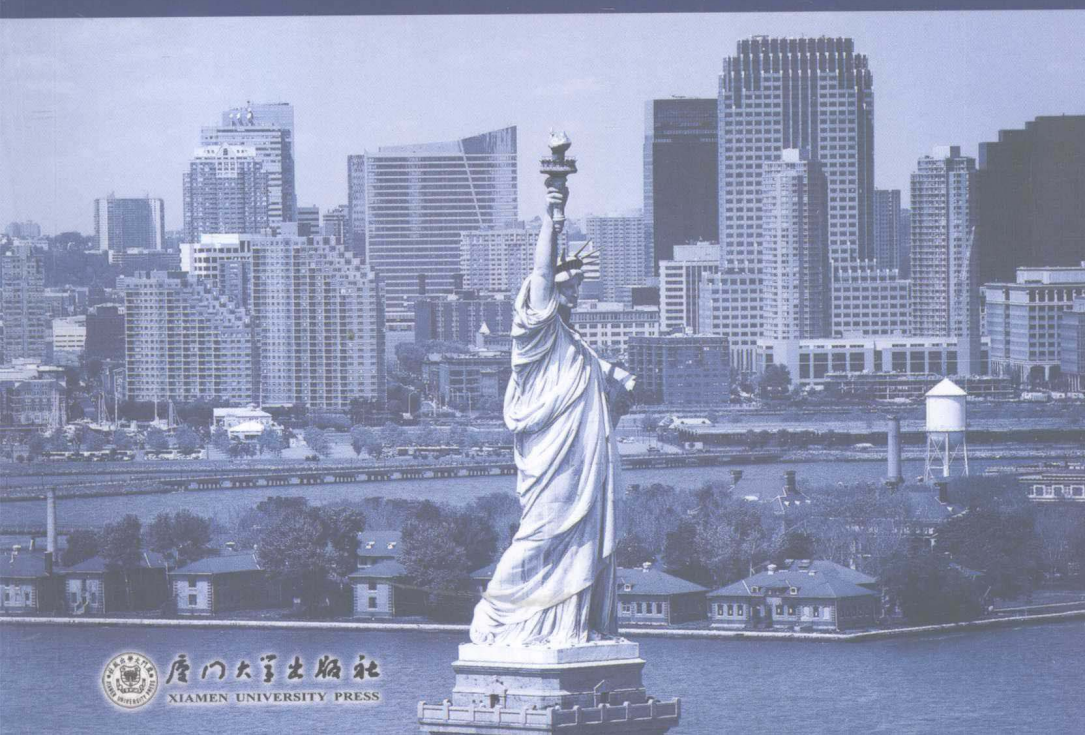


美国短篇小说选读

SELECTED READINGS IN
AMERICAN SHORT STORIES

范小玫 编著



厦门大学出版社
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序

改革开放 30 年来,高校“英语热”持续升温。非英语专业的同学们,不但认真练好英语基本功,刻苦学习专业英语,而且想读点美国小说,了解美国社会的方方面面,掌握英语的文化和历史背景,进一步提高英语水平。这是个良好的愿望,值得重视和支持。

为了满足同学们的需要,范小玫副教授编选了这部《美国短篇小说选读》。它将为非英语专业的同学了解美国短篇小说提供一个快捷的平台。

与其他同类书籍相比,我觉得本书具有下列特点:

(一)选材跨度大,题材多样化。全书精选 18 篇美国短篇小说,涵盖了从 19 世纪初的小说家华盛顿·欧文到当代女作家谭恩美的作品;入选作家时间跨度大,涵盖面很广,包括了主流作家马克·吐温、霍桑、爱伦坡、安德森、海明威、厄普代克、德里罗等,南方作家福克纳、韦尔蒂,犹太作家马拉默德,黑人女作家艾丽丝·沃克和华裔作家谭恩美等。他们的入选作品内容丰富多彩,艺术风格迥异,语言各具特色。编者仿佛为读者举办了一场令人赏心悦目的小说盛宴。

