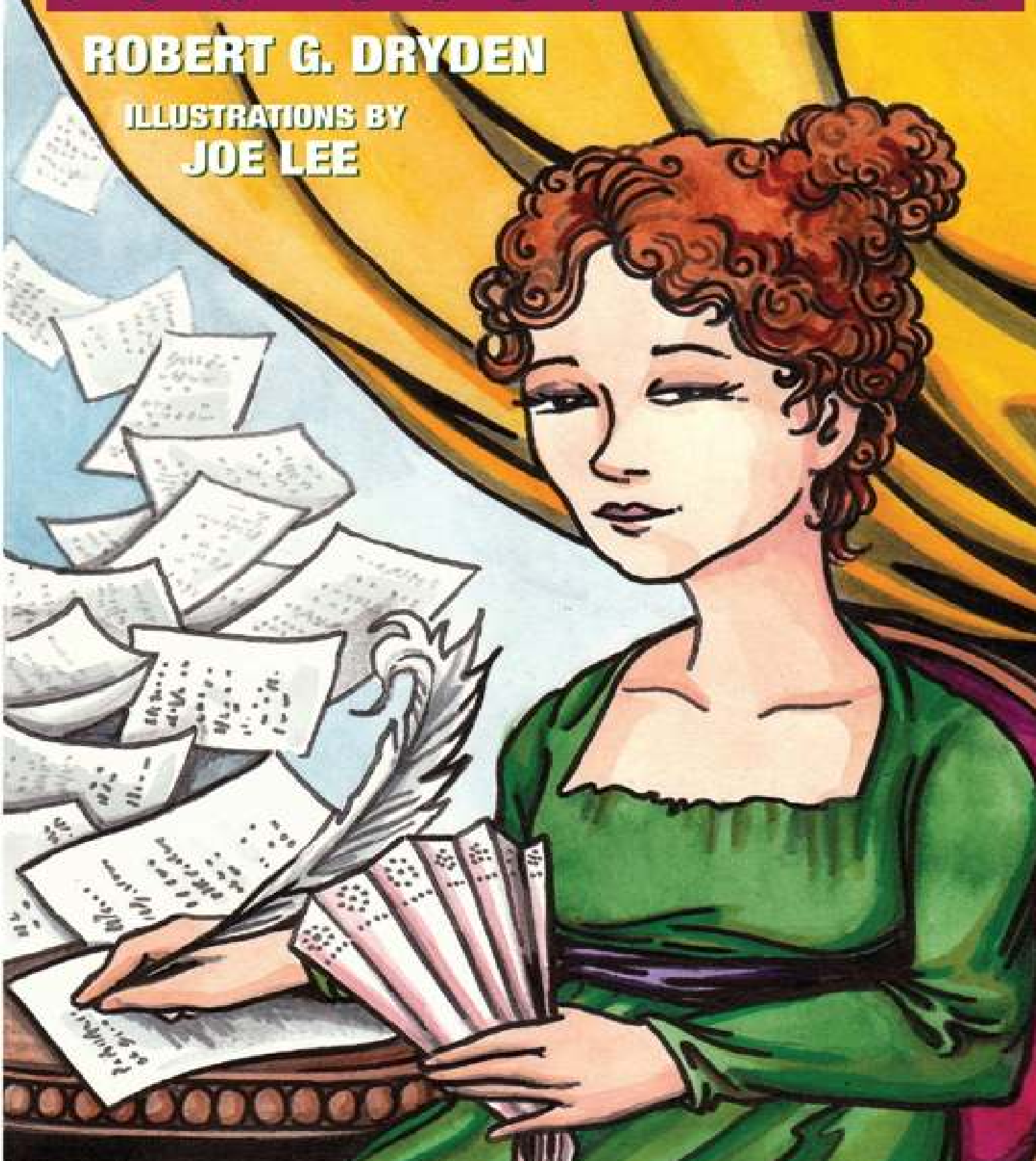


JANE AUSTEN

F O R B E G I N N E R S

ROBERT G. DRYDEN

ILLUSTRATIONS BY
JOE LEE



JANE AUSTEN

F O R B E G I N N E R S

BY ROBERT G. DRYDEN • ILLUSTRATIONS BY JOE LEE



FOR BEGINNERS[®]

an imprint of Steerforth Press

Hanover, New Hampshire

For Beginners LLC

155 Main Street, Suite 211

Danbury, CT 06810 USA

www.forbeginnersbooks.com

Text ©2012 Robert G. Dryden

Illustrations ©2012 Joe Lee

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise, without prior permission of the publisher.

