



Mr. Darcy's Undoing: A Pride and Prejudice Variation

Abigail Reynolds

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No one can outdo Mr. Darcy... or can they?

What could possibly make a proper gentleman come completely undone?

What if Elizabeth Bennet accepted the proposal of another before she met Mr. Darcy again? In Abigail Reynolds' bold and playful retelling of the Austen classic, a devastated Mr. Darcy must decide how far he is willing to go to win the woman he loves. Consumed by jealousy, he knows that winning her will throw them both into scandal and disgrace, but losing her is unbearable. Mr. Darcy is going to have to fight for his love, and his life...

Mr. Darcy's Undoing: A Pride and Prejudice Variation Details

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From Reader Review Mr. Darcy's Undoing: A Pride and Prejudice Variation for online ebook

Iris says

I loved this book. It's a little off from traditional Austen but I liked that we got to see more of Darcy. I also loved that there was more passion between them like kissing and stuff. I actually imagined something like what would happen if another guy also liked Lizzie so when I heard there was a book about this I had to read it. I just wish Lizzie wasn't so close to becoming his mistress. I think the traditional Darcy and Elizabeth would have more self control.

Meredith (Austenese Reviews) says

Mr. Darcy's Undoing (originally self-published as Without Reserve in 2007) is one of Abigail Reynolds' earliest novels from her incomparable Pemberley Variation Series, and just happens to be the first one I ever read! If you are unfamiliar with these riveting and romantic variations, they are retellings of Pride and Prejudice that take our beloved hero and heroine down a slightly altered path. Abigail Reynolds, one of my favorite Austenesque authors, is a skilled-story teller, an ardent admirer of Jane Austen, and quite proficient at infusing a lot of emotion, tension, and passion into her stories!

In this variation, Ms. Reynolds takes up her pen and asks: What if, after refusing Mr. Darcy's marriage proposal in Hunsford, Elizabeth accepts the marriage proposal of a childhood friend?

An interesting scenario, isn't it? Mr. Darcy has a rival – and the rival's already won! Or has he? Mr. Covington (a. k. a. Darcy's rival/Elizabeth's fiancée) is an amiable young gentleman who owns a small but well-established neighboring estate. He's affable, kind-hearted, generous, honorable, and has never insulted Elizabeth Bennet! He may have Elizabeth's hand in marriage, but does he have her heart?

To continue reading, go to: <http://janeaustenreviews.blogspot.com...>

Kath says

Ok~ llegamos otra vez a ese tiempo del año en que me dan deseos de leer variaciones de Orgullo y Prejuicio (y después, vuelvo a releer el libro y a ver la serie del 95) entonces, decidí leer esta adaptación porque la sinopsis de veía interesante. Y la primera parte del libro es interesante. Después ya no tanto, porque todo gira en torno a "la tensión sexual" entre los protagonistas, que no está mal pero... sostener eso durante más de cien páginas. Me parece demasiado.

En fin, en su conjunto no es un mal libro, está bien escrito, es dinámico y fácil de leer, pero... simplemente sentí que no explotó todo el potencial que tenía (me refiero a la idea base del libro) es un buen libro para pasar el rato y ruborizar un poco las mejillas de quien lo lee. Jajaja. Ahora bien, quien quiera leerlo, advierto de inmediato que el libro está de momento solamente en inglés.

EM Clark says

Pretty intimate and delightful

While not near the best of Mrs. Reynolds works, this is a very good story, as usual. I find it amusing that some of her works have barely any adult scenes, while others, such as this are copious. If this isn't your thing, please don't read it and then disparage her abilities with low star ratings. This woman writes D & E with an intensity that few else can and should be lauded as a proficient in the field of P&P variations.

Skyril says

No, I'm sorry, but no.

The whole 202 pages worth was like listening to your favorite song sung in the *worst* possible way. *On repeat.*

I *did* read the whole book, which tempted me to give it two starts instead of one, but I just really couldn't, because I actually wish I would have stopped the book while I was ahead and recycled the paper immediately. The main reason I finished the book was because it was so thin, barely more than a novella, and the other reason I finished was because, I admit, there were some sweet scenes near the beginning that weren't horribly written that did make me smile.

