



Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon

Jane Austen , Margaret Drabble (Editor, Introduction by)

Download now

Read Online ➞

Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon

Jane Austen , Margaret Drabble (Editor, Introduction by)

Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon Jane Austen , Margaret Drabble (Editor, Introduction by)

Together, these three works - one novel unpublished in her lifetime and two unfinished fragments - reveal Jane Austen's development as a great artist.

Lady Susan, with its wicked, beautiful, intelligent and energetic heroine, is a sparkling melodrama which takes its tone from the outspoken and robust eighteenth century. Written later, and probably abandoned after her father's death, *The Watsons* is a tantalizing and highly delightful story whose vitality and optimism centre on the marital prospects of the Watson sisters in a small provincial town. *Sanditon*, Jane Austen's last fiction, is set in a seaside town and its themes concern the new speculative consumer society and foreshadow the great social upheavals of the Industrial Revolution.

Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon Details

Date : Published November 28th 1974 by Penguin Books (first published 1871)

ISBN :

Author : Jane Austen , Margaret Drabble (Editor, Introduction by)

Format : Paperback 222 pages

Genre : Classics, Fiction, Romance

 [Download Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon Jane Austen , Margaret Drabble (Editor, Introduction by)

From Reader Review Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon for online ebook

Carina says

This book of Jane Austen short stories was a bit of a mixed bag. 'Lady Susan' is interesting because it is more experimental due to the fact that it is both written in the form of letter entries and the main character is not one of Austen's usual heroines.

My favourite of the stories was 'The Watsons', an unfinished novel, it's written very much in the style of 'Pride and Prejudice' and if finished would have been a magnificent addition to her six completed novels.

I did not enjoy 'The Sanditons' as much, I found it to be full of fussy details and lacking any clear or meaningful storyline. I would recommend these stories to a die-hard Austen fan, but I'm not sure it would interest many other readers. 'The Watsons' is really the only story worth merit.

Ange says

3.5 stars

Sophia says

I can't remember where or when I got my copy of this book. I vaguely remember getting it cheaply and being happy to have some of Austen's minor works. It sat on a shelf for many years, but then I wanted a refresher read of Lady Susan because of the upcoming movie adaption that is whimsically named 'Love & Friendship'. Much to my pleasure and surprise, this book had a fascinating introduction of the three works that discussed the background of the stories, speculation about Austen's choice in not having the first two finished and published, and of course, where the two unfinished works were headed. There were general historical and biographical discourses as well. It was helpful and gave me a good set up to understanding before I dove into the stories themselves.

Lady Susan is a quick read as it is novella length and told in the epistolary format. While limiting and probably the reason for this being the last of her books to use the format, it was a curious work. Lady Susan carries several unique elements not the least is the nature of the protagonist, Lady Susan. She is a dark, manipulative woman who still manages to coax the reader into laughing with her and enjoying her outrageous exploits. I found her so very quotable. I also found that this darker, dangerous and more titillating story showcased the author's repertoire to be wider than her published novels would indicate. Lady Susan felt like a prototype of such sparkling, witty heroines as Elizabeth Bennet, Emma Woodhouse, Marianne Dashwood, and Mary Crawford. The plot isn't as snappy as the later novels and that epilogue was a rushed piece, but I am slightly awed that a young, sheltered lady of twenty wrote it since it only hurts by comparison to her later novels and not to literature in general.

This was my first turn at the unfinished The Watsons. Oh my heart sorrows a bit not to have the completed story. The set up was a good, strong one and promised an engaging story with Emma Watson the heroine

raised apart from her family and used to more genteel circumstances now back in their midst and unsure of her future. She is the interest of a high lord and a country clergyman. Her inferior family and quirky local characters make for some good humor even if Emma's situation is sobering. Yes, drat, I wanted more. At least, there was the note appended to the end sharing what Cassandra knew of how her sister planned to finish the story.

