



Searching for Jane Austen

Emily Auerbach

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Searching for Jane Austen demolishes with wit and vivacity the often-held view of "Jane," a decorous maiden aunt writing her small drawing-room stories of teas and balls. Emily Auerbach presents a different Jane Austen—a brilliant writer who, despite the obstacles facing women of her time, worked seriously on improving her craft and became one of the world's greatest novelists, a master of wit, irony, and character development.

In this beautifully illustrated and lively work, Auerbach surveys two centuries of editing, censoring, and distorting Austen's life and writings. Auerbach samples Austen's flamboyant, risqué adolescent works featuring heroines who get drunk, lie, steal, raise armies, and throw rivals out of windows. She demonstrates that Austen constantly tested and improved her skills by setting herself a new challenge in each of her six novels.

In addition, Auerbach considers Austen's final irreverent writings, discusses her tragic death at the age of forty-one, and ferrets out ridiculous modern adaptations and illustrations, including ads, cartoons, book jackets, newspaper articles, plays, and films from our own time. An appendix reprints a ground-breaking article that introduced Mark Twain's "Jane Austen," an unfinished and unforgettable essay in which Twain and Austen enter into mortal combat.

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