



A Quest for Mr Darcy

Cassandra Grafton , Ada Bright (Illustrator)

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Fitzwilliam Darcy is on a quest. Convinced he is over his foolish infatuation with Elizabeth Bennet, he returns from a year of travelling with a plan, both to protect the estate of which he is guardian and to ensure his sister's happiness: he intends to do his duty and secure a wife at the earliest opportunity.

Duty; a path from which Darcy knows he should never have been diverted. Duty was safe and nothing would persuade him from it a second time.

Soon restored to his home in Derbyshire, Darcy puts his quest in motion, preparing to welcome guests from Town, one of whom is the suitably eligible young lady he has earmarked as his future wife.

But what of the Bennets of Longbourn? What befell them in Darcy's absence from England? And what of the new tenants on his estate named Bennet? Is his path fated to cross with Elizabeth's once more?

With the addition of his friend, Bingley's, mischievous twin younger sisters, letters from a stranger and a shadowy figure lurking in the grounds of Pemberley, Darcy's life is about to be turned upside down.

Can he remain steady to his purpose, or will his carefully laid plans soon be in tatters as the rigid protection he has placed around his heart begins to falter?

A Quest for Mr Darcy Details

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From Reader Review A Quest for Mr Darcy for online ebook

Meredith (Austenesque Reviews) says

What If, One Year Later, Mr. Darcy Had Moved On?

Rating: 5 out of 5 stars

TYPE OF AUSTENESQUE NOVEL: Pride and Prejudice Variation

TIME FRAME: July 1813 (around one year after Elizabeth's visit to the Peak District)

MAIN CHARACTERS: Elizabeth and Jane Bennet, Mr. Bennet, Mr. Darcy, Georgiana Darcy, Mr. Bingley, Olivia and Viola Bingley, Colonel Fitzwilliam

SYNOPSIS: What if, instead of returning home to Pemberley and running into Elizabeth and the Gardiners at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy traveled to the continent for a year with Georgiana? And if Mr. Darcy doesn't encounter Elizabeth at Pemberley, that means he doesn't find out about Wickham's flight with Lydia and come to the rescue... What becomes of the Bennets when their family name is disgraced and more than tragedy takes place within the year?

WHAT I LOVED:

- Unique Premise: Such inventive and creative premise! Missing the significant encounter at Pemberley produces quite a different chain of events – Lydia is not saved, the Bennet family is ostracized, Mr. Bingley never returns for Jane, and several other events are triggered by this alteration. It is interesting to see what happens when these changes take place and the effect they have on the Bennet family. And what happens when their paths cross with Mr. Darcy who does not know about any of their past year's troubles. It is such a unique situation for a Pride and Prejudice variation and it was so much fun to explore this thoughtful and plausible divergent path.
- Moved On and Hopeless: Here we see what happens when Mr. Darcy believes his affections and wishes for Elizabeth are in the past and that he has moved on... He even has a lady in mind that he believes will suit as a wife and has made some steps towards courting her. In addition, Elizabeth is seeing a different side of Mr. Darcy and it is quite hard for her to admit that she no longer despises him, but in all actuality likes him against her will. She strives to protect her heart because she knows that her situation in life is such that it is even more of a degradation for Mr. Darcy to marry her than it was before. I love seeing Darcy and Elizabeth at such cross purposes...it isn't simple misunderstandings or pride, they truly are in an awkward and delicate situation where they believe the other has moved on or that such a possibility is hopeless.
- Original Characters: I adore Ms. Grafton's original creations in the Bingley twins! They are fourteen year old mischief-makers that love romance, ghost stories, and pranks! Their liveliness was infectious – I loved how much merriment they brought to this tale. It is quite funny to think that they are related to Caroline and Louisa, and to see Mr. Bingley – who is usually caught under his sisters' thumb – in the position of trying to maintain and discipline such boisterous younger sisters! In addition, I also enjoyed the Latimer family and their drama, Alice, the Bennet's, fussy housekeeper, and Mr. Wentworth, the kind vicar in Kympton with an interest in one of the Bennet daughters...

- Leisurely Paced: I loved seeing the Bennets live somewhere else other than Longbourn, and I loved bearing witness to all their daily encounters and interactions with the neighborhood. Especially with Mr. Darcy! There is so much that happens in just a few days – so many significant meetings and surprising exchanges... I love how Cassandra Grafton builds her story with small, everyday experiences. To see it all gradually develop firsthand really immerses the reader into the story.

- Mysteries and Secrets: The feeling of someone lurking in the woods, Mr. Bennet's questionable business in a nearby town, petty thefts around Pemberley – some strange and unsettling things are happening! I always love when there is a bit of intrigue involved!

