

哈佛 蓝星双语名著导读
Today's Most Popular Study Guides

黑孩子 **Black Boy**

〔美〕 Richard Wright 原著
Selena Ward 导读
Ross Naughton 翻译
刘建喜 汪静

SMARTER

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FASTER



天津科技翻译出版公司

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致读者

亲爱的读者,在这个多元文化的世界里,渴望知识、钟情文学、热爱英语的你是否希望站在巨人的肩膀上摘星呢?

“哈佛蓝星双语名著导读”系列是全美最流行的经典名著导读笔记,由哈佛学生们融会名著阅读和文学学习精华,亲笔撰写而成。蓝星系列精选了来自世界各国的杰出经典著作,以经典性和流行性并重的名著为素材,以明晰的风格和地道的语言,解读名著精华和具有时代性的主题和思想。每一分册都包括名著的创作背景、人物分析、主题解析、篇章讲解、重要引文释义、作品档案,并且附有相关的思考题、推荐论文题、小测验以及延伸阅读篇目。

如今“蓝星”漂洋过海,轻轻落在了国内英语学习读者的掌中,读者不需走出国门,即可轻松掌握哈佛课堂上的知识。蓝星系列丰富的内容编排,使我们不仅仅停留于名著内容的了解,而且对著作的精华和内涵有更全面、深入的掌握,进而对英语语言和文化做更进一步的了解和研究。蓝星精辟、明晰的编写风格让“半天阅读一本名著”成为现实,使我们在有限的闲暇时间内阅读更多的书,同时迅速增强英语水平,提高文学修养,增加谈资。

天津科技翻译出版公司之前推出的“蓝星”系列50册,在图书市场上收到了很好的反响。本次新推出的品种同样精挑细选了国外近现代经典作品,以期进一步丰富该系列的内容。本次出版仍由天津外国语学院张滨江教授和青年教师负责翻译和审校,并严格按照原作的风格,提供原汁原味的英语环境,让读者自由地阅读、想象和发挥。

蓝星闪耀,伴你前行!

CONTEXT

Richard Wright was born on September 4, 1908, on a farm near the river town of Natchez, Mississippi. He was the first of two sons born to Nathan Wright, an illiterate tenant farmer, and Ella Wilson Wright, a teacher. When Richard was about five years old, his father abandoned the family to live with another woman. Trying to support herself and her two children—all the while trying to keep the rambunctious Richard under control—proved too stressful for Ella's delicate constitution, and she suffered a stroke that left her physically disabled for the rest of her life. His mother's health troubles shaped Wright's life in two significant ways. First, they meant that he had to work when his mother could not (which was often); this situation made his schooling intermittent at best. Second, it meant that Wright's living arrangements would change whenever his mother became too ill to care for her children. As such shifts occurred often, Wright had little opportunity to form coherent, nurturing, and meaningful relationships with family members or friends.

Despite his irregular schooling, Wright became an avid reader. When he was sixteen, he published a short story in a local black newspaper and began to harbor ambitions to write professionally. He faced considerable odds in this quest: his intensely religious household discouraged "idle" thoughts and creativity, while the dehumanizing Jim Crow South pronounced Wright and all black men unfit for anything but the lowliest work. When he moved himself and his family to

来龙·去脉

理查德·赖特于1908年9月4日出生在密西西比河边纳齐兹市附近的一家农场。他是家里两个儿子中的老大，父亲内森·赖特是个没有文化的佃农，母亲埃拉·威尔逊·赖特是一名教师。理查德大约5岁时，父亲抛弃了家庭，去跟另一个女人生活了。埃拉要养活自己和两个孩子，还要管教放纵的理查德——这些负担对身体柔弱的埃拉来说过于沉重，随后她得了中风，这使她的后半生失去了自理能力。妈妈的健康问题在两个重要方面严重影响了理查德的生活：第一，妈妈的病意味着他不得不在妈妈不能工作的时候（经常如此）出去打工，这种情况充其量只能让他断断续续地去上学；第二，这意味着每当妈妈病情严重不能照顾孩子时，赖特的生活安排就得随之发生变化。由于这样的变化时常发生，赖特几乎没有机会与家人或朋友建立起亲密协调、良性发展、富有意义的关系。

