

AMERICAN FOLKTALES

美国民间故事

英语课外读物



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程 健 陈 渊 译注

上海译文出版社

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译 者 的 话

为了帮助我国读者了解美国民间文化传统，同时也为了帮助我国读者在学习英语过程中掌握地道英语，我们编选并译注了这本《美国民间故事》。

这本书主要是根据美国六十年代后期出版的《美国民间故事》两卷集 (American Folktales I, II) 选译的。这套两卷集可以说是汇集了在美国流传较广的民间故事，如反映人民智慧和乐观主义精神的《小伙子马尔文》(Young Melvin)、《死神与老人》(Death and the Old Man)、《神枪手》(Good Shooting); 充满了浓厚美国乡土风味、反映少数民族印第安、爱斯基摩族风貌的《赛跑》(The Race)、《猎人和渡鸦》(The Hunter and the Raven)、《伤疤脸》(Scarface); 此外，还有在美国流传极广、几乎是家喻户晓的《柏油娃娃》(The Tar Baby)、《梦》(The Dream)，等等。选集中寓言性的故事含义深刻，如《猎人和渡鸦》一篇，通过民间故事不仅介绍了过去美国少数民族的生活习惯，而且还教导人们要“言必信，行必果”，失去了信义也就失去了一切；《仲裁者》(The Judge) 通过拟人化的动物寓言故事，教育人们不要轻信甜言蜜语，不要怜悯恶人，这很象我国的《农夫与蛇》、《东郭先生》；《吉姆和天使》(Jim and the Angel) 与我国民间故事《叶公好龙》寓言似有异曲同工之妙；《不幸的婚礼日》(The Unlucky Wedding Day) 也与我国许多民间故事中的“仙山住一日，世上已百年”相近。可见，不同国家尽管各方面有着很大差别，人民文化传统中却有不少相通之处。

本书共有二十一篇美国民间故事，行文通俗、流畅，总词汇量在一千个左右，我们对一些词组、习语作了注释，书末还附有参考译文，适合英语初学者阅读。

由于水平有限，注释和译文可能存在不少缺点和错误，希望读者批评指正。

一九八一年

CONTENTS

Two Davy Crockett Stories	1
Crazy	5
Death and the Old Man	9
The Son Who Went to College	12
The Cure	16
Hans the Butterman	20
The Dream	24
The Hunter and the Raven	28
The Tar Baby	33
Mrs. Simpson and Her Soup	38
The Race	42
Scarface	46
Young Melvin ..	53
The Judge	57
Jim and the Angel	61
The Talking Eggs	65
Good Shooting	70
How the Coon Got His Supper	74
The Unlucky Wedding Day	78
John Henry	82
Joe and Sam in the Country	89

Two Davy Crockett Stories

Davy Crockett is a popular American folk hero. He was a real person, but *today we remember him for the funny stories about him instead of for the exciting things he did*¹. He liked to tell stories about himself. For a long time he was a congressman. In Congress, too, he liked to tell funny stories about himself before he began to talk about serious things. These stories are like many others he told.

* * *

*Two or three times a year*² I see the *badman*³ of the Ohio River, the boatman Mike Fink. We are friendly enemies. Once Mike sent me a letter. In the letter he invited me to a *shooting match*⁴. He can shoot well, but I can shoot better. However, I lost this match.

When I had time, I visited Mike Fink at his home. *I got my gun ready for shooting*.⁵

"You shoot first," said Mike.

1. remember (sb.) for ...: 由于……而记住(某人). instead of 是短语介词, 作“代替”、“而不是……”解. 本句中 he did 是省略了关系代词 which (或 that) 的定语从句, 修饰 things. 当 which (或 that) 在从句中作宾语时, 常予以省略. 2. 每年两、三次. 在这类词组中, 表示具体时间的名词 (如 year, month, day) 前须用不定冠词 a, 不可用 the 或 every. 3. badman 可作“偷牲口贼”、“亡命之徒”解, 但这里并没有这层意思, 而是半开玩笑的诙谐说法, 和后一句的 friendly enemy 相呼应. 4. 射击比赛; 枪法比赛. 5. get (sb.) ready for ... 是“使……准备好……”的意思, 后接名词或动名词.



"All right," I said, and *I shot at a cat a hundred and fifty yards away*⁶. The shot took the hair from its head, but the cat didn't move. It didn't know its hair was *gone*⁷.

"Not bad," said Mike.

Then the cat began to wash its head. When it found its hair was gone, it turned its back and ran. That was a lucky cat, because now Mike Fink *was looking for something to shoot at*⁸.

