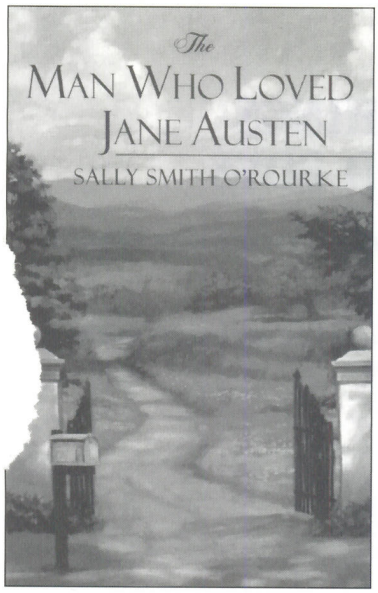

KENSINGTON TRADE PAPERBACK

THE MAN WHO LOVED JANE AUSTEN

Sally Smith O'Rourke

What if you found a 200-year-old love letter written from a fictional character to the writer who created him? And what if, next to that letter, was another addressed to this character…From the author herself? Truth may be stranger than fiction, but one woman is about to find out what happens when fiction becomes truth

New York artist Eliza Knight certainly did not realize it at the time, but her life changed when she bought the old, beat-up vanity table one lazy Sunday afternoon. Tucked away behind the mirror she found two letters—one sealed, but one already opened.

May 2nd, 1810. Dearest Jane, the Captain has found me out, I am being forced to go into hiding immediately. But if I am able, I shall still be writing at the same spot tonight. Then you will know everything you wish to know. F. Darcy."

F. Darcy? Fitzwilliam Darcy, the fictional hero of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*? Even more mysterious was the other letter, sealed and never read—from Jane to Darcy. Could this man, possibly the most romantic character ever written and the hero of Eliza's favorite novel, have been a real person? Eliza's initial guarded curiosity turns to astonishment as scientific testing confirms the sealed letter was indeed addressed by Jane Austen. But she is completely baffled by the revelation that the other letter, though proven to be from the same period—was written by an American.

Caught between the routine of her present life and the intrigue of those incredible discoveries from the past, Eliza decides to look deeper. Her research leads to a majestic 200-year-old estate in Virginia's breathtaking Shenandoah Valley where she meets the one man who may hold the answer. But he also has a secret, one he has kept hidden for years. Now, as the real story of Fitzwilliam Darcy unfolds, Eliza finds her life has become a modern-day romance, one that perhaps only Jane Austen herself could have eloquently written.

- **Will appeal to fans of Nicholas Sparks, Emily Grayson, Karen Joy Fowler, and Peter Pezzelli as well as the legion of fans who remain captivated by Jane Austen**

Sally Smith O'Rourke lives in Monrovia, CA, where she is working on her next novel.

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