



Eleanor H. Porter  
**POLLYANNA**  
Read by **Laurel Lefkow**

JUNIOR  
CLASSICS



NA346912D

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1	Miss Polly Harrington entered her kitchen a little hurriedly...	6:03
2	In the little attic room Nancy swept and scrubbed vigorously.	3:46
3	Promptly at twenty minutes to four the next afternoon...	5:15
4	Miss Polly Harrington did not rise to meet her niece.	5:40
5	For a moment after she had gone Pollyanna stood quite still...	6:03
6	At the earliest possible moment after supper...	7:48
7	It was nearly 7 o'clock when Pollyanna awoke that first day...	4:35
8	Half an hour later when Miss Polly...	6:15
9	The shopping expedition consumed the entire afternoon...	5:28
10	It was not long before life at the Harrington homestead...	3:51
11	In the sick room, Pollyanna blinked a little...	7:04
12	It rained the next time Pollyanna saw the Man.	7:08
13	One by one the July days passed.	6:21
14	August brought several surprises and some changes.	7:16
15	It had been a hard day.	3:49
16	It was not long before she came in sight of the house.	4:50

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17	Pollyanna was a little late for supper...	4:21
18	The great, grey pile of masonry looked very different...	6:22
19	The man did not answer.	6:04
20	It was on a rainy day about a week after Pollyanna's visit...	5:26
21	Pollyanna only chuckled the more gleefully.	5:17
22	John Pendleton greeted Pollyanna today with a smile.	4:04
23	After supper that evening...	3:45
24	As the warm August days passed, Pollyanna went very frequently...	7:27
25	School, in some ways, was a surprise to Pollyanna...	5:03
26	Sunday mornings Pollyanna usually attended church...	4:17
27	The man turned now, almost fiercely.	4:06
28	The sky was darkening fast...	6:44
29	He lifted his chin and braced himself...	5:58
30	It was on the last day of October...	6:51
31	It was that afternoon that Nancy ran out to Old Tom...	7:09
32	On the day after John Pendleton's call...	4:20

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33	Then, abruptly, the light died from his eyes.	3:59
34	Just a week from the time Doctor Mead the specialist...	4:37
35	It was Nancy who was sent to tell Mr. John Pendleton...	3:37
36	It did not take long for the entire town of Beldingsville...	5:49
37	It was not long after John Pendleton's second visit...	6:59
38	The door had scarcely closed behind her...	5:39
39	One by one the short winter days came and went...	7:46
40	The next time Dr. Warren entered the chamber...	4:09

**Total time: 3:41:24**

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Eleanor H. Porter

# POLLYANNA

Pollyanna Whittier goes to live with her rich Aunt Polly when she becomes orphaned after her father's death. There she dedicates herself to making everyone as cheerful as she can by playing the 'glad game', which consists of finding the best in every situation, whatever its immediate harms may initially appear to be. On one hand, this is nothing but admirable, and she succeeds in making everyone she encounters happier as a result, but on the other, there are problems with this sunny disposition. One is that it appears that she is either wilfully misunderstanding the motives of the people she encounters (her frosty aunt, for one) or is simply not prepared to accept that they may have other reasons for their behaviour than the good ones she ascribes to them. The other problem is that her logic might be inclined to make the most generous of

her acquaintances doubt her reason. For example, when visiting the invalid Mrs Snow, she tells the bed-ridden lady how glad she could be that other people weren't like her.

The 'glad game' originated with Pollyanna's father when the two of them were waiting for a delivery from a charitable organisation. Pollyanna hoped it might contain a doll; instead it was crutches. Her father said that they should find something to be glad about in the delivery – namely, that although it was just crutches, at least he and Pollyanna didn't need them. This almost seems to be laughing at others' misfortune; but that is as far from Pollyanna's philosophy as possible and certainly not what he would have intended.

The book, published in 1913, was written by Eleanor H. Porter (1868–1920) and although she had had minor success

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before with short stories and other novels, *Pollyanna* was a phenomenon. There was something about the irrepressible *joie de vivre* of the heroine, something infectious about her enthusiasm for squeezing all the goodness she could from life, that caught the imagination of readers all over the world, leading to sequels (by Porter and others), films, stage and television adaptations, as well as a board game. It is by no means the only book to feature an orphaned girl brought up by adults she hardly knows and who brought happiness with her – *Anne of Green Gables*, published five years earlier, is just one other example. The history of children's literature would hardly exist without parentless heroes getting into scrapes and engaging the reader with their innocence, humility and freshness of vision. On the other hand, there is the consequent danger that what the author intended as charm might turn into something more cloying;

that innocence might become mere naivety; and child-like honesty transform into childish misunderstanding.

