

NAXOS
AudioBooks

James • Poe • Wilde • Bierce • Dickens
Chilling Ghost Stories

Rats • The Raven • Berenice • The Birthday of the Infanta
A Tough Tussle • The Signalman

Read by **Anthony Donovan**

**CLASSIC
FICTION**



NA291112D

1	Rats by M.R. James	6:56
2	The locked room	9:03
3	The Raven by Edgar Allan Poe	8:08
4	The Birthday of the Infanta by Oscar Wilde	10:59
5	The bull-fight	8:22
6	The little dwarf	9:05
7	The well-bred flowers	7:51
8	The throne-room	11:09
9	A Tough Tussle by Ambrose Bierce	8:01
10	The figure	12:21
11	Berenice by Edgar Allan Poe	7:46
12	To muse in meditation	8:33
13	The teeth	7:47
14	No. 1 Branch Line: The Signalman by Charles Dickens	8:59
15	The bell	8:09
16	A remarkable coincidence	8:50
17	What to do?	5:17

Total time: 2:27:36

James • Poe • Wilde • Bierce • Dickens

Chilling Ghost Stories

OSCAR WILDE 1856–1900.

One of the nineteenth century's most polemical literary figures, Oscar Wilde scandalised Victorian society and paid the price with social ostracism and a lonely death. Now restored to acceptability, his talent is unquestioned, and though he is best remembered for the comic wit and social criticism in his plays *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *Lady Windemere's Fan*, he also wrote the sombre, memorable poem *The Ballad of Reading Gaol*. His taste for the dark and the macabre was revealed in his novel *The Picture of Dorian Gray*. *The Birthday of the Infanta* is one of a number of fairy stories for older children which dissects the kind of cruelty only children are capable of.

CHARLES DICKENS 1812–1870.

Dickens's mastery of characterisation and atmosphere is undisputed and he was particularly fond of a mystery or

a good ghost story. His most famous is undoubtedly *A Christmas Carol* but he wrote a number of other less well known but equally fine chillers, such as *The Haunted Man* and *The Bagman's Uncle*. Indeed his last novel *Edwin Drood* is a mystery that remains unsolved to the present day. *No 1 Branch Line: The Signaller* is a strange tale of haunting and precognition – and is said to have been based on a true story.

M.R. JAMES 1862–1932.

Montague Rhodes James, a student of ancient and medieval lore, was appointed Provost of Eton College in 1918. He began to write horror stories to entertain and frighten his friends at Christmas. *Rats* is a chilling and evocative story set in a Suffolk tavern where an apparently normal situation becomes suddenly and frighteningly strange.

EDGAR ALLEN POE 1809–1849.

Poe is regarded as the true originator of the modern horror story. His particular blend of the gothic and suspense is eminently characterised in the collection *Tales of Mystery and Imagination*. It also informed his most well-known poem *The Raven*, reproduced here in its entirety.

AMBROSE BIERCE 1842–1913.

Ambrose Bierce was born in Ohio and was a veteran of the American Civil War – he was honourably discharged after being wounded. The clash between the Union and the Confederacy served as the inspiration for much of his later writing. A man of action who was as happy fighting as when writing, Bierce disappeared as mysteriously as a character in one of his stories – while serving in Pancho Villa's army in the Mexican Revolution in 1913.

Notes by Edward Ferrie

**The music on this recording is taken from
the NAXOS catalogue**

d'INDY 'MÉDÉE', SUITE D'ORCHESTRE, OP.47 Württemberg Philharmonic / Nopre	8.223654
SMETANA STRING QUARTET NO. 1 IN E MINOR, 'FROM MY LIFE' Moyzes Quartet	8.550379
HINDEMITH MATHIS DER MALER SYMPHONY NZSO / Decker	8.553078
MUSIC OF THE SPANISH RENAISSANCE Shirley Rumsey – Vihuela	8.550614
BEETHOVEN BATTLE MUSIC : WELLINGTON'S VICTORY OP. 91 CSRSO (Bratislava) / Lenard	8.550230



Anthony Donovan has toured the UK extensively, appearing in works by playwrights as varied as Marlowe, Pinter and Willy Russell. He was recently heard as the voice of Joseph Conrad in the BBC Radio production of *The Black Heart* and his film credits include *Keeper* and *Utz*.

Credits

Selected and abridged by Edward Ferrie. Produced by Andrew Lyle
Post production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording Company
Engineer (speech) Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Cassettes

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Cover picture: The Siege! A story by F. St Mars
Courtesy of The Bridgeman Art Library

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Chilling Ghost Stories

Rats • The Raven • Berenice • The Birthday of the Infanta

A Tough Tussle • The Signalman

Read by **Anthony Donovan**

The vengeful dead, a premonition, ghosts, pacts with the devil and a strange madness – these are the themes of this collection of chilling tales, written by some of the great names in English and American literature and masters of the genre. Stories to be listened to in the dark with the lights turned off and the imagination switched on...



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Produced
by Nicolas
Soames

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