



The Companion of His Future Life

Jack Caldwell

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One of the great "what-ifs" among *Pride & Prejudice* aficionados is: if Mr. Collins married Mary Bennet instead of Charlotte Lucas, how would that influence Mr. Darcy's dogged pursuit of the elusive Elizabeth? In this breezy and hilarious re-telling of Jane Austen's classic novel, the author explores what would have changed -- and what would have not -- had two of literature's most self-righteous characters found their way together. Elizabeth Bennet goes to Kent with her sister Jane, and the fur flies! A wonderful, mad-cap romp!

The Companion of His Future Life Details

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From Reader Review The Companion of His Future Life for online ebook

Barbara says

I was not impressed. this was just p&p with a few minor changes, not really an original story.

Anna Fitzwilliam says

The book was ok, I just don't enjoy much when Darcy only proposes when his cousins push him to. IMO, looks like he didn't love Elizabeth enough to act without interference. On the other hand, I found the friendship between Anne and Mary kinda odd, at one point I was suspecting they had a romantic relationship.

Hazel Mills says

I really enjoyed Jack Caldwell's 'Mr Darcy Came to Dinner', with many laugh out loud moments, so had high hopes for this book and was not disappointed. I read these books for entertainment and was thoroughly entertained by this one from beginning to end. I loved Mary as Mrs Collins and the journey Mr Caldwell has given her. The way she handles Mr Collins made me smile and at times laugh out loud as she got her own way.

The main plot twists of Pride and Prejudice remain intact and much of the dialogue is there but not always from the mouths of those you expect, but this is definitely an original retelling with Jane and Lizzy experiencing much more of the tale together, thus giving Jane much more room to grow. I certainly recommend this 'what if?'.

Dung says

I enjoyed the character development of Mary/Mr. Collins , Jane/Bingley, and Anne de Bourgh under the guidance of her new friend Mary.

The storyline with Darcy/Elizabeth were similar to cannon and did not deviate much.

Katherine says

Much too similar to the original. The main difference is that Mary marries Collins versus Charlotte and Jane goes with Elizabeth to Hunsford. Thus Jane will learn the truth of Darcy's interference with Bingley firsthand from Colonel Fitzwilliam when he tells Elizabeth and thus Darcy must apologize to both of them. The

conversations read exactly as they did in Pride & Prejudice which made me wonder If there was copyright infringement. This was the reason for my lower rating. The one change I enjoyed was getting to know Anne more and learning of her romantic feelings to one of our characters. Overall, too similar to the original to stand on its own.

JMarcy says

Highly entertaining story. The first change to canon wherein Collins woos and marries Mary instead of Charlotte sets off a bit of a chain reaction of differing circumstances during major plot events. One of the biggest is Jane and Elizabeth both going to first Hunsford, then Lambton. This leads to some highly original and entertaining twists to canon.

There is also a fair bit of humour sprinkled in, and not really much heartwrenching angst. My favorite is the recurring thought "I think I will become ill" or some variation thereof that seems to cross the mind of most characters throughout the story.

[Some people dislike Elizabeth's response to Darcy after the news of Lydia is learned, as being highly out of character for her. However, I found in only a few pages her declaration is completely explained.]

Meredith (Austenesque Reviews) says

Have you ever felt that Mr. Collins ended up with the wrong character in Pride and Prejudice? He is attracted to Jane's and Elizabeth's beauty and Charlotte's agreeable nature, but he completely overlooks plain Mary, who, with her preference of sermons, serious nature, and fondness for counseling others, would perhaps be the ideal candidate. I've always wondered if Mr. Collins ever thought of Mary Bennet, if he even noticed her. Did he see their compatibility and ignore it? In Jack Caldwell's newest novel he explores what happens when Mr. Collin's sees Mary and proposes to her instead of Elizabeth...

So how does Mary marrying Mr. Collins change the story for the other characters, you ask? Well, the Netherfield party still departs to London, but because her sister is soon to be married, Jane Bennet doesn't venture there herself. She instead accompanies Elizabeth on a long visit to Hunsford Parsonage (that's right, no Maria Lucas!). Where we learn that Mary and Anne de Bourgh don't remain indifferent acquaintances with each other, but instead become fast friends.

