

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Joseph Conrad
Nostramo

THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

CLASSIC
FICTION



NAX89012D

1	PART FIRST: Chapter 1	5:14
2	These, then are the legendary inhabitants...	5:48
3	Chapter 2	6:10
4	He had to lower these gentlemen at the end of a rope...	6:18
5	Chapter 3	5:32
6	In a pause of stillness...	5:57
7	Chapter 4	5:43
8	It was pain; she suppressed the twinge.	6:10
9	Linda pouted, advancing her red lips...	6:27
10	The spirit of self-forgetfulness, the simple devotion...	4:06
11	Chapter 5	5:50
12	What concerned him most at the time...	6:04
13	Sir John arrived too late to hear the magnificent...	6:16
14	Chapter 6	5:15
15	She was always sorry for homesick people.	5:57
16	'My dear, you seem to forget that I was born here.'	6:23
17	And for many years this was the last of the San Tomé mine.	5:01
18	For a moment, biting her carmine lip...	6:09
19	He thought of it every day...	5:11
20	She was the first person to whom...	5:40
21	They turned back, and after she had slipped...	5:22
22	The latest phase in the history of the mine...	5:15

23	A fringed Indian hammock from Aroa...	4:56
24	'A man must work to some end,'...	5:02
25	These two young people remembered the life...	5:23
26	'The Costaguana Government shall play its hand...'	5:49
27	Thus the great personage had spoken...	6:03
28	They had stopped near the cage.	5:16
29	Chapter 7	5:48
30	She bore a whole two months of wandering...	6:38
31	He took up a paper fan and began to cool himself...	5:29
32	Chapter 8	5:02
33	Thus professionally spoke Don Pepe, the fighter...	4:50
34	And he would tap his ear with the tip of his forefinger...	4:25
35	And it was not only the men that Don Pepe knew...	5:27
36	To Charles Gould's fancy it seemed that the sound...	5:12
37	Hernandez, the robber, had been an inoffensive...	4:48
38	Mrs. Gould's ride with the first silver escort to Sulaco...	5:32
39	The reception of the first consignment of San Tomé silver...	4:04
40	The string of padlocked carts lengthened...	3:23
41	No wonder, then, that Sir John, coming from Europe...	4:01
42	The Excellentissimo was on his legs.	5:20
43	An enormous national flag of Costaguana...	5:13
44	He smiled ruggedly, with a running together...	5:57

45	The man fell back...	3:30
46	Laughs were heard at her anger...	4:01
47	PART SECOND: Chapter 1	6:02
48	Always an army chaplain...	6:33
49	In the afternoon the news of that vote had reached Sulaco...	5:05
50	Chapter 2	6:41
51	Never before, perhaps, had Hernandez's head...	5:52
52	Chapter 3	5:32
53	This letter, in Antonia's handwriting...	6:23
54	'I am inexpressibly grateful for your welcome...'	4:14
55	Chapter 4	5:33
56	After the triumph of the Ribierists...	5:28
57	Mrs. Gould smiled a good-bye at Barrios...	5:16
58	'It's a delightful surprise to see you, Mrs. Gould...'	4:42
59	'And so very wise for his age,' retorted Decoud.	3:23
60	Chapter 5	5:24
61	Martin Decoud was angry with himself.	4:32
62	The people returning from the harbour...	5:24
63	Even that declaration did not make her look at him.	5:22
64	'We Occidentals,' said Martin Decoud...	5:23
65	He was surprised at the warmth of his own utterance.	5:12
66	He paused, then muttered almost inaudibly...	5:09

67	The tide of political speculation was beating high...	4:23
68	It was known that Father Corbelan had come...	4:52
69	Father Corbelan had remained quite motionless...	5:07
70	'Come, brother,' he said...	5:13
71	'I assure you, Senor Hirsch,' murmured Charles Gould...	5:23
72	'What does he want to keep so much...'	3:05
73	Chapter 6	5:09
74	He confronted his wife with a firm...	5:17
75	Decoud, exchanging a steady stare with Mrs. Gould...	5:09
76	Mrs. Gould gave no sign of being offended.	5:12
77	'Why don't you say all this to my husband?'	5:31
78	'Perhaps he prizes it for its own sake,' Mrs. Gould said...	3:05
79	Chapter 7	6:08
80	'I didn't learn till later in the afternoon...'	5:05
81	After having written so far...	6:11
82	You mean Nostromo?' said Decoud.	6:34
83	'I walked up to the table blindly...'	5:03
84	'"What are they doing in there?" she asked.	5:17
85	'"And here, in this boudoir," I said...'	5:05
86	'This is why, my dear girl, I am a fugitive to-night.'	5:47
86	'The incorruptible Capataz de Cargadores is the man...'	5:45
88	'I am waiting for him here now.'	5:17

