

美国文学名著

故事梗概及作品导读

鲍秀文 王卫新 主编

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前 言

《英国文学名著故事梗概及作品导读》出版后,受到广大读者的热烈欢迎。在短短的一年之内,国内大多数高校图书馆已有收藏,新华书店、北京图书大厦、外研书店等国内大牌书店以及卓越亚马逊、淘宝网、时代网等网上书城均有销售。图书出版之后即作为浙江师范大学英语专业本科以及学校通识课程教材使用,学生普遍反映良好。学生在使用《英国文学名著故事梗概及作品导读》教材的同时,迫切希望我们能够尽快推出类似的美国文学教材。

为满足广大学生的要求,我们从2007年开始着手编写《美国文学故事梗概及作品导读》。作为《英国文学名著故事梗概及作品导读》的姊妹篇,本书的编写原则以及编写体例与《英国文学名著故事梗概及作品导读》相同。故事梗概皆系英语国家专业人士撰写,英文地道流畅,内容准确无误。所选文学作品题材广泛,主要包括长篇小说和戏剧,时间跨度从美国浪漫主义时期一直到20世纪80年代。所选篇目符合《高等学校英语专业英语教学大纲》的要求,思想性和艺术性兼顾,同时尽量吸收国外最新的研究成果。为方便学生自学,故事梗概采用了英汉对照方式,配以美国文学专业教师撰写的深入浅出的作品导读。

和英国文学相比,美国文学的历史很短。如果我们以1607年英国移民在美国弗吉尼亚建立第一个殖民点作为美国文学史的开端,那么,美国文学至今只有四百多年的历史可言。即便我们把时间上限上溯到1492年,即哥伦布发现美洲新大陆的时

间,美国文学的历史也只能随之延长到五百多年。美国文学是年轻的文学,年轻而充满活力。历史很短,却是名家辈出。尤其是第一次世界大战之后,随着美国国力的迅速增长,美国文学也开始以一种强势文化的姿态渗入到世界的每个角落,诺贝尔文学奖得主中美国作家的比例越来越高,美国本土涉及文学的奖项如普利策奖、美国国家图书奖等也越来越被世界文坛所关注。

《美国文学故事梗概及作品导读》编写的初衷是以深入浅出的方式普及美国文学,让曾经被认为是“曲高和寡”的严肃文学“飞入寻常百姓家”。我们将美国文学分为浪漫主义时期、现实主义时期和二十世纪文学三个阶段,选取其间最有代表性的作家作品进行介绍。由于美国印第安文学、殖民时期文学乃至美国独立战争时期的文学主要是诗歌和散文,没有故事可言,所以,我们将浪漫主义时期作为美国文学的“起点”。二十世纪是美国文学急剧变革、不断花样翻新的时代,用现代主义和后现代主义不足以窥其全貌,所以,我们干脆使用“二十世纪文学”作为该时期文学的总标题。所有的选择,都是为了普及文学的需要。

在编写过程中,我们尽量吸收国外最新的研究成果,将过去一度被国内美国文学教材所忽略的作品(如《觉醒》、《凝望上苍》)收录其中。同时,我们也尽最大可能收录了一些新近国内研究的热点作品(如《宠儿》)。但是,由于国际知识产权等诸多方面的限制,我们对二战之后作家作品的收录是十分欠缺的,连索尔·贝洛(Saul Bellow)、约翰·巴思(John Barth)、诺曼·梅勒(Norman Mailer)等首屈一指的美国作家的作品都不得不忍痛割爱,实在是无奈之举,恳请读者谅解。

本书适合作为高等学校英语语言文学专业配套教材,与《美国文学史》教材同时使用。此外,本书还可以作为美国文学通识课程教材,亦可供具有一定英语水平的自学者使用。

本书由浙江师范大学外国语学院鲍秀文、王卫新主编,负责全面策划、翻译校对以及最后统稿工作,并亲自撰写了大量文字。浙江师范大学外国语学院黎会华、张鑫、许秋红承担了大量

