

# So Fine a Brush



## **Welcome to So Fine a Brush!**

Play out the life of Jane Austen, interwoven with scenes from her novels.

As you play, your group will create a unique portrait of Jane's life and works. There is much known about Jane's life, but also key gaps leave questions we will never know the answer to.

By choosing interpretations of the people in her life and informing the roles in her novels with the reflection of these family members and friends, we will make "our Jane" come alive.

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# How to Play **So Fine a Brush**

## Roles

17 players are assigned the roles of Jane Austen and 16 characters (two pairs of lovers each) from 4 of her novels: *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Pride & Prejudice*, *Sense & Sensibility*. Each role is numbered: From 1 (Jane Austen), to 17 (Colonel Brandon from *Sense & Sensibility*).

**Once you know your main character, look to the section of these rules covering the novel they are in (or find the information about Jane herself!). There is a summary of the novel, and information about the character and people of importance to them.**

Each novel character is paired with one from Jane Austen's life. You will see that character listed after the Novel character assigned to you. The role from Jane's life has two interpretations. Read them over and choose one to guide you in play.

The player of Jane will take supporting roles in the novels as those play out, allowing them to witness, give input and interact with the stories.

## Scenes

The game will get played out as a series of scenes. Four GMs shepherd prepared events from Jane's life and the novels, using meta-techniques like internal monologue to play out events from history or the fictional stories. The scenes from the novels are played out at the same time. Jane's player will participate in each of the novels throughout the game, adding her perspective and playing supporting roles.

In Jane scenes, players receive a scene briefing with the character number on a slip of paper. In Novels, the players read summaries of events of the novel out loud, leading to scenes to be played.

In between, there will be two other types of scenes: Dances, where major plot and time for flirtations and social maneuvering. And Hunt/Parlor scenes, where the characters mix in a low key way, and prepare for the future.

At the end, there is one big wedding reception, bringing all these characters together.

## Meta-techniques

These special rules let us guide play and hear more from the characters.

Internal Monologue – we pause play to hear the inner thoughts of the character

Bird-in-ear – a GM or other player gives guidance of motivation or action to take

### *Outline of the Game:*

Workshops – introducing, rules, period knowledge, meta-techniques, dance and letting players inhabit their roles.

Janes Life – Scenes from the Life of Jane Austen, from her childhood to her death.

Novel Scenes – Major events from four of her novels, focusing on two main romantic pairs in each.

Hunting/Parlor Mixing – Characters from the novels and Jane, mix and prepare for the Dances and Wedding. The men walk out for a hunt, the women make trousseau gifts in the parlor. These mixing scenes occur after Novel scene sequences and last until all groups have been able to take part.

Dances – A simple, optional English Country dance, a time to communicate beyond words, and to have major events unfold. There will be two dances during the game, and one at the Wedding.

The Weddings – all the character wed (or elope), with each other and Jane as the guests. Jane has the opportunity to visit with and advise each couple. The final scene of the game.

End and Debrief – share your thoughts and experiences.

### On Dance in the Game

In a couple of scenes, the players may participate in an adaptation of an English Country Dance. This activity was central to many of the character's lives and was a social hub for provincial as well as city life.

Dance is presented as an optional activity, with seated and stationary versions. No prior knowledge or experience is needed. The dance will be taught by GMs who are seasoned dance organizers and a caller will provide the steps needed through-out.

## Life of Jane Austen



Jane Austen as painted by her sister Cassandra.

**Jane Austen** is a beloved and celebrated author who lived during the late 18<sup>th</sup> and early 19<sup>th</sup> century in England. Six of her novels (four published during her short lifetime, two immediately posthumously) have gained recognition as among the finest works in the English language. Jane was the daughter of a clergyman *George Austen* who doted on her, and her mother *Cassandra Leigh Austen*, who though not wealthy herself had well-to-do relations. Some of whom adopted her son Edward who became heir and took the family name of Knight. Cassandra had eight children including the second youngest, Jane. She and her husband made a loving, educated family on a modest genteel income. One that encouraged Jane's literary gifts.

Jane Austen and her sister *Cassandra Austen* were close, both suffering in love: Cassandra's fiancé Thomas Fowle, died before they could marry; Jane loved an Irish barrister in training *Thomas LeFroy*, whose family him separated from her before they could become engaged. Jane was engaged for just one day to *Harris Biggs-Wither*, after which she changed her mind and refused the suit of the awkward young man.

Jane began writing at a young age and decided to become a published author in an era where this was difficult for a woman, even a landed, white woman of the gentry. Her family's wealth was entailed (required to be let to a male heir) so that when her father died she and her female relatives were supported by her brothers. Her brothers had income from serving in the military or church, or through adoption by relatives for *Edward (Austen) Knight* or marriage into wealth as in the case of *Henry Austen*. Jane's most productive period were the years from 1809 through 1816, supported by brother Edward who leased Chawton Cottage to Jane and her female relatives and lifelong friend *Martha Lloyd*. Sadly, this period immediately preceded her death due to illness in 1817 at the age of 41. Jane's mother Cassandra Leigh Austen survived her youngest daughter by ten years.

Jane saw four of her novels published during her lifetime by publisher *Thomas Egerton* and others, and two were published shortly after her death. She wrote anonymously and even hid her writing from her family for many years. Austen saw income and fame during her life, but did not become rich from her works or see their full value. With the exception of a period following her death, her novels have been continually in print for two centuries. She numbers among the most beloved authors in the English language.

