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Is it true that. . . nothing can be lost that love cannot find? Jane Austen's beloved "Pride and Prejudice" is readapted in this Regency tale of love in the face of tragedy. Mr. Darcy is thwarted in his attempt to propose to Elizabeth Bennet at Hunsford when he encounters her minutes after she receives the sad news from Longbourn of her sister's death. His gallantry and compassion as he escorts her back to Hertfordshire begins to unravel the many threads of her discontent with him. While her family heals from their loss, Darcy must search London for answers --- answers that might bring justice but also might just mark the end of his own hopes with Elizabeth.

Bluebells in the Mourning Details

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From Reader Review *Bluebells in the Mourning* for online ebook

Anne says

Okay, so I admit that I never really saw myself as entering the world of Jane Austen fan fiction, let alone starting reading novel variations and 'what ifs'. But lately I discovered Amanda Grange's series of Jane Austen hero diaries and started to develop a liking for re-tellings through another character's perspective. I still wasn't too keen on trying a variation of one of Jane Austen's novels though, as in my opinion her books are already wonderful as they are and I didn't especially want to hear about a different plot with the same characters. I thought that it would feel too much like a totally different story with well-known character names.

Then, my wonderful friend Soph, who loooves JA fan-fiction, suggested that I try one and buddy read it with her. We agreed on this one, *Bluebells in the Mourning*, as it had a lot of positive reviews and the plot didn't seem to be too farfetched. Although I was left wanting more of Darcy and Elizabeth after I read *Pride and Prejudice* over a year and a half ago, I had never felt the urge to remedy to that by indulging in fan-fiction. I thought it wouldn't do. Well, all I can say after reading this book is that I am so glad I was wrong!

Bluebells in the Mourning is a perfect variation to the original, that will make you heave a long sigh of contentment and satisfaction after you put it down. It was sweet, romantic, had its sad and its heart-warming moments that blended together beautifully. We get to see a very passionate side of Darcy, and a more forgiving one of Elizabeth. When the former arrives in Kent with the hopes of asking Elizabeth to be his wife, his plans get interrupted by the news of Lydia's death, which prevents his from proposing, a fortunate circumstance since Lizzie was in no way ready to accept him at that point. Thus ensues a series of kindnesses and sweet attentions from Darcy, offering to convey her back to Longbourn immediately and (literally) giving her a shoulder to cry on. Much to her confusion and disbelief, Elizabeth's prejudices against Darcy slowly melt away as she finds herself enjoying discovering his hidden depths. Darcy's every action and thought revolve around Lizzie, and there isn't anything he wouldn't do for her. I loved watching how much in love with her he was, and how hard it was for him to watch her grieve.

Just like in the original story, Darcy goes further than his role of kind acquaintance concerned for the welfare of the woman he loves. He goes to great lengths to find Wickham when it is suggested that he may have had something to do with Lydia's death, and though that task proves very demanding, he doesn't back away and keeps giving more of his time and energy, when he could have easily decided that it was not his job to find out if Wickham was guilty or not.

As Elizabeth becomes increasingly aware of her own attraction for him, she also realizes that he may be well on the way of returning her feelings (little does she know he is already ready to die for her!), and she finally understands that his "dark stares" don't mean he disapproves of her ;)

The romance between Darcy and Lizzie was so well portrayed! They had so many cute scenes together. One of my favourites is the one at the beginning when Elizabeth mistakes Darcy's study for the library, and he comes in coatless and cravat-less, not knowing she is in there. She sees him first and is embarrassed to find him so attractive in his casual attire, and then he has a sweet breathtaking moment as he sees her sitting in his chair with a book. That scene was extremely well-done and clever, and I love the fact that the author used it again in the epilogue!

I also really enjoyed all the recurring patterns used throughout the story, such as the bluebells and the

handkerchiefs. The former symbolized joy and happiness, and the latter was more used as a symbolism for hope, assurance and comfort. Darcy kept giving his handkerchief to Lizzie when she cried, thereby letting her know that he cared for her, and that by using it to dry her tears, it would help to ease her chagrin. The author furthermore joined the two symbols at an important point in the novel, which created a lovely effect!

