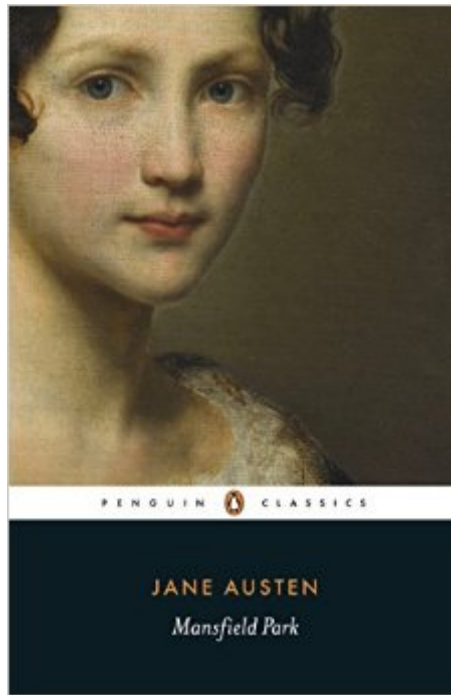


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Mansfield Park (Penguin Classics)



Synopsis

Taken from the poverty of her parents' home in Portsmouth, Fanny Price is brought up with her rich cousins at Mansfield Park, acutely aware of her humble rank and with her cousin Edmund as her sole ally. During her uncle's absence in Antigua, the Crawford's arrive in the neighbourhood bringing with them the glamour of London life and a reckless taste for flirtation. Mansfield Park is considered Jane Austen's first mature work and, with its quiet heroine and subtle examination of social position and moral integrity, one of her most profound. For more than seventy years, Penguin has been the leading publisher of classic literature in the English-speaking world. With more than 1,700 titles, Penguin Classics represents a global bookshelf of the best works throughout history and across genres and disciplines. Readers trust the series to provide authoritative texts enhanced by introductions and notes by distinguished scholars and contemporary authors, as well as up-to-date translations by award-winning translators.

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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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