的导读编写工作,英语语言文学专业研究生颜婉西、王瑶、辛莹莹以及课程与教学论(英语教育)研究生潘正凯、李昀昀、丁宁、蔡雷参加了故事梗概的翻译和校订工作。本书以及先期出版的《英国文学名著故事梗概及作品导读》被列为浙江师范大学校级重点建设教材,图书的出版得到浙江师范大学教务处、外国语学院以及天津人民出版社的大力支持,在此谨致谢忱。

由于时间仓促,加之笔者水平有限,书中讹误之处在所难免,敬希读者批评指正。

鲍秀文 王卫新

2008年6月

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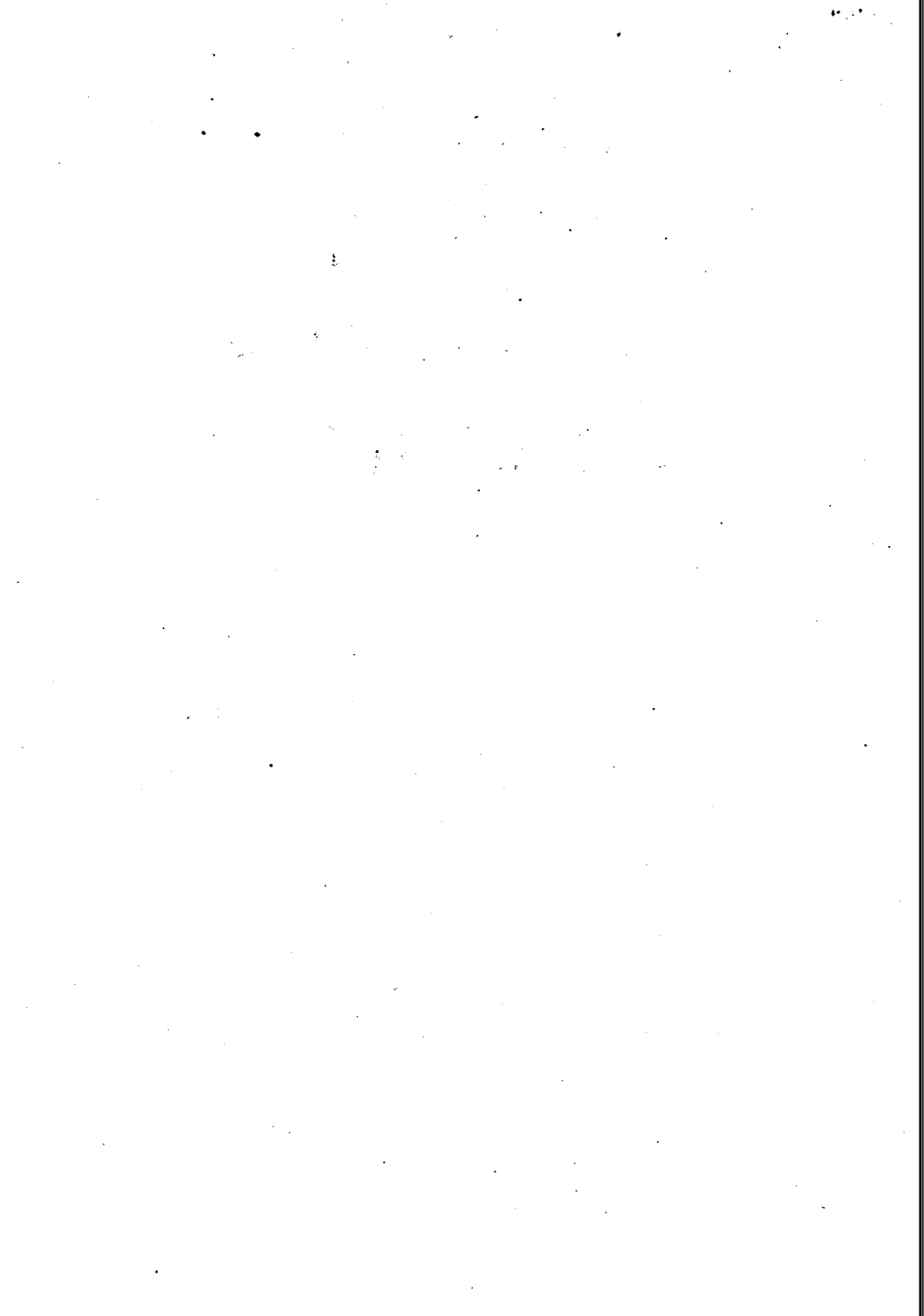
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AMERICAN ROMANTICISM

