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Marcel Proust **Time
Regained**

Read by **Neville Jason**

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST • 7

CD 1

1	Time Regained: Chapter One	4:47
2	Robert came several times to Tansonville while I was there.	5:55
3	Françoise, who had already seen...	5:46
4	One day when Robert was due to come to Tansonville...	5:22
5	As for that love he kept talking to me about...	4:13
6	Once Robert had gone off again...	5:26
7	It occurred to me that it was because Robert had...	6:11
8	'The day before yesterday...'	5:46
9	'You Westerners find that impossible to understand...'	4:58
10	When I spoke to Verdurin of the subtle pleasure...	5:46
11	'Yes, I give you my word...'	4:39
12	Hearing this, Doctor Cottard...	3:39
13	I stopped there...	5:40
14	The result of this was...	4:29
15	Thus it was that the Goncourts' journal had revealed to me...	4:47

Total Time on CD 1: 77:29

CD 2

1	I had realised earlier that it is not the most witty...	5:25
2	Chapter Two	4:26
3	'The sadness of the present moment, it is true...'	5:00
4	Saint-Euverte's salon had a faded image...	6:16
5	M. Bontemps would not hear of peace...	5:38
6	Now Morel ought not to have been there...	4:53
7	These words, which would have injured...	6:42
8	Before the time when the afternoon teas came to an end...	5:16
9	The silhouettes of the trees were reflected sharply...	4:58
10	'Have you heard,' he asked me as he left...	6:11
11	Bloch left us at the door of his house...	5:31
12	Robert (who at the time seemed to me much more a Saint-Loup...)	5:50
13	No doubt the boy was fed up with going up...	5:49
14	One might have thought that I was the only person...	6:04

Total Time on CD 2: 78:07

CD 3

1	Whether the German staff officers had indeed behaved well...	5:47
2	It was no good the general telling the man...	4:51
3	'In a word, Gilberte now believed...'	4:12
4	When Saint-Loup had come into my room...	5:39
5	In certain respects the comparison was not a false one.	6:03
6	Later he was to say to me...	7:03
7	While recalling Saint-Loup's visit...	4:54
8	One might say that in his case...	6:10
9	And thinking probably...	5:08
10	Thus it was that when seeking to hurt the baron...	6:31
11	However, even if M. de Charlus and Mme Verdurin...	6:05
12	However, just as there are animals' bodies and human bodies...	6:14
13	M. de Charlus went further...	7:14

Total Time on CD 3: 75:56

CD 4

1	For M. de Charlus, therefore...	5:00
2	The war was going on for ever...	6:35
3	'It's a strange thing too,' M. de Charlus added...	5:27
4	The Duc de Guermentes' opinions had quickly changed.	5:11
5	It's quite obvious that those peoples...	4:11
6	And since M. de Charlus began to be extraordinarily childish...	6:44
7	M. de Charlus was right about that.	6:05
8	So it was that journalism...	4:43
9	Her fury with Brichot increased all the more...	4:33
10	'I don't know, old chap,' M. de Charlus went on...	7:07
11	'The symbol of it,' I replied.	5:21
12	I would be very surprised...	6:34
13	'You must admit that would be very funny,' he said.	4:46
14	What is more, M. de Charlus literally did not know which way to turn...	5:49

Total Time on CD 4: 78:11

CD 5

1	The night was just as lovely as it had been in 1914...	5:52
2	At this point the violinist...	5:52
3	I then understood Morel's fear.	4:05
4	'I admire all the heroes in this war,' he said.	5:06
5	It was a transparent night...	4:51
6	Something did strike me, though...	5:10
7	'It's amazing the boss isn't back...'	5:58
8	The oldest member of the group...	5:19
9	All at once the door opened and someone entered...	4:59
10	The baron even felt slightly resentful towards Jupien...	4:57
11	A relationship with a woman one loves...	5:52
12	I made my way downstairs...	5:30
13	However, it was no good his suggesting...	4:48
14	He anyway had no other room to offer me.	5:36
15	'I don't doubt for a single moment...'	4:27

