


NAXOS
AudioBooks

Jane Austen
Persuasion

THE
COMPLETE
CLASSICS

UNABRIDGED

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

CLASSIC
FICTION



NA743612D

1	Chapter 1 Sir Walter Elliot, of Kellynch Hall, in Somersetshire...	4:54
2	This friend and Sir Walter did not marry...	6:08
3	He was, at that time, a very young man...	6:05
4	Chapter 2 Mr Shepherd, a civil, cautious, lawyer...	4:01
5	This was the principle on which Anne wanted...	3:56
6	Lady Russell felt obliged to oppose her dear Anne...	4:33
7	Chapter 3 'I must take leave to observe, Sir Walter...'	4:47
8	Here Anne spoke. 'The Navy, I think...'	4:34
9	It seemed as if Mr Shepherd, in this anxiety...	8:37
10	Chapter 4 He was not Mr Wentworth, the former curate...	7:16
11	They knew not each other's opinion...	4:32
12	Chapter 5 On the morning appointed for Admiral and Mrs Croft...	5:42
13	Anne was so impressed by the degree of their danger...	3:51
14	Upper Cross was a moderate-sized village...	5:38
15	'Oh, well', and after a moment's pause...	4:46
16	Chapter 6 Anne had not wanted this visit to Upper Cross...	4:52
17	One of the least agreeable circumstances of her residence...	6:30
18	The party at the Great House was sometimes increased...	5:42
19	The folks of the Great House were to spend the evening...	5:28
20	Chapter 7 A very few days more, and Captain Wentworth...	4:53

21	The child had a good night and was going on well...	5:11
22	The next moment she was tapping...	6:47
23	Mary had no feelings to make her respect her sisters...	3:37
24	Chapter 8 From this time, Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot...	4:35
25	'Phoo! Phoo!', cried the Admiral...	6:08
26	They were actually on the same sofa...	5:02
27	'What a great traveller you must have been...'	4:56
28	Chapter 9 Captain Wentworth was come to Kellynch as to a home...	6:40
29	Her husband, however, would not agree with her here...	3:16
30	Charles Hayter had met with much...	5:22
31	In another moment, however, she found herself in the state...	2:07
32	Chapter 10 Other opportunities of making her observations...	7:17
33	Winthrop, however, or its environs...	6:54
34	He had done, and was unanswered...	5:12
35	The walking party had crossed the lane...	4:32
36	Chapter 11 The time now approached for Lady Russell's return...	3:29
37	The first heedless scheme had been to go in the morning...	6:15
38	They all met and were introduced...	4:46
39	The nights were too dark for the ladies to meet again...	4:00
40	Chapter 12 Anne and Henrietta, finding themselves the earliest...	5:25

41	After attending Louisa through her business...	6:45
42	'Miss Elliot,' said he, speaking rather low...	6:01
43	Everyone capable of thinking felt the advantage of the idea...	6:10
44	Charles, Henrietta, and Captain Wentworth...	4:23
45	Anne had never submitted more reluctantly...	5:25
46	Chapter 13 The remainder of Anne's time at Upper Cross...	5:44
47	Anne had never entered Kellynch since her quitting...	5:23
48	Mrs Croft always met her with a kindness...	5:55
49	Chapter 14 Though Charles and Mary had remained at Lyme...	3:06
50	Charles laughed again and said...	6:21
51	There can be no doubt that Lady Russell and Anne...	6:06
52	Chapter 15 Sir Walter had taken a very good house in Camden Place...	4:44
53	The circumstances of his marriage, too, were found...	3:46
54	Anne mentioned the glimpses she had had of him at Lyme...	4:38
55	It was the same, the very same man...	4:37
56	Chapter 16 There was one point which Anne, on returning...	5:03
57	It was now some years since Anne had begun to learn...	5:09
58	Sir Walter, however, would choose his own means...	5:42
59	Chapter 17 While Sir Walter and Elizabeth were assiduously pushing...	5:50
60	There had been a time, Mrs Smith told her...	5:18

