

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

Jane Austen  
**Pride and Prejudice**

Read by **Jenny Agutter**

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**



NA310412D

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1	Mr Bingley comes to Netherfield Park	4:03
2	Mr Bennet makes a disclosure	12:13
3	The Lucas family at Meryton	5:23
4	Letters from Netherfield Park	5:22
5	Elizabeth at Netherfield	7:02
6	A visitor to Longbourn – Mr Collins	6:01
7	At Meryton, two officers, Mr Denny and Mr Wickham	14:57
8	Elizabeth enters the drawing-room	10:14
9	Mr Collins makes his declaration	8:56
10	Charlotte takes the place of Elizabeth	5:27
11	Mr and Mrs Gardiner arrive at Longbourn	11:15
12	Elizabeth travels with Sir William to the Gardiner's in London	1:23
13	The journey to Mr Collins at Hunsford	11:21
14	A conversation about music	7:46
15	Elizabeth receives a visit from Mr Darcy	7:13
16	Another visit	5:46

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17	A long letter of explanation	11:17
18	Elizabeth reveals all to Jane	8:27
19	Elizabeth arrives at Pemberley	10:14
20	Letters from Jane	5:23
21	Return to Longbournv	7:41
22	Lydia reveals a secret and Elizabeth learns all	9:49
23	Mr Darcy returns to Hertfordshire	5:47
24	Jane and Mr Bingley in deep conversation	5:26
25	A surprise visit from Lady Catherine de Bourgh	10:35
26	Mr Darcy again	9:33
27	Sisterly approval	9:06
28	Mrs Bingley gets rid of her two most deserving daughters.	2:54

**Total time: 3:40:14**

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Jane Austen

# Pride and Prejudice

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 1813, the bulk of **Pride and Prejudice** was actually written between October 1796 and August 1797. The original title was **First Impressions** and Jane Austen's father offered it to a publisher, Cadell, in November 1797, who promptly turned it down. It was then revised and eventually taken on and published in January 1813 by Thomas Egerton for an advance of £150. The very modest print run of 1,500 soon ran out and a second edition was published in November of the same year. A third edition was published by John Murray in 1817.

**Pride and Prejudice** deals with the theme of the Bennet sisters' search for a 'suitable match'. A 'good' marriage symbolised for Jane Austen a form of social resolution and fulfilment. Those women who find partners of similar outlook or social standing, who have sufficient funds and a caring open demeanour, seem destined for the 'happy ending'. But this is far too simple an analysis of Jane Austen's view, and is to overlook the various processes which her characters must go through before this

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happy denouement can be achieved. There are two stumbling blocks for Darcy and Elizabeth: his Pride and her Prejudice. Elizabeth's socially inferior family first blind Darcy to Elizabeth's beauty and in turn Elizabeth's hasty condemnation of Darcy for his maltreatment of Wickham and his haughty manner, blind her to his honourable behaviour in saving the family from ruin, in recompense for his failure to alert them to Wickham's true nature. When these two characters begin to 'see' one another clearly, and certain key actions are revealed, then, and only then, is the path to their union cleared of obstacles.

Indeed, another theme is that of the consequences of wilful concealment and deception. Darcy does not reveal Wickham's seduction of his sister as he is anxious to protect his family's respectability, and in turn Elizabeth and Jane keep Wickham's behaviour secret with disastrous consequences. Lydia remains a victim of self-deception to the very end and is consequently condemned to a feckless and indigent life with Wickham. It was also Jane's reluctance to show her true feelings for Bingley, which persuaded Darcy that her affection was not serious and thus emboldened him to dissuade Bingley from the match.

Although the marriage of Elizabeth's friend Miss Lucas to the egregious Mr Collins causes shocked incomprehension, the fact that Charlotte goes into the marriage with her eyes open, seems to suggest that the outcome will be happy, and indeed, when Elizabeth reluctantly visits her friend, she finds that she has found a certain contentment.

Jane Austen was concerned that **Pride and Prejudice** was too 'light', and indeed it wasn't until her next book, **Mansfield Park**, that she explored more fully the issues of class and social mobility. However, in spite of its humour and lightness of touch, we are aware of the moral implications contained in the text; we are simultaneously delighted, entertained and informed. This is fiction in its most perfect form.

### **Notes by Heather Godwin**

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

<b>KROMMER</b> PARTITAS FOR WIND ENSEMBLE Budapest Wind Ensemble, Kálmán Berkes	8.553498
<b>HUMMEL</b> FLUTE SONATAS Lise Daoust, flute, Carmen Picard, piano	8.553473
<b>CARULLI</b> TRIO IN D MAJOR Anna Höbblin, Quido Höbbling, violins; Jozef Zsapka, guitar; Ján Slávik, cello	8.550645

**Music programming by Nicolas Soames**

Jane Austen  
**Pride and Prejudice**

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"It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." So opens this famous novel which has become Jane Austen's best-loved and best-known work. It was in this book that all Jane Austen's talents combined to create not only the most wonderful love story, but dialogue that sparkles with wit and irony, an ingenious and compelling plot and some of the most unforgettable characters ever created.



**Jenny Agutter** rose to fame as a child in the film of E. Nesbit's *The Railway Children*. Since then her film credits have included *The Eagle Has Landed*, *Equus* and *An American Werewolf In London*. She has been equally active in the theatre in varied roles for the RSC, Royal National Theatre and on Broadway. Her TV credits include *The Buccaneers*, *Heartbeat* and the Channel 4 series *And The Beat Goes On*.

*"Jenny Agutter's reading is sensitive to every social nuance and to the passions swirling beneath the good manners. Every scene is gripping. Sex, though offstage, is rarely out of the mind."*

LITERARY REVIEW

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Total time  
3:40:14

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