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XII

Marcel Proust

The Fugitive

Read by **Neville Jason**

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST • 6

CD 1

1	The Fugitive: Chapter One	14:50
2	No doubt I had not ventured to interpret...	14:44
3	When I vowed to myself that Albertine would...	12:54
4	To carnal pleasure I did not even give a thought...	10:27
5	Knowing that Saint-Loup was in Paris I had sent for him...	13:28
6	By an inverse gymnastic, I who had made a mental effort...	11:33

Total time on CD 1: 78:00

CD 2

1	But as soon as they had gone, the head...	11:16
2	I thought of Albertine all the time and never was...	13:11
3	Since Manon returned to Des Grieux...	12:21
4	No doubt, just as I had said in the past to Albertine...	13:47
5	Time passes, and gradually everything that we have said...	14:35
6	I was during these days so incapable of forming any picture...	12:58

Total time on CD 2: 78:11

CD 3

1	I remained speechless with astonishment...	13:44
2	The suppression of suffering?	14:03
3	I asked Françoise the time.	11:44
4	No doubt these nights that are so short...	14:57
5	How could she have seemed dead to me when now...	11:35
6	Sometimes I came in collision in the dark lanes...	12:24

Total time on CD 3: 78:30

CD 4

1	And I then felt, with an intense pity for her...	9:49
2	How she used to hasten to see me at Balbec...	14:34
3	I had thought that my social relations, my wealth...	15:08
4	At any rate I was glad that, before she died...	14:54
5	Besides, from a single fact, if it is certain...	11:51
6	No doubt it was because in that silent and deliberate arrival...	11:46

Total time on CD 4: 78:07

CD 5

1	I tried not to think of anything, to take up a newspaper.	10:23
2	I had indeed suffered at Balbec when Albertine...	13:28
5	At the moment in which the good Albertine had returned...	13:29
4	The person that I had been so short a time ago...	14:24
5	Often this memory that Albertine was dead was combined...	11:39
6	No doubt an incident such as this of the Buttes-Chaumont...	14:46

Total time on CD 5: 78:12

CD 6

1	'Apart from the fact that not for anything in the world...'	11:26
2	Associated now with the memory of my love...	15:27
3	Chapter Two	13:27
4	A few days later, however, as I was coming home...	13:01
5	A moment before Françoise brought me the telegram...	10:50
6	I saw thus at that same hour, for so many people...	14:06

Total time on CD 6: 78:21

CD 7

1	The politicians had not been wrong in thinking that...	12:00
2	Certain women who were old friends of Swann...	12:29
3	Gilberte recognised the drawings.	12:26
4	Notwithstanding this, in her snobbishness...	14:22
5	The illusions of paternal affection are perhaps no less...	14:51
6	Well, the next day, which was my mother's at-home day...	11:52

Total time on CD 7: 78:05

CD 8

1	It is precisely the same. For the woman...	13:35
2	On the other hand, Albertine and Andrée...	11:54
3	'Did those excursions to the Buttes-Chaumont...'	15:32
4	Albeit I was not exactly a man of that category...	13:26
5	Some time later, when I attended the first performances...	6:36
6	Chapter Three	8:06
7	And as I went indoors to join my mother who had left the window...	8:33

Total time on CD 8: 77:47

CD 9

1	Notwithstanding his contempt, the waiter was...	14:33
2	The Prince, to put the Marquis at his ease...	12:01
3	Thus for instance one evening a letter from...	13:23
4	What she might or might not have done with Andrée...	12:19
5	The sun continued to sink. My mother must be nearing...	14:08
6	Chapter Four	12:05

Total time on CD 9: 78:34

CD 10

1	Can't you imagine how it would have amused her...	10:12
2	Other friends of my mother who had met Saint-Loup...	13:49
3	These two marriages which I had already begun to discuss...	15:12
4	The person who profited least by these two marriages...	12:55
5	I gathered that Robert and his wife had been on...	14:59
6	One fine day she had changed her tune, the son-in-law...	10:48

Total time on CD 10: 77:59

CD 11

- | | | |
|---|--|-------|
| 1 | The doubt that Aimé's words had left in my mind... | 10:55 |
| 2 | 'And the second time,' Gilberte went on... | 9:24 |

Total time on CD 11: 20:21

Total time on CDs 1–11: 13:22:07

Marcel Proust

(1871–1922)

The Fugitive

The critic André Maurois described Proust's *Remembrance of Things Past* as 'one of the greatest works of the imagination of all time'.