89	'Is she really dying, senor doctor?'	5:51
90	Old Giorgio, in profound ignorance of his wife's views...	5:07
91	'Leave my soul alone, Padrona...'	5:07
92	'It is as if I were taking up a curse upon me, senor doctor.'	5:10
93	It was a new experience for Decoud...	6:17
94	'No, you needn't explain,' said Decoud...	5:15
95	Decoud lay on the silver boxes panting.	3:54
96	A small flame appeared burning quite straight.	4:07
97	Chapter 8	5:40
98	The mere presence of a coward, however passive...	5:11
99	Nostromo ceased chirruping at once.	5:38
100	He moved about as warily as a cat.	5:19
101	The last words he hissed into Decoud's ear.	5:31
102	Sotillo, as Nostromo had surmised, was in command...	5:39
103	Sotillo's ideas did not soar above the care...	5:25
104	Sotillo, on the bridge, muttered from time to time...	5:24
105	Hirsch, when ordered forward by Nostromo...	5:17
106	There was certainly something almost miraculous...	5:21
107	There was nothing for Decoud...	5:10
108	Nostromo detected the ironic tone.	6:22
109	PART THIRD: Chapter 1	6:11
110	Charles Gould rode on...	5:15

111	It was not from any liking for the doctor...	5:34
112	The chief engineer pulled out his watch.	5:38
113	Slow, heavy footsteps moved across the planks...	3:45
114	'The man has proved his trustworthiness...'	3:39
115	Chapter 2	6:34
116	In this Captain Mitchell was right.	6:29
117	Sotillo had taken up his quarters on the upper floor...	5:43
118	'The watch! The watch!' raved the colonel...	5:25
119	Sotillo, too, had time to cool down.	6:31
120	'How in the name of all that's marvellous...'	7:36
121	Chapter 3	5:06
122	'Had you?' muttered Captain Mitchell.	5:06
123	The peculiar dawn of Sulaco...	5:20
124	Since his arrival in Sulaco the colonel's ideas...	5:03
125	The horseman had gone on with only a glance...	6:27
126	'Drive carefully,' cried Mrs. Gould in a tremulous voice.	5:53
127	At the turn of the road the glare of a big fire...	5:44
128	Chapter 4	5:55
129	Down below in the patio...	5:15
130	The doctor, arriving with his sharp, jerky walk...	5:42
131	Their dread of the raving tyrant translated itself...	5:59
132	Dr. Monygham had become, in a manner...	5:18

133	Mrs. Gould, her colour heightened...	5:50
134	Mrs Gould watched his abstraction with dread.	3:41
135	'He was afraid to start back on account of Hernandez...'	3:53
136	Chapter 5	6:12
137	Thus at first sight the agent of the Gould Concession...	3:57
138	Pedro Montero, the brother of the general...	4:19
139	Pedrito Montero looked with disgust...	4:44
140	Chapter 6	5:48
141	Father Roman expressed in a few words his thankfulness...	6:21
142	'Listen, Padre.'	3:54
143	Chapter 7	5:09
144	Pedrito Montero surprised one at first sight...	5:15
145	'Ah! You are back at last!'	4:58
146	'Certainly not that last,' Charles Gould declared...	4:50
147	Chapter 8	5:02
148	The darkness of the sky had descended...	5:45
149	'There is no mistake.'	5:32
150	Bareheaded, in a thin shirt and drawers...	5:38
151	The whole enormous ruined barrack of a place...	5:18
152	Already the doctor had left him.	5:46
153	The Capataz was heard striking the table with his fist.	6:18
154	'It will be necessary to take him into...'	5:17

155	He went on to develop his view of Sotillo's...	4:44
156	Nostromo had listened with profound attention.	4:22
157	Chapter 9	6:44
158	But as soon as the other had shut after him the door...	5:11
159	He felt a reluctance...	5:21
160	A slight quiver passed up the taut rope...	5:30
161	Below, the troops fell in silently and moved off...	4:23
162	The doctor swallowed with difficulty.	4:42
163	Nostromo's prolonged silence made the doctor uneasy.	5:18
164	A low exclamation had escaped Nostromo.	5:08
165	He bounded downwards into the black, smoky hall.	5:45
166	Nostromo released him abruptly...	5:09
160	Nostromo heard him stir...	5:15
168	'You have returned,' he said, with shaky dignity.	6:55
169	Chapter 10	6:22
170	And all day Captain Mitchell would talk like this...	5:56
171	And the lunch would begin and terminate...	5:20
172	'The equestrian statue that used to stand...'	6:03
173	Captain Mitchell stopped for a while.	5:15
174	'Abominable Pedrito!...'	5:02
175	Nostromo had, indeed, found the lighter's boat...	5:27
176	Streaming from head to foot...	5:36