## People in Jane Austen's Life:

**Father** - George Austen a clergyman who supported his daughters' education, made his living through his parish and tutoring

**Mother** - Cassandra (Leigh) Austen – daughter of a rector at Oxford, member of a wealthy family, happily married to George Austen, Jane's father

**Brother** (oldest) - James Austen – charming, a talented writer of drama and poetry but failed with his literary magazine *The Loiterer* so never published, known in the family as the best Austen writer even after Jane was published, when their father died James became rector at Steventon. His wife Mary was not diplomatic in urging the Austen women to leave

**Brother 2** - George Austen – Jane's disabled younger brother, suffered from seizures and was likely deaf and mute, was fostered out for care

**Brother 3** – Edward Austen Knight – close to Cassandra, adopted by wealthy family members who made him their heir, provided Chawton Cottage as dwelling for Jane and extensive libraries, where she had her most productive years

**Brother 4** - Henry Austen – close to Jane, married their cousin the widow Eliza and through her wealth made his living through the military, founding a bank (which failed), and clergyman

**Sister** - Cassandra – beloved friend and confidante of Jane, her beloved fiancé died before their marriage and Cassandra never married, she destroyed some of her correspondence with Jane, likely on Jane's request

**Brother 5** - Frances Austen – joined British Royal Navy at the age of 12 and had a distinguished career, knighted and achieving an Admiralty, married close friends of the Austen sisters, Mary Lloyd, then sister Martha Lloyd, Lady Austen.

**Brother 6** - Charles Austen – youngest son of the Austen family, close to Jane and Cassandra, Naval officer stationed in West Indies for many years, married and brought home wife from there

**Friend** – Martha Lloyd (Lady Austen) – a childhood friend and confidante of Jane Austen, a read her childhood works, invaluable to Jane and her family after Mr Austen's death and eventually married Sir Frank Austen, becoming Lady Austen in her 60s

**Friend** Madame Anne Lefroy – wealthy, well-educated, charitable older friend of Jane, wife of a Reverend, one of closest neighbors of the Austen family in Hampshire, aunt of Thomas Lefroy, worked hard to benefit the poor in the neighborhood, including vaccinating hundreds of people in husband's parish against smallpox

**Cousin** Eliza de Feuillide (nee Hancock) – the daughter of George Austen Sr, born in India and married to a French Count who was killed in the French Revolution, then married Henry Austen, close to Jane

**Mentor** – Mrs Ann Cawley – brought Cassandra and Jane to Oxford to be educated, during which they contracted Typhus and nearly died

**Publisher** – Thomas Egerton – published *Sense and Sensibility* on commission and *Pride and Prejudice* by purchasing the copyrights

**Love Interest 1** - Thomas Lefroy Langois - Jane's beau for a time, later became Lord Chief Justice in Ireland

**Love Interest 2** - Harris Biggs Wither – wealthy but awkward friend of the family who unsuccessfully proposed to Jane

**Niece** – Fanny Catherine Austen – one of Jane's favorites, daughter of Edward Austen Knight, at 16 became close to Jane when Fanny's mother died, married a baronet

**Colleague** Sir Walter Scott – famous Scottish author who was an admirer of Jane Austen's work during her lifetime

**Colleague** Librarian of Prince Regent, James Stanier Clarke – correspondent with Austen, gave much advice on novel writing which Jane collected into the satirical *Plan for a Novel*

## Additional Background

**Jane's Time:** England was in transition. Enclosure Acts and improved farming techniques contributed to the agricultural revolution which increased the health and population of England's people. The larger landholdings caused by breaking up commonly held land through "enclosure," put a patriotic focus on farming and made possible large wealthy landowners like Mr. Darcy. This also created cross-class bonds so that a tenant farmer like Robert Martin could be recognized as an fellow by his landlord Mr. Knightley. However, the enclosures impoverished many small farmers and sent them to the cities, causing suffering and providing the exploitable labor that the industrial revolution depended on.

It was a time of warfare. Jane Austen was born in 1775 at the beginning of the American Revolutionary War, which involved not only England and the colonies, but also American Indian tribes, France and Spain. In England, tolerance of Catholics was enforced by law, but popular protests and riots brought violence in the 1780s during the course of the war. The American War of Independence was ended in 1783, in the same year Jane and her sister returned from studies in Oxford after nearly dying from a case of Typhus.

Austen lived in a time of massive political change. She wrote her first novel, *Love and Freindship*, (a satire of contemporary novels of love and sensibility) in the same year that the US Constitution was adopted, and the French Revolution began with the storming of the Bastille and the Declaration of Universal Human Rights. The War of 1812 broke out between the newly founded US, England and its American Indian allies, in the year between when *Sense and Sensibility* and *Pride and Prejudice* were published, 1812. This war ended in 1815, the year Jane was invited to visit the librarian of the Prince Regent. The librarian encouraged Emma to dedicate her forthcoming novel *Emma* to the Prince, a profligate of whom she did not approve. Austen did so, perhaps getting the last laugh by poking fun silently at the ruler by using the term "His Royal Highness", not once but three times in the brief dedication.

It was a time of slavery and the rise of abolition. Slavery on English and Welsh soil was outlawed in 1772, but enslaving Africans and forceably removing them to the Indies and North America was the source of great wealth for English businessmen. Abuses such as the drowning of enslaved captives on the ship *Zong* to claim insurance fueled the English abolition movement. This culminated in slave trading being banned in 1807. The English Navy enforced this during the years when Jane was writing her mature novels. However, enslaved captives were not freed in English colonies until 1833 and compensation was given to slave holders for their loss but not to the freed people themselves.