A For Beginners® Documentary Comic Book

Copyright © 2012

Cataloging-in-Publication information is available from the Library of Congress.

eISBN: 978-1-934389-65-2

For Beginners® and Beginners Documentary Comic Books® are published by For Beginners LLC.

v3.1

contents

Cover

Title Page

Copyright

Preface

Introduction

Sense and Sensibility

Pride and Prejudice

Mansfield Park

Emma

Northanger Abbey

Persuasion

Jane Austen's Legacy

Jane Austen in Popular Culture

Preface

Greetings and welcome to *Jane Austen for Beginners*. In these pages you will find discussions of Austen's six major novels. Along with sustained looks at *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Northanger Abbey*, and *Persuasion*, I also provide an overview of Austen's life and times, speculation about her legacy, and a roundup of numerous Austen-related films and TV productions, book spinoffs, Austen-fan websites, and more, generated by the tidal wave of Jane Austen enthusiasm that has swept the English-speaking world and beyond in the past twenty-plus years.

This book is for everyone who is curious about Jane Austen. If you have no intention of reading the novels but want to hold your own in Austen conversations, this book is for you. If you are a student or general reader attempting to tackle the novels for the first time, this book is for you. If you read Austen a long time ago but don't remember much, this book is for you. And if you are a knowledgeable Austen aficionado, please read on for perspectives you hope you find new and interesting.



Kindly note that in my engagement with the novels, I reveal significant portions of the plots. If you want to let the plotlines in Austen's books unfold organically, begin your reading with the novel introductions, then turn to the novels themselves. These overviews will help you with the big picture—contexts, characters, historical background, and themes. Once you

have finished reading the novels, go back and complete the chapters. What you find in the will help illuminate central plotlines and open up new vistas to enhance your understanding of and pleasure in Jane Austen's brilliant fiction.

Jane Austen for Beginners is intended to complement and contribute to the world of discussion concerning our friend Jane. Sophisticated content is conveyed in an accessible style that will help the beginning Austen reader understand the novels at an advanced level. But as you read, keep in mind that there is no single manual or key to understanding Jane Austen's books. There is no single Austen "authority." Reading and thinking about great literature is so rewarding because interpretations are manifold. Since no book could possibly address all interpretations of Austen's work, consider these discussions part of the dialogue.

My work here represents nearly twenty years of contemplation of Jane Austen and her fiction. I included Austen in my Ph.D. dissertation, I have published scholarly articles on aspects of Austen's life and novels, I have taught Austen's novels at the college level, and I have enjoyed reading these novels as a member of the general reading public. The amount of scholarship on Jane Austen is staggering. In keeping with the style and format of the *For Beginners* series, I have not used a formal citation style in my discussions, nor do I cite page numbers when quoting from her fiction. On occasion I do refer by title or name to sources and scholars that figure prominently into a particular discussion. I have also provided in my bibliography a list of texts that have been useful to me during my long courtship of Jane Austen. These resources along with my suggestions for further reading will be useful to the Austen reader who is not satisfied to sit still after completing this book. Enjoy!



Robert G. Dryde



Jane Austen's impact on late twentieth and early twenty-first-century American, British, and even global audiences is so immense that it's hard to fathom. Austenmania has become an industry, and Austen's popularity today is arguably eclipsed only by interest in the Bard himself, William Shakespeare. With our contemporary knowledge of what a phenomenon Jane Austen has turned out to be, we should find it surprising (to say the least) that at the time of her death, her own brothers and sister initially suppressed Jane's identity as author. When she passed away in the town of Winchester, England in 1817, and her body was carried over from 8 College Street to the spot that had been reserved for her in the mighty Winchester Cathedral, her epitaph did not mention that Jane Austen was a writer. It mentioned the "extraordinary endowments of her mind" and the "sweetness of her temper," but nowhere in the brief three paragraphs is there even a reference to the fact that this woman completed six novels and that at the time of her death she had published four of them. In fact, Jane Austen died in relative obscurity, and knowledge about the precise facts of her life remains somewhat murky. With all that is written about her today—the hundreds of texts that claim to know Jane Austen so intimately—you would think that her life had been the subject of a reality show. But that was hardly the case.



