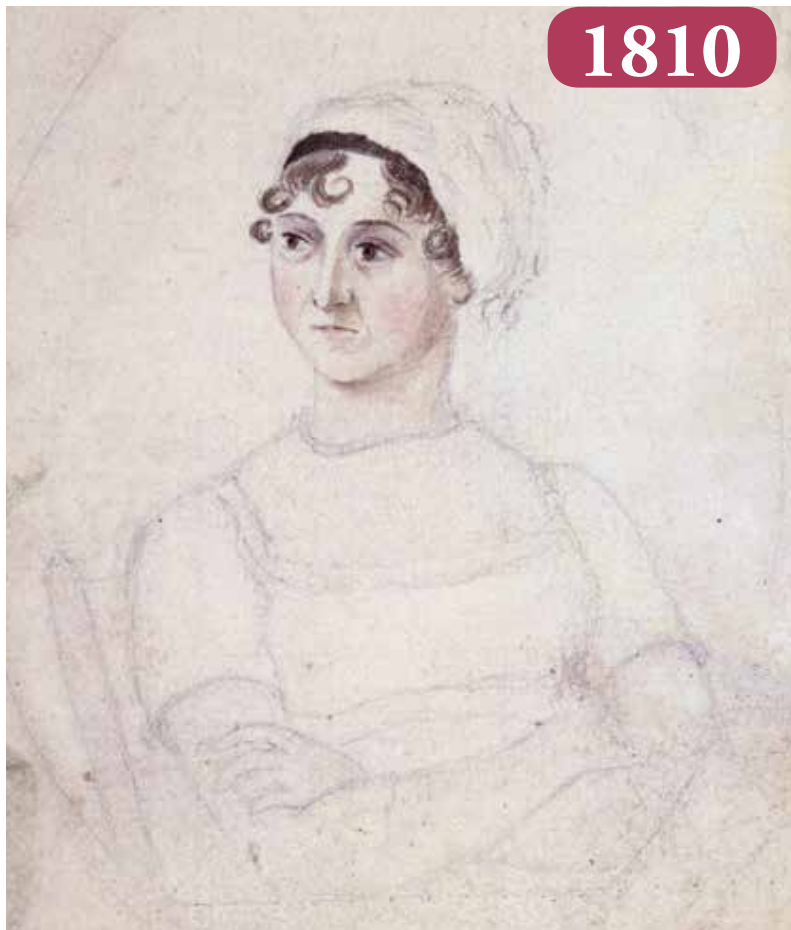
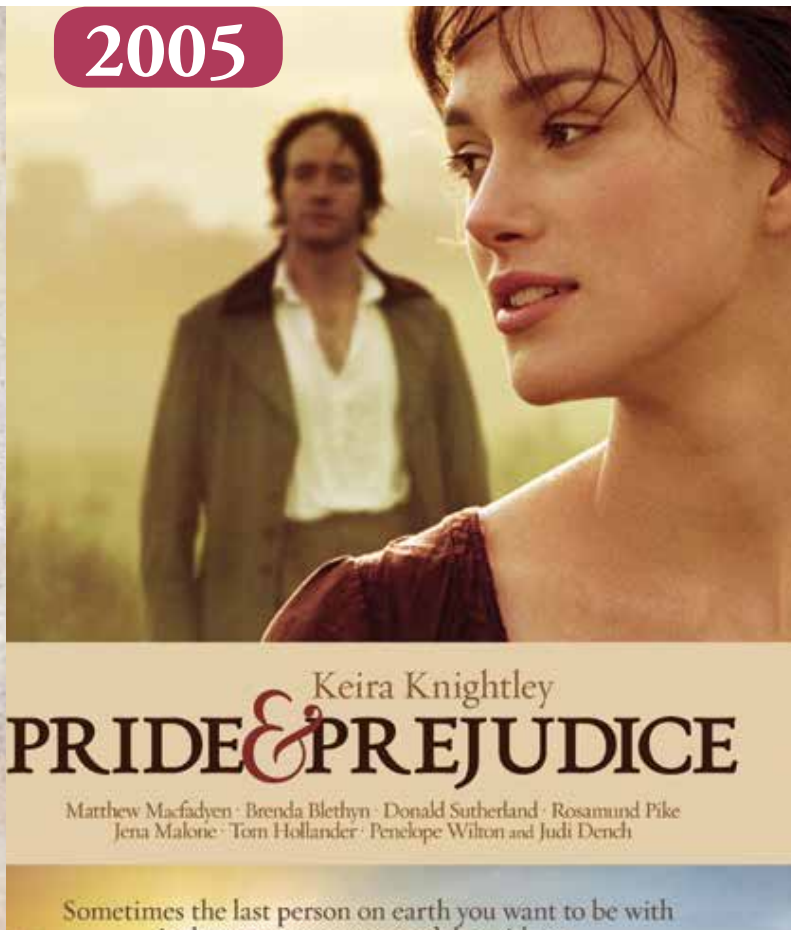


