




**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

COMPLETE  
CLASSICS  
UNABRIDGED



George Eliot

# Middlemarch

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

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<b>1</b>	<b>Middlemarch by George Eliot – Prelude</b>	3:51
<b>2</b>	<b>Book 1: Miss Brooke – Chapter 1</b>	5:58
<b>3</b>	And how should Dorothea not marry?	5:18
<b>4</b>	Early in the day Dorothea had returned...	5:08
<b>5</b>	Celia felt a little hurt.	6:05
<b>6</b>	<b>Chapter 2</b>	5:33
<b>7</b>	This was the first time that Mr Casaubon...	5:39
<b>8</b>	Dorothea felt hurt. Mr Casaubon would think...	4:38
<b>9</b>	'Let me hope that you will rescind that resolution...'	4:01
<b>10</b>	<b>Chapter 3</b>	6:57
<b>11</b>	Certainly he seemed more and more bent on making...	4:45
<b>12</b>	It had now entered Dorothea's mind...	3:37
<b>13</b>	Dorothea checked herself suddenly...	6:18
<b>14</b>	Dorothea was in the best temper now...	7:22
<b>15</b>	<b>Chapter 4</b>	5:17
<b>16</b>	'It is very painful,' said Dorothea...	5:32
<b>17</b>	She bethought herself now of the condemned...	5:02
<b>18</b>	'Well, but Casaubon, now. There is no hurry...'	4:25
<b>19</b>	<b>Chapter 5</b>	5:41
<b>20</b>	Now she would be able to devote herself...	6:54

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21	The next day, at luncheon, the butler...	5:39
22	Perhaps Celia had never turned so pale before.	6:37
23	<b>Chapter 6</b>	3:34
24	'I see you have had our Lowick Cicero here,' she said...	4:28
25	Mr Brooke again winced inwardly...	5:12
26	In less than an hour, Mrs Cadwalladar...	5:21
27	'Well, Humphrey doesn't know yet...'	4:43
28	With such a mind, active as phosphorus...	5:09
29	<b>Chapter 7</b>	5:24
30	Mr Brooke had no doubt on that point...	5:36
31	<b>Chapter 8</b>	5:29
32	Sir James paused. He did not usually find it easy...	3:40
33	'But, my dear Chettam, why should I...'	4:24
34	<b>Chapter 9</b>	6:35
35	Mr Casaubon led the way thither.	7:46
36	Dorothea sank into silence on the way back...	7:11
37	When their backs were turned...	6:29
38	<b>Chapter 10</b>	5:53
39	Certainly this affair of his marriage...	5:31
40	The season was mild enough to encourage...	5:00

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41	Already, as Miss Brooke passed out of the dining-room...	6:57
42	'But we were talking of physic...'	6:54
43	<b>Chapter 11</b>	6:22
44	Lydgate could not be long in Middlemarch...	4:26
45	'Mamma,' said Rosamond...	6:26
46	'But how came you to stay out so late, my dear?'	6:44
47	<b>Chapter 12</b>	4:36
48	Mrs Waule had to defer her answer...	6:39
49	Before Mr Featherstone's cough was quiet...	5:03
50	'So, sir, you've been paying ten per cent...'	6:51
51	Fred, in spite of his irritation, had kindness enough...	6:40
52	'But,' she added, dimpling, 'it is very different...'	6:11
53	Mr Lydgate was rather late this morning...	6:17
54	Thus, in riding home...	5:37
55	<b>Book 2: Old and Young – Chapter 13</b>	4:40
56	One of Lydgate's gifts was a voice habitually deep...	5:09
57	'What I desire,' Mr Bulstrode continued...	5:00
58	To point out other people's errors was a duty...	5:48
59	Mr Bulstrode paused a little before he answered.	4:54
60	<b>Chapter 14</b>	6:39

