

NAXOS
AudioBooks

Daniel Defoe
Moll Flanders

Read by **Heather Bell**

**CLASSIC
FICTION**



NA337212D

1	My true name is well known in the records	6:06
2	When I was 14 my old nurse died	8:09
3	The younger brother falls to work with me	3:59
4	One brother prevails upon me to marry the other	6:45
5	With reluctance, I agree	6:34
6	A widow – left loose to the world	5:34
7	Alone again – but in lessened circumstances	7:44
8	A new, kindly husband	3:56
9	We arrived in York River in Virginia	5:52
10	The revelation destroys the marriage	6:09
11	At last I resolved to tell him of it myself	4:30
12	Return to England	7:49
13	A new liaison in Bath	5:30
14	Abandoned again	4:08
15	Taking stock – approaching poverty	4:50
16	At the bank – a sympathetic ear	6:48
17	Travelling North – a wild marriage	7:02
18	Financial reality and a final fling	5:40
19	Another parting and another child	6:34

20	Birth and fostering	4:56
21	A new affair	5:54
22	Marriage – again	6:16
23	Widowhood, poverty and a new career	7:06
24	Moll reflects on her first felony	6:33
25	Moll learns her dangerous trade	5:57
26	The last and fateful theft	7:20
27	A husband reappears	5:51
28	Trial – and a plea for mercy	4:38
29	The sentence is proclaimed	5:46
30	Moll reveals herself to her husband	5:42
31	Bound for Virginia again	5:20
32	Inquiries for my family	6:05
33	Uncertainties	6:03
34	Settling in – and a tender reunion	6:15
35	Arranging affairs with my son	5:50
36	A steady life and old age – at last	6:12

Total time: 3:36:06

Daniel Defoe

Moll Flanders

Daniel Defoe, born in London in 1660, lived an extraordinarily varied and interesting life. In 1688 he joined Monmouth's rebellion; he was imprisoned at different times for debt and for libel; he worked as a secret agent for the government between 1703 and 1714; he started several businesses and wrote prolifically throughout his career. Apart from being a formidable pamphleteer, he also virtually invented modern journalism and may be said to be the first true English novelist. Best known for *Robinson Crusoe*, his other novels include *Colonel Jack* and *Roxana*. Defoe's novels are characterised by directness, simplicity of narrative and a superb command of realistic detail – features which also distinguish the powerful *Journal of the Plague Year* and the pioneering *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*.

Moll Flanders, published in 1722, was described by Virginia Woolf as 'one of the few English novels we can call indisputably great.' Moll, abandoned as a child, tells her own story – brought up as an orphan, she enters upon a succession of marriages (not all of them legal), bent upon economic survival in a world unsympathetic to the single woman of no fortune. Reduced to abject poverty after six years as a rich man's

where, she turns to crime, but is eventually caught and transported to Virginia.

The brilliance of *Moll Flanders* lies in its absolute honesty and realism: Defoe tells his tale with uncompromising directness and an extraordinary empathy with his heroine's plight. Moll's life is seen as much in terms of economics as emotions: we are constantly reminded of the precise worth of objects, of the exact state of her finances in pounds, shillings and pence; yet we cannot help rejoicing with her in her brief periods of calm prosperity, or pitying her when she is at last caught and carried to the horrors of Newgate and probable execution. We are compelled to see that Moll can only be judged in the context of her society – a harsh world of expanding economic activity and social aspiration. Moll regrets her immorality, yet confesses that a tale of repentance 'would not be equally diverting as the wicked part'; she repeats the wise man's prayer 'Give me not poverty, lest I steal'; and we are forced to acknowledge that society may be as much to blame as the individual who struggles to survive within it.

Notes by Perry Keenlyside

The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

HANDEL

Harpsichord Suites Nos 1-5
Alan Cuckston, harpsichord

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Cover picture: The Orgy, by Hogarth.
Courtesy of: Sir John Soane's Museum, London.

Daniel Defoe

Moll Flanders

Read by **Heather Bell**

The Fortunes and Misfortunes of the Famous *Moll Flanders*
Who was Born in Newgate, and during a Life
of continue'd Variety for Three-score Years,
besides her Childhood, was Twelve Year a
Whore, five times a Wife (whereof once
to her own Brother), Twelve Year a Thief,
Eight Year a Transported Felon in Virginia,
at last grew Rich, liv'd Honest, and died a Penitent
Written from her own Memorandums



Heather Bell has worked in repertory companies all over Great Britain and has toured as far afield as Kenya. Regularly seen in London's West End and on British TV, she is also known for her many leading parts in BBC Radio Drama – notably for creating the role of Clarrie Grundy in 'The Archers' and playing her for five years.

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