



Ulysses

James Joyce (1882 - 1941)

Read by:	Librivox readers	Format:	2 MP3 CDs in DVD case
Length:	31 hours 16 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1060
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Genre:	Fiction		

Ulysses (1922) by James Joyce is one of two of the greatest works of fiction of the twentieth century (the second being the multi-volume *In Search of Lost Time* by Marcel Proust). Its greatness is only exceeded by the number of readers who have shied away from attempting to read this monumental achievement, because of its reputation for extreme difficulty. This is unfortunate. Although a few of the eighteen episodes that comprise the book are difficult, much of the book, by far the greater portion, is readily accessible. Modernism was laced with at least one conservative streak: Its proponents endorsed the notion of looking backward to the classics so as to bring the unalloyed gold of their content forward, to make them new in association with the stylistic innovations of post-World War I Europe. Joyce based his story of

Leopold Bloom, an advertisement canvasser in Dublin, and Stephen Daedalus, the artist as a young man, on Homer's *Odyssey*. In episodes spanning one day in Dublin, June 16, 1904, and corresponding to eighteen episodes of the Greek Classic, *Ulysses* (the Latin translation of the name Odysseus) is filled with references and allusions employed to create a meta-novel in which the interior thoughts of Bloom, Daedalus and Bloom's wife, Molly, are set down to describe their subjective as well as a narrator's objective view of reality. Each of the eighteen episodes use a different and individualized style sufficient to set forth an encyclopedia of the writer's vast knowledge, focused primarily on an Irishman's point of view regarding the state of Irish as well as English literature from *Beowulf* to Modernism. (Summary by Michael Hogan)

James Augusta Aloysius Joyce (February 2, 1882 – January 13, 1941) was born 1882 in the Dublin suburb of Rathgar. The eldest of ten surviving children, he grew up in Dublin and attended Jesuit schools where the good fathers were duly impressed and not a little intimidated by his formidable intelligence. Joyce took to literature early on, displaying an uncanny facility for reading, analyzing, memorizing and commenting upon the Irish literature of that time and how the next generation of Irish writers (read: Joyce, himself) might improve upon the then current model. He wrote short stories, *Dubliners* (1906), which contains his universally accepted masterpiece, "The Dead". He met Nora Barnacle and, with the unfinished manuscript of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in hand, moved with Nora to Trieste to escape the claustrophobic confines of British rule, Catholic dogma and family conventions. He began his great work, *Ulysses*, which he continued and finished in Paris ten years later in 1922. On publication *Ulysses* ranked Joyce with the greatest writers in English. With the outbreak of World War II, Joyce moved to Zurich where he put the finishing touches on his fourth, least accessible and most difficult work, *Finnegan's Wake*. Having struggled with blindness by cataracts and other health problems, and having become very depressed over the failing mental health of his brilliant daughter Lucia, Joyce died in 1941 at the age of 59.