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61	The deep-veined hands fingered many bank-notes...	5:48
62	Mary sat down again, and resumed her work.	5:57
63	Mary looked up with some roguishness at Fred...	5:37
64	<b>Chapter 15</b>	4:37
65	He had been left an orphan...	6:24
66	Lydgate did not mean to be one of those failures...	5:02
67	There was fascination in the hope...	5:48
68	He was certainly a happy fellow at this time...	4:26
69	As to women, he had once already been drawn...	5:54
70	To have approached Laure with any suit...	4:09
71	<b>Chapter 16</b>	5:50
72	'Hang your reforms!' said Mr Chichely.	6:56
73	'You will let me hear some music tonight, I hope.'	7:30
74	Everything looked blooming and joyous...	7:36
75	As he threw down his book, stretched his legs...	6:46
76	<b>Chapter 17</b>	7:00
77	'A mother is never partial,' said Mr Farebrother...	7:20
78	'Your scheme is a good deal more difficult...'	7:35
79	<b>Chapter 18</b>	6:36
80	And now, when the question of voting had come...	3:33

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81	Lydgate was late in setting out...	6:02
82	Dr Sprague said at once bluntly to the group...	5:46
83	Every one now sat down, Mr Bulstrode presiding...	7:06
84	<b>Chapter 19</b>	4:58
85	'He is not my uncle. I tell you...'	5:49
86	<b>Chapter 20</b>	5:38
87	Not that this inward amazement of Dorothea's...	5:39
88	In their conversation before marriage...	4:55
89	These characteristics, fixed and unchangeable...	6:32
90	The excessive feeling manifested...	4:21
91	Dorothea rose to leave the table...	3:59
92	<b>Chapter 21</b>	7:14
93	'Oh, there is a great deal in the feeling for art...'	6:01
94	There was a new light, but still a mysterious light...	7:37
95	<b>Chapter 22</b>	5:58
96	They found Naumann painting industriously...	6:33
97	Naumann was all apologies in asking her to stand...	5:52
98	Dorothea, who had not been made aware...	5:39
99	Will again feared that he had gone too far...	6:08
100	Will was not quite contented...	6:39

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<b>101</b>	<b>Book 3: Waiting for Death – Chapter 23</b>	6:05
<b>102</b>	The Garths were very fond of Fred...	6:24
<b>103</b>	Since it occurred, a change had come over Fred's sky...	6:22
<b>104</b>	Most of those who saw Fred riding out...	4:59
<b>105</b>	Fred was subtle, and did not tell his friends...	6:35
<b>106</b>	<b>Chapter 24</b>	3:11
<b>107</b>	Mr Garth was not at the office...	6:03
<b>108</b>	'Now let us go through that once more' said Mrs Garth...	7:16
<b>109</b>	'Are Letty and Ben your only pupils now, Mrs Garth?'	7:05
<b>110</b>	Fred turned round and hurried out of the room...	6:37
<b>111</b>	<b>Chapter 25</b>	5:40
<b>112</b>	'Any man may be unfortunate, Mary...'	5:53
<b>113</b>	She took a candle into another large parlour...	6:17
<b>114</b>	<b>Chapter 26</b>	5:53
<b>115</b>	When Mr Vincy came home he was very angry...	5:52
<b>116</b>	<b>Chapter 27</b>	6:08
<b>117</b>	She never left Fred's side...	6:30
<b>118</b>	Lydgate found it more and more agreeable...	4:34
<b>119</b>	Mr Ned smiled nervously...	5:38
<b>120</b>	<b>Chapter 28</b>	5:05

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121	In the first minutes when Dorothea looked out...	4:24
122	Dorothea's eyes also were turned up to her husband's face...	3:50
123	<b>Chapter 29</b>	7:10
124	To this mental estate mapped out...	6:08
125	'We will, if you please, say no more on this subject...'	6:59
126	<b>Chapter 30</b>	5:25
127	'You will not mind this sombre light,' said Dorothea...	5:55
128	When he was gone, Dorothea's tears gushed forth...	5:55
129	<b>Chapter 31</b>	6:03
130	'You don't mean that there is anything between...'	4:50
131	'You would not give your heart to a man...'	4:47
132	Solomon's Proverbs, I think, have omitted...	4:33
133	Miss Vincy was alone, and blushed so deeply...	5:20
134	<b>Chapter 32</b>	5:00
135	But some of the visitors alighted...	5:26
136	Old Featherstone no sooner caught sight of these...	5:02
137	Their exit was hastened by their seeing...	5:11
138	'I don't mind if I have a slice of that ham...'	4:38
139	'I shall take a mere mouthful of ham...'	5:01
140	<b>Chapter 33</b>	4:09