(二)重点突出,名篇主导。美国文学历史不长,但名家辈出。编者打破贪大求全的老框框,精选了一些很有价值的名篇,以飨读者。许多选文如欧文的《瑞普·凡·温克尔》、霍桑的《教长的黑面纱》、马克·吐温的《跳蛙》、欧·亨利的《麦琪的礼物》、福克纳的《献给艾米莉的一朵玫瑰花》、海明威的《白象似的群山》和艾丽丝·沃克的《日常家用》等都是脍炙人口的佳作,常常入选美国各类选集和教科书。这些作品内容涉及美国社会生活的各个方面,有的揭露教长的虚伪,有的讽刺贿选的丑闻,有的歌颂淳朴的真情,有的揭示个人的困惑和挫折等等,喜怒哀乐之情跃然纸上,文字优美,语句简练,表达准确自如,虽留有时代之痕迹,仍不失为读者习作之范例。

(三)思想性与艺术性的统一,知识性与可读性的结合。本书除精选上述名篇之外,特别选了爱伦·坡的侦探小说《红死魔的面具》和当代科幻小说家勒·魁恩的小说《她消除了它们的名字》以及另外一位科幻小说家吉卜森的《根斯巴克连续体》等。这在一般美国小说选集里是不多见的。科幻小说在美国小说园地里一枝独秀,二次大战后有

显著的发展。吉卜森在科幻小说里展现了一个奇妙的电脑世界。这也许是理工科同学很感兴趣的。后工业化时代以来,美国走进了后现代主义文学阶段,通俗小说与严肃小说平起平坐。科幻小说和侦探小说被大量改编成电影电视,受到广大观众的喜爱。因此,读点这类小说,也能增加阅读的乐趣,扩大知识面。

(四)评介加注释,导读作用大。本书主要面向高校非英语专业的同学,在编写上考虑比较周到。每篇选文前面有作家简介和选文评点,后面有难词难句注释和思考题,有助于引导同学学习和理解选文。这是编者多年来从事大学英语教学和认真研读美国小说的结晶。所以,本书既可作为高校非英语专业的文学教材,又可供同等学历的青年自学之用。他们可以从中得到有益的启迪,为进一步阅读美国长篇小说创造条件。

已故的著名学者范存忠教授曾指出:英语的真正价值,就在于它是一种文学语言。它是莎士比亚、弥尔顿和华兹华斯等大作家的语言。从14世纪到现在,经过许多杰出的文学家的提炼,英语具有音乐性的语调和五光十色的词汇。这些东西都有它的“弦外之音”,因为英语具有丰富的文学背景。

这些话对学习美国英语同样适用。德国哲学家赫尔德说:“必须从语言中学习语法,而不是从语法中学习语言。”学习美国英语,要读点美国小说。比如,通过阅读小说来掌握令人头痛的美国俚语(slang),比死记硬背单词的效果好得多。况且小说离不开社会生活,读点美国小说可以了解和认识美国社会,理解人文精神的深刻内涵,作为自己人生旅途的有益参照。

美国作家梭罗说:“多少人把读书作为一生中一个新时期的开端!”读点美国小说,直接接触生动优美的英语,将会拓展视野,提高英语阅读和写作的能力,增加读书的兴趣和快乐,这将使你如虎添翼,飞向知识的新天地,成为你一生中生活的开端!

学习贵在坚持。有了好教材,还要坚持不懈地努力,才能学有所得。我相信《美国短篇小说选读》将受到师生们的喜爱,在教学中发挥它应有的作用;同时,我希望编者在实践中不断总结经验,集思广益,使它更加完善,成为高校非英语专业同学的好伙伴。是为序。

杨仁敬
2009年元月
于瑞景新居

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Washington Irving

(1783-1859)



Washington Irving (1783—1859) was the first American writer of imaginative literature to gain international fame. To say that he was the father of American literature is not much exaggeration. He is a major figure in the history of the short story in America. The short story as genre in American literature probably began with Irving's *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon* (1819—1820), a collection of essays, sketches, and tales, of which the most famous and frequently anthologized are "Rip Van Winkle" and "The Legend of Sleepy Hollow". The book marked the beginning of American Romanticism.

