

Christian Reading  
Companion for **50** Classics

A decorative flourish consisting of a curved line with ornate, leaf-like patterns extending downwards and outwards from the bottom of the number 50.



Christian Reading  
Companion for **50** Classics

JAMES P. STOBAUGH



Master  
Books®  
A Division of New Leaf Publishing Group  
[www.masterbooks.net](http://www.masterbooks.net)

First printing: February 2013

Copyright © 2004, 2012 by James Stobaugh. All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission of the publisher, except in the case of brief quotations in articles and reviews. For information write:

Master Books®, P.O. Box 726, Green Forest, AR 72638

Master Books® is a division of the New Leaf Publishing Group, Inc.

ISBN: 978-0-89051-714-7

Library of Congress Number: 2012955095

Cover by Diana Bogardus

Cover photo by Meghan Scholtens

Please consider requesting that a copy of this volume be purchased by your local library system.

**Printed in the United States of America**

Please visit our website for other great titles:

[www.masterbooks.net](http://www.masterbooks.net)

For information regarding author interviews,  
please contact the publicity department at (870) 438-5288



## **Acknowledgments**

I wish to thank the New Leaf Publishing Group staff. Most of all, I want to thank my best friend and editor, my wife, Karen. “Come, let us glorify the Lord and praise his name forever” (cf. Psalm 34:3).

# Contents

How to Use This Book .....	9
Classics for the Student	
1. <i>Agamemnon</i> , Aeschylus.....	11
2. <i>The Autobiography of Benjamin Franklin</i> , Benjamin Franklin .....	14
3. <i>Black Beauty</i> , Anna Sewell .....	18
4. <i>The Bridge of San Luis Rey</i> , Thornton Wilder.....	21
5. <i>The Chosen</i> , Chaim Potok .....	24
6. <i>Daisy Miller</i> , Henry James .....	26
7. <i>David Copperfield</i> , Charles Dickens .....	29
8. <i>The Faerie Queene</i> , Edmund Spenser .....	32
9. <i>Giants in the Earth</i> , O.E. Rølvaag.....	34
10. <i>The Great Gatsby</i> , F. Scott Fitzgerald .....	36
11. <i>Hard Times</i> , Charles Dickens.....	39
12. <i>The Hiding Place</i> , Corrie ten Boom with John and Elizabeth Sherrill .....	42
13. <i>The Hound of the Baskervilles</i> , Arthur Conan Doyle.....	45
14. <i>The House of the Seven Gables</i> , Nathaniel Hawthorne .....	48
15. <i>Intruder in the Dust</i> , William Faulkner .....	51
16. <i>The Invisible Man</i> , H.G. Wells.....	54
17. <i>Jane Eyre</i> , Charlotte Brontë.....	57
18. “Julius Caesar,” William Shakespeare .....	60
19. <i>The Jungle</i> , Upton Sinclair .....	63
20. <i>Kidnapped</i> , Robert Louis Stevenson .....	66
21. <i>Little Women</i> , Louisa May Alcott .....	69
22. <i>Madame Bovary</i> , Gustave Flaubert.....	72
23. <i>The Merry Adventures of Robin Hood</i> , Howard Pyle .....	75
24. <i>Middlemarch</i> , George Eliot .....	79
25. <i>Les Misérables</i> , Victor Hugo.....	82
26. <i>Moby Dick</i> , Herman Melville.....	85
27. <i>My Antonia</i> , Willa Cather .....	89

28.	<i>Old Indian Legends</i> , Zitkala-`Sa .....	91
29.	<i>The Old Man and the Boy</i> , Robert Ruark .....	94
30.	<i>Oliver Twist</i> , Charles Dickens .....	97
31.	<i>The Pearl</i> , John Steinbeck .....	101
32.	<i>The Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant</i> , Ulysses S. Grant.....	103
33.	<i>The Prince</i> , Niccolò Machiavelli .....	107
34.	<i>The Princess and the Goblin</i> , George MacDonald .....	110
35.	“Pygmalion,” George Bernard Shaw .....	113
36.	“A Raisin in the Sun,” Lorraine Hansberry .....	115
37.	<i>The Return of the Native</i> , Thomas Hardy .....	117
38.	“Romeo and Juliet,” William Shakespeare .....	120
39.	<i>Sister Carrie</i> , Theodore Dreiser .....	123
40.	<i>The Song of Roland</i> , Turoldus (?) .....	126
41.	<i>The Three Musketeers</i> , Alexandre Dumas.....	128
42.	<i>20,000 Leagues Under the Sea</i> , Jules Verne.....	130
43.	<i>Two Years Before the Mast</i> , Henry Dana .....	132
44.	<i>Uncle Remus and Brer Rabbit</i> , Joel Chandler Harris .....	134
45.	<i>Up from Slavery</i> , Booker T. Washington .....	137
46.	<i>Utopia</i> , Sir Thomas More .....	141
47.	<i>Walden</i> , Henry David Thoreau.....	143
48.	<i>Watership Down</i> , Richard Adams .....	147
49.	<i>White Fang</i> , Jack London .....	149
50.	<i>Wuthering Heights</i> , Emily Brontë.....	151
	Aids for the Teacher .....	155
	General Sources .....	276
	Books for Age Groups.....	278
	Glossary of Literary Terms.....	280
	Biographies of Authors .....	283
	About the Author .....	295



## *How to Use This Book*

For several years I have wished to write an omnibus companion to the classics. Their reclamation into American rhetoric is critical to our success as a civilization.