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141	To-night he had not snapped...	4:53
142	He let his hand fall, and for the first time...	6:16
143	<b>Book 4: Three Love Problems – Chapter 34</b>	4:12
144	However, the three mourning-coaches...	5:01
145	'I shall not look any more,' said Celia...	5:03
146	Dorothea felt a shock of alarm...	5:41
147	<b>Chapter 35</b>	3:57
148	But in the morning all the ordinary currents...	6:18
149	But the entrance of the lawyer and the two brothers...	4:55
150	The small bequests came first...	4:34
151	Mr Vincy was the first to speak...	5:23
152	Mr Joshua Rigg, in fact, appeared to trouble...	5:05
153	<b>Chapter 36</b>	6:01
154	This was a not infrequent procedure with Mr Vincy...	7:00
155	Aunt Bulstrode was again stirred to anxiety...	5:57
156	Any inward debate Lydgate had as to the consequences...	5:44
157	An unmistakable delight shone forth...	5:23
158	'It must be lovely,' said Mrs Vincy...	5:39
159	Rosamond, however, was on her side...	3:39
160	<b>Chapter 37</b>	5:12

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161	Mr Hawley's disgust at the notion of the 'Pioneer'...	5:30
162	Invitations of the formal kind had been wanting...	3:55
163	In another minute he was in the library...	4:43
164	'But you may easily carry the help too far,' he said...	6:04
165	'No,' answered Dorothea; 'Mr Casaubon...'	6:22
166	So they only said 'Goodbye,' and Will quitted the house...	6:32
167	Meanwhile Dorothea's mind was innocently at work...	5:26
168	The thoughts which had gathered vividness...	6:12
169	The next day, Mr Casaubon received the following...	5:32
170	<b>Chapter 38</b>	6:52
171	'There is one good chance...'	7:14
172	'Come, that's rather good, you know', said Mr Brooke...	7:07
173	<b>Chapter 39</b>	5:17
174	'Chettam is a little hasty, my dear,' said Mr Brooke...	6:33
175	Dorothea felt wretched. She thought her husband...	7:12
176	It is true that an observer, under that softening influence...	5:46
177	Overworked Mrs Dagley – a thin, worn woman...	6:09
178	<b>Chapter 40</b>	6:54
179	She went and stood behind him...	6:56
180	'We haven't seen the lad for months,' said Caleb...	6:31

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181	'Now Mary's gone out, I must tell you a thing...'	6:58
182	As the Vicar walked to Lowick...	7:45
183	<b>Chapter 41</b>	7:24
184	'Have you done?' said Mr Rigg, quietly...	6:11
185	<b>Chapter 42</b>	6:03
186	This sore susceptibility in relation to Dorothea...	6:50
187	The arrangements made by Mr Casaubon...	4:27
188	'You refer to the possible hindrances...'	6:53
189	There was something horrible to Dorothea...	7:43
190	<b>Book 5: The Dead Hand – Chapter 43</b>	5:22
191	'Thank you very much for allowing me to interrupt...'	6:19
192	Will re-entered the drawing room...	6:26
193	<b>Chapter 44</b>	7:57
194	<b>Chapter 45</b>	6:20
195	One of the facts quickly rumoured was that Lydgate...	6:09
196	Mrs Mawmsey had had a great deal of sitting...	6:13
197	Mr Toller's prediction was partly verified.	6:27
198	How could Lydgate help himself?	6:57
199	There was an immediate refusal on the part...	4:35
200	Affairs were in this stage...	4:35

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201	Presently Rosamond left the piano...	5:00
202	<b>Chapter 46</b>	6:02
203	Ladislaw had now accepted his bit of work...	6:05
204	But Will's articles and speeches...	5:47
205	'That's very fine, my dear fellow. But your cure...'	5:55
206	<b>Chapter 47</b>	7:30
207	Having silenced objection by force of unreason...	7:17
208	<b>Chapter 48</b>	5:04
209	In the library Dorothea observed...	4:56
210	'And now I think that I can take some repose,' said Mr Casaubon...	5:21
211	And here Dorothea's pity turned from her own future...	4:35
212	Dorothea, feeling very weary...	5:13
213	<b>Chapter 49</b>	5:07
214	'My dear sir,' said Sir James, impatiently...	4:56
215	<b>Chapter 50</b>	6:49
216	'I can see what you are thinking of...'	7:04
217	His attendance on Dorothea while her brain was excited...	6:19
218	Dorothea tried now to turn her thoughts...	6:57
219	<b>Chapter 51</b>	6:21
220	Mr Brooke always ended by agreeing...	6:19

