CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Cuchulain of Muirthemne

Lady Gregory · *1902 (this printing, 1907)* · *Lady Gregory's English*

I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago. So Lady Gregory writes, giving a fair account of Cuchulain's life and death, in the 1902 book as printed in the 1907 John Murray edition. A preface by W. B. Yeats stands in the file; quote Gregory, not only Yeats. For grades 7–12. Some OCR is broken; quote only clean sentences. Her arrangement, not an unedited cycle. Battle: no gore spectacle.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Cuchulain of Muirthemne as Lady Gregory's own arrangement—plain words, a fair account of a life and death, told as her nurse Mary Sheridan used to tell stories—rather than as Yeats's preface only, or as an unedited cycle?

"I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago, and I a"

Lady Gregory's dedication, or opening frame

The hosted file is Lady Gregory's Cuchulain of Muirthemne, arranged and put into English, London: John Murray, 1902, in the 1907 third edition. A preface by W. B. Yeats is in the file; quote Gregory, not only Yeats. She writes that she has tried to take the best of the stories, or whatever parts of each will fit best to one another, and in that way to give a fair account of Cuchulain's life and death. She put in nothing of her own that could be helped, only a sentence or so to link the parts. She has told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way her old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago. Later, a tale is framed: This is the story of the boy deeds of Cuchulain, as it was told by Fergus to Ailell and to Maeve at the time of the war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne. Teach that honesty, for grades 7–12. Some OCR in this file is broken; quote only clean sentences, and do not mend them. This is her arrangement, not an unedited cycle. Battle scenes need tact, and no gore spectacle. One map cannot teach the whole book.

KEY CHARACTERS

Lady Gregory
Who arranges and puts the stories into English, in plain words, as her nurse Mary Sheridan used to tell them

Cuchulain of Muirthemne
Whose life and death she tries to give a fair account of, from the best of the stories that will fit

W. B. Yeats
Who writes a preface to this volume; not the arranger of the tales, and not to be quoted in place of Gregory

HOW TO BEGIN THIS CUCHULAIN

> *"I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago, and I a"*
>
> Lady Gregory's frame

> *"This is the story of the boy deeds of Cuchulain, as it was told by Fergus to Ailell and to Maeve at the time of the war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne. "» THE"*
>
> The boy deeds

Grades 7–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01

A Fair Account, from the Best of the Stories

LADY GREGORY'S FRAME

She has tried to take the best of the stories, or whatever parts of each will fit best to one another, and in that way to give a fair account of Cuchulain's life and death. Name this as her arrangement.

- Keep "fair account" and "the best of the stories." If an apostrophe in a longer span fails, stop at "fair account."
- 7–12.
- Not an unedited cycle.
- Quote Gregory, not only Yeats.

> *"and in that way to give a fair account of"*
>
> Lady Gregory's frame

02

Nothing of My Own That Could Be Helped

LADY GREGORY'S FRAME

I put in nothing of my own that could be helped, only a sentence or so now and again to link the different parts together. She names her own additions as links, and as few as she could help.

- Keep "nothing of my own that could be helped."
- 7–12.
- Honesty about an arrangement.
- Quote this English.

> *"I put in nothing of my own that could be helped, only a sentence or so now and again to link the different parts together. I have"*
>
> Lady Gregory's frame

03

Plain Words, as Mary Sheridan Told Them

LADY GREGORY'S FRAME

I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago, and I a child at Roxborough. The measure of the telling is a nurse's story, remembered.

- Keep "plain and simple words" and "Mary Sheridan."
- 7–12.
- Quote Gregory.
- The 1907 printing of the 1902 book.

> *"I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago, and I a"*
>
> Lady Gregory's frame

04

The Boy Deeds, as Fergus Told Them

A LATER TALE

This is the story of the boy deeds of Cuchulain, as it was told by Fergus to Ailell and to Maeve at the time of the war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne. A clean opening of a tale, after the frame. Do not quote nearby broken OCR.

- Keep "boy deeds," "Fergus," and "Brown Bull of Cuailgne."
- 7–12. Tact in later battle.
- Quote only clean sentences.
- One tale, not the whole book.

> *"This is the story of the boy deeds of Cuchulain, as it was told by Fergus to Ailell and to Maeve at the time of the war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne. "» THE"*
>
> The boy deeds, as framed

05

Gregory, 1902/1907, Not Only Yeats

THE EDITION

Lady Gregory, John Murray, 1902, this file from the 1907 third edition. Yeats writes a preface; quote Gregory. For grades 7–12. Some OCR is broken; quote only clean sentences. An arrangement, not an unedited cycle. Battle: no gore spectacle. One map cannot teach the whole book.

- Name Gregory, and 1902/1907.
- Quote her, not only Yeats.
- 7–12. Tact.
- Plain words, and a fair account.

> *"I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago, and I a"*
>
> Lady Gregory's frame

An arrangement, honestly named

Plain words, as a nurse told them

A fair account of a life and death

A tale framed by Fergus

Battle without spectacle

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 7–12

1. Lady Gregory, 1902, this file from the 1907 John Murray edition. Quote her, not only Yeats's preface. This is her arrangement, not an unedited cycle.
2. She takes the best of the stories, or the parts that fit, to give a fair account of Cuchulain's life and death, and puts in nothing of her own that could be helped.
3. "I have told the whole story in plain and simple words, in the same way my old nurse Mary Sheridan used to be telling stories from the Irish long ago."
4. A later clean opening: the boy deeds, as told by Fergus to Ailell and Maeve, at the war for the Brown Bull of Cuailgne. Some OCR is broken; quote only clean sentences. For grades 7–12. Battle: no gore spectacle.

Quotations are verbatim from the Lady Gregory's English, Internet Archive cu31924072525110 (Cuchulain of Muirthemne, London: John Murray, 1907 edition; Cornell University Library copy), the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/cuchulain-of-muirthemne/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.