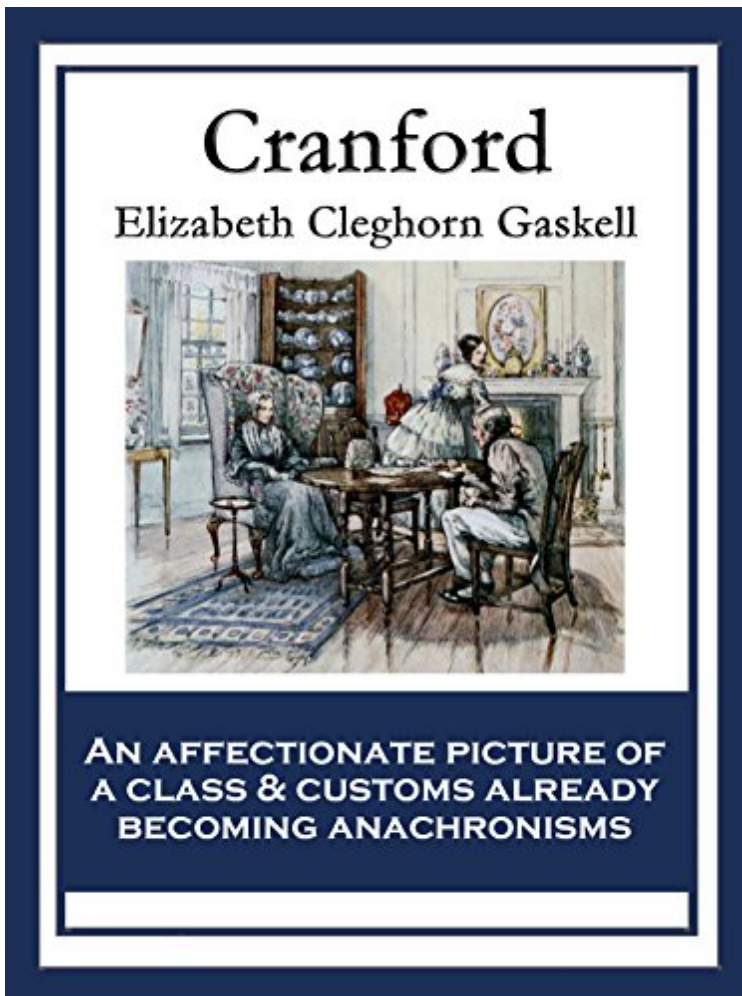


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Cranford: With linked Table of Contents



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Description : Description du produitThis 19th-century classic was characterized by Charles Dickens as "delightful, and touched with the most tender and delicate manner," Cranford presents a sensitive and moving portrait of a Victorian town, captured at a crucial moment of transition in English society. Unabridged republication of a standard edition.

Prsentation de l'diteurThe fictional town of Cranford is closely modeled after Knutsford in Cheshire England, which Elizabeth Gaskell knew well. This gentle, humorous, and witty book follows the lives of Mary Smith and her friends, Miss Matty and Miss Deborah, two spinster sisters. A classic.From AudioFileThis peek at small-town life in Victorian England opens with the delightful statement that the village of Cranford "is in possession of the s." Women own the finer homes, and few gentlemen are in residence. Frequent visitor Mary Smith relates the Cranford happenings. Reader Nadia May lends an authentic air to the women's complaints about bonnets and servants, adding a somber note when the villagers experience death and robbery. The women reveal their true characters when the respected Miss Jenkins faces financial ruin. Ironically, it's a man who rescues this "" from her plight. J.J.B. AudioFile 2003, Portland,

Maine-- Copyright AudioFile, Portland, MaineCritiqueClare Wille's performance of this gently satirical look at a genteel English village in the first half of the nineteenth century may be the wittiest I've ever heard. Like a kinder version of E. F. Benson's *Mapp v. Lucia* novels, Gaskell's *Ladies of Cranford* have their jealousies and their vanities. They also have moments of quiet tragedy (a lost brother, a suitor rejected to please the family but never forgotten) and of high drama. Wille made me laugh aloud at the pompous trumpeting of the late Reverend Jenkins. When Miss Poe comes in out of breath, you could swear Wille was running up stairs while delivering her lines. Her performance is always fully engaged, at one with the story, which is itself a small gem. --B.B., AudioFile Magazine

Welcome to the quiet backwater of Cranford. The women are in charge, because the men mostly have business elsewhere. So the desperate gentlewomen keep busy sublimating more basic urges into a passion for Victorian social niceties. Clare Wille is delightfully warm and compassionate as the young narrator Mary Smith, fondly recounting the 'elegant economies' of her Cranford circle of spinsters and widows. Yet neither Mary's narrow field of focus nor the delicacy of her humour preclude sharp observations about the frailties of human nature or warnings of the disruption that events in the wider world are about to visit on her unsuspecting friends. The plotlines a msalliance between a titled lady and one of the town's few virile men, a financial scandal, a beturbanned magician, a prodigal's return were probably pretty sensational when the novel was first published, but are most important as the frame on which Gaskell constructs a beguiling picture of a dying society. The BBC 1 costume-drama version shouldn't put Wille's telling of the original in the shade. --Karen Robinson, *The Sunday Times*

To prime myself for *Return to Cranford*, the new Masterpiece Classic sequel to last year's award-winning mini-series *Cranford* on PBS, I wanted to read Mrs Gaskell's original novel that it was adapted from. Since I am always short of reading time, I chose instead to listen to an audio recording, my favorite pastime during my commute to work. After a bit of research on Cranford audio book recordings, I settled on the Naxos AudioBooks edition. From my experience with their recording of Jane Austen's novels I knew the quality would be superior. I was not disappointed. This unabridged audio book recording is aptly read by Clare Wille whose sensitive and lyrical interpretation of Gaskell's narrative enhanced my enjoyment of the story by two fold. Her rendering of the different characters with change of timbre and intonation was charmingly effective. My favorite character was of course the kindhearted Miss Matty. Even though she is of a certain age she has a child-like naiveté refreshingly seeing her friends and her world in simple terms. In opposition to our present day lives of cell-phones, blackberries and information overload, a trip to Cranford was a welcome respite. I recommend it highly. 2010 marks the 200th anniversary of author Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell nee Stevenson's birth on 29 September 1810 in Chelsea, which was then on the outskirts of London. In celebration of her bi-centenary, Naxos Audiobooks will be releasing three additional recordings of her novels: *North and South* in February again read by Clare Wille, *Wives and Daughters* in March read by Patience Tomlinson and *Cousin Phillis* in May read by Joe Marsh. Happily, I will be enjoying many hours of great Gaskell listening this year. --Laurel Ann, Austenprose.com