

Selected American Short Stories Book I

美国

短篇小说

选读

上册



上海译文出版社

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上海外国语学院英语系

《美国短篇小说选读》编注组

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## 前 言

本书收集了美国十八世纪末至二十世纪六十年代华盛顿·欧文、纳撒尼尔·霍桑、马克·吐温、杰克·伦敦等著名作家的短篇小说共十五篇。各篇次序按作者出生先后排列，这些作品从不同角度反映了美国社会在不同时期的某些侧面，同时也体现了各作家的写作风格、技巧和特色。

本书供具有中等英语程度的读者参考阅读，也可作为英语专业文学选修课的参考教材。为了便于读者了解作家及作品内容，我们对作家及作品作了简略介绍，并对作品中出现的难句及某些语言现象加了必要的注释。

本书选材及注释由秦小孟同志负责组织并作全面审阅。参加注释的有侯维瑞、丁廷敏、臧骊珠、聂振雄、蒋小蓉、王美君、厉声隆、何兆熊、姚福生、洪名梁、吕光旦、许余龙等同志。

限于水平，本书注释中可能有欠妥或错误之处，希读者批评指正。

上海外国语学院英语系  
《美国短篇小说选读》编注组  
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A

# Rip Van Winkle

*Washington Irving*

**【作者简介】** 华盛顿·欧文 (Washington Irving, 1783—1859), 美国最早的著名作家之一, 生于纽约。他幼年好学, 喜读关于游历探险的书籍, 青年时漫游欧洲, 回国后从事创作, 间或从事法律事务。他一生写了不少文学作品和历史传记, 其中主要的有 *The Knickerbocker History of New York* (1809), *The Sketch Book* (1819—1820), *Tales of a Traveller* (1824), *The Life and Voyages of Christopher Columbus* (1828) 以及五卷集 *Life of George Washington* (1855—1859)。其中以 *The Sketch Book* 为最著名。Rip Van Winkle 即选自此书。

**【内容提要】** Rip Van Winkle 是个不事生产的懒汉, 因此在家中经常受到妻子的唠叨呵责。为了躲避家中的不安宁, 他常带了爱犬上山打猎消遣。一天, 他在山上遇见一群古怪的老头, 他偷喝他们的酒后沉醉昏睡, 一觉睡了二十年, 回家后发现已改朝换代, 时过境迁。这篇故事取材于民间传说, 但与当时美国社会生活揉成一体, 描绘了美国早期浓郁的乡村风貌和田野景色, 既有中世纪欧洲文学的风格, 也有东方故事的色彩。作者文笔优美, 描写细腻, 语言生动, 特别是他幽默夸张的笔法, 读来更是意趣盎然。

## RIP VAN WINKLE<sup>1</sup>

Whoever has made a voyage up *the Hudson*<sup>2</sup> must remember *the Kaatskill mountains*<sup>3</sup>. They are a dismembered branch of the great Appalachian family, and are seen away to the west of the river, swelling up to a noble height, and *lording it over*<sup>4</sup> the surrounding country. 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 barometers. When the weather is fair and *settled*<sup>5</sup>, they are clothed in blue and purple, and print their *bold outlines*<sup>6</sup> on the clear evening sky; but sometimes, when the rest of the landscape is cloudless, they will gather a hood of gray vapors about their summits, which, *in the last rays of the setting sun*,<sup>7</sup> will glow and light up like a crown of glory.

At the foot of these fairy mountains, the voyager may have descried the light smoke curling up from a village, whose *shingle-roofs*<sup>8</sup> gleam among the trees, just where the blue tints of the upland melt away into the fresh green of the nearer landscape. It is a little village, of *great antiquity*,<sup>9</sup> having been founded by some of *the Dutch colonists*<sup>10</sup>, in the early times of the province, just about the beginning of the government of the good *Peter Stuyvesant*<sup>11</sup> (may he rest in peace!) and there were some of the houses of the original settlers standing *within a few years*<sup>12</sup> built of small yellow-bricks brought from Holland, *having latticed windows and gable fronts, surmounted with weathercocks*<sup>13</sup>.

