CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Billy Budd and Other Stories

Herman Melville · *1924 · original English text*

In the time before steamships, a stroller along the docks of any considerable seaport would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed marines. This collection holds Billy Budd complete, plus other Melville prose.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What is innocence worth in a time of war at sea, and how should a collection that holds Billy Budd complete also be honest about the other stories in the same file?

"In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable seaport would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed marines,"

Billy Budd, the opening

The hosted collection holds Billy Budd, Sailor complete (first published 1924, now public domain) together with other Melville prose, including Bartleby, Benito Cereno, and The Encantadas from The Piazza Tales. The opening is exact, "bronzed marines" as printed. Map the labeled collection and flag the companions. For older students: a hanging under law in wartime; teach with gravity.

KEY CHARACTERS

the bronzed marines of the opening
The remembered type of sailor who arrests a stroller's attention in the time before steamships.

Billy Budd
The handsome sailor of the title story, whose innocence is tried under law in time of war.

the captain, and the accuser
The officers of the wartime ship, in whose hands the title story's trial is placed.

Bartleby, Cereno, and the companions
The figures of the other tales in this file, who are not characters of Billy Budd.

IN THE TIME BEFORE STEAMSHIPS

> *"In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable seaport would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed marines,"*
>
> Billy Budd

Grades 11–12

Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

In the Time before Steamships

BILLY BUDD, THE OPENING

In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable seaport would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed marines. The title story begins as a type of sailor, and as a remembered time.

- The opening is exact in both witnesses; quote the wording both files share, including 'bronzed marines' or the typography actually printed.
- This is the opening of Billy Budd, the title story, which is complete in the file.

> *"In the time before steamships, or then more frequently than now, a stroller along the docks of any considerable seaport would occasionally have his attention arrested by a group of bronzed marines,"*
>
> Billy Budd

02

Innocence, Law, and a Wartime Ship

BILLY BUDD, THE TALE

The handsome sailor, a false accusation, and a captain's duty under law in time of war are the title story's trial. Teach it as Melville wrote it, with gravity, and do not reduce the close to a single moral sentence.

- Billy Budd is complete in this file (1924 text, now public domain).
- A hanging under law is the tale's hard close; teach it for older students, not as spectacle.

03

Bartleby, Cereno, and the Encantadas

THE COMPANION STORIES IN THIS FILE

The hosted collection also holds other Melville prose, including Bartleby, Benito Cereno, and The Encantadas from The Piazza Tales. They are companions in the same file, not chapters of Billy Budd.

- Flag the companions; map the labeled collection, not the title story alone.
- Bartleby and Benito Cereno are their own hard tales; for older students.

04

A Complete Title Story in a Larger File

THE HOSTED FILE

The site text and EPUB are this collection: complete Billy Budd, plus the companion prose. Quote stretches that appear in both, and quote Billy Budd from the tale itself.

- Billy Budd complete, 1924, now PD.
- Companions flagged, including Piazza Tales pieces.

Innocence under Law | A Time of War at Sea | A Title Story, and Companions | A Hard Duty | Memory of the Docks

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. The hosted text holds Billy Budd, Sailor complete (first published 1924, now public domain) plus other Melville prose, including Bartleby, Benito Cereno, and The Encantadas from The Piazza Tales. The opening is exact, with "bronzed marines" as printed.
2. Map the labeled collection; do not treat the file as Billy Budd alone. For older and advanced students: a hanging under law in wartime; teach with gravity, not as spectacle.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #76513/#15859, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/billy-budd-and-other-stories/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.