定会有不妥和错误之处,敬请读者批评指出,以便今后订正。

吴定柏

2001 年 10 月于上海

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## Black Elk

Black Elk (1863 – 1950) was born on the Little Powder River into a tribe of the Plains Indians, the Oglala Sioux. He took part in many historical events, like the Battle of Little Bighorn River against whites for Indians in 1876. In 1882 he became a medicine man and a prominent member of his tribe. From 1886 to 1889 he traveled to Europe and then became a Catholic and was given the Christian name: Nicholas Black Elk. In 1931 he told his life story to John Neihardt who edited and published *Black Elk Speaks: The Life Story of a Holy Man of the Oglala Sioux* in 1932. Black Elk died on Pine Ridge Reservation, South Dakota.

## High Horse's Courting

You know, in the old days, it was not so very easy to get a girl when you wanted to be married. Sometimes it was hard work for a young man and he had to stand a great deal<sup>①</sup>. Say I am a young man and I have seen a young girl who looks so beautiful to me that I feel all sick when I think about her. I can not just go and tell her about it and then get married if she is willing. I have to be a very sneaky fellow to talk to her at all, and after I have managed to talk to her, that is only the beginning.

Probably for a long time I have been feeling sick about a certain girl because I love her so much, but she will not even look at me, and her parents keep a good watch over her. But I keep feeling worse and worse all the time; so maybe I sneak up to her tepee in the dark and wait until she comes out. Maybe I just wait there all night and don't get any sleep at all she does not come out. Then I



feel sicker than ever about her.

Maybe I hide in the brush by a spring where she sometimes goes to get water, and when she comes by, if nobody is looking, then I jump out and hold her and just make her listen to me. If she likes me too, I can tell that from the way she acts, for she is very bashful and maybe will not say a word or even look at me the first time. So I let her go, and then maybe I sneak around until I can see her father alone, and I tell him how many horses I can give him for his beautiful girl, and by now I am feeling so sick that maybe I would give him all the horses in the world if I had them.

Well, this young man I am telling about was called High Horse, and there was a girl in the village who looked so beautiful to him that he was just sick all over from thinking about her so much and he was getting sicker all the time. The girl was very shy, and her parents thought a great deal of her because they were not young any more and this was the only child they had. So they watched her all day long, and they fixed<sup>2</sup> it so that she would be safe at night too when they were asleep. They thought so much of her that they had made a rawhide bed for her to sleep in, and after they knew that High Horse was sneaking around after her, they took rawhide thongs and tied the girl in bed at night so that nobody could steal her when they were asleep, for they were not sure but that<sup>3</sup> their girl might really want to be stolen.

Well, after High Horse had been sneaking around a good while and hiding and waiting for the girl and getting sicker all the time, he finally caught her alone and made her talk to him. Then he found out that she liked him maybe a little. Of course this did not make him feel well. It made him sicker than ever, but now he felt as brave as a bison bull, and so he went right to her father and said he loved the girl so much that he would give two good horses for her — one of them young and the other one not so very old.

But the old man just waved his hand, meaning for High Horse to go away and quit talking foolishness like that.

High Horse was feeling sicker than ever about it; but there was another young fellow who said he would loan High Horse two ponies and when he got some more horses, why, he could just give

them back for the ones he had borrowed.

Then High Horse went back to the old man and said he would give four horses for the girl — two of them young and the other two not hardly old at all. But the old man just waved his hand and would not say anything.

So High Horse sneaked around until he could talk to the girl again, and he asked her to run away with him. He told her he thought he would just fall over and die if she did not. But she said she would not do that; she wanted to be bought like a fine woman. You see she thought a great deal of herself too.

That made High Horse feel so very sick that he could not eat a bite, and he went around with his head hanging down as though he might just fall down and die any time.

Red Deer was another young fellow, and he and High Horse were great comrades, always doing things together. Red Deer saw how High Horse was acting, and he said: "Cousin, what is the matter? Are you sick in the belly? You look as though you were going to die."

Then High Horse told Red Deer how it was, and said he thought he could not stay alive much longer if he could not marry the girl pretty quick.

Red Deer thought awhile about it, and then he said: "Cousin, I have a plan, and if you are man enough to do as I tell you, then everything will be all right. She will not run away with you; her old man will not take four horses; and four horses are all you can get. You must steal her and run away with her. Then afterwhile you can come back and the old man cannot do anything because she will be your woman. Probably she wants you to steal her anyway."

So they planned what High Horse had to do, and he said he loved the girl so much that he was man enough to do anything Red Deer or anybody else could think up.

So this is what they did.

That night late<sup>④</sup> they sneaked up to the girl's tepee and waited until it sounded inside as though the old man and the old woman and the girl were sound asleep. Then High Horse crawled under the tepee with a knife. He had to cut the rawhide thongs first, and

then Red Deer, who was pulling up the stakes around that side of the tepee, was going to help drag the girl outside and gag her. After that, High Horse could put her across his pony in front of him and hurry out of there and be happy all the rest of his life.

