



Catharine and Other Writings (Oxford World's Classics)

Jane Austen

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Jane Austen began writing in her early teens, and filled three notebooks with her fiction. Her earliest work reflects her interest in the novel as a genre; in brilliant short pieces she plays with plots, stock characters, diction, and style, developing a sense of form at a remarkably early age.

The characters of these stories have a jaunty and never-failing devotion to themselves. They perpetually lie, cheat, steal - and occasionally commit murder. Throughout these short or unfinished pieces, Austen exhibits her sense of the preposterous in life and fiction with tough-mindedness and robust humour. Alice, the mock-heroine of *Jack and Alice* has 'many rare and charming qualities, but Sobriety is not one of them'. In her later published fiction, Austen had learned to take demands for propriety seriously, reining in whatever might be thought boisterous or coarse. Here we see Jane Austen without her inhibitions.

In addition to prose fiction and prayers, this collection also contains many of Jane Austen's poems, written to amuse or console friends, and rarely reprinted. The texts have been compared with the manuscripts and edited to give a number of new readings. The notes recreate the texture of daily life in Jane Austen's age, and demonstrate her knowledge of the fiction of her time. The introduction by Margaret Anne Doody sets the writings within the context of Jane Austen's life and literary career.

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