尽管没有受到规范的教育，赖特却成了一名如饥似渴爱读书的人。16岁时，他在当地一家黑人办的报纸上发表了一篇短篇小说，开始树立起成为职业作家的远大抱负。在这一求索的道路上，他面临了相当多的困难：他那虔诚的宗教家庭反对“懒散”的思想和创新，而丧失人性且盛行种族歧视的南方宣称赖特及所有黑人除从事最下等的工作外，一无是处。赖特和家人于20世纪

Chicago in the late 1920s, circumstances were hardly more encouraging. As the Great Depression enveloped the country, Wright had to work a wide variety of stultifying and exhausting jobs to support his family. Nevertheless, he began to write seriously in private.

Wright entered the world of letters in 1933, when he began publishing poetry in various leftist and revolutionary magazines. He joined the Revolutionary Party in 1934, writing for their publications and meeting many other disaffected writers, artists, and intellectuals who were also Party members. In 1937, Wright moved to New York and became Harlem editor of *The Daily Worker*, a revolutionary publication. The next eight years were the most triumphant of his life, as he published important essays such as "*The Ethics of Living Jim Crow*," acclaimed stories like "*Fire and Cloud*," and two very successful novels: *Native Son* (1940) and the autobiographical *Black Boy* (1945).

This flurry of creative productivity did not overshadow Wright's political concerns, as he remained socially engaged with activist intellectuals for the rest of his life. He left the revolutionary Party in 1942 out of disapproval at what he considered the Party's soft stance on wartime racial discrimination. Wright left the United States in 1947, partly in protest against the deep flaws he discerned in American society. Settling with his wife and daughter in Paris, he became interested in existentialism, the philosophical movement that attempted to understand individual existence in the context of an unfathomable universe.

In Paris, Wright often socialized with Jean Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir, two influential thinkers and writers

20年代末来到芝加哥，但那里的情况也强不了多少。大萧条席卷了全国，赖特不得不从事各种令他前功尽弃又筋疲力尽的工作来养活一家人。尽管如此，他还是秘密地开始认真写作了。

赖特于1933年进入文学界，开始在不同的左翼及革命性杂志上发表诗歌。1934年，他参加了革命党，为革命党刊物撰写文章，结识了其他一些党内人士，包括一些对社会心怀不满的作家、艺术家和知识分子。1937年，赖特迁到纽约，成为革命党刊物《工人日报》哈莱姆地区的编辑。这之后的8年，是他人生最辉煌的8年，他发表了《在种族主义南方谋生的道德观》等重要文章、《火与乌云》等受到称赞的短篇小说以及两部很成功的长篇小说：《土生子》（1940）和自传体小说《黑孩子》（1945）。

频繁的文学创作并未使赖特对政治的关心相形见绌，因为他在后半生中一直与激进的知识分子保持着社会联系。赖特认为革命党对战争时期的种族歧视采取了软弱的立场，他对此极为不满，于1942年脱离了革命党。1947年赖特离开了美国，这在一定程度上是由于他认清了美国社会存在的深刻缺陷，并对此持反抗态度。赖特与妻子女儿定居巴黎，他对存在主义产生了浓厚兴趣。存在主义是当时的一次试图探索在深不可测的宇宙中个人存在的哲学运动。

在巴黎，赖特与存在主义运动的两位颇具影响的思想家和作家让—琼·保罗·萨特和西蒙·



of the existentialist movement. He then began corresponding with Frantz Fanon, the West Indian social philosopher, in the 1950s. Wright published little of lasting value during these years, and when he died of a heart attack in 1960, it was clear that his writing career had peaked with *Native Son* and *Black Boy*. Nevertheless, the sheer power of those novels, and the thundering creativity of the years during which he produced them, ensured that Wright would be remembered not merely as an aspiring intellectual but as a powerful American artist.

Wright's autobiography, *Black Boy*, portrays his boyhood in the vicious Jim Crow South and his struggles with the revolutionary Party in Chicago. As such, a sensitive reading of this work depends on an understanding of its social and historical contexts. One of the primary contexts is the body of laws referred to as the "Jim Crow laws" after a crudely stereotypical character in white theater designed to degrade blacks for white entertainment.