WHAT I WASN'T TOO FOND OF:

scoffs not a thing!

CONCLUSION:

A Quest for Mr. Darcy is a truly enchanting and imaginative variation that brings readers on the most delightful sojourn to Derbyshire. I can't decide what I loved more – the tender and achingly beautiful romance, the tension-building drama and mystery, or the many heartwarming relationships formed throughout! I highly recommend!

Austenesque Reviews

EM Clark says

This is absolutely fabulous!!

It is so rare to finish a book and be completely pleased with the depth, intrigue, length and ending, but here I sit thoroughly satisfied! Easily one of the best P&P variations I have read (out of literally hundreds) and I cannot wait to read more from the author. Fantastic!!

Elizabeth Hossenlopp says

A good book. Lol not what I was expecting (thought Darcy was going on an adventure). Enjoyed the book.

Leslie says

This is a distinctive P&P What if that imagines:

- 1] That following his humiliation in Hunsford Darcy packed up his household and took an extended tour of Northern Europe
- 2] That Lydia not only wasn't recovered but was killed in an Inn Fire

3] That Mrs. Bennet succumbed to the stress of the loss of her daughter and followed her to the graveyard in a seven night

4] That the remaining Bennets fled Meryton to points unknown.

5] Darcy decides at 30 he must have a bride

6] That Bingley has more sisters and they are delightful

The best part is that 99% of what I wrote above is explained having already happened we really join the action when Darcy & Bingley go to Meryton to ascertain the suitability of Netherfield as a home for Bingley and his 3 younger 1/2 sisters.

When Darcy gets to Pemberley to prepare for the visit by the family of his potential future wife, as well as Bingley and his much younger twin sisters and of course Georgiana and Mrs. Annesley.

Upon his arrival he learns that the Bennets have leased a home, the Grange, on Pemberley's lands.

Soon he and Lizzy are struggling with the feeling they have both been repressing for so long. Alas Lizzy believes he is to marry another and he believes that Lizzy still hates him.

And let me tell you eventually this got really tedious. Each of these characters needs a xanax and a little less introspection and the book could have been a little shorter. This was one of those boos where I wanted to reach in and shake Lizzy and remind her "You were not formed for Ill Humor" a little less introspection a little more pianoforte practice wouldn't be the worst thing here honey. And Darcy is a bit of a micro-manager who still seems to have no control over anything.

So why did I like this book, well I have finally started watching Stranger Things and this book reminds me of it. There is a mysterious figure who lives in the woods who is watching everyone. There are the twins who are two fun loving adventurous girls who are convinced there is a ghost.

The one thing I didn't love was the Epilogue. I am celebrated for my lack of appreciation of epilogues. Here is my philosophy, "If you have more to say write another book", that "they all lived Happily Ever After" is brilliant. IMHO this epilogue set three years past the ending was sufficient plot to be the outline for a sequel and unnecessary.

wosedwew says

[

After the disastrous Hunsford proposal Darcy and his sister leave for a continental tour. Darcy and Georgiana lick their wounds for a year; then return to England.

The Bennets have also had an eventful year – beginning with the Lydia/

Talia says

This book is pricey. I went back and forth as to whether to buy it. I like the author but what if I didn't like the

book? Amazon had a \$5 off deal for any book \$20+ so I went for it. Money well spent! I loved this book. I had no idea what would happen. It was amazing. So glad I bought the paperback because this is one I am proud to have on the shelf to read again and again.

Deb Hughes says

A very different variation!

Totally surprised by the events that took place to put Mr. Bennet, Jane and Elizabeth living so close to Pemberley. When Darcy had returned from his European trip with his sister.... trying to forget his horrible proposal at Hunsford and trying to help his sister get over the frightful event with Wickham.... he was stunned to find Lizzie living so close in the vicinity. Is was a wonderful journey fraught with hilarious guests, adventure for all included and quite the happy ending!

Dung says

What a fun and enjoyable book. I love the Bingley twins! Such an interesting twist and plot!

Ssawyer says

Wow - lucky me - I get to give this book its first review!

I had the privilege of reading this book as Cass posted it chapter by chapter on her blog over several months. It was so much fun! I waited with baited breath for every new chapter. Can't wait to read it again as soon as the kindle edition is available.

If you enjoy P&P variations, you'll love this one!

Update: I loved reading this again. The editing for the final version tightened up some transitions and improved the readability. The new characters, especially the Bingley twins, added fun to the story.