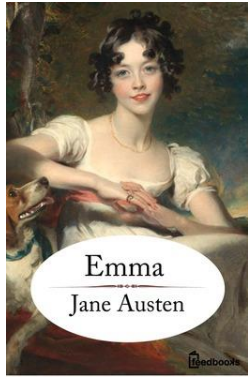
**Reception of Austen's work:** Jane and her family fought to publish her works. She saw income from them, some recognition in her lifetime, but also realized very little compared to the profit seen by publishers or by countless publishers, film companies and television networks over the centuries since her death exactly three hundred and one years ago this March. The first manuscript submitted for publication was *First Impressions* (later to be published as *Pride and Prejudice*), sent by her father to Thomas Cadell. Cadell, an established publishing house which had published women authors, seeing a growing market in "women's fiction" as industrialization raised living standards and women as a whole became more literate and affluent (DeWees, 2016). However, Cadell turned down this unknown work by an anonymous "Daughter of a Parson" summarily. Society held women authors to scrupulous standards, condemning those whose works might be risqué or rewarding immoral behavior (DeWees, 2016). Many published anonymously which was a burden to the publishing house. And the author's story showing

that they were writing for appropriately dire financial, morally uplifting, or peripheral reasons, had to be published in the volume itself, adding to the expense.

Jane's manuscript *Susan* (later known as *Northanger Abbey*, and distinct from Austen's epistolary novel *Freinds and Lovers* [sic] or *Lady Susan* with its conniving eponymous heroine) was purchased by publisher Crosby & Company of London, but never published by them. Jane's brother Henry eventually purchased the rights back. Jane's first published novel was *Sense and Sensibility*, published in 1811 when Jane was 35. The work was published on commission, with the publisher taking a percentage and Jane retaining the copyrights. Her family, primarily Henry Austen, paid the printing costs in order to allow it to circulate, and so took the main financial risk. The book was well received and eventually turned a profit of £140. Publisher *Thomas Egerton* paid the family £110 for the publishing rights of *Pride and Prejudice*. This relieved the risk for the family, but denied them the right to get royalties. *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814, selling out almost immediately despite critical failure. *Emma* (another hit with positive reviews--one thought to be by Walter Scott, popular Scottish author of *Ivanhoe* and other novels of adventure) and a second printing of *Mansfield Park* were published, again at the family's expense, in 1816. *Mansfield Park* sold poorly this time, balanced out by *Emma* which did very well. Austen's remaining well known novels, *Northanger Abbey* and *Persuasion* were published after her death. *Northanger Abbey*, with its satire of gothic romantic novels such as the *Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliffe, was the first of Jane's novels to be sold, but one of the last to be published. Jane Austen is estimated to have made approximately £700 in her lifetime, but her books, once revived in 1832 by Richard Bentley have never been out of print.

# The novel *Emma*

*“Seldom, very seldom, does complete truth belong to any human disclosure; seldom can it happen that something is not a little disguised or a little mistaken.”*



**Summary:** A young woman of substance, **Emma Woodhouse**, takes it in her mind to match-make. She meddles in the life of a young friend of unknown parentage much to the dismay of her long time family friend, **Mr. Knightley**. He encourages her to befriend the talented but orphaned **Jane Fairfax**. However, Emma’s heart becomes tangled with **Frank Churchill** who holds a secret from Emma and her community that involves Jane Fairfax.

Published in 1816. Last novel published during Jane Austen’s lifetime.

## 2 Emma Woodhouse

The younger child of the wealthy widower, Mr. Woodhouse, Emma is the apple of her father’s eye and the pre-eminent lady of her neighborhood. She is charming, lovely and intelligent, if minimally accomplished in art or music, unlike the brilliantly accomplished but poor **Jane Fairfax** whom she sees as a bit of a rival. Emma has confidants in her friend and former governess Mrs. Weston who has just married the father of **Frank Churchill**, a boy who was adopted by a wealthy relative) and Emma’s neighbor the gallant and wealthy **Mr. Knightley**. Mr. Knightley is a devoted friend to Emma and her well-meaning but self-absorbed, hypochondriacal and marriage-phobic father. Mr. Knightley brings out the best in both of them. Emma sees fit to play matchmaker, hoping to raise her new friend Miss Harriet Smith, a young woman of unknown origin who is being educated nearby, to a good station in life through marriage.

Emma believes she will not marry because she does not need to, and because she is needed to take care of her father. But she would have the highest standards if she did choose a mate.

### Role in Austen’s life:

**Madame Anne Lefroy**, Jane’s older, wealthy friend.

This close neighbor of the Austens was a confidant and mentor for Jane. Responsible for charitable works including single handedly taking on the task of vaccinating all the children in the neighborhood, Madame Anne Lefroy was an elegant, educated wife of a Reverend. However, she was also the aunt of Jane’s perhaps love-of-her-life, Thomas Langois Lefroy. Thomas was separated from Jane by his family. What role did she take in those events?

Did Madame Anne Lefroy.....? (choose one)

*Introduce Jane and Thomas and encourage his suit*

OR

*Tell the family how close Thomas was coming to an unadvantageous match*



### 3 Jane Fairfax

A beautiful and dignified young woman of great education and personal accomplishment, but of no fortune. Educated away from her home neighborhood of Highbury. She is one of the prides of the neighborhood and is often boasted of by Miss Bates, her aging aunt now living in straightened circumstances. Jane is reserved and has no confidants. She does not receive attention from the wealthy **Emma Woodhouse** though they are similar in age and station, and Emma's family does assist Jane's aunt. The pre-eminent gentleman of the community, **Mr. Knightley** admires Jane's talent and poise, and has always been kind to her. Her situation is precarious, with no realistic prospects beyond teaching or marrying well. Jane returns to the neighborhood with a secret. She and **Frank Churchill** have become acquainted and secretly engaged. He follows her and showers her with lavish presents and attention. But the talk of the town is that he is to wed Emma Woodhouse.

Jane Fairfax has no thought of being able to marry except at the whim of others. Her own security and that of her family depends on making a living through work, or through a reasonable marriage. For Jane, to hope for love is to court heartbreak.

