



Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas: Answers to Your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and What to Wear) from the Great Novelist Herself

Rebecca Smith

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Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas: Answers to Your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and What to Wear) from the Great Novelist Herself *Rebecca Smith* **Is the man I'm dating Mr. Darcy in disguise. . . or simply a jerk?**

It's been two centuries since Jane Austen penned *Pride & Prejudice* and her many other classic novels, yet her adroit observations on the social landscape and profound insights into human nature are as relevant now as they were in her time. If only those of us in need of some good advice today had the opportunity to sit down and tap even a few drops from Austen's great reservoirs of wisdom. Well, now we do. . . .

In **Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas**, Rebecca Smith channels her great-great-great-great-aunt's sense—and, of course, her sensibility—to help readers navigate their most pressing problems. Drawing on Austen's novels, letters, and unpublished writings, Smith supplies readers with wise and wonderful counsel for living well in the 21st century. From instruction on how to gracefully "unfriend" someone on Facebook to answers for such timeless questions as "Can a man ever *really* change?" this book enables readers to nimbly navigate life's most tricky terrain with the good sense, good manners, and abundant humor that are the mark of any great Austen heroine.

Sensible, savvy, and funny, **Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas** cleverly answers every Austen fan's most earnest question: What would Jane do? Replete with lovely Austen-inspired color illustrations, as well as quotes from Austen's various novels to support the advice given, this book is the ideal gift for the Jane Austen fanatic in your life.

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From Reader Review Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas: Answers to Your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and What to Wear) from the Great Novelist Herself for online ebook

Belinda says

Creating a work that would give us insight into what Jane Austen would think of the world we live in today and how she'd advise us is a marvelously intriguing idea with tremendous possibilities. Unfortunately, this book did not live up to that potential. No doubt a great deal of research went into the combing through of Jane Austen's correspondence with her sister Cassandra and others to write "Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas: Answers to Your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and What to Wear) from the Great Novelist Herself." Nonetheless, some of the author's own imagination, surely, would have produced a truer, more expressive book, than merely matching snatches of paragraphs to queries. As a descendant of the Austen family, one would think that Rebecca Smith would have some of her great-aunt's talent to draw upon - certainly the publicity blurb suggests this. And yet, none of the wit or wisdom, insights or caricatures that we have come to expect from Austen are present here, despite quoting the "Great Novelist Herself." Given the opportunity to read this work, I'd recommend you pass. I wish I had. Two stars for the pretty cover. Disclaimer: I was given a free copy of the book to review via Goodreads' "First Reads Giveaways."

Laurel says

There have been many Jane Austen advice books released this year and more in the queue. Regardless of past releases, or future, this clever tome deserves your attention. First off, the cover will make you smile: the vintage image of a Regency-era lady holding an iPad is very apropos and the subtitle will pique your interest: *Answers to Your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and what to wear) from the Great Novelist Herself*. At 27 words, this book might have the longest title I have ever seen. Let's hope that it is more succinct with the text!

Happily it is broken down into six chapters: Love & Relationships; Friends & Family; Fashion & Style; Home & Garden; and Leisure & Travel. This is a good start—and I must state right up front that the writer Rebecca Smith brings an air of authority and distinctive pedigree to the subject and that few can boast: she is the great grandniece of Jane Austen, four times removed. She was also the first official writer in residence at Jane Austen's House Museum in Chawton, England with previously published books: *Bluebird Café*, *Happy Birthday and All That*, and *A Bit of Earth*. Brava Ms. Smith!

So, enough set up, let's get down to facts. My first impressions of *Miss Jane Austen's Guide* is that it is intriguing eye candy; a thorough exploration interspersed with vintage images and text boxes of tidbits. It is set up as a Q&A: Ms. Smith presents questions of modern topics and Jane Austen answers directly from her novels and letters, or more precisely, Ms. Smith selects quotes and brief excerpts from Jane Austen's prose and correspondence. It is quite a clever premise. Who better to answer your questions on life's mysteries than the renown authoress whose astute skills of characterization and social machinations are unsurpassed? Here are a few examples of the questions presented: What Should I Be Looking for In a Man?, How Can I Make My Friend Stop the Baby Talk?, How do I Out a Cheating Spouse?, To Tattoo or not to Tattoo?, How

Can I Delete a Contact on Facebook without Causing Offense?, What Can I Do to Control My Shopping Binges?, and, many, many more. In addition to using Jane Austen's text in reply, Smith offers pithy supporting text in her own words illustrated with a vintage images:

What Should My Book Club Read?