In that same village and in one of these very houses (which, to tell the precise truth, was sadly *time-worn and weather-beaten*<sup>14</sup>), there lived *many years since*<sup>15</sup>, while the country was yet *a province of Great Britain*<sup>16</sup>, 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*<sup>17</sup> of Peter Stuyvesant, and accompanied him to the siege of *Fort Christina*<sup>18</sup>. He inherited, however, but little of the martial character of his ancestors. I have observed that he was a simple good-natured man; he was, moreover, a kind neighbor, and an obedient hen-pecked husband. Indeed, *to the latter circumstance might be owing that meekness of spirit which gained him such universal popularity*,<sup>19</sup> for those men are most apt to be obsequious and conciliating *abroad*<sup>20</sup>, who are under the discipline of shrews at home. Their tempers, doubtless, are rendered pliant and malleable *in the fiery furnace of domestic tribulation*<sup>21</sup>, and a *curtain lecture*<sup>22</sup> is worth all the sermons in the world for teaching the virtues of patience and long-suffering. A termagant wife may, therefore, in some respects, *be considered a tolerable blessing*;<sup>23</sup> and if so, Rip Van Winkle was *thrice blessed*<sup>24</sup>.

Certain it is that he was a great favorite among all the good wives of the village, who, *as usual with the amiable sex*,<sup>25</sup> *took his part in all family squabbles*;<sup>26</sup> 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 sports, made their playthings, taught them to fly kites and *shoot marbles*<sup>27</sup>, and told them long stories of ghosts, witches,



and Indians. Whenever he went *dodging about the village*<sup>28</sup>, he was surrounded by a troop of them *hanging on his skirts*<sup>29</sup>, clambering on his back, and playing a thousand tricks on him *with impunity*<sup>30</sup>; and not a dog would bark at him throughout the neighborhood.

The great error in Rip's *composition*<sup>31</sup> was an insuperable aversion to all kinds of profitable labor. It could not be *from the want of*<sup>32</sup> assiduity or perseverance; for he would sit on a wet rock, with a rod as long and heavy as a Tartar's lance, and fish all day without a murmur, *even though he should not be encouraged by a single nibble*<sup>33</sup>. He would carry a fowling-piece 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 neighbor even in the roughest toil, and was a foremost man at all country *frolics*<sup>34</sup> for husking Indian corn, or building stone fences; the women of the village, too, used to employ him *to run their errands*<sup>35</sup>, and to do such little odd jobs as *their less obliging husbands*<sup>36</sup> would not do for them. In a word, Rip was ready to attend to 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 pestilent 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 astray*<sup>37</sup>, 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 in just as he had some outdoor work to do*<sup>38</sup>; so that though

his *patrimonial estate*<sup>39</sup> had dwindled away 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 neighborhood.

His children, too, were as ragged and wild as if they belonged to nobody. His son Rip, an urchin *begotten in his own likeness*<sup>40</sup>, promised to *inherit the habits, with the old clothes, of his father*<sup>41</sup>. He was generally seen trooping like a colt at his mother's heels, equipped in a pair of his father's cast-off galligaskins which he had much ado to hold up with one hand, as a fine lady does her *train*<sup>42</sup> in bad weather.

Rip Van Winkle, however, was one of those happy mortals<sup>43</sup>, of foolish, *well-oiled dispositions*,<sup>44</sup> who take the world easy, 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*<sup>45</sup>. *If left to himself, he would have whistled life away in perfect contentment*;<sup>46</sup> but his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about 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 eloquence*<sup>47</sup>. 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*<sup>48</sup>; so that he was fain to *draw off his forces*<sup>49</sup>, and take to the outside of the house<sup>50</sup>—the only side which, in truth, belongs to a hen-pecked husband.