Some of the characters from *Pride and Prejudice* that I really loved, especially Georgiana and Colonel Fitzwilliam, had wonderful appearances and added a lot of fun to the book. Their relationship with Darcy was very well illustrated. The Bennet family is there of course, but the author gave a totally new direction to Mr. and Mrs. Bennet's relationship. It seemed that Lydia's death has brought them a lot closer, inciting them to talk to each other, and eventually to fall in love again. Mrs. Bennet is not the loud annoying, matchmaking harpy we all know, but a broken and insecure woman who needs the support and comfort of her husband. Mr. Bennet demonstrates his caring and loving nature by putting down his book, stepping outside his library, and showing his wife that she isn't a failure. That aspect of the book was very beautiful, and I loved watching it's development. They were not the only ones smelling of April and May, as Bingley also re-makes an appearance at Netherfield and doesn't waste time showing Jane that he still loves her. :) There were a lot of sad moments in this novel, but in the end, so much love!

Honestly, I do not hesitate to recommend *Bluebells in the Mourning* to any Jane Austen fan. Whether you love JAFF, are just starting to read it or is a bit sceptical about trying 'what if' variation, this one is a great one to start with, and enjoyable from beginning to end. It is beautifully written, with just the right amount of heartache, love, romance, humour and perfect quotations from the original along the way. Give *Bluebells* a try, you won't regret it! I look forward to reading more from this author, as I saw she has other Austen-related novels.

Meredith (Austen-esque Reviews) says

Instead of receiving Jane's misdirected letter and disheartening news at the Lambton Inn, Lizzy receives a letter (where the address was written "remarkably ill") during her stay at Hunsford Parsonage. Instead of Jane's news containing the ill-tidings of a sister's elopement and possible ruination, she reports the unfortunate illness and unexpected death of a beloved sister!

What will happen when Mr. Darcy arrives just a few moments later to propose?

Well...Mr. Darcy doesn't propose – doesn't mention his unrepressed feelings, honest scruples, or struggles to overcome Elizabeth's inferiority. He instead offers Elizabeth his shoulder to cry on, his sympathies as she grieves for her sister, and some much needed assistance with traveling to Meryton. Between various private conversations and stolen moments Darcy soon realizes Elizabeth's true opinion of him (he is much more perceptive!) and knows that he would have been soundly rejected if he proposed to her that night. Through kind gestures, thoughtful gifts, mastering his selfish proclivities, and restoring Bingley to Jane, Darcy sets out to repair Elizabeth's poor opinion of him in hopes that when his is able to offer her his hand in marriage (he must wait three months), he will have a more favorable reply...

As with *Falling for Mr. Darcy*, one of my favorite aspects of this novel, and of KaraLynne Marckrory's writing in general, is her portrayal of Mr. Darcy. He is simply adorable! Whether he is mentally castigating himself for his mistakes, surprising Elizabeth with his rare moments of levity and humor, or indulging in some private reflections/fantasies about Elizabeth and his future with her – this Darcy was constantly making me smile and sigh! Oh! And he is an artist – which makes him all the more attractive in my opinion! I especially enjoyed his scenes alone with Elizabeth, such as the one where he finds Elizabeth in his study, their conversation in the garden at Longbourn, and their interlude amongst the bluebells. In this novel, KaraLynne Marckrory created scenes that are emotive, sublime, and memorable. Some I know I will be rereading again and again!

Other characters I greatly enjoyed in this variation are Georgiana, Mr. Bennet, and Mrs. Bennet. I like that Georgiana meets Elizabeth a little earlier in the novel and exchanges some correspondence with her. I loved the scene between them in the music room and how Georgiana attempts some matchmaking! In addition, I took great pleasure in witnessing Ms. Marckrory's rendition and development of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. She provides a very unique explanation for why their marriage is filled with discontent and dissension which I greatly enjoyed.

With a beautiful romance, an emotional journey, and an inspiring yet poignant tale of healing and hope KaraLynne Marckrory has herself another winner with this latest release! A splendidly unique and clever *Pride and Prejudice* variation! I highly recommend!