Q. One thing you never seem to find the time for these days is reading. As you were a bookworm when you were younger. You have decided to start a club in order to get back to basics and take some time to improve your mind. But your group is made up of some very different people with very different tastes. So how do you choose which kind of books to read?

A. "I have received a very civil note from Mrs. Martin, requesting my name as a subscriber to her library ... As an inducement to subscribe, Mrs. Martin tells me that her collection is not to consist only of novels, but of every kind of literature, &c. She might have spared this pretension to our family, who are great novel-readers and not ashamed of being so ..." — Letter to Cassandra, Steventon, 18 December 1798

Smith then elaborates on Austen's view of reading, especially the not so well-thought of fiction of her day and how it influenced Austen's own writing, and then offers her own advice:

"Your club's first choice is important. You could start with *Northanger Abbey*. It is certainly not desultory, and is a novel about novels, so should get you talking about reading and please everybody you'd like to keep as a member of your book club." p. 213

I am always a bit leery of advice books; even though I am the first person of my acquaintance that should heed their wisdom. Like Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, I find Lady Catherine's arrogant pontificating tiresome and not always spot on. Not so here. The one thing that saved me from total ignominy in reading this book was the arrangement of *Miss Jane Austen's Guide* in an encapsulated manner. One can pick it up, open it to any page, and then just read one question and answer a day—almost like a daily devotional with Austen as your adviser. Taken in smaller doses, I found it amusing and enlightening.

So, gentle readers, as I present my last book review of the year, take Miss Jane Austen's advice from this clever book and look life in the face and laugh ...

"I am glad you are so well yourself, and wish everybody else were equally so. I will not say that your mulberry-trees are dead, but I am afraid they are not alive."—Letter to Cassandra, Chawton, 31 May 1811

Laurel Ann, Austenprose

Carolyn Harris says

I enjoy reading Jane Austen and I enjoy reading advice columns so this was a fun read. Austen's great-great-great-great niece Rebecca Smith, writer in residence at Chawton House makes creative use of quotes from Jane Austen's novels and letters to answer questions about relationships, family, friends, work, household and travel. For example, dress for success as everyone encounters a Caroline Bingley in their career. The overall Georgian diet may not be recommended today but the regency enthusiasm for fresh fruit and tea is still recognized for its health benefits. Best to read Austen's novels first as their plots are outlined over the course of the book!

Lyra says

3,5* Eine liebevolle Hommage an Jane Austen, aber kein Ratgeber...

~ Wer dieses Buch als das sieht, was es ist (eine liebevolle Hommage auf Jane Austen und ihr Lebenswerk), der wird damit die größte Freude haben. Wer allerdings wirklich einen Ratgeber erwartet, der wird aufgrund der oft oberflächlichen, vagen und absolut keine Geheimtipps enthaltenden Ratschläge enttäuscht sein. ~

Inhalt

Jane Austens Ur-ur-ur-ur-Nichte Rebecca Smith gibt in diesem Buch Ratschläge für moderne Lebenskrisen. Diese Ratschläge sind inspiriert von Jane Austens Figuren, ihren Romanen und ihrem Leben selbst.

Meine Meinung

Aufmachung

Die Aufmachung ist wunderhübsch und elegant gehalten. Die verschiedenen Kapitel wie „Freunde & Familie“ oder „Liebe & Beziehung“ werden durch Zwischenseiten getrennt, die jeweils ein passendes Zitat enthalten. Generell wirkt alles sehr liebevoll gestaltet.

