



De Profundis and Other Prison Writings

Oscar Wilde

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De Profundis and Other Prison Writings is a new selection of Oscar Wilde's prison letters and poetry in Penguin Classics, edited and introduced by Colm Tóibín.

At the start of 1895, Oscar Wilde was the toast of London, widely feted for his most recent stage success, *An Ideal Husband*. But by May of the same year, Wilde was in Reading prison sentenced to hard labour. 'De Profundis' is an epistolic account of Oscar Wilde's spiritual journey while in prison, and describes his new, shocking conviction that 'the supreme vice is shallowness'. This edition also includes further letters to his wife, his friends, the Home Secretary, newspaper editors and his lover Lord Alfred Douglas - Bosie - himself, as well as 'The Ballad of Reading Gaol', the heart-rending poem about a man sentenced to hang for the murder of the woman he loved.

This Penguin edition is based on the definitive Complete Letters, edited by Wilde's grandson Merlin Holland. Colm Tóibín's introduction explores Wilde's duality in love, politics and literature. This edition also includes notes on the text and suggested further reading.

Oscar Wilde was born in Dublin. His three volumes of short fiction, *The Happy Prince*, *Lord Arthur Savile's Crime* and *A House of Pomegranates*, together with his only novel, *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, won him a reputation as a writer with an original talent, a reputation enhanced by the phenomenal success of his society comedies - *Lady Windermere's Fan*, *A Woman of No Importance*, *An Ideal Husband* and *The Importance of Being Earnest*.

Colm Tóibín is the author of five novels, including *The Blackwater Lightship* and *The Master*, and a collection of stories, *Mothers and Sons*. His essay collection *Love in a Dark Time: Gay Lives from Wilde to Almodovar* appeared in 2002. He is the editor of *The Penguin Book of Irish Fiction*.

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