

# James Joyce Dubliners PART I

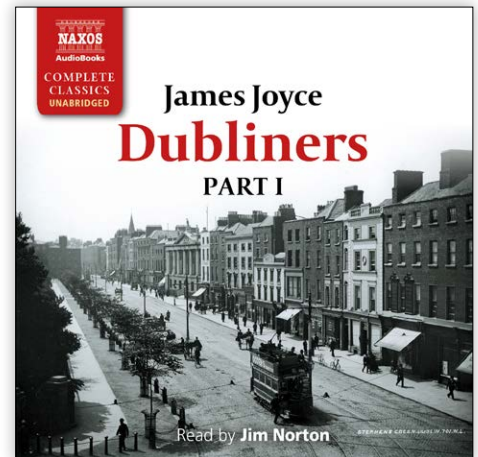
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Read by  
**Jim Norton**

**The Sisters • An Encounter • Araby • Eveline • After the Race  
Two Gallants • The Boarding House • A Little Cloud • Counterparts • Clay**

James Joyce's *Dubliners* is a collection of short stories about the lives of the people of Dublin around the turn of the century. Each story describes a small but significant moment of crisis or revelation in the life of a particular Dubliner, sympathetically but always with stark honesty. Many of the characters are desperate to escape the confines of their humdrum lives, though those that have the opportunity to do so seem unable to take it. This book holds none of the difficulties of Joyce's later novels, such as *Ulysses*, yet in its way it is just as radical. These stories introduce us to the city which fed Joyce's entire creative output, and to many of the characters who made it such a well of literary inspiration.



**Total running time: 3:12:20**

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**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 *The Third Policeman*, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and *Ulysses*.

## The Sisters

- |   |  |      |
|---|--|------|
| 1 | There was no hope for him this time: it was the third... | 6:49 |
| 2 | The next morning after breakfast...                      | 4:36 |
| 3 | In the evening my aunt took me with her...               | 9:58 |

## An Encounter

- |   |   |      |
|---|---|------|
| 4 | It was Joe Dillon who introduced the Wild West to us. | 3:41 |
| 5 | The summer holidays were near at hand...              | 6:39 |
| 6 | There was nobody but ourselves in the field.          | 8:06 |

## Araby

- |   |   |      |
|---|---|------|
| 7 | North Richmond Street, being blind, was a quiet street... | 8:26 |
| 8 | On Saturday morning...                                    | 6:46 |

## Eveline

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 9  | She sat at the window watching the evening invade... | 8:58 |
| 10 | She stood among the swaying crowd in the station...  | 2:43 |

## After the Race

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 11 | The cars came scudding in towards Dublin...     | 9:33 |
| 12 | That night the city wore the mask of a capital. | 2:15 |
| 13 | Cards! Cards! The table was cleared.            | 2:32 |

## Two Gallants

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 14 | The grey warm evening of August had descended... | 5:25 |
| 15 | Lenahan offered his friend a cigarette.          | 3:44 |

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 16 | They walked along Nassau Street and then turned... | 4:55 |
| 17 | He walked listlessly round Stephen's Green...      | 5:15 |
| 18 | His mind became active again.                      | 3:34 |

## The Boarding House

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 19 | Mrs Mooney was a butcher's daughter.                        | 7:50 |
| 20 | There must be reparation made in such a case.               | 7:49 |
| 21 | Polly sat for a little time on the side of the bed, crying. | 1:58 |

## A Little Cloud

- |    |   |      |
|----|---|------|
| 22 | Eight years before he had seen his friend off at...   | 9:24 |
| 23 | The light and noise of the bar held him at the...     | 4:52 |
| 24 | 'Everything in Paris is gay,' said Ignatius Gallaher. | 9:06 |
| 25 | Little Chandler sat in the room off the hall...       | 7:05 |

## Counterparts

- |    |  |      |
|----|--|------|
| 26 | The bell rang furiously...                           | 4:52 |
| 27 | Darkness, accompanied by a thick fog, was gaining... | 5:36 |
| 28 | He stood in a doorway opposite the office...         | 9:08 |
| 29 | A very sullen-faced man stood at the corner...       | 2:59 |

## Clay

- |    |   |       |
|----|---|-------|
| 30 | The matron had given her leave to go out...   | 7:07  |
| 31 | She thought she would have to stand in the... | 10:16 |

# James Joyce

# Dubliners

## PART I

Writing to his publisher, Grant Richards, in 1905, Joyce proclaimed 'I do not think that any writer has yet presented Dublin to the world. It has been a capital city of Europe for thousands of years, it is supposed to be the second city of the British Empire and it is nearly three times the size of Venice. Moreover... the expression Dubliner seems to me to bear some meaning and I doubt whether the same can be said for such words as "Londoner" and "Parisian", both of which have been used by writers as titles.'