The literal translation of the work's French title, 'In Search of Lost Time', contains within it a clue to the creation of this monumental work of biographical fiction. Having wasted time living a dilettante existence in the fashionable world, Proust, in middle age, decided to re-dedicate his life to art, and to attempt at last to achieve the great work of which he knew himself capable.

Remembrance of Things Past was his chance to justify his life, and to cheat death through an act of artistic creation. It was the means he would use to conquer time through recreating his lost years. Memory was the material with which he would weave the magic cord to be launched into infinity; that cord which now binds us to

him, and stretches forward into the future, linking his genius to unborn generations.

The Author

Marcel Proust was born on 10 July, 1871. His father, a distinguished professor of medicine, was from a Catholic family, while his mother was Jewish. Although convinced from an early age of his calling as a writer, Proust was riddled with self-doubt and wrote relatively little at the beginning of his career.

During his twenties, he co-founded a short-lived review, *Le Banquet*; contributed to another literary publication, *La Revue Blanche*; and in 1896 had his first book published, a collection of essays entitled *Les Plaisirs et Les Jours*.

He became an enthusiastic admirer of Ruskin and translated his *Bible of Amiens* and *Sesame and Lilies* into French.

A novel, *Jean Santeuil*, which was the precursor of *Remembrance of Things Past*, was abandoned, and eventually published long after Proust's death, in 1954.

For much of his youth Proust led the life of a man-about-town, frequenting fashionable Paris drawing rooms and literary salons, which were to form the background of a number of his early stories and sketches, and subsequently of *Remembrance of Things Past*.

The death of his adored mother in 1905 resulted in a nervous collapse and aggravated his chronic asthma and insomnia. But, despite his grief and the sense of loss, from which he never recovered, his mother's death freed him with regard to his homosexual way of life, and allowed him to address same-sex love in his writing, albeit in a form which treated such experiences as happening to others rather than to himself.

In 1907 he moved into an apartment in the Boulevard Haussmann where, in the bedroom which he had had lined with cork to keep out noise, he embarked upon his great work *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (Remembrance of Things Past). In

it the minuteness of his observation, the depth of his psychological understanding, and the vividness of his descriptive powers combined to create one of the most poetic and magical works in all literature.

Publication of *Remembrance of Things Past*

This long autobiographical cycle was originally published in eight sections: *Du Côté de Chez Swann* (Swann's Way) in 1913; *A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs* (Within a Budding Grove) in 1918; *Le Côté de Guermantes I* (The Guermantes Way I) in 1920; *Le Côté de Guermantes II* and *Sodom et Gomorrhe I* (Cities of the Plain I) in 1921; *Sodom et Gomorrhe II* in 1922; *La Prisonnière* (The Captive) in 1923; *Albertine Disparue* (The Sweet Cheat Gone/The Fugitive) in 1925 and *Le Temps Retrouvé* (Time Regained) in 1927.

Proust was obliged to publish *Swann's Way* at his own expense, and even after it had appeared, had trouble finding a publisher for the next part, *A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs*. However, when it appeared in 1918 it received considerable

acclaim, and was awarded the Prix Goncourt the following year.

By the time Proust died, on 18 November, 1922, the first four parts of the cycle had been published, leaving the others to appear posthumously.

The Fugitive

The Fugitive opens with Marcel astonished at the intensity of his mental agony following Albertine's sudden departure. 'How little we know ourselves,' he observes, having never dreamed how desperately he needed Albertine for his peace of mind and happiness.

Unlike more conventional novels, *Remembrance of Things Past* does not depend on its narrative to ensure the continuation of the reader's interest. Events themselves are less compelling than the poetic descriptions and philosophical observations to which they give rise. That said, *The Fugitive* contains one of the most unexpected and shocking occurrences in the novel: the death of Albertine. But even here, the accident itself happens offstage in the manner of a Greek tragedy, and it is

the author's penetrating observations on the process of grief and mourning which result from that event, that provide the major content of the book.

From the moment Françoise announces 'Mademoiselle Albertine has gone!', we follow the development of the Narrator's emotional states: his initial shock, his astonishment at the power of his feelings, the realisation of how much he has depended on Albertine's presence and how he has avoided acknowledging the signs of her unhappiness and frustration. He lets us see his attempts at self-deception, the 'double-think' which enables him to bear his pain. And at each stage that pain becomes more unbearable: first when he realises Albertine has gone, next when he accepts that she may not come back, and finally when he knows that death has prevented her from returning ever again. And even when she is dead his jealousy persists, and he continues to torture himself by seeking to discover explicit details of her sexual adventures.

