

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

James Joyce

THE  
COMPLETE  
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

# A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Read by **Jim Norton**

CLASSIC  
FICTION

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NA736612D

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1	A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man by James Joyce	5:14
2	He was caught in the whirl of a scrimmage...	4:42
3	Father Arnall's face looked very black...	4:59
4	It was Wells who had shouldered him...	5:14
5	He shivered and yawned.	5:04
6	O how cold and strange it was to think of that!	4:36
7	He was not foxing.	5:11
8	He told Stephen that his name was Athy...	4:32
9	A great fire, banked high and red...	5:25
10	Mr Dedalus covered the dish and began to eat hungrily.	4:53
11	Mr Dedalus threw his knife and fork noisily on his plate.	4:32
12	The story is very short and sweet...	6:56
13	The fellows talked together in little groups.	2:56
14	Athy, who had been silent, said quietly...	5:28
15	There were different kinds of sounds.	6:53
16	The door opened quietly and closed.	4:55
17	The scalding water burst forth...	4:38
18	He could not eat the blackish fish fritters...	5:25
19	He came out on the landing...	5:37
20	Chapter 2: Uncle Charles smoked such black twist...	4:30
21	On Sundays Stephen with his father...	5:05
22	For some time he had felt...	5:03
23	A vague dissatisfaction grew up within him...	4:47
24	It was the last tram.	4:11
25	But his long spell of leisure...	5:34

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26	In a dark corner of the chapel...	5:04
27	He waited in timorous silence...	5:06
28	A short loud laugh from Mr Tate...	4:40
29	While he was still repeating...	5:25
30	He felt no stage fright...	3:46
31	Stephen was once again seated...	4:46
32	Along the Mardyke the trees were in bloom.	5:23
33	We were more like brothers...	4:16
34	One humiliation had succeeded another...	4:35
35	Stephen's mother and his brother...	5:43
36	The veiled autumnal evenings...	5:37
37	Chapter 3: The swift December dusk...	4:29
38	The chaos in which his ardour...	4:31
39	The bell rang.	5:14
40	The rector paused...	4:59
41	One thing alone is needful...	4:36
42	The next day brought death and judgement...	6:05
43	Death is certain.	6:20
44	Hell has enlarged its soul...	4:51
45	...mocked at as a fool...	5:02
46	But this stench is not, horrible though it is...	5:12
47	In olden times it was the custom...	4:43
48	In the last day of terrible reckoning...	4:58
49	The thought slid like a cold shining rapier into his tender flesh...	5:27
50	The first sting inflicted by this cruel worm...	4:41

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51	Just as every sense is afflicted with a fitting torment...	5:09
52	How many millions upon millions of centuries would pass...	4:47
53	A sin, an instant of rebellious pride of the intellect...	4:45
54	He halted on the landing before the door...	5:14
55	He sprang from the bed...	4:56
56	He walked on and on through ill-lit streets...	5:05
57	The slide was shot back.	4:38
58	Pray to our mother Mary to help you.	3:36
59	Chapter 4: Sunday was dedicated to the mystery of the Holy Trinity...	5:03
60	He had heard the names of the passions of love...	4:52
61	It surprised him however to find...	5:06
62	The director stood in the embrasure of the window...	4:59
63	He had never once disobeyed or allowed turbulent...	5:00
64	He longed for the minor sacred offices...	5:05
65	Some instinct, waking at these memories...	4:40
66	The sad quiet grey-blue glow of the dying day...	5:12
67	All through his boyhood he had mused...	4:42
68	He heard a confused music within him...	5:12
69	He started up nervously from the stone-block...	7:34
70	Chapter 5: He drained his third cup of watery tea...	2:25
71	An ear-splitting whistle was heard from upstairs...	5:15
72	He fancied to himself the English lecture...	4:59
73	The grey block of Trinity on his left...	4:43
74	So there was nothing for it...	4:21
75	It was too late to go upstairs to the French class.	4:49

