

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Marcel Proust
Time Regained

Read by **Neville Jason**

CLASSIC
FICTION

MODERN
CLASSICS



NA322012D

REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST • XII

1	At Tansonville with Gilberte	7:37
2	Saint-Loup insisted I should remain...	6:15
3	Years in a sanatorium with a visit to Paris in 1914	4:32
4	At dinner time the restaurants were full...	2:55
5	Occasional meetings with Baron de Charlus	6:19
6	A return to the sanatorium	3:37
7	On my second return to Paris – another letter	3:55
8	A visit from Robert de Saint-Loup	3:18
9	Thinking about Saint-Loup's visit	7:01
10	A further vendetta against Baron de Charlus	7:49
11	The views of Baron de Charlus	5:24
12	The destruction of men and the effect of the War	6:36
13	The aeroplanes passing through the night sky	7:46
14	Among abandoned, derelict houses,...	4:14
15	Entrance to the house followed by a sailor	2:01
16	A shocking discovery	6:22
17	'I implore you, mercy, mercy, have pity'	2:49
18	A croix-de-guerre had been found on the floor	10:27
19	News of the death of Robert de Saint	10:56
20	Back to another sanatorium	2:44
21	I ordered a carriage to take me to the party	6:43
22	I got down from the carriage again	2:00

23	I stumble on some uneven paving stones	4:13
24	I entered the Guermantes's mansion	3:55
25	I forced myself to try and see clearly	8:52
26	Fragments of existence removed from time	3:27
27	As I entered the Prince de Guermantes's library	4:02
28	Real life... which has been uncovered...	5:59
29	At this moment, the butler arrived...	6:56
30	The Duchesse de Guermantes:	4:23
31	Old age, the meaning of death	8:03
32	Odette – looking like 'a rose that had been sterilised'	4:50
33	I could hardly recognise my friend Bloch	8:04
34	An effect of Time	2:07
35	Kindness, the simple process of maturing...	3:52
36	A stout lady came up and greeted me – Gilberte	6:24
37	Rachel, now a celebrated actress	2:20
38	Tea at the home of the great actress Berma	2:16
39	Judgements on Rachel	6:02
40	The lives of the Duchesse, the Duke and Odette,	7:58
41	The idea of lost Time...	5:12
42	This idea of Time had another prize for me...	5:12
43	The idea of death installed itself	8:29

Total time: 3:56:53

Marcel Proust

Time Regained

Time Regained is the final part of *Remembrance of Things Past*. In between lengthy stays in a sanatorium, the Narrator, Marcel, makes several return visits to Paris during the First World War. When he finally leaves the sanatorium at the end of the war, he discovers that the old social order has changed. The two Ways of his childhood walks in Combray have now come together; the Méséglise or Swann's Way representing the bourgeois society into which Marcel was born, and the Guermantes Way, the aristocratic circle of the Guermantes family into which he has been admitted, are now united, and members of both worlds are to be found mingling in Paris society.

Gilberte, Swann's daughter, has married Robert de Saint-Loup, thus becoming a member of the Guermantes family; the Prince de Guermantes marries Mme Verdurin, formerly 'Mistress' of 'the little clan' a bohemian artistic circle, whose husband has since died; the aged Duc de Guermantes is in love with Swann's widow, the former courtesan Odette de Crecy; Marcel's old schoolfriend Bloch, now a

respected playwright, has become much in demand in society salons; the Duchesse de Guermantes, previously unwilling to acknowledge any but the most fashionable members of her world, now cultivates the friendship of the actress Rachel, previously the mistress of her nephew Saint-Loup, and originally a whore.

