

Jane Austen's Letters Study Guide

Jane Austen's Letters by Jane Austen

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Plot Summary

Jane Austen's Letters is a collection of letters mostly from Jane Austen, collected and edited by Deirdre Le Faye. The letters are dated from January 9th, 1796 to July 29th, 1817. The last three letters in the collection are Jane Austen's sister, Cassandra, writing about Jane's death. This collection provides an intimate perusal into the life and opinions of the great author. Jane Austen's Letters allows the reader to delve deeply in Jane Austen's personal life.

The letters generally are written by Jane Austen to her older sister and best friend, Cassandra Austen. Other letters are written to Jane's brothers, friends, nieces and nephews. Because Cassandra and Jane both remained unmarried during their lives and they lived together, these letters would not have been necessary except for the extent of visiting that both girls partook in. The letters detail their visits to their brothers' families and their friends' homes. The letters are filled with Jane's opinions of people, books, plays, events and fashion. They also record the daily events that occurred in the Austen home, such as marriages, births, deaths, home improvements, purchases and illnesses.

Jane writes to her sister about the balls that she attends. She also acquaints her Cassandra that their brothers, Edward and Frank, have left home to seek their fortunes by means of the navy. Jane comments on the new style of gown that is popular and alludes constantly to the writings of Frances Burney. She assures her sister that her mother's illness has passed. Jane praises Frank and Charles when they receive their promotions, and she maintains a correspondence with them during their absences from home. She touches upon Edward's inheritance of three estates from a distant cousin and the subsequent change of his surname to "Knight". She mentions writing "First Impressions" which later becomes "Pride and Prejudice". Jane laments when Edward is ill. She describes the plays she sees and her opinions of them, as well as the improvements that are made to their home and garden. She visits Martha Lloyd and brings her friend home with her for a visit.

The Austens move to Bath when Mr. Austen retires in 1801, and Jane describes the houses that they are considering to Cassandra. Their household articles are appraised and sold, and Mr. Austen settles business for their removal. Jane initially finds the parties small and the people disagreeable at Bath, but she enjoys bathing. Mr. Austen dies in 1805, and Jane writes to Frank to acquaint him with their grievous news. Frank plans to marry Martha Lloyd after his first wife, Mary, dies. Jane visits her friend Harriet at Goodnestone. She describes the births of each of her nephews and nieces and their subsequent visits. She visits Mrs. Knight for several days. Jane laments the death of Edward's wife. She jokes about marrying men that she comes into frequent contact with.

Jane requests the return of her unpublished manuscript "Susan". She publishes "Sense and Sensibility" and "Pride and Prejudice" anonymously. She also publishes "Mansfield Park". She is pleased with people's opinions of her writing. Jane encourages Anna, Frances and Caroline's attempts at writing. She also encourages Caroline's piano playing, and congratulates her when she receives a piano of her own. She helps make



bridal clothes for Anna as she prepares to marry Benjamin Lefroy. Jane gives Frances Knight love advice: to be patient. Henry becomes ill and is unable to help facilitate the publishing of "Emma" with John Murray, a London publisher. Jane decides to dedicate "Emma" to the Prince of Wales, and, in the process, begins corresponding with James-Stanier Clarke who encourages her to write a historical romance, but Jane refuses. She is pleased with Sir Walter Scott's review of "Emma" in the Quarterly Review. Jane congratulates James-Edward when he graduates and encourages him in his writing aspirations.

Jane laments Frances Knight's plans to marry because she does not feel that Fanny's fiance, Mr. Wildman, is in love enough with her niece. She puts "Catherine" on the shelf, perhaps forever, but tells Fanny that she has another work ready for publication. This unnamed work is "Persuasion" and is not published until after Jane's death. Jane writes to Charles that she is very ill and that the news of her uncle's will has made her worse. Jane and Cassandra move to Winchester for Jane's health, and Jane writes her Last Will and Testament, appointing Cassandra as her executrix and heiress. She praises Cassandra's skill and care as her nurse. Cassandra runs an errand for Jane, and while she is gone, Jane has a seizure. She suffers greatly and dies. Cassandra writes to Fanny Knight to relate the news and laments her lost treasure, swearing that no one understands what she has lost because they do not know what Jane meant to her sister. She praises Fanny for being so like Jane. Cassandra hopes to be reunited with her sister in heaven someday. The funeral goes well and everyone mourns greatly for Jane. Jane Austen is buried in Winchester Cathedral.



Letters 1-10 dated January 9th, 1796 to October 28th, 1798

Letters 1-10 dated January 9th, 1796 to October 28th, 1798 Summary and Analysis

Jane Austen writes to her sister, Cassandra, and recounts the previous night's ball. Jane was disappointed that Charles Fowle was not in attendance, but glad that her "Irish friend", Tom Lefroy was there. She praises Tom, mentioning that his only fault is his light-colored morning coat which she compares to Henry Fielding's "Tom Jones". She tells her sister about their brother Charles's scheme to get a lieutenantcy, and jokes about the funny name of Cassandra's fiancé, Tom Fowle's, vessel. In her next letter, Jane thanks Cassandra for the letters she has received from her sister and Mary and wishes to see them sooner. She is flattered by her sister's commendation of her writing since Jane "writes only for fame". Jane has heard from Tom Lefroy lately and generously allows Mary all of her former admirers because she means to confine herself exclusively to Tom Lefroy until she hears that he is to marry a girl from Litchfield. Jane laments that this will be her last day to flirt with Tom.

Jane reaches Staines and goes to Astley's that evening. She informs her sister that Edward and Frank have left to seek their fortunes, and she wishes Cassandra success with her current avocation. Jane praises her sister's comic writing in her last correspondence. Henry goes to Yarmouth to see a doctor for his health and is doing much better. Jane does not anticipate going home until mid-October. She discusses the new style of gown and her opinion of it. She refers to Frances Burney's "Camilla", to which she subscribed. Jane sees Louisa and finds her figure improved and her face unaltered. Lady Hales and her daughters visit, but Jane hears nothing from Mary Robinson. Jane is very busy making shirts for Edward, and she claims she is the neatest worker. Jane laments losing her mother's handkerchief.

Jane longs for Cassandra to tell her about the ball at home. Jane goes to a dinner and ball at Goodnestone, but she is sad that the Goodnestone inhabitants are beginning to leave. In response to Cassandra's information about Mary Harrison, Jane hopes that Mary will find a young man and that a "respectable Dr. Marchmont will keep apart for five volumes", a reference to Burney's "Camilla". Jane is pleased with Miss Fletcher for drinking her tea without cream and for her admiration of "Camilla". Jane admits to her sister that as she went to Nackington and passed Bifrons, she pondered about one on whom she once fondly doted, referring to Tom Lefroy. She plans to dine this evening at Goodnestone where she is engaged to meet her Aunt Fielding's admirer. Jane plans to return a week later than Cassandra hopes, but advises her sister to buy Mary Harrison's gown. Frank finally receives an appointment and Jane makes arrangements for him to escort her to town, where she hopes her father will meet her to take her home. She



warns Cassandra not to expect too much regarding Miss Pearson's beauty. She alludes to William Hogarth's paintings.

Jane writes to her cousin, Miss Walter Seal, in American to offer her condolences on the loss of Miss Seal's father. Jane writes to Cassandra that Jane and their parents have arrived in Rochester. Mrs. Austen has recovered from her journey. Jane apologizes for the delay in writing, but excuses herself because her writing and dressing boxes were left in the chaise and she just got them back. She is currently reading Francis Lathom's "The Midnight Bell". Their next journey is less pleasant and Mrs. Austen suffers from fatigue. James visits and tells Jane that Mary is unusually large. Jane has unpacked and ordered fabric to begin a new hat. She informs Cassandra that Mrs. Hall of Sherbourn had a stillborn child and jokes that the child's death resulted from looking unawares at Mr. Hall. Jane is pleased that "itty Dordy" remembers her, but she feels that her attachment will be more durable than the child's. She believes her mother is much better. Jane reads "Battleridge" by Mrs. Cooke, Mrs. Austen's cousin.



Letters 11-20 dated November 17th, 1798 to June 2nd, 1799

Letters 11-20 dated November 17th, 1798 to June 2nd, 1799 Summary and Analysis

Jane is pleased to tell Cassandra that their mother has not had a relapse and is doing much better. Mrs. Lefroy visits but does not mention Tom. When Mr. Austen enquires about Tom, she tells him that her nephew is studying for the bar in London and sends his regrets to Mrs. Austen on her illness. Jane anticipates a mutual indifference between Tom and her. Mrs. Austen praises Jane for being a good housekeeper. Christian is consumptive, Mary has rheumatism and a son, and Mrs. Coulthard and Anne both died in childbirth. Jane calls on Betty Londe, who misses Cassandra and sends her greetings. Jane informs Cassandra that Mrs. Austen and Mary are both doing much better. Jane plans to attend a small ball on Thursday. Jane is glad that Henry's affairs are finally settled. Jane discusses Sir Samuel Egerton's "Arthur Fitz-Albini, has recently bought Samuel Boswell's "Life of Johnson" and "Tour to the Hebrides", and plans to buy William Cowper's new work. Jane is tired of writing and does not intend to write anymore for many days. She retracts this statement when she receives a letter from Frank, warning of long intervals in his writing.

Mrs. Austen has improved to the point of being able to attend company in the dining room, and while Mary is doing well, Jane does not think her situation is in the proper comfort and style. Jane does not expect letters from Cassandra until she she receives them to avoid disappointment. She has taken the cawl off Cassandra's bonnet to make her own, and she describes her new bonnet which she made with disregard to Cassandra's advice. She later alters it according to her sister's suggestions. Jane dissuades Cassandra from asking Sir Thomas to escort her to Steventon. She has subscribed to Mrs. Martin's library of novels and other literature, and Mr. Austen reads Cowper aloud every night. Mrs. Austen is hearty, but her bowels are unsettled. Jane complains that people are too poor and economical in this neighborhood. Charles is supposed to be promoted soon, and Frank's application for a frigate will be granted soon, according to Admiral Gambier. Mrs. Austen is not doing any worse and her spirits are up.