Austen-esque Reviews

Talia says

Loved! One of the *P & P* variations that got it right. Perfect.

Reread: This book is perfection. Oh, I just love this author's work. If you haven't read this, time to do so!

Reread again!: I needed to read this one again as I was mistaken as to who the "mourning" was for. Such a pleasure!

J. W. Garrett says

Heart wrenching, mind blowing reveal[s], intrigue, tearful grief as death comes to the Bennet household

I loved this touching, heart wrenching book. I was immediately engaged as Elizabeth received the express and learned of the death of a Bennet family member. While Elizabeth struggled with her grief, she also struggled with rioting emotions and feelings regarding Mr. Darcy. Mr. Darcy had his own bout with grief as his proposal was interrupted by the arrival of that express. From that point on, he was thwarted at every turn in his attempts to secure the affections of his beloved Elizabeth.

There are many awesome reviews that give a detailed outline or evaluation of this book. I am not going to repeat what they have already said. Read them and decide if you want to read this work or not. I suggest you do because it is an awesome read. There were minimal errors, you can't catch them all.

When two people [from completely different backgrounds] approach a problem, they each utilize the tools available to them. Even though Darcy was a gentleman and Elizabeth was a gentleman's daughter, their approach to problem solving was very different. This was the foundation to many of the problems between ODC. These differing approaches clashed on more than one occasion and had our dear couple at cross purposes. If not for the assistance [interference] of loved ones [Georgiana and our dear Colonel], ODC [our dear couple] would still be at odds and or separated.

I held my breath as Elizabeth and Darcy struggled with self-imposed feelings of responsibility for circumstances leading up to the death of Elizabeth's family member. Each maintained thoughts that the other blamed them for what had happened and therefore could not love them. The grief that Darcy felt as he realized [or thought that] he had lost Elizabeth's love was overwhelming. I grieved with him as he went through what his life would be like without her in his world.

I loved Colonel Fitzwilliam and his military buddies Major Leigh Masters and Colonel Whitman. These guys and others were awesome in their hunt for truth, a possible killer and then bringing him to justice. I certainly would not want these guys on my trail. They made fine agents. No one was who they seemed.

No SPOILER: The big reveal on the events of the death was mind blowing. I suspected something as I began to piece together the clues left by the author. Then, when it was revealed... I was so shocked as it was worse than even I imagined. How much evil can one person possibly possess?

I liked how Georgiana had grown up in this version. She had really come a long way. She was quiet the little manipulator/ matchmaker [same thing] and had such a romantic heart.

I loved how Anne de Bourgh and Mrs. Collins worked together with the servants to circumvent Lady Catherine... such machinations... awesome.

The changes that occurred within the Bennet household, after the death of one of its members, was overwhelming. Then there was another reveal that was simply too AWESOME. I am happy it occurred and I give kudos to the author for including it. How nice.

****SPOILER**** (view spoiler) **** End Spoiler ****

The Epilogue was the most fun and wrapped everything up so very neatly. I loved it. This book was so much fun even with the intrigue and mystery surrounding the death, the search for truth, and the men working with Colonel Fitzwilliam and Darcy in order to find that truth. The search for love and acceptance was so worth the read.

Abigail Bok says

This is the second KaraLynne Mackrory novel I have read, and for me, the other one—*Haunting Mr. Darcy*—worked better. The reason I prefer it, I think, is that Mackrory's Regency-period scholarship is a little thin, and the premise of *Haunting Mr. Darcy* allows for violations of decorum on the part of the characters. In *Bluebells in the Mourning*, those violations bothered me more because they were happening in the characters' real lives, not in dream life. There were also some distracting factual errors, not least the field of bluebells of the title—they bloom in May, not July or August. In the climactic scene, I kept picturing them

all yellowed and messy, as they would have been in summer!

Mackrory's characters always have considerable charm, and I enjoy following their alarms and divagations. It was also entertaining to see so many familiar phrases from *Pride and Prejudice* cropping up in expected and unexpected places; but I was concerned to see phrases from the film adaptations cropping up as well. For me, there's a line between real Austen and Austen interpretation that I don't like to see blurred. That may make no sense in the context of Austenesque fiction, I realize!

