

ENGLISH LEARNING  
FOR CURIOUS  
MINDS



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**Episode #269**  
**Jane Austen - The Queen of English Literature**  
**7th Jun, 2022**

[00:00:00] Hello, hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

[00:00:12] The show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same time as improving your English.

[00:00:22] I'm Alastair Budge, and today is part one of a three-part series on great Victorian authors.

[00:00:30] In this episode, part one, we'll talk about Jane Austen, the author of works such as Pride and Prejudice, Persuasion and Emma.

[00:00:39] Next up, in part two, we'll look at Charles Dickens, the author of books such as Oliver Twist and Hard Times.

[00:00:47] And in part three, our final part, we'll actually look at three authors, the Bronte sisters, Emily, Charlotte, and Anne, who between them wrote **greats**<sup>1</sup> such as Wuthering Heights and Jane Eyre.

[00:01:03] They all, **in their own right**<sup>2</sup>, were fascinating people with fascinating lives, and their works are still as relevant and brilliant today as the day they were published.

[00:01:14] So I hope you'll enjoy them.

[00:01:17] OK then, let's get straight into it and learn about the woman sometimes called the queen of English literature, Jane Austen.

[00:01:27] My great grandmother, who lived to the age of 99 and died when I was three years old, would read one particular book every year.

[00:01:39] In the final years of her life, when she was in her mid 90s and, with her eyesight **failing**<sup>3</sup>, she could no longer read, she would **insist**<sup>4</sup> on having this same **battered**<sup>5</sup> little blue book on the table in front of the chair where she sat all day.

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<sup>1</sup> important works

<sup>2</sup> because of their own special qualities

<sup>3</sup> becoming weaker

<sup>4</sup> keep doing it, persist

<sup>5</sup> damaged by age and repeated use

[00:01:57] Often she would simply put her hand on the book - it clearly meant as much to her as anything - perhaps apart from her family.

[00:02:05] Maybe you are thinking that this book was The Bible, or another religious text.

[00:02:11] It was not.

[00:02:12] This **sacred**<sup>6</sup>, **much-loved**<sup>7</sup> book, which became increasingly **shiny**<sup>8</sup> from my great-grandmother's hand, was in fact written by a very young woman right at the start of the same century in which my great grandmother was born, the 19th century.

[00:02:29] Her name?

[00:02:30] Jane Austen. The title of the blue book was Pride and Prejudice.

[00:02:35] So, let me tell you a little bit about the life of this amazing woman, starting with her family and her early education.

[00:02:44] Jane Austen was born in 1775 into a social class which is best described as **gentry**<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> considered very important and valuable

<sup>7</sup> which she loved very much

<sup>8</sup> made even or smooth and bright by use or rubbing

<sup>9</sup> upper middle class

[00:02:53] This means the class below the [aristocracy](#)<sup>10</sup> but above the professional middle class. In today's terms, [gentry](#) would translate to something like upper middle class.

[00:03:07] Her father was a [clergyman](#)<sup>11</sup> in the Anglican Church or the Church of England, which meant that the family were provided with a [spacious](#)<sup>12</sup> house, called a [rectory](#)<sup>13</sup>, and some land.

[00:03:19] However, relative to the social class that the Austens belonged to, they were not wealthy.

[00:03:26] To [ensure](#)<sup>14</sup> that they could live well, that they had enough money to provide them with a good life, Mr Austen ran a small [boarding school](#)<sup>15</sup> in the [rectory](#) and did some farming.

[00:03:38] The Austen family was, as was typical of many wealthy families of this class, a large one.

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<sup>10</sup> the highest social class

<sup>11</sup> a male priest

<sup>12</sup> large, with a lot of space

<sup>13</sup> the house provided to a priest

<sup>14</sup> make it certain to happen

<sup>15</sup> a school in which students lived and studied

[00:03:45] Jane Austen had six brothers and one, particularly **beloved**<sup>16</sup> sister, Cassandra.

[00:03:52] It was an **immensely**<sup>17</sup> privileged family in terms of the education and **stimulation**<sup>18</sup> provided by both parents and all the **siblings**<sup>19</sup>.

