

  
**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

Jane Austen  
**Northanger Abbey**

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**



NA207612D

---

1	Catherine Morland, the daughter of a clergyman	5:09
2	They arrive at Bath and settle in Pulteney Street	3:33
3	The first appearance in the Lower Rooms	3:18
4	In the pump-room, the next day	3:36
5	An inquiring eye for Mr Tilney	1:22
6	Catherine, Isabella, and the excitement of Udolpho	4:43
7	James Morland and John Thorpe	5:25
8	Dancing in the Upper Rooms	7:09
9	John Thorpe makes his presence felt	7:03
10	Catherine renews her acquaintance with Miss Tilney	9:26
11	More persuasion from John Thorpe	7:42
12	Rejected, dejected and humbled	5:00
13	To walk with Miss Tilney, or to join the Thorpes	5:17
14	A fellow admirer of The Mysteries of Udolpho	3:01
15	Surprising news from Isabella	5:33

---

16	A hopeful letter	4:18
17	More conflict between the Tilneys and the Thorpes	7:43
18	A wonderful invitation	3:00
19	An unwelcome suit	2:13
20	In the curricle with Henry	8:45
21	Wild imaginings in Northanger Abbey	7:36
22	The first day at the Abbey	5:56
23	A tour of the house	3:47
24	An attempt on the forbidden door	5:43
25	The anxieties of common life	4:01
26	A letter from Isabella	6:50
27	A heroine returning to her native village	3:04
28	Despair and unutterable happiness	8:09
29	Be a fool if you like!	3:53

**Total time: 2:32:33**

---

# Jane Austen

## Northanger Abbey

Jane Austen was born in Hampshire in 1775, the seventh of eight children. Her father was a clergyman who ensured that his children were well educated. After a brief spell at boarding school when they were very young, Jane and her sister Cassandra were educated at home. In 1801, Mr Austen retired and the family moved to Bath. Although Jane Austen never married, she is reputed to have had a romance in 1802, but she parted from her lover, who died the following year. In 1803, she was proposed to by a wealthy Hampshire landowner and after initially accepting his proposal, she refused him the following morning. In 1805, her father died, and she moved with her mother to Southampton and in 1809 to the village of Chawton.

In 1816, Jane Austen became seriously ill, and was taken to Winchester in search of a cure. She died there in 1817. She is remembered by six great novels: **Sense and Sensibility** (1811), **Pride and Prejudice** (1813), **Mansfield Park** (1814), **Emma** (1816), **Northanger Abbey** (1818) and **Persuasion** (1818).

Although not published until 1818, a year after Jane Austen's death, **Northanger Abbey** was her first major work. It was originally written in 1797 and bought by a publisher in 1803. By 1816, the novel still had not been published so Jane Austen bought it back from the publisher and its publication was eventually overseen by her brother.

In **Northanger Abbey**, Jane Austen deals with two aspects of eighteenth-century life with which her readers would have been very familiar. First she examines and satirises the strictly-prescribed routine of the social scene in Bath where the wealthy would go to take the waters in the Pump Room, promenade along the Crescent, attend balls, card parties and the theatre and generally partake of civilised society. Isabella and Mrs Allen, obsessed with fashion and appearances, are shallow, self-obsessed and hypocritical, and fit in perfectly with everything Bath has to offer. Henry and Eleanor Tilney, however, represent different values, and throughout the book Catherine Morland has difficult

---

choices to make as she tries to pick her way through the demands of loyalty and social decorum. It is not difficult to see where Jane Austen stands on these issues and her subtle and masterful use of irony is never far from the surface.

Jane Austen's view of the Gothic novel is not so very different from her position on the empty-headed goings-on in fashionable society in Bath. Her readers would have been very well aware of the fashion for these books, a genre which began with **The Castle of Otranto** by Horace Walpole. This, and its imitators, explored the world of the imagination; a world of ghosts, ancient castles, statues dripping with blood. Catherine Morland becomes so taken with these subjects that she is in danger of confusing fantasy with reality, she imagines foul play where there is none, but is the victim of wrong-doings of a very different kind. She concludes:

*'Charming as were all Mrs Radcliffe's works...it was not in them perhaps that human nature, at least in the midland counties of England, was to be looked for.'*

To present **Northanger Abbey** as merely a burlesque, and a parody of Gothic novels, would be to do it a severe injustice. Although a very early work, there is a

layering and sophistication, such as when Jane Austen comments on the creation of her heroine with a wink over the reader's shoulder; she deals with the confusion between reality and fantasy, and yet has the maturity to be able to remind the reader that when her writing is at its most acute, this too is fiction. Although she comes down firmly on the side of faithfulness and integrity, the novel never lapses into didacticism, thanks to her glorious lightness of touch, which she was to develop further in her later work.

### **Notes by Heather Godwin**

---

## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

<b>BEETHOVEN</b> TRIOS OP. 1 Stuttgart Piano Trio	8.550947
<b>BEETHOVEN</b> SEPTET Various artists	8.553090
<b>MOZART</b> FLUTE QUARTET IN D Jean Claude Gérard, Ensemble Villa Musica	8.550438

# Jane Austen

# Northanger Abbey

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

When Catherine Morland, a country clergyman's daughter, is invited to spend a season in Bath with the fashionable high society, little does she imagine the delights and perils that await her. Captivated and disconcerted by what she finds, and introduced to the joys of "Gothic novels" by her new friend, Isabella, Catherine longs for mystery and romance. When she is invited to stay with the beguiling Henry Tilney and his family at Northanger Abbey, she expects mystery and intrigue at every turn. However, the truth turns out to be even stranger than fiction...



**Juliet Stevenson** has worked extensively for the RSC, the Royal National Theatre, and other major theatre companies. She won an Olivier Award for her role in *Death and the Maiden* at the Royal Court, and a number of other awards for her work in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. Other film credits include *The Trial*, *Ladder of Swords*, *Drowning by Numbers* and *A Secret Rapture*. Among her prominent TV appearances is *The Politician's Wife*. She also reads Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* and Austen's *Mansfield Park* for Naxos AudioBooks.

*"...get this Naxos version, in which Juliet Stevenson invests Catherine with eager impetuosity, and gives Henry an amused and affectionately easing manner."*

THE TIMES EDUCATIONAL SUPPLEMENT

CD ISBN:

978-962-634-076-9

View our catalogue online at  
[www.naxosaudiobooks.com](http://www.naxosaudiobooks.com)



Abridged by Heather Godwin  
Produced by Nicolas Soames  
Post-production: Paul Libson Audio Services  
Engineer (speech): Alan Smyth, Bucks Audio Recording

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE,  
BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THESE COMPACT DISCS PROHIBITED.  
© 1996 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd. © 1996 NAXOS Audiobooks Ltd.  
Made in Germany.

Total time  
2:32:33