This companion is neither a substitute for an English course nor an exhaustive list of classics in general. It does not presume to be anything other than a cursory overview of 50 classics. The reader, with justification, could take this author to task for his selections. No doubt many good books are left out; nonetheless, perhaps this paltry offering will help some teachers become better instructors of at least these timeless chosen pieces.

Again, while this whole-book companion would be a helpful addition to an anthology-driven curriculum, it is not meant to be a replacement for a full-fledged English course. It would, however, be a helpful introduction to the discussions found in my American, British, and World Literature curriculum mentioned in the back of this volume. Also, most young people, while pursuing a regimented reading program, appreciate a guide to superior classics, however incomplete.

This author has categorized the books according to age groups and maturity. However, it is wise and judicious for teachers to examine closely the books involved and individualize their selections according to the ability and maturation of their specific students. One can select any book in any order they wish, or read through the selections chapter-by-chapter.

For every book title there is a short description of the book, several objective questions, several vocabulary gleanings from the text, and challenging discussion questions. The student chapters are in the first part of the volume, and the teacher chapters are in the last part. The objective test portions are available as a free download for classroom use at [nlpg.com/50classicsaids](http://nlpg.com/50classicsaids). The majority of these books are available at local

libraries or as free downloads at the Online Books Page ([onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/lists.html](http://onlinebooks.library.upenn.edu/lists.html)), Bartleby ([www.bartleby.com/](http://www.bartleby.com/)), or Project Gutenberg ([www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main\\_Page](http://www.gutenberg.org/wiki/Main_Page), which also has many free audio downloads available as well).

My prayer is that this book will encourage thoughtful Christians to be taking every thought captive to the gospel (see 2 Corinthians 10:4) and, like the Apostles, to be turning the world upside-down (Acts 17:6).

# 1

## *Agamemnon*

Aeschylus



Not much is known about Aeschylus, the first of the three great masters of Greek tragedy. We know that he was born at Eleusis, near Athens, in 525 B.C., the son of Euphorion. *Agamemnon* is one of three tragedies on the same topic. The three tragedies are called the Oresteia Trilogy.

In 458 B.C., Agamemnon returns to Argos from the Trojan War and is killed by his wife, Clytemnestra, and his first cousin Aegisthus. The Oresteia Trilogy, then, is a study in justice. With all its vivid, groundbreaking language and its universal popularity, it was the Star Wars Trilogy of its age.

### Objective Test

- \_\_\_\_\_ Agamemnon begins with (A) a guard waiting for a signal announcing the fall of Troy to the Greek armies, (B) a recapitulation of the fall of Troy, or (C) the death of Aeneas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ A beacon flashes, and he joyfully runs to tell the news to (A) Hector, (B) Apollinus, or (C) Queen Clytemnestra.
- \_\_\_\_\_ When he is gone, the Chorus — made up of (A) the old men of Argos, (B) widows of fallen soldiers, or (C) the gods — enters and tells the story of how the Trojan prince Paris stole Helen, the wife of the Greek king Menelaus, leading to ten years of war between Greece and Troy.

- \_\_\_\_\_ Then the Chorus recalls how — to obtain a favorable wind for the Greek fleet — (A) Clytemnestra's husband, Agamemnon (Menelaus's brother) sacrificed their son to the goddess Artemis, (B) Clytemnestra's husband, Agamemnon (Menelaus's brother), sacrificed their daughter to the goddess Artemis, or (C) Clytemnestra's husband, Agamemnon (Menelaus' brother), sacrificed their daughter to the god Zeus.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Clytemnestra (A) murders her husband, (B) throws a party to honor her husband, or (C) kills Paris.

### Suggested Vocabulary Words

A. Thus upon mine unrestful couch I lie, Bathed with the dews of night, unvisited / By dreams — ah me! — for in the place of sleep / Stands Fear as my familiar, and repels / The soft repose that would mine eyelids seal. / And if at whiles, for the lost balm of sleep, I medicine my soul with melody / Of trill or song — anon to tears I turn, Wailing the woe that broods upon this home, / Not now by honour guided as of old. (lines 16–24)

B. And so he steeled his heart — ah, well-a-day — Aiding a war for one false woman's sake, / His child to slay, / And with her spilt blood make / An offering, to speed the ships upon their way! / Lusting for war, the bloody arbiters / Closed heart and ears, and would nor hear nor heed / The girl-voice plead, Pity me, Father! nor her prayers, Nor tender, virgin years. (lines 268–274)

C. Shamed, silent, unreproachful, stretching hands / That find her not, and sees, yet will not see, That she is far away! / And his sad fancy, yearning o'er the sea, Shall summon and recall / Her wraith, once more to queen it in his hall. And sad with many memories, / The fair cold beauty of each sculptured face — And all to hatefulness is turned their grace, / Seen blankly by forlorn and hungering eyes! And when the night is deep, Come visions, sweet and sad, and bearing pain (lines 486–498)

D. Lastly, whate'er be due to men or gods, / With joint debate, in public council held, We will decide, and warily contrive / That all which now is well may so abide: / For that which haply needs the healer's art,

That will we medicine, discerning well / If cautery or knife befit the time.  
(Lines 980–984)

### **Discussion Questions**

A. Is Clytemnestra's murder of her husband justified?

B. Although Shakespeare's tragedies employ some comic relief, Greek tragedies are altogether tragic: every event leads the characters toward imminent disaster. Discuss how Aeschylus accomplishes this.

C. What function does Aegisthus's character have in the play?