Adrian says

Shining perfection

I usually restrain my voracious reading habit by selecting new books from Kindle Unlimited. The reputation of this author, the cover and the reviews caused me to take a chance and download the sample. From there, the author had me hooked! Everything about this book was stellar: grammar, writing, plot development, and dialogue. Bonus points for the seamless (and believable) integration of characters from other Austen works.

I do not regret the purchase of this book from my meager book budget and plan to seek out more of this author's work in the future.

Don't you wish that all Austen fiction was this well-written?

Anji says

I was one of Ms. Grafton's avid followers for six months as this story was posted online and I loved the story then. The edited version is just as good, if not better. The pacing is better, slightly tighter I'd say, but "In essentials, I believe, it is very much what it ever was." I maybe slightly misquoting a famous author there!

Ms. Grafton's trilogy "A Fair Prospect" was in my Desert Island Five on an Austen-related blog a couple of years ago and still is, though it would have to be Ten (or even Twenty) nowadays as so much good stuff has been published since. This new book would definitely be in there too, if I had to choose again.

What do I love about A Quest for Mr. Darcy? So many things! Without giving away too many spoilers: Darcy and Elizabeth's first meeting in Derbyshire, Bingley's twin sisters (yes, that IS a typo – long story!), Colonel Fitzwilliam, Alice, Sarah, Darcy's proposal *sigh!* . Oh, and there's a Wentworth, too!

Carole (in Canada) says

My Rating: 5++++

"He was a single man in want of a wife."

This book is lovingly referred to as 'The Beast'. I was very fortunate to have won it in a giveaway. It will now grace my bookshelves as one of my favourite variations from one of my very favourite authors!

I had first read this as a work-in-progress. However, holding 'The Beast' in my hands, it's as if I am reading it for the first time. I am enthralled. Ms. Grafton's writing is beautiful and flows seamlessly in this hefty tome. All emotions are engaged as you journey with Darcy on his quest. And what a journey it has been!

As the book description states, he and Georgiana have returned from a year abroad...after the Hunsford proposal. He is now determined to do his duty and secure his sister's happiness in finding a wife. However, all does not go as planned as he invites guests to Pemberley. His attempts to not think about the Bennets, especially Elizabeth, are unsuccessful.

"It was as though he were wading through time surrounded by swirls of mist, desperately seeking something, someone, and culminating with him calling out Elizabeth's name..."

Mr. Bingley and his twin younger sisters (Olivia and Viola), who are absolutely delightful and full of mischief, will spend time at Pemberley before heading off to finishing school. These young girls steal the show and steal your hearts.

"And a mischievous nature must always be forgiven, you know, because there is no hope of a cure!"

The Bingley's are the first guests, with the Latimers arriving soon after. Colonel Fitzwilliam also attends providing wise counsel and great humour to the serious and conflicted Darcy.

But what of the Bennet's? What has been their fate? I hate to give much away, but their lives have been seriously impacted by Lydia's elopement and no Darcy to save the day. What of Wickham?

"Wickham is like a shadow, he infiltrates dark places, and he disappears like smoke at the smallest sign of trouble."

There is many a mystery to solve as well. However, when Darcy finally meets Elizabeth again it is epic! And Jane, oh I just loved her. Actually, I loved them all...

What I also loved was the reference to 'Persuasion' with Reverend Wentworth and reference to his brother, Captain Wentworth. The use of phrases from canon that are cleverly used by others or the same characters in different circumstances. I loved how Darcy always got so tongue-tied in Elizabeth's presence. Was there anything I didn't like?

Not a thing!

This is an all engrossing saga of love lost and found, hearts broken, finding love and redemption. There is a wonderful epilogue at the end that was very satisfying. However, I didn't want to let these characters go.

I highly recommend this book and all others Ms. Grafton has written.

Janet says

When I heard that Cass Grafton had a new Regency era P&P work in progress, I was so excited. I absolutely love her writing style, her ability to delve into the minds and hearts of the characters and her talent to tell a captivating story. I was not disappointed. A Quest for Mr. Darcy lived up to my expectations and more. The standard set by the author in her series of books, A Fair Prospect, Volumes I, II and III was met with ease.

What if Darcy, along with Georgiana and her companion left for northern Europe shortly after the Hunsford proposal? What would happen to the Bennet family if Darcy had not been there to find Lydia after she ran off with Wickham, to save the family from disgrace? When Darcy returns a little over a year later, we, as readers, discover exactly what did happen with this one change in circumstance. Much is altered and the story that unfolds is gripping and entertaining.