Jane attends a small ball with only thirty-one people. There are twenty dances, and Jane dances all of them. Jane's cap was admired by many of the ladies, but Jane's clothing embarrassed her. She is glad that Cassandra enjoyed the ball she attended and insists that her sister buy a new gown. Jane admires Harriet Bridges. Frank has been promoted to commander. Mr. Austen plans to send money to Cassandra for washing and letter expenses. Jane is excited that she has been invited to Lady Dorchester's ball, and she describes the outfit that she plans to wear. Jane also obtains an invitation for Charles to the ball at Kempshott. She has a complaint in her eye which



makes reading and writing difficult, so Jane has been practicing her music instead. She believes her eyes feel better the more she writes though. She condemns Mrs. Knight for keeping a substantial income out of Godmersham Estate, which Edward inherited from a distant cousin. Jane laments that she was not in demand to dance at Mrs. Bramston's ball, and Charles did not go at all. She refers to her work, "First Impressions", which would later become "Pride and Prejudice".

Although Jane's eyes are still irritating, they are getting better. Charles plans to leave for Deal to sail on the 'Tamar', and Jane wishes she could ride with him to Deal but dreads returning alone. Charles is very much admired at Kintbury. James christens his daughter Elizabeth-Caroline. There is a small ball planned on Thursday that Jane plans to attend. She spends a pleasant evening at home. One of their brothers took a coach to town last night, and Jane yearns for Cassandra to come home with him. Charles arrives at Deal and sends word that he has been made the second lieutenant of the 'Endymion'. Jane alludes to Burney's "Camilla". Jane has a pleasant journey to Devizes, stops at the Paragon to see Frank and Dr. Hall, and finally arrives in Bath. She is very pleased with the house, the view, and the many new arrivals in town. Jane tells Cassandra that Edward is doing better than he has for several days, and Charles expects to sail on Wednesday. Jane plans to buy stockings for Anna. Jane's cloak has finally arrived, and she comments on the style of ladies wearing flowers and fruit in their clothing. She mentions Burney's "Evelina", and says that she had a good time at the Mapletons' house on Friday evening.



Letters 21-30 dated June 11th, 1799 to January 1st, 1801

Letters 21-30 dated June 11th, 1799 to January 1st, 1801 Summary and Analysis

Jane wishes she could cancel her intended visits for the summer. She asks Cassandra's advice about the fruit fashion. She claims she cannot write quietly and is very exclamatory. Jane enjoys her walk to Weston and mentions her admiration of Mrs. Piozzi nee Hester Thrale, an intimate of Fanny Burney and Dr. Johnson. Jane ponders on why Cassandra does not want Jane, Edward and Fanny to return home. Edward has not been well the last several days and has bought two coach horses that were recommended by Mr. Evelyn, who Jane refers to as a "yahoo", referring to Jonathan Swift's "Gulliver's Travels". She prefers Dr. Mapleton to Dr. Fellowes in terms of nursing her brother back to health. The apothecary believes that Edward ate something disagreeable. Jane intends to go to a play on Saturday which is to be her last gaiety, but she is anxious to leave town. A letter from Miss Pearson causes Jane to suspect the other lady of matrimonial views. Cassandra has a pleasant journey to Godmersham, but Jane worries because she has not received a letter since Cassandra left home. Jane calls on most of their neighbors because of the warm weather. James buys a new horse, and Mary hires a new maid, who eventually jilts her by accepting a position elsewhere. The improvements to the garden are coming along nicely. On Monday, a parcel from London arrives. Jane is grateful to Cassandra for the long letter and many gifts, and Mr. Austen is pleased with his stockings.

Jane receives a descriptive letter from Frank, and a letter from Charles stating that the 'Endymion' is awaiting orders. She attends a ball at Deane on Thursday where there are nearly sixty people, and Jane dances nine of the ten dances. Jane gossips to her sister that Earle Harwood accidentally shot himself in the thigh and is in the hospital where his family visits him. Although she was busy yesterday, Jane spent a pleasant evening in idleness. She has finished reading Mme. de Genlis' "les Veillees du Chateau". Mr. Buller writes to Mr. Austen, pressing the Austens to spend next summer in Colyton with his family, and Mr. Austen is inclined to accept the invitation. Captain Austen secures a Turkish ship from the French. Jane is startled when a storm blows down several trees, but nothing else is damaged. Jane writes to Martha Lloyd, promising to join her in two weeks. She is delaying because she wants to see Martha's mother and to convince Martha to return home with Jane. Cassandra is away for two or three days with Edward and Elizabeth. Jane expresses her distress that Martha wants her to bring Robert Henry's "History of Great Britain" on her visit because Jane wants to talk, not read. Jane writes Cassandra, but her hand is shaky from drinking too much wine last night. Charles arrived yesterday and plans to leave on Saturday. Jane went to a ball of fifty people this past Saturday, and she danced nine of the twelve dances. She describes the people, stating that there were very few beauties in attendance.



Jane plans to leave on Thursday to visit Martha. It is rumored that Sir Thomas is going to marry Miss Emma Wabshaw, who is "everything but rich". Everyone but Charles loves Jane's gown, but he changes his mind and decides that he loves it also. James Digweed is anxious that Cassandra be at Faversham Ball and Jane jokes that he is in love with Cassandra. Frank sends a note from Cyprus stating he is in health. Jane visits Martha, who insists she has grown fat, but it is too dirty to walk, and Jane and Martha are confined to each other's society. The lady that Sir Thomas is to marry is described favorably in Martha's neighborhood, but Jane is unsure if the lady's first name is Emma. Martha will return with Jane. Jane laments that there is no ball at Delmar this year, and commands Cassandra to go to the Canterbury Ball. Jane's visits to Ashe Park go well, and she longs to go to Paragon with Cassandra in May. Martha is supposed to visit again in March. The Austen family plans to move to Bath, and Mr. Austen attempts to raise his income for the move. Jane describes the houses they are looking at, but she prefers the house in Charles Street. The beds are being sent to Bath, and everyone is reconciled to moving. Mr. Peter Dubary offends the Austens by declining Mr. Austen's curacy because it is situated too far from London. Jane and Martha dine at Deane, and Martha plans to leave soon. Jane sends her love to George through Cassandra, and thanks her sister for advice on whom to give gifts but declares she will decide for herself!



Letters 31-40 dated January 14th, 1801 to January 21st, 1805

Letters 31-40 dated January 14th, 1801 to January 21st, 1805 Summary and Analysis

The Austens' household articles have been appraised finally. Jane discusses the plans for moving to Bath with Cassandra and tells her that their aunt is happy about the Austens' moving. Mr. Austen offers his curacy to James Digweed but is refused. Jane feels certain that Frank's promotion would have solicited more appointments if he had been in England at the time. Although Eliza is ill, she is still beautiful. Mr. Austen plans to settle business at Penlingtons so Cassandra does not need to worry about that. Jane shares gossip with her sister. She describes the houses at Bath that the Austens are considering. Jane is going to Manydown soon, likely within a week. She asks Cassandra to buy her a new gown. She was alone with Mr. Holder at Ashe Park for ten minutes, which was very uncomfortable and awkward. Eliza and Fulwar leave Deane. Jane is upset that Cassandra will not be going to Bath with their mother and herself, but Mrs. Austen is feeling better than she has in months. Jane has heard from Charles who is surprised but reconciled to his family moving to Bath. Frank is expected in about two weeks. Jane plans to visit Miss Lyford for several days, but begs Cassandra not to be dissuaded from coming home early and suggests travel plans for her sister. Jane has a pleasant journey to Paragon where she has her own room. She is received well by Frank, his master and mistress. Their uncle and aunt are surprised that Mr. Austen and Cassandra have been delayed so much. Jane and Mrs. Austen are currently in a house in Seymour Street, but Jane went with her uncle to look at two pleasing houses in Green Park Buildings. The household items sold well, though Jane is unhappy with the price she got for her books. Very little has occurred in Jane's life. She has been to church two times and attended a ball with only four couples who danced before tea. Jane did find the adulteress in attendance interesting. Mr. and Mrs. Badcock were drunk. Jane finds the parties stupid because they are so small, and she thinks the people are disagreeable.

Unfortunately, the Austens' views on the Green Park Buildings are at an end due to the prices. Jane assists in looking for another house. Frank goes to Milgate. Jane begins to find the parties more agreeable. She walks to Weston with Mrs. Chamberlayne and begins to like the Holders against popular opinion. She dreads a tiny party she is supposed to attend. Jane Austen alludes to Robert Dodsley's poems and to William Godwin. She is glad that Martha is going to Chilton and pleased that the 'Endymion' has docked in Portsmouth. The 'Endymion' is scheduled to sail to London, but Jane is certain that Charles will receive other orders. She has been walking with Mrs. Chamberlayne regularly but laments that the Chamberlaynes plan to leave Bath soon. She discusses Frank and money matters he is handling in London and assures Cassandra that she has not seen as much of Mr. Evelyn as Cassandra assumes. She



has an appointment with Phaeton to the top of Kingsdown. Jane quotes Mrs. Piozzi. Jane thinks that Cassandra must be bored at Weymouth because Jane finds it boring there. She has been ill but feels much better now. The family is settled in their lodgings, and they love James. Jane laments that James has read the first volume of Swift's "Robinson Crusoe" and mentions Richardson's "Sir Charles Grandison" as a preferable book for the servant. Their aunt is confused about Charles' prospects, and their uncle is sick. Jane enjoyed last night's ball though it was not full, and she enjoys bathing. Mr. Austen becomes ill on Saturday and medication is unable to cure him. An operation makes him better temporarily but then he grows worse and the doctor pronounces the case lost. Mrs. Austen bears the shock as well as possible. Jane writes to Frank to convey the news of their father's death.



