CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Christ Legends

Selma Lagerlöf · *1904 (this English, 1908)* · *Velma Swanston Howard*

When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I hardly know if I have had a greater since. It was then my grandmother died. Up to that time, she used to sit every day on the corner sofa in her room, and tell stories. So The Holy Night opens, in Velma Swanston Howard's 1908 English of Selma Lagerlöf, Project Gutenberg #44818, complete as hosted, including The Legend of the Christmas Rose. For grades 3–8, as a read-aloud. Quote this telling, not a later film.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Christ Legends as Howard's 1908 English of Lagerlöf—opened by a child, a grandmother who told stories, and then a tale of live coals in the dark night—rather than as a later film, or as a single unframed legend?

"When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I"
The Holy Night

The hosted file is Selma Lagerlöf's Christ Legends, translated from the Swedish by Velma Swanston Howard, 1908, Project Gutenberg #44818, complete as hosted, including The Holy Night and The Legend of the Christmas Rose. The Holy Night opens with a frame: When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I hardly know if I have had a greater since. It was then my grandmother died. Up to that time, she used to sit every day on the corner sofa in her room, and tell stories. Later, inside that frame, she tells of a man who went out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire, because his wife had just given birth to a child. Teach the frame first, for grades 3–8, as a read-aloud. Quote Howard, not a later film. The later legends in the book each have their own openings; one map cannot teach them all. Name Lagerlöf and Howard.

KEY CHARACTERS

The child who remembers
Who was five years old, and had such a great sorrow, when the grandmother died

The grandmother
Who sat on the corner sofa and told stories, and whose later tale is of a man borrowing live coals in the dark night

Velma Swanston Howard
Who translates this 1908 English from Lagerlöf's Swedish; name her

HOW TO BEGIN THESE LEGENDS

> *"When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I"*
> The Holy Night

> *"who went out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire. He went"*
> The tale inside the frame

Grades 3–8
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Great Sorrow, at Five Years Old

THE HOLY NIGHT

When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I hardly know if I have had a greater since. The first legend begins as a child's memory, not as a painting only.

- Keep "five years old" and "such a great sorrow."
- 3–8, read-aloud.
- Howard's 1908 English.
- Not a later film.

> *"When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I"*
> The Holy Night

02

My Grandmother Died

THE HOLY NIGHT

It was then my grandmother died. Up to that time, she used to sit every day on the corner sofa in her room, and tell stories. The stories are remembered after a death, and a sofa.

- Keep "grandmother died" and "corner sofa."
- 3–8. Gravity, gently.
- The later tale is told inside this frame.
- Quote this wording.

> *"It was then my grandmother died. Up"*
> The Holy Night

03

She Used to Tell Stories

THE HOLY NIGHT

She used to sit every day on the corner sofa in her room, and tell stories. The book's first gift is a grandmother telling, day after day.

- Keep "every day" and "tell stories."
- 3–8.
- Quote Howard.
- Name Lagerlöf.

> *"Up to that time, she used to sit every day on the corner sofa in her room, and tell stories. I"*
> The Holy Night

04

Live Coals, in the Dark Night

THE HOLY NIGHT, THE TALE INSIDE THE FRAME

A man went out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire. The grandmother's tale begins after the frame. Keep this wording, and teach the birth and the fire with gentleness.

- Keep "dark night" and "live coals to kindle a fire."
- 3–8, read-aloud.
- A story inside a story.
- Not a later film.

> *"who went out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire. He went"*
> The Holy Night, the tale inside the frame

05

Howard, 1908, Complete as Hosted

THE EDITION

Velma Swanston Howard's 1908 English of Lagerlöf's Christ Legends, PG #44818, complete as hosted, including The Christmas Rose. For grades 3–8, as a read-aloud. Quote this telling, not a later film. One map cannot teach every legend in the book.

- Name Lagerlöf and Howard.
- 3–8.
- The Holy Night opens the file, after front matter.
- A frame, then a tale.

> *"When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow! I"*
> The Holy Night

A child's sorrow, remembered | A grandmother, and a sofa of stories | Live coals, in a dark night | A tale inside a frame | Howard's 1908 English

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 3–8

1. The Holy Night opens with a frame: "When I was five years old I had such a great sorrow!" It was then the grandmother died; she used to sit on the corner sofa and tell stories.
2. Inside the frame, a man goes out in the dark night to borrow live coals to kindle a fire, for a wife and a newborn child. Teach it gently.
3. Selma Lagerlöf, translated by Velma Swanston Howard, 1908, PG #44818, complete as hosted, including The Legend of the Christmas Rose. For grades 3–8, as a read-aloud.
4. Quote this English, not a later film. One map cannot teach every legend in the book.

Quotations are verbatim from the Velma Swanston Howard, Project Gutenberg #44818, Christ Legends, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/christ-legends/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.