CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Chouans

Honoré de Balzac · *Wormeley's translation, 1893 · Katharine Prescott Wormeley (1893), Project Gutenberg #1921*

Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had left Fougeres in the morning on their way to Mayenne, were going up the little mountain of La Pelerine. So this Brittany war story begins, after a dedication: To my first friend, my first work. Katharine Prescott Wormeley, 1893, PG #1921, complete as hosted. For grades 9–12. War: no gore spectacle. Quote Wormeley.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read this file as Balzac's first signed novel in Wormeley's English, a war story of Brittany in the autumn of 1799, opening with a dedication to a first friend and a company climbing La Pelerine?

"Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had"

I. An Ambuscade

Honoré de Balzac's The Chouans, in Katharine Prescott Wormeley's 1893 English, Project Gutenberg #1921, complete as hosted. It is dedicated: To my first friend, my first work. Then an ambuscade: Early in the year VIII., towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had left Fougeres, were going up the little mountain of La Pelerine. For grades 9–12. War: no gore spectacle. Quote this English, not a later film.

KEY CHARACTERS

The company on La Pelerine
Peasants and citizens who had left Fougeres in the morning on their way to Mayenne

Honoré de Balzac
Who dedicates this first work to his first friend, before the ambuscade is told

Katharine Prescott Wormeley
The 1893 translator; quote her English

HOW TO BEGIN THE CHOUANS

> *"To my first friend, my first work. De"*
> Dedication

> *"Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had"*
> I. An Ambuscade

Grades 9–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

To My First Friend, My First Work

DEDICATION

To my first friend, my first work. De Balzac. The novel is offered as a first work, to a first friend, before the ambuscade begins.

- Keep "my first friend" and "my first work."
- 9–12.
- A dedication, not the whole war story.
- Quote Wormeley.

> *"To my first friend, my first work. De"*
> Dedication

02

Early in the Year VIII

I. AN AMBUSCADE

Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799. The file itself converts the Republican date.

- Keep "year VIII" and "close of September, 1799."
- 9–12.
- Brittany in 1799, not another campaign.
- Quote this wording.

> *"Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had"*
> I. An Ambuscade

03

They Were Going Up La Pelerine

THE SAME OPENING

A hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had left Fougeres in the morning on their way to Mayenne, were going up the little mountain of La Pelerine. The company is already on the road.

- Keep "left Fougeres" and "La Pelerine."
- 9–12. War: no gore spectacle.
- The first company, not the whole book.
- Quote Wormeley.

> *"a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had left Fougeres in the morning on their way to Mayenne, were going up the little mountain of"*
> I. An Ambuscade

04

A Heavy Stick of Knotted Oak

THE SAME COMPANY

Each man carried over his shoulder a heavy stick of knotted oak. The road is already armed, before later fighting is told.

- Keep "heavy stick of knotted oak."
- Gravity; no gore spectacle.
- 9–12.
- Quote this English.

> *"Each man carried over his shoulder a heavy stick of knotted oak, at the end of"*
> I. An Ambuscade

05

Wormeley, 1893, Complete as Hosted

THE EDITION

Katharine Prescott Wormeley's 1893 English, Project Gutenberg #1921, complete as hosted. Balzac's first signed novel, a war story of western France in the autumn of 1799. For grades 9–12. Quote Wormeley, not a later film. War: no gore spectacle. One map cannot teach the whole book.

- Name Wormeley, 1893, and PG #1921.
- 9–12. No gore spectacle.
- A dedication, then an ambuscade in year VIII.
- Quote this English.

> *"Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799, a hundred or so of peasants and a large number of citizens, who had"*
> I. An Ambuscade

A first work, offered to a first friend | Year VIII, named and dated | A company on La Pelerine | A stick of knotted oak | A war story, without spectacle

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. The dedication is short: "To my first friend, my first work."
2. The ambuscade opens: "Early in the year VIII., at the beginning of Vendemiaire, or, to conform to our own calendar, towards the close of September, 1799."
3. Katharine Prescott Wormeley, 1893, Project Gutenberg #1921, complete as hosted. Quote this English, not a later film.
4. A war story of Brittany. For grades 9–12. Gravity; no gore spectacle. One map cannot teach the whole book.

Quotations are verbatim from the Katharine Prescott Wormeley (1893), Project Gutenberg #1921, Project Gutenberg #1921, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/balzac-the-chouans/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.