Joyce's mission to 'present Dublin to the world' remained central to his work throughout his life. The city is somewhat aggrandized in *Ulysses* and *Finnegans Wake*, where it takes on a mythic quality (suitable for a modern day *Odyssey* and a *World History*), but here, in *Dubliners*, it is painted in the plain and often drab colours of reality. The fifteen stories, written at different times during the period 1904-1907 when Joyce was no longer living in Ireland, are meticulous in detail. We are given pub and street names, tram and train routes at every opportunity. The subject of these stories is not the city itself, however, but rather the lives of its citizens. Most of the characters and incidents described are based on characters and incidents remembered from Joyce's early years in Dublin. The stories are arranged in a sequence roughly charting a development from childhood, through adolescence, to adulthood and public life, with death as a principal theme of the first and last stories.

The young James's first encounter with death, – that of a local priest, Father Flynn – in *The Sisters*, sets a melancholy tone which pervades much of the book. In *An Encounter* the freedom and exuberance of a childhood adventure is somewhat dampened by the disturbing attentions of a stranger; and in *Araby* the disappointment of the young teenager determined to impress his sweetheart is clearly the first of the many disappointments which seem to characterise the lives of most of the residents of Joyce's Dublin.

Indeed disappointment, with the shallowness of their lives, is the main theme of several of the stories, together with a hopeless longing to escape. For Eveline there is a chance to escape the brutality of her existence with a domineering father, by fleeing to South America with her worldly lover, Frank. For Jimmy Doyle in *After the Race*, there is escape of a kind in his wild night with a cosmopolitan group of young men. But when day breaks after the all-night card party, Doyle is left with the reality of Dublin – and some hefty IOUs to be paid somehow.

Perhaps the most hopeless of all the captives in these stories is Little Chandler in *A Little Cloud*. For him the worldly loutishness of his well-travelled old friend Gallaher, is both revolting and exciting. His own timidity, propriety and imagined poetic sensitivity has prevented him from breaking out of his own rut, and he knows it: 'There was no doubt about it: if you wanted to succeed you had to go away. You could do nothing in Dublin.'

So simple are these stories, both in their content and style, that it is easy to forget how innovative they were at the time of their publication. Joyce set his face firmly against what he saw as the romance and sentimentality of contemporary Irish writers, and produced something rather shocking. Here is a city full of small people with real failings – no high tragedy, little

passion, no dramatic revelation. Their speech is not poetically engineered, but the everyday speech familiar to all Dubliners – warts and all. Indeed the warts were so shocking to the printer and publisher, that it took eight years of legal wrangling before the book saw full publication.

What was so shocking? The frank inclusion of thoughts and actions considered too vulgar for literary purpose: a woman crossing and uncrossing her legs suggestively, a man discussing his sexual conquests with a chum, a peculiar old vagrant performing an unspecified act alone in the bushes – and several uses of the word 'bloody'. Despite the protests of his publisher, Joyce refused point-blank to alter, for example, the line: 'if any fellow tried that sort of a game on with his sister he'd bloody well put his teeth down his throat: so he would.'

In a letter to Grant Richards he wrote: 'The word, the exact expression I have used, is in my opinion the one expression in the English language which can create on the reader the effect I wish to create. Surely you can see this for yourself?'

Furthermore, he objected: 'I seriously believe that you will retard the course of civilisation in Ireland by preventing the Irish people from having one good look at themselves in my nicely polished looking glass.'

Notes by Roger Marsh



After the Race: The Pavilion and Harbour, Kingstown, Dublin



Araby: The Royal Society, Ballsbridge, Dublin

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**The music on this recording was kindly provided by Symposium Records**  
**Then You'll Remember Me** from *The Bohemian Girl*, sung by John McCormack  
**A Youth Once Loved a Maiden** by Maude Valerie White, sung by Dame Clara Butt  
**Yes! Let Me Like a Soldier Fall** from *Maritana*, sung by John McCormack  
**The Tears That Night** by Maude Valerie White, sung by Dame Clara Butt  
**There is a Flower That Bloometh** from *Maritana*, sung by John McCormack  
**I Dreamt That I Dwelt in Marble Halls** from *The Bohemian Girl*, sung by John McCormack  
Music selected and programmed by Roger Marsh.  
78rpm transfers by Eliot Levin, Symposium Records.

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