



Persuasion

Jane Austen (1775 - 1815)

Read by:	Karen Savage	Format:	MP3 CD in DVD case
Length:	7 hours 14 minutes	Catalog:	DB-1023
Language:	English	UPC:	0684758936073
Style:	Multiple readers	MSLP:	\$9.99
Genre:	Romance		

Jane Austen completed her last novel, *Persuasion*, in 1816, the year before her death in 1817 at the age of 41. Had Austen lived longer and continued to write her magnificent novels, *Persuasion* might be considered a transition point in thematic development. The rules of lives lived in high society, unwritten, even unspoken, by the august members of Great Britain's upper-crust (even the upper-crust of the lovely though out-of-the way town of Bath) just before the beginning of Victoria's long reign were a game of sorts and remain so even today. And, like any game, playing in accord with the rules—bending them, breaking them—can be a delightful past time, especially when the activities result in fulfilling a character's desires. But happy endings are not a given in life or in literature and, if won, can prove in the end to be hard won.

Persuasion allows for a less charitable view of that same game and those same rules, as it is steeped in the snobbery of the fatuous lives of those who have nothing better to do than to keep score. In contrast to this hermetically sealed society, Austen presents the breadth and breath of life by looking beyond the short horizons of Bath to the daring, brilliant and courageous efforts of the men of the Royal British Navy at the dawn of its golden age. Ultimately, Anne Elliot, the novel's heroine, finds happiness with the love of her heart, an ending to a complex story that lays bare some of the less attractive virtues attendant to a world view where status, real or imagined, deserved or (more likely) not, clings to primacy and rules all.

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.