Now, on to another unfinished piece, but this one, sadly, was unfinished by the death of the author. I would have enjoyed knowing where she was taking this one after the initial set up. I always picture Sanditon as Austen's version of the 'summer read' since it is a vacation/health resort sort of town. The characters introduced are fun and quirky like I enjoy in a small town/village setting. The heroine was a moderately engaging one, but it was Mr. Parker that kept me interested. Ah, but again, I am sad not to have all the story.

All in all, this was a satisfying collection. I enjoyed the introduction, the three short pieces by Jane Austen and found the footnotes/explanations very helpful. I would definitely recommend this annotated version to other readers who want to gain some enjoyment and understanding beyond the actual stories.

In switching versions of the book mid-stream, I lost my earlier quote notes so I copied them and am putting them here:

5/3 page 47

22.0% "Where pride & vanity unite there can be no dissimulation worthy notice, and Miss Vernon shall be consigned to unrelenting contempt..." Ouch! Poor girl!"

05/04 page 50

23.0% "She is clever and agreeable, has all that knowledge of the world which makes conversation easy, and talks very well with the command of language, which is too often used I believe to make black appear white."

Mrs. Vernon's opinion of Lady Susan. o_O"

05/11 page 64

30.0% "...I am not afraid. I trust I shall be able to make my story as good as hers. If I am vain of anything, it is my eloquence." Lady Susan preparing to outwit her daughter. Poor Frederica!"

05/11 page 85

40.0% "There is something agreeable in feelings so easily worked upon. Not that I would envy him their possession, nor would for the world, have such myself, but they are very convenient when one wishes to influence the passion of another."

What a vixen!!!!"

05/11 page 90

42.0% "Oh wow! The line, the line... the movie took it right from the novella when Lady Susan tells her friend 'of what a mistake were you guilty in marrying a man of his age!- ...too old to be agreeable, and too young to die. *snort*"

05/11 page 95

45.0% "What could I do? Facts are such horrid things!" Alas, the wheels have started to come off for Lady Susan."

Jenny says

Reading Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon you learn some information about living in the Eighteenth Century. Also, insight into Jane Austen life and books.

Lady Susan is a short story written in the letter literacy format that was popular in the Eighteen Century. Lady Susan was a widow who tried to organise marriage for her daughter to a man she does not like. However, it did not work out the way Lady Susan wanted.

Sandition and Watsons are stories that Jane Austen did not complete before she died. However, included in Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon to allow Jane Austen fans to read her last books.

I like reading Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon is exciting collections of one short and two uncompleted stories by Jane Austen. Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon highlights that Jane Austen was able to write in many different literary styles. Margaret Drabble was the editor of Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon and provided the introduction. Also, Margaret Drabble did a great job of ensuring that the readers of Lady Susan/The Watsons/Sanditon will learn the social background of each story.

I recommend this book.

Erik Delgadillo says

Muy buenas historias y bastante bien para empezar con Jane Austen. Me hubiera gustado saber cómo termina Los Watson y Sandition pero lo que alcanzó a escribir fue muy bueno; Lady Susan es muy buena historia y diferente a lo que había leído, me gustó mucho.

The Books Blender says

C'è poco da fare: **Jane Austen è una specie di sigillo di garanzia!**

Ogni sua opera è affascinante e avvincente e coinvolgente... anche quelle incompiute!

Ho apprezzato molto **Lady Susan**, romanzo particolare nel 'palinsesto' della Austen in quanto scritto sotto forma di epistolario.

La protagonista è diversa dalle eroine cui siamo abituati: egocentrica, egoista, vendicativa, ma tremendamente intelligente, sagace e abile nel manipolare l'animo altrui. Alla fine, direi, tutto è bene quel che finisce bene, ma è una lettura avvincente.

'I Watson' e 'Sanditon' non sono da meno e è impossibile non notare gli echi di 'Orgoglio e Pregiudizio' o dell'Abbazia di Northanger' o di 'Mansfield Park'.