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76	The dean returned to the hearth...	5:08
77	The question you asked me a moment ago...	5:03
78	His fellow student's rude humour...	4:58
79	Stephen pointed to the Tsar's photograph...	5:13
80	Stephen, moving away the bystanders...	4:54
81	He sidled out of the alley...	4:52
82	A match of four was arranged...	5:18
83	'If that is rhythm,' said Lynch...	4:52
84	A long dray laden with old iron...	4:46
85	'To finish what I was saying about beauty...'	4:30
86	If you bear this in memory...	5:56
87	Towards dawn he awoke.	4:49
88	The lumps of knotted flock under his head...	5:27
89	The full morning light had come.	4:34
90	What birds were they?	5:26
91	A sudden swift hiss fell from the windows above him...	4:14
92	He walked on across the hall with Dixon...	4:59
93	She passed out from the porch of the library...	5:44
94	The squat student looked at him seriously...	4:29
95	Stephen walked on alone...	5:03
96	Stephen walked on beside his friend...	4:51
97	Stephen, struck by his tone of closure...	5:24
98	Stephen raised his hat in acknowledgement.	4:32
99	March 21. Morning. Thought this in bed last night...	5:17
100	April 3. Met Davin at the cigar shop...	6:46

**Total time: 8:21:53**

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James Joyce

## A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road and this moocow that was coming down along the road met a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo...

So begins the first great novel by one of the twentieth-century's most innovative writers. Here, in the opening pages of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, James Joyce recreates not merely the memories of infancy but its language, sounds and sensations too. He recreates them rather than describes them, and the reader is immediately drawn into the half-remembered world of childhood by the rhythm and flavour of Joyce's prose: 'When you wet the bed first it is warm then it gets cold. His mother put on the oilsheet. That had the queer smell.'

The childhood remembered is that of Joyce himself (though for the purposes of the novel he has another name: Stephen Dedalus), and the incidents recalled are all incidents from Joyce's own early days growing up in Dublin at the end of the nineteenth century. The biography is in many

ways unremarkable – the trials of school life, family tensions and financial insecurities, growing political and religious awareness, and the transition to manhood – a biography shared in outline with countless other young Irishmen. What makes this biography so special is that its protagonist is clearly not unremarkable, and that his perception and analysis of events and of people around him mark him out from others. His description of a Christmas dinner – the first in which the young Stephen is allowed to participate, rather than being banished to the nursery – begins as the description of a warm family occasion, but ends in disarray as discussion turns to violent political argument about the role of the church in the downfall of the Nationalist leader Parnell. This Christmas day was clearly a vivid memory for Joyce:

– Poor Parnell! he cried loudly. My dead King!  
He sobbed loudly and bitterly. Stephen, raising his terror stricken face, saw that his father's eyes were full of tears.

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More than simply vivid, though, this memory has a special significance, marking the beginning of his own awareness of the meaning of betrayal, a theme which runs throughout Joyce's work from *Dubliners* to *Finnegans Wake*. Other themes encountered in the novel also carry forward into the later work, and a full understanding of his great novel *Ulysses* – where we again encounter Stephen Dedalus and members of his immediate family – is probably dependent on familiarity with *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. The novel also serves as a transition from the comparatively conventional style of writing in the earlier collection of short stories (*Dubliners*) and the radical literary techniques of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*. In *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, we quickly become accustomed to sudden shifts forward in time, from one moment of significance to another, without any attempt to chronicle the events of the intervening period.

Immediately after the Christmas dinner, we find ourselves with Stephen at his boarding school on a summer's afternoon (the sound of cricket bats can be heard in the distance: 'pick, pack, pock, puck') and follow a sequence of events which culminate in Stephen suffering the indignity

and pain of a wrongful thrashing from an overzealous housemaster. Stephen's success in demanding justice gives him his first lesson in self-confidence and his first taste for heroism.

