

中文导读英文版

The Scarlet Letter

红字

[美] 纳撒尼尔·霍桑 原著
王勋 纪飞 等 编译

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(中 文 导 读 英 文 版)

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内 容 简 介

The Scarlet Letter, 中文译名为《红字》, 19世纪最有影响的经典小说之一, 由19世纪美国浪漫主义作家纳撒尼尔·霍桑编著。女主人公海丝特跟丈夫从英国移居到美国的波士顿, 途中丈夫被印第安人俘虏。只身来到美国后, 海丝特被青年牧师丁梅斯代尔诱骗怀孕。虚伪的清教徒社会视此事为大逆不道, 为此州长亲自主持了对海丝特的审讯。作为惩罚, 她要终生佩带象征耻辱的红色的A字并游街示众, 但她却用善良与善行赢得了人们的尊敬。牧师丁梅斯代尔深受良心谴责, 最后鼓起勇气承认了自己的罪责, 获得了道德上的自新; 而海丝特的丈夫却在复仇心理的驱动下完全丧失了人性, 在道德上完全堕落, 也毁掉了自己的生活。

该书自出版以来, 已被译成世界上几十种语言, 并多次被改编成电视剧、舞台剧和电影。书中所展现的故事感染了一代又一代青少年读者的心灵。无论作为语言学习的课本, 还是作为通俗的文学读本, 本书对当代中国的青少年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, 在每章的开始部分增加了中文导读。

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前言

纳撒尼尔·霍桑（Nathaniel Hawthorne，1804—1864），19世纪美国浪漫主义作家。他的文学作品及其艺术成就对美国文学史上一批卓有成就的作家，诸如海明威、菲茨杰拉德、福克纳等都产生了深远的影响，故有人称其为“作家的作家”。

霍桑出生于美国马萨诸塞州塞勒姆镇的一个没落世家。霍桑四岁时，父亲病逝，他与两个姐妹一起由母亲独自抚养。十四岁时，霍桑到祖父的庄园住了一年。他经常到庄园附近打猎、钓鱼、读书，充分领略着自然风光。据他晚年回忆，这是他一生中最自由、愉快的一段时光，他的诗人气质也是在这里形成的。霍桑在大学读书期间，深为同学所推崇，著名诗人朗费罗、美国前总统皮尔斯以及海军将军布里奇等是他的同窗好友。这几位同学都对他后来的生活和创作产生过影响。

霍桑在1825年大学毕业后即开始从事写作。由于不满意自己的作品，他最初的几篇短篇小说都是匿名发表的，他甚至还焚毁了一些原稿。1837年，霍桑出版了第一部短篇小说集《重讲一遍的故事》，从此以善于写短篇小说而著称。1850年，霍桑出版了他的第一部长篇小说《红字》，并一举成名，成为当时公认的最有影响的作家。霍桑曾两度在海关任职，1853年任美国驻英国利物浦领事，1857年后侨居意大利，1860年回国专门从事创作。

《红字》被美国作家海明威列入“提高艺术水平的文学书目”。《红字》在美国出版后的第二年便有了德译本，三年后又有了法译本。该书自出版以来，已被译成世界上几十种语言，多次被改编成电视剧、舞台剧和电影，是公认的世界文学名著之一。我国自20世纪30年代以来亦有多种译本问世。

前言



在中国,《红字》是最受广大读者欢迎的经典小说之一,同时也是最早传入中国的西欧经典名著之一。目前,在国内数量众多的《红字》书籍中,主要的出版形式有两种:一种是中文翻译版,另一种是英文原版。其中的英文原版越来越受到读者的欢迎,这主要是得益于中国人热衷于学习英语的大环境。从英语学习角度来看,直接使用纯英文素材更有利于英语学习。考虑到对英文内容背景的了解有助于英文阅读,使用中文导读应该是一种比较好的方式,也可以说是该类型书的第三种版本形式。采用中文导读而非中英文对照的方式进行编排,这样有利于国内读者摆脱对英文阅读依赖中文注释的习惯。基于以上原因,我们决定编译《红字》,并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。我们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,书中难免不当之处,衷心希望读者朋友批评指正。