For starters we're not sure what Jane Austen looked like. There was no family portrait commissioned, and aside from one sketch of Austen that was drawn by the amateur hand of her sister Cassandra (a second sketch by Cassandra doesn't show Jane's face), Jane was never the subject of an artist's rendition. There is one recollection by her nephew James Edward Austen-Leigh, who writes fifty years after Austen's passing in his *A Memoir of Jane Austen and Other Family Recollections*:



In person she was very attractive; her figure was rather tall and slender, her step light and firm, and her whole appearance expressive of health and animation. In complexion she was a clear brunette with a rich colour; she had full round cheeks, with mouth and nose small and well formed, bright hazel eyes, and brown hair forming natural curls close round her face.

Austen-Leigh's somewhat generic description of Jane Austen is lovely, but it's all we have. It is also imparted to us by a nephew who hadn't seen his aunt in fifty years! Taking into consideration the great span of elapsed time, we have to accept that Austen's precise likeness will forever remain a mystery.

Adding to the ambiguity about her personal history is the horrifying fact that Austen's sister Cassandra (who outlived Jane by twenty-eight years) burned an estimated 2800 letters from Jane before passing away in 1845. Can you imagine how much was lost? Countless insights into Jane Austen the person—her likes and dislikes, daily activities, daydreams, fantasies, fears, troubles—are all gone forever.

• • •



And then there is the suspect biographical information we have about Austen written by those who knew her. Late in 1817, the year of Austen's death, her brother Henry Austen penned "Biographical Notice" as a forward to Jane's posthumously published works, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion*. In this biography, Henry begins to reinvent his sister and deify her in a likeness that people refer to as "Saint Jane." As an example, her brother states that his sister was "Faultless ... as nearly as human nature can be" and that she "sought, in the faults of others, something to excuse, to forgive or forget." Henry paints his sister as religious, devout and incapable of behaving in any way that could be deemed negative. The love Henry shows for his sister is touching, but we can't help seriously question the veracity of the biographical portrait. And if Jane Austen was so faultless, why would Cassandra feel compelled to burn so many of her sister's letters?

Austen's deification continued in 1870 with Austen-Leigh's memoir and family recollections. Penned so long after Jane's death, there is speculation about how much of Austen-Leigh's loving biography is rooted securely in fact. Fifty years provides a great deal of opportunity for fiction to infiltrate the facts. This is not to say that Austen's nephew intentionally sugar-coated his aunt's memory, but rather that a portrait of someone created

half century later is subject to the vagaries of recollection.



My point, as I begin to provide you with some of the biographical details of Jane Austen's life, is that there are still questions about aspects of the historical record. But that's not necessarily a bad thing. One of the reasons for Austen's immense popularity is that all the facts of her life are not etched in stone. There is so much room for speculation, and we Janeites (the term used for Austen groupies) like it that way.

• • •

Austen Family Background

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1775 in a town called Steventon in Hampshire, England (sixty miles south of London) to Mr. George and Mrs. Cassandra-Leigh Austen. Jane's father, who was orphaned by the time he was seven years old, was left no inheritance or property or money. Up until his early teens, he was cared for by an aunt on his father's side. At age sixteen, George Austen received a fellowship that enabled him to attend St. John's College in Oxford, and since he proved to be an excellent scholar, he stayed on to take another degree in divinity. Mr. Austen also had two successful relatives who were instrumental in helping him establish a career as a country parson: Mr. Francis Austen and Mr. Thomas Knight. By the time George Austen completed his schooling at Oxford, he received gifts of two rectories: one in the village of Steventon given to him by Mr. Knight and the other in Deane given to him by his uncle Mr. Austen. After marrying Cassandra Leigh

