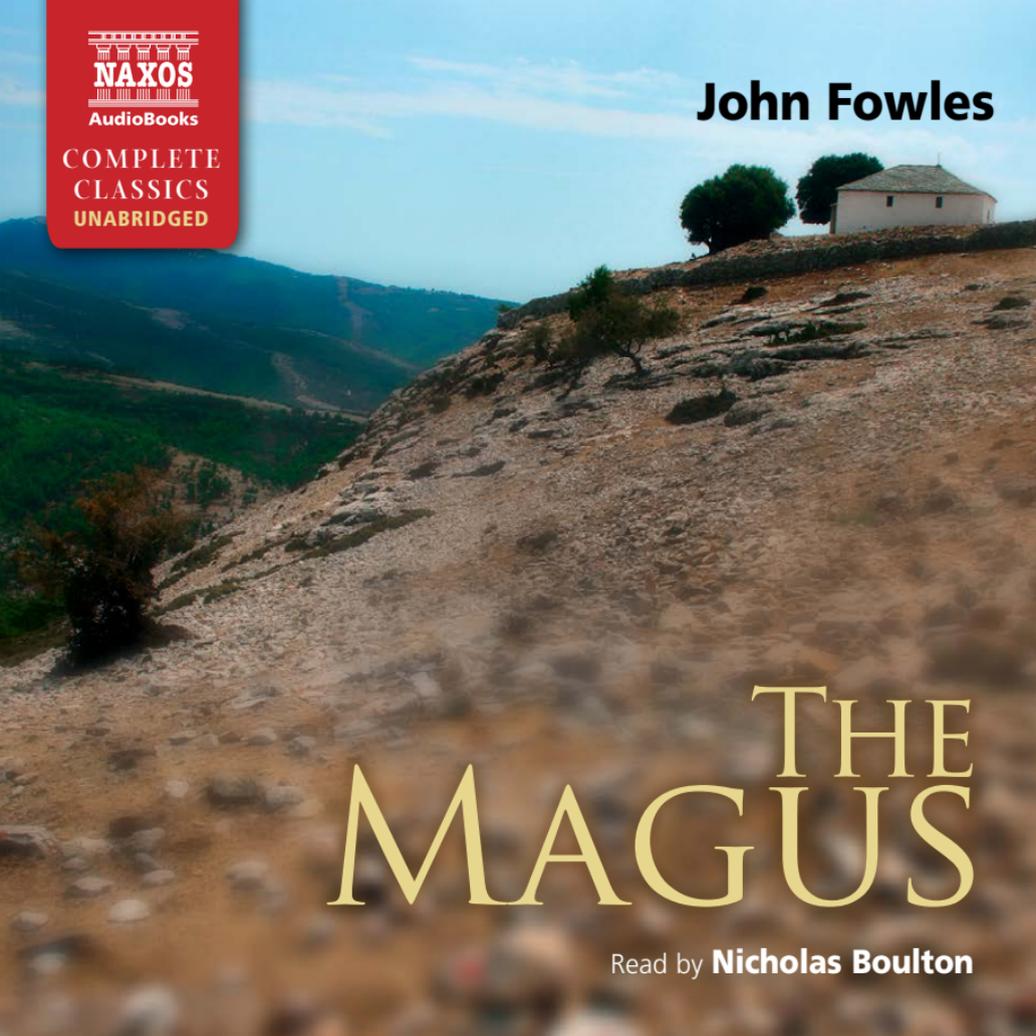




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John Fowles



THE
MAGUS

Read by **Nicholas Boulton**

1	Part 1: Chapter 1	6:44
2	At least, along with a group of fellow odd men out at Magdalen...	5:54
3	Chapter 2	4:29
4	Chapter 3	8:02
5	When I came back, she was standing with a glass of Scotch in her hand.	5:52
6	Alison knelt beside me.	5:40
7	Chapter 4	7:02
8	For days, afraid of Maggie...	7:30
9	I couldn't see her face.	6:46
10	One day she said, 'I've got to go for my interview tomorrow.'	7:25
11	Chapter 5	4:36
12	'I waited hours for you.'	4:35
13	The next morning, my last but two...	6:34
14	Chapter 6	7:13
15	Chapter 7	6:43
16	This lack of open water meant also that there were no wild animals...	6:32
17	Another letter came from her the next day.	6:44
18	Chapter 8	7:48
19	One kind of person is engaged in society without realising it...	6:36
20	The day before term ended I felt the balance tip.	6:52