177	In the face of the open gulf...	5:52
178	Not a living being...	5:37
179	The dawn from behind the mountains...	6:10
180	Chapter 11	5:30
181	The doctor dropped into a chair.	5:10
182	When all were seated again...	5:31
183	'It is about Nostromo that I wanted to talk to you.'	5:19
184	'Just a mozo of the town.'	5:30
185	Mrs. Gould sat up, opening her eyes very wide.	5:20
186	In profound silence, and glaring viciously...	5:09
187	Chapter 12	5:35
188	The incomparable Nostromo, the Capataz...	4:09
189	Captain Fidanza, unpicturesque...	5:17
190	Directly his schooner was anchored...	5:16
191	And Linda, his best-loved daughter...	5:32
192	'And between you three you have brought me here...'	5:23
193	The dusk let him see yet the tender...	5:43
194	She disengaged herself gently.	5:08
195	The heroic Garibaldino...	4:23
196	Chapter 13	5:33
197	Ever since that Sunday...	5:18
198	'What folly!' answered the other...	5:10

199	'I have shot Ramirez – infame!'	5:57
200	'Me?' whispered Mrs. Gould, shrinking a little.	5:29
201	But he did not say by whom or by what...	5:16
202	'Console yourself, child.'	5:27
203	The old man smiled under his thick moustache.	5:26

Total time: 18:09:47

Joseph Conrad

Nostromo

By the time he was nine, Joseph Conrad was an orphan, essentially stateless and longing for a life that was not even associated with land. He wanted the sea. His intellectual and patriotic parents had been effectively killed by an occupying country, and after completing his education thanks to his fond and generous uncle, he was finally given the chance. For twenty years he worked in French and British merchant ships, during which time he saw that the grotesqueries of politics were not restricted to the overlordship of Russia and his native Poland. He witnessed the horrors of the Belgian Congo, was involved with gun-running and smuggling, attempted suicide because of gambling debts, became afflicted with illnesses and conditions that would affect him for the rest of his life, and in 1892 decided to become a professional writer. He had by this time also become a British national, adopting English (his third language after Polish and French) in which

to write and living in Kent. His output was huge, including *Youth*, *Lord Jim*, *The Secret Agent*, *Under Western Eyes*, *Heart of Darkness*, non-fiction, short stories and more. The process of creation was never easy for him, partly because of his physical condition, partly because of his financial position; but largely because the moral, political and social world he was creating was implacable in its crushing effect on the human spirit, and his expression of this was so weighted, rich, complex and profound.

Such is the immediate resonance of his themes to contemporary readers it is sometimes difficult to remember that Conrad (born Józef Teodor Konrad Nalecz Korzeniowski) was a man of the nineteenth century. But he was born in 1857 to parents who were of the gentry, and who encouraged him to read Hugo, Shakespeare and Dickens. When they died from tuberculosis, after being exiled

to Northern Russia for promoting Polish nationalism, Conrad's education was continued by his uncle, who ensured he was taught Greek, maths, Latin and geography by a private tutor. Given this background, his modernity is at the very least unexpected. It may be unsurprising that he despaired of politics, after the treatment of his parents. But the world that is created by Conrad is not a window-dressed autobiography. It is born from a dark sense of the world as a useless whole, realised through works of fiction that are ground-breaking linguistically, stylistically and in terms of character. The bleakness of his philosophy, which rejected almost all human endeavour as brutal and fruitless, reached its beautiful and absorbing apogée in *Nostromo*.

Nostromo was published in 1904. It is based around the silver mine in San Tomé and the port of Sulaco, in the fictional South American country of Costaguana. It is an adventure, but it is also a moral fable, a novel of symbols and implications, where however detailed the reality, there is a more general point at play. (A small but telling indicator of how Conrad

saw the country he had invented and its implications is given by the fact that 'guano' means 'manure' (to put it politely). This is a euphemism similar to that which Dickens employed with his 'dust-heaps' in *Our Mutual Friend*, and which would be taken up by Dylan Thomas in a more light-hearted fashion by naming the town in *Under Milk Wood* ('Llareggub'). The San Tomé mine becomes a fulcrum for any number of national and international players whose lives are reflected in and affected by their involvement with it. It is crucial to European trade in Costaguana and the whole continent. It is owned by an Englishman, Charles Gould, who becomes so bound up with the mine that he loses touch with himself and his wife. It is part-financed by an American (Holroyd) who wants to convert the Catholic country to his evangelical Protestantism. There are profound 'material interests', in South America and beyond, that need the mine's wealth to develop the country's infrastructure for their own gain. The mine is of such importance that it becomes an obsession for most people associated with it and the focal point for the almost farcically

violent shifts in the politics of the country. As a result, there are revolutions, counter-revolutions and attempts at democracy; nationalism, secession, freedom-fighters, riots, torture and popular heroes, all bound by the silver of the mine and what they believe it can do for them.