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海关——《红字》的引言

The Custom-House—Introductory to "The Scarlet Letter"

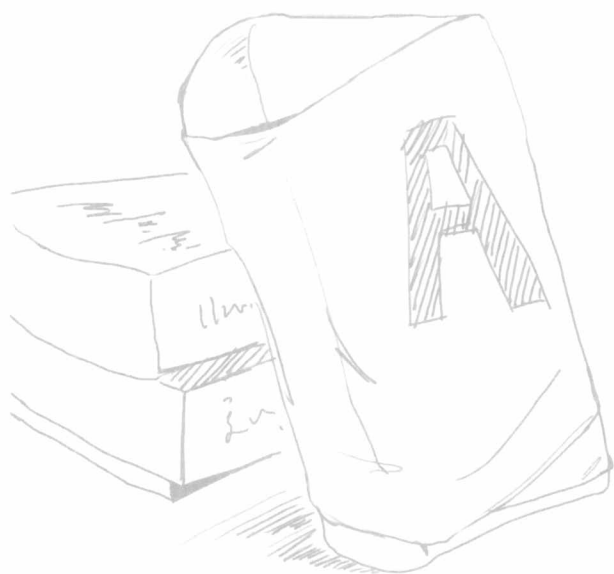


我一生之中曾两次违背意愿在公开场合谈论了我的身世，第一次是三四年前，第二次是现在谈论我在海关的经历。《海关》这篇速写主要谈论了下面文章的素材来源，提供了一些内容的证据，这也是我想达到的目的。

小镇塞勒姆是我从小生长的地方，这里在半世纪之前是一个繁华忙碌的码头，不过现在却到处堆满朽木破船，没有一丝生气。隔水相望是一座气派的大厦，大厦的屋顶每天都会有旗帜飘扬。大厦前悬挂着秃鹰标志，似乎震慑着芸芸众生。大厦四周长满了野草，一看便知道很久没人踩踏过。可一年中某些时候这里却很繁忙。有时候会有船只的主人靠岸，在这里见家人；他们时而彬彬有礼，时而怒气冲冲，情绪全被航行的顺利与否掌控。那些人中有的有是久经航海的老商人，有的是刚入社会的新水手，具有各种身份的人在这里交杂在一起，一时间变得热闹非凡。

在大厦的进出口，一些老资格的人物会坐在椅子上，靠在墙上沉沉入睡；往里走是一间办公室，透过窗户能够看到破烂的码头和一些杂货店。屋子里挂满了蜘蛛网，有火炉和桌凳，书架上还有不少《国会法案大全》和厚厚的《税法》。六个月前我就是在这里工作，然而改革的浪潮把我辞退，现在有新的人员接替了我的工作。

以前我从来没有意识到自己对故乡还有怀念之情。整个小镇的建筑千



篇一律，长长的街道贯穿了所有区域，可我内心深处依然对此处有着爱恋。这感情也许是归结于我的家族扎根于此，更多的是和一个住宅的主人有关。他是一个庄重、严肃的人，是教会的统治者，是善良和邪恶的综合体，他的儿子也继承了他的品质。历史上记录下的他们的罪过远比善行多，他们已经得到了足够的报应。也许我的先人们看不惯我以写作为生，但随他们怎么想吧！

小镇子处于开放阶段时，两个男人在这里扎根生存，整个家族一直延续下去，至今已有一百多年。每一辈人没有给家族丢过脸，但也没有什么大成就。他们一直随大海活动，生于此葬于此。在这个小镇，没有快乐、死气沉沉，这些和感情都没有关系，那生于斯长于斯的感情是不可磨灭的。我出去过很多次，但最终还是回来了。