Total Time on CD 5: 78:30

CD 6

1	It was no good the young man...	4:50
2	'Apparently he's got a million francs a day to burn through.'	6:04
3	'The main reason I did that,' added Jupien...	5:48
4	Jupien appeared to be very troubled by what I had said...	6:13
5	The moment the alarm had sounded...	5:16
6	Nonetheless the darkness went on...	5:43
7	As for M. de Charlus...	5:26
8	Now, aberrations are like love affairs...	5:24
9	I advised Françoise and the butler to go and get some sleep.	6:44
10	Françoise was all the more troubled by these remarks...	5:28
11	Every morning at six o' clock...	4:20
12	I recalled his arrival that first time at Balbec...	4:57
13	Françoise received the news...	6:29
14	He must have been really magnificent in those final hours.	5:33

Total Time on CD 6: 78:22

CD 7

1	If not through his death...	6:17
2	Chapter Three	4:38
3	My long absence from Paris...	6:03
4	For me there was one good thing at least...	5:02
5	The most moving thing, though...	4:14
6	Mme de Saint-Euverte's snobbery...	5:52
7	At that moment the Duchesse de Létourville...	6:08
8	I need not add...	4:57
9	Turning the sad thoughts I was mentioning a moment ago...	4:37
10	While asking myself this question...	4:33
11	The piece of music being played...	5:51
12	I glossed swiftly over all that...	6:52
13	However, this optical illusion...	6:28
14	This meant that the person within me...	6:07

Total Time on CD 7: 77:45

CD 8

1	Impressions such as those I was trying to pin down...	5:08
2	And even as I thought this...	5:30
3	A slanting ray from the setting sun...	6:48
4	'No more style,' people had said at the time,...	5:24
5	Thus it was that for me that book...	4:47
6	If I see a thing from another period...	5:18
7	The library I would build up for myself in this way...	5:42
8	An hour is not just an hour...	6:40
9	Even when it comes to artistic joys...	5:55
10	That group imagined that this was the criterion...	5:41
11	How could descriptive literature possibly have any value...	5:17
12	And it was certainly very tempting...	5:54
13	As for the truths that the intellect...	4:50
14	In this matter, the very comparisons which are false...	3:30

Total Time on CD 8: 76:29

CD 9

1	It is not certain that imagination...	5:04
2	Moreover, I felt infinite sympathy...	5:36
3	From this first point of view...	5:09
4	If we had no rivals, pleasure would not turn into love.	5:25
5	Just as the painter needs to have seen many churches...	5:39
6	I was perhaps wrong...	5:15
7	A writer says 'my reader' ...	6:17
8	What made it possible that this perverse way of thinking...	5:20
9	I had seen nobles become vulgar...	6:29
10	Jealousy is a good recruiting sergeant...	5:49
11	I was going to try to find the objective reason...	6:18
12	Initially I could not understand...	5:27
13	Even supposing that d'Argencourt had the same desire to smile...	5:55
14	This was a puppet-show featuring dolls...	4:45

Total Time on CD 9: 78:34

CD 10

1	As for the woman whose lover M. d'Argencourt had been...	6:45
2	The letter from this friend I had dreamed of having...	6:08
3	When somebody, hearing that I was unwell...	5:27
4	In certain people the replacement of each cell by a series of others...	5:41
5	There was no doubt that the cruel discovery I had just made...	5:06
6	I asked M. de Cambremer how his mother was.	6:49
7	In several people I ended up recognising not only their actual selves...	6:19
8	Certain faces, beneath their hood of white hair...	5:19
9	It was difficult to reconcile the two aspects...	6:43
10	The women tried to stay in touch...	5:32
11	The old men whose features had changed...	5:40
12	Nonetheless it is necessary to make one reservation...	6:33
13	Just as a candidate at the baccalauréat...	5:31