Besonders hübsch und authentisch lassen die Zeichnungen das Buch wirken, die immer zu den Fragen passen und oft auch Szenen aus Jane Austens Werken nachstellen. Sie sind in schwarz-weiß gehalten, nur bestimmte Details wie ein schöner Schuh sind in pink hervorgehoben.

Inhalt

Jede Frage ist auf ein bis zwei Seiten beantwortet. Diese Beantwortung folgt stets einem bestimmten Muster. Zuerst wird die Situation genau erklärt, danach leitet die Autorin vom Verhalten von Jane Austens Figuren oder Janes persönlichen Briefen den Ratschlag ab.

Fans von Jane Austen, die jedes neue Detail und jede neue Information über sie und ihr Leben mit Faszination und Freude regelrecht aufsaugen, werden mit diesem Buch große Freude haben. Man findet hier unzählige interessante, spannende und mitunter auch amüsante Auszüge aus ihren persönlichen Briefen, die einem erlauben, die berühmte Autorin auch einmal von einer anderen Seite zu sehen – zum Beispiel als eine Person, die keinen grünen Daumen hatte und ums Leben so mancher Pflanze kämpfen musste. Wer viele oder alle von Jane Austens Werken kennt, wird die kleinen Analysen ihrer Figuren und deren Probleme lieben und es schätzen, dass manche Details und Zitate, die man beim Lesen vielleicht übersehen würde, hier so schön aufbereitet werden. Besonders amüsant sind außerdem die kurzen Charakterbeschreibungen am Ende des Buches, die jedem, der die Werke kennt, ein Lächeln ins Gesicht zaubern werden.

Wer sich nicht zu den begeisterten Austen-Fans zählt, den könnten die langen Ableitungen allerdings schnell langweilen und vielleicht sogar nerven, da sie den größten Teil der Antwort ausmachen. Wer nur wenige oder sogar gar keine Werke von Jane Austen kennt, den werden die vielen Namen vielleicht verwirren oder sie werden belanglos erscheinen, wenn man die Hintergrundgeschichte nicht kennt.

Ratschläge

Die Ratschläge selbst sind dann häufig leider sehr oberflächlich und kurz ausgeführt. Manches Mal scheint die Verbindung zur heutigen Zeit auch etwas holprig. Wer erstklassige Tipps erwartet, auf die man selber nicht kommt, der wird wahrscheinlich enttäuscht sein. Zu vage scheint mancher Ratschlag, zu wenig Zeit nimmt man sich für Details. Zusätzlich werden manche Fragen gar nicht richtig beantwortet, man liest und liest sich durch Analysen, nur um am Ende feststellen zu müssen, dass das Gelesene mit der Frage wenig zu tun hat. Dennoch: Es gibt auch vereinzelte Ratschläge, die wirklich brauchbar sind und mir weitergeholfen haben. Mir waren das aber für ein Buch, das ein Ratgeber sein will, zu wenige.

Mein Fazit

Wer dieses Buch als das sieht, was es ist (eine liebevolle Hommage auf Jane Austen und ihr Lebenswerk), der wird damit die größte Freude haben. Jane-Austen-Faszinierte werden die Figuren-Analysen und die Parallelen, die zum modernen Leben gezogen werden, lieben, ebenso wie die kleinen interessanten und amüsanten Ausschnitte aus Jane Austens persönlichen Briefen, die man so noch nicht gelesen hat. Wer allerdings wirklich einen Ratgeber erwartet, der wird aufgrund der oft oberflächlichen, vagen und absolut keine Geheimtipps enthaltenden Ratschläge enttäuscht sein.

Bewertung:

Aufmachung: 5 Sterne ♥

Idee: 5 Sterne

Ausführung: 3,5 Sterne

Schreibstil: 4 Sterne

Ratgeber: 2 Sterne

Insgesamt:

✿✿✿,5

Dieses Buch bekommt von mir 3,5 Lilien!