Taking their cue from the infamous "separate but equal" ruling of *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), the Jim Crow laws mandated segregation of black from white not only in physical spaces such as restaurants, trains, movie theaters, and hospitals, but also in social arenas such as marriage. These laws effectively created two separate societies with highly unequal distributions of wealth. Primarily agricultural black populations were cast into extreme poverty and despair, enabling whites to take over the blacks' land and further exploit them as laborers on white-owned farms. As Wright learned when he traveled to New York, these laws were not exclusive to the South. However, they were most devastating in the South, likely because the South's history of slavery made it espe-


德·博瓦尔来往密切。后来,他又于20世纪50年代和西印度群岛的社会哲学家弗朗兹·法农保持着联系。这些年里,赖特几乎没有发表经久之作。1960年,他死于心脏病。显然他的创作生涯还是以《土生子》和《黑孩子》为巅峰的。但是,这两部小说的强大力量,以及他在创作时期表现出的极大的创造力,确立了赖特的地位。他不仅被后世视为志向远大的知识分子,还被视为举足轻重的美国艺术家。

赖特的自传《黑孩子》描写了他在盛行险恶种族主义的南方的童年生活及同革命党一道在芝加哥进行抗争的岁月。因此,能否读懂这部作品取决于对其社会和历史背景的深刻理解。一个主要背景是白人剧场中塑造的一个粗野的刻板化人物,其目的在于贬低黑人,取悦白人。随后便出现了被称为“歧视黑人法”的一系列法律。


从普莱西诉弗格森案(1896)那臭名昭著的“隔离但平等”的原则中得到启示,歧视黑人法不仅在饭馆、火车、剧场、医院等公共场所中将黑人与白人隔离,并且在如婚姻这样的社会领域中也将他们隔离。这些法律成功创造了两个截然不同的社会,财富分配极为不均。以从事农业为主的黑人陷入了极度的贫困与绝望中,这使得白人掌管了黑人的土地,强迫他们在白人所有的农场上劳作,从而进一步剥削黑人。赖特来到纽约后了解到,这些法律不仅仅适用于南方。但这些法律在南方最具蹂躏性,可能是因为南方的奴隶制历史让白人难以去接受黑人解放的思想。

cially difficult for whites to accept black emancipation.

Likewise, it is difficult to fully understand Black Boy without knowledge of American Communism in the 1930s and 1940s. These years saw the collapse of the stock market, industry stagnation, massive unemployment, and even famine in some parts of the United States. Many American intellectuals were disturbed by the capitalist mode of production, which, in their opinion, brought about these dreadful problems and then did very little to alleviate them. Revolutionists believed in the dignity and agency of precisely those people who seemed to suffer the most. They claimed their political philosophy was based on a scientific model, and they advanced a theory of progress that emphasized not only equality, justice, and solidarity, but also conformity.

As many of these tenets of Revolutionary Party appealed to human beings' noblest sentiments, the American Revolutionary Party attracted many idealists, including Wright. As a black man, Wright was particularly interested in the convergence of confronting racism with Revolutionary Party. Eventually, the American Revolutionary Party saw the same internal bickering and division that plagued other American political organizations. The Party's increasingly authoritarian stance profoundly disappointed sensitive thinkers like Wright, who had joined the Party with firm hopes for a brighter future. 

同样，不了解20世纪三、四十年代美国式公有社会制度也很难读懂《黑孩子》。这段时期内，美国经历了股市狂跌、工业停滞、大规模失业，有些地方甚至发生了饥荒。许多美国知识分子对资本主义的生产方式感到困惑，在他们看来，正是这种生产方式带来了这些可怕的问题，而又不能起到缓解作用。革命党人相信正是生活在最底层的这些人具有尊严和能动力量。革命党宣称他们的政治哲学建立在科学的模式上，他们提出进步理论，不仅强调平等、正义和团结，而且强调一致性。

由于革命党的许多信条符合人类最崇高的情感，美国革命党吸引了包括赖特在内的很多理想主义分子。身为黑人，赖特对与革命党一道对抗种族歧视特别感兴趣。但最终，美国革命党和美国其他一些政治组织一样，遭遇了内部争斗和分裂。像赖特这样的敏感的思想家正是出于对美好未来的坚定信念而加入革命党的，但这一政党却愈来愈专制，令他们大失所望。（当时的美国革命党即美国共产党——编者注）。

PLOT OVERVIEW

Required to remain quiet while his grandmother lies ill in bed, four-year-old Richard Wright becomes bored and begins playing with fire near the curtains, leading to his accidentally burning down the family home in Natchez, Mississippi. In fear, Richard hides under the burning house. His father, Nathan, retrieves him from his hiding place. Then, his mother, Ella, beats him so severely that he loses consciousness and falls ill.