In attempting to find his way home through the darkened streets during an air raid, Marcel becomes lost and stumbles into a male brothel. He sees a shadowy figure reminiscent of Saint-Loup leave the building. His curiosity leads him to witness the Baron de Charlus undergoing an episode of sadomasochistic whipping. A croix-de-guerre is discovered in the brothel, which later on turns out to have been lost by Saint-Loup. Unknown to Gilberte, Robert has been involved in homosexual affairs, and is in love at present with the violinist Charles Morel. Morel is the son of Marcel's uncle's valet, and was formerly the protégé of the Baron de Charlus whom he has treated with cruelty and ingratitude. Later, Marcel is devastated to learn that Robert de

Saint-Loup has been killed in battle, having proved himself a daring and valiant officer.

Gilberte returns to Tansonville, her house at Combray, which has been requisitioned by German troops. She writes to Marcel that the hawthorn path where they first met has become a military objective and is the centre of a fierce battle, while Combray church has been destroyed by the British and the French, because it was used as a look-out post by the Germans.

When Marcel returns to Paris from his sanatorium after the war, he accepts an invitation to attend a reception at the Prince de Guermantes's magnificent new mansion. Here he experiences several episodes of involuntary memory in which the past is so vividly recreated that it becomes indistinguishable from the present. These experiences lead to his discovering that the theme for which he has been searching as the subject for his work, is his own life. He meets friends from his earlier life whom he is astonished to find have become old, and it is brought home to him that if time has passed for them it has passed for him as well, and that he too is now old. He realises that he only has a limited time in which to work, and that he must begin at last.

Time Regained brings together the two

themes of the book, Time Lost and Time Rediscovered. The novel's original title in French, *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu* translates literally into In Search of Lost Time, and the phrase 'lost time' may be taken to refer both to time which has passed, and time which has been wasted. The two meanings are relevant both to Proust's own life and to the novel which, if not directly autobiographical, is certainly a record of Proust's inner journey through life.

Proust wanted to be a writer from his early youth, but he was tortured by self-doubt and the fear that he lacked talent. He was also highly susceptible to the attractions of society, and spent much of his time in the fashionable salons of the period which were frequented by well-known writers, composers, artists and politicians as well as by members of the aristocracy and the social elite. But Proust was aware that his life as a man about town was sapping time and energy which ought to be devoted to his work, and he constantly berated himself for lacking the willpower to keep regular hours and embark on a sustained regime of work.

However, in retrospect his whole life can be seen as a preparation for writing his masterpiece, *Remembrance of Things Past*.

All his experiences, both serious and frivolous, were to serve as raw material for his novel. Despite Proust's self-criticism, and although he never earned his living from writing and depended on a private income, before embarking on *Remembrance of Things Past*, he still managed to write – in addition to endless letters – articles, essays, poetry, translations of several works of Ruskin, a volume of short stories, and an unfinished novel. The volume of stories, *The Pleasures and the Days*, was published in 1896, to little public acclaim, while the unfinished novel, *Jean Santeuil*, an unsuccessful first attempt to write what was to become *Remembrance of Things Past*, lay among Proust's papers until being discovered and published in 1954, more than thirty years after his death.

The Narrator of *Remembrance of Things Past* is a thinly-disguised version of the author himself. Like Proust, he is an invalid who wastes his time socialising, constantly putting off the work he intends to write. In the last volume, *Time Regained*, he finally realises that the subject for his book, which always eluded him, was there in front of him all the time; it is his own life.

Because of its digressive nature, *Remembrance of Things Past* has been

criticised as formless, lacking shape. But although Proust altered and added enormously to the original scheme of the novel, which ended up unimaginably longer than he originally planned, its structure was there from the beginning, and it is not until we reach the final part that the author's intention can be fully appreciated.

Remembrance of Things Past is the story of a man who is unable to bring himself to write. Finally he discovers his theme and decides it is time to begin. And as we finish reading the novel, we realise that it is the book on which he is about to start. Here we have the perfectly formed circle of Time Lost and Time Regained, which was Proust's original plan.

