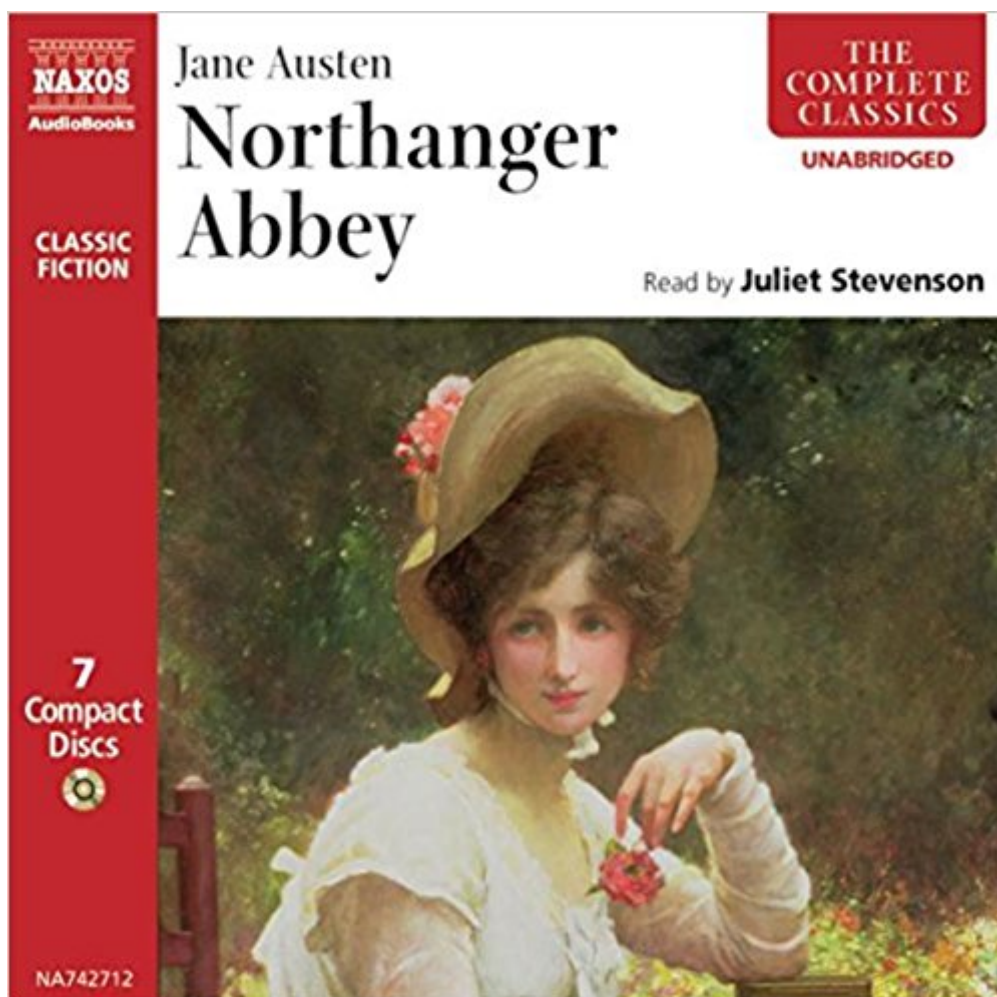




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Northanger Abbey (Naxos AudioBooks)



Synopsis

Northanger Abbey is the earliest of Jane Austen's great comedies of female enlightenment and combines literary burlesque - making fun of the excesses of the Gothic novel - with larger moral, philosophical, and social issues: the folly of letting literature get in the way of life, the inexcusability of not thinking for oneself, and the painful difficulties (especially for women) involved in growing up. Lady Susan and The Watsons are early compositions that reflect many of the qualities of Northanger Abbey. The first is an epistolary novel centring on the intrigues of the villainous Lady Susan; the second is an unfinished example of Jane Austen's most characteristic form - a story where the heroine is outstanding for her sense and goodness, virtues notably lacking in the other characters, who are here part of an altogether bleaker vision. Sanditon, too, is tragically incomplete, and it signals the achievement of a new depth and breadth of comic insight on the part of its author.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Though Northanger Abbey is one of Jane Austen's earliest novels, it was not published until after her death--well after she'd established her reputation with works such as Pride and Prejudice, Emma, and Sense and Sensibility. Of all her novels, this one is the most explicitly literary in that it is primarily concerned with books and with readers. In it, Austen skewers the novelistic excesses of her day made popular in such 18th-century Gothic potboilers as Ann Radcliffe's The Mysteries of Udolpho. Decrepit castles, locked rooms, mysterious chests, cryptic notes, and tyrannical fathers all figure into Northanger Abbey, but with a decidedly satirical twist. Consider Austen's introduction of her heroine: we are told on the very first page that "no one who had ever seen Catherine Morland in