曾经在一个早晨，我被安排到海关担当总稽查。我工作了一段时间，发现美国的公职人员似乎都是家族式的团体，职位能代代相传。我管辖的地方有几个老年人，他们一年到头很少露面，只有天气暖和时会懒洋洋地出来象征性地履行职责。由于我的管理和干预才使他们稍微有了变化，后来又被劝服卸职休息。我的手下很庆幸，我不是一个政治家，所以我不会对任何一个政党有偏见或打击。那些老年人害怕我会手下无情，看到我总是诚惶诚恐。我只是觉得他们应该把机会留给年轻人，那些人效率更高；那些老家伙为了保住自己的职位，在我任职期间也是任劳任怨，忙碌个不停。当他们发现我很温和，并没有打算撤用他们时，他们终于放松下来。在岗位上，时常也会出现一些纰漏，他们在损失发生后才会加倍警惕。我看得出那些老官员身上具有良好的品质，和他们相处得还算融洽。除了这些老人，我的下属中还是有一些朝气蓬勃、能力出众的年轻人的。

小镇上的海关之父也是全国的海上稽查员的创始人，他的职位是他的先人留下的。我第一次见到他的时候，他已经是八十岁的老人了，可精神矍铄，步伐利落，一点儿也没有衰老的痕迹。他在某一瞬间也许会回忆起以前的悲苦，可一声叹息过后，又会像婴儿一样玩闹起来，比一些年轻人都显得更精神。我时常观察这位元老级人物，他在某个程度上简直完美无缺，可从侧面又有点肤浅，没有头脑。在海关，还有一个不可或缺的人物，那就是我们的老将军。他的军旅生涯很辉煌，在这里度过了他生命中最后

的二十个年头；年迈时，他只能依赖仆人的搀扶行走，不过那些辉煌的回忆支撑着他，使他轻松不少。他习惯坐在壁炉旁，翻阅着文件，凝视着周围的人群。我和他接触不多，但对他很崇敬。他的英雄品质、坚定的精神让我感动，即使年迈，他依然保持着军人坚定的意志和热情，面临危险不动声色；虽然在战场上杀气腾腾，内心却充满慈悲。我喜欢站在远处观察周围人的行为举止，感受他们不同的生活习惯，这也是我在任职期间最丰富的经历。我和不同的人打交道，获得了很多不同的生活经历。我的那些同僚可能没有读过我写的东西，所以他们从来不把我当成作家看待。只有一两个人经常拉着我讨论莎士比亚；一位年轻人时不时会写些像诗歌的东西，一有机会便和我讨论。

海关的二层楼上有间没派上用场的大屋子，现在堆满了乱七八糟的文件物品。有一天我随意翻看，竟然发现了很久以前沉没于大海的那些商人的资料。我看到了很多珍贵的资料，知道了不少历史事实真相。这些文件有些是私人的，可能因为保存者突然去世而被认为是与公务有关的文件。还有个神秘的包裹，外面的红布上绣着一个A字，我对此产生了兴趣，这一定有着非同寻常的意义。我发现包裹里老稽查官记录着事情的详细过程，还记下了人们口头的传说。他们记得海丝特·普林——一个年迈的女人以义务保姆的身份在乡间生活，她善解人意，乐于助人。我阅读了全部记载，了解了这个女人的悲惨经历。这个故事的原始记载我仍然精心地保存着，无论谁要查看，我随时乐意拿出来。我力求保持原故事的真实性，但叙述中发挥了自己的想象力。

关于海丝特·普林的故事我考虑了很久，我担心我写出来的故事不能反映出主人公的真实经历。在我做稽查官的第三年，泰勒将军当选总统，我看到很多残忍的行为发生在人们身上，执政党有了统治的权力，却在伤害群众。之前我从不偏向任何政党，现在我却对当局不满，我想辞职；但担心无故辞职会被看成执政党的敌人，我只能郁闷地忍耐着。新闻界以我为例，抓住我的政治立场不放，我被免职了。我买来写作用品，开始当起文人。我开始着手写作，老稽查官的那些珍贵的文字资料派上了很大的用场。