Various members of the Bennet family (not just Elizabeth) go through major transformations in this story, and I did not find those changes very believable, especially when it came to Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. I don't believe Jane (or even Georgiana) would ever squeal, or that Elizabeth would laugh so hard that she would fall into a chair and hold her sides. These elements took me out of the imagined Regency world and made me enjoy the story less.

I am not really a fan of romance for romance's sake, so an entire novel focused principally on the palpitations of the main characters tends to pall for me. *Bluebells in the Mourning* does make some room for other aspects of its protagonists' lives—family affection, ethical concerns—which provided relief for me, but personally, I would have welcomed more scenes that included some of the minor figures who are so vividly portrayed in *Pride and Prejudice*. I did not need to be told what Elizabeth's every reaction was to Darcy's every word, and vice versa, which seemed to prevent any opportunity for emotional crescendo. Everything was at the same level of high emotion, and I found myself wanting more comic relief.

I would love to see the author try her hand at a modern-day novel, Austenesque or otherwise. There her characters' charm could have free play among the looser manners of today, and her imaginative plots could really take wing.

Sophie says

This story was absolutely wonderful. KaraLynne Mackrory's stories are definitely some of my absolute favourites! And on re-reading it, it was just as wonderful, if not more.

I will begin with the storyline; when I read the blurb I was intrigued. I thought it was an interesting way to take the story. In variations which include a death, the death is normally of Mr Bennet so I was interested in having the death of one of her sisters (Lydia). Lydia was out for a walk when she slips and hits her head, which eventually causes a fever and her demise. When we learn that a certain gentleman was also present on the walk (I will give you three guesses!) it sets up the basis for a bit of a mystery, which Darcy vows to Mr Bennet he will get to the bottom of. I thought it was a really good 'what if' variation.

One of my favourite things about Mackrory's first variation were the parallels and similarities which she draws between her variation and the original novel. This variation was again very clever in this area. The story opens with Darcy coming upon Lizzy when she has just received the news of Lydia's death, just like in the original when he happens upon Lizzy, after seeing her at Pemberley, when she has found out about Lydia's elopement. There are many more examples of this throughout the novel; another of my favourites being when the explanation letter (which Darcy's gives after the rejected proposal originally) is given and by whom (it is still a Darcy who sends it, but not MR Darcy).

As well as events like I have mentioned being shifted around and placed in different contexts, there is also

the clever use of quotes and conversations from the original which appear throughout the novel in different places, spoken by different people and mostly in different contexts. Some of the best examples of this, I think, were the way in which many of the thoughts and feelings of Darcy and Lizzy were switched; Mr Darcy stating that 'until this moment I never knew myself' and Lizzy being asked the question of when she fell in love with Darcy. I sometimes find that important quotes from the original appearing completely out of context can be annoying, but the way in which it is treated by Mackrory is in no way annoying and is instead rather charming, causing me to smile and even laugh out loud in some cases while I was reading.

Another one of my favourite things about her last variation was the little themes which were running through the book. Theme isn't quite the right word... In the story, as Lizzy is in mourning, there is often the need for a handkerchief to dry her tears, a handkerchief with the letters FD embroidered on it. Also, as you may guess from the title of the story, bluebells becomes a very important part of the story (and since reading this story I am planning on going for many more walks among the bluebells!)

Now for a little about some certain characters in the story, starting with Georgiana. I always wish to have seen more of Georgiana in the original as there seems to be a lot of untapped potential in Georgiana as we only meet her late in the novel. She comes in the story a lot earlier and we really see another side to her. Seeing her relationship with her brother was very sweet as their strong bond, which we see some of in the original, is developed and explored a lot in this variation. Georgiana really comes into her own and once she realises the particular interest her brother has in a certain Miss Bennet she turns into a little matchmaker, though a lot more subtly (and successfully) than Emma Woodhouse!

