

Jane Austen

Northanger Abbey



Audio CD



Jane Austen

Northanger Abbey

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The text is recorded in full.



These symbols indicate the beginning and end of the passages linked to the listening activities.



Jane Austen

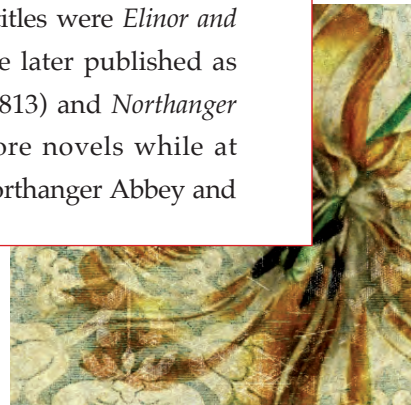
Jane Austen was born on 16 December 1775 at Steventon in Hampshire, in the south of England. Her parents were Reverend ¹ George Austen and his wife Cassandra. They had eight children, two daughters and six sons. Many people have wondered if the character of Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey* is based on Jane Austen herself. The similarities are many: as with the Morlands, Reverend Austen made a comfortable living but was not able to give his children a very generous sum of money if they chose to marry, because there were so many of them. Jane Austen also apparently preferred more boyish pastimes such as cricket, like the character of Catherine, who 'loved

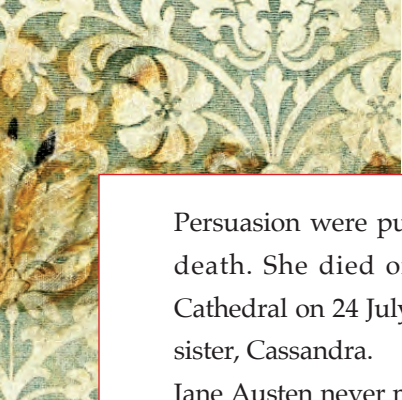
1. **Reverend** : a title for a clergyman, a minister of the Christian church.

nothing so well in the world as rolling down the green slope at the back of the house.'

Jane Austen was educated mainly within the family home, although she and her older sister Cassandra were taught for a short period by a Mrs Cawley, first in Oxford and then in Southampton. For one year, Jane and Cassandra went to the Abbey boarding school in Reading. This small amount of formal education was normal for women at this time, and most women of this class spent their time at home, learning to draw, play the piano, to sew and other pursuits which were considered fitting for women at this time.

Jane Austen's eldest brother was James, again like the character of Catherine, who was academic and studied at Oxford. Next was Edward, who was steady and good at business. Henry was Jane's favourite brother, who was witty and enthusiastic in whatever he did, although he was not always successful. Frank and Charles both joined the Navy and fought in the Napoleonic Wars. They both eventually became admirals. The family moved to Bath in 1801. Jane was not pleased about this as she never really liked the town. In 1805, Reverend Austen died, and his wife and two daughters were then dependent on the Austen sons for financial support. For several years after her father died, the Austen women had very little money. In 1809, Edward Austen gave his mother and sisters his old estate in Chawton, Hampshire. Jane Austen spent the rest of her life there. While she was there, she revised three novels that she had written when she was younger, from 1795-1799. At this early time, the titles were *Elinor and Marianne*, *First Impressions* and *Susan*. They were later published as *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813) and *Northanger Abbey* (1817) respectively. She wrote three more novels while at Chawton: *Mansfield Park*, *Emma* and *Persuasion*. *Northanger Abbey* and





Persuasion were published posthumously, that is after Jane Austen's death. She died on 18 July 1817. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral on 24 July 1817. She left almost everything in her will to her sister, Cassandra.

Jane Austen never married herself and neither did her sister. The main source of information about Jane Austen's life is family letters, especially those from Jane to Cassandra, who was her closest friend.

1 Comprehension check

Say whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F).