小镇上绝对没有适合文人写作的气氛，在别的地方我能够做得更好。

我依然很开心，也许后代能够看到我描写的生活和记录。

*I*t is a little remarkable that—though disinclined to talk overmuch of myself and my affairs at the fireside, and to my personal friends—an autobiographical impulse should twice in my life have taken possession of me, in addressing the public. The first time was three or four years since, when I favoured the reader—inexcusably, and for no earthly reason, that either the indulgent reader or the intrusive author could imagine—with a description of my way of life in the deep quietude of an Old Manse. And now—because, beyond my deserts, I was happy enough to find a listener or two on the former occasion—I again seize the public by the button, and talk of my three years' experience in a Custom House. The example of the famous "P. P., Clerk of this Parish," was never more faithfully followed. The truth seems to be, however, that, when he casts his leaves forth upon the wind, the author addresses, not the many who will fling aside his volume, or never take it up, but the few who will understand him, better than most of his schoolmates or lifemates. Some authors, indeed, do far more than this, and indulge themselves in such confidential depths of revelation as could fittingly be addressed, only and exclusively, to the one heart and mind, of perfect sympathy; as if the printed book, thrown at large on the wide world, were certain to find out the divided segment of the writer's own nature, and complete his circle of existence by bringing him into communion with it. It is scarcely decorous, however, to speak all, even where we speak impersonally. But, as thoughts are frozen and utterance benumbed, unless the speaker stand in some true relation with his audience, it may be pardonable to imagine that a friend, a kind and apprehensive, though not the closest friend, is listening to our talk; and then, a native reserve being thawed by this genial consciousness, we may prate of the circumstances that lie around us, and even of ourself, but still keep the inmost Me behind its veil. To this extent, and within these limits, an author, methinks, may be autobiographical, without violating either the reader's rights or his own.

It will be seen, likewise, that this Custom House sketch has a certain propriety, of a kind always recognised in literature, as explaining how a large portion of the following pages came into my possession, and as offering proofs of the authenticity of a narrative therein contained. This, in fact—a desire to put myself in my true position as editor, or very little more, of the most prolix among the tales that make up my volume—this, and no other, is my true reason for assuming a personal relation with the public. In accomplishing the main purpose, it has appeared allowable, by a few extra touches, to give a faint representation of a mode of life not heretofore described, together with some of the characters that move in it, among whom the author happened to make one.

In my native town of Salem, at the head of what, half a century ago, in the days of old King Derby, was a bustling wharf—but which is now burdened with decayed wooden warehouses, and exhibits few or no symptoms of commercial life; except, perhaps, a bark or brig, half-way down its melancholy length, discharging hides; or, nearer at hand, a Nova Scotia schooner, pitching out her cargo of firewood—at the head, I say, of this dilapidated wharf, which the tide often overflows, and along which, at the base and in the rear of the row of buildings, the track of many languid years is seen in a border of unthrifty grass—here, with a view from its front windows adown this not very enlivening prospect, and thence across the harbour, stands a spacious edifice of brick. From the loftiest point of its roof, during precisely three and a half hours of each forenoon, floats or droops, in breeze or calm, the banner of the republic; but with the thirteen stripes turned vertically, instead of horizontally, and thus indicating that a civil, and not a military post of Uncle Sam's government is here established. Its front is ornamented with a portico of half a dozen wooden pillars, supporting a balcony, beneath which a flight of wide granite steps descends towards the street. Over the entrance hovers an enormous specimen of the American eagle, with outspread wings, a shield before her breast, and, if I recollect aright, a bunch of intermingled thunderbolts and barbed arrows in each claw. With the customary infirmity of temper that characterises this unhappy fowl she appears, by the fierceness of her beak and eye, and the