[00:04:02] Jane's father was, unusually for the time, very **keen**<sup>20</sup> on novels, on fiction books.

[00:04:09] This may sound a strange thing **to point out**<sup>21</sup>, but, as the name suggests, this form of writing – i.e. **prose**<sup>22</sup> fiction - was relatively new and **regarded**<sup>23</sup> with much suspicion, at least in English.

[00:04:24] Novels were seen as **suitable**<sup>24</sup> material only for women.

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<sup>16</sup> very much loved

<sup>17</sup> extremely

<sup>18</sup> a cause to be interested or engaged in something

<sup>19</sup> brothers and sisters

<sup>20</sup> interested in

<sup>21</sup> to mention

<sup>22</sup> ordinary form of written language rather than poetry

<sup>23</sup> considered

<sup>24</sup> acceptable, appropriate

[00:04:29] Compared to poetry, **prose** was easy to read and write, and therefore even uneducated and uncultured women would be able to enjoy it. It sounds terrible to say now, but this was the **predominant**<sup>25</sup> view at the time.

[00:04:45] The Austen household was clearly a **stimulating**<sup>26</sup> place where poetry, storytelling, writing and acting was common.

[00:04:54] And Jane's main influence and education **undoubtedly**<sup>27</sup> came through this **stimulating, cultured**<sup>28</sup>, highly **literary**<sup>29</sup> family background.

[00:05:04] But what about the wider context and the era in which she grew up?

[00:05:10] Of the three subjects of this mini-series, she was the oldest.

[00:05:15] Jane Austen was born in 1775, Charles Dickens was born in 1812, and the oldest of the famous Brontë sisters, Charlotte, was born in 1816.

[00:05:28] And in terms of what was going on in England and in Europe during Jane Austen's lifetime, she was 14 when the French Revolution started and 17 when the Napoleonic Wars began.

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<sup>25</sup> main, accepted by most

<sup>26</sup> encouraging or causing interest or enthusiasm

<sup>27</sup> certainly

<sup>28</sup> characterised by good taste and manners and good education

<sup>29</sup> relating to written works of art

[00:05:42] In fact, these wars, which **pitted**<sup>30</sup> Britain and its **allies**<sup>31</sup> against Napoleon Bonaparte's armies, would last for almost the entirety of Jane Austen's adult life. The war brought with it the very real fear of French invasion and occupation, and with it the collapse of the small-but-growing British empire.

[00:06:05] However, one of the **curiosities**<sup>32</sup> of her novels is that massive world events, such as the American War of Independence, the French Revolution and the **subsequent**<sup>33</sup> Napoleonic wars have such a minor or insignificant influence on the **self-contained**<sup>34</sup> world of her novels.

[00:06:24] In this respect she is the complete opposite of a writer like Tolstoy who **seized on**<sup>35</sup> the huge and **sensational**<sup>36</sup> scale of an event like Napoleon's march on Russia in order to provide the **backdrop**<sup>37</sup> to his epic novel, War and Peace.

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<sup>30</sup> set them (against)

<sup>31</sup> countries that had officially agreed to help each other during the war

<sup>32</sup> unusual or strange facts

<sup>33</sup> following

<sup>34</sup> having all that is needed

<sup>35</sup> took advantage of it right away

<sup>36</sup> very large, exciting

<sup>37</sup> background, setting

[00:06:42] This is, actually, kind of the point - the characters in Jane Austen's works lived such [isolated](#)<sup>38</sup> lives, focussed on marriage and family, that the events of the wider world were partially irrelevant.

[00:06:57] Now, let's move on and discuss her works, which really means her six novels that she published over the course of six years. Three of these - Northanger Abbey, Sense and Sensibility and Pride and Prejudice - were written when she was still in her 20s.

[00:07:15] Let's remind ourselves that at this time, not only was the novel a very new and barely recognised form of literature in the English-speaking world, but also that writers were expected to be male and that being a female novelist was [breaking relatively new ground](#)<sup>39</sup>.

[00:07:35] For a woman, the family was meant to be the main occupation, and someone who was known to spend lots of time writing was often considered to be [neglecting](#)<sup>40</sup> her [duties](#)<sup>41</sup> to her husband and children.

