

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

The Leopard

Read by **David Horovitch**

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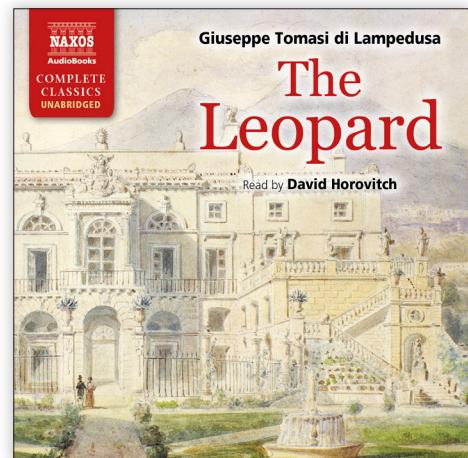
Sicily, 1860. In the gracefully decaying estates of the ancient Corbera family, Don Fabrizio, Prince of Salina, is aware that great change is coming. It is not only in the form of the popular uprising towards Italian unification, but in the decline of the nobility and the rise of the middle class.

Assailed by the critics on its publication, *The Leopard* was nevertheless hailed by the public and has since grown in worldwide popularity for the ironic elegance with which it spins a story of regret and rebirth, of change and stagnation, of the passing of the old ways and the inevitable triumph of the new.

The Leopard is a modern masterwork that stands comparison with the novels of Marcel Proust and Jane Austen.



David Horovitch has had a long and distinguished career. His appearances in the theatre include many in the West End, the National Theatre and the RSC. On television he is best known for his performance as Inspector Slack in *Miss Marple*. Among his many readings for Naxos AudioBooks are Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*.



Total running time: 9:02:45 • 7 CDs

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- 1 [1-1] **1: Introduction to the Prince, May 1860**
2 [1-2] With a wildly excited Bendico bounding ahead...
3 [1-3] Those audiences! All those audiences...
4 [1-4] Dinner at Villa Salina was served...
5 [1-5] It was not dark yet...
6 [1-6] Leaving the carriage at his palace...
7 [1-7] Next morning the sun lit on a refreshed Prince.
8 [1-8] The estate office was still empty...
9 [1-9] But he was soon exiled from these stellar realms.
10 [1-10] The Prince smiled.
11 [1-11] Leaving Bendico panting from his own dynamism...
12 [1-12] Both soothed, they began discussing a report...
13 [2-1] In the estate office, to which he returned...
14 [2-2] **2: Donnafugata, August 1860**
15 [2-3] An hour later they were all on the road again...
16 [2-4] It had been an idyllic evening...
17 [2-5] Beyond the short bridge leading into the town...
18 [2-6] The Salina palace was next door...
19 [2-7] He went up the internal staircase...
20 [2-8] The Jesuit was sweating in the heat...
21 [2-9] An hour later he awoke refreshed...
22 [2-10] The Prince had always taken care...
23 [2-11] About Tancredi there seems little to be said...



24

- [2-12] At the end of dinner the conversation... 7:17
[25] [3-1] Centuries-old tradition required... 8:38
[26] [3-2] Tancredi had been gone for more than a month... 6:23
[27] [3-3] The sensation of finding himself a prisoner... 4:13
[28] [3-4] Don Fabrizio only revealed the contents... 5:47
[29] [3-5] For the moment such tight-rope balancing... 5:19
[30] [3-6] By some association of ideas... 6:09
[31] [3-7] The day of the Plebiscite was windy and grey... 5:28
[32] [3-8] Before dusk the three or four easy girls... 5:30
[33] [3-9] At this point calm descended on Don Fabrizio... 5:10
[34] [3-10] Don Ciccio had said his say. 4:38
[35] [3-11] Don Ciccio, who, as protégé of queens... 7:00
[36] [3-12] When Don Calogero's arrival was announced... 8:13
[37] [3-13] The Mayor's eyes had been fixed... 6:45
[38] [4-1] The excellent Jesuit, dragged from his reading... 5:07
[39] [4-2] It would be an exaggeration to say... 4:46
[40] [4-3] Angelica's first visit to the Salina family... 6:46
[41] [4-4] Don Fabrizio's voice quickly put such trifling... 5:56
[42] [4-5] Now that Don Fabrizio felt serene again... 6:38
[43] [4-6] It was a moving moment, this grouping... 5:36
[44] [4-7] Having had their say on military changes... 5:23
[45] [4-8] Tancredi there seems little to be said... 7:09
[46] [4-9]



