

The Austen Escape: Interview with Katherine

1. **What was the inspiration for *The Austen Escape*?**

Inspiration from this story came from many places. One source was a C.S. Lewis novel and the other was a nonfiction book positing on how we become our best selves. That stuck with me – How do we become our best selves? What do we (or two young women) need to lay down or pick up to get there? And so... The *Austen Escape* began.

2. **What was it about Jane Austen that inspires you?**

Jane is brilliant. You may like her writing or not enjoy it, but no can deny her brilliance. She pinpoints human nature with unerring accuracy and gets to the measure of a person in a single line. Consider “I was given good principles, but left to follow them in pride and conceit...” Hello, Mr. Darcy. Or “Vanity was the beginning and the end of Sir Walter Elliot.” Goodbye, Mr. Elliot. In fact, Austen is so influential that a 2013 study found her writing to have the greatest influence on modern authors. I gather some computer analyzed almost four thousand books and came to a conclusion that seems reasonable to me – we emulate Austen. But besides all that, I find her delightful. I love her characters and how they move across their stories.

3. **What research did you do for this book?**

I lived on an expat assignment in London for a couple years, so I dusted off my memories of both London and Bath. I also did extensive research in to electrical and industrial engineering. Much of that is not in the book, but it did form how Mary Davies, the heroine, thinks about the world and her place in it. I also did some research into all things Regency. That was fun – so many layers.

4. **Has anything interesting happened as a result of writing this book or other books you’ve written?**

I’ve met so many people – authors, readers, bloggers, social media friends... It’s been a wonderful ride.

5. **What other books for writing have you done?**

I’ve written four books prior to *The Austen Escape*. I’ll give you a brief description – an elevator pitch – of each.

Dear Mr. Knightley: After years of hiding behind the voices and stories of her favorite literary characters, twenty-three year old Samantha Moore finds her own voice, her own story and true love by sharing it, through letters, with another.

Lizzy and Jane: Through their shared memories of food, literature, loves from the past, two sisters find the courage to face the challenges of the present.

The Bronte Plot: Unlikely cohorts and unlikelier friends, Lucy and Helen travel from Chicago to England intending to shop for antiques. Instead they lay down secrets, forge new paths and find their way back home.

A Portrait of Emily Price: After a whirlwind romance and marriage, Emily Price heads home to Italy with her new husband to find that life at its richest is found only when she accepts its chaotic beauty.

The Austen Escape: After years of following her best friend's lead, Mary Davies finds a whimsical trip back to Austen's Regency England paves the way towards her best future.