

中文导读英文版
中短篇小说精选



The Selected Short Stories of Allan Poe

爱伦·坡短篇小说精选

[美] 爱伦·坡 著
王勋 纪飞 等 编译

(中 文 导 读 英 文 版)

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内 容 简 介

本书精选了美国著名作家爱伦·坡的 25 篇短篇小说，其中包括《莫格街凶杀案》、《黑猫》、《凹凸山的故事》、《活埋》、《眼镜》、《红死病的化妆舞会》和《厄舍古屋崩溃记》等公认的短篇小说经典名篇。这些短篇小说被翻译成各种文字，影响了一代又一代世界各地的读者，并且被改编成戏剧、电影、电视剧和卡通等。

无论作为语言学习的课本，还是作为文学读本，这些经典名篇对当代中国的读者都将产生积极的影响。为了使读者能够了解英文故事概况，进而提高阅读速度和阅读水平，在每篇的开始部分增加了中文导读。

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埃德加·爱伦·坡（Edgar Allan Poe，1809—1849），19 世纪美国著名作家、文学评论家、短篇小说先驱，被誉为世界上侦探小说和科幻小说的鼻祖。

爱伦·坡于 1809 年 1 月 19 日出生在马萨诸塞州的波士顿，年幼时他的父亲离家出走，母亲病故，之后被商人约翰·爱伦收养。爱伦·坡的一生非常坎坷，他在养父母那里享受过家庭的温暖，但最后被养父逐出家门；少年时代他接受过良好的教育，但由于各种原因却被弗吉尼亚大学退学；虽然是个天才的作家，但以写作为生的他一生贫困潦倒。1849 年 10 月 7 日，当他在巴尔的摩为自己的新杂志工作期间，突然昏迷不醒，被送往医院后不久便离开了人世。

在他短暂的一生中，爱伦·坡共写了 70 多篇短篇小说，其中代表作有《莫格街凶杀案》、《黑猫》、《凹凸山的故事》、《眼镜》、《红死病的化妆舞会》和《厄舍古屋崩溃记》等。他的小说风格怪异离奇，充满恐怖气氛。他的短篇小说对现代西方文学和电影的发展都产生了重大影响，英国作家柯南的侦探小说《福尔摩斯探案集》，法国作家凡尔纳的科幻小说，以及今天广为流传的种种推理、罪案小说，都深受其影响。除短篇小说外，文学评论在他的创作中也占有很重要的地位，同时代的作家詹姆斯·罗塞尔·洛威尔把爱伦·坡誉为“最有见识、最富哲理的大无畏评论家”，当代文学评论家埃德蒙·威尔逊也称“爱伦·坡的文学评论确实是美国文坛上空前的杰作”。他一向主张“为艺术而艺术”，他的艺术主张几乎贯穿于他的所有作品中，包括诗歌、短篇小说和论文。在这些作品中，他声称“一切艺术的目的是娱乐，不是真理。”他认为“在诗歌中只有创造美——超凡绝尘的美才是引起乐趣的正当途径。音乐是诗歌不可缺少的成分，对诗人力求表现超凡绝尘的美尤其重要。而在小说创作方面，艺术家就不妨力图制造惊险、恐怖和强烈情感的效果。而且每篇作品都应该收到一种效果。”



他的独创性论文如《写作的哲学》，《诗歌原理》，评论霍桑《古老的故事》的论文，评论朗费罗、柯勒律治、华兹华斯、丁尼生等人的诗歌的论文以及评论狄更斯《老古玩店》的论文等作品都显示了他的精辟见解，至今仍被视为文艺批评的典范之作。

爱伦·坡对美国文学的贡献，可以通过著名作家、评论家萧伯纳对他的评论得到印证，萧伯纳认为：“美国出了两个伟大的作家——爱伦·坡和马克·吐温。”爱伦·坡对世界各国的作家影响巨大，他在美国文学史上、在整个英语国家文学史上，乃至在世界文学史上的地位，都是不容忽视的。