When Bingley shows up shortly after Darcy's return to London with a request of his old friend, they set off for Netherfield. Upon their arrival, they find nothing is as it was. Troubled and perplexed, Darcy is already beginning to realize he has not completely driven Elizabeth from his heart after all. The questions that this visit bring up get more mystifying with each new bit of information gleaned. Nobody knows where Mr. Bennet and his daughters are!

After Darcy returns to Pemberley, Mr. Bingley and his twin sisters make some stay with him. The twins, Viola and Olivia, are adorable. They are full of mischief and exactly the opposite of Louisa and Caroline. These two girls are genuine, and perceptive too! Quite often, they steal the show. How nice it was to have two Bingley girls that were fun and lovable!

Darcy has determined to marry to secure an heir and he has settled on an eligible young woman he feels is suitable to the task. Does he love her? No, but he feels he will never have the one woman of his dreams.

Eleanor Latimer is everything his family, except for Georgiana, would wish for him. The Latimers are invited to visit Pemberley at the same time as Bingley, Olivia and Viola. Oh, the fun that ensues is hilarious.

Darcy encounters Lizzy early on in the story and what an encounter it is! Curiosity gets the better of him and he pays dearly. It is absolutely priceless! I laughed with glee when reading the passage. Darcy is still ever the gentleman but his shield of indifference is beginning to crumble.

There is angst, mystery, romance, suspense and fun. Several familiar names are in the script; Wentworth, Higgins, Thornton, and even Latimer, to name a few. I enjoyed these nods to different books and authors. It became a bit of a game to see who else I might find. Well done, Ms. Grafton.

I loved everything about this book. There is absolutely nothing that dissatisfies. After finishing the novel, I felt the warmth and gratification of a book well read. With the wonderful way that Cass Grafton writes, her beautifully flowing Regency 'speak', a surprising mystery or two, a story with feeling and depth, and a wonderful ending with a few neat twists, this is a book anyone would fancy. I highly recommend it.

Sheila Majczan says

I first followed this as a WIP online and then reread it when it was published. The story seemed to have (as Anji said) been tightened up in places and a few details changed or amended. I loved it either way.

Mr. Darcy has fled to the continent with Georgiana in an attempt to escape thoughts of Elizabeth, dreams of Elizabeth, the image of her as she rejected his proposal at Hunsford. Georgiana and he have become much more open with each other and he has shared his heart break with her. Now back in London he jumps into The Season determined to fulfill his duty; the Darcy line needs an heir, Pemberley needs him back at the helm with a wife by his side. He decides on an Eleanor Latimer, a proper demure young lady with a £50,000 dowry.

But in reviewing the books from Pemberley while in London, he notices new tenant by the name of Bennet. He and Bingley take a short ride to Netherfield and between a housekeeper's relating the local news and a headstone in the church cemetery, discover that Lydia and Mrs. Bennet are dead, after Lydia's infamous elopement. The Bennets have moved away as have the Philips and no one knows where the former family relocated.

Darcy and Georgiana return to Pemberley with company expected: Charles is coming with his twin half-sisters, the Latimer family is coming (Darcy expects to propose but nothing has been stated...yet) and another family, with an eligible daughter is also expected. The colonel will take some leave and be there for a while, in addition.

There are amusingly ironic events at the on start: Darcy walks at dusk to the cottage of his new tenants as the name "Bennet" is just too coincidental and he must determine if it is the Hertfordshire family. Elizabeth hears what she thinks is the nuisance of a fox who has been annoying the chickens & steps out to toss a bucket of water in the direction of the disturbance...on Mr. Darcy. Then there are the Bingley twins who, between their sightings of a ghost in the tree tops and the little tricks they pull off and "arrangements" they plan as matchmakers...get it all wrong in the latter and "serve" one trick on the wrong party in the former, keep the other guests apprehensive as to their next move.

Eleanor Latimer's father has a great many reasons to believe that the purpose for their invitation is that Darcy will be proposing. He lets Darcy know right from the beginning of their visit what he expects and then pushes for the event at every opportunity. Darcy has had a year to get over Elizabeth. This story is all about his quest to determine if he was successful and to determine his next move.

The tension between Elizabeth and Darcy is such that even in the second reading I was on-the-edge-of-my-seat wanting to push them into each other's arms, wanting a kiss, a touch, a mutual sharing of a look and a smile. Well done.

Tamra says

5++++++! DON'T READ THE REVIEWS, just read it! So many twists and turns better left unknown. This is the best variation I've read in a long time. Funny, engaging read with great new characters! This is one complete book, long but fulfilling. I hate books written and sold in a series published one at a time. I love getting the full story so you feel complete when it's ended. Definitely got my money's worth and more on this one. I guess if I were going to be picky, a little Caroline Bingley would be nice.
