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A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man

James Joyce · *1916 · original English text*

Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road, and a boy named Stephen Dedalus begins to wake. Joyce's 1916 novel follows him through a Jesuit childhood, a crisis of sin and scruple, and a last resolve to fly. The hosted text is complete.

THE CENTRAL QUESTION

How does a soul become an artist, and what must it refuse—family, church, and nation—in order to forge the conscience of a race?

"Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead."
Stephen Dedalus · The last diary entry, 27 April

The book moves by expanding style as the boy grows: baby talk, school, the Christmas argument, the retreat, a terrible scrupulosity, a refusal of the priesthood, the university, and the diary of departure. This is Joyce's original English, PG #4217. The close is the invocation of the old artificer, dated Dublin 1904, Trieste 1914. The middle contains a frank fall and a sermon on hell; it is Adult/Advanced. Teach the religious crisis as a real crisis, not as a joke about the Church, and not as a simple advertisement for leaving it.

KEY CHARACTERS

Stephen Dedalus
The boy who becomes the young artist of the title; the book is his waking.

the Dedalus family
A sliding fortune, a father's talk, a mother's faith—the first claims he will refuse.

the Jesuit masters
The school and the retreat that form, terrify, and fail to keep him.

Cranly and the university friends
The last human circle before the departure.

OLD ARTIFICER

> *"Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead."*
> **Stephen Dedalus** · The last diary entry

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

01
A Moocow, and a Boy
CHAPTER I

The story opens in a child's ear: a moocow on the road, a nicens little boy named baby tuckoo. Clongowes, a homesickness, a punishment, and a first courage follow.

- The opening is exact: 'Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road.'
- Style is already meaning: the child's language is the child's world.
- The Christmas dinner argument is a political and religious weather, not a skit only.

> *"Once upon a time and a very good time it was there was a moocow coming down along the road"*
> The opening of Chapter I

02
Belvedere, and a Fall
CHAPTER II INTO III

The family slides in fortune. Stephen's pride, his senses, and a fall into sin come before the retreat. The sermon on hell is meant to terrify, and it does.

- Teach the fall and the retreat with gravity, for older students.
- Do not skip the sermon as a mere set piece; it is the book's religious shock.
- Joyce is exact about shame as well as about desire.

03
A Scruple, and a Refusal
CHAPTER III INTO IV

Confession, a season of devotion, and then the offer of a priestly vocation that Stephen will not take. A walk by the sea becomes another kind of calling.

- The piety is real in its season; do not treat it as only prelude.
- The refusal of the priesthood is a decision, not a shrug.
- The girl on the strand is a vision of earthly beauty; teach it with restraint.

04
The University, and Talk
CHAPTER V

Stephen among students, theories of art, a growing solitude, and the claims of family, Church, and Ireland, which he will not serve as they ask.

- The aesthetic talk is part of the portrait, not a delay.
- Cranly and the mother stand as the human cost of departure.
- The book is Irish and Catholic even in the refusal.

05
The Old Artificer
THE DIARY CLOSE

The last form is a diary. On 27 April he asks the old father, old artificer, to stand him now and ever in good stead. The book is dated Dublin, 1904, Trieste, 1914.

- The line is exact.
- 'To forge in the smithy of my soul the uncreated conscience of my race' stands just before it.
- A modernist portrait, complete in this file, for older students; do not flatten it into a simple rebel's handbook.

A Soul Waking | Faith and Scruple | Art as a Calling | Family and Nation | Departure

What to watch for as you read

GRADES 11–12

1. The hosted text is James Joyce's original English (Project Gutenberg #4217), complete through the 27 April diary entry and the dateline Dublin, 1904 / Trieste, 1914. The opening is the moocow sentence; the close is "Old father, old artificer, stand me now and ever in good stead." Quote this page.
2. The middle contains a frank sexual fall and a long sermon on hell. It is Adult/Advanced. Teach the religious crisis as a real crisis, not as a joke about the Church, and not as a simple advertisement for leaving it.
3. This is A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, not Ulysses (not in this wave). Keep the two distinct.

Quotations are verbatim from the original English text, Project Gutenberg #4217, the public-domain text hosted at classicslaunch.org/works/joyce-portrait-of-the-artist/. Citations give book and chapter (or canto and line) so every line can be checked.