爱伦·坡的作品在全世界产生了巨大的影响，始终拥有大量的读者。本书精选了他的 25 篇短篇小说，采用中文导读英文版的形式出版。在中文导读中，我们尽力使其贴近原作的精髓，也尽可能保留原作的故事主线，希望能够编出为当代中国读者所喜爱的经典读本。读者在阅读英文故事之前，可以先阅读中文导读内容，这样有利于了解故事背景，从而加快阅读速度。我们相信，该经典著作的引进对加强当代中国读者，特别是青少年读者的人文修养是非常有帮助的。

本书主要内容由王勋、纪飞编译。参加本书故事素材搜集整理及编译工作的还有郑佳、刘乃亚、赵雪、熊金玉、李丽秀、熊红华、王婷婷、孟宪行、胡国平、李晓红、贡东兴、陈楠、邵舒丽、冯洁、王业伟、徐鑫、王晓旭、周丽萍、熊建国、徐平国、肖洁、王小红等。限于我们的科学、人文素养和英语水平，书中难免会有不当之处，衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



CONTENTS

绝境/	
A Predicament	1
失去呼吸/	
Loss of Breath	12
生意人/	
The Business Man	25
欺骗是一门精准的科学/	
Diddling, Considered as One of the Exact Sciences	36
红死病的化妆舞会/	
The Masque of the Red Death	47
约会/	
The Assignment	55
一桶白葡萄酒/	
The Cask of Amontillado	68
凹凸山的故事/	
A Tale of the Ragged Mountains	77
陷阱与钟摆/	
The Pit and the Pendulum	89
椭圆形画像/	
The Oval Portrait	106
厄舍古屋崩溃记/	
The Fall of the House of Usher	110
贝蕾妮丝/	
Berenice	132
莫雷娜/	
Morella	141



丽姬娅/
Ligeia.....148

埃利奥罗拉/
Eleonora165

威廉·威尔逊/
William Wilson.....173

黑猫/
The Black Cat.....195

泄密的心/
The Tell-Tale Heart207

人群中的人/
The Man of the Crowd213

眼镜/
The Spectacles.....223

活埋/
The Premature Burial249

长方形箱子/
The Oblong Box.....265

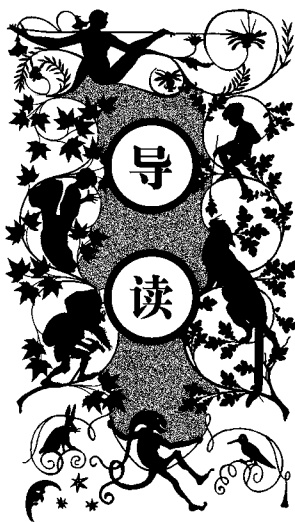
塔尔博士和费瑟尔教授的疗法/
The System of Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether278

一周中的三个星期天/
Three Sundays in a Week298

莫格街凶杀案/
The Murders in the Rue Morgue305

绝 境

A Predicament



导

读

泽诺比阿小姐带着黑奴庞培和卷毛狗黛安娜逛街。庞培是个身材矮小的老头，却套了一件长大衣，所以他不得不用手提着衣服。这时小姐突然想到教堂的钟塔上去看看全城的景色。于是他们登上了旋转楼梯。途中黛安娜闻到了老鼠的味道。

泽诺比阿小姐首先登顶，庞培伸出手来请小姐拉他一把，可这下大衣便拖在了地上，他踩着衣角，扑倒在小姐身上。小姐生气地扯掉他的假发扔在了地上。

后来他们又和好了。那钟塔只有一个高高的孔可以探出头去看全城的风景，小姐要求踩着庞培。风景果然很美。不一会儿庞培说他顶不住了。小姐骂了他，继续看着风景。她探头的地方是钟面上的一个孔，不久钟表的分针便架到了她的脖子上。她不能抽身，只有向庞培求救，可是庞培说他已伤透了心。而那条狗也帮不上忙，更何况她还命令它在角落里待着别动。

时间慢慢过去，分针压得越来越紧。小姐的眼珠被挤得凸出，最后双双掉了出来。而后，分针切掉了她的脑袋，她又自由了。她感觉自己并无不妥。她拿出了鼻烟壶，发现不能吸，就把鼻烟壶扔给了脑袋，脑袋就快活地吸着。

庞培见她下来，吓得落荒而逃。她再转身看忠诚的黛安娜，它却只剩下一堆残骸——它被老鼠吃掉了。泽诺比阿小姐这才明白她完了。



*W*hat chance, good lady, hath bereft you thus?—COMUS.

