



To Have His Cake (and Eat It Too): Mr. Darcy's Tale

P.O. Dixon

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In Jane Austen's "Pride and Prejudice", Mr. Bennet had this to say about Mr. Darcy, "We all know him to be a proud, unpleasant sort of man..." Elizabeth Bennet, herself, spoke of his arrogance, his conceit, and his selfish disdain of the feelings of others--the last man in the world whom she could ever be prevailed on to marry. Mr. Darcy's housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, described him as the best landlord and master who ever lived. Such varying accounts as these are exceedingly puzzling, indeed. This amorous, provocative, and at times tumultuous tale, illustrates Mr. Darcy as a wealthy young man of sense and education, as well as considerable worldly experience--not at all uncommon for Regency era gentlemen of his social standing. He is his own master. He enjoys his lifestyle and has no particular desire to marry at all. That is, until he renews his acquaintance with Miss Elizabeth Bennet--her own circumstances greatly diminished pursuant to the sudden and tragic death of her father. To Have His Cake (and Eat It Too) tells of Darcy's journey from a man who, indeed, is proud and haughty, to one who seeks to please a woman worthy of being pleased.

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Meredith (Austenese Reviews) says

What if Elizabeth never met Darcy in Kent? What if Lydia ran off with Wickham soon after the Netherfield Ball? What if, in a horrific series of events, Lydia, Mr. Bennet, and Mr. Wickham all came to a harrowing and untimely demise?

In this unique and absorbing *Pride and Prejudice* variation, readers witness the great misfortune and social decline of the Bennet family. Mrs. Bennet's greatest fears are realized as she is forced to remove from Longbourn a mere month after the death of her husband and daughter. In addition, Jane and Elizabeth have no other alternative but to find posts as governesses. Jane accepts a post in Scotland, but Elizabeth has yet to find a suitable situation. Until Mr. Darcy comes along...

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Carol Perrin says

To Have His Cake (and Eat It Too): Mr. Darcy's Tale (*Pride and Prejudice* Untold)

Well written variation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The happy outcome was worth the angst of getting there. That Darcy loved Elizabeth Bennet from the very start of their acquaintance, but not being able to act on it because of duty to his family, was destroying him to be without her. Bingley however, must not have had his heart so engaged with Jane, because in a matter of months he married someone from town. Even though Lady Matlock was setting him up with young ladies from the Ton, his heart's desire was in Hertfordshire or so he thought. When he finds out Mr. Bennet and Lydia were killed dealing with Wickham, he sends an investigator out to find her. Once he knows where she is in London, he sets out to talk with her. Knowing that he can't have her but wants her close, he offers her the position of being Georgiana's companion during her coming out Season. She accepts after meeting with Georgiana, but still butt heads over misunderstandings. Lord Harry Stafford asks for Georgiana's hand, and Darcy agrees to courtship because he'd like Georgiana to have second Season and if they both felt the same way, he'd give his consent. Not looking forward to that day since he'd lose not only Georgiana, but Elizabeth as well. Upon Georgiana's marry, Lizzy gets ready to move back with the Gardiners. Darcy in an effort to keep her where she knows where she is offers to buy her a home complete with servants, provide a carriage, and a pension. He cannot see why Elizabeth is so upset at his offer. In this version, Lizzy writes the letter and has her ladies maid deliver it after she leaves. He is angry, furious, and dumbfounded by her words. Only after reading it and committing it to memory, does he realize what the impact of his offer suggests. Once more the poor man needs to apologize for his actions. The trip with Gardiners takes them to view Pemberley. Mrs. Reynolds is glad to see her because she knows the Master loves her. When she goes out to see Bella, she runs into Darcy. Knowing that he has been given a second chance, decides to follow his heart's desire and asks Elizabeth to marry him. She says yes, and they plan to marry in a week. After a painful discussion, Richard agrees to back him, because he knows his cousin has changed for the better, but Lord and Lady Matlock are upset. Seeing that her nephew plans to cut all ties to the family, Lady Matlock agrees to support his decision. When they arrive for the wedding, the Matlocks see how much he's changed and how happy he is. Finally this part

of his family supports his decision. Lady Catherine however is another story. Being away from Rosings, she gets her letter late, rushes off to Pemberley to stop the wedding and is beside herself to find out the wedding was two weeks ago, and they are on their honeymoon trip. Mrs. Bennet is really hateful to Lizzy throughout this version more so than most stories, and even though she's back at Longbourn, she is not happy. Mr. Collins comes through in the end. A lot going on with the death of Mr. Bennet.