Total Time on CD 10: 77:41

CD 11

1	Someone who had been a minister before the Boulangist period...	4:54
2	Mme de Forcheville's appearance was so miraculous...	4:59
3	Mme de Forcheville's eyes, which were still very lovely...	6:02
4	'You may be painting too rosy a picture of it all,' he said to me.	5:40
5	On the other hand, it was possibly true...	5:49
6	Certain foreigners who, when I had begun to move in society...	5:49
7	During the war, Bloch had stopped 'going out'...	6:52
8	In the end, after an elderly man...	5:17
9	The woman who was a friend of Bloch...	5:51
10	For the rest, one does have to say...	5:16
11	It is true to say that having been impertinent...	6:31
12	I must have so shocked men...	5:11
13	There is no doubt that Bloch had formerly been...	4:34
14	Not only do certain people have a good memory...	5:24

Total Time on CD 11: 78:12

CD 12

1	It was not only the appearance of these individuals...	5:44
2	Our parallel lives were like the edges...	4:40
3	'What's the news of the Marquise d'Arpajon?'	5:37
4	The spinster spotted that her mother...	5:47
5	I had sat down beside Gilberte de Saint-Loup.	5:46
6	'There is one aspect of war he was beginning to notice,' I said to her...	5:36
7	'But how is it that you come to receptions...'	5:25
8	And anyway, was it not in order to concern myself...	5:54
9	As I looked at Gilberte I did not think...	5:10
10	Now, the law that had governed the dreams of each year...	6:10
11	The duchess was still hesitating...	5:12
12	Now meanwhile, at the other end of Paris...	5:14
13	Unfortunately these notes merely allowed her son-in-law...	5:38
14	Berma uttered not a word of reproach...	4:29

Total Time on CD 12: 76:30

CD 13

1	All the guests looked at one another...	5:04
2	While this woman reciting La Fontaine's loveliest lines...	5:39
3	I realised that the passage of time...	6:21
4	However, since the talent of the best writers often dries up...	5:33
5	'I can't tell you how pleased I am to see you,' the duchess continued.	5:58
6	To her, though...	5:29
7	The past had become so transformed...	6:02
8	The judgements the duchess then pronounced on Rachel...	5:49
9	In the antechamber, where the couple's wait had gone...	5:20
10	The life of the duchess went on being very unhappy too...	5:03
11	I would certainly not have recognised him...	4:43
12	Thus it was that the apparently impregnable positions...	5:39
13	In fact every time I subsequently tried to see her I failed to do so...	4:57
14	There is not necessarily any contradiction, though...	7:19

Total Time on CD 13: 79:02

CD 14

1	To greet the duchess, she slightly bowed her fine head...	4:55
2	'But how can I talk to you about stupid things like that?	5:00
3	However, she did not pursue her thoughts...	4:51
4	Later on this daughter...	5:50
5	One might say that if I tried not to use it unconsciously...	6:05
6	How happy anyone who could write such a book would be...	5:57
7	The papers that Françoise called my paperies...	6:05
8	It was not like that now.	5:16
9	Now it did not trouble me...	5:47
10	One of my selves...	5:33
11	All at once, though, after a month...	5:51
12	I myself had to write something different...	4:50
13	I could, although the mistake would be more serious...	4:54
14	At that very moment, in the Prince de Guermantes' mansion...	6:37

Total Time on CD 14: 77:36

Total Time on CDs 1–14: 18:08:24

Marcel Proust

(1871–1922)

Time Regained

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.

Time Regained

Time Regained is the final part of *Remembrance of Things Past*. In between lengthy stays in a sanatorium, the Narrator, Marcel, makes several return visits to Paris during the First World War. When he finally leaves the sanatorium at the end of the war, he discovers that the old social order has changed. The two Ways of his childhood walks in Combray have now come together: the Méséglise or Swann's Way representing the bourgeois society into which Marcel was born, and the Guermantes Way, the aristocratic circle of the Guermantes family into which he has been admitted, are now united, and members of both worlds are to be found mingling in Paris society.