Proust's theory of involuntary memory is central to the work. The incident of the madeleine dipped in lime-flower tea which brings back for the Narrator a whole lost world of childhood, takes place in the first part of the novel, *Swann's Way*, and with it the author sets forth his subject as a composer states a theme which he intends to develop in the rest of the symphony.

According to Proust, it is the power of involuntary memory which enables us to re-experience the past, rather than merely to visualise it, which is a function of the

intellect. On such occasions we feel again the same sensations which surrounded the original event. And when the Narrator returns to Paris after many years in a sanatorium, several instances of involuntary memory are crowded together in one day. These lead to his realisation that he is able to use these experiences, in which the past and the present are inextricably mixed, to relive his life, to regain lost time.

As Marcel arrives at the Prince de Guermantes's mansion he steps on an uneven paving stone, and he is immediately filled with a sense of coolness and dazzling light. He searches for the origin of these feelings, and realises that they have transported him back to Venice, where he had encountered a similar uneven paving stone in the Baptistry of St. Mark's. In the library a servant accidentally knocks a spoon against a plate, and Marcel finds himself again in a railway carriage contemplating the beauty of the evening light on a row of trees, a sight to which he had felt unable to respond the previous day. When he wipes his mouth with a starched napkin he relives the sensation of being once again in Cabourg, drying his face by the open window with one of the hotel's stiff linen towels, and as he breathes the salt air he feels he has only to open the windows to

step out onto the beach. These experiences serve to remove all his self-doubt and to give him courage by affirming that the past is alive within him and that his youthful self is still accessible.

And so 'lost Time' – in the sense both of time which has passed and time which has been wasted, becomes 'Time regained', that is time which can not only be lived through again, but can be captured and immobilised through literature. Encapsulated in a work of art, time is suspended, and a life which would otherwise have been as ephemeral as a plant which blooms only for a season and then dies, is enabled to exist indefinitely.

This yearning for immortality is the spur which drives the artist forward, impelling him to create art as a defence against the finality of death. And the last third of Marcel Proust's short life was taken up with this struggle against mortality, as bedridden and suffering, he called upon all his remaining strength to complete his task.

Proust, the life-long invalid, sensed the advance of death and was conscious of the shortness of time remaining for the accomplishment of his work. And with an irony worthy of one of his own characters, who so often turn out to be quite different from what we have been led to suspect, the fashionable man about town who had been

seen by his critics as a dilettante, who since his youth had berated himself for his lack of will-power and his inability to work, now became an example of courage, single-minded determination and tenacity, as he battled against illness and death to finish what he had set out to do.

In the end Proust succeeded in completing his novel before death claimed him, and in *Remembrance of Things Past* he leaves us his legacy, a distillation of his life through which he enables us to see our own more clearly. As he wrote, 'Our greatest fears, like our greatest ambitions, are not beyond our strength, and we are able in the end to overcome the one and to realise the other.' The work he feared he might never accomplish stands now for all time – a reminder that with sufficient courage and will, we too have the power to transform Time Lost into Time Regained.

Notes by Neville Jason

The previous books

Swann's Way, set in the village of Combray, introduces the reader to Marcel's family, their servants including the redoubtable Françoise, and their neighbour Charles Swann, the scholarly man of fashion. There are two country walks favoured by Marcel's family; *Swann's Way*, which lies in the direction of Swann's property, and the Guermantes Way, which skirts the estate of the noble Guermantes family.

Swann in Love tells the story of Swann's passion for the former courtesan Odette de Crécy, and Marcel's childish love for their daughter Gilberte.

Within a Budding Grove Part I sees the end of Marcel's infatuation with Gilberte. Following an illness, he is sent to recuperate at the seaside resort of Balbec together with his grandmother, who renews her acquaintance with an old school friend, the Marquise de Villeparisis.

In *Within a Budding Grove Part II* Marcel meets a band of charming young girls, to one of whom, Albertine, he is particularly attracted. He encounters the painter Elstir, whom the reader has met earlier as a member of Mme Verdurin's bohemian circle. He is also introduced to the sinister Baron de Charlus, and to Mme de Villeparisis's nephew, the Marquis Robert de Saint-Loup.

