

Laurence Sterne

Tristram Shandy

Read by **Anton Lesser**

One of the most extraordinary novels ever written in English, *Tristram Shandy* defies categorisation. A vast, shaggy-dog story, a cock-and-bull tale, a self-conscious and mocking parody of the novel itself, a bawdy romp – it is all these and more.

Published between 1759 and 1767, it is ostensibly a fictional autobiography, but it digresses so much that the hero is not even born until the fourth volume. There are blank pages, black pages, missing chapters and many more unconventional devices. Satire, parody, broad humour and an intellectual *joie de vivre* mark it as a stylistic masterpiece; but the magnificent Walter Shandy, the loyal Corporal Trim, and the gentle Uncle Toby give it humanity and an unexpected tenderness.

Endlessly inventive, full of knowing asides and puns of all varieties, it continues to influence writers today; and it changed forever the possibilities of the novel itself.



Anton Lesser is one of Britain's leading classical actors. His television appearances include roles in *Vanity Fair* and *Dickens*. He is a familiar voice on radio, and has become particularly associated with his award winning readings of Dickens for Naxos AudioBooks.

ISBN 978-962-634-967-0



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