Purtroppo, però, queste due opere sono incompiute e, quindi, lasciano tanta tristezza al pensiero di come la Austen avrebbe, alla fine, potuto aggiustare queste storie e consegnarle a noi lettori. Sono convinta che anche queste sarebbero state dei capolavori!

K. says

I wanted to love this, I really did. I mean, it's JANE AUSTEN, you know?? And yet, here we are. I don't

think it helped that I was slightly slumpy when I was reading this and that it therefore took me the better part of four days to get through this 200 page book.

I wanted to love Lady Susan, because it was such a unique way of telling a story. But it was so full of horrible characters that I just came out at meh. I wanted to love The Watsons, but it felt like it was speeding along without any depth and then it just ended. I wanted to love Sanditon, especially after I thoroughly enjoyed the Pemberley Digital adaptation of it a couple of years ago. But OH MY GOD SO MANY HYPOCHONDRIACS I CAN'T DEAL WITH THIS NONSENSE. And then it just ended because Austen rudely went and died.

So yeah. Maybe my expectations were too high? And I did enjoy seeing a variety of Austen's writing in one book. But on the whole, this was fine but forgettable.

Priscila says

Lady Susan se llevó todas las flores, definitivamente.

? ? ? ? ? says

Tres porque Lady Susan y Los Watson fueron muy buenos y el mundo se quedó sin ellos pero Sanditon hizo que quisiera arrancarme los ojos :) Los Parker son insufribles y Lady Denham me recuerda a alguien igual de fea persona.

Ashwood (?? ??). says

??

•Karen• says

Remarkable that the grease stained pages found down the back of the sofa or stuffed into a drawer or still on the desktop when Jane Austen died should be so entrancing 200 years later. And Margaret Drabble's intro is judicious and knowledgeable.

I have now read almost (but not quite) everything that JA wrote; her Juvenilia would make me a 'completist'. Horrible word. It sounds like some Orwellian newspeak term for someone who goes round co-ercing people into committing suicide.

She may well have been right to abandon *The Watsons* as it is a bit samey, P&P all over again, but oh boy would I have loved to read *Sanditon*. There are all the signs of a fascinating take on the changeover from visiting friends or family, or being formally introduced to **their** friends and family, to the commercial business of tourism.

Anna says

I reviewed each of these separately on my blog:

Lady Susan is a very short novel (less than 100 pages) by Jane Austen, considered one of her “minor works.” It was likely written in 1793 or 1794, but it was not published until after her death. *Lady Susan* is an epistolary novel, and it’s the only novel I’ve read by Austen with a horrid “heroine” — but that’s what makes her so interesting.

Lady Susan Vernon is a recent widow who had an affair with a married man, whose wife’s jealousy, along with her efforts to find a husband for her daughter, have prompted her to flee and stay with her brother-in-law and his wife. *Lady Susan* is a very selfish person who acts horribly toward her daughter, Frederica, who refuses to marry the man her mother has chosen for her. In addition to stringing along Manwaring, the man with whom she had the affair, *Lady Susan* sets her sights on her sister-in-law’s brother, Reginald, much to Mrs. Vernon’s dismay. While *Lady Susan*’s close friend, Mrs. Johnson, indulges her despite the fact that her husband wants her to end their relationship, Mrs. Vernon sees *Lady Susan* for who she is and takes pity on Frederica.

I enjoyed *Lady Susan* and its overly dramatic characters, but the limitations of the epistolary novel are evident. There is little character development, and the primary voices in the book are *Lady Susan*’s and Mrs. Vernon’s, though a few minor characters chime in here and there. Because the book is written in letters, the conversations and actions are being retold after they happened, and they lose some of their immediacy.

Still, *Lady Susan* is highly entertaining. I found it interesting how Austen put a woman in the role of a shameless adulterer, though *Lady Susan*’s seeking another husband with a fortune is similar to the storylines in her more well-known novels. However, what’s different and intriguing is that *Lady Susan* is much older than the men she hopes to attract. And while I couldn’t like her or have much sympathy for her in the end, she certainly was amusing. Another must-read for Austen fans!