#### Role in Austen's life:

**Walter Scott**, (later Sir Walter Scott) Jane's well known, professional colleague and admirer. This attorney, poet and popular Scottish author of novels was a contemporary of Jane Austen. His novels such as *Ivanhoe* and *Rob Roy*, were inspired by folk tales from his home countryside in Scotland. Although seen as inferior to his poetry (for which he was offered but declined to be Poet Laureate for England) his novels slowly gained acceptance during his lifetime. Scott's novels, like Austen's, helped establish a genre (in his case it was the historical adventure novel) and continue to be adapted today. Scott is credited by many as the author of a very positive anonymous review of Austen's final novel *Emma*, which helped its success as a publication. In this play of the events, how did Scott see Austen?

Did Sir Walter Scott.....? (choose one)

*See Jane Austen for the culmination of what women can attain as authors with a unique contribution*  
OR

*See her as trapped by the societal constraints on what women could write, and urge her to go beyond*

## 4 Mr. (George) Knightley

A wealthy, educated, morally upright man who is the leading man of the Highbury neighborhood. Mr Knightley is a devoted friend to the attractive and charming **Emma Woodhouse** and her well-meaning but self-absorbed, hypochondriacal and marriage-phobic father, and seeks to bring out the best in both of them. He thinks the world of Emma, but believes she could do better by exerting herself to accomplish more. He urges her to take an interest in the poor but brilliant **Miss Jane Fairfax** and to do more for others in need in their community. He is friends with the farmer Robert Martin and encourages him in his suit of Emma's friend, Miss Harriet Smith, a young woman of unknown parentage who is being educated nearby. He is cordial with **Frank Churchill**, who was adopted by a wealthy relative, but feels that Frank has not done right by his father Mr. Weston.

Mr. Knightley hopes to marry. He can afford to marry as he will and expects to choose for love.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Harris Biggs Wither**, a childhood friend and wealthy admirer of Jane, who had a short-lived engagement with her. Harris was several years younger than Jane. He was the oldest son of a family in the Austen's neighborhood. He had a reticent, awkward personality. His sisters and Jane were dear friends with each other throughout Jane's life, and when he came visited them in Bath on a break from university, she accepted his suit. Marriage to him would have relieved their money troubles and allowed Jane to return to her beloved Steventon region. However, after a day, she turned him down instead.

Did Harris Biggs Wither.....? (choose one)

*Love Jane ardently and have his heart broken by her loss*

OR

*See his offer to Jane as a way to rescue her from the pressure on her family, allowing her to write*

## 5 Frank Churchill

The child of a member of the wealthy and beautiful **Emma Woodhouse's** community, Frank was raised by a wealthy relative on the condition that he take that family's name. He is a pride of the neighborhood, in line to inherit a good fortune, but has never visited his father, Mr Weston, who has wed Emma's close friend and former governess, Mrs Weston. Charming, attractive and impulsive, he returns to the neighborhood with a secret: he is engaged to the beautiful and talented, but poor, **Jane Fairfax**. Her station in life means his guardian may not approve. He flirts with Emma as a cover while raining gifts and attention on Jane. He knows his birth-father loves him and indulges him, but may feel judged by the influential **Mr. Knightley**, one of the leading figures of his home neighborhood.

Frank is eager to wed, and aims to do as he pleases, marrying for love and with great admiration, but he depends on the favor of his wealthy relatives. He flirts with danger in his romance.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Edward Austen Knight**, Jane's third eldest brother. Edward was adopted by a wealthy relative, spending most of his childhood away from the Austen family. However, in their later years, it was Edward to provide Chawton Cottage, Jane's home with her female relatives after her father died. It was here that she spent her most productive years writing.

Did Edward Austen Knight.....? (choose one)

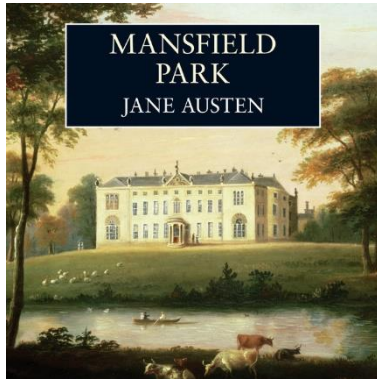
*Feel rejected by the family who allowed him to be adopted by a wealthy relative*

OR

*Value being able to protect his female relatives at this time in their lives, as a way to be close to them*

# The novel *Mansfield Park*

*"We have all a better guide in ourselves, if we would attend to it, than any other person can be."*



Summary: **Fanny Price** is the oldest child of a large family with little money. At the insistence of her abrasive aunt *Mrs. Norris*, Fanny is taken in to be raised by her wealthier, indolent aunt and strict uncle *Mrs. and Mr. Bertram*. Fanny is shy and put upon by the beautiful and somewhat spoiled **Maria Bertram**, her sister *Julia* and eldest brother *Tom*. Maria's brother **Edmund Bertram** becomes Fanny's friend and champion. During a business trip which takes Mr. Bertram away, sophisticated visitors **Henry Crawford** and his intelligent but pragmatic sister *Mary Crawford* turn the household upside down with a scheme of putting on a play. Hearts and lines are crossed as morality and obligation are debated, and happiness is sought.

## 6 Fanny Price

The oldest daughter of a large, working class family, Fanny was fostered at Mansfield Park with a wealthy aunt, Lady Bertram, and her family, the baronet Sir Thomas Bertram, children Tom, Edmund, Maria and Julia. She is invited at the urging of her widowed, pushy aunt Mrs. Norris who guilted the Bertrams into bringing Fanny there, then foists her care on them. Fanny is shy, unconfident, pious and obliging. She is welcomed to the family, but her treatment is jealously watched by her Aunt Norris to be sure she is not treated better than the Bertram children. Her closest friend and champion is **Edmund Bertram**. He befriends Fanny, watches out for her fragile health and helps encourage her education. Life at Mansfield Park is calm, orderly and comfortable, if a bit isolating emotionally except for Edmund. She sees her cousins, particularly **Maria Bertram**, being courted by wealthy men like the (somewhat foolish) Mr. Rushworth, and then fall for frivolous people like the charming visitor **Henry Crawford**. Duty and obligation drive Fanny, along with a keen sense of propriety, right and wrong.

