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# Persuasion Review: Dakota Johnson Dazzles as Anne Elliot in This Adaptation of Jane Austen's Novel

By: [Gautaman Bhaskaran](#) [News18.com](#) Last Updated: JULY 15, 2022, 22:02 IST New Delhi, India



Dakota Johnson as Anne Elliot in Persuasion

Persuasion U/A

★★★★★ 3.5/5

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15 July 2022 | English

1 hrs 47 mins | Drama

Starring: Dakota Johnson, Cosmo Jarvis

Director: Carrie Cracknell

Music: Stuart Earl

Netflix's adaptation of Jane Austen's novel Persuasion, and it is Dakota Johnson who shines as Anne Elliot with her subtle, jovial and immensely expressive portrayal

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Jane Austen's novels have a certain remarkable preciseness about them. The plots in her novels Emma, Pride and Prejudice and Sense and Sensibility resonate with the angst and joy of early 19th century England. These were incisive exploration of women's position in society, their struggle to find freedom from male dominance though, strangely, coupled with their desperate attempt at finding a husband, the richer the better. For, this was one way of climbing the social ladder for women who came from families of modest means. Much of Austen's work harps on this, and although she has been popular for 200 years with an extremely loyal fan base of readers, she rose to still greater heights after a couple of screen adaptations of her novels. Ang Lee's elegant Sense and Sensibility as well as Amy Heckerling's Emma pushed up Austen's admirers by considerable numbers. The films evoked a lot of curiosity even among those who had never read her work.

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But, we have also had a band of purists who feels Austen belongs exclusively to the written world, and any screen version is hardly likely to do justice to her great literature. In fact, these men and women presume that they are better than script writers and directors at interpreting Austen and her extremely nuanced view of the Regency era, its mores and social complexities. And it is here that the latest tryst with Austen, Persuasion, on [Netflix](#) by director Carrie Cracknell is bound to face opposition, though the core plot remains pretty much the way she had envisaged. Also, the settings remain exactly how they had been visualised by Austen. Bath looks divine with its rugged coastline washed by the gently crashing waves – magically captured by cinematographer Joe Anderson. And many of the events take place there.

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There is that obsession with marriage, and as Mary (Mia Mckenna-Bruce) tells her unmarried sister, Anne Elliot (Dakota Johnson), it is the greatest blessing that life can offer, it does become the movie's most abiding theme, passion and pastime. Not surprisingly, for that was how society was then. But Anne had spurned marriage to a handsome Naval officer, because he had no money and no rank. Heeding to an unsolicited advice from a close family friend, Lady Russell (Nikki Amuka-Bird), Anne though deeply in love with him, walks away.

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However, the universe has its ways, and the officer, Frederick Wentworth (Cosmo Jarvis), comes back after eight years to a still pining-for-him Anne. But she pretends she does not care for him, and Persuasion stumbles through pride and ego and an acute sense of disappointment and frustration. Both Frederick and Anne pass through agonising moments – desperately trying to open their hearts out. Well, we do know how the romance would wind its way through.

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It may not be a great work, but to look for the book on the screen is absolutely futile, and if a viewer can accept this, Persuasion would work. But my take from it is Johnson’s brilliance. She is subtle, she is jovial and she is immensely expressive conveying the depth of her sorrow at having let go her love. Her later dilemma when he comes back into her life is captured by her with dazzling honesty. We are never made to believe that Anne is an opportunist; she had never stopped loving him and had regretted at not having listened to her heart. Certainly, Johnson infuses a rare candour into Anne’s character.

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**About the Author**  

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