Review posted on *Diary of an Eccentric*

The Watsons is a fragment of a novel written by Jane Austen in 1804 and is believed to be the only work written by Austen when she lived in Bath. The introduction to this edition of three of Austen’s minor works speculates on why she didn’t finish it, but in my opinion, *The Watsons* is similar to *Pride and Prejudice* in many ways, and her heroine, Emma Watson, has characteristics of her other heroines.

Emma was living away from her family with an aunt who could better provide for her, but when her aunt marries, she is forced to return home to her widowed father and siblings. The 45-page fragment is mainly an introduction to the characters and covers Emma’s introduction into society through the Edwards family, who are friends of the Watsons. Some of the characters we meet, in addition to the Edwards family, are Elizabeth Watson, Emma’s older sister; Tom Musgrave, who flirts with all the eligible young women and seems to want to inflate his social status by riding the coattails of Lord Osborne; Mr. Howard, a clergyman who catches Emma’s eye at a ball; and Lord Osborne, who is attracted to Emma.

The Watsons are the poorest family seen in a work by Austen, or at least among her main characters, with Elizabeth caring for their sickly father and handling some domestic tasks. As such, the need for the four

sisters to marry — and for at least one of them to marry well — is a main theme of the book. But whereas Elizabeth has resigned herself to the fact that the love of her life has married another and she has lowered her standards for marriage as a result, Emma is more romantic and insists she would not marry a man she didn't love regardless of his fortune.

I really enjoyed *The Watsons* and was sad to see it end. It had so much potential, and had it been completed, it could have been a wonderful novel. While I didn't get to know her as well as I would have liked, Emma was a delightful character. I especially loved the scene at the ball where she asks 10-year-old Charles Blake, the nephew of Mr. Howard, to dance after Miss Osborne promised him before the ball that she would dance with him, then decided to dance with someone else. I would have loved to see Mr. Howard and Lord Osborne compete to win Emma's heart, and I would have loved to see who would have become the scoundrel of the novel.

While many readers would avoid reading a fragment because of its abrupt ending, *The Watsons* didn't leave me entirely unsatisfied. Austen told her sister, Cassandra, what she'd planned for her characters, and this information is given at the end of the fragment as a conclusion of sorts. If you're like me and want to read anything and everything by Austen, then I highly recommend *The Watsons*. As can be expected, her wit is interlaced with entertaining characters and social commentary.

Review posted on *Diary of an Eccentric*

Jane Austen was writing *Sanditon* when she fell ill, beginning the manuscript on January 17, 1817, ending chapter 12 on March 18, 1817, and dying on July 18, 1817, at the age of 41 without having finished it. It's sad that we'll never know Austen's plans for her characters, an eccentric bunch that I found very amusing.

Sanditon opens with a carriage accident. Mr. Thomas Parker, intent on finding a doctor for *Sanditon* — the fishing village he hopes to turn into a bustling seaside resort — has driven the carriage on an impassable road. And come to find out, he and his wife are in the wrong Willingden — the Willingden without a doctor. The Parkers are taken in by the Heywoods so Mr. Parker can recover from a twisted ankle, and the new friendship prompts the Parkers to take the young Charlotte Heywood — the likely heroine of the novel — to see the progress being made in *Sanditon*.

In *Sanditon*, Charlotte meets a host of entertaining people, including Lady Denham, a twice married woman (the first time for money, the second time for a title) reminiscent of Lady Catherine in *Pride and Prejudice* and Thomas Parker's partner in developing *Sanditon*; Sir Edward Denham, who rambles on about poetry and novels and views himself as a seducer of women; Diana, Susan, and Arthur Parker, Thomas' hypochondriac siblings; and Sydney Parker, Thomas' fashionable younger brother who probably would have emerged as the hero. Austen was brilliant when it came to providing humorous social commentary. In this novel, she juxtaposes characters who favor the old way with characters who favor development and showcases hypochondriacs alongside those whose health actually is poor enough to benefit from the seaside air.

