

# The Sanditon Enterprise

The book is privately printed: the title page claims that it was written by Jane Austen in 1818, and revised by her in 1824. This would immediately indicate that it's a fake, of course; but it's a contemporary fake, because everything about the book suggests Nineteenth Century construction. The book does not particularly appear to be esoteric or otherwise unusual. The contents, however... well.

The plot of *The Sanditon Enterprise* starts off reasonably close to Jane Austen's unfinished novel *Sanditon*: young heroine Charlotte Heywood is, through a mildly contrived set of circumstances, brought to the up-and-coming seaside resort town of Sanditon as a guest of one Mr. Parker and Lady Denham. There Charlotte meets Lady Denham's obligatory poor-but-virtuous niece Clara; Denham's poor-but-ambitious niece and nephew Esther and Edward (fop); Mr. Parker's just the perfect age for Charlotte brother Sidney; a romantically ill heiress from the West Indies (Ms. Lambe) that Lady Denham wishes to marry off to Edward; and Diana Parker, sister to Mr. Parker and self-appointed assistant to Ms. Lambe.

But Edward and Clara are apparently secretly enamoured with each other, so of course it transpires that Clara is promptly beset by a strange, wasting illness of her own. One that causes screaming nightmares in the victim -- and leaves blue-black marks on the body. This is a dreadful mystery, and one that could destroy any chance of Sanditon becoming a tourist mecca; but fortunately Mr. Parker knows that Charlotte was trained by her eccentric parents - both of whom were notorious adventurers before they retired to the countryside -- to do investigations.

With Sidney in tow (and proving to be surprisingly and suspiciously skilled in all sorts of mayhem, including how to blow things up), Charlotte soon discovers that the horrible and dangerous Caribbean shape-shifting *soucriant* is haunting Sanditon! From there it's merely a matter of Charlotte and Sidney fighting Voodoo zombies, rescuing each other, playing with a remarkable amount of what would be high-tech for the time period, fighting off more zombies, rescuing everybody else, discovering a spy for the secret King of the Pirates (the long-thought-dead first husband of Mrs. Parker), having various dinner parties where it's dancing in front and desperate fencing duels out back, witty banter, having the King of the Pirates sacrifice himself to keep a sloop packed with black powder from sailing into town and exploding, and of course the final

denouement, when it turns out that the *soucriant* has actually stolen the identity of Diana Parker, **not** Ms. Lambe (who has been kept drugged lest she revealed that she is actually the illegitimate daughter of Lady Denham's first husband, and also of course a powerful Voodoo priestess who must return to her homeland posthaste). The *soucriant* is slain, the real Diana is rescued, Charlotte marries Sidney, Edward marries Clara, Ms. Lambe returns home, and Sanditon is now the Place To Be Seen Because Of All The Adventures.

...Yeah. What will drive researchers slightly insane about this book is that it absolutely has Jane Austen's style and voice to it. If Austen had ever written a technothriller -- if she even knew what a technothriller *was* -- it would be look precisely like this book. Which is absurd, because it's an absolute fake. Jane Austen died in 1817. This is a known thing. This book is clearly a very clever pastiche.

Which **absolutely** does not explain why ninja keep appearing, and trying to get *The Sanditon Enterprise* back. Yes. Actual ninja. Black ninja suits and everything. Good luck trying to get an explanation, too.

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