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<sup>38</sup> far away from people or events

<sup>39</sup> something relatively or somewhat different

<sup>40</sup> not paying proper attention to

<sup>41</sup> responsibilities

[00:07:50] In Jane Austen's case, she didn't have a husband or children, but there was a certain [stigma](#)<sup>42</sup> that was attached to the writing of novels.

[00:07:59] It is perhaps not surprising therefore that Jane chose to publish [initially](#) anonymously. Her first novel was titled simply "by a Lady".

[00:08:10] Her most famous novel, Pride and Prejudice, was [initially](#)<sup>43</sup> rejected in 1797 and was only eventually published in 1813, when it was an immediate [hit](#)<sup>44</sup>, earning her the sum of £140, which was enough to cover her living expenses for three years.

[00:08:30] Her growing reputation amongst the reading public and also the help of one of her most [prosperous](#)<sup>45</sup> brothers, Henry, who started and part-owned a private bank, meant that the real identity of the author became known amongst well-connected social circles.

[00:08:49] One of her most mature and [thought-provoking](#)<sup>46</sup> novels, Emma, was published in 1814 by one of the country's top publishers and was dedicated to the

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<sup>42</sup> shame or dishonour

<sup>43</sup> at the beginning

<sup>44</sup> success

<sup>45</sup> successful financially

<sup>46</sup> causing people to think seriously about something

Prince Regent—the King's son—who [incidentally](#)<sup>47</sup> was a [pleasure-loving](#)<sup>48</sup>, [disreputable](#)<sup>49</sup> and deeply unattractive man whom Jane [despised](#)<sup>50</sup>, she hated.

[00:09:12] But the Prince's librarian had invited Jane Austen to meet, had [hinted](#)<sup>51</sup> that the Prince would like her next novel to be dedicated to him, and she could hardly [refuse](#)<sup>52</sup>.

[00:09:24] Now, if you are [encountering](#)<sup>53</sup> Jane Austen and her works for the first time and know nothing about the world of her novels, let me try and give you a brief introduction.

[00:09:37] In general, her novels are about the challenges of making the right choices in life, especially the choices that a young person of her social status might make when it comes to choosing a life partner and [proceeding](#)<sup>54</sup> towards marriage.

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<sup>47</sup> by the way, speaking of which

<sup>48</sup> enjoying and looking for pleasure

<sup>49</sup> not respected

<sup>50</sup> hated

<sup>51</sup> suggested it not directly, implied

<sup>52</sup> not accept it

<sup>53</sup> hearing about, coming across

<sup>54</sup> continuing

[00:09:54] Perhaps this might sound [petty](#)<sup>55</sup>, small, or not such interesting material for a novel, but it's hard to [adequately](#)<sup>56</sup> stress the importance of these questions for a young lady growing up in this position of English society at this time.

[00:10:11] The expectation was that a young woman of this [gentry](#) class should find a [suitable](#) man who could provide her with the necessary economic status for her to maintain her position in life. That was the main goal, so it's quite [unsurprising](#)<sup>57</sup> that this is a [recurrent](#)<sup>58</sup> theme in Jane Austen's work.

[00:10:33] What is surprising, perhaps, is that Jane Austen herself never married.

[00:10:39] She had, it appears, every opportunity to marry and indeed accepted a [proposal](#)<sup>59</sup> of marriage from a man in 1802.

[00:10:49] However, [overnight](#)<sup>60</sup> she changed her mind, as she realised she didn't love him.

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<sup>55</sup> small

<sup>56</sup> in a way that is enough

<sup>57</sup> not surprising, expected

<sup>58</sup> appearing again and again

<sup>59</sup> offer

<sup>60</sup> very quickly

[00:10:55] Now, back to her work, her true genius was to create **believable**<sup>61</sup> human beings who live in a beautifully structured fictional world into which we as readers are **drawn**<sup>62</sup>.

[00:11:09] You follow the characters in her novels and they **grapple**<sup>63</sup> with **fundamental**<sup>64</sup> questions like what makes for a good education, both intellectually and emotionally, and what does it take to be a good parent?

