CLASSICS LIBRARY · STORY MAP

The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner

James Hogg · *1824 · original English text*

It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan, about one hundred and fifty years ago. Hogg's complete 1824 novel is a double narrative of fanaticism, crime, and a demonic companion.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

What happens when a man believes himself already justified, and how should a double story—an editor's narrative and a sinner's memoir—be taught as a warning about spiritual pride?

"It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan,"
The Editor's Narrative, the opening

The hosted text is The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner (published anonymously 1824, PG #2276), complete as Hogg's novel, including the Editor's Narrative and the memoir written by the sinner himself. The opening of the Editor's Narrative is exact, including "Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled)." The book is a dark Scottish tale of antinomian pride, murder, and a companion who may be the devil; for older and advanced students, teach with gravity, as a warning about spiritual pride, not as a mere Gothic thrill. Quote this typography.

KEY CHARACTERS

the Editor
The first teller, who begins from tradition and parish registers, and from the lands of Dalcastle.

Robert, the justified sinner
The writer of the private memoir, whose pride in being justified is the book's wound.

George Colwan
The brother of the editor's narrative, whose fate the two tellings surround.

the companion of the memoir
The figure who walks with Robert; teach him as Hogg wrote him, for older students.

DALCASTLE, OR DALCHASTEL

> *"It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan,"*
> The Editor's Narrative

Grades 11–12
Read the full text free at classicslaunch.org.

01
Dalcastle, or Dalchastel
THE EDITOR'S NARRATIVE, THE OPENING

It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan, about one hundred and fifty years ago. The book begins as an editor's inquiry, not yet as a confession.

- The opening is exact in both witnesses, including the two spellings of Dalcastle.
- The Editor's Narrative is the first half of the design, not a disposable preface.
- For older and advanced students.

> *"It appears from tradition, as well as some parish registers still extant, that the lands of Dalcastle (or Dalchastel, as it is often spelled) were possessed by a family of the name of Colwan,"*
> The Editor's Narrative

02
Two Brothers, and a Broken House
THE EDITOR'S NARRATIVE CONTINUED

The Colwan house is divided. The editor tells of George and Robert, and of a violence the neighborhood cannot settle. Keep this outer story distinct from the later memoir, and teach the crime with gravity.

- Do not name every last revelation of the memoir in this branch.
- The two tellings are meant to be read together.
- Teach the violence with gravity, not as spectacle.

03
A Memoir of Justification
THE SINNER'S OWN WRITING

The second part is the private memoir of the justified sinner, and of a companion who leads him on. Spiritual pride is the book's subject. Teach it as a warning, for older students, not as a mere devil-tale.

- Map both parts; this is one designed novel.
- The demonic companion is to be taught as Hogg wrote it.
- For older and advanced students; a dark book.

04
A Complete 1824 Novel
THE HOSTED FILE

PG #2276 and the site EPUB are this complete book, editor and memoir together. Quote stretches that appear in both.

- Complete as Hogg published it, including both narratives.
- For older and advanced students.
- The opening typography includes Dalchastel as a second spelling.

Spiritual Pride | A Double Narrative | A Broken House | A Dark Companion | Crime and Confession

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

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2. The book is a dark Scottish tale of antinomian pride, murder, and a companion who may be the devil; for older and advanced students, teach with gravity, as a warning about spiritual pride, not as a mere Gothic thrill.
3. Quote stretches that appear in both the Gutenberg text and the site EPUB.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #2276: The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/confessions-of-a-justified-sinner/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.