IT was a quiet and still afternoon when I strolled forth in the goodly city of Edina. The confusion and bustle in the streets were terrible. Men were talking. Women were screaming. Children were choking. Pigs were whistling. Carts they rattled. Bulls they bellowed. Cows they lowed. Horses they neighed. Cats they caterwauled. Dogs they danced. Danced! Could it then be possible? Danced! Alas, thought I, my dancing days are over! Thus it is ever. What a host of gloomy recollections will ever and anon be awakened in the mind of genius and imaginative contemplation, especially of a genius doomed to the everlasting and eternal, and continual, and, as one might say, the—continued—yes, the continued and continuous, bitter, harassing, disturbing, and, if I may be allowed the expression, the very disturbing influence of the serene, and godlike, and heavenly, and exalted, and elevated, and purifying effect of what may be rightly termed the most enviable, the most truly enviable—nay! the most benignly beautiful, the most deliciously ethereal, and, as it were, the most pretty (if I may use so bold an expression) thing (pardon me, gentle reader!) in the world—but I am always led away by my feelings. In such a mind, I repeat, what a host of recollections are stirred up by a trifle! The dogs danced! I—I could not! They frisked—I wept. They capered—I sobbed aloud. Touching circumstances! which cannot fail to bring to the recollection of the classical reader that exquisite passage in relation to the fitness of things, which is to be found in the commencement of the third volume of that admirable and venerable Chinese novel the *Jo-Go-Slow*.

In my solitary walk through, the city I had two humble but faithful companions. Diana, my poodle! sweetest of creatures! She had a quantity of hair over her one eye, and a blue ribband tied fashionably around her neck. Diana was not more than five inches in height, but her head was somewhat bigger than her body, and her tail being cut off exceedingly close, gave an air of injured innocence to the interesting animal which rendered her a favorite with all.

And Pompey, my negro!—sweet Pompey! how shall I ever forget thee? I had taken Pompey's arm. He was three feet in height (I like to be particular)



and about seventy, or perhaps eighty, years of age. He had bow-legs and was corpulent. His mouth should not be called small, nor his ears short. His teeth, however, were like pearl, and his large full eyes were deliciously white. Nature had endowed him with no neck, and had placed his ankles (as usual with that race) in the middle of the upper portion of the feet. He was clad with a striking simplicity. His sole garments were a stock of nine inches in height, and a nearly—new drab overcoat which had formerly been in the service of the tall, stately, and illustrious Dr. Moneypenny. It was a good overcoat. It was well cut. It was well made. The coat was nearly new. Pompey held it up out of the dirt with both hands.

There were three persons in our party, and two of them have already been the subject of remark. There was a third—that person was myself. I am the Signora Psyche Zenobia. I am not Suky Snobbs. My appearance is commanding. On the memorable occasion of which I speak I was habited in a crimson satin dress, with a sky-blue Arabian mantelet. And the dress had trimmings of green agraffas, and seven graceful flounces of the orange-colored auricula. I thus formed the third of the party. There was the poodle. There was Pompey. There was myself. We were three. Thus it is said there were originally but three Furies—Melly, Nimmy, and Hetty—Meditation, Memory, and Fiddling.

Leaning upon the arm of the gallant Pompey, and attended at a respectable distance by Diana, I proceeded down one of the populous and very pleasant streets of the now deserted Edina. On a sudden, there presented itself to view a church—a Gothic cathedral—vast, venerable, and with a tall steeple, which towered into the sky. What madness now possessed me? Why did I rush upon my fate? I was seized with an uncontrollable desire to ascend the giddy pinnacle, and then survey the immense extent of the city. The door of the cathedral stood invitingly open. My destiny prevailed. I entered the ominous archway. Where then was my guardian angel?—if indeed such angels there be. If! Distressing monosyllable! what world of mystery, and meaning, and doubt, and uncertainty is there involved in thy two letters! I entered the ominous archway! I entered; and, without injury to my orange-colored auriculas, I passed beneath the portal, and emerged within the vestibule. Thus it is said the

immense river Alfred passed, unscathed, and unwetted, beneath the sea.