浪漫主义时期



Washington Irving

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

In a sequestered cove of the Hudson lies the drowsy valley of Sleepy Hollow — once a remote, enchanted region, abounding in haunted spots and twilight superstitions.

The dreamy, visionary Dutch folk, descendants of the early settlers, were given to marvelous beliefs. Many were their fireside tales of ghosts and evil spirits. The most awesome wraith of this bewitched neighborhood was a headless figure on a powerful black charger, which at midnight rode forth from the church graveyard.

At every country fireside were told blood-curdling stories of the weird and ghoulish pranks of this headless horseman of Sleepy Hollow.

Perhaps the most superstitious soul throughout the Valley, in the days just following the Revolution, was the country schoolmaster, Ichabod Crane. Tall, lank, long-limbed, he was a grotesque figure, yet not lacking in conceit.

As was the custom he led an itinerant life, boarding with the farmers whose children he taught. Since he brought the local gossip and helped with the chores, his periodical visitations were welcome by the housewives.

He also enlivened the long wintry evening with direful stories of witchcraft. In a snug chimney corner before a crackling wood fire there was a fearsome pleasure in these blood-chilling tales.

But for this gruesome enjoyment, how dearly he paid when out

alone at night. What menacing shadows beset his path! Every snow-covered bush stood a sheeted specter in his way.

However, it was not only these phantoms of the night that disturbed his peace, for his days were haunted by the most bewitching of all witches — a woman.

In his weekly singing class was Katrina Van Tassel, only child of a substantial farmer. Famed for her beauty and vast expectations, the enraptured Ichabod became her ardent suitor.

Gloatingly he surveyed her father's rich meadowlands, the overflowing barns, and the great, sloping-roofed farm-house filled with treasure of old mahogany, pewter, and silver. All these rich possessions made Ichabod covet the peerless Katrina.

The most formidable of his many rivals was the roistering Brom Van Brunt, nicknamed, from his Herculean frame, Brom Bones.

He was the hero of all the country round, which rang with his feats of strength and hardihood. A reckless horseman and foremost in all rural sports, he was always ready for a fight or a frolic.

Yet even the old dames, startled out of their sleep as he clattered by at midnight, looked upon his wild pranks with more goodwill than disfavor.

This rantipole hero had chosen to lay siege to the blooming Katrina. And when on a Sunday night his horse was tied to Van Tassel's palings all the suitors passed on in despair.

Ichabod, however, in his role of singing-master, made frequent visits at the farm. Neither old Van Tassel, an easy, indulgent soul, nor his busy housewife interfered with the pedagogue's suit; yet his wooing was beset with difficulties.

Brom Bones had declared a deadly feud, and as Ichabod shrewdly avoided a physical combat, he became the object of whimsical persecutions by Brom and his boon companions.

They smoked out his singing school, broke into and turned topsyturvy his schoolhouse, and, still worse, taught a scoundrel dog to whine as a rival instructor in psalmody to the fair Katrina.

One fine autumnal afternoon Ichabod, in a pensive mood, sat enthroned on the lofty stool from which he ruled his laggard pupils.

The buzzing stillness of the schoolroom was broken by a galloping messenger, who brought an invitation to a "quilting frolic" that evening at Van Tassel's.

Promptly dismissing school, Ichabod furbished up his only suit of rusty black, and soon rode forth a gallant cavalier to this bidding of his lady fair.