Nathan abandons the family to live with another woman while Richard and his brother, Alan, are still very young. Without Nathan's financial support, the Wrights fall into poverty and perpetual hunger. Richard closely associates his family's hardship—and particularly their hunger—with his father and therefore grows bitter toward him.

For the next few years, Ella struggles to raise her children in Memphis, Tennessee. Her long hours of work leave her little time to supervise Richard and his brother. Not surprisingly, Richard gets into all sorts of trouble, spying on people in out-houses and becoming a regular at the local saloon—and an alcoholic—by the age of six. Ella's worsening health prevents her from raising two children by herself and often leaves her unable to work. During these times, Richard does whatever odd jobs a child can do to bring in some money for the family. School is hardly an option for him. At one point, the family's troubles are so severe that Ella must place her children in an orphanage for a few weeks.

Life improves when Ella moves to Elaine, Arkansas, to

情节·览

姥姥卧病在床，4岁的理查德·赖特被命令老老实实呆着。他感到厌烦，开始在窗帘旁玩火，这次意外烧毁了他们在密西西比州纳齐兹的家。恐惧之下，理查德躲到了着火的房子底下。爸爸内森把他从藏身之处抓了出来。妈妈埃拉将他一顿狠揍，使他失去知觉，大病了一场。

在理查德和弟弟艾伦还很小的时候，内森就抛弃了家庭，跟另一个女人一起生活了。失去了内森的经济来源，赖特一家陷入了贫困，经常忍饥挨饿。理查德将家里的困难，特别是饥饿，与父亲紧紧联系在一起，因此他对父亲的态度变得刻薄起来。

随后的几年里，埃拉挣扎在田纳西州的孟菲斯抚养着孩子。过长的工作时间让她无暇照看理查德和弟弟。自然而然之中，理查德就变成了捣蛋鬼。他偷窥厕所里的人，成为当地酒馆的常客——6岁时就成了酒鬼。埃拉日渐衰弱的身体使她没有能力再养育两个孩子，每况愈下的身体状况时常让她无法出去做工。这种情况下，理查德就干起一个孩子可以做的零工，挣些钱贴补家用。他几乎没有法子再去上学。家里曾一度十分困难，埃拉不得不把两个孩子送到孤儿院住几周。

埃拉搬到阿肯色州的依莱恩与妹妹麦吉和



live with her sister, Maggie, and her sister's husband, Hoskins. Hoskins runs a successful saloon, so there is always plenty of food to eat, a condition that Richard greatly appreciates but to which he cannot accustom himself. Soon, however, white jealousy of Hoskins's business success reaches a peak, as local white men kill Hoskins and threaten the rest of his family. Ella and Maggie flee with the two boys to West Helena, Arkansas. There, the two sisters' combined wages make life easier than it had been in Memphis. After only a short time, however, Maggie flees to Detroit with her lover, Professor Matthews, leaving Ella the sole support of the family. Hard economic times return.

Times become even harder when a paralytic stroke severely incapacitates Ella. Richard's grandmother brings Ella, Richard, and Alan to her home in Jackson, Mississippi. Ella's numerous siblings convene in Jackson to decide how to care for their ailing sister and her two boys. The aunts and uncles decide that Alan, Richard's brother, will live with Maggie in Detroit. Ella will remain at home in Jackson. Richard, given the freedom to choose which aunt or uncle to live with, decides to take up residence with Uncle Clark, as Clark lives in Greenwood, Mississippi, not far from Jackson. Soon after he arrives at Clark's house, Richard learns from a neighbor that a young boy had died years ago in the same bedroom Richard now occupies. Too terrified to sleep, Richard successfully pleads to be returned to his grandmother's home.

Back at Granny's, Richard once again faces the familiar problem of hunger. He also faces a new problem: Granny's incredibly strict religious regimen. Granny, a Seventh-Day