The Guermantes Way Part I finds Marcel's family installed in an apartment which forms part of the Paris mansion of the Guermantes family. Marcel becomes obsessed with the Duchesse de Guermantes, who does not reciprocate his interest. At a reception given by the Marquise de Villeparisis, Marcel discovers that his father's colleague, the former diplomat M. de Norpois, has been the lover of the Marquise for many years.

The Guermantes Way Part II sees the death of Marcel's beloved grandmother following a stroke. Now that Marcel is no longer in love with the Duchesse de Guermantes, her attitude towards him changes, and she invites him to dine. Seeing nobility at close quarters, Marcel is made aware of the fallibility of his fantasies about them. He receives an invitation from the Baron de Charlus, and is outraged by the manner of his reception. Charles Swann announces that he is suffering from a terminal illness.

In *Sodom and Gomorrah (Cities of the Plain) Part I* Marcel observes a homosexual encounter between the Baron de Charlus and the tailor Jupien, which leads to the author's meditations on the theme of homosexuality. Marcel continues to rise in the world of high society as he receives an

invitation to a ball given by the Prince and Princesse de Guermantes. He pays a second visit to Balbec, where feelings of grief for the death of his grandmother vie with those of his desire for Albertine.

In *Sodom and Gomorrah (Cities of the Plain) Part II* Madame Verdurin has taken a house for the summer in the locality of Balbec and invites Marcel and Albertine to join her 'little group' for her 'Wednesdays'. The violinist Charles Morel, whose father was valet to Marcel's uncle, becomes intimate with the Baron de Charlus. Marcel's suspicions regarding Albertine's lesbian tendencies are revived when he learns of her friendship with Mlle Vinteuil, who is due to arrive in Balbec. To avoid their meeting he decides to take Albertine with him to Paris.

The Captive Part I finds Albertine installed in Marcel's Paris apartment in the absence of his parents. Despite enjoying their physical intimacy, Marcel is tortured by his suspicions regarding Albertine's lesbian tendencies, and his efforts to separate her from her women friends end by his keeping her a virtual prisoner.

In *The Captive Part II* Marcel attends a soiree at the Verdurin's house, to which the Baron de Charlus has invited his aristocratic friends. When the guests all snub Mme

Verdurin, she takes her revenge by setting Morel against his protector, the Baron. Marcel attempts to please Albertine with gifts of gowns and expensive jewellery, but she is listless and depressed, deprived of her freedom. Just as Marcel resolves to leave her, he is met with the news that Albertine has taken flight.

The Fugitive Albertine has escaped from Marcel's Paris flat, and fled to her aunt's house in Touraine. Marcel is devastated by her loss, and sends Saint-Loup after her to try and persuade her to return. But his pain is increased immeasurably when he receives a letter from her aunt to say that Albertine has been killed in a riding accident.

The Author

Marcel Proust was born on July 10, 1871. His father, a distinguished professor of medicine, was from a Catholic family, while his mother was Jewish. Although intent on becoming a writer from an early age, Proust was riddled with self-doubt.

During his twenties he co-founded a short-lived review, *Le Banquet*, contributed to *La Revue Blanche* and had his first book published in 1896, a collection of essays entitled *Les Plaisirs et les Jours*.

He became an enthusiastic admirer of Ruskin and translated his *Bible of Amiens* and *Sesame and Lilies* into French. A novel, *Jean Santeuil*, which was the precursor of *Remembrance of Things Past*, was abandoned, and eventually published long after Proust's death, in 1954.

For much of his youth Proust led the life of a man about town, frequenting fashionable Paris drawing rooms and literary salons, which were to form the background of a number of his early stories and sketches, and subsequently of *Remembrance of Things Past*.