Rip's sole domestic adherent 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 honorable dog, *he was as courageous an animal as ever scoured the woods*<sup>51</sup>—but what courage can withstand the *ever-during*<sup>52</sup> and *all-besetting*<sup>53</sup> terrors of a woman's tongue? The moment Wolf entered the house, *his crest fell*<sup>54</sup>, his tail drooped to the ground, or curled between his legs, he sneaked about *with a gallows air*<sup>55</sup>, casting many a side-long glance at Dame Van Winkle, and *at the least flourish of*<sup>56</sup> a broomstick or ladle, he would fly to the door with yelping precipitation.

Times grew worse and worse with Rip Van Winkle as years of matrimony rolled on; a tart temper never mellows with age, and a sharp tongue is the only edged tool that *grows keener with constant use*<sup>57</sup>. 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 village; which held its sessions on a bench before a small inn, designated by a rubicund portrait of *His Majesty George the Third*<sup>58</sup>. Here they used to sit in the shade through a long lazy summer's day, talking listlessly 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 o'd newspaper fell into their hands from some passing traveler. How solemnly they would listen to the contents, as *drawled out*<sup>59</sup> by Derrick Van Bummel, the schoolmaster, a dapper learned little man, who was not to be

daunted by the most gigantic word in the dictionary; and how sagely they would *deliberate upon*<sup>60</sup> public events some months after they had taken place.

The opinions of this *junto*<sup>61</sup> were completely controlled by Nicholas Vedder, a patriarch 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 neighbors could tell the hour by his movements as accurately as by a sundial. 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 vapor curl about his nose, would gravely nod his head in token of perfect approbation.

From even this stronghold the unlucky Rip was at length routed by his termagant wife, who would suddenly break in upon the tranquillity of the assemblage and *call the members all to naught*<sup>62</sup>; nor was that august personage, Nicholas Vedder himself, *sacred from the daring tongue of this terrible virago*,<sup>63</sup> who charged him outright with encouraging her husband in habits of idleness.

Poor Rip was at last reduced almost to despair; and his only alternative, to escape from the labor of the farm and clamor 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 wallet with Wolf, with whom he sympathized as a fellow-sufferer in persecution. "Poor Wolf," he would say, "*thy*<sup>64</sup> mistress *leads thee a dog's life of it*<sup>65</sup>; but never mind, my lad, whilst I live thou shalt never *want*<sup>66</sup> a friend to stand by thee!" Wolf would wag his tail, look wistfully in his master's face, and if dogs can feel pity, I verily believe he reciprocated the sentiment with all his heart.

In a long ramble of the kind on a fine autumnal day, Rip had unconsciously scrambled to one of the highest parts of the Kaatskill mountains. He was after his favorite sport of squirrel-shooting, and the still solitudes had echoed and re-echoed with the reports of his gun. Panting and fatigued, he threw himself, late in the afternoon, on a green knoll, covered with mountain herbage, that crowned *the brow of a precipice*<sup>67</sup>. 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 course, with the reflection of a purple cloud, or the sail of a lagging bark, here and there sleeping on its glassy bosom, and at last losing itself in the blue highlands.

On the other side he looked down into a deep mountain glen, wild, lonely, and shagged, 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 on this scene; evening was gradually advancing; the mountains began to throw their long blue shadows over the valleys; he saw that it would be dark

long before he could reach the village, and he heaved a heavy sigh when he thought of encountering the terrors of Dame Van Winkle.

As he was about to descend, he heard a voice from a distance, hallooing, "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 side, looking fearfully down into the glen. Rip now felt a *vague apprehension stealing over him*<sup>68</sup>; he looked anxiously in the same direction, and perceived a strange figure slowly toiling 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 unfrequented place; but supposing it to be some one of the neighborhood in need of his assistance, he hastened down to *yield*<sup>69</sup> it.