What I loved most about this story was seeing all the positive results of Mr. Collins's marriage to Mary! Mary's development and improvement was wonderful to witness; she handles Mr. Collins masterfully and truly comes into her own. And now that the sisters are separated by a distance of "nearly fifty miles," they seem to value each other more and their increased sisterly affection for each other was heartwarming to observe. In addition, I loved how Mary, while respectful and kind towards Lady Catherine, did not worship her with the same absolute veneration that her husband is prone to do and often steered him in a better direction than his "esteemed patroness." Go Mary!

Mary's maturity and development isn't the only pleasing one to witness in this tale, Anne de Bourgh, while under the guidance and support of her new friend is finally becoming the woman she has always longed to be. Taking secret music lessons, driving carriages, interfering with her cousin's relationship, trying to attract

a certain suitor...I liked seeing Anne take a more active part in the plot!

While I loved the premise of this variation and enjoyed seeing the changes it wrought, I did often wish that the story deviated a little more. There were a lot of familiar scenes and similar conversations, and it seemed like Mary marrying Mr. Collins had more impact on Jane and Bingley than it did Darcy and Elizabeth. (Loved how Jane handled Mr. Bingley! Go Jane!) The course of Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship seemed to be the same, even with the help of Darcy's well-meaning cousins and Elizabeth's matchmaking sister. I found myself enjoying the Jane/Bingley relationship in this story more than the Darcy/Elizabeth one, especially when Elizabeth makes a brazen and assumptive declaration to Mr. Darcy...(that just felt odd.)

Part of me wished this variation stayed with and focused on Mary, Anne, and Jane, but you can't have a Pride and Prejudice variation without Darcy and Elizabeth!! Even though I was more partial to the secondary characters than the main ones, I found this inventive variation of Pride and Prejudice to be an entertaining and engaging read! I look forward to reading more from Mr. Caldwell in the future!

Patricia says

[

There were at times where I felt Mr. Bingley was har

Mary says

Dear reader,

If you are looking for a P&P variation peppered with humour and a smattering of differences, then this is the book for you!

This was a lovely story to lose yourself in as you pondered what would happen when Mary, and not Elizabeth, was chosen by Mr Collins to make him the happiest of men!

How would circumstances change if both sisters, Elizabeth and Jane visited Kent, and what would be the outcome of a budding friendship between Anne and Mary?

I must admit to loving this story and found it quite compelling. I really enjoyed seeing how quietly manipulative and sweetly cunning Mary was in dealing with Mr C, a character that I actually liked in this story!

Loved the fact that Jane was clear sighted enough to see that Bingley was not his own man, and until such time that he matured into being an independent man who could support her and their family, she could not and would not promise herself to him.

This encouraged said gentleman to stand on his own two feet, (unknowingly with Darcy's help), take the reigns of his life in his hands and put his stamp on Netherfield.

Jack Caldwell has an uncanny ability in using Austen's dialogue for different characters, quite often with humorous results. It was very funny reading much loved dialogue being uttered in different situations and by different characters!

One small bugbear I had was Elizabeth stating 'find them and I'm yours' to Darcy, when he has learned of Wickham and Lydia's unexpected flight to London.

This statement doesn't sound right to me, she has just realised she could love him, and why she would seemingly offer herself as part of the 'deal'/'reward' for finding Lydia, is beyond me. It simply sounds wrong, to my mind, and I cannot imagine her ever uttering such words.

Having said that, I do recommend this delightful and off times, humorous read! Enjoy!

Sheila Majczan says

If one loves JA's P&P, one knows the lines very well. Mr. Caldwell uses many of them with no attempt to disguise such. Does that offend me? NO. My thoughts are that Mr. Caldwell was very clever and had to have given a lot of thought as to how to use those lines and in whose mouth. But, honestly, I did skim through many of those sections as I knew the words so well. Many of his changes are changes which I, frankly, have opined about for the original. Don't we all think Mary should have married Mr. Collins, what with her reading of Fordyce's Sermons and her holier-than-thou attitude? However, in marrying Mary to Mr. Collins our author gives her the wisdom (and body) to be able to handle her husband. Him "begging" to be allowed to visit her bedroom - I think I will be ill also if not die from laughing so hard first! I enjoyed reading that Mary and Anne de Bourgh became best of friends. What a nice surprise! Many authors have married Col. Fitzwilliam off to Anne in JAFF stories, but in this version, Col. Fitzwilliam doesn't seem to have a clue that this is to be his fate. Is he in denial? The scene in which he is entering Rosings and 3 females have his destiny all tied up is priceless.

