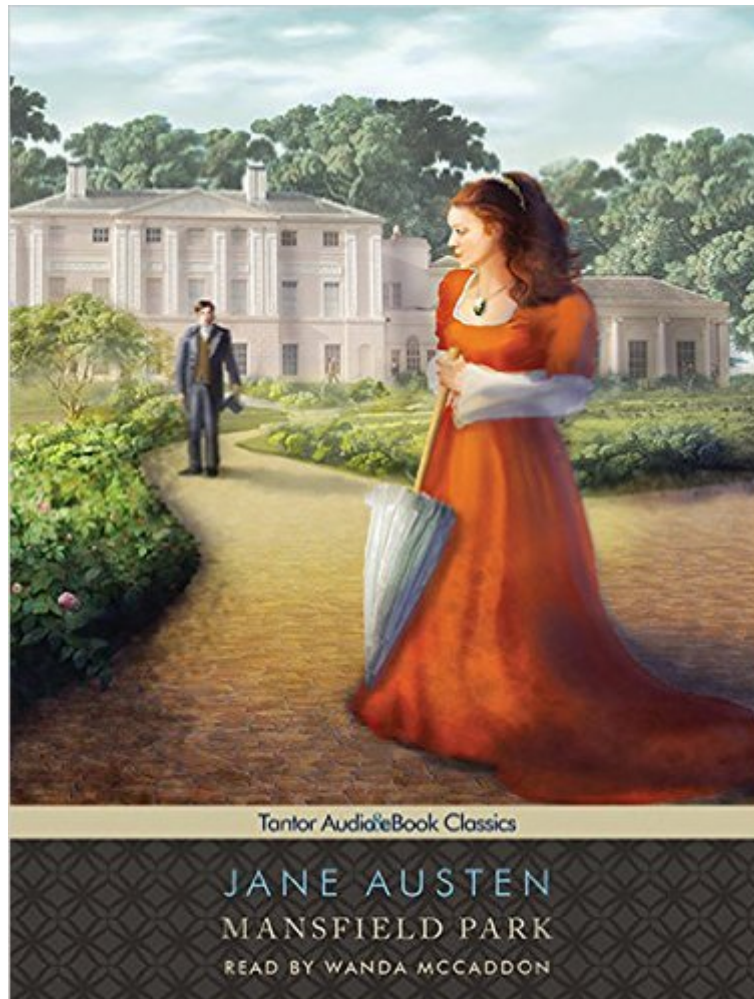


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Mansfield Park (Tantor Unabridged Classics)



Synopsis

From its sharply satiric opening sentence, *Mansfield Park* deals with money and marriage, and how strongly they affect each other. Shy, fragile Fanny Price is the consummate "poor relation." Sent to live with her wealthy uncle Thomas, she clashes with his spoiled, selfish daughters and falls in love with his son. Their lives are further complicated by the arrival of a pair of witty, sophisticated Londoners, whose flair for flirtation collides with the quiet, conservative country ways of Mansfield Park. Written several years after the early manuscripts that eventually became *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park* retains Jane Austen's familiar compassion and humor but offers a far more complex exploration of moral choices and their emotional consequences.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"*Mansfield Park*" has always been Jane Austen's most controversial novel. The heroine of the book is Fanny Price, a powerless and socially marginal young woman. To almost everyone she knows, she barely exists. As a child, she is sent to live with the family of her wealthy uncle. Her parents give her up without regret, and her uncle only takes her in because he is deceived into doing so. Fanny's wealthy relations, when they deign to notice her at all, generally do so only to make sure she knows of her inferiority and keeps in her place. Fanny is thus almost completely alone, the only kindness she receives coming from her cousin Edmund. Forced by circumstances to be an observer, Fanny is a faultlessly acute one, as well as the owner of a moral compass that always points true

north. Those who dislike "Mansfield Park" almost invariably cite Fanny as the novel's central fault. She is generally accused of being two things: (1) too passive, and (2) too moral. The charge of passivity is perplexing. Surely it is evident that for her to challenge those in power over her is extremely dangerous - in fact, when she finally does challenge them, on a matter of the greatest importance to her and of next to no importance to them, she is swiftly reminded of the weakness of her situation by being deported back to the impoverished family of her parents, who receive her with indifference. The charge of morality is easier to understand - many readers feel themselves being silently accused by Fanny, and they don't like it. The interesting thing is that those same readers often enjoy "Pride and Prejudice", even though it is evident that the same moral standards are in place in both books. So, why do readers feel the prick of criticism in one and not the other?

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