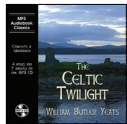
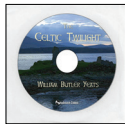


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The Celtic Twilight

By William Butler Yeats (1865 - 1939)

Read by: Multiple readers Language: English
 Length: 4 hours and 7 minutes Style: Collaborative
 Genre(s): Myths, Legends & Fairy Tales

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In addition to his considerable gifts as a poet, William Butler Yeats had a deep and lifelong interest in Irish folklore, and in *The Celtic Twilight* he collects tales told by friends, neighbors and acquaintances that venture into the realm of the mystical and magical. The title refers to the pre-dawn hours when Druid rituals were performed. These words from Yeats' introduction give a good sense of his purpose in plucking this "handful of dreams".

I have desired, like every artist, to create a little world out of the beautiful, pleasant, and significant things of this marred and clumsy world, and to show in a vision something of the face of Ireland to any of my own people who would look where I bid them. I have therefore written down accurately

and candidly much that I have heard and seen, and, except by way of commentary, nothing that I have merely imagined. I have, however, been at no pains to separate my own beliefs from those of the peasantry, but have rather let my men and women, dhoulds and faeries, go their way unoffended or defended by any argument of mine. The things a man has heard and seen are threads of life, and if he pull them carefully from the confused distaff of memory, any who will can weave them into whatever garments of belief please them best. I too have woven my garment like another, but I shall try to keep warm in it, and shall be well content if it do not unbecome me.

William Butler Yeats (June 13, 1865 – January 28, 1939) was an Irish poet and a leading figure in 20th century literature. He was born in County Dublin into a well-to-do and artistic family: his father abandoned law to study art, his mother came from a wealthy merchant family. The family settled in Sligo by the sea when Yeats was an infant. The young William studied poetry from an early age, with a fascination for Irish legends and occult subjects, which, along with Spenser, Shelley and the Pre-Raphaelites, influenced his early work. His work became more concrete and realistic over time but maintained a connection with the mystical throughout. He wrote in 1892 that "the mystical life is the centre of all that I do and all that I think and all that I write." He is known for his long and difficult relationship with Irish heiress and Nationalist Maud Gonne, and for his friendship with Lady Gregory, an Irish dramatist and folklorist with whom he co-founded the Irish Literary Theatre and the Abbey Theatre and established the "Irish Literary Revival" movement. He married 25-year old Georgie Hyde-Lees happily at age 51 and fathered two children. His support of the Irish Nationalist movement led to his appointment as a Senator to the Irish Free State in 1922 and again in 1925. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1923.