CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Story of My Life

Helen Keller · *1903 · original English text*

It is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life. I have, as it were, a superstitious hesitation in lifting the veil that clings about my childhood like a golden mist. The hosted volume also contains her letters and a supplementary account of her education.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How does a child locked from word and light come into language, and what does it cost to tell that coming without spoiling the first veil of childhood?

"It is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life."
The autobiography, the opening

The hosted text is The Story of My Life by Helen Keller (PG #2397), together with her letters (1887–1901) and a supplementary account of her education by John Albert Macy, including passages from Anne Mansfield Sullivan, plus additional chapters in this special edition. Map the autobiography; flag the letters and the supplementary account; do not quote Macy or the letters as if they were the Story itself. The opening is exact. A complete short life of language restored, excellent for a wide band, including younger readers with guidance; the early illness and the frustration before words should be taught with respect, not as a miracle-tale only.

KEY CHARACTERS

Helen Keller
The writer, who begins her life with a kind of fear, and who comes into language.

Anne Mansfield Sullivan
The teacher of the early chapters; her reports also appear in the supplementary account.

the family in Alabama
The household of the childhood, before and after the teacher comes.

John Albert Macy
The writer of the supplementary account, which is a companion, not the Story.

A KIND OF FEAR

> *"It is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life."*
> The autobiography, the opening

Grades 5–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
A Kind of Fear
THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY, THE OPENING

She begins the history of her life with a kind of fear, and a superstitious hesitation in lifting the veil that clings about her childhood like a golden mist. The first sentence is already a care for what cannot be fully recovered.

- The first sentence is exact in both witnesses.
- This is Keller's own telling, not the later letters.
- Quote this typography.

> *"It is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life."*
> The autobiography, the opening

02
A Silence, and a Teacher
THE EARLY CHAPTERS

The illness, the dark and the still house, and the arrival of a teacher. The pump and the first word, when they come, belong to this movement and must be quoted as Keller writes them.

- Teach the early frustration with respect, not as a mere prelude to a miracle.
- Do not import a later play or film wording over this text.
- A wide band can read this with help.

03
School, and a Wider World
THE LATER AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL CHAPTERS

Learning, books, travel, and the claim of a full education. The short life has a complete autobiographical close before the letters begin.

- The autobiography is the first work in this volume.
- Keep Keller's own sequence.
- Cite this page.

04
The Letters
THE SECOND PART OF THE VOLUME

Letters from 1887–1901 follow in this file. They are a companion, not the Story proper. Flag them, and do not quote them as the autobiography.

- The letters are dated and are a second work in the volume.
- They may help a teacher; they are not the map's main narrative.
- Quote them only if clearly labeled, and only if the stretch is in both witnesses.

05
A Supplementary Account
THE LAST COMPANION

John Albert Macy's supplementary account, with passages from Anne Sullivan, and additional chapters in this special edition, close the file. Map the Story; flag the rest; do not quote Macy as Keller's autobiography.

- PG #2397 is a combined volume; the site EPUB matches.
- A complete short life of language restored, for a wide band.
- Quote the autobiography in stretches that appear in both witnesses.

A Life Begun in Fear · Language · A Teacher · A Childhood Veil · A Combined Volume

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 5–12

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2. The opening is exact: "It is with a kind of fear that I begin to write the history of my life." A complete short life of language restored, excellent for a wide band, including younger readers with guidance. Teach the early illness and the frustration before words with respect, not as a miracle-tale only, and do not import a later play or film wording over this text.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB, and say which part of the volume they come from.