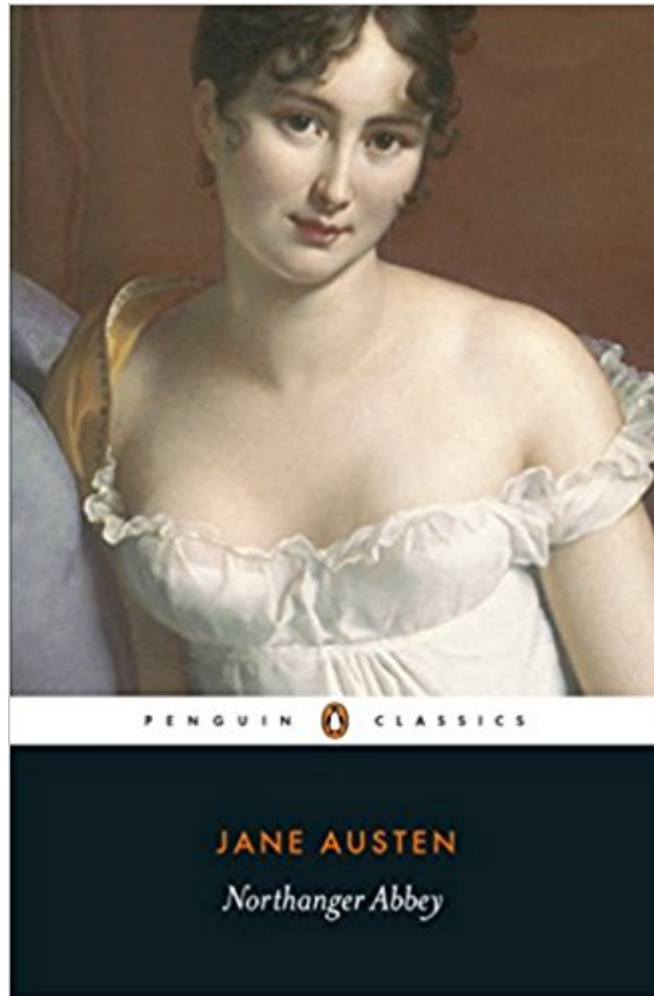


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Northanger Abbey (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Austen's witty exploration of the perils of mistaking fiction for reality During an eventful season at Bath, young, naïve Catherine Morland experiences the joys of fashionable society for the first time. She is delighted with her new acquaintances: flirtatious Isabella, who shares Catherine's love of Gothic romance and horror, and sophisticated Henry and Eleanor Tilney, who invite her to their father's mysterious house, Northanger Abbey. There, her imagination influenced by novels of sensation and intrigue, Catherine imagines terrible crimes committed by General Tilney. With its broad comedy and irrepressible heroine, this is the most youthful and optimistic of Jane Austen's works. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

Book Information

Series: Penguin Classics

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Penguin Classics; Reissue edition (April 29, 2003)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0141439793

ISBN-13: 978-0141439792

Product Dimensions: 5.1 x 0.8 x 7.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 8.5 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars 4,462 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #12,403 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #7 in Books > Romance >

Historical > Tudor #51 in Books > Romance > Gothic #78 in Books > Literature & Fiction > History & Criticism > Criticism & Theory

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 an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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 an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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.

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.

A lot of water under the bridge since first reading this book many years ago. I do not know why I liked it so much then...possibly I was blinded by adolescents and want everyone to have a loving mate and played match maker myself thinking also I was above others..shame on me!! This book the second time around was so frustrating I could have screamed in parts. How dare Emma feel so superior in her small town and looked for others to make over in her image. How dare she play match maker with every eligible bachelor and made in the area thinking she knew best. Was she a true friend visiting all the families and offering her solicitations as if she were the queen and it being a big gift to shower her presence with others (all of whom she felt were inferior) on a regular basis. Glad to have revisited this book and will revisit others but don't think they will be by Jane Austen. My book was downloaded onto my Kindle from .

This book suffers from the same problems as Emma. I think I like the story line and characters better, but because it surrounds a well-off family, it spends a lot of time talking about the inane details of their lives. I slogged through as much as I could, but after spending several chapters discussing and leading up to the play the characters were putting together for their entertainment, I just couldn't keep reading. I give it 2 stars simply because I love Ms. Austen and her descriptions.

She is an amazing author but needed to cut back on the pages and pages of detailed descriptions of the same things. It's not that it's bad to be so detailed, but she could have accomplished the same thing in a fraction of the time.

Mansfield Park is not the best of Austen books, maybe even the most boring, but still worth reading because of the characters and the story and most of all because of the ending. I love Austen's ending, always good. There is nothing wrong with good endings. Fanny is a poor relation to the family who takes as a favor to her mother. Fanny lives in a cold attic and is treated almost as a servant, she serves everyone in the household. And yes, there is Edmund, the second son who is her friend, but to me he was not really her friend. True, he spends time with her, treats her fairly and loves her, but in some moments he betrays her allowing certain treatment from his sisters and an aunt. Fanny is strong, smart and she knows who she is. She dreams, she loves, she writes and she believes that one must follow one's heart and in the end this is what she gets, the love she dreamt about. The story is more complex than that, but it is for the new reader to find out.

I'm re-reading most of these novels while others are new to me. But they are all a delight. Austen does more with dialogue in defining characters than other authors can do with long descriptions. What an ear! There are no great tragedies, like in the Brontes' novels, but the lives of these characters have very human joys and heartbreaks that can resonate in any era. Austen was definitely a woman of her time, yet she understood the ins and outs of the middle class better than any other author of any century. Darcy and Elizabeth are no Heathcliff and Catherine, and I'm very glad of it. Their troubles stem from human frailties and interference, which 'most anyone who has had any kind of relationship can understand and relate to. These are novels to savor.

Besides the character names and personalities, McCall Smith pretty much writes a brand-new story. For the first nine chapters, he gives us a backstory on Emma's dad's childhood, how the governess came to live with them, and Emma's childhood. Chapter 10 in the beginning of the story we get from Austen--Emma meeting Harriet Smith and seeking to pair her off with the vicar. There is a lack of depth to Emma's relationship with Frank Churchill, and even Mr. Knightley makes very few appearances to warrant Emma falling in love with him. In some ways, McCall Smith does move the story faster along than Austen does in the original, but it definitely feels like a story BASED off of Austen's Emma versus a modern re-telling of it.

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