



My Particular Friend

Jennifer Petkus

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Miss Charlotte House will not admit impediments to marriage, not even when those impediments include scandal, blackmail and even a duel to the death. With the help of her particular friend Miss Jane Woodsen, she deduces all that happens in Bath-both good and ill-and together they ensure that true love's course runs smooth, even though both friends have suffered tragedies that prevent their own happiness. These six affairs, set in Bath, England, during the Napoleonic War, are inspired by the creations of both Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and Jane Austen. The sequel to this book is *Our Mutual Friends*: <https://amazon.com/Mutual-Friends-Charlotte-H...>

My Particular Friend Details

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Author : Jennifer Petkus

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From Reader Review My Particular Friend for online ebook

Larry Feldman says

A neat combination of Doyle's detective and Jane Austen's romantic sagas.

IndieJane says

When Sherlock Holmes meets Jane Austen ... I had no idea what I was getting myself into. You see, I've never read (or watched) any Sherlock Holmes, and mysteries are always strange to me. I have a hard time getting into them. But Jane Austen, now that I like. Or is it love? Regardless, the premise was interesting, and I decided to give it a shot. Oh my. What fun!

Jennifer has created a character – Charlotte House – whom I both loved and hated. She's brilliant! She's elegant. She's rich and eccentric. And did I mention she's brilliant? But she's also very confident in and aware of her brilliance, and expects to receive her own way in everything. She's a little condescending too. So I alternately wanted to strangle her and watch mesmerized as she worked her magic. We are introduced to Miss House via Miss Woodsen, who becomes her particular friend and companion. Miss Woodsen I became quite fond of, she's young and rather inexperienced, but under the care of Miss House, she begins to grow in confidence and experience from being able to move in the finer circles of society, despite the unfortunate hand fate dealt her family. And she is able to join Miss House on her work.

This work, you see, is a very delicate occupation. It involves espionage and sleuthing, not to mention a keen eye for detail and the accurate reading of characters. Miss House is a cross between a private investigator and a matchmaker, her primary area of concern is making sure that matches take place as they should – without unnecessary impediment. Sometimes this means unraveling multiple engagements at once (that was a hilarious tale, to be sure!), and sometimes it means stepping out of the romantic realm and investigating the mysterious leaking of top secret information. In *My Particular Friend*, readers go through a series of “cases” with Misses Woodsen and House, with each reading almost like a novella – though all connected neatly with continuing threads of life involving the two ladies. It's an easy read, with twists and turns that keep the reader's interest, without turning into a taxing mystery. I found myself thinking that Jane Austen herself would appreciate some of Miss House's observations on character and human nature. All in all an agreeable read, though Ms. Petkus did leave us hanging with Miss House's concluding statement! I can only hope there is more to come – I feel a very interesting story is afoot.

3.5 out of 5 stars

M.J. Johnson says

This is the second of Jennifer Petkus' books that I've read. Her first book was the sci-fi/police procedural novel 'Good Cop, Dead Cop' which I enjoyed immensely. Petkus has an easy style that flows pleasantly off the page, in fact Petkus can sometimes delude the reader into thinking that what she does is straightforward

and therefore just plain simple - believe me, the only simplicity in this is her art! Like the famous English authors she admires and pays tribute to with 'My Particular Friend', it is only as one pauses to reflect on what a pleasant experience it is to be reading her book that one becomes truly aware of her writerly skills.

Here's an example of the quality of writing she often attains: "The clock in the hallway caught my attention in that fleeting way that clocks sometimes do. Most of the time they do their job of measuring out the seconds, minutes and hours of our lives unnoticed save when there is an anticipated engagement and are then consulted with regularity. Sometimes they remind one of the remaining hours until dawn during a troubled night. But occasionally they simply remind one of the passage of time, not a specific period mind you, but just the simple unfolding of one day into the next and the sense that things are as they always should be."

Is this fan fiction? I suppose it must inevitably be classified under this heading; however, the 'label' seems to somehow diminish what Jennifer Petkus has achieved here. It's a great idea: combining the period, style and social mores of the Regency era and its writers like Fanny Burney and Jane Austen with the crime-solving thrills of Conan Doyle and his greatest of all creations, Sherlock Holmes. The book is divided into stories or cases that take its three female protagonists on various 'adventures' - the book's very reminiscent of the story collections of the great sleuth in the way it's laid out. In all of the tales Petkus' wit is never far from the mouths and thoughts of her characters: my wife can testify to the smile I bore on my face as I read this book on her borrowed Kindle at bedtime reading. Even the tale where the author presents us with an earlier incarnation of PG Wodehouse's Bertie Wooster, though Wooster seemed somewhat anachronistic in his speech and use of language, I was quickly able to forgive this simply because the antics really made me laugh. As for the three main female protagonists, Charlotte House, Jane Woodsen and Margaret Fitzugh, Jennifer Petkus would appear to have more planned for them, as at the end of this novel they depart Bath for the London season. I shall certainly be looking forward to this and must definitely put Petkus' third novel 'Jane Actually' on my TBR list.

