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MARK TWAIN DEFINED A CLASSIC BOOK AS one that everybody wants to have read but nobody wants to read. The few lines from Joyce's *Finnegans Wake* that you just read (did you?) clinch Twain's point.

Actually, they are not a few lines but the first of ten key words in the *Wake*. Here is the tenth one:

*Ullhodturdenweirmudgaardgringnirurdrmolnirfenrirlukkilok-
kibaugimandodrrerinsurtkrinmgernrackinarockar*



The first word (a bit later we'll get to justifying the outrageous claim that this is a word) has 100 letters and the second 101. That part's easy—and so is a lot more when we find the keys to turning Joyce's classics into books we want to read—from *spark to phoenish* (Joyce's pun).

The keys to. Given! A way a lone a last a loved a
long the

—last line of *Finnegans Wake*

BIOGRAPHY



BORN IN DUBLIN, ON FEBRUARY 2, 1882, to John Stanislaus Joyce and his wife Mary Jane Murray, James Joyce began his education at age six under Jesuit scholars at Clongowes Wood College in County Kildare, continuing at Belvedere College in Dublin from 1893 to 1897. The following year, he entered the University College, Dublin, where he studied philosophy and languages, graduating in 1902. At age eighteen, he broke into print with an essay on Henrik Ibsen's drama *When We Dead Awaken*, published in the *Fortnightly Review* in 1900.

W. TERRENCE GORDON

Joyce left Ireland for Paris in 1902, planning to attend medical school but spent most of his time writing. On learning that



his mother was dying, he returned to Dublin in 1903, but he was not to stay in his native land for long. Soon after Joyce met Nora Barnacle of Galway in 1904, the couple left for the Continent. Their union produced a son and a daughter; Joyce and Nora were eventually married in 1931.



At the beginning of World War I, Joyce and his young family began a series of moves, first to Zürich, where he began to work on *Ulysses*. By the time the work appeared in print in 1922, Joyce had already published *Dubliners* in 1914, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* in 1916, and the play *Exiles* in 1918. A collection of poems, *Chamber Music* had appeared in 1907 and a second, *Pomes Penyeach*, would appear in 1927.



Within a year of the appearance of *Ulysses* in 1922, the book was plagued by censorship in Great Britain and in the United States, where



it remained contraband till 1933. (When US District Judge John M. Woolsey lifted the ban on the notoriously “dirty book,” he noted wryly that “whilst in many places the effect of *Ulysses* on the reader undoubtedly is somewhat emetic, nowhere does it tend to be an aphrodisiac.”) Joyce, then living in Paris, had begun writing *Finnegans Wake*. He was suffering from glaucoma, and chronic eye trouble dogged him for the rest of his days. The first segment of the *Wake* appeared in the *transatlantic review* in April 1924, under the title *Work in Progress*. The final version of the work was not published until 1939.



Acclaimed a masterpiece by many from the outset, the *Wake* found just as many readers ready to condemn it. When France fell to the Nazis, Joyce removed his family to Zürich once again. Weakened by illness and discouraged at the public reception of *Finnegans Wake*, he died there on January 13, 1941.