1810



2005



Jane Austen

in Her Time and Ours

BY JESSICA TEISCH

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” Thus opens *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), Jane Austen’s beloved novel about class, manners, and social mores in Georgian England. Nearly two centuries after her death, Austen (1775–1817), who published her six novels anonymously as “A Lady,” remains one of our most revered writers, the undisputed queen of the Regency. Her ironic wit, graceful plots, and parodies of social conventions resound as loudly today as they did then. She asked timeless questions about how to regard one’s peers, how to judge human character, and how to solve matters of the heart. She offered timeless lessons, too: jealousy gets one nowhere; money can’t buy happiness (though it helps). Rejecting the sentimental Gothic novels of the day, Austen brought moral realism to a world where order, not passion, ruled love, and those rules wove the fabric of society.

When Austen put ink to paper, England’s small towns and villages were far removed from the Napoleonic Wars and the Industrial Revolution. Although she was aware of these historical currents, Austen looked inward at the hu-

man soul rather than outward at war and politics. “Pictures of perfection as you know make me sick & wicked,” she wrote as she invented the arrogant Mr. Darcy of *Pride and Prejudice* and the meddling Emma Woodhouse of *Emma* (1816). Describing her art as “the little bit (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush,” she enacted domestic dramas in the drawing rooms and gardens of the landed middle class that revealed the finer points of society—manners, courtship, and marriage—as she observed them.

Austen was born the seventh child of Cassandra Leigh Austen and the Reverend George Austen, rector of a modest parish in Hampshire, England. The family had sufficient means, but not enough to provide Jane and her sister Cassandra with dowries—a subject to which Austen continually returned in her novels. Educated primarily by her father, Austen began writing novellas in her early teens. In 1795, she drafted *Elinor and Marianne*, which became the classic study of female conduct, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811). A year later she began *First Impressions*, the early version of *Pride and Prejudice*.

In 1801, the Reverend retired and moved his family to Bath, jeopardizing his daughters' "prospects." Although Austen wrote about courtship, love, and marriage and had two suitors herself, she never married. After her father's death, Jane moved with her mother and sister to a cottage on her brother's property in Hampshire, which saved her from dreaded governess work. Austen wrote and published assiduously until 1817, when she fell ill with Addison's disease and died.

That Austen's novels resound so loudly today attests to her modern understanding of human nature. Women "still fall in love with the wrong guy," said Emma Thompson, who starred in the movie version of *Sense and Sensibility*, and they're still worried about how to survive financially. Indeed, Austen understood how to live in an imperfect world with balance and consideration. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the Dashwood sisters find reason. Mutual respect, not sexual attraction, inspires true love in *Persuasion*. The moral? Common sense, good manners, decency, and domestic harmony lead to happy, debt-free lives. Then again, as Mary Crawford of *Mansfield Park* says, in ironic Austen style, perhaps "a large income is the best recipe for happiness I ever heard of."

In the past few decades, Austen and her novels have exploded in popularity, captivating different generations of readers and inspiring sequels, prequels, copycats, adaptations, reinterpretations, movies, miniseries, musicals, and even a cookbook. Here we present some of the worthier additions in various genres, among the hundreds of titles available, though we've shied away from romance. Some of our selections extend the themes of Austen's novels into the modern era; others are period-style speculations about What Happened Next. Of course, nothing can substitute for the originals, but if you are a true Austen fan, many of the following books may be worth a look.

