CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Overcoat

Nikolai Gogol · *1842 · Unattributed (Everyman's Library, 1918, ed. John Cournos)*

In the department of—but it is better not to mention the department. There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. This English is the story as printed under the title "The Cloak" in Taras Bulba and Other Tales (Everyman's Library, 1918, ed. John Cournos). The translator is not named; do not invent one. Project Gutenberg #1197. For grades 9–12. This story, complete, not the whole volume.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read this Overcoat as what it is—the story printed as "The Cloak" in an unattributed Everyman English of 1918, opening in a department it is better not to name—rather than as a later famous wording, or as the whole Everyman volume?

"In the department of--but it is better not to mention the department. There is"
Opening

The hosted file is this one story, complete as printed under the title "The Cloak" in Taras Bulba and Other Tales (J. M. Dent, Everyman's Library, 1918, edited by John Cournos), Project Gutenberg #1197. The edition does not name the translator; do not invent one. It opens: In the department of—but it is better not to mention the department. There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. Teach that opening, for grades 9–12, in this English. The later pages follow a clerk and a cloak; quote this wording, not a later, more familiar translation. This file is not the whole Everyman volume, and not Claud Field's Mantle and Other Stories (that is the other Gogol map, The Nose). Name the unattributed Everyman English.

KEY CHARACTERS

The nameless department
Which the first sentence refuses to mention

The clerk of the later pages
Who will enter after this official opening, in this English

John Cournos
Editor of the 1918 Everyman volume; not to be named as the translator

HOW TO BEGIN THIS CLOAK

> *"In the department of--but it is better not to mention the department. There is"*
> Opening

> *"There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. Each"*
> Opening

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

01
Better Not to Mention the Department
OPENING

In the department of—but it is better not to mention the department. The story begins by refusing a name.

- Keep the dash and "better not to mention the department," as this file prints it.
- 9–12.
- This English, not a later wording.
- The translator is not named; do not invent one.

> *"In the department of--but it is better not to mention the department. There is"*
> Opening

02
Departments, Regiments, Courts
OPENING

There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. The refusal of a name is already a look at official life.

- Keep the list: departments, regiments, courts of justice.
- 9–12.
- Quote this Everyman English.
- The clerk will enter after this opening.

> *"There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. Each"*
> Opening

03
Printed as "The Cloak"
THE EDITION'S TITLE

The story is printed here under the title "The Cloak." The catalogue calls it The Overcoat. Name both, and quote this file's wording.

- Keep "The Cloak" when you describe this printing.
- 9–12.
- Complete as this story, not as the whole Everyman book.
- Do not import another translation's opening.

> *"In the department of--but it is better not to mention the department. There is"*
> Opening

04
Every Branch of Public Service
OPENING

Each individual attached to them nowadays thinks all society insulted in his person. The official world is already general, and particular, in this English. Keep "insulted in his person."

- Keep "insulted in his person," as this file prints it.
- 9–12.
- Do not import a later wording.
- Quote the unattributed Everyman English.

> *"There is nothing more irritable than departments, regiments, courts of justice, and, in a word, every branch of public service. Each"*
> Opening

05
Everyman, 1918, Translator Unnamed
THE EDITION

Project Gutenberg #1197 is this story as printed in Taras Bulba and Other Tales, Everyman's Library, 1918, edited by John Cournos. The translator is not named; do not invent one. The file is this story, complete, not the whole volume. For grades 9–12. Claud Field's English of The Nose is another hosted Gogol file. Quote this wording, not a later famous translation.

- Name Cournos as editor, not as translator.
- Name "The Cloak" and The Overcoat.
- 9–12.
- A clerk, a cloak, and a department better not named.

> *"In the department of--but it is better not to mention the department. There is"*
> Opening

A department better not named | Official life, in a word | A story printed as "The Cloak" | An unattributed English, honestly named | A clerk, later, and a cloak

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. "In the department of--but it is better not to mention the department." Keep this file's dash and wording; do not swap in a later, more familiar translation.
2. This story is printed here as "The Cloak," in an unattributed Everyman English, 1918, ed. John Cournos, PG #1197. Do not invent a translator.
3. The file is this story, complete, not the whole Everyman volume, and not Claud Field's Nose.
4. For grades 9–12. Quote this English. The later clerk and cloak follow this opening.

Quotations are verbatim from the Unattributed (Everyman's Library, 1918, ed. John Cournos), Project Gutenberg #1197: Taras Bulba and Other Tales (London: J. M. Dent, Everyman's Library, 1918), the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/gogol-the-overcoat/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.