However, the above is all I have good to say about this "book" that is nothing more than glorified, erotic, poorly-written fan-fiction. I mean, sure, I enjoy fan-fictions as much as the next fangirl [in fact, I probably enjoy it more than most], but those are the fluffy, silly, not-true-to-their-characters stories one might read online. NOT pay money for.

At the start of the book [as in, the first 2-3 chapters maybe] the author obviously tried her hardest to both write in a regency style, and to keep the story as close to Jane Austen's as possible. After, oh, 40, maybe 50, pages, however, she gave up, and her writing gradually changed to something definitely NOT Austen-esque.

At first, it was sweet to see Darcy's struggles and to see a more emotional side of Elizabeth as she fell in love with him. Then we got introduced to Darcy's dreams, that he apparently has every night, and suddenly, rather than being one of the greatest *love* stories of all time, it became one of the most shocking *lust* stories of all time.

I mean, really? Darcy? Lusting after Elizabeth and imagining doing all kinds of things to her in his bed? That's... NO. NO! Never, ever, ever! Darcy would never even let such a single thought enter his mind. In fact, it would be SO FAR from his mind, that nothing of the sort would ever occur to him, and it rather disgusted me in "Without Reserve," whose title is more fitting than you would believe.

As I said before, your favorite song, sung in the worst possible way, on repeat, as the impropriety only increases drastically in its meager 202 pages.

I imagined a short book with story and character and tension building throughout most of its pages, and ending with perhaps one or two kissing scenes. Instead, I have a 50-60 page *kissing* buildup, followed by 140-150 pages of kissing scenes.

Trying to associate the Fitzwilliam Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet in this "book" with the Darcy and Elizabeth I know, is pure torture that sends mortified shivers across my skin.

Trust me, dear review reader, if you are a fan of Jane Austen in any way, whether it be her books only, her movies only, or both, you *will not* enjoy this book. It will rot your mind and destroy your soul, and leave you dismayed and appalled and desperately trying to scrub yourself free of the images you have just force-fed your poor brain.

Mary says

There comes a time every so often when I am compelled to read another Pride and Prejudice sequel/bodice ripper featuring Darcy and Elizabeth in (very) compromising positions (actually in lots of positions). That time is now and this book is one of them. Nope, don't feel a bit guilty about it...

Angie says

Without Reserve was another enjoyable *P&P* variation from Abigail Reynolds. This variation sees Elizabeth agree to marry a childhood friend, Mr. Covington, after Darcy's first proposal. She knows that she shouldn't have accepted another man so soon after rejecting Mr. Darcy but she sees it as a benefit to her family. However, Mr. Darcy reappears shortly after the engagement and Elizabeth starts to realize her mistake. With little surprise, Elizabeth breaks off her engagement with Covington, but feels little hope that Darcy will come back for her...of course he does. It is obvious that the passion between Elizabeth and Darcy is strong, and at times it is almost like they are horny teenagers in this book. This is definitely not Jane Austen, but for those of us addicted to chick lit, that is okay.

Katherine says

2.5 stars though I would have given this novel a higher rating if the love was kept in clean taste (even a 4 perhaps). I loved the story line - Darcy returns to Netherfield shortly after his visit in Kent. He wants to know if Elizabeth has forgiven him after his letter and hopes to re-unite Bingley with Jane. He wants to prove himself to be the man Elizabeth would want him to be but is utterly shocked and grieved when he learns she is engaged. Lizzy becomes engaged to a lifelong friend Mr. Covington that she never thought about romantically but considered an amiable man and could not find fault with him when he proposed(though she possessed no passionate feelings for him). You learn in the novel WHY she thought she needed to accept him though she clearly rejected 2 marriage proposals prior to this. When Darcy returns, he makes her heart race and she begins to enjoy a friendship with him when he accompanies Bingley on his visits to Jane. One of the funniest scenes is when Elizabeth's fiance comes to visit on one such an occasion. Darcy instead of going walking with Jane and Bingley as invited to do, chooses to enjoy refreshments with