Taria0508 says

In „Jane Austens Ratgeber für moderne Lebenskrisen“ werden in unterschiedlichen Kapiteln verschiedene Problembereiche des heutigen, modernen Lebens unter die Lupe genommen. In Familie & Freunde dreht es sich zum Beispiel um peinliche Eltern, nervende Freunde und andere Themen. Auch ein Kapitel über das Liebesleben darf bei Austen natürlich nicht fehlen.

Als ein großer Austen Fan fand ich die Idee dieses Buches witzig. Besonders interessant fand ich die Tatsache, dass es von einer Verwandten der berühmten Autorin geschrieben wurde.

Die eingebrachten Zitate aus Austens Werken oder Ihren persönlichen Korrespondenzen sind lustig und erfrischen und zeigen, wie das Leben in England im 19. Jahrhundert war. Leider sind diese Umgangsformen

und Normen heutzutage von wenig belang.

Die „Ratschläge“ sind nicht wirklich Ratschläge sondern eher logische Schlussfolgerungen, auf die man mit Leichtigkeit auch selbst kommen kann. In vielen Fragestellungen wird auch keine Lösung gegeben oder ein Ratschlag erteilt, da diese Problemstellungen für die Zeit Austens einfach belanglos oder utopisch waren. Das Buch ist eine wunderbare Hommage an Jane Austens Bücher und Ihr Genie, doch nicht wirklich ein Ratgeber im eigentlichen Sinne. Es ist vielmehr eine amüsante Lektüre.

Pamela D says

I received this book for free through the Goodreads First Reads program.

Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas: Answers to Your Most Burning Questions About Life, Love, Happiness (and What to Wear) from the Great Novelist Herself is a fun "Dear Abby" column but filled with advice based on Jane Austen's novels and her life. The book is divided up into several sections (e.g., fashion, home, love, etc.) and within each section, related questions are asked. The author, Rebecca Smith is the great-great-great-great-niece of Jane Austen and truly appears to have done her research on her aunt's books and her life. Each answer is filled with direct quotations from Austen's books and her letters to Cassandra (Jane's sister). I enjoyed seeing the connections between modern life problems and Austen's heroines. My one complaint is that I feel that the questions are quite lighthearted and the answers are a bit too serious (they are fun, mind you, but there are quotations and references!). This format may not have been the best for presenting Rebecca Smith's knowledge of her aunt. In any event, I did enjoy this book and I feel that I will return to it every time I finish an Austen novel.

Meredith (Austenesque Reviews) says

Every time I read an Austenesque novel like According to Jane by Marilyn Brant, Austentatious by Alyssa Goodnight, or My Jane Austen Summer by Cindy Jones, I become green with envy at how each heroine was able to, in some form or another, communicate with Jane Austen! How magnificent would it be if this wise and discerning author was able to impart advice and council to her readers?!? How incredible would it be to have Jane Austen answer questions about our modern world and lend an ear to our present-day woes?

Well, until Jane Austen decides to manifest herself in my life, I will continue to find solace and seek wisdom from her novels and various other Jane Austen guidebooks. Including this newly published offering from Rebecca Smith, Miss Jane Austen's Guide to Modern Life's Dilemmas. In her advice book, Rebecca Smith (Jane Austen's great-great-great-great-niece) cleverly and adeptly shows readers how our modern-day dilemmas can be solved through passages, quotes, and letters from our favorite author!

To continue reading, go to: <http://janeaustenreviews.blogspot.com...>

Daffney says

Some people look towards a higher power when it comes to working through life challenges, others look toward their favorite author. For Janeites like myself, author Rebecca Smith has compiled a reference book devoted to Jane Austen's words of wisdom. Readers who want as varied advice as looking for the perfect

mate to getting the neighborhood eyesore removed can find Ms. Austen's practical, and often humorous, advice (gleaned from her novels and her letters) collected in the collection.

Though not a text for the uninitiated, those who delight in Austen's work, and return to *Pride and Prejudice* time and again, will find words of wisdom to guide even the most mundane of life choices. I can't recommend this book to Austen fans enough!

Sarah83 L says

Ein nettes Buch mit Antworten zu allen aktuellen Fragen beantworten mit Antworten aus der Vergangenheit.