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 The protagonist of <i>Northanger Abbey</i> has little in common with Jane Austen. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 2 Jane Austen's father did not make very much money. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 3 Jane Austen came from a large family. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 4 When she was a little girl, Jane Austen liked playing unfeminine games. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 5 Jane received all of her education at home. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 6 Jane's brothers were never very successful. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 7 Jane was not very fond of Bath. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 8 Jane, Cassandra and their mother had no financial problems after Rev Austen's death. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 9 Jane wrote her first three novels at Chawton. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 10 <i>Northanger Abbey</i> and <i>Persuasion</i> were not published during Jane Austen's lifetime. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 11 Jane Austen had a very good relationship with her sister. | ☐ | ☐ |
| 12 Cassandra Austen remained single her entire life. | ☐ | ☐ |

The Characters



Top left: Isabella Thorpe, John Thorpe, General Tilney, Eleanor Tilney

Bottom left: Henry Tilney, Catherine Morland, James Morland

Before you read

1 Vocabulary

Choose the best definition for the underlined words – A, B or C – by looking at the context. These words will appear in Chapter One.

- 1 Mr Tilney was a handsome and unmarried young man from a good family. He was the first attractive and eligible man that Catherine had ever met.
 - A ☐ polite and wealthy
 - B ☐ a good candidate for marriage
 - C ☐ artistic and intellectual
- 2 Mr Tilney was a clergyman of the Anglican Church. His church was in the village of Woodston.
 - A ☐ someone with the authority to performs religious services
 - B ☐ someone who washes public buildings
 - C ☐ someone who is resident in a certain town
- 3 Mrs Allen was fond of Catherine and so she invited Catherine to come with her to Bath.
If you are fond of someone, you
 - A ☐ do not much like that person.
 - B ☐ like that person very much.
 - C ☐ are worried about that person.



2 Listening

Listen to the beginning of Chapter One. You will hear about a friendly 17-year-old girl named Catherine Morland who lives with her family in the small town of Fullerton. For questions 1-5, complete the sentences.

- 1 Catherine had brothers and sisters.
- 2 Mr and Mrs Allen had of money.
- 3 Mr and Mrs Allen wanted Catherine to come with them to
- 4 Mrs Allen didn't think life in Fullerton was for Catherine.
- 5 Mrs Allen liked thinking and talking about



CHAPTER ONE

Miss Morland Goes to Bath

Catherine Morland had not been a particularly beautiful child, or special in any way. She came from a family of ten children. The Morlands were a plain and unremarkable family, not rich, but not poor either. They lived in the village of Fullerton in Wiltshire.



At the age of seventeen, Catherine had never been in love and no man had been in love with her. There were no eligible men in Fullerton.

A man named Mr Allen owned a lot of the property around the village of Fullerton. His wife, Mrs Allen, was fond of Miss Morland. Mr Allen was not very well. The town of Bath was a spa town,¹ so Mr Allen decided that he and Mrs Allen would go and stay there for

1. **spa town** : town where the water has special minerals in it. People go to these towns to improve their health.



CHAPTER ONE

some time. His wife invited Miss Morland to go with them. She knew that life in a small village was probably quite boring for a young lady of seventeen. Mr and Mrs Morland were happy for Catherine to go, and Miss Morland herself was delighted.

Catherine was a cheerful, attractive young woman with an open and happy nature. Because of her young age, she was still quite naive, but going to Bath was a new experience for her and so she would learn from it. Mrs Allen was not a remarkable lady. Her main interest was in fine clothes.



At the first dance they went to, there were a lot of people, but Mrs Allen and Miss Morland did not know any of them. They both felt a little awkward for a while. Mr Allen came to join them.

‘I wanted Catherine to dance,’ said Mrs Allen to her husband, ‘but she didn’t have a partner.’

‘Perhaps we will find her a partner another evening,’ said Mr Allen.

The dancing had finished and people were starting to go home. Some gentlemen noticed that Catherine was quite pretty and said so in voices loud enough for her to hear. This improved the evening very much for Catherine. She went home very pleased with this small amount of attention.