Elizabeth and Mr. Covington. First he just wants to observe them and see what Elizabeth sees in this man, jealous overwhelms him - he doesn't want another man looking at his Elizabeth and he certainly doesn't want to leave them alone and then.. he mocks him to Elizabeth. One of the most heart-pulling scenes is when Darcy comes to comfort Elizabeth when he hears the news of Lydia though Bingley. He wants to put his arms around her and console her but knows he doesn't have the right as she is promised to another. But when Mr. Covington arrives to comfort Lizzy and take her into his arms and Elizabeth finally loses all emotion and starts sobbing uncontrollably, Darcy realizes that he should not be there and leaves. He thinks he has lost her to him and doesn't know the real reason Elizabeth is crying. When Darcy is away in London Elizabeth realizes how much she misses him and that she is about to marry a man she can never love because she loves another. One of my favorite scenes is when Darcy returns just for one day to say goodbye to Elizabeth. SPOILERS ALERT: He begs her forgiveness for what he's about to do and kisses her softly just to feel her lips one time in his life. Then he wishes her happiness for her future marriage and leaves. WOW! Talk about emotional!! Then the novel fast-forwards to 5 months later when Darcy returns for Bingley's wedding to Jane. He assumes that Elizabeth is now Mrs. Covington but when he learns she is still a Miss Bennett he must learn what happened and WHY she's decided to be single for life. Now he wants her and will do whatever it takes to have her. This is where the novel gets spoiled for me. He tries to win her over with his many kisses (fine I get that) but many times it goes way too far. Would Elizabeth allow a man she will not accept to kiss her that way? Would Darcy really dishonor her so? And if they do come to an understanding of sorts, would Darcy really compromise her? Unlikely and yet that is what Abigail Reynolds did in this novel. I hated that Darcy could not have maintained enough self control to wait. So if you want to read a P&P style clean-romance story of Darcy & Elizabeth, this isn't it. So halfway through the novel I became too disappointed. If only Abigail Reynolds gave Darcy more self-control I would have loved this novel as their conversations were so passionate. There was such love in Darcy's words to Elizabeth as he wanted to win her over and such an inner struggle for Elizabeth with her feelings for Darcy that it would have been enough to make it a great novel. However, it was ruined with immoral passion that would never have taken place among these 2 great characters.

Hazèl says

Mr. Darcy's Undoing is a book I've won through here and yesterday evening I started reading it. I read *Pride and Prejudice* and *Persuasion* by Jane Austen before I commenced with this book. Although a fan of the film renditions of the book, I had never read *Pride and Prejudice*—or any book by Jane Austen, for that matter. Needless to say, after becoming familiar with the language and Austen's way of storytelling, I enjoyed both books immensely, though I was slower than I usually am in reading them. (It was the language, mostly; it made my progress less than what's typical for me.)

Anyway, after reading *Pride and Prejudice* and then reading *Persuasion* (so not to overdose on the amazing, classical pair that is Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet), I picked up *Mr. Darcy's Undoing*. This book begins after Elizabeth Bennet returns from Kent, after refusing Mr. Darcy's first proposal of marriage. She becomes engaged to a local, respectable gentleman named Covington. Elizabeth's choice is based on providing for her family, as Jane's prospects of marriage do not look well, and Mr. Covington was hardly a disagreeable man (in fact, he has many traits that Elizabeth admires; she's simply not in love with him). Elizabeth is also especially fond of Mr. Covington's mother because she is a woman of good sense and respectability. Mr. Darcy returns to Netherfield with Mr. Bingley (who returns to woo Jane Bennet after learning from his friend that she is not impartial to him) and learns of Elizabeth's engagement. Darcy is determined to win her back.

I was half way through the book before I refused to read further. Immediately, the book was terrible, but I

had hoped it would improve further on. It didn't. Although this is a variation, the characters' personalities and mentalities are already set by Austen. Reynolds did not keep to either Darcy's or Elizabeth's preordained personalities. Darcy, a man who is known for his intolerance for impropriety is nothing but improper towards Elizabeth. After learning of her engagement, Darcy becomes absolutely petty and has absolutely no respect for Elizabeth's engaged status. He tries to ignore it and pretend that she's not engaged. He does not accept the reality of Elizabeth's situation. Darcy leaves to tour Vienna, finally able to accept that Elizabeth is to be married to another man, and Elizabeth breaks her engagement during his absence, realizing that she is in love with Darcy. However, there is a price to pay. The scandal of Elizabeth breaking her engagement causes an uproar in Meryton and is the talk of the town upon Darcy's return for Mr. Bingley and Jane's wedding. Darcy learns of the broken engagement from Elizabeth herself. Having no respect for her whatsoever, he kisses her in the carriage, after she has told him she cannot accept another man's proposition of marriage—at least, not for a time. Note, that this is not a simple kiss of the cheek or lips; it's a make-out session and Elizabeth's trying to maintain what little bit of respectability she has left in the eyes of Meryton.