Gunpowder, the bony old plow-horse, borrowed from the farmer with whom Ichabod was domiciled, was a suitable steed for his long, gaunt frame.

Jogging slowly along, it was after sundown when he reached Van Tassel's, where were gathered the farmer folk of the surrounding country.

However, it was not the buxom lasses that held Ichabod enthralled; it was the sumptuous abundance of the supper-table. Such luscious ham and chicken, and heaping platters of doughnuts, crullers, and ginger cakes!

Ichabod's rapacious appetite did ample justice to this repast, while he gloated over the opulence of which some day he might be master.

Soon the sound of fiddling bade all to the dance. With Katrina as his partner, smiling graciously at his amorous oglings, the lank but agile Ichabod clattered triumphantly about, while Brom Bones, sorely smitten with jealousy, kept brooding aloof.

Later, Ichabod joined the sager folk, who sat smoking and spinning tales of ghosts and apparitions, and of the headless horseman that

nightly tethered his steed among the churchyard graves.

Most terrifying were the adventures of those who, on dark nights, had met that gruesome specter. Even Brom Bones testified that once, overtaken by the midnight trooper, he had raced with him to the church bridge, where the horseman had vanished in a flash of fire.

When at a late hour the revel broke up Ichabod lingered for the customary lover's talk. What passed at that interview with the heiress was never known, but when he finally sallied forth it was with a dejected, chopfallen air.

Had Katrina's encouragement been only a coquettish trick to secure her conquest of his rival?

It was near the witching midnight hour that the crestfallen Ichabod pursued his solitary travel homeward. All the stories of ghosts and goblins told that evening now crowded hauntingly upon him.

The night grew deeper and darker as he approached the lonely churchyard — sombrous scene of many of the tales. Suddenly through the leaf-stirred stillness came the clatter of hoofs! Something huge and misshapen loomed above the crouching shadows.

In quaking terror Ichabod dashed ahead, but the unknown followed close. Then the moonlight, through a rifted cloud, revealed the headless horseman! More ghastly still, his head rested on the pommel of his saddle!

Away they flew, Ichabod madly spurring Gunpowder, while the sinister horseman came galloping after.

As they reached the haunted road, turning off to Sleepy Hollow, the girth of Ichabod's saddle broke. Gripping his steed around the neck, as the saddle slipped from beneath him, he still plunged on, with the ghostly rider pursuing him.

The church bridge, where in Brom Bones's tale the specter had vanished, was just ahead. Another moment and old Gunpowder was

thundering over the resounding planks.

Here Ichabod, casting a backward glance, saw the goblin rising in his stirrups and in the very act of hurling his head.

The horrible missile crashed against Ichabod's cranium and he plunged headlong into the road while Gunpowder and the ghostly horseman swept on.

The next morning the old horse was found, saddleless, grazing at his master's gate. But no Ichabod!

In the road by the church was found the saddle. Farther on was the trampled hat of the unfortunate pedagogue and close beside it a shattered pumpkin!

The whole neighborhood was aroused. Brom Bones's story and all the other weird tales were called to mind, and the good folk sagely concluded that Ichabod had been carried off by the headless horseman.

Soon the school was removed to a less haunted section. Another pedagogue reigned, and Ichabod became only a legend.

It is true that several years later an old farmer, returning from New York, brought news that Ichabod was still alive; that fear of the goblin and chagrin at his dismissal by the heiress had caused his flight; that in another part of the country he had taught school, studied law, and become justice of the Ten-pound Court.

Brom Bones, who, shortly after his rival's disappearance, had led the blooming Katrina to the altar, was observed to look exceedingly knowing whenever the story of Ichabod was related. At the mention of the pumpkin he never failed to laugh heartily, which led some to suspect that he knew more about the matter than he chose to disclose.

The old country wives, however, maintain to this day that Ichabod was spirited away by the headless horseman. And many gruesome tales of the pedagogue's fate are still told round the wintry firesides of Sleepy Hollow.