Letters 41-50 dated January 22nd, 1805 to February 9th, 1807

Letters 41-50 dated January 22nd, 1805 to February 9th, 1807 Summary and Analysis

Jane learns from Cassandra that Frank may be at Portsmouth by now and rewrites her previous letter concerning her father's death, adding her praise of the serenity of the corpse and directing it to Portsmouth. Mrs. Austen finds her deceased husband's compass, sun-dial and scissors and wants Frank to accept them. Jane writes her brother to ask him where he wants them sent. Jane enjoys the nice weather and hopes Cassandra profits by it as well. She visits Miss Irvine in the evening and sees Miss Chamberlayne perform on horseback, which reminds her of Miss Lefroy's performance on horseback. Jane fears that Cassandra will relapse and does not believe her sister's report that she is already much better. Jane sees the Bullers and Mr. Buller is very sick and plans to try the waters at Bath, but Jane doubts they will help him. A lady interrupts Jane's writing to inquire about hiring Anne as a school mistress. Jane will take tea tomorrow at Mrs. Chamberlayne. She writes Charles and Henry, and Henry offers to meet his family on the sea-coast. Jane hopes to see Cassandra soon, and praises James as a useful "man of letters". She does not intend to accept her aunt's invitation to the Grand Sydney-Garden Breakfast. She attends a party at the Cookes' but there is scarcely any wit there. Jane thinks that concealing the intended partnership with Martha Lloyd is foolish, referring to Frank's intentions to marry Martha, especially since Frank is in a hurry to get married. Jane invites her uncle and aunt to tea despite her resolution not to do so. Jane is pleased by Ly Gordon's manners, but thinks Ly Elizabeth and Miss Hatton have too little to say. She is not jealous of those who are attending Ly Yates' ball because she is too tired to go and has spent the past several days quietly writing and playing games.

Jane plans to arrive at Goodnestone as Cassandra is leaving and to take her sister's place for several days. She refers to Rachel Hunter's "Letters from Mrs. Palmerstone to her Daughters". Jane's pleasant journey is offset by an agitation at her arrival at Goodnestone. Harriet receives invitations to a ball at Deal on Friday and also one at Dover on Friday, and does not want to offend anyone by rejecting the invitation. Jane wants to leave Thursday to avoid giving offense but Harriet will not permit it. Dinner is served late because the ladies are busy answering the invitations. They are then able to spend a pleasant evening together. Sophie is happy with the bird Lizzy sends her and promises to send a doll to Marianne. Jane stays at Goodnestone until Monday and hopes that Edward will fetch her since his health is better now. She sees Marianne, who is much changed. She anticipates that next week will be unpleasant for this family. Jane reads Thomas Gisborne's "An Enquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex" which Cassandra recommended, and Jane is pleased with the book. Jane sends her niece, Fanny Austen-Knight, a poem for her amusement concerning the arrival of Captain and



Mrs. Austen after their marriage. Cassandra's visit to Mrs. Knight pleased Jane, but Jane's lack of writing does not please Miss Irvine, who writes to reproach her friend's silence. Jane discusses local gossip: the Welby's eldest son dies from a fever, Tom Chute moves to Norfolk and the Footes have a new baby. She reads Mme. de Genlis' "Alphonsine" and Charlotte Lennox's "Female Quixotte". Jane was disappointed that James did not arrive yesterday, and worries about Jenny who has not written since she reached Itchings. Mrs. Austen brags that she is doing quite well with her budget. Everyone expects Mary to marry Peter Debary. Frank and Mary are sad that Cassandra is not at home to assist them with their household purchases. Jane informs Cassandra of the plans to improve the house and garden. She refers to Dr. Samuel Johnson, William Cowper's "The Task" in "The Winter Walk at Noon" and alludes to Burney's "Evelina". She has read Sarah Harriet Burney's "Clarentine" and finds it stupid and filled with unnatural conduct.



Letters 51-60 dated February 20th, 1807 to October 25th, 1808

Letters 51-60 dated February 20th, 1807 to October 25th, 1808 Summary and Analysis

Jane is disappointed that Cassandra is staying away from home longer. The Austens' journey to Kent will include Frank if he is not employed at the time. Martha visits on Tuesday. Jane is reading Joseph Barretti's "Account of the Manners and Customs of Italy" and refers to Anne Grant's "Letters from the Mountains". Jane's quarters in Bath are not comfortable, and she travels to Godmersham, but that is also uncomfortable without Cassandra. She describes her nephews and nieces, saying Fanny grows well. Her visit is going to be rather short, but Jane is enjoying the beauty of Southampton despite her languor and illness. She reads "Two Sermons" by Rev. T. Jefferson to Edward and visits Miss Maria. Jane visits Canterbury where she receives an affectionate welcome from Harriet. Edward still intends to go to Hampshire but agrees to take Jane to Southampton where she can spend a day with Cassandra. Mrs. Knight invites Jane to visit for a day or two, and Jane accepts. Mrs. Knight extends her invitation to Mrs. Austen whenever it is convenient. Jane is happy with Frank's health and safety, even more so when he returns home. She has been pressured to stay until September but desires to be home in July. She subscribes to Mr. Jefferson's works. There has been a lot of company at Mrs. Knight's house, and Jane is anxious to go home. She is not pleased when she hears news of Fanny's match and ill behavior.

Jane sends her best wishes to the mother and child through Cassandra and describes the party at Mrs. Duer's house. Mrs. Austen plans to move to Alton. Jane is unhappy with the recently cold weather. She disdains Robert Southey's "Letters from England" as horribly-anti English. Cassandra's Winchester correspondent writes to her, not realizing she is away, and Jane responds. Jane also jokingly wishes Edward a "happy thirtieth birthday", although it is actually his forty-first birthday. She describes the party at Mrs. Maitland's house and the fire at Webbes that caused much alarm. Jane assures Cassandra that her ear is cured, and Martha returns. Jane mentions Thomas Percival's "A Father's Instructions". Jane writes to offer her condolences to Edward on the death of his wife, as well as her mother's condolences. She is sorry for his loss and worries about Edward and his children. George and Edward arrive and behave well; Jane makes sure that they are thoroughly amused. Mrs. Austen considers taking a house at Wye. Anne gives notice to discontinue her employment for the Austens because she is engaged. Jane is reading Anne Maria Porter's "Lake of Killarney".



Letters 61-70 dated November 20th, 1808 to April 20th, 1811

Letters 61-70 dated November 20th, 1808 to April 20th, 1811 Summary and Analysis

Frank plans to go to Godmersham while Cassandra visits Goodnestone. Edward hires a new manservant. Jane's aunt expects some sort of evil to occur in the family. Jane quotes Hester Piozzi in "Letters to and from the late Samuel Johnson" in praise of Mr. Deedes' writing abilities. Mrs. Knight promotes a match between Jane and Mr. Papillon, and Jane jokes that she will marry him despite his or her own reluctance because of the good lady's interest in the matter. Jane means to go to as many balls as possible this season and describes one that is comprised of thirty couples where she is asked to dance. Her aunt and uncle offer James an allowance of one hundred pounds a year, and James plans to keep two more horses. Mrs. Austen and Jane want to settle in at Chawton before October when Henry will come home to shoot. The house at Bath is finally cleared out and is quite dull. Jane describes her visitors and buys a piano forte. She recommends "Corina" to Mr. Fitzhugh. Mrs. Leigh is dangerously ill. Jane is thrilled that Cassandra plans to return home soon, and she shares her travel plans for Mrs. Austen and herself. She alludes to Anne Grant's "Memoirs of an American Lady" and S. Sykes' "Margiana". Jane writes Cassandra with talk of the newest fashions, neighborly visits, general gossip and travel plans. She expects Earle Harwood and James to visit but is disappointed. She is reading Sydney Owenson's "The Wild Irish Girl" but does not expect much from the book. She finally receives the third volume of Rev. Edward Cooper's "Sermons".

Charles procures a small prize in his most recent cruise. Mrs. Leigh's health improves. Jane plans to dislike the "Evangelicals", but she doubts that she will be able to once she reads it, comparing it to the classics Virgil, Homer and Ovid. She tells her sister that the ball went well and compares one of the ladies that attended to Miss Beverley, the heroine from Burney's "Camilla". Jane complains about the wet weather and alludes to the possibility of Cassandra writing a novel. Sir Thomas William returns, and the Austens hire a new servant. Jane reads Hannah More's "Coelebs in Search of a Wife". Jane writes to Crosby, a publisher, complaining that she received ten pounds for the publication of her novel "Susan" six years previously, but it was never published. She requests the return of her manuscript in order to seek publication elsewhere. Crosby responds that there was no stipulation in the purchase of the manuscript that it would be published, much less a time period when it would be published. He agrees to return the manuscript for the same price he paid. Jane congratulates Frank on the birth of his son. Jane spends Tuesday in Bentinck Street with the Cookes, but she is unable to call on Miss Beckford because of the rain. She proposes that Mary go with her to Chawton, but it is unlikely. Henry escorts Jane home. On Wednesday, Jane walks to Grafton House and spends a lot of money, some of it Cassandra's. She has tea with the Tilsons but is



unable to go see a play because she is ill. She has a party planned for next Tuesday and has invited eighty people. Frank is superseded in Caledonia, Charles plans to be back in England within a month, and Henry expects an offer of employment. Jane plans to leave Sloane. She praises James' skill in verse.



