

The *New York Times* Best-Selling Series

Who Was Jane Austen?



by Sarah Fabiny

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by Sarah Fabiny

illustrated by Jerry Hoare

Penguin Workshop
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For my mom, who taught me “there is no enjoyment like reading!”—SF

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Who Was Jane Austen?

Every year, *People* magazine publishes a special issue. The magazine focuses on the twenty-five most interesting people of the year. In 1995, their list included President Bill Clinton; Brad Pitt, one of the world's most famous movie stars; Princess Diana, the “people's princess”; and Jane Austen, the author of six best-selling books. It was not a surprise that the president of the United States would be on the list, but Jane Austen had been dead since 1817!



But in 1995, several very popular TV miniseries and movies based on her books had premiered. Why would books that were published so long ago be so popular two hundred years later? Perhaps it was because Jane Austen's characters were smart, funny, and very

entertaining—even into the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Readers in the 1800s felt a connection to the people in her books. And people today still feel as if they know her characters personally.

Jane Austen created books about regular people and their everyday struggles and triumphs. She proved that ordinary characters and the drama of their daily lives could sometimes make the most interesting stories.