The death of his adored mother in 1905 resulted in a nervous collapse and aggravated his chronic asthma and insomnia. But despite his grief and the sense of loss from which he never

recovered, his mother's death freed him with regard to his homosexual emotional life, and allowed him to address homosexuality in his writing, albeit in a manner which treated such experiences as happening to others rather than to himself.

In 1907 he moved into an apartment in the Boulevard Haussmann where, in the bedroom which he had had lined with cork to keep out noise, he embarked upon his great work *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* (*Remembrance of Things Past*).

This long autobiographical cycle was originally published in eight sections: *Du Côté de Chez Swann* (*Swann's Way*) in 1913; *A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs* (*Within a Budding Grove*) in 1918; *Le Côté de Guermantes I* (*The Guermantes Way I*) in 1920; *Le Côté de Guermantes II* and *Sodom et Gomorrhe I* (*Cities of the Plain I*) in 1921; *Sodom et Gomorrhe II* in 1922; *La Prisonnière* (*The Captive*) in 1923; *Albertine*

Disparue (*The Sweet Cheat Gone*) in 1925; *Le Temps Retrouvé* (*Time Regained*) in 1927.

Proust was obliged to publish *Swann's Way* at his own expense, and even after it had appeared, had trouble finding a publisher for the next part, *A L'Ombre des Jeunes Filles en Fleurs*. However, when it appeared in 1918 it received considerable acclaim, and was awarded the Prix Goncourt the following year.

By the time Proust died, on November 18, 1922, the first four parts of the cycle had been published, leaving the others to appear posthumously. Parts One to Eleven of this Naxos recording of *Remembrance of Things Past* have been abridged from the English translation by C.K. Scott Moncrieff. The translation of Part Twelve is by Neville Jason.

Notes by Neville Jason

Cover picture: Ypres After First Bombardment, Nevinson.
Courtesy: The Bridgeman Art Library, London.

**The music on this recording is taken from the
NAXOS and MARCO POLO catalogues**

FAURE PIANO MUSIC FOR FOUR HANDS Pierre-Alain Volondat & Patrick De Hooge	8.553638
DEBUSSY PRELUDES Amir Tebenikhin, piano	8.554768
DEBUSSY VIOLIN SONATA Dong-Suk Kang, violin/Pascal Devoyon, piano	8.550276
D'INDY PIANO QUINTET IN G MINOR Ilona Prunyi, piano, New Budapest Quartet	8.223691
FAURE NOCTURES Jean Martin, piano	8.550795
SCRIABIN ETUDES Alexander Paley, piano	8.553070
DAVID PIANO TRIOS Ilona Prunyi, piano/Eszter Perényi, violin/Tibor Párkányi, cello	8.223492
CHABRIER PIANO WORKS VOL. 1 Georges Rabol, piano	8.553009
CIURLIONIS PIANO WORKS VOL. 1 Mûza Rubackyté, piano	8.223549
CIURLIONIS PIANO WORKS VOL. 2 Mûza Rubackyté, piano	8.223550
DEBUSSY ARRANGMENTS FOR 2 PIANOS Daniel Blumethal/Robert Groslot pianos	8.223378
SATIE REVERIE DU PAUVRE Klára Körmendi, piano	8.556688

The music on this recording was programmed by Nicolas Soames

Marcel Proust

Time Regained

Read by **Neville Jason**

Lost in the blacked-out streets of Paris during the First World War, Marcel stumbles into a brothel and accidentally witnesses a shocking scene involving the Baron de Charlus. Later, at a reception given by the Prince de Guermantes, his meditations on the passage of time lead to his determination to embark on his life's work at last.



Neville Jason trained at RADA where he was awarded the Diction Prize by Sir John Gielgud. He has worked with the English Stage Co., the Old Vic Company and the RSC as well as in films, TV and musicals. He is frequently heard on radio. As well as *Remembrance of Things Past*, he also reads Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, *Far From The Madding Crowd*, *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, and Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* for Naxos AudioBooks.

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