Letters 71-80 dated April 25th, 1811 to February 4th, 1813

Letters 71-80 dated April 25th, 1811 to February 4th, 1813 Summary and Analysis

Jane is thrilled with her and Cassandra's newest nephew. She describes her plans for "Sense and Sensibility" for the first time, and she believes that Mrs. Knight will like Elinor. She enjoys the party and praises one female singer particularly. A rumor circulates that Charles is bringing the 'Cleopatra' home. Jane sees Isaac Bickerstaffe's play, "The Hypocrite", which is taken from Moliere's "Tartuffe". Jane mentions Mary Brunton's "Self-Controul", and sends her poetry to Edward and his daughter, reminding Edward of his promise to escort Cassandra to town. Jane's aunt has never gotten rid of her winter disorder. Jane updates Cassandra on their plans for the garden and livestock. She also relates Anna's social engagements and is excited that Miss Benn is supposed to visit her. She provides details of Miss Sharp's visit and asks Cassandra to pay her debt of 3 s. 6 to Edward. She begins drinking China Tea and finds it very good. Jane is happy with the recent publication of "Practical Piety". She describes Miss Lee's wedding. Jane plans for Henry to escort Cassandra back to town. Henry and his friend visit on Tuesday, and Jane describes their pleasant visit. She is happy with the goods that Cassandra sends. She is grieved at the King's death, and Harriet is truly grieved over Mrs. Budd's death. Jane refers to Sir Walter Scott's "Lady of the Lake".

Jane writes her niece, Anna, and expresses her interest in the Flint family from Anna's novel, "Tarefield Abbey". She compares it to Rachel Hunter's "Lady Maclaim", and Jane insists that Anna make the novel at least four volumes long. She writes to Martha Lloyd, assuring her that Edward has left Chawton and is safe in Winchester. Edward's name change is finalized, from Austen to Knight, that of his distant cousin who adopted him and left him an inheritance. Egerton pays one hundred ten pounds for "Pride and Prejudice". Jane tells Cassandra that she has had no visitors since Cassandra left home, except Miss Benn who she has had several agreeable walks with. She found Wednesday's party not disagreeable but detests Mrs. Bramstone. Jane loves Sir Charles William Pasley, RE and his "Essay on the Military Policy and Institutions of the British Empire". She also reads Thomas Clarkson's "History of the Abolition of the African Slaves Trades", Claudius Buchanan's "Christian Researches in Asia" and "Rejected Addresses" by James and Horatio Smith. Jane receives a copy of her "own darling child" from London, referring to the publication of "Pride and Prejudice", and is thrilled to see an advertisement in the paper for the novel. She sends a copy of the book to Charles. Jane is elated that Miss Benn likes Elizabeth Bennett, but she does not know how she will tolerate people who do not. She refers to the Austens' charades which are later collected and published in 1895. Jane is pleased with Cassandra's opinion of the novel and sorry for Cassandra's disappointment at Manydown. Martha visits. "Sense and Sensibility" has also been sent to the publisher. Jane mentions "fits of

disgust", alluding to the loss of Dr. Johnson's reputation when he admitted that he found "Lycidas" disgusting.



Letters 81-90 dated February 9th, 1813 to September 25th, 1813

Letters 81-90 dated February 9th, 1813 to September 25th, 1813 Summary and Analysis

Fanny Knight praises Elizabeth Bennett and Mr. Darcy's characters. Jane decides to tell Anna that she is the anonymous author of "Pride and Prejudice" and "Sense and Sensibility". She mentions reading Maria Edgeworth's "Tale from Fashionable Life". Jane writes to Martha Lloyd that Mrs. Austen has been ill, and Jane will be busy for the next few days. Miss Benn is driven from Old Philmore's house. Charles is the most comfortable and successful member of the family. This perhaps alludes to Charles supporting Mrs. Austen, Jane and Cassandra. Cassy plans to go to Chawton. Jane discusses her rainy journey and her plans to visit friends and family while she is away. Henry takes Jane to see the Exhibition in Spring Gardens, and Jane is pleased at a small portrait of "Mrs. Bingley", like "Portrait of a Lady" by J. F. M. Huet-Villiers. Jane yearns to see Sir Joshua Reynold's exhibition as well. She is frightened at the thought that Miss Burdett wants to be introduced to her. Jane plans to return home on Tuesday. Jane writes to Frank praising his skill and the pleasures of his profession in terms of being able to visit new places, such as Sweden where he is headed. Edward does well at Chawton with haymaking, and Jane enjoys being near her brother and his children. Henry is promoted and does not feel the loss of Eliza so badly because he is used to being away from her. Jane finds Charles' daughters greatly improved. She is pleased that every copy of "Sense and Sensibility" sells, and she makes two hundred and fifty pounds from the sale of the books and the sale of the copyright.

Jane enjoys visiting Henry, though he has a pain in his face, and suggests that Cassandra travel with Henry to Oxfordshire. She is thrilled with the praise that she hears about "Pride and Prejudice" from Lady Robert and Mr. Hastings. She obtains good seats to see "Don Juan" in the theatre, and plans to see George Colman's "Clandestine Marriage" and "Midas". She is pleased with the new fashion in stays that do not push the bosom up. Henry gives Jane a gift of five pounds, and she plans to buy poplin and send half to Cassandra. Henry is going to see Cassandra soon. Jane took Henry's daughters to the dentist, but she would not let him look at her teeth. She mentions her reading of James Hook's "Guida di Musica". Jane disapproves of Mrs. J. Austen's behavior to Jane's mother, who is again sick. She describes her new clothes, the dinners she attends and the visits she makes. She plans to go to the fair at Goodnestone. She reads James Beattie's "The Hermit", R. B. Harraden's "Cantabrigia Depicta", John Bigland's "Letters on the Modern History and Political Aspect of Europe" and Frances Burney's newest novel, "The Wanderer". The constant allusions to Frances Burney's writings are significant because Jane Austen was greatly influenced by the earlier writer. Jane quotes William Cowper in "Verses Supposed to be Written by Alexander Selkirk" when she states that she is "mistress of all I survey". Jane writes to



Frank expressing sorrow that his visit to Sweden is so poor. She is at Godmersham Park with Charles for about two months. She praises George Colman's "Clandestine Marriage". Henry heard "Pride and Prejudice" being praised and divulged the author's secret name, and Egerton advises Jane to publish a second edition of "Sense and Sensibility". Jane tells Frank that Anna Austen is engaged to Benjamin Lefroy.



Letters 91-100 dated October 11th, 1813 to March 21st, 1814

Letters 91-100 dated October 11th, 1813 to March 21st, 1814 Summary and Analysis

Jane tells Cassandra that not much is going on, but her visits are pleasurable and she plans to attend a ball but does not. Jane plans to read Robert Southey's "Life of Nelson" because Frank is mentioned in it. She visits the Fagg family and describes the plain daughters. She suspects that Charles will arrive today and he arrives at seven in the evening. Jane jokes that she is "rather in love" with Mr. Lushington. She also states that she just found out that Mr. Crabbe was married when his wife died. She quips that she will comfort him but not his children. Cassy does not look well when she arrives, but she recovers her looks somewhat until the weather makes her sick again. Jane finds nothing in Mr. Moore's manners to Harriet to object to. She misquotes the "infallible Pope" in his "Essay on Man" when she states "whatever is, is best" rather than "whatever is, is right". Jane is happy when "Sense and Sensibility" is advertised and happy with Miss Sharpe's flattery that "Pride and Prejudice" is read in Ireland. She jokes that she may marry a young d'Arblay, referring to Frances Burney's son. She discusses Sir Joshua Reynolds's female portraits and Henry Aston Baker's collection, "Triumph of Perspective". She reads William Cowper's "Epitaph on a Hare" and Boswell's "Life of Johnson". She is determined to raise money for the second printing of "Sense and Sensibility" which is to be printed at her expense. Jane's acquaintance increases and she plans to attend a ball next week. Mary is very much admired in Cheltenham. She alludes to Mme. de Sevigne's "Letters" and Elizabeth Hamilton's writings. Jane praises Eaton Stannard Barrett's "The Heroine" as being amusingly written in the Radcliffe style, alluding to Gothic novelist, Anne Radcliffe. She receives the proof sheets for "Mansfield Park" and Henry is reading it. Henry praises Mansfield Park. Jane is unable to obtain good seats at Drury Lane for two weeks, but when she does, she is satisfied with Kean's acting. Mr. Wickham writes to Henry to describe Edward's trial, and Jane believes that Edward has a good chance of escaping his lawsuit. Jane plans to see "Artaxerxes" and "The Farmer's Wife" by Charles Dibdin. She is not impressed with "The Farmer's Wife" because of Miss S.'s singing and acting. She plans to see "Richard III" when Cassandra returns. Henry finally finishes "Mansfield Park" and approves. Jane tells Frank that "Mansfield Park" may be printed soon, but she begs him to keep the name of the author to himself.



Letters 101-110 dated June 14th, 1814 to November 22nd, 1814

Letters 101-110 dated June 14th, 1814 to November 22nd, 1814 Summary and Analysis

Jane spends a comfortable hour at Grafton House. She accepts an invitation to visit the Cookes and wants Cassandra to join her there. She is pleased that the Cookes admire "Mansfield Park". Frank's visit is delayed by naval business. Jane does not want Henry to take her to town but admits that she cannot say "no" if he offers because it is a thoughtful offer. She hopes that Sir William will marry Miss Sharpe. Jane describes the balls she attends and the visits she pays. She plans to visit Henrietta Street soon. James and Edward are due to arrive on Wednesday. Jane believes that Henry will marry his Hanwell favorite soon, and she may travel to Chawton with Henry. She tells Martha Lloyd that Henry is taking Jane through Chawton on his way home to introduce her to his favorite, Mrs. Crutchley. The visit is pleasant but superficial. Jane gets the chance to see West's famous paintings. She is pleased with Henry's new house, and his health is much improved.