[00:11:24] To state the obvious, these are questions that are so universal, so **fundamentally**<sup>65</sup> human, that the books are as enjoyable and interesting now as they would have been when they were first published.

[00:11:38] **Stylistically**<sup>66</sup>, she was revolutionary.

[00:11:41] Now, “revolutionary” isn’t a word often used to describe Jane Austen, and indeed the stories in her novels aren’t about wars, revolutions, or epic battles.

[00:11:54] But she did create a completely new style of writing.

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<sup>61</sup> seeming possible or real

<sup>62</sup> attracted to

<sup>63</sup> fight, struggle

<sup>64</sup> basic, very important

<sup>65</sup> in a way that is basic or very important

<sup>66</sup> in a way that relates to the style in which her works are written

[00:11:59] Up to this point not many novels had been written, as poetry or theatre were the **dominant**<sup>67</sup> genres, certainly in English.

[00:12:09] These novels would often **rely**<sup>68</sup> very heavily on the use of exchange of letters – in other words the novel was more or less a collection of letters from different characters.

[00:12:23] For literary **geeks**<sup>69</sup>, for people who are **keen on**<sup>70</sup> literature, the term for this in English is the **epistolary**<sup>71</sup> style.

[00:12:31] The other form that these early novels took was by way of either someone telling a story in the form of a journal or diary or through having a **narrator**<sup>72</sup> telling a story such as might happen, for example, in a **fairytale**<sup>73</sup>.

[00:12:48] In this case, the **narrator** “knows everything” – the technical term for this, again, is an **omniscient**<sup>74</sup> **narrator**.

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<sup>67</sup> having most influence or presense

<sup>68</sup> depend

<sup>69</sup> people with knowledge about and interest in it

<sup>70</sup> very interested in

<sup>71</sup> literary works in the form of letters

<sup>72</sup> the character who tells what is happening in a book

<sup>73</sup> traditional story about magical and imaginary beings and lands

<sup>74</sup> knowing everything

[00:12:57] What Jane Austen did - and what was so revolutionary - was that she combined the use of a main character or protagonist, through whose eyes the story was told, with a flow of thoughts which [reflected](#)<sup>75</sup> or [dramatised](#)<sup>76</sup> the ideas going through that central character's mind.

[00:13:17] It's a style written both in the first person and third person, and allows the reader to see, for example, when the [narrator](#) is wrong or makes mistakes.

[00:13:31] This style of writing, known as free, indirect style, has become the standard style for so many modern novels.

[00:13:40] It [enables](#)<sup>77</sup> the writer to [convey](#)<sup>78</sup> [subtleties](#)<sup>79</sup> of human thinking to a degree not really possible before Austen's [innovation](#)<sup>80</sup>.

[00:13:49] Indeed these are [subtleties](#) that can only really be [conveyed](#)<sup>81</sup> through books, through writing, this style doesn't really work as well through other forms of media, like film.

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<sup>75</sup> represented, showed

<sup>76</sup> put in a suitable for a book form

<sup>77</sup> makes him able

<sup>78</sup> express, make them known and understandable

<sup>79</sup> qualities and details that are difficult to find and describe

<sup>80</sup> new idea or method

<sup>81</sup> expressed, made known or understood

[00:14:02] And perhaps the most amazing aspect of this [innovation](#) was that Jane Austen didn't take part in [fancy](#)<sup>82</sup> literary circles, where [aspiring](#)<sup>83</sup> writers would discuss experimental techniques.

[00:14:17] She [came up with](#)<sup>84</sup> this completely herself, likely when she was still a teenager.

[00:14:23] Another revolutionary aspect to her work that is, to a certain extent, anti-revolutionary, was that she showed that you didn't need huge epic external events to provide a [backdrop](#) to a [compelling](#)<sup>85</sup> story.

[00:14:38] She showed that these small, [self-contained](#) worlds were more than enough, and in her own words all she needed was "three or four families" in a country setting.

[00:14:50] Now this might seem obvious to us, and so many great books and films have been created using only very few characters and very small, [self-contained](#) worlds, but Jane Austen was one of the first English writers to do this.