general truculency of her attitude, to threaten mischief to the inoffensive community; and especially to warn all citizens, careful of their safety, against intruding on the premises which she overshadows with her wings. Nevertheless, vixenly as she looks, many people are seeking, at this very moment, to shelter themselves under the wing of the federal eagle; imagining, I presume, that her bosom has all the softness and snugness of an eiderdown pillow. But she has no great tenderness, even in her best of moods, and, sooner or later—oftener soon than late—is apt to fling off her nestlings, with a scratch of her claw, a dab of her beak, or a rankling wound from her barbed arrows.

The pavement round about the above-described edifice—which we may as well name at once as the Custom House of the port—has grass enough growing in its chinks to show that it has not, of late days, been worn by any multitudinous resort of business. In some months of the year, however, there often chances a forenoon when affairs move onward with a livelier tread. Such occasions might remind the elderly citizen of that period before the last war with England, when Salem was a port by itself; not scorned, as she is now, by her own merchants and ship-owners, who permit her wharves to crumble to ruin, while their ventures go to swell, needlessly and imperceptibly, the mighty flood of commerce at New York or Boston. On some such morning, when three or four vessels happen to have arrived at once—usually from Africa or South America—or to be on the verge of their departure thitherward, there is a sound of frequent feet, passing briskly up and down the granite steps. Here, before his own wife has greeted him, you may greet the sea-flushed shipmaster, just in port, with his vessel's papers under his arm, in a tarnished tin box. Here, too, comes his owner, cheerful or sombre, gracious or in the sulks, accordingly as his scheme of the now accomplished voyage has been realised in merchandise that will readily be turned to gold, or has buried him under a bulk of incommodities such as nobody will care to rid him of. Here, likewise—the germ of the wrinkle-browed, grizzly-bearded, careworn merchant—we have the smart young clerk who gets the taste of traffic as a wolf-cub does of blood, and already sends adventures in his master's ships, when he had better be

sailing mimic-boats upon a mill-pond. Another figure in the scene is the outward-bound sailor, in quest of a protection; or the recently arrived one, pale and feeble, seeking a passport to the hospital. Nor must we forget the captains of the rusty little schooners that bring firewood from the British provinces; a rough-looking set of tarpaulins, without the alertness of the Yankee aspect, but contributing an item of no slight importance to our decaying trade.

Cluster all these individuals together, as they sometimes were, with other miscellaneous ones to diversify the group, and, for the time being, it made the Custom House a stirring scene. More frequently, however, on ascending the steps, you would discern—in the entry, if it were summer time, or in their appropriate rooms, if wintry or inclement weather—a row of venerable figures, sitting in old-fashioned chairs, which were tipped on their hind legs back against the wall. Oftentimes they were asleep, but occasionally might be heard talking together, in voices between speech and a snore, and with that lack of energy that distinguishes the occupants of almshouses, and all other human beings who depend for subsistence on charity, on monopolised labour, or anything else, but their own independent exertions. These old gentlemen—seated, like Matthew, at the receipt of customs, but not very liable to be summoned thence, like him, for apostolic errands—were Custom House officers.

Furthermore, on the left hand as you enter the front door, is a certain room or office, about fifteen feet square, and of a lofty height; with two of its arched windows commanding a view of the aforesaid dilapidated wharf, and the third looking across a narrow lane, and along a portion of Derby Street. All three give glimpses of the shops of grocers, block-makers, slop-sellers, and shipchandlers; around the doors of which are generally to be seen, laughing and gossiping, clusters of old salts, and such other wharf-rats as haunt the Wapping of a seaport. The room itself is cobwebbed, and dingy with old paint; its floor is strewn with grey sand, in a fashion that has elsewhere fallen into long disuse; and it is easy to conclude, from the general slovenliness of the place, that this is a sanctuary into which womankind, with her tools of magic, the broom and