The Classics and Their Adaptations

Sense and Sensibility (1811)

When the death of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood's father leaves them without financial means, how will these young women, who have very different ways of seeing the world, find husbands? Mr. Dashwood has passed Norland Park down to John, the only son of his first wife; John's greedy wife Fanny immediately reduces Elinor and Marianne, Mr. Dashwood's daughters by his second wife, to unwelcome tenants. Then the passionate Marianne, who believes in love at first sight, falls for the unscrupulous John Willoughby, despite the older but gentlemanly Colonel Brandon's attentions. The more prudent Elinor embraces Fanny's brother, the sensible Edward Ferrars. Both relationships are not without obstacles. Although not generally considered her best work, Austen's first novel of manners offers insight into finding the balance between reason and passion.

SPIN-OFFS, SEQUELS, AND ADAPTATIONS

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

The Three Weissmanns of Westport

By Cathleen Schine (2010)

In this modern day makeover of *Sense and Sensibility*, a wealthy businessman, Joseph Weissmann, decides to divorce his sweet wife, Betty (a.k.a. Mrs. Dashwood), citing irreconcilable differences (a younger woman enters the picture). He is 78, she is 75, and their marriage has lasted almost 50 years. Betty suffers further insult when she is turned out of their elegant Upper West Side home and forced to relocate to a small cottage in Westport. Along with her daughters, the sensible Annie and the high-strung Miranda, Betty must learn to forge new relationships and adjust to a world of vastly reduced circumstances. (★★★★ SELECTION May/June 2010)



The Cookbook Collector

By Allegra Goodman (2010)

Goodman is often described as a modern-day Austen, and comparisons of *Sense and Sensibility* to this deftly written novel are not without merit. In 1999, in the midst of the dot-com boom, two sisters take divergent paths to happiness. The pragmatic Emily, 28, is the CEO of a startup in Silicon Valley; 23-year-old Jessamine is a whimsical Berkeley philosophy grad student who enjoys saving trees and working at an antiquarian bookstore owned by a retired Microsoft millionaire. Then Emily entrusts her boyfriend, the founder of a Boston-based tech firm, with a company secret as proof of her long-distance love. While Goodman asks the big questions about what money can—and cannot—buy and how we should live our lives, she provides no easy answers. (★★★★ SELECTION Sept/Oct 2010)



The Dashwood Sisters Tell All

A Modern-day Novel of Jane Austen

By Beth Pattillo (2011)

Following *Jane Austen Ruined My Life* (2009) and *Mr. Darcy Broke My Heart* (2010), Pattillo spins a tale about two modern-day, 30-something sisters, Ellen and Mimi Dodge (stand-ins for Elinor and Marianne Dashwood), whose mother's dying wish is to send them on a walking tour of Hampshire, England, where Austen lived. Never close, the sisters start to come together when they realize their late

mother left them a diary belonging to Jane's sister, Cassandra. Soon, they are uncovering the secrets that inspired one of the greatest love stories and that nearly destroyed the Austen sisters' bond, as well as beginning to understand how each sister, past and present, contributes to the other's happiness.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY: THE AUSTEN PROJECT | JOANNA TROLLOPE (2013)

Sequels and Continuations

Colonel Brandon's Diary

By Amanda Grange (2009)

In *Sense and Sensibility*, Colonel Brandon is the quiet, gentlemanly, 35-year-old bachelor who falls for Marianne, despite her attachments to the untoward John Willoughby. *Colonel Brandon's Diary*, which provides insight into Brandon's heart and soul as he comes of age, reimagines Brandon's life before he meets the Dashwood sisters, when he is 18 and the girl he loves, Eliza, is forced to marry his brother. His diary, which covers the years between 1778 and 1798, tells of his experience in the army in the East Indies; the tragic demise and death of Eliza; and his grief over the disappearance of Eliza's illegitimate daughter. Then he meets Marianne Dashwood—but the course of true love never did run smooth, did it?



The Three Colonels

Jane Austen's Fighting Men

By Jack Caldwell (2012)

The Three Colonels, filled with both action and romance, draws upon characters from two Austen novels: Colonel Brandon from *Sense and Sensibility* and Colonel Richard Fitzwilliam from *Pride and Prejudice*, plus an imaginary third, Colonel Sir John Buford. At the start of the story, the three men are reveling in their marriages and romantic attachments to Anne, Caroline, and Marianne (three of Austen's heroines). But when they are called to serve their king in the Battle of Waterloo, their lives are put to the test—as is the faith of the women they leave behind. With the exception of Buford, Caldwell stays true to Austen's original characters, while creating new story lines that explore themes of love, loss, duty, and war.