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221	But whether he should succeed in that mode...	6:38
222	'I am a close neighbour of yours, my good friends...'	6:26
223	Mr Brooke re-entered the committee-room...	6:21
224	<b>Chapter 52</b>	5:34
225	Hardly a week later, Duty presented itself...	6:16
226	There was a moment's silence before Mr Farebrother...	5:43
227	Mary looked so much moved, that he said after a moment...	6:28
228	<b>Chapter 53</b>	7:19
229	Mr Bulstrode was conscious of being in a good spiritual frame...	6:46
230	Raffles opened wide eyes, and gave a long whistle...	6:48
231	It was not long before they were seated together...	7:14
232	Mr Raffles ended with a jocose snuffle...	7:04
233	<b>Book 6: The Widow and the Wife – Chapter 54</b>	7:24
234	Mrs Cadwallader said no more on that point...	6:34
235	Mrs Farebrother recurred to her knitting...	7:05
236	She was not aware how long it was...	4:43
237	Will spoke at random: he was merely venting his petulance...	4:46
238	<b>Chapter 55</b>	3:18
239	One day that she went to Freshitt to fulfil her promise...	4:22
240	'My dear Mrs Casaubon,' said Lady Chettam...	3:59

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<b>241</b>	<b>Chapter 56</b>	7:10
<b>242</b>	In the absence of any precise idea...	6:03
<b>243</b>	The scent would have been sweeter to Fred Vincy...	8:03
<b>244</b>	Caleb paused here, and perhaps the greatest orator...	7:07
<b>245</b>	The expression of Caleb's face...	7:54
<b>246</b>	Mrs Garth was not given to tears...	6:38
<b>247</b>	Fred entered on the subject directly...	6:14
<b>248</b>	<b>Chapter 57</b>	4:05
<b>249</b>	'Let us all go and see Mary,' said Christy...	4:09
<b>250</b>	The power of admonition which had begun to stir...	5:24
<b>251</b>	No doubt it was having a strong effect on him...	5:29
<b>252</b>	Mary at once saw the Vicar's intention.	5:38
<b>253</b>	<b>Chapter 58</b>	7:26
<b>254</b>	It might have been supposed that Rosamond...	7:48
<b>255</b>	Rosamond was soon looking lovelier than ever...	7:23
<b>256</b>	Its novelty made it the more irritating.	3:48
<b>257</b>	However, it had seemed a question of no moment...	4:15
<b>258</b>	Rosamond did not look at her husband...	6:03
<b>259</b>	'What can – I – do, Tertius?' said Rosamond...	5:56
<b>260</b>	'Are we to go without spoons and forks then?'	5:39

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261	<b>Chapter 59</b>	7:42
262	<b>Chapter 60</b>	5:22
263	Will was in a defiant mood...	5:36
264	Meanwhile Joseph had brought a trayful...	4:40
265	Next came two Dutch prints...	4:47
266	The bidding was brisk, and Will continued...	3:27
267	Later in the evening, however, Raffles overtook...	4:13
268	<b>Chapter 61</b>	6:23
269	But in truth Mr Bulstrode was very far from a state...	6:10
270	He remembered his first moments of shrinking.	7:09
271	Meanwhile, in his conversation with Raffles...	6:21
272	Will felt something like an electric shock.	5:53
273	'I will not deny that you conjecture rightly,' he answered...	5:32
274	<b>Chapter 62</b>	5:32
275	Dorothea was detained on the good pretext...	4:39
276	'He said he would never do anything...'	6:28
277	When Will saw her there, he gave a start...	6:25
278	She put out her hand, and Will took it for an instant...	6:15
279	<b>Book 7: Two Temptations – Chapter 63</b>	5:49
280	The opportunity came at Mr Vincy's...	6:08