Emily L says

3.5/4 stars. I've had the most awful reading slump and needed something easy. This was surprisingly amusing and charming and made me happy. It also taught me some historical tidbits and pointed out details of Austen's novels that I'd never noticed before, so I actually ended up seeing them and Austen a different way.

TheLitFangirl says

More of a 3.5

Okay, let me explain myself. I'm a huge Jane Austen fan, and when I say huge I mean that I'm obsessed with anything that has to do with her. So I was just browsing books, just doin' my thing and BOOM! A wild book appears. I had to buy this because, reasons.

Things I loved about this book:

1. The illustrations. They were hilarious.
2. The author is actually a great great great great niece of Jane Austen. (I'M SO FUCKIN JELLY)
3. It feels like reading an advice column, Jane Austen style. There's a paragraph with all the questions that you'd want answered and then there's the actual response with lots of passages and quotes from Jane Austen's novels and letters to justify the answer.
4. The book is beautiful. The whole book. The cover, the paper, the colors and the patterns... Ugh, can't handle this

So... Why 3.5 stars?

I had three main problems:

1. Some of the advice, in my very personal opinion, was not good. Quite the opposite, actually. Don't get me wrong, most of it is pretty good advice. Some of it though... Like, yeah, ditch your friend if you get bored... Um, no. That is not friendship.
2. I hate it when fans of Jane Austen cannot accept that Jane Austen was a human being and had every right

to be rude and bitchy. I remember the author trying to explain why Jane made the famous dead baby joke and that she was not a bad person or insensitive and blah, blah, blah... Bitch, Jane Austen was a Hot Bitch in Charge. That's what I like about her.

3. Let's face it, the author was kind of a prude.

Dianna says

This is an advice book written with a Jane Austen twist. I enjoyed reading the quotes from Jane Austen's letters and novels in this book. It was well researched and it was fun to learn what Jane wrote about shopping, travel, and relationships.

My complaint is that Jane's views were twisted to work better under our 21st-century viewpoint. It's hard to know exactly what Jane Austen would say about division of chores between live-together partners; wearing high heels; or cheating on your boyfriend. This book takes a fairly modern viewpoint—and who knows? It wouldn't surprise me to find Jane a thoroughly modern woman if she lived today, although we now associate her with times long past.

Although the values presented in this book don't align with my own (in part because I'm not the single, twenty-something working women this book seems to be aimed toward), I'm inclined to forgive the author since she's the five-times great-niece of Jane Austen. If anyone is going to put words into Jane Austen's mouth, I suppose her niece has more right than most.

Notes on the book design: the book is printed on lovely glossy white paper . . . in purple. It's dark purple, so it's not completely impossible to read (there's a reason black is popular!). THE QUESTIONS ARE PRINTED IN ALL CAPS, which make them cumbersome to read. I did enjoy the vintage-look illustrations.

I received a copy of this book from Goodreads First Reads.

Karyn Mitchell says

This book was full of insightful and yet surprisingly helpful hints on how to deal with modern day problems in a way that would be both polite yet firm, without being rude or unseemly.

The writing was witty and at time drew a chuckle from me as I realised that today's issues aren't that much different from one's miss Austen would have had in her day.

Denise says

Advice on life, Jane Austen style. While most of the advice given here is really just plain old common sense IMO, the presentation - peppered with examples and excerpts from Jane Austen's novels as well as her personal letters - is charming and a delight for anyone who has enjoyed her novels as much as I did.

Elizzy B says

Este libro es una interesante guía que te propone respuestas basadas principalmente en las novelas y cartas de Jane Austen. Es un '¿Qué haría Jane Austen?' muy bien hecho.

Preguntas sobre familia, moda, trabajo, viajes, vida doméstica y amorosa, que especialmente, te hacen conocer a Miss Austen cuando la respuesta se basa en las cartas.

La estructura es sencilla: se propone una pregunta actual y la autora nos responde, basándose en la obra o correspondencia austeniana, a la pregunta. La decisión ya es tuya.