Jane writes to Anna saying that her eyes are weak and it is well that they did not weaken sooner or she could not have assisted in making clothes for the "bride expectant". She spends much time gardening. Jane praises Anna's manuscript, comparing it to Burney's "Evelina". Unfortunately, the manuscript was never completed or published. Jane answers Anna's specific questions regarding the accuracy and title of the manuscript, and she suggests that Anna omit the postscript because it appears to imitate "Pride and Prejudice". Jane is also displeased with the final chapter and advises her niece to stick to what she knows: England. She edits some grammatical errors and condemns several scenes as "too prosy". She criticizes the prudence of the heroine, claims Henry Mellish is written too much in the "common novel style", and advises Anna to avoid novelistic clichés. Jane plans to keep the manuscript to read to Mrs. Austen, Anna's grandmother. Jane is fond of Thomas Sherlock's "Sermons", is reading Jane West's "Alicia de Lacy", and pretends to be unfamiliar with the anonymous author of "Waverly". She sends Anna Harriet Benn's congratulations on Anna's marriage to Benjamin Lefroy. Jane also writes to her niece, Fanny Knight, declaring that she knows that Fanny is not in love. She praises Mr. J. P. and admits that Fanny has led him to be secure of her, admonishing the girl not to encourage him more or to accept him unless she really likes him. Jane is also happy that she has sold the first edition of "Mansfield Park".



Letters 111-120 dated November 24th, 1814 to September 29th, 1815

Letters 111-120 dated November 24th, 1814 to September 29th, 1815 Summary and Analysis

Jane writes to Anna Lefroy nee Austen that Mrs. Creed's opinion is now less important to her because of her disapprobation of "Mansfield Park". Jane threatens to write an imitation of "Self-Controul" in retaliation. She regrets that she is unlikely to visit Hendon, Anna's new home. She would like to visit but is just too busy. Jane goes to see the play "Isabella, or the Fatal Marriage" by David Garrick but is not pleased with the actors; however, she admits that she is seldom satisfied with acting. Jane praises Anna's book and her speed in writing. Based on the plot in Anna's book, Jane jokes that Ben, Anna's husband, was in love with Aunt Jane first. Jane enjoys Anna's description of her visit to town, but is unable to accept her invitation to visit. She has much confidence in Anna publishing. Jane agrees with Anna's critique of Laetitia Matilda Hawkins' "Rosanne, or a Father's Labour Lost" as clever but tedious. Jane apologizes to Anna because she told Ben Lefroy that she would visit, but she gave Cassy the choice of going to the fair or visiting Anna at Wyards. The child chose the fair, but no affront is intended. Jane promises to visit at Wyards before Wednesday, when she leaves for London.

Jane writes to Fanny Knight that her father will provide her with details about their trip to Hendon. She advises Fanny against marrying Mr. J. P. because the wedding would be far off. Jane believes that Fanny likes him "enough to marry, but not enough to wait". Jane plans to leave on Monday for a visit and demands a letter before then. She is uncertain as to whether there will be a second edition of "Mansfield Park". Jane writes to Caroline Austen, praising her speed in producing stories and demanding that the father in her most recent story be punished. Jane, her sister and brothers intend to dine together at Grafton House.



Letters 121-130 dated October 17th, 1815 to December 11th, 1815

Letters 121-130 dated October 17th, 1815 to December 11th, 1815 Summary and Analysis

Jane tells Cassandra that Henry is home and sicker than she thought, though most of the family is sick. The apothecary arrives to bleed him. Jane spends most of her time working or reading and anxiously awaiting Edward's arrival next Tuesday. She writes to Caroline Austen, apologizing that she has not yet read Caroline's manuscript. She encourages Caroline to practice music but reminds her to take care of Jane's piano forte. Jane congratulates her niece on becoming an aunt. Jane receives a pleasing visit from Edward Knight, but is disappointed when Edward does not arrive on schedule. She mentions Helen Maria Williams' "A Narrative of the Events Which Have Lately Taken Place in France". She also complains about Mr. Haden's paraphrasing "Merchant of Venice" by saying that people who are not musically inclined are capable of all sorts of evil. Fanny Knight's visit makes Jane quite happy and she notices that Fanny is affected by the sight of the children. Henry is doing better, but his fever is not quite gone yet. Jane makes a reference to Mme. Duval from Burney's "Evelina". Henry visits Hanwell where he receives excellent care for his health, and Jane plans a gala for Henry's return. Jane rejoices that her cold allowed her to avoid many visits that she did not plan to enjoy.

Mr. John Murray, a London publisher, offers Jane four hundred fifty pounds for "Emma" and the copyrights to "Mansfield Park" and "Sense and Sensibility". Henry dictates a letter to Mr. Murray stating that his illness makes dictation necessary, and while he is pleased with Mr. Murray's praise of "Emma", the money offered is insufficient when including the copyrights to the two previously successful novels. Jane writes Mr. Murray later saying that Henry is too ill to reply and asking Mr. Murray to call on her at the house to discuss "Emma". Jane writes to James Stanier Clarke, asking permission to dedicate "Emma" to the prince regent. James Stanier Clarke responds that the request is unnecessary, grants permission and praises Jane's writing from both his and the prince regent's perspectives, comparing her to Goldsmith and La Fontaine. Clarke hopes to see Jane again soon. Jane expresses her concern about the delay in printing to John Murray, asking if a dedication to the prince regent will speed up the process. Jane tells Cassandra that the delay is blamed on the stationer and Mr. Murray promises no cause for further dissatisfaction. Shortly after, Jane says that the printers supply her well with proof. She admits that she is influenced to dedicate by mercenary motives. Jane feels that she has no business to give the prince regent a binding but asks her sister's advice. When she sees "Emma" advertised, Jane writes to John Murray with her final instructions. She asks him to place the dedication to the prince regent on the title page and send the dedicatee a copy of the book two or three days before it goes on

sale. She also sends a list of people to send an unbound copy with an inscription from Jane, and she sends John Murray the edited second edition of "Mansfield Park".



Letters 131-140 dated December 11th, 1815 to April 21st, 1816

Letters 131-140 dated December 11th, 1815 to April 21st, 1816 Summary and Analysis

John Murray advises Jane of the proper place to situate a dedication in a book, and she thanks him for the correction. Jane writes James Stanier Clarke advising that a copy of "Emma" is to be sent to the prince regent, care of James Stanier Clarke. She thanks him for his praise of her writing but fears that her fourth novel will dishonor her first three novels. He responds that he read only a few pages of "Emma" before passing it on to the prince regent. He praises Jane's writing and begs her to continue to write. He offers his library to her pleasure and promises to send her a copy of the second edition of his book, "Of Life of King James II"; unfortunately, it never made it to a second edition. James Stanier Clarke sends the prince regent's thanks for the book and tells Jane that he was appointed chaplain. James Stanier Clarke begs Jane to continue writing and advises her to write a historical romance next and dedicate it to Prince Leopold. Jane congratulates him on his new position but states she is unable to write a romance. Jane tells John Murray that she is happy with Sir Walter Scott's review of "Emma" in the Quarterly Review, but she is displeased that the second edition of "Mansfield Park" is not mentioned. The sad news at H. Street makes it necessary to direct correspondence to Jane there.

Jane writes Charles Thomas Haden to thank him for loaning her some books. Jane receives a letter from the Countess of Morley, who thanks her for "Emma" and says she looks forward to reading it. Jane replies with thanks for the kind opinion and her apprehensions for "Emma". Jane writes Anna Lefroy with a copy of "Emma", stating that as she longs to see Anna's daughter, Jemima, she knows that Anna longs to see Jane's "child". Jane also sends a copy of the novel to Catherine Ann Prowling because she would have sent it to their "poor friend", Miss Mary Benn, if she had lived, but since the two ladies read together, Jane forwards it to Catherine instead. Jane writes Caroline Austen that she is happy her brother's hand is improving. She agrees with Caroline that "Olimpe et Theolphile" was written poorly. She tells Caroline about the death of Mrs. Elizabeth Leigh, but Jane is excited that Henry, Edward and Fanny are supposed to visit soon. Mrs. Austen is not well but would be glad to see Caroline, especially next Saturday, which is Mary Jane's birthday and the date of a fair.



Letters 141-150 dated June 25th, 1816 to January 24th, 1817

Letters 141-150 dated June 25th, 1816 to January 24th, 1817 Summary and Analysis

Cassy thanks Anna for sending her a book and Jane tells Anna that she left her gloves by the piano. Jane tells James-Edward Austen that his mother is invited to visit when she is well again. She praises Caroline's handwriting and her story, "Carolina". Jane tells Caroline that Mary Jane passed her time at Chawton pleasantly and is surprised that she does not miss Cassy as much as she expected she would. Edward visits, which is a great pleasure to Jane, especially as he is writing a clever novel. She also looks forward to Henry visiting soon. Once Cassandra returns home, Charles and his family are supposed to visit as well. She fills Cassandra in on what is going on with the rest of their family. Jane is unable to write while Cassandra is gone and she is in charge of the house. She praises Mrs. West for writing "such books" while dealing with her family matters simultaneously. Jane advises Cassandra to find cheaper lodgings. She dislikes Rev. E. Cooper's new book, "Two Sermons preached at Wolverhampton".

Jane writes James-Edward Austen to congratulate him on graduation. She teases him that he can now admit his misery at Winchester. She is pleased with Charles and Henry's looks, and praises Henry's sermons which she believes she and her nephew should include in their novels. She is convinced that Mr. Papillon will soon make his offer. She refers to Sir Walter Scott's "The Antiquary" and quotes Hannah Cowley's "Which is the man?". Mrs. Austen thanks Anna Lefroy for sending them a turkey but is grieved that Anna did not keep it for her own family. Jane writes Cassandra-Esten Austen to say happy new years and remind her that it is little Cassy's third birthday. The words in this letter are written backwards (for example, jane is written enaj), a code developed between Cassandra-Esten and Jane. Jane is very happy to see Edward but reluctant to allow him to leave. She tells Caroline about the Grand Evening Party where a young man read two chapters of his novel. She is offended by Anne's mock modesty in using French words. Jane is happy that Cassy is likely to visit in March and encourages Caroline to visit soon, saying the piano misses her. Charles' rheumatism worries his sister. Jane writes to Alethea Bigg, admitting it has been a long time since they wrote one another. She tells Alethea that Anna is better than she has been since she married, and she has two nice children. Jane reads Robert Southey's "Poet's Pilgrimage to Waterloo", generally with much approbation. She asks Alethea for a receipt for some purchases she made.