Basically, what it boils down to, is that Reynolds has taken a classic piece of literature and has tried to write it with a modern mentality twist, almost. She has taken two beloved Austen characters and has completely defaced them. Darcy is no longer respectable; he's just wealthy and seems respectable. And Elizabeth is a voluntary seductress, flirting with Darcy while she's engaged to another man. Although it seems like friendly banter, it is undeniably flirtatiousness. I must disagree with Reynolds in thinking that Elizabeth would ever behave in such a manner if she were engaged to another man. And I equally disagree that Darcy would behave so abominably, too, if Elizabeth were to be engaged to another man.

The respectability of both these characters are lost in this variation. Reynolds has ruined them by trying to turn their love into a Harlequin romance/*Twilight* stalker spin-off.

Sheila Majczan says

Having read all the other reviews I read such different opinions. But we are all entitled to our own. I purchased and read this book as *Without Reserve*. I love all of Abigail Reynolds's books and I think this one may be one of my favorites, if not number 1. I have read it many times in part or in whole. I can take or leave sex scenes but am not offended by such nor do I read Abigail's as porn. I have posted several other reviews in which I do describe the stories as smut or porn, but Abigail builds the sexual tension and the relationship between two people with the bedroom scenes as natural results of such. I LOVE the angst, the anxiety, the confusion, etc. described and built upon in this tale. My reasoning for finding the bedroom scenes, etc. as a natural progression come from the thoughts in Darcy's head, "He determined that his best strategy lay in wearing down her resistance, and realized one of his strongest weapons lay in the pleasure he could give her by touching her...He could not change her mind, but perhaps with enough time and enough familiarity with him, she would change it for herself...Having determined there was no reason to deny himself, especially since he had every intention of marrying her, he seized every opportunity to steal kisses from her, and when this was not possible, at least to find a way to unobtrusively touch the back of her hand." The conversations and their journey to accepting where they are and how they feel about each other portray two very independent and passionate people, which is what Jane Austen gave us and Abigail builds on in modern times.

Darcy, in going back to Meryton to once again court Elizabeth and finding her engaged decides to stay b/c of social conventions (He can't just run off after only being there for a day or two) and also to assess the relationship between Elizabeth and James Covington; are they in love? He detected no such feelings on

display. The scenes with the tigers and unicorns, the poetry, are so romantic! And then apologizing - what for? He then kisses her!!!! And that kiss stirs the embers in Elizabeth's heart. Now she knows what chemistry can mean. I loved the scene after the wedding rehearsal for Jane's wedding during which Darcy discovers Elizabeth is not "Mrs. Covington". Oh how my heart warmed.

It is so endearing to read their discourse. First one, then the other explaining why they can't feel guilty or why they must or must not marry, etc. kept me turning pages every time I read this book. I really appreciate Ms. Reynolds' ability in this department. She develops the thoughts in depth and takes us on such a love trip. Thank you.

Heather Wickett says

there were so many arch comments and arched eyebrows on Elizabeth's part I can only imagine her eyebrows had actually migrated off her face. they're hovering even now a foot above her head. This book was a pretty big 'meh' with okay characterizations.

Mary says

This story had a sweet premise-how would Darcy react when he discovered Lizzy was engaged to another and how would he persuade her otherwise. The first half of the book was really touching, very romantic-with Darcy determined he was happy for her to be married to another man as long as she, herself was truly happy. He returns for Bingley's wedding only to happily discover that she is unwed and sets out to make her his and is not willing to take no for an answer.

I wanted to love this book but I found the fact that Darcy and Lizzy slept together before they were married just didn't sit well with me. I realise it's a variation and characters' personalities can change but Austen's Darcy and Lizzy would not ignore society's rules by engaging in such behaviour. Neither would Darcy act in ANY way that would reflect badly on Elizabeth. So while I liked it, I didn't enjoy it as much as I thought I would.