Proust's deep understanding of the human soul and his ability to describe

his own thoughts and feelings with unparalleled truthfulness and courage enable us to recognise the universality of his experience. His insightful analysis of his inner world and his ability to speak without equivocation, to show himself at his most vulnerable, touches us deeply.

But despite Proust's literary honesty, the social climate in which he lived forced certain restrictions on him. Society demanded that any lifestyle, especially homosexuality, which deviated from what was considered acceptable, had to be discreet and hidden from view. The fate of Oscar Wilde loomed as a warning to those who ignored the rules. Proust was not one to flout society. On the contrary, in his youth he had made strenuous efforts to be accepted in the right circles. It was not until after the death of his mother that he was able to indulge his homosexual tendencies, although even then he was never able to live openly as a homosexual.

Proust remarked that as a writer one can say anything providing one does not say 'I', and although *Remembrance of Things Past* is written in the first person, Proust contrived to remain incognito. He

denied publicly that the Narrator was intended to be himself (he writes of 'the "I" who is not "I"', although at one point he teasingly suggests that we call the Narrator 'Marcel') and the Narrator's two great loves, Albertine and Gilberte, are women, although their originals have been identified as male. The device of attributing homosexuality to other characters enabled him to discuss the subject freely without implicating himself.

Proust repudiated accusations by his friends that he had portrayed them, insisting that each character is based not on one, but on many originals. However, it is clear that some characters are modelled more closely than others on a single person. It is generally accepted that the main original of Albertine, by sexual transposition, was a young Monegasque, Alfred Agostinelli, who worked initially as Proust's chauffeur and later as his secretary.

Although over time there were several young men engaged by Proust in the capacity of secretary, who lived in his apartment and became 'Captives' as a result of his possessive nature, it was

Agostinelli whose tragic death in a plane crash, so closely echoed in Albertine's riding accident, resulted in the deep grief Proust describes so movingly.

In correspondence, Proust referred to Agostinelli as 'an extraordinary being', adding, 'I don't know how I can endure such grief.' Proust used the events of his life more directly than many authors as raw material for his work, and it was Agostinelli's death which was to inspire him to create out of his suffering the enduring monument which is *The Fugitive*.

The Life and Work of Marcel Proust

To avoid any confusion, it may be helpful to point out that Proust's great work, *À La Recherche du Temps Perdu*, was originally translated into English by Charles K. Scott-Moncrieff and published in 1922 under the title, *Remembrance of Things Past*. It was subsequently re-translated by Terence Kilmartin and appeared in 1981 as *In Search of Lost Time*. In 2002 a new edition appeared under the same title, with each volume assigned to a different translator. The Naxos AudioBooks recordings use the

Scott-Moncrieff text and, in references to the work, I use Scott-Moncrieff's title.

My own contact with Proust began when, as a 17-year-old schoolboy, I first read *Swann's Way*. I could not have guessed then that, many years into the future, Proust would take over my life to such an extent. Over a six year period during the 1990s, I abridged and recorded *Remembrance of Things Past* for Naxos Audiobooks, for whom I have now recorded this entire, uncut text.

When I was asked to write *The Life and Work of Marcel Proust* (see www.naxosaudiobooks.com), it occurred to me that, although the people on whom Proust based his characters were no longer living, the places he wrote about were still there, and so I travelled to France to see them.

I was delighted to discover that Illiers, where Marcel Proust spent his holidays as a child, and which figures in the book as Combray, is now marked on maps and road signs as Illiers-Combray, in official recognition of the reason for this sleepy village's wider fame.

In a narrow street just off the market

square in Illiers-Combray is the house in which Proust's father, Adrien Proust, was born, and further along is the house of his aunt Élisabeth, now a Proust museum, where Élisabeth's fictional counterpart, the bedridden Aunt Léonie, watched the world go by from her bedroom window. Around the corner from the house is a little boulangerie with a sign in the window announcing proudly: 'This is where Aunt Léonie bought her madeleines'. It only occurs to me as I buy a packet of the scallop-shaped cakes, that Aunt Léonie is a creature of fiction. Never mind, Aunt Élisabeth might well have patronised the establishment, or one very like it. Up the hill there is a real house called Tansonville, the name of the house occupied by Charles Swann, and later by his daughter Gilberte and her husband Robert de Saint-Loup, and further on there is a real village called Méréglise, a name almost identical to the fictional Méséglise.