21	Chapter 9	3:21
22	Part 2: Chapter 10	8:05
23	The sun beat down on my back.	5:18
24	Chapter 11	3:17
25	The leading estiatoras of the village...	8:34
26	Chapter 12	6:47
27	Chapter 13	6:30
28	I bit into my first kourabiè, and gave an appreciative nod.	6:58
29	As I walked behind him, I said...	6:32
30	His head turned on me with a snakelike swiftness...	6:53
31	Chapter 14	6:28
32	Chapter 15	6:06
33	'Do you like this?'	8:09
34	He picked up a book and slapped the dust off it.	5:52
35	He sat against the parapet with his back to the view.	6:18
36	Chapter 16	5:26
37	Chapter 17	7:29
38	I swilled the last of the ouzo round in my glass.	6:59
39	'I came to Phraxos looking for a house to rent.'	8:33
40	Chapter 18	7:06

41	'You see the child I was.'	7:06
42	'No obstacles except those of propriety...'	8:03
43	'I felt like a small boy beside her.'	6:34
44	Chapter 19	6:20
45	'The madness of it, Nicholas.'	6:09
46	He stood up.	7:23
47	Chapter 20	7:00
48	'I stayed in that crater all night.'	6:45
49	Chapter 21	7:43
50	Chapter 22	6:05
51	We remained staring at each other.	6:27
52	Chapter 23	6:20
53	I looked around again, towards the house.	5:42
54	He had already had his own...	5:52
55	I was silent.	5:46
56	Chapter 24	5:54
57	He stopped speaking for a moment...	6:14
58	'But there was so much misunderstanding between us.'	7:35
59	Chapter 25	6:04
60	I went swiftly down the hall to the front door.	4:30

61	Chapter 26	6:08
62	'He's asked me over next week again.'	8:16
63	Chapter 27	6:20
64	At last it began to seem plain.	7:24
65	She had bare shoulders and arms.	6:49
66	Chapter 28	5:50
67	She went and stood against the parapet at the far end of the terrace..	5:30
68	Chapter 29	6:37
69	'Constantly, during that first visit, I was shocked...'	6:52
70	'He was the most abnormal man I had ever met.'	6:01
71	I went to the parapet that faced East.	7:16
72	I looked back at Conchis.	6:48
73	'Very well. Let us have a little more brandy first.'	7:28
74	Chapter 30	7:08
75	I had never had a telepathic experience in my life...	3:27
76	Chapter 31	6:15
77	'Give me your hand.'	6:00
78	I thought for one mad moment that he had crept up behind us.	7:57
79	It was a wild, dislocating, disactualising, shock.	7:14
80	Chapter 32	4:41

81	Chapter 33	5:54
82	She threw me a veiled look, then stared ahead again.	4:38
83	'I haven't been very happy on Phraxos.'	4:31
84	Chapter 34	7:32
85	'When shall I see you again?'	8:20
86	Chapter 35	5:41
87	He gave me a piercing look I was meant to believe...	6:20
88	I had the now familiar feeling that came in conversations at Bourani.	6:26
89	I remained staring at the edge of the tablecloth.	5:55
90	Chapter 36	6:33
91	I began to stare at the star.	5:55
92	At some point it began imperceptibly to change.	6:54
93	Chapter 37	6:53
94	I was glad, with a simplicity that recalled earliest adolescence.	5:25
95	Chapter 38	6:30
96	I remembered Lily's prophecy...	6:35
97	There was a long silence.	6:51
98	Chapter 39	5:22
99	It should have cast a shadow over the day.	3:53
100	Chapter 40	4:56

101	At the top of it we came to...	5:54
102	Chapter 41	7:38
103	She thrust the saucepan under my nose...	7:20
104	Chapter 42	6:55
105	We walked on a way...	7:32
106	'It's not that I believe any of these things...'	5:42
107	We got to Arachova about five...	7:29
108	'That reminds me.'	5:20
109	She began to bang the bedrail with her fists...	5:06
110	Chapter 43	7:04
111	She turned down the pale blue flame of the spirit-stove...	6:27
112	I went after her.	6:55
113	Chapter 44	5:22
114	'I think I told you that when modern history...'	6:24
115	However, from being rather frightened by the solitude...	6:12
116	'He said, "I had no choice."'	6:09
117	'I got into the boat...'	5:10
118	'I watched this rare specimen of humanity for some time.'	5:56
119	'I went back to the farmstead a wiser young man.'	5:25
120	I trained my glasses on him.	5:44