WILLOUGHBY'S RETURN: A TALE OF IRRESISTIBLE TEMPTATION | JANE ODIWE (2009)

EXPECTATIONS OF HAPPINESS | REBECCA ANN COLLINS (2011)

CRIME

MURDER ON THE BRIDE'S SIDE: A MYSTERY | TRACY KIELY (2010)

MARGARET DASHWOOD AND THE ENCHANTED ATLAS: REGENCY MAGIC, BOOK 2 | BETH DEITCHMAN (2014)

SF AND FANTASY

Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters

By Ben H. Winters (2009)

This mash-up combines horror with pop culture while retaining aspects of Austen's first novel. In it, Mr. Dashwood is eaten by a hammerhead shark. His daughters Marianne and Elinor, as well as their sister and mother, are sent to Pestilent Island, where familiar characters, but rather unfamiliar and gruesome adventures, await. Mr. Willoughby rescues Marianne from a gigantic octopus, causing her to fall in love with him; Elinor falls for Edward Ferrars, who is engaged to the evil Lucy Steele. Although the plot is based on *Sense and Sensibility*, the novel also draws on *Pirates of the Caribbean*, Jules Verne, classical mythology, and more. And it's gory!

YOUNG ADULT

SASS & SERENDIPITY | JENNIFER ZIEGLER

THE DASHWOOD SISTERS' SECRETS OF LOVE | ROSIE RUSHTON

Pride and Prejudice (1813)

When Elizabeth Bennet, the generous and witty heroine and daughter of a country gentleman, meets Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, an aristocratic, landed, and haughty bachelor who has just moved into their neighborhood in Hertfordshire, it could be love. Her sister Jane's growing affection for his close friend, the wealthy and sociable Mr. Charles Bingley, repeatedly throws them together. But will Elizabeth and Darcy allow their misguided judgments about manners, social rank, and fortune to cloud their mutual affection? This comedy of early 19th-century manners and class consciousness is among Austen's finest and most popular; it has consequently spawned the most spin-offs.

Spin-offs, Sequels, and Adaptations

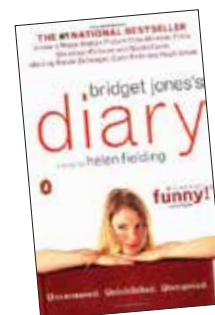
CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Bridget Jones's Diary

By Helen Fielding (1996)

◆ BRITISH BOOK OF THE YEAR

Based loosely on *Pride and Prejudice* and adapted from Fielding's newspaper columns, this hilarious, irreverent novel captivated the hearts of women worldwide. Bridget, a 30-something "singleton" living in London, can't get anything right—her career, her family, her looks, her fluctuating weight (she gains 74 pounds, but loses 72), her inability to give up cigarettes, and, most of all, her misguided romantic relation-



ships. But as she chronicles a year in her life and continues to browbeat the male species, she becomes involved with two men. Sequels: *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason* (1999), based on Austen's *Persuasion*, and *Mad About the Boy* (2013).

Jane Austen in Boca

By Paula Marantz Cohen (2002)

Is it possible for May Newman, Lila Katz, and Flo Kilman, three elderly Jewish widows frittering away their days at a retirement community in Boca Raton, Florida, to find true love? They're happy buying flashy clothes at Loehmann's and watching *Schindler's List*, but something's missing from their lives. In Cohen's modern-day recasting of *Pride and Prejudice*, this something is love. When May's daughter-in-law visits, she determines to find May "a husband or plotz." It's a contagious proposition. Cohen cleverly draws parallels between Austen's gracious Bennett sisters and the widows. But misunderstandings lead to unpredictable fates for the three women. (★★★★ Sept/Oct 2002)



AUSTENLAND | SHANNON HALE (2008)

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: THE AUSTEN PROJECT | CURTIS SITTENFELD (2014)

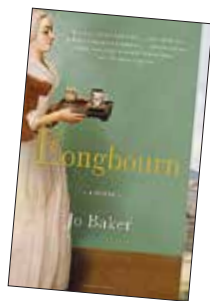
SEARCHING FOR PEMBERLEY | MARY LYDON SIMONSEN (2007)

Sequels and Continuations

Longbourn

By Jo Baker (2013)