[00:15:07] She would, however, never know the true impact that her works would have.

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<sup>82</sup> high-class and fashionable

<sup>83</sup> trying to become successful

<sup>84</sup> produced, thought up

<sup>85</sup> very strong and interesting

[00:15:12] She died in 1817, at the age of 41, and it was only after her death that her novels started being published under her own name.

[00:15:23] Now, in the interest of balance, Jane Austen isn't without her [critics](#)<sup>86</sup>.

[00:15:29] The themes of her novels might be universal, but the world in which they are set is very small, and forms only a tiny, tiny part of society.

[00:15:40] Charlotte Brontë, who you'll hear more about in part three of this mini-series, [remarked](#)<sup>87</sup> that "the Passions are perfectly unknown to her".

[00:15:50] She thought Jane Austen was [superficial](#)<sup>88</sup>, and accused Pride and Prejudice of being "a [carefully](#)<sup>89</sup> [fenced](#)<sup>90</sup>, highly [cultivated](#)<sup>91</sup> garden with neat [borders](#)<sup>92</sup> and delicate flowers".

[00:16:03] The writer Joseph Conrad wrote to H.G. Wells, asking "What is all this about Jane Austen?"

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<sup>86</sup> people who expressed not favourable opinions about her

<sup>87</sup> said, mentioned

<sup>88</sup> concerned with only what is obvious, not deep

<sup>89</sup> with great attention or care

<sup>90</sup> surrounded with a protective barrier, enclosed

<sup>91</sup> providing lots of plants and flowers

<sup>92</sup> barriers that prevent communication with the outer world, boundaries

[00:16:10] He simply couldn't get it.

[00:16:12] Mark Twain wrote "I often want to [criticise](#)<sup>93</sup> Jane Austen, but her books [madden](#)<sup>94</sup> me so that I can't [conceal](#)<sup>95</sup> my [frenzy](#)<sup>96</sup> from the reader; and therefore I have to stop every time I begin. Every time I read Pride and Prejudice I want to dig her up and beat her over the [skull](#)<sup>97</sup> with her own [shin-bone](#)<sup>98</sup>."

[00:16:34] But there's a [clue](#)<sup>99</sup> in that quote there. He writes that "every time" he reads Pride and Prejudice.

[00:16:40] He might find it frustrating, but he can't stop himself [picking it up](#)<sup>100</sup> over and over again.

[00:16:47] And this is a theme throughout [criticism](#)<sup>101</sup> of Jane Austen.

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<sup>93</sup> express not favourable opinion about

<sup>94</sup> make me very annoyed

<sup>95</sup> hide

<sup>96</sup> uncontrolled behaviour

<sup>97</sup> the bones of the head surrounding the brain

<sup>98</sup> the bone from the front of the leg below the knee

<sup>99</sup> a useful sign or piece of information

<sup>100</sup> starting reading it

<sup>101</sup> expressions of not favourable opinions about her

[00:16:51] She can [justifiably](#)<sup>102</sup> be accused of writing about small worlds that are completely [detached](#)<sup>103</sup> from the lives of most people, where the main concern seems to be about finding a [suitably](#)<sup>104</sup> rich partner and behaving the correct way in society. She doesn't hide from that, indeed this is a theme throughout her books.

[00:17:14] But this is the world she knew, and it's the life that she lived. Her life was spent trying to find a [suitable](#) marriage partner, trying to fit in to Victorian societal [norms](#)<sup>105</sup>, trying to do the right thing, which certainly wasn't easy as a woman.

[00:17:34] Now, no discussion on Jane Austen would be complete without referring to the amazing range of popular [adaptations](#)<sup>106</sup> that have been inspired by her novels.

[00:17:45] For those [critics](#) who say that Jane Austen is [irrelevant](#)<sup>107</sup>, given the tiny [slither](#)<sup>108</sup> of society in which the stories take place, the amount of [spin-offs](#)<sup>109</sup> and [adaptations](#) certainly suggests that the themes are more widely [applicable](#)<sup>110</sup>.

