



Northanger Abbey

Jane Austen (1775 - 1815)

Read by:	Elizabeth Klett	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	7 hours 5 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1022
Language:	English	UPC:	0684758936066
Style:	Multiple readers	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Romance		

Northanger Abbey is one of the early novels of Jane Austen, the first to be submitted for publication. It tells the story of Catherine Morland, the passably attractive seventeen-year old daughter of a clergyman with a comfortable income and his wife. She leads an orderly and ordinary life, but has a penchant for the gothic novels of the day and a lively imagination to go with it. She is invited by a family friend to visit Bath, and there meets Henry Tilney and his sister Eleanor, who invite her to stay at Northanger Abbey, the family estate. Catherine's imagination has a field day during her holiday, filling the novel with the clichés of the gothic genre: ruined castles, secret notes, locked chests in hidden rooms, and the obligatory tyrannical father. While Catherine finds portentous horrors lurking in every quotidian event, Austen skewers the horrors and hypocrisy of the polite society of her so-called friends.

horrors and hypocrisy of the polite society of her so-called friends.

Originally entitled *Susan*, *Northanger Abbey* was written in 1798-1799, then revised for publication in 1803, when it was sold for the princely sum of £10 to a London bookseller, who subsequently decided not to publish it and sold it back to her brother for the same price. Austen revised it again shortly before her death in 1817, changing the title to *Catherine*. Her brother Henry arranged for its publication after her death, and it was published in December 1817 along with *Persuasion* under the title *Northanger Abbey*.

Jane Austen (December 16, 1775 – July 18, 1817) was the seventh of eight children born to George and Cassandra Austen. Both parents were members of the lower ranks of the landed gentry. Her father was the rector of Anglican parishes in Steventon, Hampshire. She was educated by her father and brothers, and her family was supportive of her artistic ambitions. In her early twenties she began publishing novels of romantic fiction set among the landed gentry that focus on relationships and marriage as the only path available for women to achieve economic security and social standing. Although the plots of her books are quite comic, she is unsparing in her depiction of the people and the manners of the times and finds abundant opportunities for satire and trenchant social commentary.

Jane Austen was relatively unknown in her lifetime. Although she published four popular novels in rapid succession between 1811 and 1815, they were published anonymously and she had few reviews and little recognition. Her nephew published *A Memoir of Jane Austen* in 1869 that introduced her to a broader audience, and by the middle of the 20th century she was recognized by academia as one of the great English writers. Her focus on the realities of the lives of women in the late 18th and early 19th centuries gained even greater currency with the advent of feminism and women's studies. Her work has a large and ardent fan base that results in her works consistently ranking among the top best selling and most highly regarded classics in all literature.