Elesha says

This is a tricky one, I'm not entirely sure how much I liked this book but it did. The story itself went so far away from Austen's creation but was so true to the time and the individual characters that I can't hate it, but it made me slightly uncomfortable because it gave me leave to question Austen's own reflectivity to her work; was Austen guilty of portraying her world how she wished it to be; did her being of the landed gentry and not of the aristocracy and first circle make her envious; does that fact that she never married and her own education make her work too safe. I don't like the feeling of questioning a book that has been round as long as P&P has, had Austen's life been different she could have easily written this book (with more wit naturally), this book felt historical not fictional, like Lizzy and Darcy were real people who lived back then.

Claudine DiMuzio / Just Jane 1813 says

This book was really 3.5 stars for me. I received it for free from the author as an audiobook. I read this book along with its whole series, which I subsequently purchased.

With this said, I enjoyed this books, I liked the story, and I am not bothered by what some other Amazon readers cited as a disappointment within these books. I don't mind a "rakish" Darcy, who visits a brothel to "forget" Elizabeth. I can't admonish a 28 year old man for his "personal" choices within his "love life."

I enjoyed how he "cleverly" inserted Elizabeth into his own life as a companion for Georgiana, even when she already had one...I like the time Darcy and Elizabeth spent together, I enjoyed Darcy's relationship with Colonel Fitzwilliam. I enjoyed the way this book ended...

This was a quick and easy read that fed right into the next book, "What He Would Not Do," which I anxiously began reading right after this book.

Talia says

Not fond of animosity from Lizzy to the Colonel or Darcy being a rake but still a good story.

I reread this today and have to stick with my three stars. I did like some of Darcy's later reflections on women's welfare but not enough to change the rating.

Sophia says

AUDIO REVIEW

What if Lydia and Wickham eloped earlier setting into motion a series of events that leaves the Bennet family desolate and forced to find employment? This sets things up for an interesting variation on the original *Pride and Prejudice* story with Lizzy employed by Darcy as Georgiana's companion. The characters are colorful and the romance full of heat and passion.

It was a curious story with Darcy fighting his love because Elizabeth is so far beneath him and Elizabeth fighting his domineering ways as he tries to protect the woman he can't have for himself, but wants to keep close. Elizabeth is Georgiana's companion, but the ladies become dear friends. Elizabeth is there as Darcy and Georgiana attend fashionable events for Georgiana's coming out and for the machinations of matchmakers after a wealthy and eligible bachelor. Their differences come between them and they part both feeling the separation. Darcy runs through a range of emotions before determining to gain a second chance with Elizabeth.

I both enjoyed and didn't enjoy this story. The premise was exciting and interesting, but the execution at times left me wanting. I wasn't so keen on this version of Darcy who is morally weaker than I like. He toys with other women and keeps a courtesan even for a while after he falls in love. Lizzy comes across as rather harsh with her assessments and I thought it laughable when she kept saying Darcy is arrogant and domineering when she obviously hadn't looked in the mirror lately. She took his generosity and the protected status he gave her for granted acting like it was her do. Darcy does all the apologizing and explaining.

And while I enjoyed an amorous Darcy and Lizzy, the last portion of the book dragged with repeated scenes of hot sexy times and the 'I love yous' that made it sound like a mutual admiration society more than a romantic couple. After a half dozen, I kept thinking 'okay, I get it'. Could we maybe say it differently or express the passion differently? They were sneaking around at night and early morning like two horny teenagers and it was hot, but not in character.

The narrator had a nice clear voice that made hearing the story easy. Her Elizabeth voice was this small, gentle tone that didn't match Elizabeth's personality in my opinion. I enjoyed what she did with Darcy's relations and other voices. Humor and straight narration apart from the dialogues was definitely strong. Her pacing was good and there was good inflection.

So, I was okay with the story, but I wasn't wowed. I wanted more development after the beginning, more heroic qualities in the main characters and I found the last portion repetitive. The barrier and creative premise with the extra characters and new roles was good stuff. I would recommend it to Austenesque fans particularly those who enjoy a great deal of heat in their romance and don't mind a creative license taken with the original story and characters.