When High Horse had crawled inside, he felt so nervous that he could hear his heart drumming, and it seemed so loud he felt sure it would waken the old folks. But it did not, and afterwhile he began cutting the thongs. Every time he cut one it made a pop and nearly scared him to death. But he was getting along all right and all the thongs were cut down as far as the girl's thighs, when he became so nervous that his knife slipped and stuck the girl. She gave a big, loud yell. Then the old folks jumped up and yelled too. By this time High Horse was outside, and he and Red Deer were running away like antelope. The old man and some other people chased the young men but they got away in the dark and nobody knew who it was.

Well, if you ever wanted a beautiful girl you will know how sick High Horse was now. It was very bad the way he felt, and it looked as though he would starve even if he did not drop over dead sometime.

Red Deer kept thinking about this, and after a few days he went to High Horse and said: "Cousin, take courage! I have another plan, and I am sure, if you are man enough, we can steal her this time." And High Horse said: "I am man enough to do anything anybody can think up, if I can only get that girl."

So this is what they did.

They went away from the village alone, and Red Deer made High Horse strip naked. Then he painted High Horse solid white all over and after that he painted black stripes all over the white and put black rings around High Horse's eyes. High Horse looked terrible. He looked so terrible that when Red Deer was through painting and took a good look at what he had done, he said it scared even him little.

"Now," Red Deer said, "if you get caught again, everybody will be so scared they will think you are a bad spirit and will be afraid to chase you."

So when the night was getting old and everybody was sound asleep, they sneaked back to the girl's tepee. High Horse crawled in with his knife, as before, and Red Deer waited outside, ready to drag the girl out and gag her when High Horse had all the thongs cut.

High Horse crept up by the girl's bed and began cutting at the thongs. But he kept thinking, "If they see me they will shoot me because I look so terrible." The girl was restless and kept squirming around in bed, and when a thong was cut, it popped. So High Horse worked very slowly and carefully.

But he must have made some noise, for suddenly the old woman awoke and said to her old man: "Old Man, wake up! There is somebody in this tepee!" But the old man was sleepy and didn't want to be bothered. He said: "Of course there is somebody in this tepee. Go to sleep and don't bother me." Then he snored some more.

But High Horse was so scared by now that he lay very still and as flat to the ground as he could. Now, you see, he had not been sleeping very well for a long time because he was so sick about the girl. And while he was lying there waiting for the old woman to snore, he just forgot everything, even how beautiful the girl was. Red Deer who was lying outside ready to do his part, wondered and wondered what had happened in there, but he did not dare call out to High Horse.

Afterwhile the day began to break and Red Deer had to leave with the two ponies he had staked there for his comrade and girl, or somebody would see him.

So he left.

Now when it was getting light in the tepee, the girl awoke and the first thing she saw was a terrible animal, all white with black stripes on it, lying asleep beside her bed. So she screamed, and then the old woman screamed and the old man yelled. High Horse jumped up, scared almost to death, and he nearly knocked the tepee down getting out of there.

People were coming running from all over the village with guns and bows and axes, and everybody was yelling.

By now High Horse was running so fast that he hardly touched the ground at all, and he looked so terrible that the people fled from him and let him run. Some braves wanted to shoot at him, but the others said he might be some sacred being and it would bring bad trouble to kill him.

High Horse made for the river that was near, and in among the brush he found a hollow tree and dived into it. Afterwhile some braves came there and he could hear them saying that it was some bad spirit that had come out of the water and gone back in again.

That morning the people were ordered to break camp<sup>⑤</sup> and move away from there. So they did, while High Horse was hiding in his hollow tree.

Now Red Deer had been watching all this from his own tepee and trying to look as though he were as much surprised and scared as all the others. So when the camp moved, he sneaked back to where he had seen his comrade disappear. When he was down there in the brush, he called, and High Horse answered, because he knew his friend's voice. They washed off the paint from High Horse and sat down on the river bank to talk about their troubles.

High Horse said he never would go back to the village as long as he lived and he did not care what happened to him now. He said he was going to go on the war-path<sup>⑥</sup> all by himself. Red Deer said: "No, cousin, you are not going on the war-path alone, because I am going with you."

So Red Deer got everything ready, and at night they started out on the war-path all alone. After several days they came to a Crow<sup>⑦</sup> camp just about sundown, and when it was dark they sneaked up to where the Crow horses were grazing, killed the horse guard, who was not thinking about enemies because he thought all the Lakotas<sup>⑧</sup> were far away, and drove off about a hundred horses.

