CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Theodore Roosevelt: An Autobiography

Theodore Roosevelt · *1913 · Roosevelt's English*

My grandfather on my father's side was of almost purely Dutch blood. When he was young he still spoke some Dutch. Later: My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness. He would not tolerate in us children selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness. The 1913 autobiography, Project Gutenberg #3335. For grades 9–12. Quote him, not only a later campaign life. Chapter I is boyhood and youth.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Roosevelt's 1913 autobiography as he begins it—with a Dutch grandfather, and then with a father who was the best man he ever knew, who would not tolerate selfishness, cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness?

"My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He"
Chapter I, Boyhood and Youth

Chapter I is Boyhood and Youth. He opens with his grandfather on his father's side, of almost purely Dutch blood, who still spoke some Dutch as a boy, when Dutch was last used in the Dutch Reformed Church in New York. Then he names his father: Theodore Roosevelt was the best man he ever knew. He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness, and would not tolerate in his children selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness. Teach that household, for grades 9–12, before the later public career. Quote the 1913 English, not a later campaign life or a film. The book is long; one map cannot teach it all.

KEY CHARACTERS

Theodore Roosevelt
Who writes this 1913 account of his life, beginning with boyhood and with his father

His grandfather
Of almost purely Dutch blood, who still spoke some Dutch as a boy in New York

His father, Theodore Roosevelt
"The best man I ever knew," who combined strength and courage with gentleness, and would not tolerate untruthfulness

HOW TO BEGIN THIS AUTOBIOGRAPHY

> *"My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He"*
> Chapter I

> *"He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness. He"*
> Chapter I

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

01

A Grandfather of Dutch Blood

CHAPTER I, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

His grandfather on his father's side was of almost purely Dutch blood. The autobiography begins with a family, not with a presidency.

- Keep "almost purely Dutch blood."
- 9–12.
- Quote him, not a later life.
- The later public years are not this first paragraph.

> *"My grandfather on my father's side was of almost purely Dutch blood. When he was"*
> Chapter I, Boyhood and Youth

02

Dutch in the Church in New York

CHAPTER I, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

When the grandfather was young he still spoke some Dutch, and Dutch was last used in the services of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York while he was a small boy. A language and a church are remembered together.

- Keep the Dutch Reformed Church, and New York.
- A small boy's memory, held in the grandson's book.
- 9–12.
- Do not skip the church for the later office only.

> *"When he was young he still spoke some Dutch, and Dutch was last used in the services of the Dutch Reformed Church in New York while he was a small boy. About"*
> Chapter I, Boyhood and Youth

03

The Best Man I Ever Knew

CHAPTER I, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. The name is shared; the praise is a son's, and costly if it is to be lived up to.

- Keep the sentence exact.
- The father is not the president; he is the father.
- 9–12.
- Teach this before later offices.

> *"My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He"*
> Chapter I, Boyhood and Youth

04

Strength, Courage, Gentleness

CHAPTER I, BOYHOOD AND YOUTH

He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness. He would not tolerate in us children selfishness or cruelty, idleness, cowardice, or untruthfulness. A standard is named, for boys and, he later says, for girls alike.

- Keep the paired virtues, and the things not tolerated.
- He later makes the same standard of clean living for the boys as for the girls; if you teach that, quote it.
- 9–12.
- Costly virtue, not a later slogan only.

> *"He combined strength and courage with gentleness, tenderness, and great unselfishness. He"*
> Chapter I, Boyhood and Youth

05

The 1913 Book, and a Long Life

THE EDITION

Project Gutenberg #3335 is the 1913 Autobiography. Chapter I is boyhood and youth; later chapters cover ranch, war, and office. Quote him, not a later campaign life or a film. For grades 9–12. One map cannot teach the whole book.

- Name 1913.
- Start with the household.
- Do not pretend completeness.
- Courage, unselfishness, and truthfulness are his words here.

> *"My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew. He"*
> Chapter I, Boyhood and Youth

A father worth honoring | Strength with gentleness | Truthfulness required | A Dutch church, and a family | Boyhood before office

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 9–12

1. Chapter I is Boyhood and Youth: a Dutch grandfather first, then the father.
2. "My father, Theodore Roosevelt, was the best man I ever knew." Keep the virtues, and the things he would not tolerate.
3. This is the 1913 autobiography, Project Gutenberg #3335. Quote him, not a later campaign life or a film.
4. For grades 9–12. The book is long; one map cannot teach it all.

Quotations are verbatim from the Roosevelt's English, Project Gutenberg #3335, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/theodore-roosevelt-an-autobiography/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.