



The House of the Seven Gables

Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804 - 1864)

Read by:	Mark F. Smith	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
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Set in Salem, Massachusetts in the mid-19th century, *The House of the Seven Gables* traces the history of a haunted mansion belonging to the Pyncheon family built on land seized from Matthew Maule in the 1600's after Colonel Pyncheon accused and convicted Maule of witchcraft. Maule laid a curse on the family at his execution, resulting first in the untimely death of the Colonel at the housewarming festivities. Flash forward to the current inhabitants: the impoverished Hepzibah Pyncheon; her brother Clifford, falsely accused of murdering his uncle; pretty young Phoebe, a distant country cousin; and Holgrave, a mysterious lodger writing a history of the family. Enter wealthy cousin Judge Jaffray Pyncheon, who threatens to commit the unstable Clifford unless he reveals the whereabouts of a long lost deed to land in Maine the family is thought to own. Events follow a fate set by character, the evil are punished, and the righteous are rewarded and released from the curse.

The House of the Seven Gables was the follow up to Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and sold out four printings in its first year. His treatment of generational guilt, retribution, and atonement has been an inspiration for many over the years, with particular resonance in the work of William Faulkner.

Nathaniel Hawthorne (July 4, 1804 – May 19, 1864) was an American author best known for his dark novels and stories set in Puritan New England that grapple with sin and the nature of evil. He was born in Salem, Massachusetts to a family with deep roots in the Boston area. His father was a sea captain who died in 1808, forcing the family to live with his mother's relatives, first in Salem and then near Sebago Lake in Maine. He graduated from Bowdoin College in 1825 and started publishing short stories that were eventually collected as *Twice-Told Tales* in 1837. He lived for a time at the Brook Farm transcendentalist Utopian community before marrying Sophia Peabody in 1842 and moving to Concord next to Ralph Waldo Emerson. In 1846 he won an appointment to the Salem Custom House and returned to Salem, where he wrote *The Scarlet Letter* in 1850. He moved to Lenox, Massachusetts that same year, where he became friends with Herman Melville and wrote *The House of the Seven Gables* and *The Blithedale Romance*. The family returned to Concord in 1852, where he wrote the campaign biography of his friend Franklin Pierce. Pierce's election earned him an appointment as U.S. consul in Liverpool. The family returned to Concord in 1860, where he wrote *The Marble Faun*. After a period of failing health he died on a tour in the White Mountains in 1864 and was buried on Author's Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery in Concord.