I thought the staircase would never have an end. Round! Yes, they went round and up, and round and up and round and up, until I could not help surmising, with the sagacious Pompey, upon whose supporting arm I leaned in all the confidence of early affection—I could not help surmising that the upper end of the continuous spiral ladder had been accidentally, or perhaps designedly, removed. I paused for breath; and, in the meantime, an accident occurred of too momentous a nature in a moral, and also in a metaphysical point of view, to be passed over without notice. It appeared to me—indeed I was quite confident of the fact—I could not be mistaken—no! I had, for some moments, carefully and anxiously observed the motions of my Diana—I say that I could not be mistaken—Diana smelt a rat! At once I called Pompey's attention to the subject, and he—he agreed with me. There was then no longer any reasonable room for doubt. The rat had been smelled—and by Diana. Heavens! shall I ever forget the intense excitement of the moment? Alas! what is the boasted intellect of man? The rat!—it was there—that is to say, it was somewhere. Diana smelled the rat. I—I could not! Thus it is said the Prussian Isis has, for some persons, a sweet and very powerful perfume, while to others it is perfectly scentless.

The staircase had been surmounted, and there were now only three or four more upward steps intervening between us and the summit. We still ascended, and now only one step remained. One step! One little, little step! Upon one such little step in the great staircase of human life how vast a sum of human happiness or misery depends! I thought of myself, then of Pompey, and then of the mysterious and inexplicable destiny which surrounded us. I thought of Pompey!—alas, I thought of love! I thought of my many false steps which have been taken, and may be taken again. I resolved to be more cautious, more reserved. I abandoned the arm of Pompey, and, without his assistance, surmounted the one remaining step, and gained the chamber of the belfry. I was followed immediately afterward by my poodle. Pompey alone remained behind. I stood at the head of the staircase, and encouraged him to ascend. He stretched forth to me his hand, and unfortunately in so doing was forced to abandon his firm hold upon the overcoat. Will the gods never cease their persecution? The



overcoat is dropped, and, with one of his feet, Pompey stepped upon the long and trailing skirt of the overcoat. He stumbled and fell—this consequence was inevitable. He fell forward, and, with his accursed head, striking me full in the—in the breast, precipitated me headlong, together with himself, upon the hard, filthy, and detestable floor of the belfry. But my revenge was sure, sudden, and complete. Seizing him furiously by the wool with both hands, I tore out a vast quantity of black, and crisp, and curling material, and tossed it from me with every manifestation of disdain. It fell among the ropes of the belfry and remained. Pompey arose, and said no word. But he regarded me piteously with his large eyes and—sighed. Ye Gods—that sigh! It sunk into my heart. And the hair—the wool! Could I have reached that wool I would have bathed it with my tears, in testimony of regret. But alas! it was now far beyond my grasp. As it dangled among the cordage of the bell, I fancied it alive. I fancied that it stood on end with indignation. Thus the happy-dandy Flos Aeris of Java bears, it is said, a beautiful flower, which will live when pulled up by the roots. The natives suspend it by a cord from the ceiling and enjoy its fragrance for years.

Our quarrel was now made up, and we looked about the room for an aperture through which to survey the city of Edina. Windows there were none. The sole light admitted into the gloomy chamber proceeded from a square opening, about a foot in diameter, at a height of about seven feet from the floor. Yet what will the energy of true genius not effect? I resolved to clamber up to this hole. A vast quantity of wheels, pinions, and other cabalistic—looking machinery stood opposite the hole, close to it; and through the hole there passed an iron rod from the machinery. Between the wheels and the wall where the hole lay there was barely room for my body—yet I was desperate, and determined to persevere. I called Pompey to my side.

“You perceive that aperture, Pompey. I wish to look through it. You will stand here just beneath the hole—so. Now, hold out one of your hands, Pompey, and let me step upon it—thus. Now, the other hand, Pompey, and with its aid I will get upon your shoulders.”