Elmo says

2.5 stars. I really didn't like Darcy in this variation. I don't want a Darcy who has a private courtesan after he fell in love with Elizabeth. Yes, he didn't expect to marry her, but I just don't want him to behave like that. I also missed dialogue in this story. There's a lot of telling what happened, but it's often more a short synopsis of events. So, it's not totally bad, the idea is good and there are some nice moments, but I had too many

quibbles to really enjoy it.

Lilmissmolly says

To Have His Cake (and Eat It Too): Mr. Darcy's Tale by P.O. Dixon is an alternative telling of how Elizabeth and Darcy fall in love by taking a very different path to get there than how Jane Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*. It starts with the premise that George Wickham and Mr. Bennett end up dying after shooting each other along with Lydia. Mr. Collins and his wife Charlotte move into the Bennett's estate within a month, kicking out Mrs. Bennett and her daughters. Elizabeth moves in with the Gardners, and Mrs. Bennett, Mary and Kitty move in with Mrs. Phillips. Bingley marries a woman from the Ton soon after departing Netherfield, and Jane is now a nanny for a family in Scotland.

If these events were not strange enough, Darcy is a renown rake in London with no particular desire to marry at all. Along with his cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam, Darcy frequently goes carousing and visits a brothel. Darcy goes as far as paying for "exclusive rights" to one of the working girls so he doesn't have to share her body with any other customer. Things start to change after Darcy learns of the tragic death of Elizabeth's father.

Darcy invites Elizabeth to Pemberly to be a companion for his sister Georgiana, who needs to overcome her severe shyness so she can experience a successful season when she is introduced to society next year. Over the next 18-months, it is apparent to almost everyone who sees them that Elizabeth and Darcy are destined for each other - if only Darcy can learn to love her enough so it wouldn't matter that she is from a family beneath his station.

Pearl Hewitt did an outstanding job narrating, as she did with other books written by P.O. Dixon. She really brings the characters to life giving each one their own distinct voice. Pearl's narration is natural and easy to listen to, which really enhanced my enjoyment of this audiobook. I received a copy of this audiobook in exchange for an honest unbiased review.

Ceri says

This book diverges very early on from *Pride and Prejudice*. The events happen as in P&P up until the departure of the Bingley party to London after the Netherfield Ball and Lizzy turning down Collins' proposal but she never goes to Kent, meaning that Darcy never makes the proposal at Hunsford. Also, Lydia elopes with Wickham much earlier, leading to her and Mr Bennet's death, and ultimately Wickham's too. All this happens right at the beginning of the book, so don't worry that I'm spoiling it for you. So, Lizzy is staying with the Gardiners and looking for a post as a governess, to help support her family.

Darcy has heard of the family's change in circumstances from Lady C at his easter visit to her, and he comes to find her, to offer her the role of companion to Georgiana (who is a couple of years older, and much less shy in this version). His motive is to make sure she's alright, as much as anything, but it's poorly thought through. Almost immediately he finds it difficult to have her living in his house because she's way below the status he'd need in a wife but his feelings for her are getting stronger all the time. I thought Darcy was portrayed interestingly in this version. He's very much a rake, known for flirting and playing with women's affections in town, and also he is a frequenter of brothels. He is very self-absorbed, pretty selfish and likes to

be in control, which Lizzy finds frustrating to deal with. He says in P&P that he's been a selfish being all his life and he proves it time and again in his behaviour in this, for example, he dissuades her from having suitors even though he has decided not to pursue Lizzy himself and being married would secure her future. It's not hard to forgive his selfishness though, as it mostly stems from his feelings for her, even though he is putting his feelings before her happiness. Rather than change his ways as a result of the failed proposal in Kent as in P&P instead Darcy gradually changes over time to become more gentlemanly, and I felt it was a different take on Darcy, and it was interesting to see another route to the same outcome (i.e. him changing his views and behaviour for her). There are a number of things said by characters that are in P&P but said by different people there, which I felt was a nice touch.

On the downside, I felt that Elizabeth didn't really fight very hard to keep him at a physical distance, I thought she might have been more cautious in her circumstances. Also, there were a few words which I think were either too modern or Americanisms (e.g. finagled, acclimated, smidgen, etc) but these were odd instances and didn't detract from the story too much, I enjoyed this book and I'd read it again.