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<sup>102</sup> with good reason

<sup>103</sup> separated

<sup>104</sup> in a right or appropriate way

<sup>105</sup> accepted standards of behaving

<sup>106</sup> works that have been remade into a new form

<sup>107</sup> not important, beside the point

<sup>108</sup> small part

<sup>109</sup> new productions based on her works

<sup>110</sup> relevant or relating to people

[00:18:01] Perhaps the most famous of the [adaptations](#) is a 1995 BBC version of Pride and Prejudice, most famous for the scene when a character called Mr Darcy, played by Colin Firth, walks through a lake and comes out [dripping<sup>111</sup>](#) wet.

[00:18:18] But there are some more [frivolous<sup>112</sup>](#) versions, such as Pride and Prejudice and Zombies and an Indian version, [Bride<sup>113</sup>](#) and Prejudice.

[00:18:29] In some cases, the [adaptations](#) imagine a world after a particular novel has finished. The crime writer PD James wrote a thriller based on the married life of Mr Darcy and Lizzie Bennet, called Death Comes to Pemberley.

[00:18:45] In another film, an Austen [enthusiast<sup>114</sup>](#) literally steps into the world of Pride and Prejudice – that’s called Lost in Austen.

[00:18:54] There’s even a film which sets the novel Emma in 1990s America, called Clueless.

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<sup>111</sup> very wet

<sup>112</sup> silly, not so serious

<sup>113</sup> a woman who is about to get or just got married

<sup>114</sup> very interested in her

[00:19:00] Now, from the English learner's point of view, these films can be a very good way to [engage with](#)<sup>115</sup> Jane Austen, and I'd definitely recommend watching some of them if you'd like an easier [route](#)<sup>116</sup> than starting with the novels.

[00:19:15] If you would like some safe recommendations of high quality films, I would go for the 1995 Sense and Sensibility, the 2005 Pride and Prejudice, and the recent [adaptation](#)<sup>117</sup> of Emma.

[00:19:30] The final thing to say is that one of the great things about Jane Austen is that she is interpreted [afresh](#)<sup>118</sup>, she is [reinterpreted](#)<sup>119</sup>, by each new generation.

[00:19:41] On that note, let me leave you with this image.

[00:19:45] The [heroine](#)<sup>120</sup> of Pride and Prejudice, Lizzie, is described by an awful character called Lady Catherine de Burgh as an "[obstinate](#)<sup>121</sup>, [headstrong](#)<sup>122</sup> girl".

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<sup>115</sup> create a connection with

<sup>116</sup> way

<sup>117</sup> a work that has been remade into a new form

<sup>118</sup> again in a new way

<sup>119</sup> understood again in a new way

<sup>120</sup> the main female character in the book

<sup>121</sup> very difficult to change, stubborn, strong-minded

<sup>122</sup> not having patience and easily annoyed, stubborn

[00:19:57] Obstinate means [unwilling](#)<sup>123</sup> to change your mind or opinion, and [headstrong](#) means a similar thing, but is more like [determined](#)<sup>124</sup> and [impatient](#)<sup>125</sup>.

[00:20:08] For Victorian traditionalists, this might have been seen as a [fitting](#)<sup>126</sup> [insult](#)<sup>127</sup>, as women in Victorian times were expected to be [submissive](#)<sup>128</sup> and [accepting](#)<sup>129</sup> of their father's and then their husband's wishes.

[00:20:24] Now, of course, being [determined](#) and independent are qualities to be admired, and it is [fitting](#) that this [insult](#), this [slur](#)<sup>130</sup>, has now been [embraced](#)<sup>131</sup>.

[00:20:36] You can see girls t-shirts and jumpers with the [slogan](#)<sup>132</sup> "[obstinate](#), [headstrong](#) girl" [emblazoned](#)<sup>133</sup> across the front.

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<sup>123</sup> not wanting to

<sup>124</sup> having made a strong decision and not wanting to change it

<sup>125</sup> not having patience and easily annoyed

<sup>126</sup> suitable, appropriate

<sup>127</sup> expression of not showing respect, offensive comment

<sup>128</sup> ready to do what others ask

<sup>129</sup> ready to accept and do

<sup>130</sup> expression of not showing respect, offensive comment

<sup>131</sup> accepted and supported

<sup>132</sup> a short easily remembered phrase

<sup>133</sup> displayed or shown

[00:20:45] She might have died over 200 years ago, but if Jane Austen could see young women just like her wearing t-shirts with these words on, I'm sure it would bring a quiet smile to her face.