Fanny loves her cousin Edmund with her whole heart. However, Fanny does not have any expectations with respect to marriage, knowing that her livelihood rests entirely on the good will of the Bertrams and Mrs. Norris.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Martha Lloyd**, (later Lady Austen) close life-long friend and confidant. Martha and Mary Lloyd, slightly older than Jane, lived nearby to the Austens. Jane shared her writing with Martha, who was one of the first readers of Jane's first manuscript: *Love and Freindship*, later known as *Lady Susan*. Later in life, after Mary had married Francis Austen, Jane's naval brother with a brilliant career, Martha lived with Jane and her female relatives, making a shared household. Martha became indispensable to the Austen women, sharing the household work with them, but running the kitchen other key roles. She stayed with the family even after Jane's and her own sister's death. She married Francis, who had been knighted by then, becoming Lady Austen at the end of her life.

Did Martha Lloyd.....? (choose one)

*Selflessly love and support Jane in her pursuit of her career*

OR

*Feel envy of Jane in her talents, and resent the life that had confined her to supporting others*

## 7 Maria Bertram

The oldest daughter of the wealthy family of Mansfield Park, the baronet Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram. Maria was simultaneously spoiled by her lenient mother and held to a high standard by her strict and fairly distant father. She gets along with her adventurous brother Tom, but is irritated sometimes by her high-minded and moral brother **Edmund Bertram**. Her family took in their cousin, **Fanny Price**, as a child who is a shy retiring little thing. Fanny helps take care of their indolent mother's needs, occupies overbearing Aunt Norris and generally stays out of the way. Maria is all but engaged to Mr Rushworth, a man of some means but unpolished manners who is passionate about the poorly informed renovation of his recently purchased nearby estate. The fact that this match would put her at a higher station than her sister (who is all but engaged to their cousin, a lawyer), is icing on the cake. But it pales when the two sisters meet the dashing and attractive **Henry Crawford**, a man of some means (though much less than Mr. Rushworth) and much charm who comes to stay at Mansfield Park during Maria's father's long business trip. Life at Mansfield Park was comfortable but dull until Henry Crawford came along.

Maria expects to marry well and is learning what it might mean to marry for love or passion, or not.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Mrs Ann Cawley**, an educated friend of the Austen family. She brought Jane and Cassandra to Oxford to pursue their own individual educations. During their time there, both girls caught Typhus fever and only barely survived.

Did Ann Cawley.....? (choose one)

*Regret and blame herself for the risk to the girls' lives*

OR

*Feel that the opportunity afforded them by going to Oxford was worth the risk*

## 8 Edmund Bertram

A well-educated, earnest young man of means. The oldest child and only son of the wealthy family of Mansfield Park, the baronet Sir Thomas and Lady Bertram, his older brother Tom and his younger sisters Maria and Julia. Edmund overcame being simultaneously spoiled by his lenient mother and held to a high standard by his strict and fairly distant father through effort to improve himself and the influence of tutors. He sees his sister **Maria Bertram** as somewhat selfish and sometimes lectures her on her obligations. His family took in their cousin, **Fanny Price**, as a child who is a shy retiring little thing with fragile health. Edmund took it upon himself to protect Fanny, since she is often put upon by their stringent aunt Mrs. Norris. He sees that she is given little respect, and works to support his mother and the rest of his family. He wishes to join the clergy, as a younger brother may. Edmund will be comfortable if he can find a good parish, but expects to live simply and work hard. Edmund's adventurous brother Tom brings home guests in the form of the lively and lovely Mary Crawford, her brother the charming **Henry Crawford** and an amateur actor named John Yates who encourages them to put on a play. Edmund joins in the plan, after initial misgivings. Life at Mansfield Park has been respectable and comfortable to Edmund, but begins to sparkle with new life when the Crawfords come along.

Edmund is eager to marry and expects to marry as he will. He hopes to find an intelligent, refined and good-hearted woman with which to share his life.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Francis Austen**, Jane's fifth brother, younger than her. Francis joined the Royal Navy and had a spectacular career, becoming an Admiral and commanding ships during the French Revolution, Napoleonic Wars and Mexican American War. In his later years his duties were to disrupt the slave trade which England had declared illegal. He married two friends of the family, first Mary Lloyd then after Mary's death, her sister Martha who had been a dear friend of Jane and part of her household for much of her life. He was knighted many years after Jane's death, making Mary, Lady Austen.

Did Francis Austen.....? (choose one)

*See a contradiction in the tolerance of allowing people to be enslaved in British colonies*

OR

*See his duty as enforcing the will of the Crown no matter what its will*

## 9 Henry Crawford

A wealthy, attractive and witty young man, visiting the Bertram family at the invitation of the oldest Bertram brother, Thomas. He and his accomplished and charming sister Mary Crawford, have left London after the relative they were living with took up a household with his mistress. They are generally believed to be independently wealthy and are well-received despite these connections. Henry's fortunes are based on holdings in Norfolk and are substantial. The Crawford siblings bring a friend with them, John Yates, who wishes to put on a play. In the absence of the patriarch, Sir Thomas Bertram, they soon infect the Bertrams with this passion. His sister takes a shine to the upstanding second son, **Edmund Bertram** and encourages him to do better than join the clergy. Henry is intrigued by the lovely and charming **Maria Bertram**, particularly since he can show up the boor Mr. Rushworth by flirting with his fiancé Maria. But unexpectedly, Henry comes to see the value of that shy flower, **Fanny Price**, the poor relative the family took in. Henry can see that life at Mansfield Park was luxurious but dull, and the Bertrams can use some stirring up by himself and his sister.