Brigid says

More smut than I would like.

spoiler alert

The concept of the book was interesting - what if another man proposed to Elizabeth after she'd turned down Darcy's proposal (and she accepted)? Unfortunately, that only lasts for about 1/4 of the book. I don't care for the interpretation of Darcy as written by Reynolds, and while I can accept the scene where Darcy kisses Elizabeth (even though she's engaged to another guy), I can't fathom them having premarital sex, at Netherfield, with Georgiana in the next room - and even if I could, I don't want such **graphic** detail about it.

Anna says

Review originally posted on Diary of an Eccentric

Mr. Darcy's Undoing (previously published as Without Reserve) is another retelling of Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice in which Abigail Reynolds asks readers to imagine "what if?" — in this case, what if Mr. Darcy had a rival for Elizabeth Bennet's affections? Reynolds opens the novel after Darcy's disastrous proposal at Kent. By the time Darcy convinces Bingley to return to Netherfield and rekindle his romance with Elizabeth's sister, Jane, Elizabeth has already accepted a marriage proposal from James Covington.

Darcy had followed Bingley in the hopes of winning Elizabeth's love, and he is shocked and dismayed upon learning of her engagement. That doesn't stop him from hanging around, though he tells himself that if he knows for sure that Elizabeth is in love with Covington, then he must let her go. Meanwhile, Elizabeth feels an attraction to Darcy and must force herself to consider all the reasons why her marriage to Covington makes sense for her and her family. Besides, there's nothing she can do about the situation now — not without ruining her reputation and her family's standing in the community, especially considering the damage already caused by Lydia after she runs away with Wickham.

In Mr. Darcy's Undoing, Reynolds gives readers what they have come to expect from her Pride and Prejudice variations — different twists and turns as Elizabeth and Darcy navigate the same misunderstandings and plenty of heat as they skirt the bounds of propriety and often cross the line as they find they cannot keep their hands off each other. Although Reynolds briefly brings in the wit and playfulness of Mr. Bennet, most of Austen's secondary characters sit on the sidelines in Mr. Darcy's Undoing. Elizabeth and Darcy, their bantering, and their serious discussions about their relationship are the focus of the novel, and while I missed the tension typically supplied by Wickham, Caroline Bingley, and Lady Catherine, I enjoyed Reynolds' take on a scandalized Elizabeth and a more emotional and seductive Darcy. There also was some amusement to be had with Darcy's jealousy and pain, as he goes so far as to chaperone Elizabeth and her betrothed.

I am always amazed at how many ways Reynolds can re-tell the same story. She manages to keep the story fresh, throwing new obstacles in Elizabeth and Darcy's path to happiness and making it so that readers almost wonder whether the two will live happily ever after. While Mr. Darcy's Undoing isn't my favorite of Reynolds' variations, it was a page-turner that I would recommend to readers who want a spicier Pride and Prejudice retelling.

D.G. says

Definitely not the worst of the lot in these P&P variations but I wonder at this author's portrayal of Darcy as a man who can't control his desires. I agree he was a passionate man underneath all that starch (there was no doubt of that after his first proposal) but I'm sure that Darcy would have been able to keep himself in check in most other circumstances. I guess this was the author's solution for having Darcy mauling poor Elizabeth every time he had the chance.

Anyhow, the plot is as follows: After Darcy's proposal and letter, Miss Bennet returns to Longbourn and soon after receives a proposal she accepts. Mr. Covington (this is a new character) is an amiable man she's known for years with a decent fortune so given Jane's situation, she realizes that she cannot let pass this

opportunity to secure her family's future. But then Darcy returns, changed after her reproof, and after meeting him again, she falls in love with him.

In general I despise love triangles but I would have liked to see a plot where both Darcy and this other man are courting Elizabeth at the same time. As it was, the fiancé was pretty much gone by 30% of the book and after that, it was all Darcy & Elizabeth kissing in corners while she rejects his proposal of marriage because she thinks marrying her would ruin his reputation.

In this variation, we didn't have the confrontation with Lady Catherine or the visit to Pemberley and I have to say I missed both.