[00:21:01] OK then, that is it for today's episode on Jane Austen, the queen of English literature.

[00:21:08] As a reminder, this is going to be part one of a mini-series on great Victorian authors. Next up it'll be Charles Dickens, then part three will be on the Bronte sisters, Emily, Charlotte and Anne.

[00:21:21] As always, I would love to know what you thought of this episode.

[00:21:25] Have you read any Jane Austen, either in translation or in the original? Have you seen any of the films?

[00:21:32] If so, what did you think about them? Are there any writers in your language that Jane Austen reminds you of?

[00:21:38] I would love to know, so let's get this discussion started.

[00:21:41] You can head right into our community forum, which is at [community.leonardoenglish.com](http://community.leonardoenglish.com) and get chatting away to other curious minds.

[00:21:50] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds, by Leonardo English.

**English Learning for Curious Minds | Episode #269**  
**Jane Austen - The Queen of English Literature**

[00:21:55] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

[END OF EPISODE]

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## Key vocabulary

<b>Word</b>	<b>Definition</b>
<b>Greats</b>	important works
<b>In their own right</b>	because of their own special qualities
<b>Failing</b>	becoming weaker
<b>Insist</b>	keep doing it, persist
<b>Battered</b>	damaged by age and repeated use
<b>Sacred</b>	considered very important and valuable
<b>Much-loved</b>	which she loved very much
<b>Shiny</b>	made even or smooth and bright by use or rubbing
<b>Gentry</b>	upper middle class
<b>Aristocracy</b>	the highest social class
<b>Clergyman</b>	a male priest
<b>Spacious</b>	large, with a lot of space

<b>Rectory</b>	the house provided to a priest
<b>Ensure</b>	make it certain to happen
<b>Boarding school</b>	a school in which students lived and studied
<b>Beloved</b>	very much loved
<b>Immensely</b>	extremely
<b>Stimulation</b>	a cause to be interested or engaged in something
<b>Siblings</b>	brothers and sisters
<b>Keen</b>	interested in
<b>To point out</b>	to mention
<b>Prose</b>	ordinary form of written language rather than poetry
<b>Regarded</b>	considered
<b>Suitable</b>	acceptable, appropriate
<b>Predominant</b>	main, accepted by most
<b>Stimulating</b>	encouraging or causing interest or enthusiasm
<b>Undoubtedly</b>	certainly

<b>Cultured</b>	characterised by good taste and manners and good education
<b>Literary</b>	relating to written works of art
<b>Pitted</b>	set them (against)
<b>Allies</b>	countries that had officially agreed to help each other during the war
<b>Curiosities</b>	unusual or strange facts
<b>Subsequent</b>	following
<b>Self-contained</b>	having all that is needed
<b>Seized on</b>	took advantage of it right away
<b>Sensational</b>	very large, exciting
<b>Backdrop</b>	background, setting
<b>Isolated</b>	far away from people or events
<b>Breaking relatively new ground</b>	something relatively or somewhat different
<b>Neglecting</b>	not paying proper attention to
<b>Duties</b>	responsibilities
<b>Stigma</b>	shame or dishonour

<b>Initially</b>	at the beginning
<b>Hit</b>	success
<b>Prosperous</b>	successful financially
<b>Thought-provoking</b>	causing people to think seriously about something
<b>Incidentally</b>	by the way, speaking of which
<b>Pleasure-loving</b>	enjoying and looking for pleasure
<b>Disreputable</b>	not respected
<b>Despised</b>	hated
<b>Hinted</b>	suggested it not directly, implied
<b>Refuse</b>	not accept it
<b>Encountering</b>	hearing about, coming across
<b>Proceeding</b>	continuing
<b>Petty</b>	small
<b>Adequately</b>	in a way that is enough
<b>Unsurprising</b>	not surprising, expected