Moving onto another character that I always like in the variations which I read; Colonel Fitzwilliam. I think the colonel is a character which authors can have a lot of fun with. We see a little of his teasing nature in his relationship with Darcy in the original, and Mackrory uses this to her advantage. He is such a teasing and delightful character and is all affability. I love seeing more of Colonel Fitzwilliam and his relationship with Darcy and also his relationship with Georgiana. I was always laughing when Fitzwilliam was around!

I will refrain from saying much about Wickham but be rest assured, Wickham pops up from time to time through the story...

I believe my favourite secondary story line was the one between Mr and Mrs Bennet. Mackrory delves deeper into the past between the couple and the reasons for their indifference to each other for so long. Lydia's death reignites past feelings between the two and they begin on the road to reconciliation. It is wonderful to see how their relationship changes throughout the story, ending in a very satisfactory way! (I will say no more...)

One thing I loved about her first variation was the inclusion of an epilogue, showing what happens to each of the characters in the future. And so I was very pleased to once again find an epilogue at the end, allowing us to see what happens to each of the characters in the future.

And so I reach the end of my review.... although I realise I haven't really touched on the main two characters of the story; this will not do! Well, for anyone who wishes to read more about one of the most important couples in all of literature and to see a different route to bringing the two together, you will not be disappointed. There were enough problems that arose to keep the story interesting but not too many that it felt as if it was dragging on and on! The scenes towards the beginning of the story were a lot of fun, as Lizzy began to discover the true man behind the facade that is Mr Darcy. Any scenes between the two of them in the first half of the story brought a smile to my face. I do not want to give anything away but be assured the scenes between the two of them from the middle onwards are equally as enjoyable and are even more

touching! The last thing I shall say is that the ending is perfection itself!

This is a truly wonderful variation of my favourite novel of all time and I shall be re-reading it in the near future. It satisfied my highly romantic nature as well as my need for a good laugh, and with the added extra of a bit of mystery it all made for a delightful read. I hope Mackrory has another variation on the way!

(Review originally posted here:
<http://laughingwithlizzie.blogspot.co...>)

Leslie says

This is a very very very good book. But I followed it with an amazing book and I fear that has biased my review slightly.

This *Pride and Prejudice* What if asks what if Darcy didn't propose at Rosings (Hunsford, Kent) because Lizzy receives bad news of the death of a family member. This is not the first book I have read that offers a similar option but I believe it handles it best.

As that Darcy & Col. Fitzwilliam were already departing Rosings they are able to offer Lizzy and Maria assistance to London. And when Lizzy realizes that the Gardiners are already at Longbourn with Jane and the other Bennets the ladies accept Darcy's offer to stay in his townhouse until they can resume their trip on Monday. This gives Elizabeth a chance to become acquainted with Georgiana as well as hear servants sing the praises of Mr. Darcy; and Darcy is forced to tell Bingley of the situation. While Darcy attempts to discourage Bingley from calling upon the Bennets Bingley arrives right on his heels and reopens Netherfield. All of these things force Lizzy to reevaluate her opinions of Darcy and through correspondence with Georgiana begins to really question Wickham's slanderous comments. Additionally Wickham's proximity to the accident and subsequent disappearance have Darcy and Mr. Bennet curious. Lizzy's friendship with Georgiana results in the Gardiner's and their niece staying at Pemberley during their trip to Derbyshire and Lizzy and Darcy becoming closer. Georgiana's cleverness during this period are sweet and humorous.

My only complaint is that there is too much miscommunication between Lizzy and Darcy when they are both well past the point where 'seeing the look in his/ her eyes leads to the wrong conclusion'. Since this occurs long after both has admitted that they were wrong regarding what the other was thinking; Lizzy thinking Darcy was finding fault and Darcy thinking Lizzy would accept his proposal. I realize it is meant to mirror the meeting at the inn in Lambton but it feels forced and silly. There were numerous persons around them who knew of their relationship and would be able to offer council or intervention.

One further disclaimer on my rating. Based upon the book I was re-reading prior I would have given this a 5 but because I next read *Consequences* I can only give it a 4 1/2.