"There could be no wearing of clothes without their laundering, just as surely as there could be no going without clothes, not in Hertfordshire anyway, and not in September," begins this retelling of *Pride and Prejudice* from the perspective of the Bennet family's servants. Mr. and Mrs. Hill, young housemaid Sarah, and elfin scullery maid Polly spend their days cooking, scrubbing, sweeping, dusting, and maintaining the Bennets' ramshackle if respectable estate, Longbourn. But as familiar events unfold upstairs, a parallel drama develops downstairs. As secrets are revealed, lives are altered. (★★★★ SELECTION Jan/Feb 2014)



An Assembly Such as This

A Novel of Fitzwilliam Darcy, Gentleman, Book 1

By Pamela Aidan (2006)

Readers looking for clues to Darcy's character will find some answers in this parallel story. The first in a trilogy, *An Assembly Such as This* features Darcy and a host of famil-

iar and invented characters as the former at first bumbles his relationship with Elizabeth Bennet and then slowly becomes attracted to her. The narrative arc is familiar to Austen fans (*An Assembly Such as This* covers about the first third of *Pride and Prejudice*), but in Aidan's retelling, Darcy narrates events from his perspective. The novel is also notable for its description of Regency details, from social conventions of the time to the importance of family connections to the mind-set of the landed gentry and their interactions with servants.

THE HOUSEGUEST: A PRIDE AND PREJUDICE VAGARY | ELIZABETH ADAMS (2014)

THE BALLAD OF GRÉGOIRE DARCY: JANE AUSTEN'S PRIDE AND PREJUDICE CONTINUES | MARSHA ALTMAN (2011)

THE DARCY'S & THE BINGLEYS: A TALE OF TWO GENTLEMEN'S MARRIAGES TO TWO MOST DEVOTED SISTERS | MARSHA ALTMAN (2008)

LETTERS FROM PEMBERLEY: THE FIRST YEAR | JANE DAWKINS (2012)

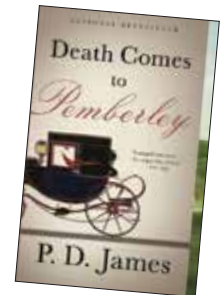
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: THE SCENES JANE AUSTEN NEVER WROTE | ABIGAIL REYNOLDS ET AL. (2014)

CRIME

Death Comes to Pemberley

By P. D. James (2011)

Under the ballroom banter and heartfelt correspondence runs something of a sinister thread in *Pride and Prejudice*. Certainly characters such as Darcy's friend Wickham have a checkered past that Austen could only imply in 1797. And why, exactly, is the Lord of Pemberley so brooding in the first place? The celebrated British mystery novelist addresses these questions by staging a murder mystery at the main locale of her favorite novelist's best-known book, which, in James's hands, takes place in 1803, just a few years after Elizabeth and Darcy, who now have two children, started their life together. (★★★★ SELECTION Mar/Apr 2012)

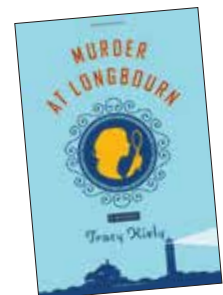


Murder at Longbourn

A Mystery

By Tracy Kiely (2009)

When Elizabeth Parker, who works for a Washington, D.C.-area newspaper, decides to join her beloved great-aunt Winnie on Cape Cod property, the Inn at Longbourn, for a murder mystery party on New Year's Eve, the unexpected happens. Not only does she encounter her childhood nemesis—the charming, Darcyesque Peter McGown—but the local wealthy miser ends up the victim—a real one. As Elizabeth tries to clear her aunt of suspicion, she must uncover motives and secrets of those surrounding her.



In this cozy mystery, Kiely pays tribute to *Pride and Prejudice* and crafts a clever, old-fashioned whodunit.

PRIDE AND PRESCIENCE: OR, A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY ACKNOWLEDGED | CARRIE BEBRIS (2008)

THE DISAPPEARANCE OF GEORGINA DARCY: A PRIDE AND PREJUDICE MYSTERY | REGINA JEFFERS (2012)

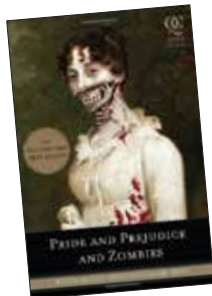
SF AND FANTASY

Pride and Prejudice and Zombies

The Classic Regency Romance—Now with Ultraviolent Zombie Mayhem!