Miki says

When I got to the part where Elizabeth "clenched her tiny fist and stamped her dainty foot" the book suddenly left my hands and flew across the room! I was therefore unable to continue to the end and finish the book. Oh darn.

Joan Watkins says

Reread

Alicia says

This is not one of the better P&P variations. The technique of using large parts of Austen's original novel are combined with a retelling of scenes from the 1995 BBC TV drama and the 2005 movie. In fact, a lot of the EXACT dialogue from the movie appears in this story. The story itself is somewhat original, but the author's technique is lacking.

Brittany says

This one just wasn't a winner for me. I think P.O Dixon did a nice job, but the story in itself just didn't draw me in.

I guess one of my biggest complaints is Darcy was off for me. One of his quotes in Jane Austen's work is "...disguise of every sort is my abhorrence". Yet he disguises a lot in this book. He is a common patron of Brothels (which...I just don't like...I feel like it taints Darcy for me - but I may be just picky there) - he toys with women's emotions, and is so lustful after Elizabeth he pretends a prostitute is her.

I am just not comfortable with those things. Elizabeth's character also kinda shifts strangely at the end. At first she does seem to be more receptive to him, even admits it to herself that she has feelings for him, then she completely back tracks and vehemently says she never wants to see him again, and then they get engaged the next time they meet.

So...it's not a bad book per se. I think the writing was great, and some people may really enjoy this version. It just wasn't for me.

Victoria says

I felt like I was reading more of a synopsis than an actual story while reading this book. There were a lot of scenes where we the readers were told what had happened, instead of it unfolding in front of us as observers. I found it detached me from the story, or I should say, I was not able to get "into" the story as a result.

I feel that if the story was fleshed out more, and didn't use movie-canon as a source it would be a much better read.

Sheila Majczan says

I read this as part of Romancing Mr. Darcy: Pride and Prejudice Variations Collection but due to the length of my review am posting it under the earlier and separate publication of this story on its own. Some Spoilers herein.

As others have mentioned Abigail Reynolds, Kara Louise and very recently, Joana Starnes have also written books in which Elizabeth Bennet's circumstances are reduced even further than in canon.

In the first few pages of this book we read of Wickham's elopement with Lydia and Mr. Bennet's challenging of the scoundrel and the deadly results to all three. Jane is employed as a governess in Scotland while Elizabeth resides with the Gardiners and seeks employment. Darcy learns of the situation and upon arranging to accidentally come upon her while she takes a walk, offers her a position as Georgiana's companion, due to Mrs. Annesley's plans to soon retire.

This puts Elizabeth "under his protection" but as he attempts to limit her activities and to rebuff men seeking to court her and to provide her with an adequate wardrobe, etc., needed to accompany Georgiana to all her activities Elizabeth bristles and has words with Darcy.

Meanwhile, Darcy, a man of the world who has as a partner in most of his adventures his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, is observed in his now hiring a courtesan as his exclusive "toy" who greatly resembles the woman he has employed and brought into his home. The Colonel calls him on it but as Darcy has sworn to treat Elizabeth with honor and respect, he finds he needs an outlet for all those sensations she causes when he is near to her.

Elizabeth does not participate in the dancing while accompanying Georgiana but this does not prevent a number of young men from paying attention to her. She is seen as witty and beautiful and a good conversationalist. Does she jump at the chance to have her own home, even have children, as we know

Charlotte would advise?

As Georgiana has her first season and receives an offer of marriage, Elizabeth's services are no longer needed. Darcy, always the generous employer, seeks to provide for Elizabeth's future in secret. She is having none of it. She does not equate his actions as generosity in providing for an employee and he does not see it as making her appear as a "kept" woman.

The main premise here is a much stronger emphasis on Darcy's belief in the separation of classes, of upholding his family's position and of marrying with the approval of kin and the ton, even though he admits to a forbidden love of one beneath him. It is not until Elizabeth is no longer under his roof that he realizes how her presence in his life is so necessary.

I enjoyed approximately the first two-thirds of this book until we got into scene after scene of physical intimacy. These were repeated numerous times and my feelings were that we had reached the climax and needed to bring closure much sooner. The chase was well written. And then we do read of numerous reassurances of love in the end.
