

EXTRACT 1: THE LIFE OF JANE AUSTEN (Taken from Chapter 31 – The parsonage, Godmersham Park)

‘Well,’ he said, smiling at her solemnly, ‘I read a marvellous book. *Pride and Prejudice*. We spoke about it before. So, I wrote to the author, at the address of the publisher, a long letter saying what I liked about it and how clever I thought it, and saying a few words about my own position as a young curate with good intentions but no situation. And to my surprise, I got a letter back. It was not only from the author herself, whose ... sex ... was quite other than I had imagined, but it also contained a most kind, most generous, offer of a post. She said she thought she might enjoy – as she put it – having a literary parson.’

He looked intently at Fanny, and must have seen that he was saying nothing that she hadn’t begun to deduce for herself.

‘And was it ...?’ she began.

‘Yes, it was,’ he said simultaneously.

‘... Aunt Jane!’

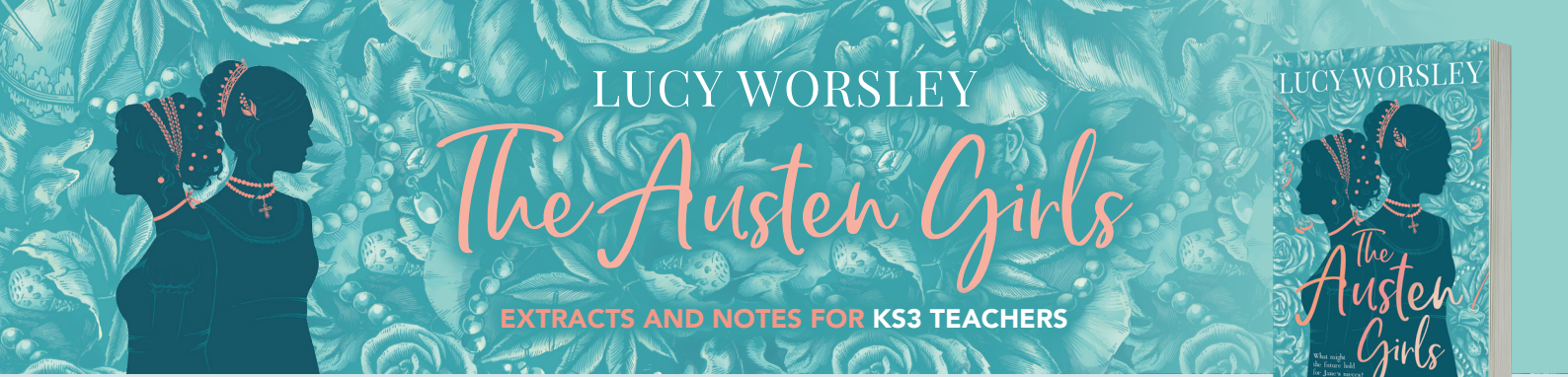
Fanny leaped to her feet, and almost clapped her hands.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

- What did you already know about Jane Austen before reading the story? Share with a partner.
- How has the text given you extra sight into the life of Jane Austen and her family?
- In the extract, why was Mr Drummer so surprised at the letter he received back from ‘the author’?
- What is Fanny’s relationship like with her aunt? Why does Fanny find her aunt such an inspiration?
- Which characters bear most similarities to Aunt Jane’s character? Which characters are most different to her?

ACTIVITY: THE AUTHOR HERSELF

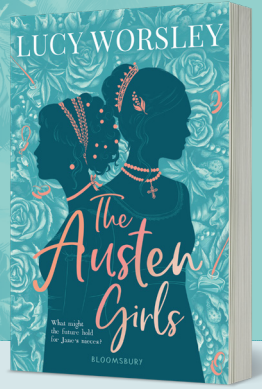
- In *The Austen Girls*, the writer embeds a lot of factual information about Jane Austen’s life in the story she tells. Use the Epilogue on pages 283–286 as a starting point and note down key details about Jane Austen’s life. Use the worksheet provided. Then, think and look back over the rest of the story and other work you have done on Jane Austen to complete your worksheet with as much information as possible.
- In the large rectangular box in the centre, draw a sketch of Jane Austen. In your drawing, try to convey something about Jane’s life and character. For instance, you could draw her writing at her desk, or with Godmersham Park behind her. Think about what fashion was like in the late 18th and early 19th century to make Jane’s appearance as accurate as possible.
- Feedback the work you have done as a class and add in any extra ideas that you might have missed. By the end of the lesson, you should have lots of biographical notes that will help you in future lessons and when studying Jane Austen in the future.



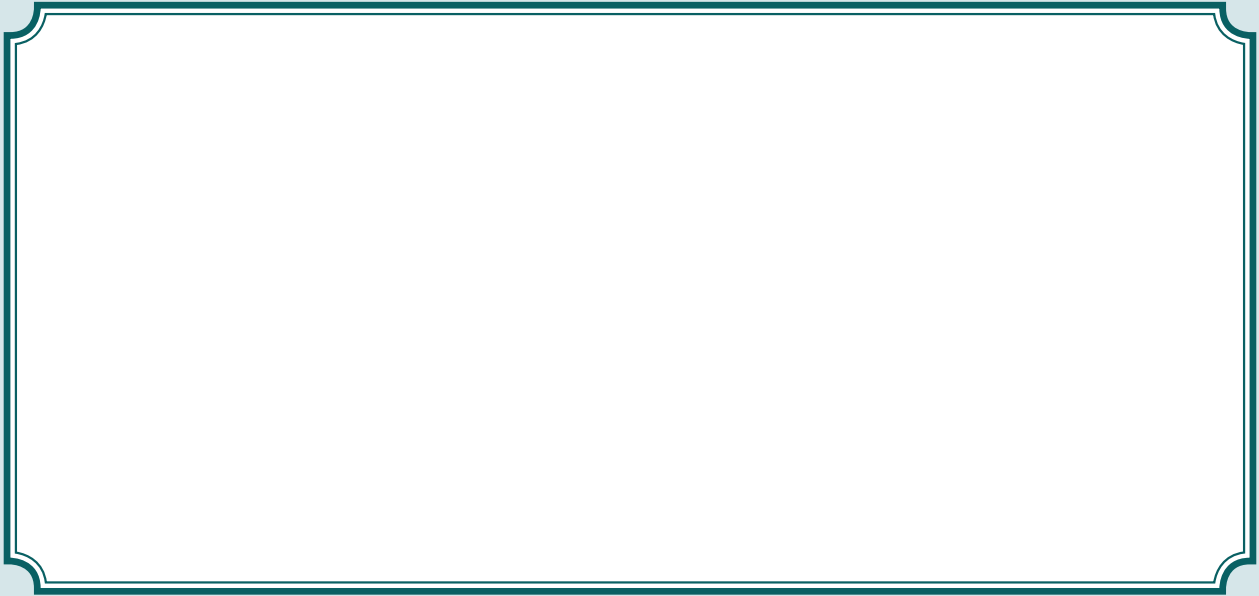
LUCY WORSLEY

The Austen Girls

EXTRACTS AND NOTES FOR KS3 TEACHERS



JANE AUSTEN: THE AUTHOR HERSELF



Family life and friends

Context - late 18th
and early 19th century
England

Other key biographical
details

Education and career

Love and marriage

Her legacy