Letters 151-158 dated February 20th, 1817 to April 27th, 1817

Letters 151-158 dated February 20th, 1817 to April 27th, 1817 Summary and Analysis

Jane writes to Fanny Knight praising her writing and lamenting her pending marriage because the single life suits Fanny. Jane will lose "Fanny Knight" when she marries. She comforts her niece on "his" marriage to another and argues that Fanny was never in love with him anyway. Jane is pleased with Mrs. Cage's praise of "Emma". Jane's reference to Methuselah in her letter to Fanny Knight proves her familiarity with the Bible. She states that she is done with Mr. Wildman because he is not "enough in love" with her niece and advises Fanny to be patient for love. Jane laments Mrs. C. Milles' death. Jane decides to put "Catherine" on the shelf, perhaps forever, but has a short piece that she is ready to publish. Little Harriet is ill and the doctor states that she has water on the brain. Jane is amused with Fanny's account of her conversation with Mr. Wildman but shocked at Fanny's persistence in it. Jane states that while Fanny may like her heroine, who is almost too good for Jane, she will not like the publication. Jane is ill and tired of so many children.

Jane congratulates Caroline on getting a piano forte and looks forward to reading the next four chapters of Caroline's novel. She praises Caroline's novel and expresses hope that Edward is still writing. Jane receives twenty pounds for the second edition of "Sense and Sensibility". She advises Caroline to live with Mr. William at Digweeds and practice the piano. Harriet's headaches are better and only the doctor now believes it is on water on the brain. Jane writes Charles that she is ill and her uncle's will made her worse. She apologizes for not having the proper black edge on her paper to denote mourning. Jane writes her own Will and Testament, appointing Cassandra as executrix. She leaves fifty pounds to Henry and fifty pounds to Mme. de Bigeon. She bequeaths everything else to Cassandra except her funeral costs.



Letters 159-161 and CEAs 1-3 dated May 22nd, 1817 to July 29th, 1817

Letters 159-161 and CEAs 1-3 dated May 22nd, 1817 to July 29th, 1817 Summary and Analysis

Jane writes to Anne Sharp that she has been very ill but is feeling better. She is touched by the kindness of her family and praises Cassandra's nursing. Jane goes to Winchester to improve her health. She writes James-Edward Austen that their lodgings at Winchester are comfortable and she is gaining strength very fast. Her final letter is to Frances Tilson, stating that her attendant is encouraging and talks of making her well. Jane believes she could not ask for a better nurse than Cassandra.

Cassandra writes Fanny Knight to tell her that their loss is sad. She assures Fanny that Jane loved her very much and Fanny's letters gave Jane much pleasure during her illness. Jane's complaint returned on Tuesday and she was barely able to leave the bed. Cassandra laments the loss of such a treasure: her sister and her best friend. She admits that she has been negligent to others in her love for Jane. She gives Fanny the details of Jane's death. Cassandra ran an errand for Jane, and Jane had a seizure while she was unattended. Her speech was affected and she died shortly after Cassandra's return. The funeral is scheduled for Thursday morning and Jane is to be buried in the Cathedral. Cassandra laments their great loss, and hopes to be reunited with Jane in heaven some day. Cassandra writes Anne Sharp, agreeing to send her a lock of Jane's hair and a bodkin of Jane's. She insists that though Anne knows what Jane was, she does not know how important she was to Cassandra and cannot understand what Cassandra has lost. Cassandra writes to Fanny that she is pleased at Fanny's writing about Jane because Fanny is so much like Jane. Thursday, Cassandra was too busy for the funeral to be so dreadful. Everyone greatly mourns for Jane. Cassandra thinks of her sister often and repeats her hope to be reunited in heaven. Jane's papers command Cassandra to send one of her gold chains to her god-daughter Louisa and a lock of hair to be set for Fanny Knight. Cassandra asks Fanny if she wants the hair set in a brooch or a ring.



Characters

Jane Austen

Jane Austen was born in Steventon on December 16, 1775. Jane Austen was the second daughter of George Austen and Cassandra Austen (nee Leigh). She was educated at the Abbey School from 1785 until 1786. She was very close to her older sister, Cassandra Austen. Jane and Cassandra were the only sisters in their family and were best friends. Both girls often traveled to visit their brothers' families and friends. This occasioned much correspondence between the two even though they actually lived together for their entire lives. Jane was in love with an Irish man, Tom Lefroy, but his uncle, who financed Tom Lefroy's education, disapproved of the match. Jane remained unmarried and lived with her parents and sister, Cassandra. In 1801, the Austens moved to Bath when Rev. George Austen decided to retire. He died in 1805, and his wife and daughters moved to Southampton in 1806. In 1809, Edward Knight, the richest of the Austens, moved his mother and two single sisters into a cottage near his estate. Jane was very close to her nieces, Anna Lefroy (nee Austen) and Frances Knight.

Jane Austen was a very popular writer, though she published anonymously at first. She published "Sense and Sensibility" in 1811. "Pride and Prejudice" came out in 1813. After much deliberation, she released "Mansfield Park" in 1814. She dedicated "Emma" to the Prince of Wales in 1815. After her death, her oldest brother, Henry arranged for "Persuasion" and "Northanger Abbey" to be published in December 1817. She wrote many additional, uncompleted manuscripts as well. Jane Austen was greatly influenced by the earlier female novelist, Frances Burney. Her letters are full of allusions to Burney and her writings.

Jane Austen became very ill and moved to Winchester with Cassandra, hoping to improve her health. Her letters claim Cassandra was a very dedicated nurse to her sister. Jane died, unmarried, in Winchester on July 18, 1817. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Jane left her sister, Cassandra Austen, as her heiress and the executrix of her Last Will and Testament. Jane was greatly missed by her family. Her Memoirs were published by her nephew, James-Edward Austen-Leigh, in 1869, and her letters were edited by Frances Knight's oldest son much later in the century. Jane Austen's writing has influenced countless writers since her time. Her stories have been produced into many movies and have been continued by countless authors.

Cassandra Austen

Cassandra Austen was born on January 9th, 1767. Her parents were George Austen and Cassandra Austen (nee Leigh). Cassandra Austen was the first daughter born to the couple. Cassandra Austen was educated with her sister at the Abbey School from 1785 until 1786. Rev. Thomas Fowle proposed to her in 1792 but died in the West Indies. Cassandra Austen was Jane's only sister and best friend. The two were very



close and spent much of their time together. Most of Jane's correspondence is directed to Cassandra Austen while one of them was visiting. Cassandra Austen, as the older sister, took care of the house for the most part and assisted her parents in financial matters. Cassandra Austen constantly sent presents to her brothers, sisters, nephews and nieces. Cassandra Austen was the executrix of Jane Austen's will and Jane Austen's heiress. Cassandra Austen died unmarried on March 22, 1845.

Cassandra Austen was very thoughtful and sympathetic. Cassandra Austen did a lot of the Austen family's shopping and was relied on for advice concerning major purchases. Cassandra lamented the loss of her sister very much and wrote to Anne Sharp that no one could understand what she had lost by Jane's death. Her argument was that though others knew Jane and felt the loss, no one understood what exactly Jane had meant to Cassandra. Cassandra's hopes focused on being reunited with her sister in heaven.

Edward Austen

Edward Austen was born on October 7, 1767. Edward Austen was the third son to George Austen and Cassandra Austen (nee Leigh). In 1783, Edward Austen was adopted by Thomas Knight II. Thomas Knight II was a distant cousin who had no children and therefore no heir. He adopted his wife's cousin, Edward Austen. After Thomas Knight II's death, Edward Austen inherited three estates: Steventon, Chawton and Godmersham. Edward Austen married Elizabeth Bridges on December 27, 1791. The couple had six sons and five daughters. Edward Austen finally took his adopted surname in 1812, changing his and his children's last names to "Knight". After his wife's death, Edward Austen spent much of his time in Chawton. Because of this, he provided his mother and sister with a cottage near his estate. Edward Austen died on November 19, 1852.

George Austen

George Austen was Jane's father. He was born May 1, 1731 and died January 21, 1805. He was ordained in 1754, and he received a BD from St. John's College in Oxford in 1760. George Austen was the rector of Steventon from 1761 until his death and Dean from 1773 until his death. He married Cassandra Leigh on April 26, 1764, and they had six sons and two daughters. He retired in 1801 to Bath where he died.

Cassandra Austen (nee Leigh)

Cassandra Austen (nee Leigh) was Jane's mother. She was born in 1739 and died on January 17, 1827. Cassandra Leigh married George Austen on April 26, 1764, and they had six sons and two daughters. She lived with her husband in Steventon and moved to Bath with him in 1801. She lived in Southampton from 1806 to 1809 before settling at Chawton where she is buried.



Francis-William Austen

Francis-William Austen was born April 23, 1774. He was educated at the Royal Naval Academy from 1786-1788 and served in the navy. He married Mary Gibson on July 24, 1806, and they had six sons and five daughters. After her death, he married Martha Lloyd on July 24, 1828 but had no additional children. He died August 10, 1865.

Charles-John Austen

Charles-John Austen was born June 23, 1779. He was educated at the Royal Navy Academy from 1791 to 1794 and served in the navy. He married Frances-Fitzwilliam Palmer on May 19, 1807, and they had four daughters. After her death, he married her sister, Harriet-Ebel Palmer on August 7, 1820. They had three sons and one daughter. Charles died October 7, 1852.

Frances-Catherine Austen/Knight

Frances-Catherine Austen/Knight was born January 23, 1793. She was Edward's oldest daughter. She was very close to her aunt, Jane, and Cassandra commented that the two were very much alike. Fanny died December 24, 1882 and her eldest son edited Jane Austen's letters.