Sophia says

I have been meaning to read this one for some time so I was glad that this one was a voter's choice from our reading challenge group. I have read one other book and a short story from this author and enjoyed her light,

heartwarming style of telling a story. Even when her story allows for high angst, she balances the emotions with other elements which suit my tastes well.

While this is a variation of Jane Austen's *Pride & Prejudice*, it is written in such a way that those only vaguely or not familiar at all will still have the opportunity for optimum enjoyment because it begins in the historical present and then offers a few brief 'memory' moments for the principle characters.

Bluebells in the Mourning begins with a tragic death. Young Lydia Bennet has died and her older sister, Elizabeth needs to get home. Elizabeth was visiting with friends in Kent and tolerating the arrogant Mr. Darcy and his relations when she got Jane's letter to come home. Unfortunately, Mr. Darcy is the one to come to her aid and she is forced to accept his kindness. Only, this act and his other solicitous kindnesses along the way are stacking up to show that he isn't quite the cold-hearted, selfish monster she made him out to be. To be sure, he interfered with her sister and Bingley, then there are the tales poor Wickham told of this man, but his care for her and Maria Lucas, his ready sympathy, and the way everyone around him including family, particularly his sister, and servants warmly respect and esteem him throw her into confusion.

Darcy nearly proposed to Elizabeth the day he found her grieving the loss of her sister. He learned through little hints that his proposal would not have been welcome. She discovered his work to separate his friend from her sister and she made clear that Jane Bennet was shy and reserved not uncaring for Bingley like Darcy thought. And then there are her accusations about his treatment of 'poor (cough)' Wickham. Darcy is determined to be there as the strength she can lean on through this dreadful period and show her his love for her through his actions. Then Mr. Bennet requests for him to discover if Lydia's death was an accident sending Darcy on a quest that might very well take him from Elizabeth's side forever if his suspicions are true.

This story is told from a variety of viewpoints with Elizabeth and Darcy getting the most page time. Even though this is a variation and there are alternate paths, the main pair still have some growing to do. Elizabeth is on a private mental journey of knowledge of the man she started out by detesting to finding he was nothing like she imagined while Darcy must work to deal with his past mistakes and the character flaws that caused them.

The tone of the story is not dreary due to death, but a renewal and reset for all those who survived Lydia. I thought the changes within the Bennet household were particularly interesting. I love what the author did with a backstory for Mr. and Mrs. Bennet.

I had a few minor niggles. There were a few slow spots, but also I recognized the exact same device used to cause a late inning break up between the lovers as was used in another of the author's stories. Succinctly, Darcy jumps to conclusions and runs rather than clarify what Elizabeth's words and action meant. Elizabeth does the same to a certain extent. Lack of communication and late in the story at that. Sigh...

That said, I love the author's writing and the warmth and light in her storytelling. There is good banter and a story broader than just the romance. I would definitely recommend this to other sweet historical romance and Austenesque Lovers.

Melissa says

This *Pride and Prejudice* variation picks up when Elizabeth receives the letter from Jane about Lydia, only

instead of containing news that her youngest sister has run off with Wickham, the note informs Lizzy that Lydia has had an accidental fall while out on a walk with Wickham and died as a result of her injuries. So instead of proposing to her and being rejected, Mr. Darcy is there to help Elizabeth as she grieves and to escort her and Maria Lucas home. And then it turns out there may be foul play involved with Lydia's death -- a development that may waylay the growing romance between Elizabeth and Darcy.

Pretty enjoyable, if you enjoy Jane Austen fanfiction or prim-and-proper Regency romance novels. I'm not sure it really added all that much to the story as it already exists, except that it gave more development to the character of Darcy's cousin Captain Fitzwilliam and his sister Georgiana, and gave an unlikely happy ending to Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, who were brought together as husband and wife after the tragic loss of Lydia.

Sheila Majczan says

I read this again in paperback which I won as part of the raffle grand prize for The Darcy Monologues.

I laughed, I cried, I smiled so hard my cheeks hurt and I sighed many times...so this is how a romance reads?!