On nearer approach he was still more surprised at the singularity of the stranger's appearance. He was a short, square-built old fellow, with thick bushy hair and a grizzled 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*,<sup>70</sup> decorated with rows of buttons down the sides, and bunches at the knees. He bore on his shoulder a *stout keg*<sup>71</sup>, that seemed full of liquor, 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

alacrity; and mutually relieving each other, they clambered up a narrow gully, apparently *the dry bed*<sup>72</sup> of a mountain torrent. As they ascended, Rip every now and then heard long rolling peals, like distant thunder, that seemed to issue out of a deep ravine, or rather cleft, between lofty rocks, *towards which their rugged path conducted*<sup>73</sup>. He paused for an instant, but supposing it to be the muttering of one of those transient thunder-showers which often take place in mountain heights, he proceeded. Passing through the ravine, they came to a hollow, like a small amphitheater, *surrounded by perpendicular precipices*,<sup>74</sup> over the brinks of which impending trees shot their branches, so that you only caught glimpses of the azure sky and the bright evening cloud. During the whole time Rip and his companion *had labored on*<sup>75</sup> 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 familiarity.

On entering the amphitheater, new objects of wonder presented themselves. On a level spot in the center was a company of odd-looking personages playing at *nine-pins*<sup>76</sup>. They were dressed in a quaint outlandish fashion; some wore short *doublets*<sup>77</sup>, 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 visages, 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*<sup>78</sup>, *set off*<sup>79</sup> with a little red cock's tail. They all had beards, of various shapes and colors. There was one

who seemed to be the commander. He was a stout old gentleman, with a *weather-beaten*<sup>83</sup> countenance; he wore a laced doublet, broad belt and hanger, 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 painting*<sup>81</sup>, in the parlor of *Dominie*<sup>82</sup> 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, *withal*,<sup>83</sup> 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 of thunder.

As Rip and his companion approached them, they suddenly *desisted from their play*<sup>84</sup>, and stared at him with such fixed, statue-like gaze, and such strange, uncouth, lack-luster countenances, that his heart turned within him, and his knees smote together. His companion now emptied the contents of the keg into large flagons, and made signs to him to wait upon the company. He obeyed with fear and trembling; they quaffed the liquor in profound silence, and then returned to their game.

By degrees Rip's awe and apprehension subsided. He even ventured, when no eye was fixed upon him, to taste the beverage, which he found had much of the *flavor of excellent Hollands*<sup>85</sup>. He was naturally a *thirsty soul*<sup>86</sup>, and was soon tempted to *repeat the draught*<sup>87</sup>. One taste provoked another; and he reiterated his visits to the



flagon so often, that at length his senses were overpowered, his eyes swam in his head, his head gradually declined, and he fell into a deep sleep.

On waking, he found himself on the green knoll whence he had first seen the old man of the glen. He rubbed his eyes—it was a bright sunny morning. The birds were hopping and twittering among the bushes, and the eagle was wheeling aloft, and breasting the pure mountain breeze. “Surely,” thought Rip, “I have not slept here all night.” He recalled the occurrences before he fell asleep. The strange man with a keg of liquor—the mountain ravine—the wild *retreat*<sup>88</sup> among the rocks—the *woebegone party*<sup>89</sup> at nine-pins—the flagon—“Oh! that flagon! that wicked flagon!” thought Rip; “what excuse shall I make to Dame Van Winkle?”

He looked round for his gun, but in place of the clean well-oiled fowling-piece, he found an old firelock lying by him, the barrel incrustated with rust, the lock falling off and the stock worm-eaten. He now suspected that *the grave roysters*<sup>90</sup> of the mountain had put a trick upon him, and, having dosed him with liquor, had robbed him of his gun. Wolf, too, had disappeared, but he might have strayed away after a squirrel or partridge. He whistled after him, and shouted his name, but all in vain; the echoes repeated his whistle and shout, but no dog was to be seen.

He determined to revisit the scene of the last evening’s gambol, and, if he met with any of the party, to demand his dog and gun. As he rose to walk he found himself stiff in the joints, and wanting in his usual activity. “These mountain beds do not agree with me,” thought Rip;