



Washington Square

Henry James (April 15, 1843 – February 28, 1916)

Read by:	Dawn Murphy	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	7 hours 19 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1060
Language:	English	UPC:	0683422134609
Style:	Solo	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Fiction		

Washington Square tells the classic story of the conflict of Dr. Austin Sloper, a brilliant, wealthy but unemotional physician, with his good-natured but ordinary daughter Catherine over her plans to marry Morris Townsend, a suitor that Sloper fears is after her money. He threatens to disinherit her in hopes of exposing Townsend's intentions, but she persists, while Townsend senses a bluff and maintains the engagement while repeatedly deferring its fulfillment. The doctor takes Catherine on a grand European tour for a year in hopes of weakening her relationship with Townsend. The matter is discussed only twice, and when Catherine remains resolute her father displays a contempt that cuts deep and alienates Catherine for good. Upon their return Catherine informs Townsend of her father's views and he at last withdraws, leaving Catherine disillusioned and destined for spinsterhood.

The story is based on a real life situation related to James by his friend actress Fanny Kemble. It was serialized in *Cornhill Magazine* and *Harper's New Monthly Magazine* before release in book form in 1880. The novel is structurally simple and comparatively short, and is compared with Jane Austen in its clear, graceful style and focus on family relationships. It remains one of the most popular titles in the James oeuvre.

Henry James (April 15, 1843 – February 28, 1916) was an American novelist and critic and a key figure in the development of literary realism in the 19th century. He was born in New York to a well-to-do and celebrated family: his father was a lecturer and philosopher noted for his ties to Swedenborg; his older brother William was a leading philosopher and psychologist; and his sister Alice found fame as a diarist. The family traveled abroad extensively during his youth, settling in Newport, RI and then Boston. After a brief term at Harvard Law School he began to write in earnest, publishing reviews and stories for magazines. In 1869 he toured Europe and settled in London, where he remained for much of the rest of life. Much of his work addresses the cultural differences between Europe and America, often writing from the point of view of the character and adding depth with the use of interior monologue, shifting points of view, and a keen awareness of consciousness and perception. His style shows the influence of Balzac, Maupassant, and Zola, and has been likened to impressionist painting. His work can be grouped into three periods, the first concluding with *The Portrait of a Lady* 1881, the second with *The Turn of the Screw* in 1890, and the late years characterized by the trilogy of masterpieces, *The Wings of the Dove* (1902), *The Ambassadors* (1903), and *The Golden Bowl* (1904). He was nominated for the Nobel Prize in literature in 1911, 1912, and 1916.