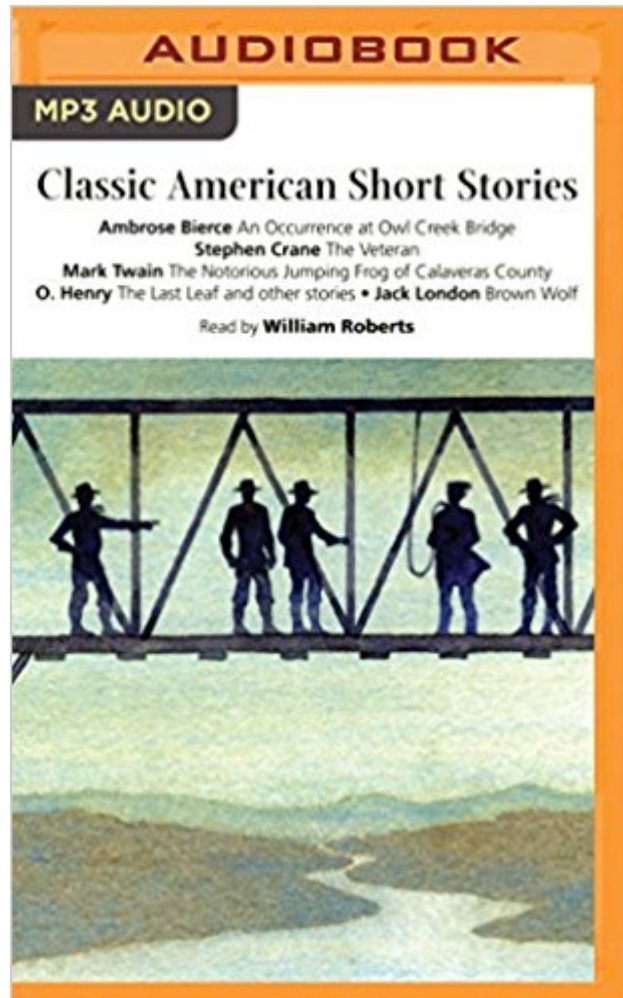




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Classic American Short Stories



Synopsis

Five great American short story writers, dating from the turn of the nineteenth/twentieth centuries are represented here. Different in atmosphere and writing style, they nevertheless caught the mood and concerns of the day in a way that was distinctly American. Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge" leaves echoes in the imagination; the stories by Crane and London recall the themes of the Civil War and the Klondike for which they are well known. Twain's humour is to the fore in "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County" and O. Henry's sharp observation makes his neat tales a joy to listen to. An attractive and accessible collection.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Gr 8 Up-Nine classic stories by five late 19th and early 20th century American writers are offered in a well-produced package. William Roberts reads with clarity and emotion, accomplishing a range of voices for these character-driven stories, and bringing to life a young boy, a querulous old man, and even the few women who appear in these tales. The production quality is excellent. With the exception of Mark Twain's "The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calavaras County," the unifying theme among the selections is one of suspense, often to the point of edge of the seat tension. Ambrose Bierce's "An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge," recounts the hanging of a Confederate sympathizer during the American Civil War. Stephen Crane's "The Veteran" takes place a few years later and features a man who survived that war, in spite of his fearfulness, and now demonstrates his real bravery on a firey night when horses must be rescued from a burning barn. The five stories selected to demonstrate the surprising twists to events for which O. Henry made his name include "After

Twenty Years," "A Retrieved Information," "While the Auto Waits," "The Last Leaf," and "Makes the Whole World Kin." The autobiographical "Brown Wolf," by Jack London, bespeaks of the human attachment to the dog and the dog's reciprocal attachment. While the age of these stories mean that their styles are more ponderous than those of some popular contemporary writers, students will have no trouble understanding and picturing the events these authors weave. The range of characters, while mostly male, is socially broad, including several outlaws. Francisca Goldsmith, Berkeley Public Library, CA Copyright 2001 Cahnners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

It is hard to imagine why these particular nine stories were chosen to record together; while they are unquestionably "classic," there seems very little relation among them. Nor are they particularly representative; five of the nine are authored by O. Henry (one of which is referred to throughout as "The Retrieved Information," not, correctly, as "The Retrieved Reformation"). The other authors featured are Stephen Crane (The Veteran), Ambrose Bierce (An Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge), Mark Twain (The Notorious Jumping Frog of Calaveras County), and Jack London (Brown Wolf). Each story is introduced and concludes with a beautiful fragment of classical music, unnecessary but very pleasant. William Roberts as narrator is excellent, with a voice full of drama, expression, and variety, bringing a great deal to these familiar tales. Most audio collections should have a good representation of short stories, and this would be a worthwhile addition. Harriet Edwards, East Meadow P.L., NY Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Preloaded Digital Audio Player edition.

Beautiful and loved.

Interesting selection from Barnes and Noble. Good price and fast delivery. Thank you.

It is almost a crime to subject classic short stories such as these to this kind of audio treatment. Each is introduced with cheap sound effects or maudlin music. The reader is hopelessly overdramatic, mispronounces words like "coquetry" and cheapens the narrative with dripping emotion and weird rhetorical lifts in his voice. Worst of all is the dialogue which, as if in a radio play, is read by a variety of voices, women for female characters, men for male. Accents are over-wrought, turning the dialogue of masters like Twain and Fitzgerald into caricature. These great stories should be read and, if they must be read aloud, done with respect rather than fear that

listeners might be bored without cheap theatrics.

These are very good readings of some good stories. Particularly impressive is Bierce's classic "Occurrence at Owl Creek Bridge." This story holds up well on re-reading. On one level it's a cool "Twilight Zone" kind of story: man has out of body experience as he's about to be hanged. But on a deeper level, the story is about the interplay of mind and matter and about how to face death. The O Henry pieces are all amusing, but his stories are a bit superficial and contrived, and I'm not sure they really deserve to dominate this collection. Nor are the Crane and London pieces their best. But these are good stories, and the readers are excellent.

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