When his gun was ready to shoot, he shot at a chicken. That chicken was *at the end of the earth*⁹. When Mike's gun was empty, the chicken had only one feather on its back.

"That's good shooting," I said politely, and then I *shot off*¹⁰ the last feather. That made me very happy, but Mike didn't say, "Very good!" this time. Instead he looked for another place to shoot. The chicken was hiding now, but Mike saw his wife instead. She went to the river three times a day to get water. *Mike saw her walking up from the river with a pitcher of water in her hands*¹¹. In her hair was a small comb, and he shot away half of it.

"Be still," Mike called to her. "Davy Crockett wants to shoot next." Mrs. Fink stood very still.

6. shoot at: 朝……打枪、向……射击。a hundred and fifty yards away (一百五十码外的)是修饰 cat 的定语,实际上可看成: a cat (which was) a hundred and fifty yards away. 7. gone 在这里是表语形容词,作“已去的”、“消失了的”解。8. look for: 寻找。不定式短语 to shoot at 作定语,修饰 sth. 此不定式从形式上来看是主动结构,但实际表达的却是被动的意思 (= to be shot at). 9. 在大地的尽头。10. shoot (sth.) off 和下文的 shoot (sth.) away 意思差不多,其中 off 和 away 都是副词,表示位置关系。11. 分词短语 walking up from the river 与 her 一起构成复合宾语。介词短语 with a pitcher in her hands (手里捧着一壶水)是修饰现在分词 walking 的方式状语。

“Try to shoot away the other half of the comb,” said Mike.

“No, no, Mike,” I said. “I’m *too* polite *to*¹² shoot at a woman. You win the match, Mike.”

* * *

One time I was *out*¹³ with my gun. I was at a place called Great Gap when I saw a *raccoon*¹⁴ up in a tree. When I *pointed* my gun *at*¹⁵ him, he *put up*¹⁶ one paw and asked, “Is your name Crockett?”

“That’s right,” I said. “My name is Davy Crockett.”

“Then you *don’t have to*¹⁷ shoot,” said the raccoon, “because I’m coming down. I know I can’t hide from you, even if I run *to the ends of the earth*¹⁸,” He walked down the tree to me and stood still.

I didn’t move, and he said finally, “Here I am. Why don’t you shoot me?”

I couldn’t shoot that raccoon. I *patted* him *on*¹⁹ the head and said, “I’ll shoot myself before I shoot a hair *off*²⁰ your head. I never heard a better compliment.”

“I’m glad you think that,” said the raccoon. “Now I’ll go away. I believe you, but I don’t want to be here when you change your mind.”

12. too ... to ... : 太……以致不……。 13. out 是副词, 意为“在外”, 句中作表语。 14. 浣熊(产于北美的一种食肉类小动物)。 15. point at: 把……对准。 16. 举起; 支起。 17. don’t have to (不得不, 必须)的否定结构, 意思及用法相当于 needn’t。 18. (跑)到天边; 到天涯海角。短语 at the end of the earth 中的 end 用单数; 短语 to the ends of the earth 中的 end(s) 用复数。 19. pat (sb.) on the (身体部位) 是英语中的习惯表达方式, 类似的有: grab (grasp, catch, take) (sb.) by the arm (抓住某人的手臂); strike (sb.) in the face (打在某人脸上)。 20. 这里的 off 是介词 = away from, 意为“从……离开”(参见本篇注10)。

Crazy

Once there was a little boy who forgot everything.

One rainy morning his father wanted to go to the city, but he *didn't have*¹ a wagon. He called his son and said, "Go to your uncle, boy, and get his wagon for me." On a piece of paper, he wrote, "PLEASE SEND ME YOUR WAGON," because he knew his son forgot things.

"Give that piece of paper to your uncle. Don't forget. Don't forget."

"Don't forget, boy. Don't forget," the boy repeated.

The uncle lived *far away*² and *on the way*³ the boy lost his piece of paper. He couldn't find it in the mud. He stood near a tree beside the road. He thought, "What does my father want? What did he say? I'm *far from*⁴ my uncle's house, and it's raining. I think I'll go home." So he walked along the road toward his house.

"My father said, 'Don't forget, boy. Don't forget.'"

*He was repeating this sentence when he met a man on the road.*⁵ The man was running because he did not have his umbrella.

"Don't forget, boy. Don't forget," said the little boy.