<b>Recurrent</b>	appearing again and again
<b>Proposal</b>	offer
<b>Overnight</b>	very quickly
<b>Believable</b>	seeming possible or real
<b>Drawn</b>	attracted to
<b>Grapple</b>	fight, struggle
<b>Fundamental</b>	basic, very important
<b>Fundamentally</b>	in a way that is basic or very important
<b>Stylistically</b>	in a way that relates to the style in which her works are written
<b>Dominant</b>	having most influence or presense
<b>Rely</b>	depend
<b>Geeks</b>	people with knowledge about and interest in it
<b>Keen on</b>	very interested in
<b>Epistolary</b>	literary works in the form of letters
<b>Narrator</b>	the character who tells what is happening in a book

<b>Fairytale</b>	traditional story about magical and imaginary beings and lands
<b>Omniscient</b>	knowing everything
<b>Reflected</b>	represented, showed
<b>Dramatised</b>	put in a suitable for a book form
<b>Enables</b>	makes him able
<b>Convey</b>	express, make them known and understandable
<b>Subtleties</b>	qualities and details that are difficult to find and describe
<b>Innovation</b>	new idea or method
<b>Conveyed</b>	expressed, made known or understood
<b>Fancy</b>	high-class and fashionable
<b>Aspiring</b>	trying to become successful
<b>Came up with</b>	produced, thought up
<b>Compelling</b>	very strong and interesting
<b>Critics</b>	people who expressed not favourable opinions about her
<b>Remarked</b>	said, mentioned

<b>Superficial</b>	concerned with only what is obvious, not deep
<b>Carefully</b>	with great attention or care
<b>Fenced</b>	surrounded with a protective barrier, enclosed
<b>Cultivated</b>	providing lots of plants and flowers
<b>Borders</b>	barriers that prevent communication with the outer world, boundaries
<b>Criticise</b>	express not favourable opinion about
<b>Madden</b>	make me very annoyed
<b>Conceal</b>	hide
<b>Frenzy</b>	uncontrolled behaviour
<b>Skull</b>	the bones of the head surrounding the brain
<b>Shin-bone</b>	the bone from the front of the leg below the knee
<b>Clue</b>	a useful sign or piece of information
<b>Picking it up</b>	starting reading it
<b>Criticism</b>	expressions of not favourable opinions about her
<b>Justifiably</b>	with good reason

<b>Detached</b>	separated
<b>Suitably</b>	in a right or appropriate way
<b>Norms</b>	accepted standards of behaving
<b>Adaptations</b>	works that have been remade into a new form
<b>Irrelevant</b>	not important, beside the point
<b>Slither</b>	small part
<b>Spin-offs</b>	new productions based on her works
<b>Applicable</b>	relevant or relating to people
<b>Dripping</b>	very wet
<b>Frivolous</b>	silly, not so serious
<b>Bride</b>	a woman who is about to get or just got married
<b>Enthusiast</b>	very interested in her
<b>Engage with</b>	create a connection with
<b>Route</b>	way
<b>Adaptation</b>	a work that has been remade into a new form

<b>Afresh</b>	again in a new way
<b>Reinterpreted</b>	understood again in a new way
<b>Heroine</b>	the main female character in the book
<b>Obstinate</b>	very difficult to change, stubborn, strong-minded
<b>Headstrong</b>	not having patience and easily annoyed, stubborn
<b>Unwilling</b>	not wanting to
<b>Determined</b>	having made a strong decision and not wanting to change it
<b>Impatient</b>	not having patience and easily annoyed
<b>Fitting</b>	suitable, appropriate
<b>Insult</b>	expression of not showing respect, offensive comment
<b>Submissive</b>	ready to do what others ask
<b>Accepting</b>	ready to accept and do
<b>Slur</b>	expression of not showing respect, offensive comment
<b>Embraced</b>	accepted and supported
<b>Slogan</b>	a short easily remembered phrase

**Emblazoned**

displayed or shown

*We'd love to get your feedback on this episode.*

*What did you like? What could we do better?*

*What did you struggle to understand?*

*Let us know in the forum [community.leonardoenglish.com](https://community.leonardoenglish.com)*