at St. Swithin's Church in Bath in 1764, the couple immediately set out for Hampshire. They initially lived at the parsonage in Deane, but after four years moved over to the rectory in Steventon. They would never be rich, but they enjoyed a respectable social rank at the low level of the gentry. In his memoir, J. E. Austen-Leigh recalls that George Austen was a handsome and charismatic man, and Jane's mother had an acute intellect and excelled at both writing and conversation. George Austen took up the occupations of pastor and teacher for the two small communities in Hampshire and the couple commenced production of a large family. George Austen received a modest living from his work and stuck with it until he retired at the age of 70. The church at Steventon where George Austen preached and where the Austen family worshiped still stands to this day, but the rectory where they lived was torn down shortly after Jane's death. All that remains on the property of the former Austen home is a metal water-pump handle that replaced the wooden one used by the Austen family.





As for brothers and sisters, Jane Austen had many—six brothers and one sister. Her eldest sibling was James, a man of letters who was ten years older than Jane. He and Mr. Austen provided young Jane with a strong educational background uncommon for a woman of her day. Like his father, James Austen was bound for a career in the clergy. He served as a curate in Hampshire for much of his career, and eventually moved his family into the Steventon rectory and took over as parson when his father retired in 1801.

The next eldest brother was George. He was omitted from most contemporary Austen family trees because he was developmentally disabled. He never learned to speak and was kept apart from the family for the majority of his life. It is believed that he may have been “deaf and dumb.” Mrs. Austen had a brother who was also mentally disabled, and these two men resided together as boarders with caretakers in a nearby Hampshire town.



After George, there was Edward, who was adopted at an early age in 1783 by Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Knight of Godmersham, Kent. Practically unthinkable today, the Austens relinquished parental control of one of their children in an exchange that was beneficial for both families.

The Knights had all the land, money, and prestige that could ever be wanted by an elite family of the English gentry; however, they were lacking a male heir. Through the process of adopting Edward, the Knights' line of succession was extended, and the Austens undoubtedly benefited from their now much closer connection to the Knight family. Later in his life, Edward Knight would inherit two large country estates: Godmersham Park and Chawton House in Hampshire. After the death of her father, Jane Austen would make her final residence at Chawton Cottage on the property of Edward's estate.



Jane was closest with the fourth Austen brother, Henry. He spent the first part of his career as a banker, and after losing his business, he turned in his middle age to the profession of the clergy. He had many influential business connections in high English society and was able to assist Jane in locating publishers for her novels. He aided his sister in publishing four of the titles during her lifetime—*Sense and Sensibility* (1811), *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), *Mansfield Park* (1814) and *Emma* (1815)—and then in the months after Jane Austen's death, Henry penned the biography of his sister and added it to the publication of a two-novel volume that included *Northanger Abbey* (completed by 1799) and *Persuasion* (December 1817, but dated 1818).



Next in terms of male siblings were Austen's two sailor brothers. The first was Francis, who served in the Royal British Navy, and during his long career he climbed to the position of Senior Admiral of the Fleet. After Frank came the last Austen son, Charles, who also had a career in the Royal Navy, although not as distinguished as Frank's. These brothers were at sea

for most of their lives, but Jane maintained close contact with them through their written correspondence. Both Austen brothers were significant players in Admiral Nelson's fleet and served in the Royal Navy during heroic Napoleonic War battles. Austen invents detailed naval characters in two of her novels, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion*. Her depictions of these characters are highly accurate. Austen knew her way around the details of life in the Royal Navy, more so than most women of her day could be expected. Austen's detailed knowledge undoubtedly was accumulated through the intimate family connections she had with her sailor brothers. As Austen-Leigh notes, "with ships and sailors [Jane] felt herself at home, and at least could always trust to a brotherly critic to keep her right."

Sister Cassandra and Jane Austen's Letters

Cassandra Austen was Jane's closest friend in life. She was three years older than Jane, but the two women were joined at the hip from childhood until Jane's death.



For most of their lives they resided in the same homes and shared the same bedroom. Austen-Leigh recalls that "Cassandra's was the colder and calmer disposition; she was always prudent and well judging, but with less outward demonstration of feeling and less sunshine of temper than Jane possessed." Cassandra and Jane confided in each other throughout the

lives, and when they were not together physically, they tirelessly corresponded. Even at the end of Austen's life, it was Cassandra who nursed her sister until her final seconds had expired.