1. 当动词 *have* 作“有”解时，其否定结构有两种：一是“*have (has, had) + not*”，一是“助动词 *do (does, did) + not have*”。前一种多用于英国；后一种多用于美国。 2. 遥远(地)；在遥远的地方。 3. 在路上；途中。短语 *on the (或 one's) way* 后面，有时还可加一个表示具体地点的副词和介词短语，如：*on the (one's) way home* (回家路上)；*on the (one's) way to school* (去学校的途中)。 4. 远离(某处)。 5. 注意本句中 *when* 的位置。在英语中，如主句用进行时态，*when* 多放在一般时态的从句之前。

The man thought the boy was mocking him. He grabbed him by the ear and said, "Say you're sorry you did it, *or*⁶ I'll whip you."

"I'm sorry."

"You learn politeness, or I'll wash your mouth with soap," said the man, and he *let go of*⁷ the boy and went along the road.

"Wash with soap," repeated the boy.

*Just then the boy saw an old woman slip in the mud and fall down.*⁸ Her hands and clothes *got muddy*⁹.

When he came near the old woman, the boy was still talking to himself. "Wash with soap," he said.

The old woman *got out of*¹⁰ the slippery mud. She *shook her finger at*¹¹ him.

"I want to *push you in*¹², but I'm too old," she said.

The boy went on. "I want to push *you* in, but I'm too old," he repeated.

He came to a fisherman by the river. "I want to push *you* in, but I'm too old," he said.

The fisherman grabbed him and looked at him *from head to foot*¹³.

"What's your name, little boy?"

"Don't forget, boy. Don't forget," said the boy.

6. 否则; 要不然。 7. 放开; 释放。这一短语中的 *of* 常可省去。 8. 本句中 *slip in the mud and fall down* 是动词不定式短语, 与 *an old woman* 一起构成复合宾语。在 *see, hear, notice* 等动词后面作复合宾语的不定式, 都不带 *to*。 9. 弄脏了。这里的 *got* 是联系动词 (= *became*), 作“变得”, “成为”解。 10. 摆脱。 11. 向……晃动手指(表示威胁)。 12. 把你推进(泥地里)去。这里的 *in* 是副词, 表示位置关系(参见前篇注 10)。 13. 从头到脚(地), 这一短语中的 *head* 和 *foot* 均不加冠词。



“What shall I *do with*¹⁴ you?”

“Wash with soap,” said the boy.

“I want to push you in the river.”

“I want to push *you* in, but I’m too old,” the boy said.

“You’re crazy,” said the fisherman and *gave him a push*¹⁵. “Go home to your pa.”

The boy ran along. “You’re crazy,” he repeated to himself. When he came to his home, his father *was waiting for*¹⁶ him.

“Didn’t you get the wagon?” asked the man.

“Don’t forget, boy. Don’t forget.”

“Well, where is it?” asked the man. “What shall I do without a wagon?”

“Wash with soap.”

“I’ll have to get it myself,” said the man. He pushed his son into the house. “Go in and *put on*¹⁷ dry pants and a dry shirt,” he said.

“I want to push *you* in, but I’m too old,” said the boy.

“Boy, do you want a whipping?”

“You’re crazy,” said the boy.

Do you think he got a whipping?

14. 对付; 处置。 15. 推了某人一下。 give 同某些名词一起构成词组, 表示一次性动作, 如: give the rope a pull (拉一拉绳子)。 16. 正在等。 17. 穿上; 披上; 戴上,

Death and the Old Man

There was once a mean old man. He was mean when he was young, and he was still mean when he was old. No one came to visit him, and he lived alone on his farm. Sometimes when he wanted to be mean, he *threw sticks at*¹ his chickens, but he was too old to hit them.

One day the old man was sitting on his porch when he saw someone walking up the road to his house. The stranger walked to the porch and stood on the steps.

"Good evening," said the old man. "I don't know you. Are you new in this place?"

"Good evening, old man," said the stranger. "No, I'm not new here. I visit often. My name is Death."

The old man *sat up*² in his chair. "Well, Death. I didn't expect you. What business do you have here?"

"It's strange that people don't expect me," said Death. "You are my business, old man. I've *come for*³ you. Put on your hat and *come*⁴ with me."

The old man didn't want to go with Death. "Thank you very much for the invitation, Death," he said. "*It was good of you to*⁵ come to see me. But I *prefer to*⁶ live.