Anna Lefroy (nee Austen)

Anna Lefroy (nee Austen) was born April 15, 1793. She married Benjamin Lefroy on November 8, 1814, and they had one son and six daughters. She preserved some of her aunt's letters and provided James-Edward Austen information to use in "Memoirs of Jane Austen". She died September 1, 1872.

James-Edward Austen-Leigh

James-Edward Austen-Leigh was born November 17, 1798. He was ordained in 1823. His great-aunt Mrs. Leigh-Perrot adopted him and he assumed the additional surname in 1837. He was close to his aunt Jane and wrote "Memoirs of Jane Austen" in 1869. He died September 8, 1874.

Martha Lloyd

Martha Lloyd (1765-1843) was a close friend of Jane Austen. She became Frank Austen's second wife when she married him in 1828, but she died childless.



Thomas-Langlois Lefroy

Thomas-Langlois Lefroy lived from 1776 until 1869. He is the "Irish friend" that Jane refers to as "Tom". He was educated in London at the expense of his great-uncle, who disapproved of the match between Tom and Jane. Jane was very much in love with Tom Lefroy. He practiced law in Dublin and married Mary Paul in 1799.

Benjamin Lefroy

Benjamin Lefroy was born on May 13, 1791. He married Anna Austen on November 8, 1814, and they had seven children. They rented part of a farmhouse named Wyards from November 1814 to August 1815. He became rector of Ashe in 1823. Ben died August 27, 1829.

Anne Sharp

Anne Sharp was Fanny Knight's governess from January 1804 until January 1806. She was Jane Austen's friend and visited Chawton in June 1815 and again in August and September of 1820. She rated "Mansfield Park" as excellent but preferred "Pride and Prejudice", ranking "Emma" somewhere in between.

John Murray

John Murray lived from 1778 until 1843. He was a very popular London publisher. He published "Emma", "Northanger Abbey" and "Persuasion". He also published the second edition of "Mansfield Park".

James-Stanier Clarke

James-Stanier Clarke lived from 1767 until October 4, 1834. He was an author, a biographer and a naval chaplain. He became the Domestic Chaplain and Librarian to the Prince of Wales in 1805, which is how he met Jane Austen. He facilitated Jane's dedication of "Emma" to the prince regent. He tried and failed to interest Jane Austen in writing romantic novels.

Countess of Morley

The Countess of Morley lived from 1782 until 1857. She was known for her literary interests and many people initially believed that she was the authoress of "Pride and Prejudice" and "Sense and Sensibility". It is unsure how she met Jane Austen, but likely that she met her through Henry. She ranked "Emma" below Jane's earlier books.



Alexander d'Arblay

Alexander d'Arblay lived from 1794 until 1837. He lived at Great Bookham and was in constant contact with the Cookes. It is unknown if he actually met Jane Austen, but he is important because he is the son of Frances Burney who was a major influence on Jane Austen as a writer.

Sir Walter Scott

Sir Walter Scott lived from 1771 until 1832. He was a poet and novelist whom Jane Austen frequently mentions. He critiqued "Emma" in the Quarterly Review.

Robert Southey

Robert Southey was a writer and poet who lived from 1774 until 1843, and he was Poet Laureate in 1813. He regretted not meeting Jane Austen.



Objects/Places

Steventon

Steventon, Hants is the village where the Austens lived and where Rev. George Austen was the rectory.

Kintbury

Kintbury, Berks is the Fowles' home which is situated across the river from Rev. John Craven.

Rowling

Rowling, Kent is the Bridges' small country home.

Dartford

Dartford, Kent is a marketing and manufacturing town which Jane and Cassandra Austen passed through several times on their journeys.

Godmersham Park

Godmersham Park, Kent is Edward Austen-Knight's main estate that he inherited from his distant cousin.

Bath

Bath, Somerset is a fashionable inland spa city that many people visited to improve their health. The Austens retired and moved to Bath, where they lived from 1801-1806. Rev. George Austen died in Bath.

Manydown

Manydown, Hants is the Bigg-Withers' home where Jane and Cassandra Austen visited frequently.



Ibthorpe

Ibthorpe, Hants is the Lloyds' home. Martha Lloyd remained living with her mother in Ibthorpe after her marriage to Frank Austen.

Goodnestone

Goodnestone, Kent is the Bridges' home and the Austen sisters spent much time visiting there.

Portsmouth

Portsmouth, Hant is the naval dockyard from which Frank and Charles Austen sailed in and out.

Southampton

Southampton, Hants is an ancient town and seaport where the Austens' cousins lived.

Chawton

Chawton, Hants is one of Edward Austen-Knight's estates that he inherited from his distant cousin. After his father's death, he spent a lot of his time in Chawton and provided his mother and sisters a cottage in the village.

London

London is the city where the Austens made frequent travels to pay visits to friends and family, as well as to buy clothing and supplies.

Hendon

Hendon, Middlesex is the village where Anne and Ben Lefroy lived for few months after their marriage.

Wyards

Wyards is a farmhouse one mile north of Chawton; Anna and Ben Lefroy rented half of Wyards after their marriage.



Brighton

Brighton, Sussex is a fashionable seaside town where the Austens vacationed.

Winchester

Winchester, Hants is where Jane Austen died. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Deane

Deane, Hants is the village where Rev. George Austen was rector until his death in 1805.



Themes

Writing

Writing is a major theme throughout Jane Austen's letters. There is the obvious preoccupation with her own writing. In one of the first letters in the collection, she tells Cassandra that she "writes only for fame". Her later letters recount her preparations for the publication of her works. She describes her attempts to publish and the methods she takes to get her work published. Initially she publishes anonymously because of the impropriety of a woman writing novels during this time period. Interestingly, she also alludes to Frances Burney's novels quite often. Frances Burney is a female novelist who began writing several decades before Jane Austen and also published anonymously at first. She faced much more controversy than Jane Austen but was a major influence in the younger woman's career.

Jane Austen describes her publishing "Sense and Sensibility", "Pride and Prejudice", "Mansfield Park", and "Emma". There is also a short series of letters concerning her submission of "Susan" to the publisher Crosby who bought the manuscript but did not publish it after six years. Jane requests the return of her manuscript. She details her relationship with the famous London publisher John Murray, who published "Emma" and the second editions of her other three novels. Jane details her apprehensions in her writing and the public's reception, claiming she fears that "Emma" will not be liked as well as her first three novels. She also worries that she will not be able to stand it if people do not like Elizabeth Bennett from "Pride and Prejudice".

As her nieces and nephews grow older, the theme of writing takes a turn to include encouraging others to write as well. Jane encourages Caroline Austen, Frances Knight and Anna Lefroy (nee Austen) in their attempts at writing. Her nieces often send her manuscripts that she edits and reviews for them. She discusses with James-Edward Austen-Leigh, her nephew, his writing. She praises her brother, James', verse and encourages her brothers, Henry and Charles to write. Her letters are also filled with her criticism of other writers of the time, such as Robert Southey, Sir Walter Scott and Frances Burney.

Travel

Travel is a major theme in this collection of letters by Jane Austen. She and her family travel among one another's homes frequently and this vocation is the source of many of her letters. Most of her letters are directed to her sister, Cassandra, and since they lived together their entire lives, these letters would not exist if it were not for the Austens' habit of traveling frequently.

Jane and Cassandra each travel to visit their brothers and their families, as well as several other close relatives, such as the Knights and the Cookes. They frequently visit



their friends as well. Another aspect of the travel that prevails in this collection of letters is the visits that Jane and Cassandra Austen receive. The same people that they visit frequently visit them. Jane's letters constantly mention one or more of her nieces and nephews visiting for an extended period. It is also very common for her to express her excitement concerning the anticipated arrival of one of her brothers.

The most common places that Jane and Cassandra Austen visited were Godmersham Estate, Chawton, Steventon, London, Goodnestone and Deane. Their most frequent visitors were Edward, James, Charles, Fanny, Anna, Cassy, Caroline, Harriett, Mary and Martha. The descriptions of their journeys and accounts of their acquaintances' current conditions pervade these letters.

Family

Family is the overall prevailing theme in this collection. The vast majority of these letters are written to and from members of the Austen family. The letters not only record many details about Jane Austen's life, habits and opinions, but also provide a history of the family during this time period.

Jane Austen's love for her family is evident in her descriptions of her siblings as well as her happiness in their successes and sorrow in their failures. She records the births of her nieces and nephews and the deaths that occur in their immediate and extended family. These letters show who lived where, when and with whom. They also record the illnesses, marriages and purchases that were of any account.

Besides being a history, the amount of letters that Jane writes to members of her family show that the Austens were a tight knit clan that cared what was going on in one another's lives. She frequently informs Cassandra of Frank and Charles' promotions. Jane writes about the daily occurrences that her sister and brothers miss while they are away. This attention to every detail, including gardening and furniture, shows that these factors were important to them all because of their love for one another. The Austens' unity is further shown when Edward provides a cottage for his mother and sisters to live in Chawton after his father's death.



Style

Perspective

Jane Austen writes letters to her family and close friends while she is not with them. In the case of her sister, her letters denote that one of them is visiting since neither of them married, and they lived together. She often writes to her brothers to inform them of what was going on at home with her mother, Cassandra and herself, as well as to gain information about the well-being of their respective families. Most of her letters are social in nature and are meant to convey and gather information between her location and her recipient's location.

Most of Jane Austen's letters concentrate on facts, such as the weather, where she is staying and what she has done; however, she also has a tendency to comment on people. She frequently praises or condemns the people that she meets to Cassandra, presumably giving her very honest opinion. Balls and parties attended are often described in great detail to her sister as well. Financial matters are discussed as well as clothing styles and purchases. Jane Austen writes several letters to convey news of great importance to her family members, such as the death of her father and her brother's promotion.