At some point in the years following Jane's death, Cassandra began editing and then destroying the lion's share of Jane's letters that were in her possession. There is considerable evidence that Cassandra burned most of the correspondence that the two shared. Jane Austen wrote an estimated three thousand letters, and most were addressed to Cassandra. The belief is that Cassandra feared the prying eyes of future scholars and enthusiasts. In her censorious mission, she cut sections out of several letters, but the great majority (presumably containing what Cassandra perceived as a combination of embarrassing, private, and compromising information) she outright destroyed. Alarming, only 160 letters survive! Virginia Woolf explains with sadness:

It is probable that if Miss Cassandra Austen had had her way we should have had nothing of Jane Austen's except her novels. To her elder sister alone did she write freely; to her alone she confided her hopes and, if rumour is true, the one great disappointment of her life; but when Miss Cassandra Austen grew old, and the growth of her sister's fame made her suspect that a time might come when strangers would pry and scholars speculate, she burnt, at great cost to herself, every letter that could gratify their curiosity, and spared only what she judged too trivial to be of interest.



Cassandra's action went a long way towards eternally preventing scholars and biographers from being able to separate fact from fiction. As Woolf says, Cassandra was fearful that scholars would "speculate," and so we continue to do so. The loss of over 2800 letters leaves speculation as our primary option.



Town and Country

Jane Austen spent most of her life in extremely rural and provincial surroundings. As her novels demonstrate, rural English communities consisted of a handful of families living within a mile or two of one another. These communities were populated by all the characters we meet in Austen's novels—the country parson, members of the country gentry, and the occasional commissioned army officer stationed nearby, or the naval midshipman, lieutenant, or captain on leave from his duty at sea. Both Steventon and Chawton (where Austen lived and wrote for the final eight years of her life) fit that description well. By most accounts, Austen preferred living a rural existence; however, there is some debate in the Austen community about her sentiments towards urban life. The prevailing opinion had for some time been that she disliked the city. We know for a fact that she did not put pen to paper when in Bath or London. But that doesn't necessarily mean that she was unhappy. Most of her novels contain important scenes set in Bath or London, so the fact that she wasn't materially productive in the city should not compel us to conclude that she was consistently unhappy.

The Austens and the English Social Hierarchy

During the early nineteenth century, the English social hierarchy was structured as follows. Next to the king's court, the aristocracy was at the top, and it was comprised of a few hundred families of lords, dukes, viscounts, and earls, most of whom were part of the government. They derived their staggering wealth from both rents and their positions of power. They lived in sprawling country estates and huge city mansions. Since Jane Austen had no contact with members from this elite social class, aristocrats do not appear in the pages of her novels.



Below the aristocracy was the gentry, and here is where we see the majority of characters who inhabit Austen's novels. From the Elliots and Musgroves of *Persuasion* to the Bertrams of *Mansfield Park* and the Tilneys of *Northanger Abbey*, these families are all in possession of estates that have been in their families for many generations. The ranking of the gentry is a bit complicated, but for the Austen beginner, suffice it to say that there are three social levels: the landed gentry, the lesser landed gentry, and the professional minor gentry. As Maggie Lane illustrates in her essay "Daily Life in Jane Austen's England," members of the landed gentry were titled in the ranks of either baronet or knight, and of those two, only the baronet's title was passed down from father to son. *Mansfield Park's* Sir Thomas Bertram and *Persuasion's* Sir Walter Elliot are the two representatives in Austen's novels from this class. Since the title of knight was bestowed during a person's lifetime, it could not be passed down. Both Sir William Lucas from *Pride and Prejudice* and Sir Henry Russell from *Persuasion* are knights. Correspondingly, the wives of both baronets and knights are referred to by the title Lady.

The lesser landed gentry was composed of many of the misters in Austen's stories. Examples here include Mr. Darcy of *Pride and Prejudice*, Mr. Knightly (who is a magistrate) from *Emma*, and Mr. Palmer (who is running for Parliament) from *Sense and Sensibility*. They are the higher-ranking members, but the lesser landed gentry also includes most of the families that have named estates, such as Longbourn in *Pride and Prejudice*, Hartfield in *Emma*, and Uppercross in *Persuasion*. The rank of characters in these mid-level gentry positions varies, but most of the patriarchs share in common that they are first sons living in their ancestral homes.