1. to throw ... at 和 to throw ... to 都表示“向……扔……”，但前者带有恶意，后者则无此意。 2. (原躺着而)坐起；(离开椅背)坐直。 3. 来接、来找(人)；来取(物)。 4. 这里的 come 作“去(另一个人要去的地方)”解，如：We're going to a show. Would you like to come with us? (我们要去看戏了，你想跟我们一起去看吗?) 5. It is (was) good (nice, kind) of you to ... 这是英语中表示感谢的一种表达方式。在 good, nice, kind 等形容词的后面须用介词。 6. (比较)喜欢、宁愿(选择)可接不定式，也可接名词或动名词。

I want more time. *I have a big field of corn to take care of.*⁷
Come again in two or three years⁸."

Death didn't have time to talk about it. He had lots of people to visit. "Well," he said, "*go take care of your corn*⁹. I'll come back next Saturday. Will you be ready to go with me then?"

The old man didn't answer. Death went away and the old man began smoking his pipe.

Three or four days *went by*¹⁰. On Saturday morning the old man was in his cornfield. He was pulling weeds when he heard a noise in the corn. He looked up. There was Death.

"Come on, old man," Death said. "I'm busy this morning. I can't wait a long time for you."

"Good morning, Death," the old man said. "It's a fine day. Come and help me pull weeds."

When he heard these words, Death frowned angrily. "Now listen to me, old man," he said. "I have a lot of work to do. I can't *keep coming*¹¹ here for you."

"Death," said the old man, "give me some *more*¹² time. I have to take care of this cornfield. And I plan to hit one of those chickens of mine with a stick before I die. Come back *another time*¹³."

"All right, I'll come again," Death said.

7. 句中 to take care of 是修饰 field (of corn) 的定语(可参阅第一篇 Davy Crockett 注 8). 8. in two or three years 是“两、三年以后”的意思。

表示“若干时间以后将(干什么)”, 介词往往需用 in 而不是 after. 9. 在口语中 go 后面的不定式“to”可省去。如: Go fetch some water. (去拿点水来。)

10. (时间)过去了。 11. 老是来; 经常来。keep (或 keep on) 后接现在分词, 表示“继续不停地(做)……”的意思。不过 keep on 的语气更强些。 12. 这里的 more 作“另外的”解。 13. 另外找个时间。

"*You do that*,¹⁴" said the old man.

Death went away and the man started pulling weeds. He lived *as always*¹⁵. He didn't think about getting ready for Death. Winter came and went.

One spring day the old man was in his cornfield again. Death came to visit him there. "Come on, old man," he said. "You have to go with me this time."

"Good morning, Death," the old man said. "Sit down and rest. Do you want something to eat?"

"I'm busy," said Death. "Get your hat."

"I don't like seeing you here so often," said the old man. "Next time send me a letter. Perhaps I'll come then."

Death *was tired of*¹⁶ the old man. "All right," he said, and he went away.

The old man got older and older. He became deaf and blind. One morning he got a letter from Death, but he couldn't read it. When the old man wrote no answer, Death came *once more*¹⁷ to visit him. He was very angry.

"You tricked me too many times, old man. I don't want you now."

The old man became older than the oldest trees, but he didn't die. Death *left him alone*¹⁸. People say that he never died. He just disappeared.

14. 你(要那么干)就那么干吧……

16. 对……感到厌倦; 厌烦.

15. 照常; 象往常那样. (= as usual)

17. 再一次 (= once again).

18. 不

管他了; 不理睬他了.

The Son Who Went to College

A farmer and his wife had a son who liked to study. They loved him very much, so they saved money for him and sent him to a college in the city. In seven years, he finished his studies and came home. His old mother and father *were proud of*¹ the boy who could read books.

One morning the mother went outdoors to milk the cows. There was a new young cow that was very wild. When the old woman tried to milk her, she kicked.

When the cow kept on kicking, the woman called to her husband, "Come out and *help me with*² the cow." The old man went out and tried to hold the cow, but the cow kept on jumping and kicked him.

Then he said, "We don't have to *worry about*³ her. We have a son who went to college. He has studied many things and has learned a lot. *He knows how to take care of*⁴ a wild cow. I'll call him."

The old man called his son and told him about the cow. The boy came out of the house and looked at her for a time. Then he said, "Don't worry about this cow. Before she can kick, she has to bend her back. We have to make her back straight."

The father said, "I don't understand, Son, but, of

1. 以……而感到骄傲; 以……为荣. 2. 在……方面给予帮助. 3. 为……操心; 为……发愁. 4. "how to take care of ..." 是“疑问词+动词不定式”的结构, 作 knows 的宾语.