I did NOT like when Elizabeth, at Lambton, after having received the letters about Lydia's elopement with Wickham, said, "Find them and I am yours." It just doesn't sound right...sorry. Yes, we know Darcy is honorable and would only have Elizabeth in marriage but I just don't think our Lizzy would have said it quite that way. It opens up too many negative connotations. He has not proposed for a second time, She has just realized that, yes, she can love him. But she also thinks that this disgrace because of Lydia's actions would now totally justify his views of her family, even though he takes the blame in not exposing Wickham. And there is that whole thing about him not wanting her out of gratitude, which her words imply. Doesn't she know that he is not going to want her for that reason by now. She has been learning so much about his honor and how loyal he is to those he loves and how he takes care of them and protects them.

In creating a different Anne I found it very interesting that Mr. Caldwell now gives her an accomplishment which her mother was bragging about in the original story (and which she didn't have) and additional accomplishments, which would draw attention from a man looking for an "ideal woman"...learning to play the piano, learning to shot billiards, drawing, handling her dog cart and wanting to learn to ride are sure to please.

We have a new Jane who suddenly has the discernment to realize that Bingley can't stand on his own two feet and that a couple cannot live on love alone. This is not JA's Jane. We do see Bingley's character being more developed in this version and, for me, that was pleasing. (Even if the steward he hires and works with was sent his way via Darcy and Matlock.)

All in all a very interesting twist to the original story. The author kept very close to the original story line making changes more in characters' personalities and then their actions without changes in the final outcome for the most part.

J. W. Garrett says

“The reason as to why we are attracted to our opposites is because they are our salvation from the burden of being ourselves.” –Kamand Kojouri

I will say that this book was not as good as other books I've read by this author. I was a bit disappointed that much of the text was drawn straight from Austen, although it might have been tweaked a bit to accommodate a different speaker or something was added to it to fit the circumstances. I don't want to read text verbatim from canon. That just gets annoying.

When I first started reading this I felt like I had been punched in the gut. Elizabeth was horrid. Her attitude bordered on obnoxious and I wanted to shake her and ask “what is your problem?” Her inner dialogue was cutting, biting, and filled with sarcasm; she was not nice.

Our P&P timelines were tweaked just a bit when our story-line deviated from canon as Mr. Collins saw a Bennet daughter in a whole new light and yahoo... decided on a very different companion of his future life.

Poor Bingley, bungled his lines and stage directions throughout this story. Bless his heart. He really tried.

A lot of the action happened off the page and we were simply told what happened. I loved Anne de Bourgh, our dear Colonel [love him], and Mary. Their stories intertwined and was the best part of this book. The last HEA, for them, was hilarious. Well done on that part.

I was confused by the title until I realized it encompassed everyone and their companion of their future life. It pertained to more than one person. Sneaky there Caldwell... very sneaky.

The conclusion or epilogue for our villains was a bit far-fetched, but oh well. At least they got what they deserved.

Erika says

A lovable yet pious Mary

How would P&P differ if Mary married Mr Collins versus Charlotte?

This story starts with Mr Collins changing his focus again from Elizabeth to Mary after having spied her in the garden. Jane misses the opportunity to go to London with the Gardiners, therefore missing rekindling her friendship with Miss Bingley. Elizabeth and Jane both travel to Hunsford to visit with the Collins', how does the change things. Mary befriends Anne de Bourgh, though keeps their activities in secret from her mother.

How does all this change the Hunsford events for Darcy? For Col Fitzwilliam? How do Mary and Mr Collins adjust to married life?

I truly loved Mary and Anne in this variation. They are two peas in a pod and truly grow from the addition of their friendship. The story was well written and kept me wanting to read until I was finished. I would recommend this book to all JAFFers, no mature themes noted in this story.

Kirk says

Oh what a Jane!!

Talia says

I love this author and this book did not disappoint. Terrific read.

Reread: Delightful!

Erika says

A lovable yet pious Miss Mary

How would P&P differ if Mary married Mr Collins versus Charlotte?

This story starts with Mr Collins changing his focus again from Elizabeth to Mary after having spied her in the garden. Jane misses the opportunity to go to London with the Gardiners, therefore missing rekindling her friendship with Miss Bingley. Elizabeth and Jane both travel to Hunsford to visit with the Collins', how does the change things. Mary befriends Anne de Bourgh, though keeps their activities in secret from her mother.

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