'My Particular Friend' is a pleasantly distracting confection - very nicely done and a delight from start to finish!

Rebecca Emin says

I won a copy of this book via Goodreads First Reads.

What a super, different book. I had read of the comparisons with Austen and Doyle, however I made sure to read this book as if I had no knowledge of this, to avoid any influence on my opinion.

I absolutely loved the character Miss Charlotte House, and her friend and our narrator Miss Jane Woodsen. The way their friendship develops and grows is great to read.

I particularly enjoyed the reveals of how things happened for each case in this book, as well as the fact that each case could feasibly be read almost as a standalone short story - this is wonderful when you have limited reading time.

I am very impressed with the fact that the author who wrote this is American. I was "hearing" it in my head

in a very clear old-fashioned English accent.

I would *love* to read a sequel to this book. The characters and the writing are wonderful. Fingers crossed!

Jennifer says

I found this book to be refreshingly creative, although it used elements from many familiar books. It's a mixture of Jane Austen and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle with a dash of Dickens. There was a lot to love - wonderful characters, unique plot with a lot of twists and turns, and a very realistic aura (you can tell that the author has done her research). There were a couple of things that rubbed me wrong (two sections especially, at the beginning and again at the very end), but overall I was quite impressed.

Pamela Mingle says

Loved this witty and clever blend of Holmes detection with Regency sensibilities. What a unique view of the "marriage mart," so different than the way it is usually portrayed. Will hope for a sequel to find out what happens to Charlotte and Miss Woodsen during their season in London.

Jackie says

I really don't do the whole Jane Austen thing, or the Sherlock Holmes thing either, so I very reluctantly agreed to be an early reader for this book. It didn't take long for me to figure out that I would have been a fool to miss out on this book. It is absolutely delightful, with plenty of humor and mystery. It concerns the inestimable Miss Charlotte House, a brilliant woman known for her ability to help in matchmaking situations. She can quiet scandals or start them, whichever serves her purpose. Miss Jane Woodsen, a young lady in dire states after her father's death and her family's crash in wealth and status, ends up a guest of, and then an assistant to, Miss House and her investigations and machinations. It might sound like light fare, but it actually very quick witted and absorbing. This first book in a planned series involves six different "cases", leaving the investigative team, at the end of the book, planning to move back to London and take on the big city in the second novel. All in all, a very entertaining book for mystery lovers and fans of the England of the early 1800s.

Christine says

This book is set in Bath during the period of the Napoleonic wars. It is the story of three ladies who team up to solve several affairs.

Each affair (or case) is a sort of romantic conundrum. Usually some individual seems to have erred in the romance department and finds themselves at Miss House's doorstep begging her to rectify the situation. Most of the affairs are light-hearted and the outcome is desirable. A couple others seemed more sinister and the ladies were in some potentially dangerous situations.

Jane is the narrator in this book, and her father has recently committed suicide after going broke. She meets up with Charlotte House when Charlotte catches her attempting to shoplift a pair of gloves. A quick friendship is formed and Charlotte insists that Jane come and stay with her. Shortly after, Charlotte asks Jane to assist her with her work, and the ladies work together with Mrs Fitzhugh to solve the mysteries and romantic mistakes that others have made.

Charlotte House is a unique character. She befriends Jane quickly and takes her in. She understands Jane's situation and shares her home and life with her. She does not seem to expect much in return except for her friendship and assistance with the affairs. She can be aloof and cold at times, but then at other times she surprises the reader with her warmth and compassion. I wasn't really sure how Miss House had become a matchmaker of sorts. Her past was a mystery and even Jane didn't seem to know that much about her.

On the very last page of the book, we get to read an interesting tidbit of information from Charlotte's past. I truly hope there is a sequel so we can find out more about Charlotte, and I would also like to find out what happens between Jane and Mr. Wallace!

I don't usually read books like this and have never read anything by Jane Austen, and perhaps only one story by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle so I cannot say if the style of writing in this book is similar. I can say that it was a truly entertaining book and that I enjoyed the different affairs that the ladies resolved.

I received this book for free from Goodreads First Reads. Thank you!

suzi says

Awesome set of mysteries with a little bit of romance to spice it up. I want to know what happens next but it seems there's no next book :((Note: The stories are finished. I just wanted to know what happened/happens to Charlotte, Jane, et al)

Jeffrey says

In her fledgling foray into the growing field of Austenesque fan fiction, author Jennifer Petkus takes an entirely new direction from her first novel, *Good Cop, Dead Cop*, with *My Particular Friend*, mixing up Regency match making and mystery, which some may argue are one in the same. My attempts to further sub-categorize it utterly fail. But, let's try a recipe: Combine the crime-solving of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, the location and dialogue of Jane Austen, the humor and romance of Frances Burney, mash-up thoroughly and you get something like "Matrimonial private investigators, Inc."