At the next dance they went to the Pump Room,² and things became much more interesting for Catherine. She was introduced to a young man called Mr Tilney. He was twenty-five, tall and quite handsome, intelligent and quite witty.³ Catherine found him very pleasant to talk to. He had a sister he was very close to, and so he knew quite a lot about dresses. He spoke to

2. **Pump Room** : the large room where people drank the mineral water and walked for exercise — also the building that contained this room.
3. **witty** : able to use language in a clever and amusing way.





CHAPTER ONE

Mrs Allen for quite some time about her dress. She approved of Mr Tilney and so did Mr Allen. He asked some other friends of his if Mr Tilney was a suitable partner for Miss Morland. He found out that Mr Tilney was a clergyman ⁴ and came from a very respectable family in Gloucestershire.

The next day, Catherine went to the Pump Room to meet Mr Tilney again. But Mr Tilney was not there.

Mrs Allen said, 'What a lovely place Bath is. But I wish we knew more people.' She had said this many times since they had been in Bath but they still did not know any people. But today Mrs Allen was lucky. A lady about the same age as Mrs Allen came to sit by her.

'I think I know you,' she said. 'Your name is Allen, isn't it? My name is Thorpe.'

Mrs Allen recognised the lady.

'We went to school together, didn't we?' she replied, looking very pleased.

They had not seen each other since they both got married. Mrs Thorpe liked to talk. She talked a lot about her children and how fine they were. Mrs Allen did not have any children so she did not talk as much. But she did notice that the lace ⁵ on Mrs Thorpe's dress was not as fine as her own.

Mrs Thorpe's daughters arrived. She introduced them to Mrs Allen and to Catherine. Catherine's name seemed to be of great interest to the young ladies. The eldest one, Isabella, said, 'Miss Morland looks very much like her brother.'

Catherine was surprised that they knew her brother, but then

4. **clergyman** : a minister of the Christian church.

5. **lace** :



she remembered that her eldest brother James had become friends with a young man called Thorpe at his college. Catherine was pleased to make more friends in Bath.

Miss Thorpe was four years older than Catherine and seemed to her to be very sophisticated. They became good friends very quickly and Miss Morland was very happy to have such a pretty new friend.

Mrs Thorpe was a widow and not very rich. Isabella was beautiful and her mother hoped that this would help her to marry someone rich to help the family out of their poverty.

The next evening, Catherine and the Allens went to the theatre. Catherine was pleased to see her new friend Miss Thorpe there, but that did not stop her from looking everywhere to see if she could see Mr Tilney. But again, he was not there.

The next morning was so beautiful that Catherine went out with Isabella to walk around Bath. She hoped to run into Mr Tilney. But again, he was nowhere to be seen. He had probably left Bath already. But he had not said that he was leaving so soon. This made Mr Tilney seem more mysterious to Catherine, and much more interesting.

She talked about him with Isabella, who encouraged her to keep thinking of him.

'I'm sure he will be back,' she reassured Catherine. She sighed as she said this, as if there was a gentleman of her own that she wished to talk about.

Mrs Allen was also very happy. Now she had company and friends in Bath, and not only that, these new friends were not dressed as well or as expensively as herself.

The text and **beyond**

FCE 1 **Comprehension check**

For questions 1-5, choose the answer – A, B, C or D – which you think fits best.

- 1 Catherine had never fallen in love before because she
 - A ☐ was very particular in her tastes.
 - B ☐ was still a little too young.
 - C ☐ spent all her time with her brothers and sisters.
 - D ☐ never met a man of the right age and social situation.
- 2 Mrs Allen thought Catherine would like Bath because
 - A ☐ it was more exciting than Fullerton.
 - B ☐ she would enjoy the hot mineral springs.
 - C ☐ Catherine needed some peace and quiet.
 - D ☐ her parents did not want her at home.
- 3 Which one of these phrases DOES NOT describe Mrs Allen?
 - A ☐ kind and friendly
 - B ☐ concerned with fashion
 - C ☐ ordinary
 - D ☐ remarkable
- 4 Which one of these words DOES NOT describe Mr Tilney?
 - A ☐ amusing
 - B ☐ clever
 - C ☐ attractive
 - D ☐ dull
- 5 Mrs Allen was not happy that Mrs Thorpe
 - A ☐ had clothing that was inferior in quality and taste.
 - B ☐ could talk about all her children.
 - C ☐ had been to school with her.
 - D ☐ was so willing to spend time with her.