Water lilies are still reflected in the glassy surface of the river Loir, which in the book bears the more poetic name the Vivonne, and beyond the stream lies the Pré Catalan, the enchanting park created

by Proust's horticulturally minded Uncle Jules. From Illiers I travelled on to Cabourg, a seaside resort on the Normandy coast, the original of the fictional Balbec. Here I found the Grand Hotel in all its Edwardian splendour. It was rebuilt after Proust spent holidays there as a child, but he returned as an adult, and sections of *Remembrance of Things Past* were written beneath its roof. As in *Within a Budding Grove*, the great glass windows of the restaurant look out over the promenade to the beach below, and with a little imagination, that group of budding young girls in bikinis is transformed into the little band of 'jeunes filles en fleurs' outlined against the sea.

I travelled on to Paris, visiting 102 Boulevard Haussmann, Proust's home for many years, where he wrote so much of *Remembrance of Things Past*. The building is still owned by the same bank that purchased it from Proust's aunt, when her inconsiderate decision to sell it forced him to move. His bedroom is still there, but unfurnished, and to see the room as it was, one is obliged to visit the Musée Carnavalet, where his bed, chaise-longue and other effects are displayed in a recon-

struction of the famous cork-lined room.

A walk to the gardens of the Champs Élysées brought me to an area with a sign announcing that I am in the Allée Marcel Proust. Children chase each other – perhaps playing the modern equivalent of ‘prisoners base’, the game played by Gilberte and her friends. This is where the real Marcel played as a child with the real Marie de Benardaky, with whom he fell in love, just as the fictional Marcel falls in love with the fictional Gilberte Swann.

In the real world the same spaces are occupied now by different people. Time has moved on, but places remain, and we have the privilege of being present in not only the imaginary world Proust created, but that portion of the real world which had a part in its creation. His presence has left behind a trace of magic, and we see places differently, because we see them through his eyes. One day those places will have crumbled into dust, as will we ourselves, and the space we now consider ours will be occupied by others. But as long as civilisation remains, those who come after us will be able to share Proust’s vision and enter his world. Proust

was aware that art is the only true reality and that through his creations the artist continues to live after his death, beyond space and beyond time.

Notes by Neville Jason



Marcel Proust (right) and his younger brother Robert, c. 1877

A Proust Chronology

1871, July 10	Marcel Proust born
1873, May 24	Robert Proust born
1878–1886	holiday visits to Illiers (now Illiers-Combray)
1880, spring	Marcel's first attack of asthma
1882–1888	attends the Lycée Condorcet
1888	contributed to <i>La Revue Lilas</i> and <i>La Revue Verte</i>
1889–1890	military service at Orléans
1890, January 3	death of maternal grandmother, Adèle Weil
1890, August	holiday at Cabourg
1890, November	enrols as a student in the Faculty of Law and at the Ecole Libre des Sciences Politiques
1890, November – 1891, September	contributes to <i>Le Mensuel</i>
1892, March	first edition of <i>Le Banquet</i>
1893, March	last edition of <i>Le Banquet</i>
1893, April 13	meets Comte Robert de Montesquiou-Fezensac
1893	contributes to <i>La Revue Blanche</i> ; degree in law

1894, May 22	meets Reynaldo Hahn
1894, December	trial of Captain Alfred Dreyfus
1895, March	degree in philosophy
1895, summer	holiday in Brittany with Reynaldo Hahn
1896	publication of <i>Les Plaisirs et Les Jours</i> ; writing <i>Jean Santeuil</i>
1897, February 6	duel with Jean Lorrain
1898, January 13	Emile Zola's article <i>J'Accuse</i> published
1899	begins translation of Ruskin's <i>Our Fathers Have Told Us (La Bible d'Amiens)</i>
1899, summer	holiday at Evian-les-Bains, visits the Brancovan family at Amphion
1900, June and October	visits Venice
1902	abandons work on <i>Jean Santeuil</i>
1903, November 26	death of Adrien Proust
1904	publication of <i>La Bible d'Amiens</i>