61	Anne had called several times on her friend...	5:14
62	Lady Russell was now perfectly decided in her opinion...	6:30
63	Chapter 18 It was the beginning of February...	4:36
64	So ended the first part, which had afterwards put into...	4:39
65	This was Sir Walter and Elizabeth's share of interest...	5:10
66	Anne was too much engaged with Lady Russell...	4:47
67	Anne had been ashamed to appear to comprehend so soon...	5:52
68	Chapter 19 While Admiral Croft was taking this walk with Anne...	5:23
69	It did not surprise, but it grieved Anne...	5:14
70	The following morning, Anne was out with her friend...	4:36
71	Chapter 20 Sir Walter, his two daughters, and Mrs Clay...	4:43
72	Either from the consciousness, however, that his friend...	4:17
73	Upon Lady Russell's appearance soon afterwards...	5:26
74	Mr Elliot was not disappointed in the interest...	4:16
75	In re-settling themselves, there were now many changes...	3:58
76	Chapter 21 Anne recollected with pleasure, the next morning...	4:57
77	Anne heard nothing of this. She was still in the astonishment...	5:04
78	'No', said Anne. I can readily believe all that of my cousin...	6:27
79	Anne's astonished air and exclamation of wonder...	3:29
80	'Mr Elliot', replied Mrs Smith, 'at that period of his life...'	5:10

81	'The letter I am looking for was one written by Mr Elliot...'	4:55
82	'My dear Mrs Smith, your authority is deficient...'	5:13
83	'Yes', said Anne. 'You tell me nothing which does not accord...'	5:09
84	Anne was shown some letters of his on the occasion...	4:29
85	Chapter 22 Anne went home to think over all that she had heard...	3:58
86	Anne admired the good acting of the friend...	7:29
87	Anne's only surprise was in that...	4:11
88	Here, they were interrupted by the absolute necessity...	4:38
89	A morning of thorough confusion was to be expected...	4:42
90	Mrs Musgrove was good-humouredly beginning to express...	5:30
91	Their preparations, however, were stopped short...	5:54
92	Chapter 23 One day only had passed since Anne's conversation...	4:45
93	Anne found an unexpected interest here...	5:08
94	'Your feelings may be the strongest', replied Anne...	5:25
95	She could not immediately have uttered another sentence...	4:53
96	Such a letter was not to be soon recovered from...	4:30
97	Presently, struck by a sudden thought, Charles said...	4:35
98	In his preceding attempts to attach himself to Louisa...	5:52
99	'You should have distinguished', replied Anne...	7:00
100	Chapter 24 Who can be in doubt of what followed?	5:19
101	The news of his cousin Anne's engagement...	4:51

Total time: 8:43:37

Jane Austen

Persuasion

'...you must not let anything depend on my opinion. Your own feelings and none but your own, should determine such an important point.' Thus wrote Jane Austen to her niece, Fanny Knight in 1815, shortly before starting work on *Persuasion*, illustrating her concern for Fanny who was about to embark on a long engagement. Jane Austen had unwittingly encouraged Fanny into this course of action by voicing her approval of the man in question and, fearful that Fanny would be unable to sustain her feelings over a very long engagement, she felt it her duty to point this out, also saying, '*...nothing can be compared to the misery of being bound without Love, bound to one & preferring another. That is Punishment which you do not deserve.*' Jane's anxiety about her role as a persuader may well, therefore, have been uppermost in her mind when she began working on *Persuasion*, the work which was to be her last, and a story in which the

power and the results of persuasion are closely examined.

