



OROONOKO

## *Oroonoko, or The Royal Slave*

by Aphra Behn (1640-1689)

Aphra Behn was the first woman writer in England to make a living by her pen, and her novel *Oroonoko* was the first work published in English to express sympathy for African slaves. Perhaps based partly on Behn's own experiences living in Surinam, the novel tells the tragic story of a noble slave Oroonoko, and his love Imoinda. The work was an instant success and was adapted for the stage in 1695 (and more recently by the Royal Shakespeare Company in 1999).

Behn's work paved the way for women writers who came after her, as Virginia Woolf noted in *A Room of One's Own* (1928): "All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, ... for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds."

Total running time: 2:40:12

Read by Elizabeth Klett

Cover design by Kathryn Delaney  
Study of "head of a Negro" by Peter Paul Rubens



Aphra Behn

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