[47]	[4-10]	As the result of this welcome arrival...	5:14	[69]	[6-6]	The great stairs were of rough material...	4:36
[48]	[4-11]	Tancredi wanted to show Angelica the whole...	6:59	[70]	[6-7]	Angelica and Don Calogero were late...	5:25
[49]	[4-12]	Once the surprise was of a different kind.	6:04	[71]	[6-8]	While Angelica reaped laurels...	6:16
[50]	[4-13]	So the pair of them spent those days...	3:10	[72]	[6-9]	The ballroom was all golden...	6:43
[51]	[5-1]	When Angelica and Tancredi returned to the world...	6:05	[73]	[6-10]	Till that moment accumulated irritation...	6:17
[52]	[5-2]	In the smoking room, conversations...	4:09	[74]	[6-11]	Angelica and Don Fabrizio made a magnificent...	6:46
[53]	[5-3]	One day about that time Don Fabrizio...	5:32	[75]	[6-12]	Round the room smelling of vanilla...	7:12
[54]	[5-4]	Next morning Tancredit and Cavriaghi led him...	4:25	[76]	[6-13]	The ball went on for a long time still...	3:59
[55]	[5-5]	At four in the afternoon the Prince sent...	6:27	[77]	[6-14]	7: Death of a Prince, July 1883	5:06
[56]	[5-6]	The Piedmontese, representative of the only liberal...	6:32	[78]	[7-1]	He had arrived that morning, a few hours before...	5:13
[57]	[5-7]	Not all of this was understood by the good...	6:21	[79]	[7-2]	The first comfort he found at the hotel...	6:39
[58]	[5-8]	'There is a name I should like to suggest...'	8:21	[80]	[7-3]	There were his sons, of course.	8:05
[59]	[5-9]	Chevalley left early next morning...	3:02	[81]	[7-4]	Below in the street, between the hotel and the sea...	7:26
[60]	[5-10]	5: Father Pirrone Pays a Visit, February 1861	5:47	[82]	[7-5]	8: Relics, May 1910	5:52
[61]	[5-11]	Then towards evening his friends came...	5:48	[83]	[7-6]	The conversation lasted an hour...	4:07
[62]	[5-12]	Father Pirrone had more than once asked himself...	7:07	[84]	[7-7]	When Monsignor entered, the chapel was lit...	6:39
[63]	[5-13]	'You, Don Pietrino, if you weren't asleep...'	6:13	[85]	[7-8]	Carolina had gone off to pour out her rage...	5:56
[64]	[6-1]	Another sample of these complications...	5:07	[86]	[7-9]	A maid entered...	6:01
[65]	[6-2]	The Jesuit took a chair and sat down...	3:26	[87]	[7-10]	Senator Tassoni, who arrived soon after...	5:26
[66]	[6-3]	After celebrating the Divine Sacrifice...	6:33	[88]	[7-11]	The conversation continued for some time...	5:41
[67]	[6-4]	When Father Pirrone got back to the little square...	4:50	[89]	[7-12]	The Cardinal of Palermo was a truly holy man...	4:45
[68]	[6-5]	6: A Ball, November 1862	6:19	[90]	[7-13]	The carriages had not yet reached...	5:10

Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa

(1896–1957)

The Leopard

Italy's best-loved novel, *Il Gattopardo* ('The Leopard'), is a delicate, modulated, subtle work, understated and thematically rich. It incorporates within its love-stories and histories a tale of decay and rebirth, of change and stagnation, of the passing of the old ways and the inevitable triumph of the new. While it illuminates the life and world of Sicily between 1860 and 1910, each episode and description has a symbolic subtext, or a broader implication, that gives the story a resonant, universal appeal. The work of a Sicilian prince, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa, it was published posthumously in 1958 and became Italy's greatest international bestseller.

The Risorgimento

For nearly 50 years before *The Leopard* begins, Italy had been struggling for nationhood. The country was very broadly divided into four states, each with its own governors. In the north-west it was ruled by the native Piedmontese under their king, Victor Emmanuel II. Austria governed the rest of the north, including Venice, and had great influence beyond that. In the central regions, including Rome, the Papacy had control. In the south, including Sicily, the French Bourbon king Francis II was the ruler. But after successful uprisings and political manoeuvrings in the north-west drove out the Austrians, Victor Emmanuel II became the figurehead for unification, a movement that became known as the *Risorgimento* ('Resurgence').

In 1860 the popular general Garibaldi sailed with a thousand volunteers to liberate Sicily, taking the fight across to the mainland, deposing the Bourbons and eventually joining Victor Emmanuel's forces that had defeated the Pope's army. Once Garibaldi had succeeded in Sicily, there was a plebiscite (as there had been elsewhere) to determine whether the people wanted to join this new nation. *The Leopard* opens at this point in the country's history and is set in the household of a Sicilian aristocrat, Don Fabrizio Corbera, Prince of Salina. The character

is based in part on the author's great-grandfather, Giulio Tomasi di Lampedusa, but also, in certain respects, on the author himself.