Sanditon had the potential to be a great novel. Charlotte could have been as wise and strong a heroine as Elizabeth Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. Sydney Parker hardly makes an appearance, so who knows whether he would have given Mr. Darcy a run for his money. Some of the characters were so exaggerated and ridiculous (Sir Edward and Diana, in particular) that I nearly laughed out loud, and to be honest, when I got to the end of chapter 12 and the book ended abruptly, I was sad. I'd grown attached to these characters in just a handful of pages, and the story hadn't been developed enough for me to guess how things might have played out. I'm glad I knew in advance that the novel was unfinished, and I'm not sorry I read it. In fact, I think it is a worthwhile read for any Austen fan.

Corinna says

Lady Susan ★★★★★

Non so come abbia fatto la Austen, ma con il personaggio di Lady Susan ha fatto davvero un mezzo miracolo: ha reso simpatica una manipolatrice fatta e finita.

Ho molto apprezzato anche la forma del romanzo epistolare, anche se nelle prime lettere ho faticato un pochino a inquadrare i vari personaggi..

I Watson ★★★★★

Giuro che arrivata alla fine ci sono rimasta malissimo.. Sapevo che era un romanzo incompiuto, e ho cercato di non farmi prendere troppo dalla storia e dai personaggi, ma niente da fare. Come Emma mi sono sentita la nuova arrivata in famiglia e subito mi sono affezionata un po' a tutti.

Sanditon ★★★★★

Ecco, se con i Watson ci sono rimasta male, quando sono arrivata in fondo all'ultimo capitolo e mi sono ritrovata senza più pagine (digitali) da sfogliare è stato un vero e proprio trauma!!

Non mi resta che inventare una macchina del tempo per poter andare a chiedere alla zia Jane come voleva sviluppare e concludere questo romanzo..

Captain Sir Roddy, R.N. (Ret.) says

Lady Susan is a short epistolary novella written by Jane Austen. What intrigued me is that Lady Susan really is the most morally bankrupt (maybe 'amoral' is better?) of any of Austen heroines (and I use the term 'heroine' loosely here). She will think, say and do anything to achieve her means. This novella, presented as series of letters, was written by the young Jane Austen, and first published long after her death. One surmises that she probably did not intend for it to see the light of day in its present guise. *The Watsons* and *Sanditon* are fragments she was working on in the last few months of her life. It would have been interesting to see where they ended as completed novels. Maybe I am a bit of a dilettante, but I will not read versions of the *The Watsons* or *Sanditon* completed by other authors; it just doesn't interest me at this point in time. Having *Lady Susan* and the other fragments made purchasing this book a worthwhile addition to my collection of the Austen canon.

Bárbara says

4 estrellas

Es difícil opinar sobre la obra de un autor que está incompleta, más aún si ese autor del que hablamos es Jane Austen y tenemos 6 novelas con las cuales comparar.

De las tres obras contenidas en esta edición, es *Lady Susan* la que destaca por lo diferente que resulta su planteamiento: protagonizada por una villana, y narrada a través de cartas, *Lady Susan* usa uno de los temas autenistas regalones de la autora: la mala madre.

Los Watson en cambio se apega más a sus novelas cumbres, sin embargo, es también el augurio de una historia con final triste, el reflejo de la vida de la autora, la realidad hecha historia.

Por último, *Sanditon* es quizá el más pesado para mí, simplemente por sus personajes insoportables, muchos de ellos ya retratados en *Mansfield Park* o *La abadía de Northanger*.

Para todos los que gusten de Austen, este libro es lectura obligatoria: averiguar de dónde nacieron esas ideas que después de convirtieron en clásicos, en estos relatos está la receta secreta.