Jane Austen was born on 16th December, 1775, the seventh child of the family, her father at that time being the Rector of the Hampshire village of Steventon near Basingstoke. She was a well-educated young woman, having been sent to good boarding-schools for a while when very young, together with her sister, Cassandra, and later being educated at home by her father. Although by the time her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, was published in 1811 Jane was 36 years old, she had already been writing for many years, having begun when she was just a girl. Her earliest pieces were written for the amusement and entertainment of her family and she particularly enjoyed penning burlesques of popular romances. *A History of England by a Partial, Prejudiced and Ignorant Historian* was one of her early, unpublished works and suggests her natural

gift for gentle irony. Her other great novels were published in the following order: *Pride and Prejudice* in 1813, *Mansfield Park* in 1814, *Emma* 1816, and *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* in 1818. *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were originally published as a four-volumed set, with volume one of *Persuasion* ending at the conclusion of Chapter 12. They were published posthumously by Jane's brother Henry, and he was the one to formally reveal her authorship since the four titles published in her lifetime were done so anonymously.

Jane Austen's style of writing did not really fit in with much of the literature of the period. This was the time of the Romantic movement, in which writing often took on a more personal feel, something demonstrated particularly in the poetry of the time. Works by poets such as Keats, Byron, Coleridge and Shelley often included references to their own feelings, loves and sorrows, whilst highly imaginative and dramatic Gothic novels were also becoming particularly fashionable. Austen's work was unlike such literature, demonstrating instead a more cool and commonsense style, with balanced sentences which are clear and precise rather than heavy and

over-elaborate. Austen's lack of descriptive powers has attracted criticism in some quarters and perhaps this is why Charlotte Brontë expressed her dissatisfaction with Austen's works. Certainly they were not very popular with readers during Jane Austen's lifetime, although other writers such as Macaulay, Coleridge and Sir Walter Scott were full of praise for her writing.

In *Persuasion* Jane Austen informs readers via a narrator although we do also learn of events in the story through the eyes of her heroine, Anne Elliot. However, unlike many of Jane's previous heroines, she has created in Anne a character too gentle to provide the required criticism of others, and the narrator, instead, provides us with such information. Jane Austen is also clearly aware at this stage in her writing career that persuasion is also the tool used by writers to communicate with their readers. Thus she expects her readers to perceive her touches of irony, thereby allowing them to make the required moral judgements of her characters, and her ability to achieve this communication is something at which she excels. We thus learn that Sir Walter Elliot is a vain man, that Lady Russell is a good and charitable woman and that Anne's sister

Mary is unable to handle lack of attention. We also learn that, unlike Austen's other heroines, Anne herself is a mature woman, who, from the start of the novel, is already capable of mature judgement.

Austen's earlier novels, *Sense & Sensibility* and *Pride & Prejudice*, each present the reader with a pair of qualities for debate and consideration and *Persuasion* similarly requires readers to make moral and intellectual judgements. However, in this case the whole debate is contained within the one word – persuasion. Recognising, from her experience regarding niece Fanny's engagement, the power and the moral dangers of persuasion, Jane Austen illustrates in this work its social and personal effects, both good and bad, particularly on her heroine, Anne Elliot. Anne has been persuaded by the well-meaning and much respected Lady Russell to end her engagement to Frederick Wentworth due to his uncertain financial situation, and the consequences of this are examined during the course of the novel. Further, Anne herself is seen by other characters in the novel to be a successful persuader: her brother-in-law wishes her to persuade her

sister Mary that she is not unwell, whilst Mary herself comments on Anne's superior ability to persuade Mary's child to adopt a particular course of action. Sometimes it is the ability to withstand persuasion which Austen illustrates for us, such as when Anne cannot be persuaded to attend an evening function where she fears she might encounter Captain Wentworth. Louisa Musgrove provides another example when describing herself as being difficult to persuade (although in her case this might be called plain obstinacy).