Finally, the professional minor gentry consisted predominantly of offspring of the landed

gentry (second and third sons), who did not stand to inherit property. These individuals derived their incomes from the three professions: the church, the armed services, and the law. Countless examples of this class exist in Austen's world, and they include Austen's own father, who was a clergyman, Admiral Croft from *Persuasion*, and the Vicar Elton from *Emma*.

Jane Austen's family has been described as existing in the ranks of the "pseudo gentry" (a term coined by scholar David Spring). Since George Austen held a position in the church and had family connections with members of the landed gentry, he and his family can technically be included in the professional minor gentry, but keep in mind that these borders between social stations are in many cases somewhat fuzzy. The main reason for this lack of clarity is that the middle class, the social station beneath the Austens, is competing with the gentry for prestige in society.



The middle class—or the “new middle class” as it was called—consisted of successful, educated men who lacked breeding and connections to elite families. It comprised professionals like lawyers and doctors, officers in the army and navy (who were not from landed families), and merchants and businessmen. Due to the ambiguous boundaries between the lower level of the gentry and the upper level of the middle class, opinions differ about the extent of middle-class characters in the pages of Austen's novels. Some critics argue that members of the middle class barely exist; others (including myself) view the cast of middle

class characters as substantial, however. As we will discuss at length in most of the chapters that follow, England is evolving into the globally powerful Great Britain, and the early nineteenth century brings with it war with France, the emergence of the Industrial Revolution, and colonization. As England evolves into the British Empire, there are all kinds of personal money-making ventures to pursue, and many members of the middle class are striking while the iron is hot. As Austen demonstrates so well in all of her novels, members of this emerging middle class are competing for status in society with members of the landed gentry. One of the best examples is from *Persuasion*, where wealthy naval officers are mingling with members of the gentry. Admiral Croft rents a familial estate that the baronet Sir Walter Elliot, can no longer afford, and a middle-class naval captain (Frederic Wentworth) eventually climbs up the social ladder by marrying the daughter (Anne Elliot) of that same baronet. We also see in *Pride and Prejudice* another excellent example of blurring boundaries between middle class and the gentry. Charles Bingley is a member of the middle class nouveau riche. He is not landed, and the source of his fortune is never revealed, but the fact that he is extremely well-monied enables him to mingle with the likes of Fitzwilliam Darcy. More likely than not, his fortune was made in the colonial realm, where opportunities were vast. For our purposes, however, suffice it to say that in the early nineteenth century, money is competing with social rank, and like it or not, members of the gentry are opening up their doors to newly affluent members of the middle class.



Childhood and Education

When Jane Austen was born, her parents obeyed a custom (albeit a dying one) whereby infants were not kept at home, but with a wet nurse. Thus, for the better part of her first two years of life, Austen was kept in a cottage in the village where she was nursed and cared for. Her parents would visit on a daily basis, and they would often bring her home for short periods of time, but her primary care was elsewhere until she could walk and begin to talk. Reasons for the practice varied. Lawrence Stone in *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500-1800* states that on the one hand, mothers were freed of the drudgery of breast feeding and the demands it placed on their bodies, but another more compelling reason stemmed from husbands who wanted to maintain sexual access to their wives and did not want to compete with a nursing child.



As for education, it is not surprising that Jane Austen's was far superior to that of her peers. With older brothers, a highly intelligent mother, and a father who was a teacher, it is also not surprising that Austen's education began very early. Austen-Leigh tells us, "In her childhood every available opportunity of instruction was made use of. According to the ideas of the time, she was well educated, though not highly accomplished, and she certainly enjoyed that important element of mental training, associating at home with persons of cultivated intellect." Since males exclusively received a formal education and went on to study classical Greek and Latin, there were limits to Austen's progress as a scholar; however, by the time she was a teenager, she was well versed in the practice of writing. She wrote stories, a few poems, and some plays. Many of these are available, collected in a volume referred to as Jane Austen's *Juvenilia*. They include *Love and Friendship*, *Catherine*, and *The History of England from the Reign of Henry the 4th to the Death of Charles the 1st*. Her family home at Steventon was the location where Austen eventually blossomed as an author. In her early twenties, Austen wrote her most successful novel, *Pride and Prejudice* (which she began and finished in a period of about ten months during the years 1796 and 1797), and she also wrote drafts of *Sense and Sensibility* and *Northanger Abbey*.