The Author

Born in Palermo, the capital of Sicily, in 1896, Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa was the last of a long line of Sicilian nobility and was able to live a life of some ease and leisure, despite his family's declining fortunes. His father wanted him to study law, as a means of eventually working in the diplomatic service, but Giuseppe himself preferred the world of the arts, and literature in particular. His mother was more sympathetic but Giuseppe did as his father wished, only to have his studies interrupted by the outbreak of the First World War. He joined the army and was involved in some very bloody fighting between Austria and Italy before being captured and sent to a Hungarian Prisoner of War camp. He escaped, and continued to serve until he was demobbed in 1920. It was already becoming clear, however, that his attitude to the fighting, indeed to several aspects of Italian political and social life, was not that of the ruling class. He was to become – despite his noble background – an outsider, an observer, a thinker; if not politically engaged, then intellectually questioning of both the past and the present.

After the war he travelled widely, if rather aimlessly, through northern Italy and Europe, including England where his uncle was an ambassador. It was here, in 1925, that he met the woman who would become his wife, Alexandra Wolff Stomersee (known as Licy), a Latvian student of psychoanalysis. They eventually married in 1932, although it is not clear how happy the marriage was. Certainly they did not spend all their time together; Alexandra was not comfortable in Sicily and frequently returned to her own family's estate in Riga. This may have been in part because of a very strained relationship with Giuseppe's mother.

Giuseppe himself might be said to have fallen as much for the country where he met his bride as for the bride herself. He loved England's landscape, the hunting, the culture and the literature. But this was a dangerous passion. In the Italy of the 1920s and 1930s, the Fascists were gaining power, and they regarded any intellectuals who were not of their stamp as a threat – and those who had a fondness for England were especially suspect. But Giuseppe was nothing if not low-profile: despite the depth of his learning he had only published a few articles, in a Genoese journal. As a result, the authorities in Italy seemed to pay him little attention, even when his father died in 1934 and Giuseppe Tomasi became Prince of Lampedusa. This did not in fact mean a great deal; but he did inherit the family's estates in Sicily.

He was called up in the Second World War but was released after just two years, spending the remaining war years with his family in a town on the coast to the east of Palermo. But even their sheltered lives were affected. The familial palace in the capital was destroyed in Allied bombing raids, and Licy found her homeland overtaken by the Russians. Then in 1946 Giuseppe's mother died. Although his father's aloofness and forbidding attitude might have been detrimental to Giuseppe's career plans, his mother's powerful influence may well have been a more substantial block to his development as a writer, just as it was to his marriage. With her death, it seems he was able to take a slightly more active part in the literary world he loved, indeed in life

itself, going to poetry festivals and becoming a private tutor to a group of students at Palermo University. One of the students, Gioacchino Lanza Tomasi, was a cousin whom he legally adopted in 1954. He and Licy had no children of their own.

It was in the following two years that he wrote *The Leopard*, a story (at least superficially) about his great-grandfather's reaction to the *Risorgimento*. But he had contracted lung cancer, and died in 1957 before the book was published.

His inherent diffidence, a depressive nature, the weight of his mother's authority, and his love of art and the abstract are some reasons why Giuseppe Tomasi di Lampedusa might be charged with never fully engaging in the world of the 20th century. But another cause was his social position. His titles were hollow symbols – the family had not owned the island of Lampedusa for a century before he came into the title, and the status of the nobility as a whole was violently eroded during his life. His was an inheritance already dissolving; the values and expectations of a moribund social elite were no longer relevant or possible. Like the principal character in his novel, he was watching his own world dying. But in recording the end of that world through the lens of an earlier one, he crafted a work that can sit alongside the novels of Jane Austen and Marcel Proust.

Notes by Roy McMillan

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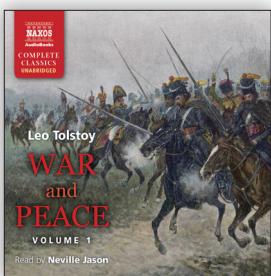
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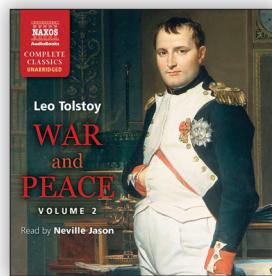
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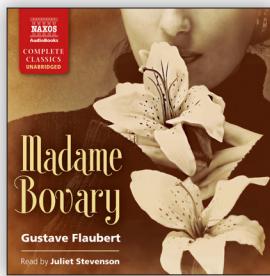
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