Gilberte, Swann's daughter, has married Robert de Saint-Loup, thus

becoming a member of the Guermantes family; the Prince de Guermantes marries Mme Verdurin, formerly 'Mistress' of 'the little clan', a bohemian artistic circle, whose husband has since died; the aged Duc de Guermantes is in love with Swann's widow, the former courtesan Odette de Crecy; Marcel's previously socially inept school friend Bloch is now a respected playwright and has become much in demand in society salons; the Duchesse de Guermantes, previously unwilling to acknowledge any but the most fashionable member of her world, now cultivates the friendship of the actress Rachel, previously the mistress of her nephew Saint-Loup, and originally a whore.

In attempting to find his way home through the darkened streets during an air raid, Marcel becomes lost and stumbles into a male brothel. He sees a shadowy figure reminiscent of Saint-Loup leave the building. His curiosity leads him to witness the Baron de Charlus undergoing an episode of sado-masochistic whipping. A croix-de-guerre is discovered in the brothel, which later on turns out to have been lost by Saint-Loup. Unknown to Gilberte,

Robert has been involved in homosexual affairs, and is in love at present with the violinist Charles Morel. Morel is the son of Marcel's uncle's valet, and was formerly the protégé of the Baron de Charlus whom he has treated with cruelty and ingratitude. Later Marcel is devastated to learn that Robert de Saint-Loup has been killed in battle, having proved himself a daring and valiant officer.

Gilberte returns to Tansonville, her house at Combray, which has been requisitioned by German troops. She writes to Marcel that the hawthorn path where they first met has become a military objective and is the centre of a fierce battle, while Combray church has been destroyed by the British and the French, because it was used as a look-out post by the Germans.

When Marcel returns to Paris from his sanatorium after the war, he accepts an invitation to attend a reception at the Prince de Guermantes's magnificent new mansion. Here he experiences several episodes of involuntary memory in which the past is so vividly recreated that it becomes indistinguishable from

the present. These experiences lead to his discovering that the theme for which he has been searching as the subject for his work is his own life. He meets friends from an earlier time whom he is astonished to find have become old, and it is brought home to him that if time has passed for them it has passed for him as well, and that he too is now old. He realises that he only has a limited time in which to work, and that he must begin at last.

Time Regained brings together the two themes of the book: time lost and time rediscovered. The novel's original title in French, *À la Recherche du Temps Perdu*, translates literally into 'In Search of Lost Time', and the phrase 'lost time' may be taken to refer both to time which has passed, and time which has been wasted. The two meanings are relevant both to Proust's own life and to the novel, which, if not directly autobiographical, is certainly a record of Proust's inner journey through life.

Proust wanted to be a writer from his early youth, but he was tortured by self-doubt and the fear that he lacked talent. He was also highly susceptible to

the attractions of society, and spent much of his time in the fashionable salons of the day which were frequented by well-known writers, composers, artists and politicians as well as by members of the aristocracy and the social elite. But Proust was aware that his life as a man about town was sapping time and energy which ought to be devoted to his writing, and he constantly berated himself for lacking the willpower to keep regular hours and embark on a sustained regime of work.

However, in retrospect, his whole life can be seen as preparation for writing his masterpiece, *Remembrance of Things Past*. All his experiences, both serious and frivolous, were to serve as raw material for his novel. Despite Proust's self-criticism, and although he never earned his living from writing and depended on a private income, before he embarked on *Remembrance of Things Past*, he wrote quite constantly and produced, in addition to endless letters, articles, essays, poetry and translations of several works of Ruskin, a volume of short stories and an unfinished novel. The volume of stories, *The Pleasures and the Days*, was published

in 1896 to little public acclaim, while the unfinished novel, *Jean Santeuil*, an unsuccessful first attempt to write what was to become *Remembrance of Things Past*, lay among Proust's papers until it was discovered and published in 1954, more than thirty years after his death.