Romance for Cassandra and Jane

Much has been made in the last decade about possible romances that the Austen sisters might have had during their lifetimes. Considering the tiny size of the communities where the Austens lived, the world of romance was limited at best. Since romantic options consisted of members of a few families that lived in neighboring houses within a small community, it shouldn't come as a surprise that neither Cassandra nor Jane married during their lifetimes. But for both women, there were a few close calls.

When the family still lived in Steventon, Cassandra received and accepted a proposal of marriage from a clergyman in the area, Tom Fowle, who had been a student of Mr. Austen's and had grown up with their family since childhood. Like some unfortunate characters in Austen's books, this young man was endowed with neither land nor money, but he did have a patron, a Lord Craven, who would have assisted the young Fowle in establishing himself as a suitable groom for the marriage. Tragedy struck, however, when he followed Lord Craven to the West Indies (serving his master as a chaplain of the regiment), contracted yellow fever, and died. The news devastated Cassandra. And this was, as far as is commonly known, her sole opportunity for marriage.

Jane had never been engaged in her life, but she did have a few opportunities for marriage that never came to fruition. It is widely known in the Janeite community that, like Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* (who rejects a marriage proposal from the character Mr. Collins), Jane herself rejected a marriage proposal from a prospective suitor whom she didn't care for. Austen-Leigh reports: "In her youth [Jane] had declined the address of a gentleman who had the recommendations of good character, and connections, and position in life, and everything, in fact, except the subtle power of touching her heart." The Austen reader easily comes to understand Jane's decision when we take into consideration that true love should be the ultimate criterion for marrying. However, in Austen's time most women did not have the luxury of marrying for love. You might say a woman's duty was to get married, and there were serious social consequences if she did not. In *Pride and Prejudice*, for example, Charlotte Lucas jumps at the chance to marry Mr. Collins after he had been rejected by Elizabeth Bennet. Charlotte is not in love with Collins, but (like women of the time) she is practical. It's fair to say that the majority of women in early nineteenth-century England were conditioned to think like Charlotte Lucas, not like Elizabeth Bennet or Jane Austen.



Austen-Leigh also recalls another story of prospective romance for Jane that evolved briefly when the family had been vacationing at a seaside location (possibly Devon). As she puts it, the Austens “became acquainted with a gentleman, whose charm of person, mind and manners was such that Cassandra thought him worthy to possess and likely to win her sister’s love. When they parted, he expressed his intention of soon seeing them again; and Cassandra felt no doubt as to his motives. But they never again met. Within a short time they heard of his sudden death. I believe that, if Jane ever loved, it was this unnamed gentleman.”

In addition to these accounts of near-romance in Austen’s short life, there is another possible romantic encounter that is depicted in the 2007 film *Becoming Jane*, where the author falls in love with a man named Tom Lefroy. According to the Jane Austen Society of North America, there is some merit to the story depicted in the film. Apparently Austen and Lefroy met when they were each twenty during a visit Lefroy made to Hampshire to visit his aunt and uncle. Lefroy, an Irishman, was on break from studying law in London. Austen wrote a letter to her sister about her experience with Mr. Lefroy and their interaction during the course of three balls. On January 14, 1796, she writes, “I look forward with great impatience to [the ball], as I rather expect to receive an offer from my friend in the course of the evening.” The engagement never came to fruition, however, and there is evidence that Mr. Lefroy became engaged two years later to a woman in Ireland, and they married the following year. They did name one of their daughters Jane (as the film depicts), but Jane was also the name of Mr. Lefroy’s mother, so make of that what you will.



Bath, England

The town of Bath was England's premier vacation and social destination during much of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Bath was a social hot spot, where fashionable people came to see and be seen. It is known for its fifteenth-century cathedral, Roman bath, natural hot springs, and beautiful Georgian architecture. Bath's culture was urban and sophisticated. There were ballrooms, a modern theater, shops, restaurants, and access to professional services every bit as good as what you could find in London. Many elders and retirees were advised to "take" the healing waters of Bath for a wide variety of illnesses. Along with this aging population, younger, unmarried men and women came to Bath to find a partner.