Jane Austen led a calm and unremarkable life, and was very modest about her gift for writing, describing her work as '*...that little bit (two inches wide) of ivory, in which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labour.*' She spent many years living in quiet, rural villages, although she did live for a while in fashionable, elegant Bath after her father retired, in 1801. Following his death in 1805 she spent the years between then and 1809 in Southampton with her mother. However, much of her life consisted of nothing more exciting than conversation – or, more accurately, gossip – needlework and reading, often aloud, in her own drawing-

room or in those of other people. Private dances or balls and occasional visits to fashionable seaside towns would have provided the only real highlights. Not surprisingly, then, the plot of *Persuasion* seems rather uneventful and superficial in outlook, concerning itself with the social activities of one particular class of people. It must be remembered that at that time class distinctions were rigid, and life for the upper class was just as portrayed by Jane Austen, drawing on her own limited experience. The occupations of the upper class were, indeed, social, with dinner parties and balls considered extremely important, and trivialities such as visiting friends taking up much of their time. A reference, in the closing lines of *Persuasion*, to the possible dangers from war, which faced sailors, is one of the few acknowledgements made by Jane Austen to the fact that in her novel, as in her own life, this was the time of the Napoleonic Wars.

Jane Austen never married although she was reputed to have become romantically attached in 1802. The man in question died in 1803 and in that same year Jane received a proposal of marriage from a wealthy Hampshire landowner. She accepted his

proposal, only to retract it the following morning. Love and marriage, however, provide an important theme for *Persuasion* although, requiring moral judgement from readers, it is far from being just a light-hearted love story.

Jane Austen was meticulous in refining her work until she truly achieved her desired purpose, and consequently she dramatically reworked the end of *Persuasion*. Replacing her original final chapter with two new chapters, she brought about a more believable reconciliation between Anne Elliot and Captain Wentworth than she had originally conceived. The words and actions of characters in this final version reflect far more the personality traits with which readers have become familiar during the course of the novel and also communicate to us the maturity of the love between Anne and Wentworth, providing them with happiness which is shown to be their moral right. That Jane Austen felt compelled to work until she achieved this genuine credibility illustrates the dedication and brilliance which was required to produce an apparently natural effect.

By 1816 Jane Austen had become seriously ill and *Persuasion* was written

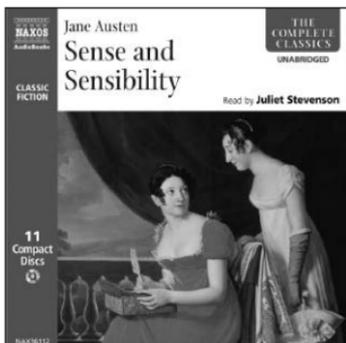
whilst her health was rapidly failing. She was taken to Winchester to be under the care of the best doctors but within two months of arriving there she died, on July 18th, at the age of 42. Not until the twentieth century did her works become established favourites when, according to some critics, her admirers were over-lavish in their praise. Nevertheless many today would argue that this is fiction of the highest order.

Notes by Helen Davies

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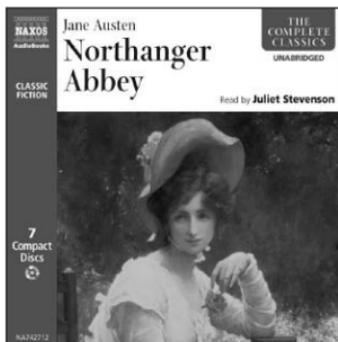


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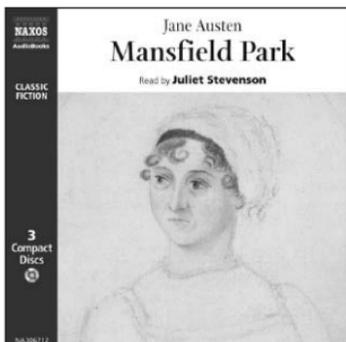
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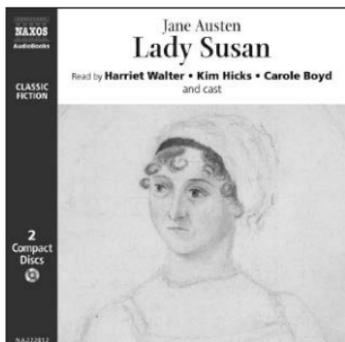
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