mop, has very infrequent access. In the way of furniture, there is a stove with a voluminous funnel; an old pine desk with a three-legged stool beside it; two or three wooden-bottom chairs, exceedingly decrepit and infirm; and—not to forget the library—on some shelves, a score or two of volumes of the Acts of Congress, and a bulky Digest of the Revenue Laws. A tin pipe ascends through the ceiling, and forms a medium of vocal communication with other parts of the edifice. And here, some six months ago—pacing from corner to corner, or lounging on the long-legged stool, with his elbow on the desk, and his eyes wandering up and down the columns of the morning newspaper—you might have recognised, honoured reader, the same individual who welcomed you into his cheery little study, where the sunshine glimmered so pleasantly through the willow branches, on the western side of the Old Manse. But now, should you go thither to seek him, you would inquire in vain for the Locofoco Surveyor. The besom of reform has swept him out of office; and a worthier successor wears his dignity, and pockets his emoluments.

This old town of Salem—my native place, though I have dwelt much away from it, both in boyhood and maturer years—possesses, or did possess, a hold on my affections, the force of which I have never realised during my seasons of actual residence here. Indeed, so far as its physical aspect is concerned, with its flat, unvaried surface, covered chiefly with wooden houses, few or none of which pretend to architectural beauty—its irregularity, which is neither picturesque nor quaint, but only tame—its long and lazy street lounging wearisomely through the whole extent of the peninsula, with Gallows Hill and New Guinea at one end, and a view of the almshouse at the other—such being the features of my native town, it would be quite as reasonable to form a sentimental attachment to a disarranged checker-board. And yet, though invariably happiest elsewhere, there is within me a feeling for old Salem, which, in lack of a better phrase, I must be content to call affection. The sentiment is probably assignable to the deep and aged roots which my family has struck into the soil. It is now nearly two centuries and a quarter since the original Briton, the earliest emigrant of my name, made his appearance in the wild and

forestbordered settlement, which has since become a city. And here his descendants have been born and died, and have mingled their earthy substance with the soil, until no small portion of it must necessarily be akin to the mortal frame wherewith, for a little while, I walk the streets. In part, therefore, the attachment which I speak of is the mere sensuous sympathy of dust for dust. Few of my countrymen can know what it is; nor, as frequent transplantation is perhaps better for the stock, need they consider it desirable to know.

But the sentiment has likewise its moral quality. The figure of that first ancestor, invested by family tradition with a dim and dusky grandeur, was present to my boyish imagination, as far back as I can remember. It still haunts me, and induces a sort of home-feeling with the past, which I scarcely claim in reference to the present phase of the town. I seem to have a stronger claim to a residence here on account of this grave, bearded, sable-cloaked and steeple-crowned progenitor—who came so early, with his Bible and his sword, and trod the unworn street with such a stately port, and made so large a figure, as a man of war and peace—a stronger claim than for myself, whose name is seldom heard and my face hardly known. He was a soldier, legislator, judge; he was a ruler in the Church; he had all the Puritanic traits, both good and evil. He was likewise a bitter persecutor, as witness the Quakers, who have remembered him in their histories, and relate an incident of his hard severity toward a woman of their sect, which will last longer, it is to be feared, than any record of his better deeds, although these were many. His son, too, inherited the persecuting spirit, and made himself so conspicuous in the martyrdom of the witches, that their blood may fairly be said to have left a stain upon him. So deep a stain, indeed, that his old dry bones, in the Charter Street burial-ground, must still retain it, if they have not crumbled utterly to dust! I know not whether these ancestors of mine bethought themselves to repent, and ask pardon of heaven for their cruelties; or whether they are now groaning under the heavy consequences of them, in another state of being. At all events, I, the present writer, as their representative, hereby take shame upon myself for their sakes, and pray that any curse incurred by them—as I have heard, and as the