Henry Crawford has wealth and expects to marry as he will. He sees society's rules as hypocritical and ignorable. He is impulsive in his attachments and seeks to follow his own desires.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Thomas Egerton**, the first publisher of Jane's novels. Thomas Egerton and his company published Jane's *Sense and Sensibility* on commission. The family paid the printing costs risking any losses. However, after the success of the first novel, Egerton's company purchased the publishing rights, making a tidy profit from three successful printing runs. There was a growing market for books about women's lives, if written by women with the "appropriate" background (writing to support a starving family, or doing it as a passing entertainment not as a profession).

Did Thomas Egerton.....? (choose one)

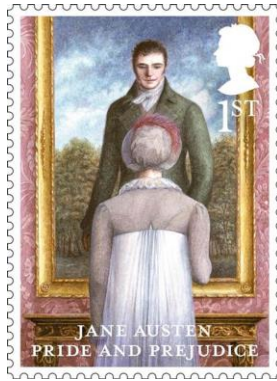
*Encourage and support Jane and her family in her endeavor, weighing out the costs and benefits*

OR

*Pragmatically calculate the risk and gain for the publishing house, pushing Jane against her best interests*

# The novel *Pride & Prejudice*

“It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.”



Summary: The Bennett family is blessed with five girls, but the entailment of the estate to their stuffy cousin the clergyman *Mr. Collins*, means all will need to marry well to be financially comfortable. **Jane Bennett**, the eldest, is a gentle beauty. **Elizabeth Bennett**, second oldest, is a lively, witty girl. Their parents encourage them to marry, though their silly mother *Mrs. Bennett* is obvious and crass about the hunt for husbands, encouraging their younger sisters *Kitty* and *Lydia* to be brash and careless, spending time with soldiers like the charming *George Wickham*. Elizabeth is the favorite of their intelligent, sarcastic father *Mr. Bennett*. When the wealthy gentlemen **Mr. Darcy** and **Charles Bingley** come to town, Charles and Jane are soon smitten and sparks fly between Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. However, the characters of many people are judged wrongly and heartbreak is risked before happy endings can be found.

## 10 Elizabeth Bennett

Main character and one of the most well-known heroines in English literature, Elizabeth Bennett is witty, intelligent and has a pair of “fine eyes.” The great beauty of the village (it is popularly held) is her gentle older sister **Jane Bennett**. The two sisters are quite close. The family having all female offspring is in financial trouble since the estate is entailed (required to be inherited by a male heir, Elizabeth's cousin, the clergyman Mr. Collins), Elizabeth's mother, a silly woman once a great beauty but her husband's intellectual inferior, is obsessed with finding a good match for each of her children. Many men enter their neighborhood, but finest (and most arrogant) among them is the very wealthy **Mr. Darcy**, and his genial and similarly eligible friend, **Charles Bingley**, who has eyes for Jane.

Elizabeth refuses to marry for anything but love, knowing of her family's financial predicament but trusts her sisters will find good situations and seeks to avoid the mismatch she sees in her parents' relationship.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Fanny Catherine Austen Knight**, a beloved niece of Jane Austen. Oldest daughter of Jane's wealthy brother Edward Knight, Jane wrote that she thought of her as “another sister”. Her mother died when Fanny was 16 and her aunts Cassandra and Jane became mother figures. They were quite close, with Jane and Cassandra living nearby at Chawton Cottage owned by Fanny's father. Fanny went on to marry “her own Mr. Darcy”, a baronet named Knatchbull. Later in life wrote fondly of her aunt Jane, but also talked down about how unworldly and unfashionable Jane and her family were.

Did Fanny Catherine Austen.....? (choose one)

*Appreciate the talents and choices of her aunt*

OR

*Take Jane for granted and perhaps pity her life deprived of love and family*



# 11 Jane Bennett

Eldest child of the Bennett family, **Jane Bennett** is acknowledged to be the great beauty of the family. She is gentle and caring and is a beloved confidant of her sister **Elizabeth Bennett** who is known for her sparkling wit. Her family has all female offspring and the estate entailed (falling to be inherited by a male heir, Elizabeth's cousin, the clergyman Mr. Collins) means financial difficulties when their father dies. Jane's mother, a silly woman great beauty in her day but her husband's intellectual inferior, is obsessed with finding a good match for each of her children. Jane is universally liked and respected, but her calm demeanor and even temper are sometimes mistaken for coolness of feeling and distance. She meets and falls deeply for the genial and well-off **Charles Bingley**. However, her reserve makes Bingley's friend, the powerful and stand-offish **Mr. Darcy**, intervene to Jane's detriment.

Jane hopes to marry for love, but is obedient to her mother and is aware of her family's financial predicament.

## Role in Austen's life:

**Cassandra Austen**, Jane's only sister, a beloved friend and confidant. Cassandra was older than Jane but the two girls grew up and lived their lives together. Cassandra was nearly married to a clergyman, but he died from illness on a work trip while they were still engaged. Cassandra, Jane and her mother made a household with Martha Lloyd after their father George Austen died. The women depended on the support of their male relatives and lived in strained, though harmonious, penury. Cassandra was Jane's longest correspondent and burned many of their shared letters after Jane's death, at her sister's request.