her infancy, would have supposed her born to be an heroine." The author goes on to explain that Miss Morland's father is a clergyman with "a considerable independence, besides two good livings--and he was not in the least addicted to locking up his daughters." Furthermore, her mother does not die giving birth to her, and Catherine herself, far from engaging in "the more heroic enjoyments of infancy, nursing a dormouse, feeding a canary-bird, or watering a rose-bush" vastly prefers playing cricket with her brothers to any girlish pastimes. Catherine grows up to be a passably pretty girl and is invited to spend a few weeks in Bath with a family friend. While there she meets Henry Tilney and his sister Eleanor, who invite her to visit their family estate, Northanger Abbey. Once there, Austen amuses herself and us as Catherine, a great reader of Gothic romances, allows her imagination to run wild, finding dreadful portents in the most wonderfully prosaic events. But Austen is after something more than mere parody; she uses her rapier wit to mock not only the essential silliness of "horrid" novels, but to expose the even more horrid workings of polite society, for nothing Catherine imagines could possibly rival the hypocrisy she experiences at the hands of her supposed friends. In many respects Northanger Abbey is the most lighthearted of Jane Austen's novels, yet at its core is a serious, unsentimental commentary on love and marriage, 19th-century British style. --Alix Wilber --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

A resurgence of interest in Austen, combined with a vivacious reading by British actress Amanda Root, makes this a timely audio selection. Usually considered Austen's earliest completed novel, this posthumously published work is a delightful parody of gothic novels. Heroine Catherine Moreland is introduced to the social whirl of Bath by a new friend, Isabella Thorpe. Alas, Catherine is disappointed by this disloyal lass and departs to spend time at the ancestral home of her true friend, Eleanor Tilney, and Eleanor's charming brother Henry. Meanwhile, Isabella's brother John, whose romantic overtures have been rejected by Catherine, is almost successful in his schemes to cause the Tilneys to reject our heroine. An excellent acquisition for public libraries. Linda Bredengerd, Univ. of Pittsburgh, Bradford, Pa. Copyright 1997 Cahners Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to the Paperback edition.

So I just wanted to let others know that this collection is one giant book of all Austen novels combined. You can't tell from the picture, but I was actually expecting (and hoping for) individual books packed in one box like other book collections I have. So I was definitely a bit disappointed when I received this book. And while I am used to reading large books like David McCullough biographies, this compilation is by far the heaviest I have in my possession. I'm not sure I will be

able to read this in bed or even hold it up in my arms for any long period of time. So beware. I would have chosen differently if had this information when I was contemplating purchase.

It was a little slow in some parts but overall I enjoyed it. The book is about two sisters who find love but get their hearts broken in different ways. Elinor, the sensible sister, loves Edward but soon finds out that he is engaged to be married to someone who he does not love anymore. Marianne, the more light hearted and outgoing sister, is crazy in love with Willoughby but eventually finds out he is a dirty scoundrel who is also involved with another woman who he is using for money. Meanwhile, another man, Colonel Brandon loves Marianne from a distance but she does not share his feelings even though his love is genuine and true. Elinor manages to keep her heartache to herself and suffer in silence but Marianne is wildly dramatic and falls into a deep depression. In the end, everything works out for the best for the girls. Edwards engagement to his other lady falls apart enabling him to rekindle his relationship with Elinor, and Marianne finally begins to learn what true love is and opens her heart up to Colonel Brandon. The book was a bit predictable, but all in all it was a good story.

I just purchased the 'used' copy of the 2007 hardcover edition from the Wordsworth Library Collection. The problem is not with the bookseller's description, which is accurately noted as 'like new.' The problem is with the book's layout. There's not quite enough margin on the inside of the pages.. or maybe the binding is too tight... to be able to read the words along the inside edge without pulling and pressing on the book to make it flatter. Does not make for a relaxing dip into the works of one of my favorite authors. This was intended to replace a 1930's Modern Library edition which has started losing its covers. I have found a duplicate of my existing book and will be ordering that.... this one goes to Goodwill. Again, no slight on the vendor... this is not something you would notice unless you open the book and start to read.

I'm a huge fan of Jane Austen and have read many of her other books. This was her first published novel so I was excited to finally get to it. Unlike her other works, this has less philosophical musings but just as much drama. The storyline is engaging and the characters are so nicely developed that you really find yourself reproaching or lauding their actions in your head. This format was just fine on my kindle and was easy to read. I find that a good romantic drama always contains some joy, some sadness, and multidimensional characters. This checks all the boxes. I would definitely recommend this book.

Most great Austen novels feature women encountering terrible familial or legal circumstances which it is their business to overcome ("Emma" may be the sole exception). In a few novels the (possible or actual) entailment of an estate away from a deserving wife after the death of a beloved husband is that circumstance. The Dashwood sisters (and their mother) have been displaced from their financially secure life after the death of their father. Once the estate goes to their insipid brother and his scheming wife, the girls and their mother are removed to a cottage with none of the graces inherent in their former life. While Marianne Dashwood seeks solace in Romantic ideals and romance, her sister Elinor pragmatically negotiates their new world with Austen-esque grace. I will not do the minutiae of plot, but this, along with "Persuasion" and "Pride and Prejudice," are supremely satisfying reads. Austen's light-filled prose, characterization, and gentle satire make her novels supremely pleasurable reads.

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