Because Jane Austen is a professional novelist, her letters often mention her handwriting compared to others' handwriting, particularly Cassandra's. She also often requests feedback on the style of her writing and praises or condemns her correspondents for their styles. Her letters often mention the books she has read and the plays she has seen as a means of vindicating her education and her experience. These are needed to justify her profession as a novelist.

Tone

The tone of the book is subjective. Published in the epistolary form, the collection of letters conveys the personal correspondence between Jane Austen and others, primarily her siblings. The content of the letters is very subjective in terms of providing her opinion of people, places and occurrences to those in her inner circle. The letters also provide evidence of her lifestyle as regards her attendance of plays and her references to fashion of the time. Most of the letters are written by Jane Austen, limiting the access to others' opinions, except as mentioned in Jane's writing.

The tone of the book imposes an intimacy on the reader as it is hard to read the personal thoughts of someone without such a feeling. The epistolary form allows the reader to absorb Jane Austen's exact words and thoughts, including her digressions. This results in the sensation that the letters are written to the reader and that Jane Austen is a close friend.



The tone of the letters changes throughout the book, depending on the subject being written about. In letters concerning deaths, Austen is appropriately lamenting whereas she expresses joy concerning the publication of her books. Several of the letters simply convey information about parties that she attends with her commentary on the people, fashion and entertainment, producing a tone of levity.

Structure

This epistolary book collects Jane Austen's letters, mostly outgoing, from January 1796 to May 1817, in chronological order. They are numbered from 1 to 161. It also includes three letters written by her sister and best friend, Cassandra Austen, in July 1817, after Jane's death. The structure is simply a compilation of these letters which creates a personalized atmosphere surrounding Jane Austen.

The format is effective in conveying Jane Austen's personality to the reader as well as creating an atmosphere that encourages the reader to think of Jane Austen as a person, not just an author. The inclusion of letters that are preoccupied with gossip and fashion prove Austen's fallibility and lessen the austerity through which most great writers are viewed. Her affection for her family and her sarcasm are prevalent throughout her letters, creating a written portrait of the writer.

At times, the structure is interrupted by the admission of a letter to Jane Austen from another. This can sometimes be confusing because these letters are usually suffixed with a letter of the alphabet, with her response being numbered the same. This becomes confusing as often letters are missing in between and so may be numbered 1A and 1D. It is also confusing at times because months of letters are missing. The reader learns great detail about two or three days followed by a lack of information about a much longer period of time.

The overall structure of the book is cohesive enough to convey the desired information about Jane Austen as a person and as a writer. Her affection for others is obvious and her observations often comical. She admits her faults, including vanity which leads her to also praise her attributes.



Quotes

"Mrs. Hall of Sherbourn was brought to bed yesterday of a dead child, some weeks before she was expected, owing to a fright—I suppose she happened unaware to look at her husband." Letter 10 to Cassandra Austen, dated Saturday 27-Sunday 28 October 1798, p. 17

"People get so horridly poor and economical in this part of the World, that I have no patience with them.—Kent is the only place for happiness, Everybody is rich there; —I must do similar justice however to the Windsor neighbourhood." Letter 14 to Cassandra Austen, dated Tuesday 18-Wednesday 19 December 1798, p. 28

"Miss Debary, Susan and Sally all in black, but without any Statues, made their appearance, and I was as civil to them as their bad breath would allow me." — Letter 27 to Cassandra Austen, dated Thursday 20-Friday 21 November 1800, p. 61

"I cannot anyhow continue to find people agreeable; — I respect Mrs. Chamberlayne for doing her hair well, but cannot feel a more tender sentiment." Letter 36 to Cassandra Austen, dated Tuesday 12-Wednesday 13 May 1801, p. 86

"Heavy as is the blow, we can already feel that a thousand comforts remain to us to soften it. Next to that of the consciousness of his worth and constant preparation for another World, is the remembrance of his having suffered, comparatively speaking, nothing." Letter 40 to Francis Austen, dated Monday 21 January 1805, p. 96

"The papers announce the Marriage of the Rev. Edward Bather, Rector of some place in Shropshire to a Miss Emma Halifax—a Wretch!—he does not deserve an Emma Halifax's maid Betty." Letter 44 to Cassandra Austen, dated Sunday 21-Tuesday 23 April 1805, pp. 104-105

"I am sorry I have affronted you on the subject of Mr. Moore, but I do not mean ever to like him; and as to pitying a young woman merely because she cannot live in two places at the same time, and at once enjoy the comforts of being married and single, I shall not attempt it, even for Harriot." Letter 50 to Cassandra Austen, dated Sunday 8-Monday 9 February 1807, p. 119

"We have at last heard something of Mr. Austen's Will. It is believed at Tunbridge that he has left everything after the death of his widow to Mr. M. Austen's third son John; and as the said John was the only one of the Family who attended the Funeral, it seems likely to be true.—Such ill-gotten Wealth can never prosper!" Letter 51 to Cassandra Austen, dated Friday 20-Sunday 22 February 1807, p. 122

"We have tried to get Self-controul, but in vain.— I should like to know what her estimate is—but am always half afraid of finding a clever novel too clever—and of finding my own story and my own people all forestalled." Letter 72 to Cassandra Austen, dated Tuesday 20 April 1811, p. 186



"Mr. Digweed has used us basely. Handsome is as Handsome does; he is therefore a very ill-looking Man." Letter 78 to Cassandra Austen, dated Sunday 24 January 1813, p. 198

"I have got my own darling Child from London...I must confess that I think [Elizabeth Bennett] as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like her at least, I do not know." Letter 79 to Cassandra Austen, dated Friday 29 January 1813, p. 201

"I am now alone in the Library, Mistress of all I survey—at least I may say so and repeat the whole poem if I like it, without offence to anybody." Letter 89 to Cassandra Austen, dated Thursday 23-Friday 24 September 1813, p. 228

"If Cassandra has filled my Bed with fleas, I am sure they must bite herself." Letter 99 to Cassandra Austen, dated Wednesday 9 March 1814, p. 262

"You like him well enough to marry, but not well enough to wait." Letter 114 to Fanny Knight, dated Wednesday 30 November 1814, p. 286

"The latter writes me word that Miss Blachford is married, but I have never seen it in the Papers. And one may as well be single if the Wedding is not to be in print." Letter 118 to Anna Lefroy, dated late February-early March 1815, p. 289

"I have been listening to dreadful Insanity.— It is Mr. Haden's firm belief that a person not musical is fit for every sort of Wickedness. —I ventured to assert a little on the other side, but wished the cause in abler hands." Letter 127 to Cassandra Austen, dated Friday 24 November 1815, p. 300

"I must make use of this opportunity to think you dear Sir, for the very high praise you bestow on my other Novels.—I am too vain to wish to convince you that you have praised them beyond their Merit." Letter 132D to James Stanier Clarke, dated Monday 11 December 1815, p. 306

"A Classical Education, or at any rate, a very extensive acquaintance with English Literature, Ancient and Modern, appears to me quite Indispensable for the person who would do any justice to your Clergyman — And I think I may boast myself to be, with all possible Vanity, the most unlearned, and uninformed Female who ever dared to be an Authoress." Letter 132D to James Stanier Clarke, dated Monday 11 December 1815, p. 306

"[Edward] is getting very near our own age, for we do not grow older of course." Letter 143 to Cassandra Austen, dated Monday 15 July 1816, p. 318

"The Piano Forte often talks of you; — in various keys, tunes and expressions I allow—but be it Lesson or Country dance, Sonata or Waltz, You are really its' constant Theme. I wish you could come and see us, as easily as Edward can." Letter 149 to Caroline Austen, dated Thursday 23 January 1817, p. 326



"Pretty Well, for a Lady irrecoverably attached to one Person!— Sweet Fanny, believe no such thing of yourself.— Spread no such malicious slander upon your Understanding, within the Precincts of your Imagination.— Do not speak ill of your Sense, merely for the Gratification of your Fancy.— Yours is Sense, which deserves more honorable Treatment. — You are not in love with him. You never have been in love with him." Letter 151 to Fanny Knight, dated Thursday 20-Friday 21 February 1817, p. 330-331

"You will not like [my new publication], so you need not be impatient. You may perhaps like the Heroine, as she is almost too good for me." Letter 155 to Fanny Knight, dated Sunday 23-Tuesday 25 March 1817, p. 335

"In short, if I live to be an old Woman I must expect to wish I had died now, blessed in the tenderness of such a Family, and before I had survived either them or their affection." Letter 159 to Anne Sharp, dated Thursday 22 May 1817, p. 341

"I have lost a treasure, such a Sister, such a friend as never can have been surpassed, — She was the sun of my life, the gilder of every pleasure, the soother of every sorrow, I had not a thought concealed from her, and it is as if I had lost a part of myself." CEA 1 to Fanny Knight, dated Sunday 20 July 1817, p. 344

"What I have lost, no one but myself can know, you are not ignorant of her merits, but who can judge how I estimated them?" CEA 2 to Anne Sharp, dated Monday 28 July 1817, p. 346

"Never was human being more sincerely mourned by those who attended her remains than was this dear creature. May the sorrow with which she is parted from on earth be a prognostic of the joy with which she is hailed in Heaven!" CEA 3 to Fanny Knight, dated Tuesday 29, July 1817, p. 347



Topics for Discussion

How do you think that the lack of letters to Jane Austen helps or hurts the collection?

Why does Jane Austen put such an emphasis on her reading and theatre attendance?

What is the significance of Jane Austen's excitement concerning the approbation of her novels, specifically by her brothers?

Given the social standards of the time, how would it be viewed that Jane Austen was an unmarried novelist?

What characteristics does Jane Austen seem to value in women? In men?

Why do Jane and Cassandra Austen travel so much?

What is your opinion of Jane Austen's learning and intellect?

What increases your opinion of Jane Austen as a novelist?

What detracts from your opinion of Jane Austen as a novelist?