The Narrator of *Remembrance of Things Past* is a thinly disguised version of the author himself. Like Proust, he is an invalid who wastes his time socialising, constantly putting off the work he intends to write. In the last volume, *Time Regained*, he finally realises that the subject for his book, which always eluded him, was there in front of him all the time: it is his own life.

Because of its digressive nature, *Remembrance of Things Past* has been criticised as formless, lacking shape. But although Proust altered and added enormously to the original scheme of the novel, which ended up unimaginably longer than he originally planned, its structure was there from the beginning, and it is not until we reach the final part that the author's intention can be fully appreciated.

Remembrance of Things Past is the story of a man who is unable to bring himself to write. Finally, he discovers his theme and decides it is time to begin. And as we finish reading the novel, we realise that it is the book on which he is about to start. Here we have the perfectly formed circle of time lost and time regained, which was Proust's original plan.

Proust's theory of involuntary memory is central to the work. The incident of the madeleine dipped in lime-flower tea which brings back for the Narrator a whole lost world of childhood, takes place in the first part of the novel, *Swann's Way*, and with it the author sets forth his subject as a composer states a theme which he intends to develop in the rest of the symphony.

According to Proust, it is the power of involuntary memory which enables us to re-experience the past, rather than merely to visualise it, which is a function of the intellect. On such occasions we feel again the same sensations which surrounded the original event. And when the Narrator returns to Paris after many years in a sanatorium, several instances of

involuntary memory are crowded together in one day. These lead to his realisation that he is able to use these experiences, in which the past and the present are inextricably mixed, to relive his life, to regain lost time.

As Marcel arrives at the Prince de Guermantes's mansion, he steps on an uneven paving stone and he is immediately filled with a sense of coolness and dazzling light. He searches for the origin of these feelings, and realises that they have transported him back to Venice, where he had encountered a similar uneven paving stone in the Baptistry of St Mark's. In the library a servant accidentally knocks a spoon against a plate, and Marcel finds himself again in a railway carriage contemplating the beauty of the evening light on a row of trees, a sight to which he had felt unable to respond the previous day. When he wipes his mouth with a starched napkin he relives the sensation of being once again in Cabourg, drying his face by the open window with one of the hotel's stiff linen towels, and as he breathes the salt air he feels he has only to open the windows to step out

onto the beach. These experiences serve to remove all his self-doubt and to give him courage by affirming that the past is alive within him and that his youthful self is still accessible.

And so 'lost time' – in the sense both of time which has passed and time which has been wasted, becomes 'time regained', that is time which can not only be lived through again, but can be captured and immobilised through literature. Encapsulated in a work of art, time is suspended, and a life which would otherwise have been as ephemeral as a plant which blooms only for a season and then dies, is enabled to exist indefinitely.

This yearning for immortality is the spur which drives the artist forward, impelling him to create art as a defence against the finality of death. And the last third of Marcel Proust's short life was taken up with the struggle against mortality as, bedridden and suffering, he called upon all his remaining strength to complete his task.

Proust, the life-long invalid, sensed the advance of death and was conscious of the shortness of time remaining for

the accomplishment of his work. And with an irony worthy of one of his own characters, who so often turn out to be quite different from what we have been led to suspect, the fashionable man about town who had been seen by his critics as a dilettante, who since his youth had berated himself for his lack of willpower and his inability to work, now became an example of courage, single-minded determination and tenacity, as he battled against illness and death to finish what he had set out to do.

In the end, Proust succeeded in completing his novel before death claimed him, and in *Remembrance of Things Past* he leaves us in his legacy a distillation of his life through which he enables us to see our own more clearly. As he wrote, 'Our greatest fears, like our greatest ambitions, are not beyond our strength, and we are able in the end to overcome the one and to realise the other.' The work he feared he might never accomplish stands now for all time: a reminder that with sufficient courage and will, we too have the power to transform time lost into time regained.

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 reconstruction 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

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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