He did every thing I wished, and I found, upon getting up, that I could easily pass my head and neck through the aperture. The prospect was sublime.

Nothing could be more magnificent. I merely paused a moment to bid Diana behave herself, and assure Pompey that I would be considerate and bear as lightly as possible upon his shoulders. I told him I would be tender of his feelings—ossi tender que beefsteak. Having done this justice to my faithful friend, I gave myself up with great zest and enthusiasm to the enjoyment of the scene which so obligingly spread itself out before my eyes.

Upon this subject, however, I shall forbear to dilate. I will not describe the city of Edinburgh. Every one has been to the city of Edinburgh. Every one has been to Edinburgh—the classic Edina. I will confine myself to the momentous details of my own lamentable adventure. Having, in some measure, satisfied my curiosity in regard to the extent, situation, and general appearance of the city, I had leisure to survey the church in which I was, and the delicate architecture of the steeple. I observed that the aperture through which I had thrust my head was an opening in the dial-plate of a gigantic clock, and must have appeared, from the street, as a large key-hole, such as we see in the face of the French watches. No doubt the true object was to admit the arm of an attendant, to adjust, when necessary, the hands of the clock from within. I observed also, with surprise, the immense size of these hands, the longest of which could not have been less than ten feet in length, and, where broadest, eight or nine inches in breadth. They were of solid steel apparently, and their edges appeared to be sharp. Having noticed these particulars, and some others, I again turned my eyes upon the glorious prospect below, and soon became absorbed in contemplation.

From this, after some minutes, I was aroused by the voice of Pompey, who declared that he could stand it no longer, and requested that I would be so kind as to come down. This was unreasonable, and I told him so in a speech of some length. He replied, but with an evident misunderstanding of my ideas upon the subject. I accordingly grew angry, and told him in plain words, that he was a fool, that he had committed an ignoramus e-clench-eye, that his notions were mere insommary Bovis, and his words little better than an ennemywerrybor'em. With this he appeared satisfied, and I resumed my contemplations.

It might have been half an hour after this altercation when, as I was deeply absorbed in the heavenly scenery beneath me, I was startled by something very



cold which pressed with a gentle pressure on the back of my neck. It is needless to say that I felt inexpressibly alarmed. I knew that Pompey was beneath my feet, and that Diana was sitting, according to my explicit directions, upon her hind legs, in the farthest corner of the room. What could it be? Alas! I but too soon discovered. Turning my head gently to one side, I perceived, to my extreme horror, that the huge, glittering, scimeter-like minute-hand of the clock had, in the course of its hourly revolution, descended upon my neck. There was, I knew, not a second to be lost. I pulled back at once—but it was too late. There was no chance of forcing my head through the mouth of that terrible trap in which it was so fairly caught, and which grew narrower and narrower with a rapidity too horrible to be conceived. The agony of that moment is not to be imagined. I threw up my hands and endeavored, with all my strength, to force upward the ponderous iron bar. I might as well have tried to lift the cathedral itself. Down, down, down it came, closer and yet closer. I screamed to Pompey for aid; but he said that I had hurt his feelings by calling him ‘an ignorant old squint-eye.’ I yelled to Diana; but she only said ‘bow-wow-wow,’ and that I had told her ‘on no account to stir from the corner.’ Thus I had no relief to expect from my associates.

Meantime the ponderous and terrific Scythe of Time (for I now discovered the literal import of that classical phrase) had not stopped, nor was it likely to stop, in its career. Down and still down, it came. It had already buried its sharp edge a full inch in my flesh, and my sensations grew indistinct and confused. At one time I fancied myself in Philadelphia with the stately Dr. Moneybenny, at another in the back parlor of Mr. Blackwood receiving his invaluable instructions. And then again the sweet recollection of better and earlier times came over me, and I thought of that happy period when the world was not all a desert, and Pompey not altogether cruel.

