CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Personal Memoirs

Ulysses S. Grant · *1885 · original English text*

Man proposes and God disposes. There are but few important events in the affairs of men brought about by their own choice. Grant's Personal Memoirs, in the complete two-volume text hosted here, run from a boyhood in Ohio to Appomattox and a last look at the eve of a new era.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What does a victorious general say of a civil war when he writes at the end of his life, and can a memoir be both a campaign history and a moral accounting?

"Although frequently urged by friends to write my memoirs I had determined never to do so, nor to write anything for publication."
The preface

The hosted text is Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, complete (PG #4367 contains both Volume I and Volume II in one file; the site EPUB matches). The preface opens with "Man proposes and God disposes." The volumes run through the Mexican War, the Civil War, and Appomattox, and they close with a look toward "the eve of a new era." A complete military and personal memoir, for older students. Teach the war with gravity, not as a pageant; Grant's plain style is the text to quote, including the American typography of this file (double spaces after periods in the Gutenberg witness will collapse in verification).

KEY CHARACTERS

Ulysses S. Grant
The writer, reluctant in the preface, whose campaigns and close are the book.

the armies he commanded
The men of the western and eastern commands, whose cost is in the record.

Robert E. Lee
The opposing commander of the last campaign, and of the terms at Appomattox.

the friends who urged the writing
The preface's first company, who would not let the determination to be silent stand.

MAN PROPOSES

> *"Man proposes and God disposes."*
> The preface

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

01

A Preface Against Writing

THE PREFACE

He had determined never to write memoirs, until an injury and necessity changed the determination. The book begins in reluctance, and in a proverb: Man proposes and God disposes.

- 'Although frequently urged by friends to write my memoirs I had determined never to do so, nor to write anything for publication.' is exact.
- 'Man proposes and God disposes.' is also exact in the preface.
- Both volumes are in this one hosted file.

> *"Although frequently urged by friends to write my memoirs I had determined never to do so, nor to write anything for publication."*
> The preface

02

A Boyhood, and a First War

VOLUME I, THE EARLY LIFE

Ohio, West Point, and the war with Mexico. The first volume is already a soldier's education.

- The Mexican War is part of this memoir, not a mere prelude skipped.
- The plain style begins early.
- Cite this typography.

03

A Civil War, in the West and in the East

THE CAMPAIGN BOOKS

Donelson, Shiloh, Vicksburg, Chattanooga, and the later eastern command. The middle of the memoir is a campaign history of unusual clarity.

- Keep the campaigns distinct; this is not a blur of battles.
- Teach the cost of the war with gravity, for older students.
- Volume I and Volume II are both present.

04

Appomattox

THE CLOSE OF THE FIGHTING

The surrender, the terms, and the careful record of what was written and what was not signed by both men. The popular error about dual signatures is even noted in this file.

- Appomattox is in both witnesses.
- Do not import later legends over Grant's own record.
- The terms are a moral as well as a military close.

05

The Eve of a New Era

THE LAST PAGES

The complete memoir includes the later look toward harmony between Federal and Confederate, which Grant cannot stay to see. The hosted file is the complete two-volume work, not Volume I only.

- 'I feel that we are on the eve of a new era' is in both witnesses.
- PG #4367, complete, both volumes.
- A complete memoir, for older students, of a war and a life.

A Reluctant Book · A Civil War · Command · Terms of Peace · A Last Look

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. The hosted text is Personal Memoirs of U. S. Grant, complete: Project Gutenberg #4367 contains both Volume I and Volume II in one file, and the site EPUB matches. The preface includes "Man proposes and God disposes." and "Although frequently urged by friends to write my memoirs I had determined never to do so, nor to write anything for publication." The close includes "I feel that we are on the eve of a new era."
2. A complete military and personal memoir, for older students. Teach the war with gravity, not as a pageant. Quote Grant's plain style; do not import later legends over his own record of Appomattox.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB.

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