Although her general popularity has taken a profound hit in recent years (unlike, say, Huckleberry Finn or Tom Sawyer), *Pollyanna* is not a prim goody-two-shoes. She is a girl who embraced living, not just being alive; someone who wanted to sleep under the stars, and talk to people, and run and play and just ... *live*. She has a genuine belief that the best can be made of a situation, and wants others to share what to her is an evident truth. It is this innocent desire to take what is good out of life, rather than simply follow one's duty, or be weighed down by obligations, or constrained by social niceties, that is one clue to her appeal, as it is in many other children's books.

However another reason is perhaps slightly deeper. *Pollyanna*'s 'glad game' may seem at first like a specious attempt to believe that there is a beneficent

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Providence in everything if only you can find it, but it can also be read as a self-protection mechanism, a system to deflect pain or loss, and one that needs to be held to fast in times of great distress. Rather than not see or not accept the less happy side of life, it is a decision to fight against it, to take it on and beat it. She has faced plenty of unhappiness in her young life before we meet her; and she is not without her trials in the book itself. What is more, rather than simply hang on to her philosophy for her own internal good cheer, she makes every effort to bring the benefit of her belief to everyone else

around her. This is an active engagement with the community aimed at making everyone happier, breaking their self-imposed shackles and freeing them to express the more generous aspects of their nature – effectively enabling their happiness. Moreover, she is rewarded for her efforts when she faces her greatest challenge.

Life is not necessarily like that, of course. But then fiction is not always supposed to reflect life so much as idealised representations of its potential.

**Notes by Roy McMillan**

Cover picture: Girl on Swing, illustration by Helena Maguire in *Needles and Pins* courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library



**Laurel Lefkow** is an accomplished stage, television and radio actress. She has won awards for a number of her audio books and was nominated for best supporting actress for her performance in *A Shayna Maidel* in London's West End. Other theatre roles include Alison in *Look Back in Anger*, Irina in *The Three Sisters* and Rose in *Slow dance on the Killing Ground*. Her television and film credits include *In Suspicious Circumstances*, *The Tracey Ullman Show*, *Spy Game*, *Inside the Twin Towers* and *A Perfect Family*. She was born in Washington DC and grew up in India, Kenya and France where her father worked as an American Diplomat. She trained at the Webber Douglas Academy in London. Laurel also has an extensive and successful career as a voice over artist in many well known cartoons and advertising campaigns.



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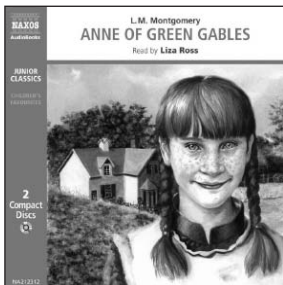
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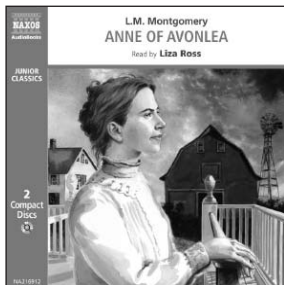
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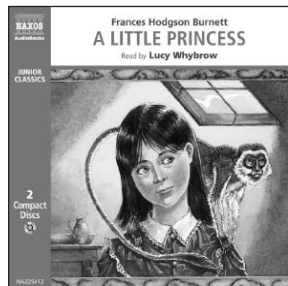
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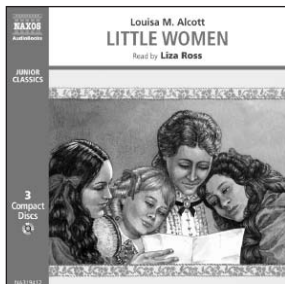
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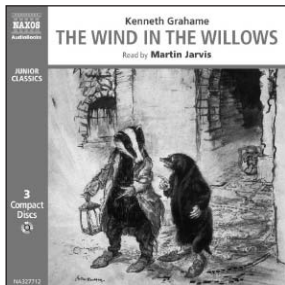
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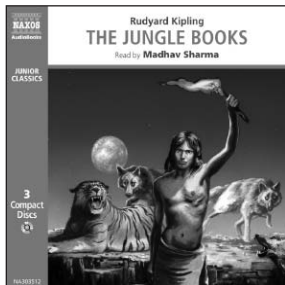
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Eleanor H. Porter

# POLLYANNA

Read by **Laurel Lefkow**

When Pollyanna Whittier becomes orphaned, she goes to live with her rather strict Aunt Polly. And Aunt Polly is not at all prepared for Pollyanna! With her infectious energy and her determination to see the best in every situation, Pollyanna brings sunshine into the lives of everyone around her.

But not everyone wants it – and she has a lot of work to do to persuade some of them that there is a good side to everything.

But will being glad be enough for Pollyanna herself when she faces the biggest struggle of her life?

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-460-6

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Abridged by Sylvia Helsey  
Produced by Roy McMillan  
Recorded at Motivation Sound Studios, London  
Edited by Sarah Butcher

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3:41:24