CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

Wonderful Adventures of Mrs. Seacole in Many Lands

Mary Seacole · *1857 · Seacole's English*

I was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, some time in the present century. As a female, and a widow, she may be well excused giving the precise date; but the century and herself were both young together. She is a Creole, and has good Scotch blood coursing in her veins. Mary Seacole, 1857, Project Gutenberg #23031. For grades 7–12. Quote her, not a later legend only. The later chapters take her through travel, nursing, and the Crimean War.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How should a school read Mrs. Seacole's Wonderful Adventures as her own account—Kingston-born, a Creole widow who will not give the year, and who later goes out to nurse in the Crimea—rather than as a later slogan?

"I was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, some time in the present century. As a female, and a widow"
Chapter I

She opens in Kingston, Jamaica, some time in the present century, and will not give the precise date; the century and herself were both young together, and have grown side by side into age and consequence. She is a Creole, and has good Scotch blood coursing in her veins. Teach that self-naming first. The later chapters carry her through travel, yellow fever, and the Crimean War, where she goes out to nurse and to keep a house for the sick and the worn. For grades 7–12. Quote her 1857 English, not a later campaign leaflet or a film.

KEY CHARACTERS

Mary Seacole
Born in Kingston, a Creole widow, who writes her adventures and later goes out to the Crimea

Her Jamaican household
The first home, and the first school of her doctoring

The sick and the worn in the Crimea
Whom she later goes out to nurse, in her own account

HOW TO BEGIN THESE ADVENTURES

> *"I was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, some time in the present century. As a female, and a widow"*
> Chapter I

> *"I am a Creole, and have good Scotch blood coursing in my veins. My"*
> Chapter I

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

01

Born in Kingston

CHAPTER I

She was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, some time in the present century. The adventures begin with a place and a withheld date.

- Keep "some time in the present century."
- 7–12.
- Quote her, not a later life.
- Jamaica is the first home, not a footnote.

> *"I was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, some time in the present century. As a female, and a widow"*
> Chapter I

02

A Female, and a Widow

CHAPTER I

As a female, and a widow, she may be well excused giving the precise date of this important event. Humor and reserve stand in the first paragraph.

- Keep both "female" and "widow."
- She will not be made to give what she withholds.
- 7–12.
- The tone is hers.

> *"As a female, and a widow, I may be well excused giving the precise date of this important event. But"*
> Chapter I

03

The Century and I Were Young Together

CHAPTER I

She does not mind confessing that the century and herself were both young together, and that they have grown side by side into age and consequence. The life is already a long one when she writes.

- Keep "age and consequence."
- 1857 is the year of the book; she looks back.
- 7–12.
- Not a later rewrite.

> *"But I do not mind confessing that the century and myself were both young together, and that we have grown side by side into age and consequence. I am"*
> Chapter I

04

A Creole, and Scotch Blood

CHAPTER I

I am a Creole, and have good Scotch blood coursing in my veins. She names her parentage in her own words; keep them, and do not replace them with a later label only.

- Keep "Creole" and "good Scotch blood" as she writes them.
- Teach her self-naming before later travels.
- 7–12.
- Do not flatten the book into a slogan.

> *"I am a Creole, and have good Scotch blood coursing in my veins. My"*
> Chapter I

05

Travel, Nursing, and the Crimea

THE LATER CHAPTERS, AND THE EDITION

Project Gutenberg #23031 is the 1857 Wonderful Adventures. After Kingston come travel, sickness, and the Crimean War, where she goes out to nurse and to keep a house for soldiers. Teach that service as she tells it. For grades 7–12. Quote her English, not a later film.

- The Crimea is later in the book; start with Kingston.
- Courage and care, not a spectacle of war.
- Name 1857.
- A life of enterprise and mercy under strain.

> *"I was born in the town of Kingston, in the island of Jamaica, some time in the present century. As a female, and a widow"*
> Chapter I

A named home in Kingston | Courage to go out | Care for the sick | A life told in her own words | Enterprise under strain

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 7–12

1. Kingston first: she withholds the year, and says the century and she were young together.
2. Keep her own words: "I am a Creole, and have good Scotch blood coursing in my veins."
3. The Crimean chapters come later; do not skip the opening, and do not make a spectacle of the war.
4. For grades 7–12. Her 1857 English, not a later slogan or film.

Quotations are verbatim from the Seacole's English, Project Gutenberg #23031, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/wonderful-adventures-of-mrs-seacole/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.