121	Chapter 45	6:08
122	Conchis kissed her hand, and then she reached it to me...	7:13
123	A second later I had let go of her and was reaching in my pocket...	5:45
124	She leant backward and stretched her arm along the seat back...	4:43
125	She answered obliquely.	5:43
126	She started to walk down past the statue.	6:01
127	Chapter 46	5:44
128	Lily looked coolly down at me and said...	6:16
129	I lit my cigarette.	5:41
130	She handed me three other letters.	5:58
131	'But you must still have smelt a rat?'	5:08
132	'We had screen tests. Some woman Maurice knew...'	6:34
133	'You said yes again?'	7:12
134	She looked back over her shoulder.	5:55
135	Chapter 47	5:39
136	I began my supplementary cross-examination.	6:13
137	After a moment or two...	6:38
138	Chapter 48	3:35
139	Chapter 49	6:00
140	We came to where the beach curved away...	5:31

141	I began to walk in the direction that would bring me...	6:30
142	In a few seconds a pale movement told me I was right.	5:19
143	'What the bloody hell's the game?'	5:42
144	The colonel moved up the path to where the sergeant...	5:49
145	As he did so there was a cry, an exclamation.	6:40
146	Chapter 50	6:50
147	I began to walk along towards the bay with the three cottages.	6:03
148	On the far side of the village there was another harbour...	6:43
149	'What kind of singing and dancing?'	7:22
150	Chapter 51	6:45
151	I lay on the bed and thought of her coming to me...	5:25
152	My tears did not last very long.	6:29
153	Chapter 52	6:02
154	'A victim is someone who has something inflicted on him...'	6:11
155	This was the 'last trick' of Julie's letter.	6:08
156	We silently toasted each other, across the lamp-lit table...	5:28
157	The new-risen moon was amber...	5:49
158	Chapter 53	6:14
159	He let me look a few moments longer...	5:21
160	The beam was extinguished, the engine stopped.	6:33

161	'Poor Anton.'	6:45
162	'So the eighty of us were marched off to the school...'	6:52
163	'They took the three to the school, where they were interrogated.'	6:33
164	'We went into another bare room next door.'	5:53
165	'The night passed.'	4:57
166	'Beyond those three atrocious shapes I saw the hostages.'	7:13
167	'I understood then.'	7:06
168	Chapter 54	7:12
169	'But let me finish by showing you the report that Anton wrote.'	6:54
170	Chapter 55	5:35
171	'She wrote me a letter.'	5:11
172	He caught sight of something behind me.	5:02
173	Joe appeared in the music-room door, with two heavy suitcases.	6:17
174	Chapter 56	5:43
175	Perhaps it was seeing her in contemporary...	4:35
176	Under the colonnade, Hermes stood waiting.	5:24
177	I lit a fourth match.	5:46
178	Chapter 57	5:20
179	Julie's suitcase stood at the foot of the bed.	5:08
180	Chapter 58	4:20

181	She had the amateur liar's habit of looking earnestly into one's eyes.	4:11
182	I took her hand and led her silently and quickly up the alley...	5:16
183	I went and stood by the window, the now-torrential rain...	5:29
184	Chapter 59	7:28
185	I lay on top of her, mastering her...	6:32
186	A little smile at the corner of her mouth...	7:32
187	Chapter 60	5:53
188	All her story – her stories...	5:39
189	I lit another Philip Morris.	6:44
190	Chapter 61	6:17
191	As soon as I had done so...	5:41
192	The next figure was African...	6:46
193	Perhaps a minute passed like that.	5:18
194	'Good. Now... if I may be allowed I shall first introduce myself.'	5:44
195	I could not keep control any longer.	6:32
196	The subject's family...	6:16
197	Though I have little sympathy as a fellow human being...	6:37
198	Adam called something.	6:48
199	No one moved...	6:58
200	Chapter 62	6:43