Irving was born into a wealthy New York merchant family in the final year of the Revolutionary War and named after George Washington. From a very early age he began to read widely and write juvenile poems, essays and plays. Later, he studied law and for a time led the leisurely life of a gentleman lawyer, but he loved writing more. In 1815, he went to England to take care of his family business there, and when it failed, he had to write to support himself. When he was about 50, after an absence of 17 years, he returned to America and lived a life of leisure and comfort, and writing *The Life of Goldsmith* (1849) and a five-volume *Life of Washington* (1859) and a lot of other works. He died in 1859. He was not married.

He was not only a story writer, a biographer, but also a historian. Apart from *The Sketch Book*, his major works include *A History of New*

York (1809). Many of Irving's works are distinctively European in content and style and exhibit the Gothic, the supernatural, and the longing for the good old days, which are romantic enough in subject if not exactly in style. His English is mostly British English. A folk-tale quality governs the overall meaning of Irving's fiction. Irving's style can only be described as beautiful. It is imitative, but he was a highly skillful writer. His writing is elegant and full of gentle humor and vivid descriptions. His characters are vivid and true so that they tend to linger in the mind of the reader. Another characteristic of Irving's writing is the musical language. Some people read Irving just for the music of his language.

"Rip Van Winkle" is based on old German folk tales which Irving adapted to the American setting. The central character, Rip Van Winkle, the hen-pecked and lazy husband who sleeps for twenty years and awakens to a greatly changed world and a long beard, is one of the best-known characters in American popular culture, widely recognized through his many appearances and references in books, movies, cartoons, and advertisements. "Rip Van Winkle" has been called the most popular story in the United States. An American actor played in a stage version of it for 45 years!

Rip Van Winkle

Washington Irving

Whoever has made a voyage up the Hudson¹ must remember the Kaatskill mountains². They are a dismembered³ branch of the great Appalachian family⁴, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and lording it over the surrounding country⁵. Every change of season, every change of weather, indeed, every hour of the day, produces some change in the magical hues and shapes of these mountains,

and they are regarded by all the good wives, far and near, as perfect barometers⁶. When the weather is fair and settled, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their bold outlines⁷ on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapours about their summits⁸, which, in the last rays of the setting sun, will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager⁹ may have descried¹⁰ the light smoke curling up from a village, whose shingle-roofs gleam among the trees¹¹, just where the blue tints¹² of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village, of great antiquity, having been founded by some of the Dutch colonists, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good Peter Stuyvesant¹³ (may he rest in peace!), and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing within a few years, built of small yellow bricks brought from Holland, having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks¹⁴.

In that same village and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly time-worn and weather-beaten), there lived many years since¹⁵, while the country was yet a province of Great Britain, a simple good-natured fellow, of the name of Rip Van Winkle. He was a descendant of the Van Winkles who figured so gallantly in the chivalrous days of Peter Stuyvesant¹⁶, and accompanied him to the siege¹⁷ of Fort Christina. He inherited, however, but little of the martial¹⁸ character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbour, and an obedient hen-pecked¹⁹ husband. Indeed, to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity²⁰; for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating abroad²¹, who are under the discipline of shrews²² at home. Their temper, doubtless, are rendered pliant and

malleable in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation²³, and a curtain lecture²⁴ is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant²⁵ wife may, therefore, in some respects, be considered a tolerable blessing; and if so, Rip Van Winkle was thrice²⁶ blessed.

Certain it is that he was a great favourite among all the good wives of the village, who, as usual with the amiable sex²⁷, took his part in all family squabbles²⁸; and never failed, whenever they talked those matters over in their evening gossipings, to lay all the blame on Dame Van Winkle. The children of the village, too, would shout with joy whenever he approached. He assisted at their sports²⁹, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and shoot marbles³⁰, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches, and Indians. Whenever he went dodging³¹ about the village, he was surrounded by a troop of them, hanging on his skirts³², clambering³³ on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him with impunity³⁴; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighbourhood.

The great error in Rip's composition was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labour³⁵. It could not be from the want of assiduity or perseverance³⁶; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance³⁷, and fish all day without a murmur, even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble³⁸. He would carry a fowling-piece³⁹ on his shoulder for hours together, trudging through woods and swamps, and up hill and down dale, to shoot a few squirrels or wild pigeons. He would never refuse to assist a neighbour even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country frolics for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences⁴⁰; the women of the village, too, used to employ him to run their errands⁴¹, and to do such little odd jobs as their less obliging husbands would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to⁴² anybody's business but his own; but as to doing family duty,

and keeping his farm in order, he found it impossible.