By Seth Grahame-Smith (2009)

Does the story really require an explanation? Who could imagine a more formidable Shaolin-trained, katana-wielding, antizombie warrior than Elizabeth Bennet? But unlike many other parodies or adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, Grahame-Smith takes advantage of the book's public domain status to insert his action-scene additions into Austen's original text. He also carefully imitates the well-mannered speech of her characters (the zombies are referred to as "the unmentionables" or "the sorry stricken"). Because this novel is based on *Pride and Prejudice*, you already know how it will end—but in this version, you can keep a body count. See also *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dawn of the Dreadfuls* (2010) by Steve Hockensmith and Patrick Arrasmith and *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies: Dreadfully Ever After* (2011) by Steve Hockensmith (★★★★ July/Aug 2009).



MR. DARCY'S BITE | MARY SIMONSEN (2011)

YOUNG ADULT

EPIC FAIL | CLAIRE LAZEBNIK (2011)

PRADA & PREJUDICE | AMANDA HUBBARD (2009)

Mansfield Park (1814)

The timid Fanny Price, a poor relation, grows up in her aunt and uncle's wealthy household at Mansfield Park without enjoying its benefits. Only her cousin Edmund Bertram treats her as an equal; soon, his kindness toward her evolves into feelings of love for him. When charming, wealthy, and worldly siblings Henry and Mary Crawford enter the scene, they test their peers' moral sensibilities and cause a series of complicated romantic entanglements. A more solemn addition to Austen's playful, gossipy parodies of love in late 18th- and early 19th-century England, this masterpiece, her most technically complex work, shows we can all learn from our mistakes.

Spin-offs, Sequels, and Adaptations

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

MY JANE AUSTEN SUMMER | CINDY JONES (2011)

Sequels and Continuations

Mansfield Park Revisited

A Jane Austen Entertainment

By Joan Aiken (1984)

In this sequel to *Mansfield Park*, which takes place four years after that novel's final events, Fanny Price, after marrying her cousin Edmund Bertram, leaves England with her husband and children to settle family affairs at the Antigua plantation. Exit Fanny; enter Susan, Fanny's plucky younger sister. Susan subsequently becomes Lady Bertram's indispensable companion at Mansfield Park and, as did Fanny before her, becomes involved with the notorious Crawford siblings Henry and Mary, though here they are a chastened version of the original. Susan will charm readers and please those disappointed by Austen's original characterization of the meek Fanny.



EDMUND BERTRAM'S DIARY | AMANDA GRANGE (2008)

CRIME

THE MATTERS AT MANSFIELD: (OR, THE CRAWFORD AFFAIR) (MR. & MRS. DARCY MYSTERIES) | CARRIE BEBRIS (2009)

MURDER AT MANSFIELD PARK | LYNN SHEPHERD (2010)

SF AND FANTASY

MANSFIELD PARK AND MUMMIES: MONSTER MAYHEM, MATRIMONY, ANCIENT CURSES, TRUE LOVE, AND OTHER DIRE DELIGHTS | VERA NAZARIAN (2009)

YOUNG ADULT

THE TROUBLE WITH FLIRTING | CLAIRE LAZEBNIK (2013)

Emma (1816)

Emma Woodhouse, "handsome, clever, and rich ... had lived nearly twenty-one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her." Then the young heiress of the provincial town of Highbury, determined not to marry herself, befriends the poor Harriet Smith and schemes to find her a husband by playing matchmaker. When her meddling backfires, Emma is forced to redress her errors. As Austen wrote of her fourth novel, a comedy of manners, "I am going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like." Yet it's easy to fall in love with this novel about courtship, class, and compassion, in which the heroine, much like Austen's heroines before her, overcomes personal obstacles that keep love at bay.

Spin-offs, Sequels, and Adaptations

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

EMMA: A MODERN RETELLING (THE AUSTEN PROJECT) | ALEXANDER MCCALL SMITH (2015)

EMMA: A LATTER-DAY TALE | REBECCA H. JAMISON (2013)

Sequels and Continuations

Jane Fairfax

By Joan Aiken (1997)

In the original version of *Emma*, Jane Fairfax, the beautiful and musically talented but penniless niece of Emma's neighbor, was a second heroine, but her circumstances remained mysterious. Here, Jane tells her own story, starting with her childhood. She then sheds light on her interactions with Emma and the intersections of their two stories. In Aiken's novel, which adheres to the general story line Austen originally penned, Jane is a strong, loving, and intelligent heroine—in stark contrast to Emma, whom only Austen claimed to like. And here, Jane holds a secret that may just lead to her own happiness.