2 Vocabulary

Find synonyms in the box for these words from Chapter One. There are four words in the box that you do not need to use.

oldest youngest dull worthy exceptional happy
fortunate principal hurt good-looking difficult humorous
expensive possess wealthy appropriate embarrassed
comfort inexperienced thrilled

- | | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| 1 eldest | 9 own |
| 2 respectable | 10 boring |
| 3 reassure | 11 remarkable |
| 4 witty | 12 main |
| 5 handsome | 13 awkward |
| 6 suitable | 14 lucky |
| 7 delighted | 15 cheerful |
| 8 rich | 16 naïve |

T: GRADE 7

3 Speaking: village and city life

Northanger Abbey takes place around 1798. At that time most people in England lived in the countryside. Indeed, at the time in England and the rest of the world, cities were the exceptions – they were like islands in the ocean of the countryside. In 1800, Bath was one of the largest cities in Britain and it had a population of about 40,000.

What do you think a 17-year-old girl from a small village would find surprising about Bath? What do you think she would like? Dislike?

- The magnificent buildings like the Crescent or the Circus?
- The traffic?
- The shops?
- The fashionable clothing?
- The noise?
- The smell?
- *Your own idea.*

Discuss with your partner, and then report your ideas to the class.

What about you? Which do you prefer – life in a small town or a big city? Why?

Discuss your ideas with your partner and report your ideas to the class.

FCE 4 The Glittering Round in Bath

You are going to read an article about the resort city of Bath. Seven sentences have been removed from the article. Choose from the sentences A-H the one which fits each gap (1-7). There is one extra sentence which you do not need to use.



The Circus, Bath (1784) by Thomas Malton Jr.

In 1702, Queen Anne went to bathe in the warm spring waters of a small country village called Bath. This royal visit helped make Bath famous. (1) He, along with a businessman named Ralph Allen and an architect named John Wood turned Bath into a city of fun and pleasure. They started building elegant new crescents (rows of houses built in a crescent — semi-circle — shape). (2) When Jane Austen came to Bath in 1802 it was no longer the trendiest spa, but it still had an active social life. The wealthy came and stayed there for two or three months. (3) A typical day might begin with a bath in the waters. (4) Some men went to a coffee house (public places for drinking coffee which had first started in England in 1650).

Then people went to the Pump Room. This was a building constructed over one of the springs, where people came to drink water. (5) Other young ladies used to go to lending library (where they could get one of the bestsellers of the day like *The Mysteries of Udolpho*). (6)

The evenings were kept for card playing, dancing, gambling and romance. In fact, all these various social activities gave young people many chances to meet.

(7) This, of course, is what Mrs Allen is doing for her young friend Catherine Morland as they go from one place to another to dance and walk slowly along the busy streets of Bath.

Today Bath is a lively and fun city. There are two universities and it is a major centre for tourism.

- A** In the early afternoon, at around four, people went for a walk through the streets of Bath.
- B** But young people never had much to do in Bath.
- C** Bath became a place where respectable families came to look for husbands for their daughters.
- D** They had nothing to do except drink and bathe in the waters of Bath and enjoy themselves.
- E** This was followed by a private breakfast.
- F** Bath soon became the most fashionable spa city in Europe.
- G** A short time later, a professional gambler and excellent promoter named Richard 'Beau' Nash came to Bath.
- H** Then, some young ladies would go to a fashion show or the clothing shops.



Bath today.