201	A new shot.	7:10
202	Then light came from behind the curtains.	6:51
203	Lily.	7:09
204	Chapter 63	6:31
205	I climbed a hundred yards or so to the top of the hill.	4:58
206	Pitching and rolling, the little steamer, made late by the meltemi...	4:19
207	Next I opened another envelope from London.	4:05
208	Chapter 64	5:29
209	There was a swift conversation in Greek between the headmaster...	5:12
210	He watched me a moment more, then came to the point.	6:20
211	Chapter 65	7:02
212	Finally, on different paper, a scrawled message...	6:30
213	The 'orders' looked as if they had all been typed out...	6:00
214	Chapter 66	6:05
215	I returned to the waiting yellow taxi.	5:08
216	The dinner that evening was dreadful...	6:33
217	Chapter 67	5:02
218	I walked up and down my room...	6:51
219	Part 3: Chapter 68	5:04
220	I wanted to say that I hadn't come as a tourist...	6:29

221	Chapter 69	5:21
222	The next morning I went round to the estate agents...	5:07
223	Chapter 70	6:24
224	Faculty of English, Osaka University.	4:42
225	Evening Standard of January 8, 1952.	6:23
226	Chapter 71	6:39
227	I walked over the gravel and under a brick arch.	7:25
228	'Can you remember one thing...'	5:11
229	She looked down at her cigarette.	6:24
230	Chapter 72	8:02
231	'I have some ugly questions to ask.'	7:32
232	She reached up to the mantelpiece beside...	7:57
233	I would not turn and look at her.	7:03
234	Chapter 73	6:35
235	There was only one person I wanted to talk with.	6:47
236	I stood at the bar waiting for the drinks...	6:53
237	'Fantastic.'	6:16
238	Chapter 74	5:00
239	I analysed the situation.	6:51
240	Chapter 75	7:34

241	I looked down.	7:24
242	A minute later, we were going down the corridor...	5:50
243	Chapter 76	5:43
244	A young Victorian of my age would have thought nothing...	7:14
245	She was always equable...	5:07
246	Rain pounded down, dripped in the gutters...	5:18
247	If only I had told her at the beginning...	5:36
248	Chapter 77	7:38
249	Chapter 78	6:58
250	She was walking slowly across the grass, towards the east.	6:25
251	'You're the only person I've ever felt that about.'	7:10
252	She was not crying, I leant forward and looked.	7:12
253	There was a smell of a bonfire.	8:01

Total Time: 26:26:05

John Fowles

(1926–2005)

THE MAGUS

In this remarkable book, John Fowles presents us with a magus, a magician or enchanter, who has the power to manipulate the lives of others. But the real magician is Fowles himself. *The Magus* is a kind of literary kaleidoscope which the author constantly revolves, showing the reader a new reality with each turn. We become the willing victims of the author's enchantment, fellow pilgrims with Nicholas the narrator, on the stony, tortuous path of his enforced journey towards self-knowledge.

On its publication the book was a resounding success, which, according to the author, considerably surprised him. In the light of its continuing fascination for succeeding generations, it is interesting to consider the reason for its remarkable popularity.

Although Fowles said that the book contains no message, and describes it as

like 'a Rorschach blot' in which the reader is free to find his own meaning, the problems it explores, of human love and sexual fulfilment; courage and cowardice; freedom and responsibility; faithfulness and betrayal, are those with which every thinking person struggles in order to find a personal balance for him or her self.

That struggle is normally at its most intense in youth, and the book is, in a sense, a metaphor for coming of age, which may explain its popularity with a young audience. Nicholas, the narrator, whose story this is, is twenty-four, but maturity is reached at different times by different people, and for some, growing up can take a lifetime. Perhaps some of us never manage it.

The Magus is very much a child of its time: it was written in an era when tension between east and west threatened to unleash an atomic holocaust; when a

younger generation was discovering psychoanalysis and eastern religions; when the recent availability of the birth control pill had created a new sexual freedom. The release from the restraints on physical love and from traditional religious dogma created a new freedom which brought with it new responsibilities. The shackles had been removed, and the individual had to find his own way through the moral maze. The book of rules had been jettisoned; new rules had to be written and there was no one to write them but oneself.

Fowles's stated intention was to create a mysterious, magic world and he writes that he had been influenced by works which included Henry James's *The Turning of the Screw*, Alain Fournier's *Le Grand Meaulnes*, and Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (although I detect echoes of another Shakespeare play, *The Winter's Tale*, as well). Bourani is a world where nothing is as it seems; the past bleeds into the present, one person becomes another, cruelty becomes kindness, and kindness cruelty.