Sometimes I had to cry with sorrow - any parent, any family that loses a child, whether small or grown loses a part of their heart. Then to later learn...no, can't say...would reveal part of the tragedy...but learning that additional fact made it even that much more sorrowful. Wickham truly got what he deserved, even if some secrets are not revealed.

As in so many of the stories about ODC, Elizabeth and Darcy just can't seem to communicate; they have the biggest knack for misunderstanding, I believe, of any couple about whom I read. In this tale our dear Georgiana takes the lead in attempting to unravel the mess. And she has to make the effort more than once. There are surprises in other's relating what they perceive about just what a person feels.

And then there is Anne. She certainly grew a backbone. Enjoyed reading how she manipulated her own household and that of the Hunsford Parsonage to help ODC achieve their HEA without any interference. She made sure she had it all covered and was rewarded in unexpected ways.

This book has more than one surprise - endearing and totally catching one off guard near the end. As others have said it was so sweet to read of the determination on Mr. Bennet's part to revamp his relationship with his wife and then to read of her change in character. Will wonders never cease?

The Epilogue was everything you could wish, bringing together loose ends and unwed dear ones as well as letting us know about the Darcy succession. I even liked that Col. Fitzwilliam's army pals came into play at the end.

I could not put this down and finished it in half a day. I am sure I will re-read it as I was rushing to get to the "good" parts this first time through. Loved, loved, loved how Darcy was taking off his cravat and coat as he was entering his study - oh, to imagine that thin material left covering his chest (This is almost as good as the wet shirt in the 1995 movie.) and his uncovered neckline. "The library/his study" a memory for years to come.

Ceri says

Here is a Pride and Prejudice variation for all you romantics! I really loved this book. We pick up the story with Elizabeth at the Hunsford Parsonage. She ducks out of dinner with Lady Catherine to read 2 letters from Jane that have just arrived (one had been misdirected, the address being written very ill indeed). Darcy arrives to propose, as in canon and finds Lizzy very distraught, having just found out that one of her sisters has had a fall from Oakham Mount and has died from her injuries.

Obviously, the proposal never happens and instead Darcy escorts Lizzy and Maria Lucas to London, where they stay for a night at his house (chaperoned by Georgiana and Mrs Annesley). Spending so much time with each other leads them both to make some re-evaluations - Darcy begins to see that he can be self-absorbed and selfish, and he realises from a hint Lizzy drops that not only has he made an error in removing Bingley from Jane but also that if he had have proposed he probably would have been rejected. Lizzy begins to see that she has been wrong in being so hasty to judge Mr Darcy, and also she starts to question to herself whether Wickham's story is true.

Now Lizzy is in mourning, Darcy wouldn't be able to make her an offer of marriage for at least 3 months, but what he instead tries to do is make up some of the lost ground caused by her initial poor impression of him. In this, he is joined by Georgiana, who does her best to matchmake.

Considering this book starts with a death, especially that of somebody so young, it's not a sad book at all. Although the characters mourn there are also positive effects of the death, most notably the relationship between Mr and Mrs Bennet, the latter of whom blames herself for her daughter's demise.

One of the things I particularly liked is the number of familiar lines from Pride and Prejudice which turn up, often spoken by somebody who didn't say them in P&P. This story is really sweet (but not over-sweet) and romantic and if you don't like any sex scenes then you are safe, nothing goes further than just a few kisses and the only time you get behind the bedroom door is a birth scene in the epilogue.

The only minus points to this book are a few of the words used. There are some American words, the odd word that is too recent, and a number of instances of the wrong versions of word being used e.g. discrete instead of discreet, breech instead of breach etc, but not enough to distract from a lovely romantic story that will leave you with a smile on your face. I would certainly recommend this one!

Candy says

I loved this story! I was struck by how many good things came out of this tragic event. Even though, there is a death in the family and, to that end, some grieving, it wasn't a heavy book. In fact, I found Bluebells in the Mourning a fun and enjoyable read!