With the second chapter of the book Stephen begins his long journey to independence. A series of isolated moments – epiphanies – are presented in quick succession without comment: the contrast between 'the beautiful Mabel Hunter' photographed in his aunt's evening paper and the dirty boy bringing in coal for her fire; the strange apparition of 'a feeble creature like a monkey' calling from the darkened hallway; a moment of intimacy with a childhood sweetheart. Finally, Stephen takes a trip to the southern city of Cork with his father. Here there is a startling moment when he observes the word foetus carved into a desk at his father's old college. The word revolts him, but returns to his mind repeatedly, reminding him of his own need to grow from his embryonic and vulgar state.

Soon after this, a further significant step towards manhood is encountered in the dark streets of the brothel area, and Stephen begins a swift descent into inner turmoil. This is in many ways the crux of the

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novel, and the subject of the original 1904 article which Joyce developed over the next ten years, through the abandoned novel *Stephen Hero* which preceded *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. Here, in the third chapter, Joyce charts Stephen's battle to renounce his addiction (at 16) to the sins of the flesh. Joyce frames the stages of this battle with a series of long and vivid sermons on Hell delivered to pupils during a weekend retreat at his school. It's terrifying stuff – 'walls four thousand miles thick', 'a neverending storm of darkness, dark flames and dark smoke', and 'fetid carcasses massed together in the reeking darkness, a huge and rotting human fungus' – and it finds its mark:

Every word of it was for him. Against his sin, foul and secret, the whole wrath of God was aimed.

Shocked into repentance Stephen makes confession and in chapter four he adopts a more sober way of life, and finds himself being offered the opportunity to be put forward for training to the priesthood. The realisation that such a life is not for him, however, is most vividly conveyed when he experiences another 'epiphany' in the form of a girl standing in the shallows of Dublin

bay gazing out to sea. The magic of this moment and the meeting of their eyes, triggers the start of the final phase of Stephen's journey to freedom.

In the final chapter, the confident young university student grapples with matters of language and aesthetics, but also with family and homeland. A true story told to him by his simple friend Davin, about an encounter with a seductive peasant woman, symbolizes for Stephen the dangerous lure of Ireland from which he must break free. In a delightful scene with the Dean of Studies, the use of the word 'funnel' rather than the Irish word 'tundish' reminds Stephen that for him the English language is 'an acquired speech. I have not made or accepted its words.'

Meanwhile, in a meandering conversation with his intellectual sparring partner Lynch, he attempts a definition of Art, and expounds on Aquinas's theory of beauty. Though pretentious in tone, as befits the arrogant would-be poet, the theorising makes perfect sense, and ends with an ambitious mission statement: 'The artist, like the God of creation, remains within or behind or beyond or above his handiwork, invisible, refined out of existence, indifferent, paring his fingernails.'



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Here, finally, is Stephen/Joyce, the artist who is about to leave Ireland for ever, to continue to grapple with and force into submission the words of the English language, and with them to paint the Ireland of his youth for the enlightenment

of readers in all parts of the world. For Stephen, like the Daedalus of mythology, is to soar high above ordinary folk, above matters of race or religion, and ultimately above art.

**Notes by Roger Marsh**

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

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TRADITIONAL IRISH MUSIC ESPECIALLY RECORDED BY:  
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Front cover picture: O'Connell Bridge, Dublin. Courtesy National Library of Ireland

James Joyce

# A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

Read by **Jim Norton**

This fictionalised portrait of Joyce's youth is one of the most vivid accounts of the growth from childhood to adulthood. Dublin at the turn of the century provides the backdrop as Stephen Dedalus moves town and society, towards the irrevocable decision to leave – the decision made by Joyce himself and which resulted in the mature novels of *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*.



**Jim Norton**, one of Ireland's leading actors, is a Dubliner, and has worked regularly on Joycean topics. He worked extensively in Irish Theatre (Abbey, Gate), TV and Radio before coming to London to work at the Royal Court and the Royal National Theatre. His many West End credits include *Comedians*, *The Changing Room*, *The Contractor*, *Bedroom Farce*, *Chorus of Disapproval* and *The Weir*. For Naxos AudioBooks he has also recorded *Ulysses* (abridged and unabridged), *Finnegans Wake*, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* and the world premiere recording of McPherson's *Port Authority*.

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Total time  
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