Did Cassandra Austen.....? (choose one)

*Burn the letters solely to honor Jane's wishes and privacy*

OR

*Burn the letters to protect the family from embarrassment at cutting or despairing things that Jane had written during their difficult years in Bath*

## 12 Mr (Fitzwilliam) Darcy

A very fine gentleman in appearance and in fortune, Mr Darcy has inherited Pemberly, a very large estate. He cares for his ward and younger sister, Georgianna, who is 16 years old. Darcy has a reserved disposition, with a tendency to be cold to strangers and to express his displeasure or censure when others might diplomatically withhold their opinions. He is a target for marriage minded mothers and daughters. He has had to rescue his sister from the clutches of an adoptive family member, Mr Wickham. Darcy is fast friends with **Charles Bingley**, whose sunny disposition balances his own, and whose sister Caroline Bingley is an admirer of Mr Darcy. When Darcy and his party come to Highbury, Darcy is soon captivated against his better judgement by the "fine eyes" and spirit of **Elizabeth Bennett**. But he intervenes against his friend Charles's affection for her beautiful but reserved **Jane Bennett**, suspecting her of not truly caring for his friend.

Mr Darcy expects to marry as he will, and looks to find a woman who can be a good influence on his sister Georgianna.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Thomas Langois Lefroy**, a young love interest of Jane Austen, possibly the love of her life. A relative of the Austens' neighbor Madame Anne Lefroy, he was a young, highly educated, animated and witty young man from Ireland. He was poor, dependent on the help of his uncle, Benjamin Langois for his education. He spent much time talking and dancing with Jane Austen during a visit to her neighborhood, but left suddenly, possibly sent away by his family. He would go on to become the Lord High Chief Justice of Ireland, but did name his oldest daughter Jane.

Did Thomas Langois Lefroy.....? (choose one)

*Toy with Jane Austen's affections, valuing her wit but not taking her seriously*

OR

*Fall deeply in love and regret having to make the choice between loving her and having a future*

## 13 Mr (Charles) Bingley

An eligible gentleman in want of a wife. Charles Bingley is a warm, guileless gentleman with a comfortable fortune, though a bit less than that of his fast friend **Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy**. Bingley arrives in the Bennetts' village to take possession of his country dwelling, Netherfield. He is ready to be restored by country delights and charmed by beautiful ladies, one of whom might make him happy as his wife. He is smitten with the lovely and gentle **Miss Jane Bennett**. However, his sister Miss Caroline Bingley, a fashionable London lady is unimpressed by Jane and feels threatened by the interest Darcy shows in Jane's lively sister, **Elizabeth Bennett**. Between the two of them, Caroline and Darcy convince Bingley that Jane does not care for him.

Bingley hopes and expects to marry for love and to find someone as charming and caring as is he.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Librarian of Prince Regent, James Stanier Clarke**, royal librarian and admirer of the work of Jane Austen. The Prince Regent read Austen's novels. There was said to be a set of the published works at each of the royal residences. James Stanier Clarke summoned Jane to visit the royal library, which she did, reluctantly. Austen did not approve of the Regent, who was known for his excesses and treatment of his wife. However, he invited Austen to dedicate her third novel, Emma to him, which Austen did in an overly gushing (possibly sarcastic) manner. Clarke corresponded with Jane, sending her advice on writing a novel, which she put into the satirical "*Plan of a Novel According to Hints from Various Quarters*."

Did James Stanier Clarke.....? (choose one)

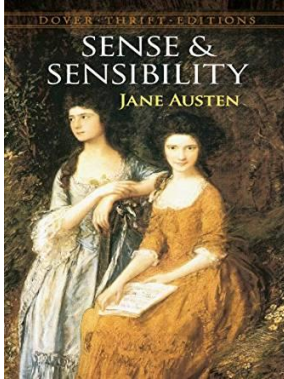
*Support Austen's career and genuinely want to see her do better*

OR

*Envy the interest his employer had in her work and try to sabotage her*

# The novel *Sense & Sensibility*

*"It is not what we think or feel that makes us who we are. It is what we do. Or fail to do..."*



Summary: The sisters **Elinor Dashwood** and **Marianne Dashwood** are a study in contrast: Elinor is practical and reserved about her emotions, always thinking ahead. Marianne is romantic, impassioned and holds honesty above all else let the consequences be damned. The Dashwood family falls upon hard times when the father dies and his heir *John Dashwood*, half-brother to the sisters, gives them very little to live on at the encouragement of his mercenary wife *Fanny Dashwood*. Elinor falls in love with Fanny's eldest brother, the quiet, intelligent **Edward Ferrars**. After barriers appear in this suit, Elinor supports her extremely emotional sister and mother *Mrs. Dashwood* as they move to the small Barton Cottage on a generous distant cousin's estate, *Sir John Middleton*. Marianne is admired by the dependable but (to her mind) boring **Colonel Brandon**, as well as the dashing, romantic *Mr. Willoughby*. The sisters suffer due to many secrets revealed on the way to surprising happinesses.

## 14 Elinor Dashwood

A calm, lovely, intelligent woman, Elinor Dashwood is the rock her family depends upon. After her father died, leaving Elinor, her two sisters **Marianne Dashwood** and Margaret (middle and youngest, respectively) and her mother, her family's wealth was entailed, left entirely to a male heir, their half-brother John Dashwood. She meets and is charmed by **Edward Ferrars**, the brother of John's wife Fanny who also seems drawn to her but stays away mysteriously. Elinor guided them in finding a living situation suited to their lessened income, where they met the dashing Mr. Willoughby who captures Marianne's romantic heart, and the older **Colonel Brandon** who is smitten with Marianne. Elinor is reserved in her emotions, at odds with her mother and stunningly beautiful middle sister, Marianne, who show strong emotions and who cherish sentimental and romantic experiences.

Elinor is sober and understands her station in the world with no estate and little income. She looks to take care of her family.

### Role in Austen's life:

**Cassandra Leigh Austen**, Jane Austen's mother. Said to be a lively, attractive, witty girl. Born to a less wealthy branch of a wealthy family, she was related to a Duke, but her father was a Proctor at Oxford. Marrying for love and affection, her husband George took a clergy position in Steventon, and they raised their large family together, giving them love and education, but little wealth. Cassandra outlived her daughter Jane, and lived with her throughout her life.