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281	'You will never care any more about my one-eyed giant...'	7:03
282	<b>Chapter 64</b>	7:41
283	Lydgate's anger rose: he was prepared...	5:23
284	He went out of the house, but as his blood cooled...	6:32
285	She returned home by Mr Borthrop Trumbull's office...	7:37
286	But the next day she carried out her plan...	7:58
287	Lydgate sat paralyzed by opposing impulses...	6:44
288	<b>Chapter 65</b>	5:57
289	It is a terrible moment in young lives...	7:35
290	<b>Chapter 66</b>	5:24
291	Mr Bambridge was not yet come...	6:52
292	Lydgate, by betting on his own strokes, had won...	5:58
293	There was a pause. Mr Farebrother seemed to wait...	5:42
294	<b>Chapter 67</b>	7:17
295	But in the midst of his hesitation, opportunity came...	6:54
296	Bulstrode showed a rather exasperating ability...	6:10
297	<b>Chapter 68</b>	5:13
298	Bulstrode carried his candle to the bedside...	4:28
299	Bulstrode was only the more conscious...	5:16
300	'The lad would be as happy as two,' he said...	4:50



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301	<b>Chapter 69</b>	6:48
302	'You are a conscientious man, Mr Garth...'	7:15
303	Yet when he arrived at Stone Court...	6:24
304	After waiting for the note to be carried to Mrs Bulstrode...	6:51
305	<b>Chapter 70</b>	7:03
306	Strange, piteous conflict in the soul...	6:54
307	The banker felt that he had done something...	6:34
308	To her surprise, Mr Bulstrode did not answer.	7:20
309	On returning home Lydgate had a visit...	6:34
310	<b>Chapter 71</b>	5:37
311	'What's the man's name? Where can he be found?'	5:12
312	'Well,' he said, with a deep breath...	4:51
313	But this vague conviction of indeterminable guilt...	7:37
314	Mrs Dollop looked round with the air of a landlady...	6:34
315	After the business had been fully opened...	7:29
316	After the word chicanery there was a growing noise...	7:06
317	<b>Book 8: Sunset and Sunrise – Chapter 72</b>	5:03
318	'Oh, how cruel!' said Dorothea, clasping her hands.	5:19
319	<b>Chapter 73</b>	5:15
320	But then came the question whether he should have acted...	5:39

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321	<b>Chapter 74</b>	4:46
322	'Mr Thesiger has always countenanced him...'	6:04
323	Mrs Plymdale was in a situation...	4:48
324	Hence Mrs Bulstrode was shown into the drawing-room...	6:38
325	He told her everything, very inartificially...	6:51
326	<b>Chapter 75</b>	7:30
327	'This is Chichely's scratch. What is he writing to you about?'	6:39
328	He thought, 'I am a fool. Haven't I given up...'	6:25
329	<b>Chapter 76</b>	6:00
330	Lydgate started up from his chair...	6:47
331	'Suppose,' said Dorothea, meditatively...	7:10
332	Lydgate did not answer, and she saw that he was...	6:41
333	<b>Chapter 77</b>	5:39
334	Dorothea's nature was of that kind...	5:56
335	Dorothea had another errand in Lowick Gate...	6:46
336	<b>Chapter 78</b>	6:27
337	Let it be forgiven to Will that he had no such movement of pity.	5:15
338	<b>Chapter 79</b>	5:58
339	<b>Chapter 80</b>	5:38
340	Then came the hour in which the waves of suffering...	4:43
341	She began now to live through that yesterday morning...	6:26

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<b>342</b>	<b>Chapter 81</b>	6:05
<b>343</b>	Looking like the lovely ghost of herself...	6:41
<b>344</b>	Rosamond, with an overmastering pang...	7:04
<b>345</b>	'You are thinking what is not true,' said Rosamond...	7:19
<b>346</b>	<b>Chapter 82</b>	5:57
<b>347</b>	Thus he did nothing more decided...	4:07
<b>348</b>	<b>Chapter 83</b>	6:12
<b>349</b>	When the little lady had trotted away...	6:43
<b>350</b>	They stood silent, not looking at each other...	7:50
<b>351</b>	<b>Chapter 84</b>	4:37
<b>352</b>	Mr Brooke was evidently in a state of nervous perturbation.	5:47
<b>353</b>	'I pointed everything out to her,' said Mr Brooke...	5:12
<b>354</b>	But Celia was glad to have room for speech...	4:33
<b>355</b>	Dorothea, busy in her boudoir, felt a glow...	5:43
<b>356</b>	<b>Chapter 85</b>	3:57
<b>357</b>	He was full of timid care for his wife...	5:13
<b>358</b>	<b>Chapter 86</b>	5:12
<b>359</b>	Instead of speaking immediately, Caleb stood still...	6:14
<b>360</b>	<b>Finale</b>	5:35
<b>361</b>	Fred never became rich...	6:32
<b>361</b>	But this opinion of his did not cause a lasting alienation...	6:24