And we, the readers and listeners,

are as confused as the protagonist, no sooner accepting one reality than finding it replaced by another. Fowles is a master storyteller, and he reveals his plot with the skill of a conjuror, each new development appearing like yet another Russian doll within the one before.

The Magus is a detective story, but unlike the usual crime novel where the clues all lead towards a neat conclusion, Fowles refuses to follow a progression towards a pat, banal ending. Even the final stage of the story is left for the reader to complete. Conchis is quoted as saying, 'an answer is always a form of death... I think questions are a form of life'. Life is complicated and multi-layered, and the author wants his writing to reflect that richness and complexity.

It is as if the only answer to a question is another question. Is Conchis a hero or a villain? Is the 'masque' a spiritual journey or a rich man's plaything? Is Nicholas's experience positive or negative? Is Lily real or a ghost? Is Alison the free spirit she appears? Can what appears to be cruel be kind? Are we able, in extreme circumstances, to do the right thing? Are

we at liberty to pursue our erotic fantasies wherever they may lead?

In *The Magus*, the author is Scheherazade, and like the Sultan, we are agog to hear the next story, to follow each new twist of the plot. But at the same time we have a sense that the book is more than just a captivating tale. It throws us back on ourselves, and we are forced to wonder what we would do in the circumstances we are shown, how we would behave, and whether our behaviour would be in accordance with whatever principles we hold. Like all art which endures, it touches us at a deeper level, and creates echoes within us of our own most profound thoughts and emotions.

When asked to explain the meaning of the book in a letter from a puzzled but intrigued young reader, Fowles refused. But what he wrote in his reply is probably the nearest we are likely to get to an answer:

...the one valid reality or principle for us lies in 'eleutheria' – freedom. Accept that man has the possibility

of a limited freedom and that if this is so he must be responsible for his actions. To be free (which means rejecting all the gods and political creeds and the rest) leaves one no choice but to act according to reason: that is humanely, to all humans.

The story of *The Magus* is complicated and difficult to understand. Just like life.

Notes by Neville Jason



Nicholas Boulton studied at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, winning the BBC Carleton Hobbs Award for Radio in 1993. Since then he has been heard in numerous productions for BBC Radio 4 and the World Service. Work for Naxos AudioBooks includes Cecil in *Lady Windermere's Fan* and most recently *David Copperfield*. Film work includes *Shakespeare in Love* and *Topsy Turvy*. Theatre credits include *Platonov* for the Almeida, *Henry V* for the RSC and *Arcadia* for the Theatre Royal Haymarket.

Credits

Edited and mastered by Andrew Riches

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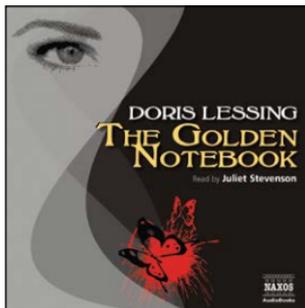
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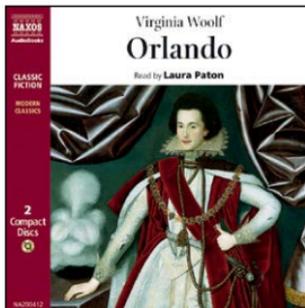
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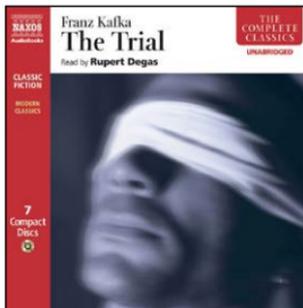
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John Fowles

THE MAGUS

Read by **Nicholas Boulton**

The Magus defined the spirit of the 1960s. Nicholas Urfe accepts a teaching post on a beautiful, remote Greek island, in order to escape an unsatisfactory love affair. He meets the enigmatic Maurice Conchis, who introduces him to the exquisitely lovely Lily, his ideal of the perfect woman. But is she flesh or fantasy? As the past bleeds into the present, he finds it increasingly difficult to distinguish reality from imagination. Under the spell of this magic isle and its presiding spirit, he struggles to understand the rules of the mysterious game into which he is drawn.



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