Did Cassandra Leigh Austen.....? (choose one)

*Understand and value Jane's dedication to her craft and free spirit*

OR

*Did she push her daughter to marry when the opportunities arose*

# 15 Marianne Dashwood

A stunningly beautiful young woman who is well-read in poetry and a talented pianist. She values honesty and authenticity above all things. After her father died, leaving Marianne, her sister **Elinor Dashwood**, younger sister Margaret and mother alone. Her family's wealth was entailed, left entirely to a male heir, her mother's half-brother John. When he, encouraged by his wife Fanny, gave them a pittance, Marianne's calm and practical older sister Elinor guided them in finding a living situation suited to their lessened income. Marianne encourages her sister to capture the heart of Fanny's strangely friendly yet reluctant brother, **Edward Ferrars**, whom Marianne believes loves Elinor. In their new home, Marianne meets the dashing Mr. Willoughby and the older **Colonel Brandon**, both of whom are attentive. Marianne, who always shows her strong emotions, cherishes sentimental and romantic experiences like her mother. They are at odds with Elinor who is always reserved in her emotions.

Marianne longs for love and would rather die than consider marriage for any other reason.

## Role in Austen's life:

**Eliza de Feuillide**, cousin and later sister by marriage to Jane Austen. Jane Austen's father was orphaned. His sister Philadelphia traveled to India to marry and had a daughter, Eliza. Eliza and her family visited the Austens every so often and brought a hint of different lands to their small village. Eliza became engaged to a French aristocrat who was killed during the French Revolution. She then came to live with the Austens and married Henry Austen, Jane's brother and close friend. Eliza's wealth allowed Henry to buy a commission in the army, and raise an income to help Jane with her publishing and eventually found a small, short-lived bank.

Did Eliza de Feuillide.....? (choose one)

*Yearn for the wider world and excitement of her earlier years*

OR

*Feel grateful for escaping the fate of her husband and fear such unrest and trouble in England*

# 16 Edward Ferrars

A solid, intelligent young man who stands to inherit a large estate. Edward would prefer to go into the clergy, but does not have that option due to the obligations of his inheritance. His sister Fanny Ferrars Dashwood, wants him to be more ambitious. Through her, as the wife of Mr John Dashwood who inherits an entailed estate, Edward meets the attractive ladies **Marianne Dashwood** and **Elinor Dashwood**. Edward wants nothing more than to live a quiet life in the country, which these women come to live due to their loss of income. Edward has a secret. He has recently spent much time with the family of Miss Lucy Steele, with whom he has an unacknowledged engagement which he stands by out of a sense of obligation rather than desire. Edward later comes to be helped by **Colonel Brandon**, an older suitor of Marianne Dashwood.

Edward knows he will marry, but accepts that the needs of others (Lucy, his aged wealthy aunt, etc.) will likely dictate whom he will spend his life with.

## Role in Austen's life:

**George Austen**, Jane Austen's father. Losing both his parents in short succession after his and his sister's birth, he was raised by his aunt. Said to be an attractive, intelligent, hard working boy. Working hard to educate himself at Oxford and find a living, he became the rector of several country villages including Steventon where his family lived. He also took in boys to tutor. He encouraged his daughters to learn, providing the library and tutors for their education after an abortive trip to Oxford which ended in both his daughters nearly dying from Typhus. He was the first person to try to publish Jane's books, sending a manuscript of *First Impressions* (later *Pride & Prejudice*) to a popular publishing house that had published other women's novels. He married for love, but lived in straightened economic situations, leaving his wife and daughters with little income after his death.

Did George Austen.....? (choose one)

*Encourage his daughter to never settle and never compromise her principals or heart, knowing and warning them of the difficulties of life*

OR

*Encourage his daughters to learn and want more from life, not worrying about the limitations that might hurt them or break their hearts*

# 17 Colonel Brandon

Colonel Brandon is an older gentleman at 35, who has served in the military and known love and loss. He lives quietly in the neighborhood where **Elinor Dashwood** and **Marianne Dashwood** come to reside. He admires the lovely and emotional Marianne, but sees little hope that she will ever return his feelings. Col Brandon has a secret. He is the guardian of a young girl, the child of his true love who died tragically. He has settled the girl in England, and some believe her to be his daughter, which she is not. She is his niece, but was orphaned when both parents died. His brother's death also left Brandon his estate. Brandon reaches out to help **Edward Ferrars**, out of friendship for the Dashwood sisters who care for Edward, and out of a desire to help someone who is standing by a woman he has obligation to, despite the rejection of society.

Brandon hopes to find love again and marry, and his wealth gives him the opportunity to choose. But he accepts that love and happiness are not guaranteed to anyone, despite their income.

## Role in Austen's life:

**Henry Austen**, Jane Austen's third and closest brother. Henry and his brothers put on plays in the Steventon barn when Jane was a child. He began an unsuccessful magazine, *The Loiterer*, with their oldest brother James who was thought to be the best writer in the family. Always close to Jane, he encouraged her and took risks to support her writing and publishing. After marrying their cousin, the widowed Eliza de Feuillide, whose money allowed him to buy a commission in the army, he raised money that was used to help publish *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma* and *Mansfield Park*, and helped her with the publishing of *Pride and Prejudice*. He even helped Jane buy back the rights to *Love and Friendship* (or *Lady Susan*) which had been unpublished for many years by a publisher. Unfortunately, shortly after this, and shortly before Jane's untimely death, a bank he had founded went bust and he lost most of his money.

Did Henry Austen.....? (choose one)

*Deeply believe in his sister and champion her from love and confidence*

OR

*Wish he could have the kind of talent she had, so push her career in order to take part in fame and glory*