A Visit to Highbury

Another View of Emma

By Joan Austen-Leigh (1995)

Austen-Leigh, Austen's great-great-grandniece, offers a playful parallel story that retells *Emma* through true-to-the-period letters written between Mrs. Goddard, the headmistress of a local school (who, as Harriet's teacher, had only a walk-on in Austen's original), and her London-based younger sister, Mrs. Pinkney. Their correspondence reveals the romantic experiences of Highbury's young singles, as well as what became of Emma, Harriet, Mr. Knightley, and other characters in *Emma*. With sharp insight and compassion, both women help two younger ones find true love and are able to reevaluate their own relationships. Sequel: *Later Days at Highbury* (1996).

MR. KNIGHTLEY'S DIARY | AMANDA GRANGE (2007)

MRS. ELTON IN AMERICA | DIANA BIRCHALL (2004)

"POOR EMMA" IN THERE ARE NO GHOSTS IN THE SOVIET UNION: A NOVELLA AND FIVE STORIES | REGINALD HILL (1989)

CRIME

THE INTRIGUE AT HIGBURY: OR, EMMA'S MATCH (MR. & MRS. DARCY MYSTERIES, #5) | CARRIE BEBRIS (2010)

YOUNG ADULT

EMMALEE (JANE AUSTEN DIARIES) | JENNI JAMES (2012)

Persuasion (1818)

Many years ago, Anne Elliot allowed a friend to convince her that the love of her life, Captain Frederick Wentworth, lacked the proper social standing to court her. When Wentworth returns to their English seaside town, can Anne and Wentworth acknowledge that mistaken judgments drove them apart and recover their aborted love? Can Wentworth forgive Anne for rejecting him? Published a year after Austen's death, *Persuasion* presents an older, 27-year-old heroine. It also takes place at a specific time (1814–1815) and assumes a mature, rather than playfully romantic, tone. Like her other novels, *Persuasion* deals with embedded social mores and institutions and second chances.

SPIN-OFFS, SEQUELS, AND ADAPTATIONS

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

Bridget Jones

The Edge of Reason

By Helen Fielding (1999)

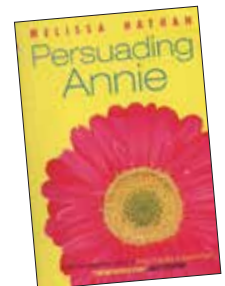
At the end of *Bridget Jones's Diary*, based on *Pride and Prejudice*, Bridget found her Mr. (Mark) Darcy. Just four weeks later, however, she has become less than enchanted with her new beau. It's mostly little things, naturally, but circumstances turn dire when Rebecca, a beautiful enemy, shows up to highlight Bridget's own neuroses and flaws. Fortunately, the ups and downs of her life distract her from her romantic woes—and the fact that her best friends have encouraged her to break off her relationship with her true love.



Persuading Annie

By Melissa Nathan (2001)

This fast-paced reworking of *Persuasion*, which starts in 1994, features London's extravagant Markham family. When Annie, the youngest daughter, believes she is pregnant, she and her boyfriend Jake plan to elope—until her aunt plants seeds of doubt in her mind and Jake leaves her heartbroken. Seven years later, the once-wealthy Markhams are spiraling downward into a financial abyss. Jake reappears as a marketing consultant to save the Markhams' business, but finds himself dealing with Annie's lingering resentment. Soon, the former couple must address their past emotions and history.



