

  
NAXOS  
AudioBooks

James Fenimore Cooper

# The Last of the Mohicans

Read by **William Hope**

CLASSIC  
FICTION



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1	The daughters of Col. Munro and a curious-looking stranger	8:17
2	A welcome travelling companion and an unwelcome guide	5:16
3	Hawkeye, Chingachgook and Uncas	7:22
4	Lost in the woods – the treachery of Magua	8:29
5	Hawkeye takes over	4:59
6	A safe haven for the night	4:56
7	An attack – David is wounded	11:34
8	Cora sends out messengers	5:46
9	Discovered by Renard Subtil	7:26
10	Cora receives an unwelcome proposal	11:22
11	Duncan breaks his bonds	5:26
12	A battle – Magua escapes	11:24
13	The abandoned hut in the forest	6:21
14	An encounter with the French and a reunion	10:18
15	Duncan pays Montcalm a visit	6:50
16	Munro's story – the Scots Colonel meets the French General	16:53

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17	A savage massacre and an abduction	14:19
18	Hawkeye, Uncas and Chingachgook take up the trail	6:48
19	Pursuit across the lake	8:47
20	Duncan discovers a useful disguise	8:15
21	In the camp of the enemy	9:01
22	Duncan is appointed physician	4:16
23	A bear to the rescue	4:52
24	David agrees to do Uncas a service	3:59
25	Magua discovers he has been outwitted	1:52
26	The Council of the Delawares	6:16
27	Cora's pleas are unheard	9:50
28	Uncas plans an expedition	4:20
29	A fight to the death	11:39
30	The last of the Mohicans	6:13

**Total time: 3:53:21**

*Cover picture: Scene from The Last of the Mohicans by Thomas Cole (1801-1848)  
Courtesy of The Bridgeman Art Library, London.*

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## James Fenimore Cooper

# The Last of the Mohicans

James Fenimore Cooper, considered to be the first important American novelist, was born in Burlington, New Jersey on September 15, 1789. His father, Judge William Cooper, founded the frontier village of Cooperstown in the lake region of New York State, to which the family moved when James was a year old. He attended school at Albany and at thirteen was sent to Yale, where he was the youngest member of his class. He was expelled in 1805 for his part in some prank and joined the navy, in which he served as a midshipman. After the assassination of his father in 1809 by a political opponent, he resigned from the navy. In 1811 he married Susan Delancy, a descendant of one of the early governors of New York colony, and settled down in Scarsdale, where for a time he led the life of a country gentleman. An apocryphal story has it that Cooper, after throwing aside a novel his wife had been reading, said to her, "I could write you a better book than that myself." She challenged him to make good his boast, thus setting him on his

career as an author.

Cooper's first novel was *Precaution* (1820), which had little success, but his next book, *The Spy*, published the following year, established his reputation. He went on to produce a total of fifty works during his lifetime. But it was with *The Leatherstocking Tales* that he consolidated his popularity, and it is chiefly for these stories that he is remembered today. They consist of *The Pioneers* (1823), *The Last of the Mohicans* (1826), *The Prairie* (1827), *The Pathfinder* (1840) and *The Deerslayer* (1841).

In 1826 Cooper and his family travelled to Europe where he spent the next seven years. Despite his duties as US Consul in Lyons, he continued to write, and in addition to novels, produced political works and books on travel. In 1833 he returned to America, and settled back in Cooperstown where he spent the remainder of his life.

*The Last of the Mohicans* was written during the author's European stay, but the order in which the books appeared differs

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from the sequence of events related in the story. It starts with *The Deerslayer* (the last to be written), is taken up in *The Last of the Mohicans*, continues in *The Pathfinder* and *The Pioneer*, and reaches its conclusion in *The Prairie*. The narrative concerns the French, British and Indian battles for territorial supremacy in the early days of the new nation, and is filled with exciting adventures – skirmishes, attacks, ambushes, flights, pursuits and rescues.

In *The Leatherstocking Tales* Cooper created characters who have achieved the status of mythic heroes in the popular imagination. First among these is the intrepid frontiersman and scout, Natty Bumppo, known as Hawkeye in *The Last of the Mohicans*. Although a European, Hawkeye has learned from the Indians all the woodsman's skills. Cooper's respect for the Indian way of life and for the dignity and wisdom of the native tribes set him apart from many of his European and Colonial contemporaries who had nothing but contempt for the American 'savages'.

Hawkeye's closest companion is the Mohican chief Chingachgook, and it is Chingachgook's son Uncas who is the subject of the book's title, the last surviving member of the Mohican tribe. Cooper sees

them as children of nature skilled in the ways of the forest, and invests them with such noble characteristics as bravery, honor and loyalty. But not all Cooper's Indians are heroes. In Magua he has created a cunning and sinister villain, a worthy opponent for Hawkeye, and the narrative contains incidents of Indian treachery and cowardice. Neither is betrayal confined to the Indian tribes – Montcalm, the commander of the French forces, fails to keep his word, as does the English General Webb, leaving Munro and his troops to take the consequences.

The European characters are helpless in the face of the wild terrain and native enemies. In the unfamiliar new world their European sophistication and learning is useless to them. The eccentric music master David's psalm-singing is no protection from Indian arrows, although his innocence helps to save him in the end. Without the woodcraft skills of Hawkeye and his Indian companions, Duncan and his two charges, Cora and Alice, would have perished almost before their journey had begun.

In *The Last of the Mohicans* we sense Cooper's closeness to the time, the place and the people about which he writes. His

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is the authentic voice of the early struggles of the American nation. His tales of the hardship and danger of frontier life were the first of their kind, and paved the way for the vast numbers of such stories which have appeared since. Our appetite for tales of adventure has not diminished in the one

hundred and seventy-odd years since these stories were written, and they continue to give as much pleasure today as they did when first published.

### Notes by Neville Jason

## The music on this CD is taken from the NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues

<b>KOECHLIN</b> LE LIVRE DE LA JUNGLE Rheinland-Pfalz Philharmonic/Leif Segerstam	8.223484
<b>LIADOV</b> KIKIMORA, Op. 63 Slovak Philharmonic/Stephen Gunzenhauser	8.550328
<b>BERLIOZ</b> SYMPHONIE FANTASTIQUE CRS Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava)/Pinchas Steinberg	8.550093
<b>MUSSORGSKY</b> NIGHT ON THE BARE MOUNTAIN Slovak Philharmonic/Daniel Nazareth	8.550051
<b>SMETANA</b> MA VLAST Polish National Radio Symphony Orchestra (Katowice)/Antoni Wit	8.550931
<b>LISZT</b> A FAUST SYMPHONY Orchestra of the Ferenc Liszt Academy/Andras Ligeti	8.553304

# James Fenimore Cooper

# The Last of the Mohicans

Read by **William Hope**

This famous novel deals with the early frontier period of American history and is set in 1757 during the Seven Years War between the French and the British. Hawkeye and his friends, Chingachgook and Uncas, are the last remaining Mohican chieftains. When the evil Magua threatens the life of an innocent English woman, Hawkeye finds himself at the centre of a battle for honor and vengeance.



Though American by birth, **William Hope** trained at RADA and has appeared in theatre on both sides of the Atlantic throughout his career. His TV and film work have been similarly extensive and have included roles in *Aliens* (Gorman) and *The Lords of Discipline*. A former member of the BBC Radio Drama Company, he is regularly heard on radio in both plays and books. He also reads Edith Wharton's *Ethan Frome* and F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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3:53:21