Darcy arrives at the parsonage just moments after Elizabeth receives news that one of her dearly beloved sisters has been in an accident and died. Instead of the planned proposal, Darcy offers to escort Elizabeth and Maria Lucas to London. On the way to London, Elizabeth makes a few comments that make Darcy realize she holds many grievances and misconceptions against him. Recognizing what a disaster it would have been to propose to her at the parsonage, Darcy goes about the business of showing her the real gentleman he is, but will that matter as the circumstances of Lydia's death come to light. Could Darcy have prevented it, if he

had been more forthcoming of Wickham's true character?

What I found very interesting is, what affect this tragedy had on Mr. and Mrs. Bennet. It brought them closer together. It was really beautiful to see.

I loved Colonel Fitzwilliam and Bingley in this story. With the Colonel being Darcy's best friend and always ready to go after Wickham. And Bingley finally doing what he wants, but still being cheerful and easy going.

Georgiana catches on pretty quickly about Elizabeth, and invites her and the Gardiners to stay at Pemberley while traveling to Lambton. Only she doesn't tell Darcy until about a week before they are due to arrive!! I love this Georgiana; a little sneaky, with a nice sense of humor.

Let me tell you, Darcy and Elizabeth's first kiss was amazing!! Sweet and lovely.

Bluebells in the Mourning is a delightful read! One I plan to re-read many times in the future!

I was provide a copy of the book for my honest review.

Kim says

This is a great P&P variation. Highly recommend. Great plot twist, ample misunderstandings for D & E to suffer through. Then Darcy knocks Wickham out cold... what more could you want? They even pull one over on Lady C. (which is a nice change as I was getting tired of reading her rantings in other P&P variations). Happy endings all around with a neat little epilogue to tie up the loose ends. Makes me smile :)

Read: July 9, 2014

Read: March 25, 2015

Anji says

BLUEBELLS IN THE MOURNING by KaraLynne Mackrory

I've been wanting to read this one for such a long time as I'd heard really good things about it. Safe to say, I wasn't disappointed in the slightest now that I've dug it out of my rather substantial TBR collection.

This story starts in Kent, assuming all the details of canon up till this point. Darcy is about to make that ill-fated proposal at Hunsford when Elizabeth receives letters telling of tragic news at home. Some of you may know what that is, but as I try not to do spoilers, I won't say what it is for anyone who doesn't. That proposal is never made and Darcy sees to Elizabeth's safe transport back to Longbourn. Coach journeys from Kent to London and London to Longbourn ensue. As there's been no proposal and Elizabeth hasn't made her less than diplomatic refusal, there's no letter from Darcy explaining about his interference with Jane and Bingley or Georgiana's near-elopement with Wickham. Other means have to be found for Elizabeth's opinion of Darcy to change and for him to realise what a pompous prig he was to plan the proposal he'd been intending to make, amongst other things. I won't say any more here though, apart from the fact Elizabeth and Georgiana meet a lot earlier and Wickham is even more of a villain than in canon!

There is an odd Americanism here and there (yes, we Brits can be very picky!), but Ms Mackrory is an excellent writer with a good feel for her subject. There's quite a lot of angst involved before the HEA and several delicious love scenes but no sexual content so I can recommend this for all audiences.

Eliza Baum says

Reread 10/15/16

I've read quite a bit more JAFF since the first time I read this book, and it occurs to me now that there are a ton of stories where Mr. Bennet dies, but not many where one of the sisters dies instead. It makes for a very different feel, where the family has to mourn, but they aren't in immediate danger of poverty. It's quieter with that lack of danger, but sometimes I'm really in the mood for that. The Wickham storyline is pretty satisfying, too.

Original read 10/11/15

I enjoyed this book a great deal. The writing was really good, and it probably would have been 4.5 or 5 stars if there was more *new* about it. A lot of material from the original was re-purposed to fit the new continuity. It was definitely used in creative ways, so bravo for that, but I would have liked it even better if the divergence explored more new territory.

Of the things that *were* new, though, my favorite was definitely Elizabeth's friendship with Georgiana. Georgie is consistently one of my favorite secondary characters, so anyone who can bring her into the story more and use her well is on my YES list.

I do have to admit that when Mr. and Mrs. Bennet ([view spoiler](#))

Recommended as an enjoyable way to pass an afternoon.
