CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

History of Friedrich II of Prussia, Called Frederick the Great

Thomas Carlyle · *1858–1865 · original English (Project Gutenberg #2101–#2121, vols. 1–21, and #2122, Appendix)*

About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, a highly interesting lean little old man, of alert though slightly stooping figure, whose name among strangers was King Frederick the Great. So Carlyle begins this long history. For grades 11–12. Quote the history, not only the contents. The file is very large; do not pretend one map has taught all twenty-one volumes.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school begin Carlyle's huge history of Frederick, which opens with an old man on the terraces of Sans Souci, without treating the twenty-one volumes as a single lesson, and without making the later wars a spectacle?

"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"

Book I, the opening

Carlyle, in his own English (PG #2101–#2122), opens from a little distance in time: about fourscore years ago, an old king was to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, or riding in a rapid business manner through the Potsdam region—a lean little old man, alert, slightly stooping, called among strangers Frederick the Great. The work is a long history, twenty-one volumes and an appendix, of that king's life and house. Teach the opening, and then as much as you honestly assign, for grades 11–12. Gravity about the wars. No spectacle. Do not pretend that one map has taught the whole.

KEY CHARACTERS

The old king at Sans Souci
The first image: a lean little old man, alert, slightly stooping, sauntering on the terraces, called among strangers Frederick the Great

Friedrich, in youth and in war
The long subject of the volumes that follow the terrace; teach what you assign, with gravity, not as a mascot

The house of Hohenzollern, and the Potsdam region
The family and the amphibious woods and avenues through which Carlyle also sees him riding

Thomas Carlyle
The historian of this long work, already the author, in this library, of The French Revolution

A TERRACE, AN AFTERNOON, A LEAN FIGURE

> *"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"*
>
> Book I, the opening

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

Twenty-One Volumes, and an Appendix

THE FILE AS A WHOLE

The source note is exact: Project Gutenberg #2101–#2121 (volumes 01–21) and #2122 (Appendix). The hosted text is very large. A school should name the span, and should assign pieces honestly.

- For grades 11–12.
- This is Carlyle's second long history in this wave; The French Revolution is a different book.
- Quote the history, not only a table of contents.
- Do not invent an abridgment that is not this file.

> *"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"*
>
> Book I, the opening

02

An Old Man at Sans Souci

THE OPENING

The first movement is not a battle, but a terrace, an afternoon, a lean figure, a slightly stooping walk, a name used among strangers. Carlyle will go backward from that last image into the house and the youth and the wars.

- The first sentence is exact, including "fourscore years ago," "sauntering," and "Sans Souci."
- The file continues: you might have met him earlier, riding or driving in a rapid business manner on the open roads or through the scraggy woods of that amphibious Potsdam region.
- 11–12.
- Quote Carlyle; do not tidy him.

> *"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"*
>
> Book I, the opening

03

A House, a Youth, and Wars

THE LONG MIDDLE

The volumes will treat the Hohenzollern house, the father, the youth of Friedrich, and the wars of Prussia. Teach what you assign as itself, with gravity, not as a romance of victory only.

- No gore and no spectacle on the map.
- Do not flatten Frederick into a later mascot, military or otherwise.
- Name the volume you are actually in.
- Finish that volume if you start it.

> *"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"*
>
> Book I, the opening

04

Carlyle's English, Again

THE EDITION

This is Carlyle's original English, mid-nineteenth century, complete as hosted. The length is part of the honesty of the map: it is a work of years, not of a week.

- Keep "Friedrich" and "Frederick" as Carlyle uses them in the passage you quote.
- The French Revolution, already mapped, is not this book.
- Not a later one-volume popular life.
- 11–12.

> *"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"*
>
> Book I, the opening

05

A King, and a Human Figure

HOW TO TEACH IT

The opening insists on a body: lean, alert, slightly stooping, sauntering or riding. A school should not lose that human first image in a cloud of campaigns.

- Start on the terrace, as Carlyle does.
- Then, if you go on, go on with gravity.
- The old man is the end toward which the long book is already looking.
- Quote him.

> *"About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci, for a short time in the afternoon, or you might have met him"*
>
> Book I, the opening

A Long History | An Old King, First | A Terrace at Sans Souci | Wars, With Gravity | Not a Mascot

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. Carlyle's History of Friedrich II (PG #2101–#2122, twenty-one volumes and an appendix) opens: "About fourscore years ago, there used to be seen sauntering on the terraces of Sans Souci," a lean little old man, alert, slightly stooping, called among strangers Frederick the Great. Keep "fourscore" and "Sans Souci." For grades 11–12.
2. The hosted file is huge. Do not pretend one map has taught all the volumes. Assign pieces honestly, and name the volume you are in.
3. Start on the terrace, as Carlyle does, not on a battle. Gravity about the later wars. No spectacle. Do not flatten Frederick into a later mascot.
4. This is not The French Revolution, already mapped in this wave. Keep the two Carlyle histories distinct.
5. Quote Carlyle; do not tidy his English.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English (Project Gutenberg #2101–#2121, vols. 1–21, and #2122, Appendix), Project Gutenberg #2101–#2121 (vols. 01–21) and #2122 (Appendix), the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/carlyle-frederick-the-great/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.