The adventure is set in Bath during the Napoleonic wars and showcases three totally un-alike heroines: The first is the mastermind, Miss Charlotte House, who is one of the most fascinating fictional personalities this reader has yet come across. She is stately tall; her elegance turns heads all over Bath; her presence commands awe and respect; her enigmatic mind is near-genius in its capabilities; nothing in Bath of any consequence escapes her notice. She is relentless and unconventional. Neither is she above thievery or deception in order to accomplish her mission. Mercurial and unpredictable, she can be fiercely loyal, generous with her wealth, and often kindly to everyone. Or, she can be mercilessly uncompromising in the demands on her partners and clients. The second is Miss Jane Woodsen, the first-person narrator of the tale.

She is young and naïve but shows the potential analytical skills that Miss House seeks. The third is Mrs. Margaret Fitzhugh, the mother-figure whose relationship to the leader is a closely-held secret.

Miss Woodsen is in desperate straits since her gentleman father committed suicide over losing his fortune and his property has been entailed away. Miss House rescues destitute Jane off the streets of Bath and offers her a situation. In exchange for shelter, raiment, and a living, all Miss House desires of Jane is for her to become a “particular friend” and protégé’. She is thus welcomed into Charlotte’s home as a respected “gentlewoman.”

What is Miss House’s “living?” In her own words: (Charlotte conversing with Jane) “I suppose you could say I’m an intermediary. Mothers come to me and ask my aid in the matter of their daughter’s matrimonial prospects.” “I see,” I said, puzzled. “And of this service....” “I am NOT in trade, my dear.”

Within this affair are five matrimonial episodes that defy solving until the parties seek Miss House for assistance. The episodes tax the ladies and their informants to the limits of their abilities. Each Episode contains its own distinct mood from the sinister to the wildly funny to the deceitful to the romantic.

The prime cargo is the suspense generated within these romantic mysteries but the engine that drives that cargo along is the exquisitely entertaining dialogue between the three ladies, their friends, acquaintances and clients. In true Austen style the author just nails the quaint civility and manners that predominated that time period without any overt sexuality, profanity, or unnecessary violence.

A sample quote from the clever wit of the author had me laughing out loud in its ridiculousness: (Jane speaking to Charlotte) “I often wondered aloud how troublesome it would be to retain so much knowledge, but she always said when information no longer was useful she promptly forgot it. I found difficulty believing her statement and asked her to give me an example of knowledge she no longer found useful. She countered that she could not because she had forgotten any examples. I countered that she could not cite an example because knowledge never becomes useless. She merely looked at me, blinked twice and said ‘I’m sorry, what were we talking about?’”

Two significant threads woven through the entire affair bind the episodes together. A tantalizing romance slowly blossoms between Miss Woodsen and one Mr. Wallace, an erstwhile military field physician who assists Miss House in her tasks. And, what is the source of the tragic sorrow of Miss House that surfaces at times but remains a mystery for the entire affair? Why does this oh-so eligible lady, with such beauty, wealth, and brilliance remain single into her late twenties?

The conclusion of the affair is enticingly open-ended as the ladies plan a season in London. Will there be new romantic tangles to solve? Will Mr. Wallace follow them? Will Charlotte find love? These questions BEG for a sequel! Or, will author Jennifer Petkus take an entirely different direction? Perhaps the author’s fertile imagination will prove to be as unpredictable as Miss Charlotte House herself. Whatever the outcome, I sense we have uncovered an emerging literary talent here of considerable promise.

(Please visit www.austenprose.com for the original publication of this review as well as to enjoy other reviews of Austen-inspired books)

Jaime says

This is an intelligent homage to Austen, Conan Doyle, and Burney as embodied by two Regency-era ladies subtly solving domestic mysteries in Bath. I enjoyed it immensely.

Jane Greensmith says

Really enjoying this Regency female Sherlockian romp--fun to recognize phrases, names, and references to so many of my favorite books and authors.

Melissa says

I'm having a hard time rating this book. For the fluidity of the language, the intelligence, and creativity that went into this book, I'd give it 5 stars. The characters were very much a female version of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson. The author managed to capture the essence of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's beloved characters and yet give them the feminine traits appropriate for female characters. The reason for my 3 stars has to do more with the excitement of the book. I wavered back and forth whether to give this 4 or 3 stars. While three of the cases really captured my imagination. The others were not as thrilling and I thought it more an exercise in paying homage to Holmes. There is a cliff hanger dropped at the end of the book and it definitely begs for a sequel. I'd definitely like to read the sequel and I can't wait to find out what ultimately happens with the characters. It just didn't have the excitement of other books I've read where I want to stay up all night reading. But on the whole, I thought it was creative and a definite read for those who love Sherlock Holmes

Little Red Readinghood says

Six little mysteries solved by a Jane Austen /Sherlock Holmes type character. Absolutely delightful and spellbinding. Noteworthy is the names of characters homage many of my favorite novels.