JANE AUSTEN IN SCARSDALE | PAULA MARANTZ COHEN (2007)

Sequels and Continuations

NONE BUT YOU (FREDERICK WENTWORTH, CAPTAIN: BOOK 1) | SUSAN KAYE (2007) SEQUEL: *For You Alone* (2008)

CAPTAIN WENTWORTH'S PERSUASION: JANE AUSTEN'S CLASSIC RETOLD THROUGH HIS EYES | REGINA JEFFERS (2010)

CAPTAIN WENTWORTH'S DIARY | AMANDA GRANGE

SF AND FANTASY

FOR DARKNESS SHOWS THE STARS | DIANA PEERFREUND (2013)

YOUNG ADULT

PERSUADED | JENNI JAMES (2012)

Northanger Abbey (1818)

When Catherine Morland, the earnest young heroine, leaves home for a vacation in Bath, she encounters a few weeks of “society.” There, she meets the charming Henry Tilney and his sister Eleanor, whose father, thinking Catherine rich, invites her as a guest to the family estate, Northanger Abbey. After he discovers his mistake, Catherine’s imagination runs wild, and her misadventures encourage her to learn to distinguish between the passionate dramas of Gothic fiction and the realities of everyday life. This lighthearted coming-of-age novel, published after Austen’s death, parodies the highly emotional Gothic literature of the late 18th century, such as Ann Radcliffe’s *Mysteries of Udolpho*. Much of its humor comes from the contrast between the heroine and *her* literary heroines.

CONTEMPORARY FICTION

NORTHANGER ABBEY (THE AUSTEN PROJECT) | VAL MCDERMID (★★★ July/Aug 2014)

CRIME

NORTH BY NORTHANGER, OR THE SHADES OF PEMBERLEY: A MR. & MRS. DARCY MYSTERY | CARRIE BEBRIS (2009)

YOUNG ADULT

NORTHANGER ALIBI (THE JANE AUSTEN DIARIES) | JENNI JAMES (2012)

OTHER AUSTEN-INSPIRED FICTION

The Catsitters

By James Wolcott (2001)

Wolcott, the cultural critic for *Vanity Fair*, has penned a modern-day Jane Austen classic on dating and courtship—but in Manhattan, and from the male perspective. Instead of Austen’s heroines, the novel features Johnny Downs, a struggling actor/

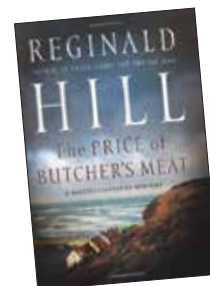


bartender searching for true love. His long-distance friend Darlene listens patiently to his romantic woes, but she has eschewed any sexual relationship with him even as she starts to run his life. But soon, when Darlene sabotages Johnny’s newest relationship, he starts to realize that love—and those catsitters—lie right under his nose.

The Price of Butcher’s Meat

By Reginald Hill

In a clever take on Austen’s unfinished novel *Sandition*, Detective Superintendent Andy Dalziel (the Fat Man) is recuperating from injuries sustained in *Death Comes for the Fat Man* (2007) at the Avalon Clinic, a convalescent home in Sandytown, on the Yorkshire coast. Chafing under the clinic’s restrictions, he sneaks out for a pint at the local pub and meets some of Sandytown’s most peculiar denizens, all of them trying to exploit the quaint seaside town in their own ways. When wealthy, petulant Lady Daphne Denham turns up dead on a hog spit at a pork roast, DCI Peter Pascoe conducts the official investigation. But as the body count starts to rise, Dalziel makes some inquiries of his own. (★★★★ Mar/Apr 2009)



The Jane Austen Book Club

By Karen Joy Fowler (2004)

“Each of us has a private Austen,” writes Fowler. In a town near Sacramento, California, six Austenesque personalities meet monthly to revive Austen’s classics, from *Emma* to *Mansfield Park*. But don’t be fooled. The members—including the beautiful lesbian, Allegra, the “control freak” hostess, Jocelyn, and the sole male participant, Grigg—don’t live life in 19th-century drawing rooms. Instead, they sip margaritas and diverge from weighty literary discussions into real life, where they ruminate on Austen’s world and their own. Do we all just want a “happy beginning, happy middle, [and] happy ending,” as our mothers taught us? Or is there something more to life? (★★★★ July/Aug 2004)



Writing Jane Austen

By Elizabeth Aston (2010)

In this frothy, entertaining novel, a love letter to Austen’s oeuvre, author Georgina Jackson has writer’s block after one chapter into her second book. When she is offered the opportunity to finish an incomplete Jane Austen manuscript, she balks—mostly because she has never read any Austen at all. When she realizes she needs to take the job in order to stay in England, she halfheartedly delves into Austen’s work with the help of her landlord, his teenage sister, and his Polish housekeeper. As Georgina starts to appreciate Austen, she also begins to understand more about herself. ■