**Total time: 35:40:18**

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## George Eliot

(1819–1880)

# Middlemarch

George Eliot, born Mary Ann Evans, plain country daughter of a land agent in the Midlands of England, is one of the most remarkable authors in English literature. This is a comment as much on her life as on her works. She outraged society, scandalised her family, and lived a personal life of serenely flagrant duplicity. She lived one of the most sexually unconventional and intellectually independent lives of her time, yet her works demonstrate a deep moral conviction concerning the virtue of integrity and the reward of virtue that would sit comfortably with many Anglican parsons.

She was close to both her parents – her father’s strength of character finds an echo in Caleb Garth – and must have found it hard to be at boarding schools in the area of her home. On her mother’s death in 1836, she took over the running

of the household. However, her father, perhaps feeling a good marriage was unlikely, brought in extra tutors (especially in languages and her great love, music) and allowed her access to the library in the house for whose land he was the agent. Her capacity and appetite for reading may have been sated; but more likely it was whetted. And she began to question certain central tenets of the ardent, evangelical Christianity in which she had been brought up. This radical intellectual shift was exacerbated when the family moved near to Coventry and she became friends of the philanthropic, free-thinking Bray family.

Through the Brays she met other liberal thinkers, and began to write; her first work was a translation of an historical (rather than divine) life of Jesus. She had lost her faith, or at least the conventional

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religious aspect of it. Her father threatened to exclude her from the household as a result, but a compromise was reached whereby she would attend church with him in order to keep up appearances and keep the home intact. She stayed with him until his death in 1849, and then went almost immediately to Switzerland for eight months. When she returned she changed her name to Marian and determined to be a part of the literary world.

She went to London to stay in a boarding house run by the magazine publisher John Chapman, whom she had met through the Brays. He had published her first book and ran the radical quarterly *The Westminster Review*. Within 18 months Marian Evans was not just contributing articles and reviewing 'silly novels by lady novelists' (her phrase); she was assistant editor in a journal that was at the centre of London's intellectual life. She was associating with some of the greatest thinkers and writers of her time, such as Herbert Spencer, who coined the phrase 'survival of the fittest' (and with whom she discussed the possibility

of marriage). She also developed a close relationship with Chapman, who was living in the house with his wife and mistress. Eventually this relationship settled to a purely professional one; and it was around this time, in the early 1850s, that she met the remarkable philosopher and critic George Henry Lewes.

Lewes himself was in an unconventional marriage at the time, and, with his full knowledge, his wife had several children by Lewes's best friend. However, Lewes was unable to obtain a divorce because he had been (scandalously) complicit in his wife's adultery. Undeterred by any of this, the two physically unappealing (Lewes was described by Carlyle as 'the ape') but brilliantly gifted free-thinkers set off to Germany together. For the next 25 years they lived as husband and wife despite what the law or the Church might say about it – or Eliot's brother, come to that, who was so incensed by his sister's behaviour that he refused to communicate with her until sometime after Lewes's death.

But it was Lewes who encouraged Eliot to write fiction, in the process

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moving away from translation and journalism. It was his encouragement and perpetual care for her (he never let her see a bad review) that allowed both the breadth of her understanding of people and her involvement with social and political activity to find expression. She chose her pseudonym partly in homage to him (not just the 'George' – the first syllable of the surname is surely for Lewes, too) and partly because it was 'a good mouth-filling, easily pronounced word'. She published three short stories in Blackwood's Magazine before publishing Adam Bede, which was such a success that several people claimed to be the real George Eliot – including one Joseph Liggins, who persuaded The Times that he had written the novel. George Eliot herself proved her claim, but was obliged to reveal her identity in the process. Strangely, this did not seem to prevent the reading public – who were so shocked at the 'marriage' of Lewes and Marian Evans that they refused to invite either of them to their houses – from loving her books; The Mill on the Floss and Silas Marner were as successful as her first novel.