Many of the characters and situations of volatile South American politics have become familiar to the point of cliché since Conrad first drew them so clearly. But his portrayal, however perceptive and detailed, and however much it excites the imagination as an adventure story, is also about politics in a much broader sense. He had no faith that politicians could do anything to save their people – rather the opposite – and the machinations in *Nostromo* show power and wealth corrupting rather than improving, even when the initial intention may have been honourable. And on the purely personal level, for the people of the story there is no redemption, no uplifting sense of achievement; only tragedy, defeat and despair.

The story is told in three parts, but also in several different ways – the standard,

all-knowing narrator, telling the tale in the past tense; sudden jumps forward in time to tell it from a different perspective (in one long sequence from a particular character); and an occasional first-person narrator, talking as if in the historical present, and in a manner suggesting that everything about the place is true. Conrad also uses a ‘history’ of this fictional country, written by one of the fictional characters, quoted as a reference work for the events described. This formally self-referential aspect of the book shows Conrad’s development away from the traditional novel form and into something recognisably modern, and which influenced almost every major writer of English thereafter, from Woolf to Greene to Lawrence and beyond.

But the principal reason for *Nostromo*’s influence is in its characters and in its tone. The language is not easy – sentences are often long and convoluted, and there are rather dated moral and rhetorical abstract generalisations. But the descriptions are lush, comprehensive, poetic and allusive, often using a series of slightly altered repetitions to build up a powerful image. The writing has a huge rolling flow to

it, like the sea itself, that resonates long beyond the words themselves. Into this richly complex and scenically exotic world, explored so fully by the language used to describe it, Conrad places people with such psychological truth and complexity that they could all be drawn from intimate biographies. All are created with depth of personality and with the sense that they have the potential to make genuine, individual choices. The range and depth is astonishing, and made all the more remarkable by their symbolic power as well, whether of European colonialism, American financial imperialism or political opportunism; or aspects of humanity such as cynicism, *froideur*, malice or deeply constrained affection. At the same time, all the choices the characters make are entirely in keeping with the personality and history of that character. For all that they serve Conrad's larger, remorseless purpose, these are detailed and layered human personalities, who – facing a range of moral and personal dilemmas – are changed gradually, subtly, convincingly, yet in complete accord with Conrad's general convictions, by the world they are in.

Nostramo was a difficult book for Conrad. It was initially published in serial form, and the pressure to produce the work added to his considerable pains in writing it. He was drained by it, and was aware that he had created something the like of which he would never achieve again, despite living until 1924. But he constructed a work that was unwavering in its moral conviction, vivid imagination and detail; haunting, intense and resonant. He created unmatched individuals as well as archetypal characters that would become stereotypes for over a century; and for all its nihilism, *Nostramo* is dryly compassionate and passionately objective.

Notes by Roy McMillan



Nigel Anthony is one of Britain's leading voice actors with wide experience of reading for audiobooks and on radio. His extensive work for BBC Radio has won him two awards. Audiobook credits include *The Lady of the Camellias*, *The Alexandria Quartet*, *Robinson Crusoe* and *The Life of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart* for Naxos AudioBooks. He has also read the part of Sir Reginald de Courcy in *Lady Susan* and the parts of Lucky and the narrator in *Waiting for Godot* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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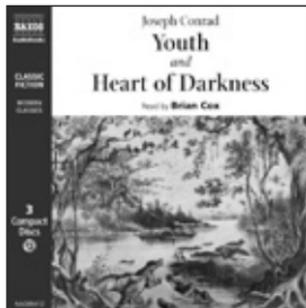
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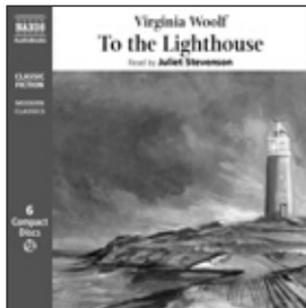
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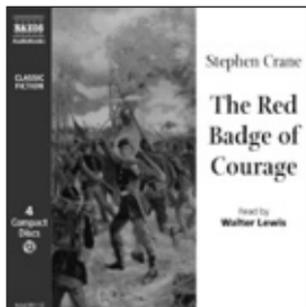
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Joseph Conrad

Nostromo

Read by **Nigel Anthony**

Set in the fictional South American country of Costaguana, *Nostromo* explores the volatile politics and crippling greed surrounding the San Tomé silver mine. The story of power, love, revolutions, loyalty and reward is told with richly evocative description and brilliantly realised characters.

But *Nostromo* is more than an adventure story; it is also a profoundly dark moral fable. Its language is as compellingly resonant as the sea itself; the characters absorbing and complex. It was Conrad's masterwork, a forerunner of Modernism, and one of the greatest novels of the twentieth century.



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