The ticking of the machinery amused me. Amused me, I say, for my sensations now bordered upon perfect happiness, and the most trifling circumstances afforded me pleasure. The eternal click-clak, click-clak, click-clak of the clock was the most melodious of music in my ears, and occasionally even put me in mind of the graceful sermonic harangues of Dr. Ollapod. Then there were the great figures upon the dial-plate—how intelligent

how intellectual, they all looked! And presently they took to dancing the Mazurka, and I think it was the figure V. who performed the most to my satisfaction. She was evidently a lady of breeding. None of your swaggerers, and nothing at all indelicate in her motions. She did the pirouette to admiration—whirling round upon her apex. I made an endeavor to hand her a chair, for I saw that she appeared fatigued with her exertions—and it was not until then that I fully perceived my lamentable situation. Lamentable indeed! The bar had buried itself two inches in my neck. I was aroused to a sense of exquisite pain. I prayed for death, and, in the agony of the moment, could not help repeating those exquisite verses of the poet Miguel De Cervantes:

Vanny Buren, tan escondida
Query no te senty venny
Pork and pleasure, delly morry
Nommy, torny, darry, widdy!

But now a new horror presented itself, and one indeed sufficient to startle the strongest nerves. My eyes, from the cruel pressure of the machine, were absolutely starting from their sockets. While I was thinking how I should possibly manage without them, one actually tumbled out of my head, and, rolling down the steep side of the steeple, lodged in the rain gutter which ran along the eaves of the main building. The loss of the eye was not so much as the insolent air of independence and contempt with which it regarded me after it was out. There it lay in the gutter just under my nose, and the airs it gave itself would have been ridiculous had they not been disgusting. Such a winking and blinking were never before seen. This behavior on the part of my eye in the gutter was not only irritating on account of its manifest insolence and shameful ingratitude, but was also exceedingly inconvenient on account of the sympathy which always exists between two eyes of the same head, however far apart. I was forced, in a manner, to wink and to blink, whether I would or not, in exact concert with the scoundrelly thing that lay just under my nose. I was presently relieved, however, by the dropping out of the other eye. In falling it took the same direction (possibly a concerted plot) as its fellow. Both rolled out of the gutter together, and in truth I was very glad to get rid of them.

The bar was now four inches and a half deep in my neck, and there was



only a little bit of skin to cut through. My sensations were those of entire happiness, for I felt that in a few minutes, at farthest, I should be relieved from my disagreeable situation. And in this expectation I was not at all deceived. At twenty-five minutes past five in the afternoon, precisely, the huge minute-hand had proceeded sufficiently far on its terrible revolution to sever the small remainder of my neck. I was not sorry to see the head which had occasioned me so much embarrassment at length make a final separation from my body. It first rolled down the side of the steeple, then lodge, for a few seconds, in the gutter, and then made its way, with a plunge, into the middle of the street.

I will candidly confess that my feelings were now of the most singular—nay, of the most mysterious, the most perplexing and incomprehensible character. My senses were here and there at one and the same moment. With my head I imagined, at one time, that I, the head, was the real Signora Psyche Zenobia—at another I felt convinced that myself, the body, was the proper identity. To clear my ideas on this topic I felt in my pocket for my snuff-box, but, upon getting it, and endeavoring to apply a pinch of its grateful contents in the ordinary manner, I became immediately aware of my peculiar deficiency, and threw the box at once down to my head. It took a pinch with great satisfaction, and smiled me an acknowledgement in return. Shortly afterward it made me a speech, which I could hear but indistinctly without ears. I gathered enough, however, to know that it was astonished at my wishing to remain alive under such circumstances. In the concluding sentences it quoted the noble words of Ariosto—

Il pover hommy che non sera corty

And have a combat tenty erry morty;

thus comparing me to the hero who, in the heat of the combat, not perceiving that he was dead, continued to contest the battle with inextinguishable valor. There was nothing now to prevent my getting down from my elevation, and I did so. What it was that Pompey saw so very peculiar in my appearance I have never yet been able to find out. The fellow opened his mouth from ear to ear, and shut his two eyes as if he were endeavoring to crack nuts between the lids. Finally, throwing off his overcoat, he made one spring for the staircase and disappeared. I hurled after the scoundrel these vehement