In fact, he declared it was of no use to work on his farm; it was the most pestilent⁴³ little piece of ground in the whole country; everything about it went wrong, and would go wrong, in spite of him. His fences were continually falling to pieces; his cow would either go astray⁴⁴, or get among the cabbages; weeds were sure to grow quicker in his fields than anywhere else; the rain always made a point of setting in⁴⁵ just as he had some outdoor work to do; so that though his patrimonial estate had dwindled away⁴⁶ under his management, acre by acre, until there was little more left than a mere patch of Indian corn and potatoes, yet it was the worst conditioned farm in the neighbourhood.

His children, too, were as raged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin begotten in his own likeness⁴⁷, promised to inherit the habits, with the old clothes of his father. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels⁴⁸, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins⁴⁹, which he had much ado⁵⁰ to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her train⁵¹ in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals, of foolish, well-oiled dispositions, who take the world easy⁵², eat white bread or brown, whichever can be got with least thought or trouble, and would rather starve on a penny than work for a pound. If left to himself, he would have whistled life away, in perfect contentment; but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about⁵³ his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and everything he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence⁵⁴. Rip had but one way of replying to all lectures of the kind, and that, by frequent use, had grown into a habit. He shrugged his shoulders, shook his head, cast up his eyes, but said nothing. This, however, always provoked a fresh volley from his

wife; so that he was faint to draw off his forces, and take to the outside of the house⁵⁵—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent⁵⁶ was his dog Wolf, who was as much hen-pecked as his master; for Dame Van Winkle regarded them as companions in idleness, and even looked upon Wolf with an evil eye, as the cause of his master's going so often astray. True it is, in all points of spirit befitting an honourable dog, he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods⁵⁷—but what courage can withstand the ever-during and all-besetting terrors of a woman's tongue⁵⁸? The moment Wolf entered the house, his crest fell, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about with a gallows air, casting many a side-long glance at Dame Van Winkle, and at the least flourish of a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation⁵⁹.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on⁶⁰; a tart temper never mellows with age⁶¹, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool⁶² that grows keener with constant use. For a long while he used to console himself, when driven from home, by frequenting a kind of perpetual club of the sages, philosophers, and other idle personages of the village⁶³; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of his Majesty George the Third⁶⁴. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly⁶⁵ over village gossip, or telling endless sleepy stories about nothing. But it would have been worth any statesman's money to have heard the profound discussions that sometimes took place, when by chance an old newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveler. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as drawled out⁶⁶ by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper⁶⁷ learned little man, who was not to be daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary⁶⁸; and how sagely

they would deliberate upon⁶⁹ public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this junto⁷⁰ were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch⁷¹ of the village, and landlord of the inn, at the door of which he took his seat from morning till night, just moving sufficiently to avoid the sun and keep in the shade of a large tree; so that the neighbours could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sundial⁷². It is true he was rarely heard to speak, but smoked his pipe incessantly. His adherents, however (for every great man has his adherents), perfectly understood him, and knew how to gather his opinions. When anything that was read or related displeased him, he was observed to smoke his pipe vehemently, and to send forth short, frequent, and angry puffs, but when pleased he would inhale the smoke slowly and tranquilly, and emit it in light and placid clouds; and sometimes, taking the pipe from his mouth, and letting the fragrant vapour curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation⁷³.

From even this stronghold⁷⁴ the unlucky Rip was at length routed⁷⁵ by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquility of the assemblage and call the members all to naught⁷⁶; nor was that august personage⁷⁷, Nicholas Vedder himself, sacred from⁷⁸ the daring tongue of this terrible virago⁷⁹, who charged him outright⁸⁰ with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair⁸¹; and his only alternative to escape from the labour of the farm and clamour of his wife, was to take gun in hand and stroll away into the woods. Here he would sometimes seat himself at the foot of a tree, and share the contents of his wallet⁸² with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "thy mistress leads thee a dog's life of it⁸³; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never want a

friend to stand by thee⁸⁴ !” Wolf would wag⁸⁵ his tail, look wistfully⁸⁶ in his master’s face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart⁸⁷.