Middlemarch, however, did not come easily. It was begun as one story in 1869, built around Lydgate and the Vincys, but was put off for over a year; it was then restarted, with the character of Dorothea taking the central position and the earlier story being incorporated into it. As she had before, Eliot tackled the issue of reform that had stirred the country so much in the 1830s, and used her own life for certain core elements of the characters' progressions. She also revisited her detailed knowledge of the rural world she had inhabited as a child to give full weight to the landscape and the characters' way of life. But in Middlemarch she made a conscious attempt to cover a huge range of themes: political, social, personal and religious.

Lewes died in 1878, but Eliot found comfort in an old friend, John Cross, and – to the surprise of many – married him in 1880, taking his surname. At least the marriage effected a reconciliation with her brother. The honeymoon was in Venice; but Cross was subject to occasional fits of depression, and he attempted suicide by jumping from their hotel window into the

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Grand Canal while Eliot was discussing his condition in another room. In the end, it was Eliot who died first, just months later. She was buried next to Lewes: it took 100 years before her wish to be buried in Westminster Abbey was granted.

She had tried to keep her femininity a secret in order to ensure her works were taken seriously, but she was obliged to reveal it to protect the legitimacy of her authorship. History has reversed that. Mary Ann Cross, *née* Evans, is almost universally recognised as George Eliot yet known as a woman, and regarded as one of the finest novelists in English. Such an unconventional mixing of the literary and the personal seems highly appropriate.

**Notes by Roy McMillan**



**Juliet Stevenson**, one of the UK's leading actresses, has worked extensively for the Royal Shakespeare Company and the Royal National Theatre. She received an Olivier Award for her role in *Death and the Maiden* at the Royal Court, and a number of other awards for her work in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. Other film credits include *The Trial*, *Drowning by Numbers* and *Emma*. She has recorded *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, *Persuasion*, *Stories from Shakespeare*, *To the Lighthouse*, *Bliss and Other Stories* and *The Road Home*, all for Naxos AudioBooks.

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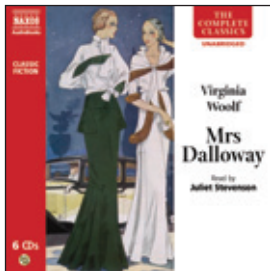
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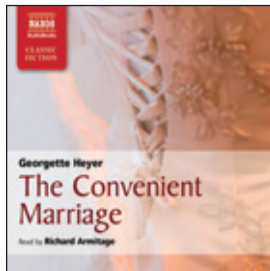
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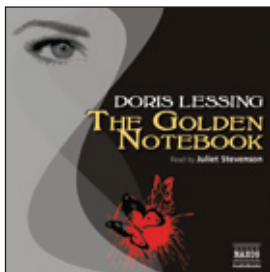
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George Eliot

# Middlemarch

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

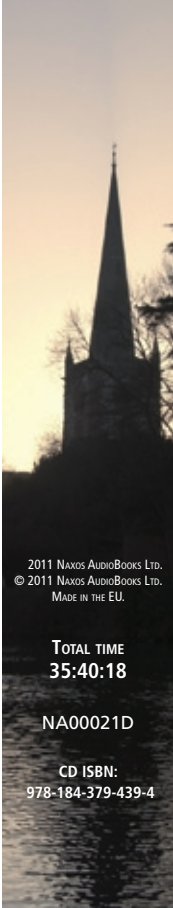
Dorothea Brooke is an ardent idealist who represses her vivacity and intelligence for the cold, theological pedant Casaubon. One man understands her true nature: the artist Will Ladislaw. But how can love triumph against her sense of duty and Casaubon's mean spirit? Meanwhile, in the little world of Middlemarch, the broader world is mirrored: the world of politics, social change, reforms; betrayal, greed, blackmail, ambition and disappointment.

Dorothea Brooke is an outstanding heroine; *Middlemarch* is filled with characters that are vivid and true, comic and moving. It is one of the greatest novels in the English language.



**Juliet Stevenson** is one of the UK's leading actresses. Her film credits include *Truly, Madly, Deeply* and *Emma*. She has recorded *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, *To the Lighthouse* and many more, all for Naxos AudioBooks.

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