In 1797 Jane visited Bath for the first time, staying with an aunt and uncle. She also came for a visit in 1799. During her second visit, Austen came with her mother to see her brother Edward Knight and his family. As a vacation destination, she didn't see much wrong with Bath, and it inspired her to create the characters Catherine Morland and Henry Tilney from *Northanger Abbey*, who meet at a ball in Bath and eventually go on to marry and live happily ever after. Austen thought differently, however, when it came to the prospect of living in Bath. In the year 1800 she received word from her father that at the age of seventy he was ready to retire, leave Steventon for good, and move the family to Bath. Having married in Bath, Jane Austen's parents viewed the town as a place of romance and fond memories. After forty years of service as a country parson in Steventon, Mr. and Mrs. Austen were ready for change. Unfortunately Jane and Cassandra didn't share their enthusiasm; they were

astounded and depressed by the announcement and had no desire to live there. As evidence of Austen's unhappy attitude about moving to Bath, biographer Claire Tomalin notes that Austen wrote four letters during her first weeks in Bath, and the tone and content suggest "a mind struggling against low spirits." The family's time in Bath came to a conclusion in 1801 with the death of Austen's father.



Following George Austen's death, Mrs. Austen, Cassandra and Jane left Bath for Southampton, where they resided for three years, living first with Francis Austen and his new wife and then in a house in Castle Square. Speculation has it that this Southampton period prolonged Jane's unhappiness. Essentially the three women were at the mercy of the Austen brothers for money and lodging. Several of the brothers pitched in to help their dependent female family members. This situation provides a good example of the kinds of difficulties unmarried women faced during this time in history. Widows and unmarried women were in charge to their families for care and necessities. At this time in their lives, Mrs. Austen and Cassandra had a total of £200 combined, and Jane, who had not yet begun to make money from her writing, had nothing to contribute. It's also worth noting that during the seven or so years between leaving Steventon and arriving at Chawton Cottage, Austen produced little writing. Undoubtedly Austen was inventing characters and plots in her imagination, but she was not putting pen to paper. Her lack of literary output might suggest that Austen was consistently depressed, but the beginning Austen reader should keep in mind that this hypothesis is based mostly on speculation.

- [read Christian Anarchism: A Political Commentary on the Gospel \(Abridged Edition\)](#)
- [download *Buffy the Vampire Slayer and Philosophy: Fear and Trembling in Sunnydale \(Popular Culture and Philosophy\)*](#)
- [Signs, Mind, And Reality: A Theory of Language As the Folk Model of the World \(Advances in Consciousness Research\) pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [Fringe-ology: How I Tried to Explain Away the Unexplainable " And Couldn't pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub, doc, mobi](#)
- [The \\$5 a Meal College Vegetarian Cookbook: Good, Cheap Vegetarian Recipes for When You Need to Eat pdf, azw \(kindle\), epub](#)
- [download online Bravo!: Health Promoting Meals from the TrueNorth Health Kitchen here](#)

- <http://yachtwebsitedemo.com/books/DNA-and-Biotechnology--3rd-Edition-.pdf>
- <http://www.freightunlocked.co.uk/lib/Buffy-the-Vampire-Slayer-and-Philosophy--Fear-and-Trembling-in-Sunnydale--Popular-Culture-and-Philosophy-.pdf>
- <http://www.khoi.dk/?books/The-Restless-Universe--Understanding-X-Ray-Astronomy-in-the-Age-of-Chandra-and-Newton.pdf>
- <http://toko-gumilar.com/books/Fringe-ology--How-I-Tried-to-Explain-Away-the-Unexplainable-----And-Couldn-t.pdf>
- <http://unpluggedtv.com/lib/The--5-a-Meal-College-Vegetarian-Cookbook--Good--Cheap-Vegetarian-Recipes-for-When-You-Need-to-Eat.pdf>
- <http://serazard.com/lib/Adventure-Guide-to-Northern-Florida.pdf>