

Jane Austen Wrecked My Life – July 2025

I thoroughly enjoyed this amusing French comedy which, in addition to the humour has very poignant moments. The storyline is based loosely on the central plot of the novel, *Pride & Prejudice*, hence the reference to Jane Austen in the title, with the main character, Agathe, played by Camille Rutherford, the French and English actor.

The opening scenes are based around Agathe's work in the famous Parisian bookshop, Shakespeare & Co. We learn that Agathe has had no sexual intimacy in a relationship for three years, has a close friend, Felix (Pablo Pauly), as a colleague at work, and is living with her sister and nephew following the deaths of their parents in a car accident, which makes her very reluctant to travel in a car. Her life appears closely circumscribed and the result of these various pressures is her suffering with writer's block. We learn that she is trying to write her first novel.

While Agathe has little self-confidence Felix is both attracted to her and believes in her skills as a writer. Unknown to Agathe he applies for her to join a writer's retreat in England organised by the Jane Austen Foundation. Agathe is full of doubts but after persuasion from Felix she agrees to go to the retreat and to travel with him by car to the ferry terminal. A euphoric moment between them, prompted by a song on the car radio, results in them embracing and committing themselves to each other.

Oliver (Charlie Anson), the son of the couple leading the Jane Austen Foundation and the great-great-great-nephew of Austen, is deputed to collect Agathe from the ferry. His attitude towards her, the purpose of the Foundation, and to the novels of Austen, is dismissive. She takes a strong dislike to him, and his haughtiness is undermined by the breakdown of his sports car, forcing them to spend the night together, before getting help.

The retreat is full of intriguing and comic characters and has many amusing scenarios. It is a time of emotional transition for Agathe but she makes no progress with her writing, leading to her making an escape to avoid having to give a reading. However her life on her return to France picks up in a number of positive ways and we are reminded of the outcome of the plot in *Pride and Prejudice*.

I am confident that most cinema goers will derive pleasure from this easy to watch film, from the personalities of its characters and from the faith it displays in the essential goodness of human nature.