They got a big start because all the Crow horses stamped and it was probably morning before the Crow warriors could catch any horses to ride. Red Deer and High Horse fled with their herd three days and nights before they reached the village of their people. Then they drove the whole herd right into the village and up in

front of the girl's tepee. The old man was there, and High Horse called out to him and asked if he thought maybe that would be enough horses for his girl. The old man did not wave him away that time. It was not the horses that he wanted. What he wanted was a son who was a real man and good for something.

So High Horse got his girl after all, and I think he deserved her.

## **Introduction**

Storytelling was very popular among American Indian tribes in the old days. American Indian customs of narration were part of their long established tradition. In former days the Indians told their stories on winter nights only and all members of an Indian tribe would listen to tales as they viewed tales as educational tools that taught people the beliefs and history of the tribe. Stories were considered private in many tribes and were owned by a particular man or family. In many tribes, storytelling was confined to a small number of gifted individuals. The narrator was an actor who took the part of the characters, mimicking their voices, and his performance played an important part in the audience's impression of the tale. Indian tales fall into two general types — sacred tales of a bygone age and secular tales based on incidents occurring in daily life. "High Horse's Courting" is chosen from *Black Elk Speaks* (1932). Black Elk first heard this humorous secular tale from his friend Watanye and then retold it to John Neihardt. This story combines a familiar love story with an original set of specific circumstances.

## **Notes**

1. stand a great deal — face many problems or obstacles.
2. fixed — managed.
3. but that — that.
4. That night late — late that night.
5. break camp — dismantle and pack one's tents.

6. war-path — the path or course taken by Indians on a military expedition; on the war-path — engaged in struggle, or battle, or conflict.
7. Crow — the name of another Indian tribe.
8. Lakotas — the name of High Horse's tribe.

### **Questions**

1. What is the significance of the first three paragraphs?
2. Why did the girl want to be bought like a fine woman?
3. What do you think about Red Deer's first plan? And the second one?
4. Why did the villagers stop chasing High Horse?
5. How did High Horse get his girl finally? What changed her father's opinion of him?
6. What do you think is the moral or theme of this tale?

## 2

### **Benjamin Franklin**

Benjamin Franklin (1706–1790) was born on Milk Street in Boston, Massachusetts from a very large family. At the age of 12, Franklin was apprenticed to be a newspaper printer in Boston. In 1729, he already owned his own printing shop and published the newspaper *Pennsylvania Gazette*. In 1732 he offered his *Poor Richard's Almanac* for sale and made it an American institution. By 1748, at the age of 42, Franklin had acquired enough wealth that he retired. It was after his retirement that he began his very active life in civic and scientific activities, and then showed his interest in politics. He was one of those who drafted articles leading to the Declaration of Independence. Later he also served on the convention to draft the constitution, which was finally adopted in 1789. His place in literature owes much to his *Poor Richard's Almanac* and *The Autobiography*. Franklin produced satire that was good-natured or caustic at his pleasure. He had talents for irony, allegory and fable that he could adapt with great will to the promotion of moral and practical truth. He was a very humorous man who knew how to use his humor to achieve social purposes.

#### **From *The Autobiography***

... It was about this time I conceived the bold and arduous project of arriving at moral perfection. I wished to live without committing any fault at any time; I would conquer all that either natural inclination, custom, or company might lead me into. As I knew, or thought I knew, what was right and wrong, I did not see why I might not always do the one and avoid the other. But I soon found



I had undertaken a task of more difficulty than I had imagined. While my care was employed in guarding against one fault, I was often surprised by another. Habit took the advantage of inattention<sup>①</sup>. Inclination<sup>②</sup> was sometimes too strong for reason. I concluded at length, that the mere speculative conviction that it was our interest to be completely virtuous, was not sufficient to prevent our slipping, and that the contrary habits must be broken and good ones acquired and established, before we can have any dependence on a steady, uniform rectitude of conduct. For this purpose I therefore contrived the following method.

In the various enumerations of the moral virtues I had met with in my reading, I found the catalogue more or less numerous, as different writers included more or fewer ideas under the same name. Temperance, for example, was by some confined to eating and drinking, while by others it was extended to mean the moderating every other pleasure, appetite, inclination, or passion, bodily or mental, even to our avarice and ambition. I proposed to myself, for the sake of clearness, to use rather more names, with fewer ideas annexed to each, than a few names with more ideas; and I included under thirteen names of virtues all that at that time occurred to me as necessary or desirable, and annexed to each a short precept, which fully expressed the extent I gave to its meaning.

These names of virtues<sup>③</sup>, with their precepts, were:

#### 1. TEMPERANCE.

Eat not to dullness; drink not to elevation.

#### 2. SILENCE

Speak not but what may benefit others or yourself; avoid trifling conversation.

#### 3. ORDER.

Let all your things have their places; let each part of your business have its time.

#### 4. RESOLUTION.

Resolve to perform what you ought; perform without fail what you resolve.

#### 5. FRUGALITY.