



Frances
Hodgson Burnett

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY

Read by
Teresa Gallagher

1	Cedric knew that his papa had been an Englishman...	6:01
2	In the midst of their conversation, Mary appeared.	6:38
3	Mrs Errol looked, in the simple black dress...	4:48
4	Mr. Havisham had an idea that perhaps it would be best...	5:07
5	The door opened and Mrs. Errol came in.	4:34
6	Cedric and his mother came back soon after.	5:17
7	It was during the voyage that Cedric's mother told him...	5:11
8	Later, Mr. Havisham presented himself at the Castle.	4:43
9	It was late in the afternoon when little Lord Fauntleroy...	4:44
10	The Earl shook hands with him...	6:36
11	Dinner was announced. Cedric left his chair.	6:13
12	When Lord Fauntleroy wakened in the morning...	6:56
13	Mr Mordaunt had called today to speak to him...	3:42

14	Fauntleroy had been standing between his grandfather and the visitor...	4:12
15	When he was gone, Fauntleroy, who had accompanied him...	4:26
16	On the following Sunday morning...	6:23
17	The little boy could not help wondering why it was...	5:19
18	It was only about a week after that ride...	5:01
19	One evening there was a grand dinner party...	5:05
20	Mr. Havisham had been expected in the afternoon...	5:03
21	When Mr. Hobbs' young friend left him...	7:13
22	Almost everybody in England who read the newspapers...	4:54
23	Not many days after that, a visitor was announced...	5:05
24	Of course, as soon as the story of Lord Fauntleroy...	4:47
25	Surprising as it may appear, it did not take nearly so long...	3:55
26	When the Earl left the room after the interview...	4:29

Total time: 2:16:39

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‘The one or two persons who have made his acquaintance so far seem to find him enchanting ...I should not be surprised if he were very popular.’ This is what Frances Hodgson Burnett herself, when writing to her publisher, said of her creation, Cedric Errol – Little Lord Fauntleroy. And so it proved to be.

Frances Eliza Hodgson, as she was called before her marriage to Dr Swan Burnett, was a natural story-teller with a vivid imagination: an avid reader too. Born in Manchester, England, in 1849, she enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle until her father died when she was just four years old. This resulted in the family having to move to the slum area of the city, whose occupants’ misfortunes and ways of speaking she remembered and used in her writing later on.

When Frances was sixteen her family crossed the Atlantic to America, hoping for a better life in Knoxville in Tennessee.

There was not much improvement for them, however, and they had to make their home in a log cabin, with Frances trying various ways to raise money for the family. One idea was an attempt to run a small private school, another was to use her story-writing skills. She made use of her ability to turn the everyday events of life into adventures and romances and, still in her teens, she sent her stories to magazine editors, the letter accompanying her first story admitting, ‘My object is remuneration.’ She was immediately successful and after this wrote many more stories and plays. However, as she grew wealthier she also developed a taste for spending her money so the need to earn it was always present.

Frances married an American, Dr Swan Burnett, in 1873 and together they had two children. Their first child being a son, Lionel, they next hoped for a

daughter. When instead, they had another son they named him Vivien, the male version of the name they had chosen for a girl.

As her little sons grew Frances would comb and curl their hair each morning, long hair being fashionable for boys in those days, telling them what she called their 'hair-curling stories' to keep them still. However, she had been having difficulties with her professional writing, experiencing something called 'writers' block'. One day she told her sons a story of an American boy who became an English lord and the seeds for *Little Lord Fauntleroy* were sown. Vivien was her model for Cedric and she used his friendship with their local boot-black and grocer, including some of his conversations and experiences in her story. Vivien's generous and sympathetic nature, especially for the less fortunate, was adopted for Cedric, as was his habit of calling his mother 'Dearest'. Vivien had sung at a concert wearing a black velvet suit with a lace collar and this was also adopted as Little Lord Fauntleroy's

costume. When her story was published, first, in 1885 as a serial in a magazine, and later both as a play and a complete novel, it was a huge success, not just with children, but even more so with adults, who then inflicted the costume on their sons. Vivien however, remained embarrassed by this fact all his life! The success of *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, the story of a brave and kindly little boy who opens the eyes of a sour and elderly relative to the needs of others and in so doing brings love into his life, was like a major Hollywood film, or the Harry Potter stories are today. It brought Frances enormous fame and fortune. However there were a few criticisms by people who claimed that she had copied the idea for the story from other writers.

Born an Englishwoman but being an adoptive American Frances enjoyed being able to experience the ways of life of both countries. The success of *Little Lord Fauntleroy* enabled her to buy a fine new American home in Washington but sadly one night in 1887 it caught fire and burnt down. Frances was lucky to

escape, having to rush into the street in her elegant nightclothes, after ensuring the safety of her precious manuscripts and fine dresses. After this she and her sons crossed the Atlantic to live for two years in their London home in Portland Place, where today a blue plaque commemorates her. She also owned another home in Kent and during her lifetime she was known to have crossed the Atlantic between her American and English homes thirty-three times – quite something for those days.

Frances enjoyed the company of people from all the social classes so it is not surprising that many of her stories, like *Little Lord Fauntleroy*, describe how their heroes or heroines experience a change in fortune or social class. She herself enjoyed having money to spend and was known to have at least ninety dresses in her wardrobe. In her later life these were often made of floaty material and she wore a large orange wig to accompany them. Not surprisingly her close friends gave her the nickname of ‘Fluffy’ as a result.

A fast writer who rarely revised anything once it was written down, Frances Hodgson Burnett wrote fifty-two books, thirteen plays and numerous short stories during the fifty-six years of her professional life, most of them works for adults. At that time there were few books written just for children and *Little Lord Fauntleroy* was her first story intended for younger readers, even if it did become equally popular with grown-ups. This story and her other children’s books, *A Little Princess*, written some eighteen years later, and *The Secret Garden*, which followed after a further two years, are however, the works for which Frances Hodgson Burnett will be best remembered. They join the ranks of other late 19th and early 20th Century classic children’s stories such as *Little Women*, *What Katy Did* and *The Railway Children*, and must surely fulfil their author’s wish that through her stories she might ‘...write more happiness into the world.’

Notes by Helen Davies

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(1748-1814) courtesy The Bridgeman Art Library

Frances Hodgson Burnett

LITTLE LORD FAUNTLEROY

Read by **Teresa Gallagher**

An unexpected inheritance changes the life of a poor eight-year-old living in New York. Cedric finds that he is now Lord Fauntleroy with a castle in England, and leaves an impoverished American city life for a new existence as an English aristocrat. It is not quite the dream scenario it first appears, as he has to cope with a crusty old grandfather and expectations from a different social circle. But gradually both find they can learn from each other. A runaway success from its first publication in 1885, *Little Lord Fauntleroy* not only set a fashion with black velvet suit and lace collar, but became a children's classic on both sides of the Atlantic.



Teresa Gallagher has performed in many leading roles in both plays and musicals across the country, London's West End and Broadway. In addition, she is a well-known voice to listeners of BBC Radio Drama. Her work on film includes *The Misadventures of Margaret* and Mike Leigh's *Topsy Turvy*. For Naxos AudioBooks she has recorded the *Biography of Jane Austen* and selections from *The Decameron* by Boccaccio. She has also read *Classic Women's Short Stories*, *Heidi*, *The Treasure Seekers*, *The Wouldbegoods*, *The Story of Jesus* and *Thailand* from *after the quake*.

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