In a long ramble⁸⁸ of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled⁸⁹ to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favourite sport of squirrel-shooting⁹⁰, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports⁹¹ of his gun. Panting and fatigued⁹², he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll⁹³, covered with mountain herbage⁹⁴, that crowned the brow of a precipice⁹⁵. From an opening between the trees he could overlook all the lower country for many a mile of rich woodland. He saw at a distance the lordly Hudson, far, far below him, moving on its silent but majestic course⁹⁶, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark⁹⁷, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom⁹⁸, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen⁹⁹, wild, lonely, and shagged¹⁰⁰, the bottom filled with fragments from the impending cliffs, and scarcely lighted by the reflected rays of the setting sun. For some time Rip lay musing on¹⁰¹ this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valley; he saw that it would be dark long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh¹⁰² when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend¹⁰³, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing¹⁰⁴, “Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!” He looked round, but could see nothing but a crow winging its solitary flight across the mountain. He thought his fancy must have deceived him, and turned again to descend, when he heard the same cry ring through the still evening air, “Rip Van Winkle! Rip Van Winkle!” — at the same time Wolf bristled up

his back, and giving a loud growl, skulked to his master's side¹⁰⁵, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a vague apprehension¹⁰⁶ stealing over him; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling¹⁰⁷ up the rocks, and bending under the weight of something he carried on his back. He was surprised to see any human being in this lonely and unfrequented¹⁰⁸ place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighbourhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to yield it¹⁰⁹.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity¹¹⁰ of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built¹¹¹ old fellow, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled¹¹² beard. His dress was of the antique Dutch fashion — a cloth jerkin strapped round the waist — several pair of breeches, the outer one of ample volume, decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees¹¹³. He bore on his shoulder a stout keg¹¹⁴, that seemed full of liquor¹¹⁵, and made signs for Rip to approach and assist him with the load. Though rather shy and distrustful of this new acquaintance, Rip complied with his usual alacrity¹¹⁶; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully¹¹⁷, apparently the dry bed of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals¹¹⁸, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine¹¹⁹, or rather cleft¹²⁰ between lofty rocks, toward which their rugged path conducted¹²¹. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering¹²² of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow¹²³, like a small amphitheatre¹²⁴, surrounded by perpendicular precipices¹²⁵, over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches¹²⁶ so that you only caught glimpses of the azure¹²⁷ sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion had laboured on¹²⁸ in silence, for though the former

marveled greatly what could be the object of carrying a keg of liquor up this wild mountain; yet there was something strange and incomprehensible about the unknown, that inspired awe and checked familiarity¹²⁹.

On entering the amphitheatre, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level¹³⁰ spot in the center was a company of odd-looking personages playing at nine-pins¹³¹. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion¹³²; some wore short doublets¹³³, others jerkins, with long knives in their belts, and most of them had enormous breeches, of similar style with that of the guide's. Their visages¹³⁴, too, were peculiar: one had a large head, broad face, and small piggish eyes; the face of another seemed to consist entirely of nose, and was surmounted by a white sugar-loaf hat, set off with a little red cock's tail¹³⁵. They all had beards, of various shapes and colours. There was one who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a weather-beaten countenance¹³⁶; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger¹³⁷, high-crowned hat and feather, red stockings, and high-heeled shoes, with roses in them. The whole group reminded Rip of the figures in an old Flemish painting¹³⁸, in the parlour¹³⁹ of Dominie¹⁴⁰ Van Shaick, the village parson, and which had been brought over from Holland at the time of the settlement.

What seemed particularly odd to Rip was, that though these folks were evidently amusing themselves, yet they maintained the gravest faces, the most mysterious silence, and were, withal¹⁴¹, the most melancholy party of pleasure he had ever witnessed. Nothing interrupted the stillness of the scene but the noise of the balls, which, whenever they were rolled, echoed along the mountains like rumbling peals or thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly desisted from their play¹⁴², and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth¹⁴³, lack luster¹⁴⁴ countenances, that his heart turned