1905, September 26	death of Jeanne Proust
1906, June	publication of <i>Sesame and Lilies</i> (<i>Sésame et les Lys</i>)
1906, July	Dreyfus declared innocent
1906, December	moves to 102 Boulevard Haussmann
1907, summer	holiday at Cabourg, where he will spend the next seven summers. Meets Alfred Agostinelli
1908–09	begins writing <i>À la Recherche du Temps Perdu</i>
1913	Agostinelli re-enters Proust's life. Employs Celeste Albaret
1913, November	<i>Du Côté de Chez Swann</i> (<i>Swann's Way</i>) published
1914, May 30	Alfred Agostinelli dies in an aircraft accident
1918, June	publication of <i>A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs</i> (<i>Within a Budding Grove</i>), <i>Pastiches et Melanges</i> and new edition of <i>Swann's Way</i>
1919, June	moves to 8, rue Laurent-Pichat
1919, December	<i>Within a Budding Grove</i> awarded the Prix Goncourt

1920, October	moves to 44, rue Hamelin
1920, October	<i>Le Côté de Guermantes I</i> (The Guermantes Way I) published
1920, April	<i>Le Côté de Guermantes II</i> and <i>Sodom et Gomorrhe I</i> (Cities of the Plain I) published
1921, December 11	death of Montesquiou
1922, April	<i>Sodom et Gomorrhe II</i> published
1922, October	awarded the Légion d'Honneur
1922, November 18	death of Marcel Proust
1923	<i>La Prisonnière</i> (<i>The Captive</i>) published
1925	<i>Albertine Disparue</i> (<i>The Fugitive/The Sweet Cheat Gone</i>) published
1952	<i>Jean Santeuil</i> published
1954	<i>Contre Sainte-Beuve</i> (<i>Against Sainte-Beuve</i>) published



Neville Jason trained at RADA where he was awarded the diction prize by Sir John Gielgud. His first appearance in the theatre was in Peter Brook's production of *Titus Andronicus* starring Laurence Olivier and Vivien Leigh. He is a former member of the Old Vic Company, the English Stage Company, the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Birmingham Repertory Company. Roles include John Worthing in *The Importance of Being Ernest*, Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, Christian in *Cyrano de Bergerac* and Robert Browning in *Robert and Elizabeth*. He is a trained singer and has

appeared in numerous musicals including *The Great Waltz*, *1776*, *Ambassador*, *Lock Up Your Daughters*, *Kiss Me Kate*, *Irma La Douce*, *Robert and Elizabeth* and *Mutiny*.

Television appearances include *Maigret*, *Dr Who* (The Androids of Tara), *Hamlet* (Horatio), *Crime and Punishment* (Zamyatov), *Emergency Ward Ten*, *Dixon of Dock Green*, *When the Boat Comes In*, *Angels*, *Minder*, *Dempsey and Makepeace*, *The Richest Woman in the World*, *The Dancing Years*, *The Magic Barrel* and *Windmill Near a Frontier*. Films include *From Russia with Love* and *The Message*. He has been a member of the BBC Radio Drama Company three times, and may be heard in radio plays, documentaries and arts programmes. For Naxos AudioBooks his readings include Vasari's *Lives of the Great Artists*, *Freud*, *War and Peace*, *Gulliver's Travels*, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, *Favourite Essays*, *The Once and Future King*, *Evgenii Onegin*, *Wessex Tales* and *Remembrance of Things Past*, both unabridged and abridged. He plays Antonio in *The Tempest*, and has directed productions of *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Hamlet* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. As a director he was awarded Talkies awards for *Great Expectations* and *Poets of the Great War*. As a reader he won AudioFile Earphone awards for *The Captive*, *Time Regained*, *The Once and Future King* and *War and Peace* (Best Audiobooks of the Year 2007 and 2009).

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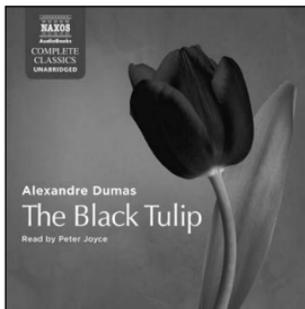
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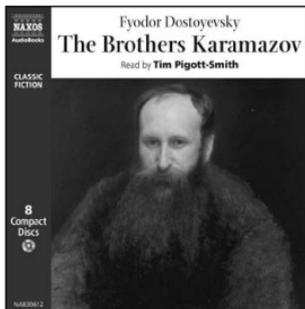
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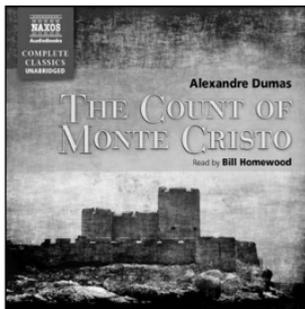
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