Susan says

This is my current favorite-to-talk-about book, and I wish wish wish that more people read it so it would come up more frequently in conversations. Considering that Austen has six completed novels and this volume has only one completed epistolary novel and two novel fragments, I doubt many readers will cross paths with it. It's arguable that Austen herself would not have wanted people reading these works salvaged from her notes and papers, but they are a pleasure. It's extremely hard to approach one of the Canonical Austen novels without knowing the names of the heroine and hero already, and because of that there is always a little bit of a tension between the reader and the text when the reader knows perfectly well that Mr. Dashing is going to be a villain yet chapters are spent with him appearing agreeable. But these works are all like little candies. You get to taste the brilliance of prose, savor the wit, and acknowledge the sweetness of characters within a short sitting, without thinking that it's too much of a wait before the happy conclusion.

The first work, *Lady Susan*, does not have a great story, and I cheered that Austen herself seemed to get bored by it and wrapped it up in a pithy conclusion that bypassed all endless Richardson-like plot that seemed to be coming. Then things get better. *The Watsons* is downright cute. Its ball may be my favorite in all of Austen (I KNOW the *Netherfield Ball* is fantastic, but this one has a ten-year-old boy who dances with the heroine. It's a toss-up). There is a shy nobleman, an earnest clergyman and a gallant gentleman, so all the ingredients for a fun story are present. Austen appears to have told her family the resolution of the story, so that mitigates some of the sadness of finishing its short chapters. The final novel fragment, *Sanditon*, is intriguing. It contains the largest ratio of silly characters out of any Austen novel or fragment, and a heroine who is out of place amid the residents of an ambitiously growing seaside resort community.

Editor Margaret Drabble and I disagree entirely about the value of *Sanditon*, in fact. In her introduction she writes, "It is not too much to speculate that, as [Austen] felt death approaching, she did not wish to create characters that she would feel pain at abandoning. Anne Elliot abandoned would have been a tragedy: Mr Parker left wondering is a joke." My first objection is that Drabble considers Mr. Parker the only sympathetic character in the fragment, and uses him for a comparison to Anne Elliot. The protagonist is Charlotte Heywood, who is nowhere near as unlikeable as Margaret Drabble would have you believe. My second point of contention is that Austen wrote more exposition about *Sanditon* than any other novel setting, and it's much less of a stretch to guess she did that because she enjoyed writing about the town and its inhabitants than that she was simply bored and writing characters about whom she couldn't care. Third problem in Drabble's statement is that abandoning Mr. Parker would simply leave him a joke. He is a joke, but he is not a benign joke. He's poured his wealth into the gamble that *Sanditon* can take off as a resort, but within the chapters of the fragment it's clear that *Sanditon* is not successful, and Mr. Parker could be a storm away from ruin.

I find the possibilities the fragments present to be fascinating. Compared to ancient fragments, having almost 18,000 words in a text feels like a luxury. Additionally, compared to having only six Austen plots, adding three more (even incomplete) seems luxurious too.

Austen's prose--seen here at three stages of her writing--is enviable as usual, though the style has noticeable changes (seen since the collection orders the fragments chronologically).

In all, a must-read for Janeites, and a should-read for readers willing to imagine their own adventures after the fragments end.

Simona Bartolotta says

"C'è qualcosa di piacevole nei sentimenti che si lasciano manovrare tanto facilmente. Non che abbia invidia, né vorrei, per nulla al mondo, averne di simili, ma si dimostrano utili quando si desidera influenzare le passioni di un altro."

Oh, Jane, immensa, incredibile, dolcissima Jane: no so cosa darei per avere un altro tuo romanzo, o per poter rileggere tutti i tuoi romanzi per la prima volta. Cosa darei, seriamente, non lo so, perché la ricompensa non sarebbe in alcun modo quantificabile.

Non sono capace di spiegarvi qual'è stata la mia sofferenza nell'accingermi a leggere queste sue opere. Non tanto *Lady Susan* -che, per inciso, è carinissimo!-, ma con *I Watson* e *Sanditon* è stata pura sofferenza. Iniziare a perdersi nel vortice della storia e dover restare sospesa a metà, esiste qualcosa di più ingiusto? Se poi il vortice lo crea la penna ironica e tagliente di Jane, allora è finita. Credo di non essere riuscita a godere appieno di questi due 'incipit' proprio per questo pensiero fisso che occupava i miei pensieri; l'idea di non poter sapere la fine mi angosciava. E' come assaggiare un piatto buonissimo, tentare di avventarsi sul vassoio ma vedersi soffiare via tutto da sotto il naso. E' una crudeltà.

Jane, torna tra noi!

Fatma says

3.5 stars

I've read *Lady Susan* before, and *The Watsons* was fine, but oh my goodness I LOVED *Sanditon*. Sir Edward is hilarious, the Parkers are ridiculous, and Charlotte is such a shrewd, level-headed heroine. To see it all cut short before the story could really get going broke my heart. But I suppose even unfinished Austen is better than no Austen at all. ????

Angie says

Tres relatos únicos y que demuestran que Jane Austen desde muy joven estaba destinada a ser una gran escritora. El modo de describir su sociedad, costumbres, añoranzas y desesperanzas es inigualable.

Irene says

Three unfinished stories are included in this collection ("*Lady Susan*," "*The Watsons*," and "*Sanditon*"), plus

a lot of additional reading under the titles of "Introduction," "Social Background," "A Note on the Text," "Notes," and "Chronology."

Despite being called the "Introduction," I think that chapter might actually be best read *after* having finished each of the stories. It certainly sheds light on story lines and characters, but it's hard to follow without knowing who or what is being discussed. I found myself going back to re-read parts of the Introduction while reading each of the stories.

"Social Background" would probably be most appreciated by a reader who has not already read other Jane Austen novels, and so doesn't totally grasp the social context of the time. But if you're not already an ardent Jane Austen fan, then this really isn't the book to be using as your introduction to her work anyway. Still, this chapter is short enough that it's worth reading, and you still might learn a thing or two about Jane Austen's era.

"A Note on the Text" I actually found to be the most interesting bit to read before jumping into the stories. This short chapter tells a little about what kind of editing was needed to get these unfinished stories into a publishable state.

"Notes" may very well have been my favorite part of this book! This chapter of footnotes sheds even more light on Jane Austen's writing. Very frequently, the footnotes tell you that instead of the words you just read, Jane Austen originally wrote different words, but then erased them or crossed them out. It was really fascinating to think about what kind of consideration went into Jane Austen's word choice. Additionally, this section provided interesting information, clarification, and reaction to various parts of the text.

"Chronology" provides a nice overview of major world events that occurred during Jane Austen's lifetime, plus major events in her personal life as well.

As for the stories themselves... "Lady Susan" came first, and it was my least favorite piece. It is an "epistolary novel" - one written as a series of letters among the main characters. It was my first exposure to such a book, and honestly, it just seems like such a constrictive way of telling a story. Maybe in a more traditional novel, the same characters could have been fleshed out to be more complex, but as they were written, many of them were one-dimensional.

"The Watsons" is most similar to Jane Austen's other well-known works, and it was for me the most satisfying to read. I was pulled in from the very start! I was so interested in the characters and couldn't wait to find out what would happen next - and then completely unexpectedly, I turned a page, and there was no more. It's a shame Jane Austen never finished this book, and it was but small consolation that it was followed by a brief note regarding what Jane Austen intended would happen to the main characters.

"Sanditon," I'm afraid, got off to a very slow start for me. Jane Austen's stories focus primarily on "the young people," and "Sanditon" just took too long in introducing all the young people. I dare say I got bored while waiting for all the key players to arrive at Sanditon, and just when they did, the writing stopped. There seems to be a lot of social commentary in this piece, and having been written just before Jane Austen died, I wonder if that's why there was so much talk of health in this book.

Overall, certainly an interesting read for the most fervent of Jane Austen fans. But if you're not interested in learning a bit more about Jane Austen's *works*, then there isn't as much stand-alone entertainment value in this collection as you would find in her finished novels.
