



A Better Impression: A Pride and Prejudice Variation

E Bradshaw

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“People do not die of little trifling colds!” exclaims Mrs Bennet in Pride and Prejudice. However, in this variation of Austen’s much-loved book, Jane’s illness is not simply a cold, but instead becomes a life threatening sickness that threatens to take her life.

Elizabeth begins to feel increasingly desperate for solutions as she attempts to take care of her sister – and Mr Darcy is the unlikely ally who offers his help. From that moment onwards Elizabeth begins to see a different side of Mr Darcy, and to gain a better impression of him than she had before. Of course, the wayward pair still continue to have their disagreements, and their relationship is by no means an easy one, but from that day onwards Elizabeth is forced to see that Mr Darcy is not merely the proud, disagreeable man she had assumed he was.

In fact, the fate of every one of the characters in the story is inevitably altered as a consequence of Jane’s illness. Mr Bennet is forced to face up to his own negligence, whilst Mrs Bennet is made to see the error of her ways. Likewise, Charles Bingley develops a new sense of determination during the days he spends worrying over Jane, whilst Mr Darcy begins to see how his reserved behaviour is perceived by others. In this variation Elizabeth and Georgiana become firm friends, and their friendship gives Georgiana the confidence she needs to face Mr Wickham’s treacherous charm. Finally both Darcy and Elizabeth recognise their feelings for one another – but there are still trials and misfortunes for the pair to overcome before they can find their happiness with one another...

This story is approximately 87,000 words long.

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EM Clark says

This is an absolute favorite!!

As a casual writer myself, I have often toyed with the idea of a better first impression and the results of an early friendship between Elizabeth and Darcy. Bradshaw has done this stupendously and has created two of the most enjoyable E and D characters and relationships I have ever read. I truly hope that there will be a sequel because I adore this couple. Absolutely perfect

Madenna U says

In this Pride and Prejudice variation, situations allow for characters to take a good look at themselves and the 'good' ones take the opportunity. Charles stands up to his sisters. Darcy helps Elizabeth during Jane's illness. Fear for Jane prompts Mr and Mrs Bennet to chance their approaches. Georgiana meets Elizabeth early in the story and becomes a stronger person because of the encouragement and friendship. Elizabeth and Darcy have their pride and prejudices but they are somehow softer on their way to finding their happily ever after.

Shannon says

A good read that focuses on E and D's relationship. One can see that this variation was slightly influenced by North and South. There were a few moments and wordings that had me envisioning Miss Margaret and Mr. Thornton.

One thing really bothered me. In chapter 5 Mr. and Mrs. Bennett are speaking and Mr. B calls his wife Mary. At first, I thought he was using it to note some unknown similarity. When he called her Mary a second time; I put the book down and walked away for a few hours to clear my head.

?

Elizabeth Hossenlopp says

Enjoy a cup of tea while reading this one. (Slight spoiler)

A lovely escape. I admit I was particularly delighted by the lack of Mr. Collins, Wickham, and Miss Bingley. Instead the book offered periods of angst and misunderstandings galore between the major characters. A refreshing book.

Sara says

*3.5 stars rounded up to 4.

I enjoyed this variation and this Darcy. He was his typical self but I loved that he let Elizabeth "in" a little sooner so she could really begin to comprehend his character. My only real issue was the ending. The Epilogue skips around and then ends abruptly shortly after their wedding with no hint at their future life. Call me crazy, but I like a little longer glimpse into the HEA of ODC.

Enjoyable read, well written. A perfect book for a weekend or time by the pool!

Debbie Brown says

Nicely thought out variation. Jane really becomes quite ill at Netherfield, dangerously so, and Mr. Darcy proves himself to be extremely solicitous and helpful. As far as Elizabeth is concerned, his aid on her sister's behalf is more than enough to counter her bad opinion after his behavior at the Meryton assembly. Jane's extended stay also provides additional opportunities for interaction between Darcy and Elizabeth, and it solidifies Mr. Bingley's feelings about Jane.

In addition to changing things at Netherfield, Jane's illness also has a decided effect on the Bennets. It scares Mr. and Mrs. Bennet enough to make them examine the future of the family and take positive action.

Unfortunately, it doesn't change Mr. Darcy's belief that he must marry someone of his social sphere, and he still escapes to London to try to forget Elizabeth and seek a wife elsewhere. Naturally, he's NOT able to forget her.

Generally, the writing is very good. Sometimes there's too much description of characters' thoughts, but the story moves along at a reasonable pace. There's enough yearning and desire built up between Darcy and Elizabeth to make it a sweet romance, too.

colleen churm says

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Really a lovely, enjoyable story. Darcy and Elizabeth acquaintance takes a different turn when Jane's ride to dine with the Bingley sisters ends up with her having a serious illness. Lizzie goes to help nurse her dear Jane, as in canon, but she isn't really managing to help her since she is really very ill! Mr. Darcy steps in, and brings his London Physician to take over the case, saving Jane's life. Lizzie had now a completely different opinion of Darcy. Georgina has been invited to Netherfield as a sort of Chaperone for Lizzie and Jane since the Bingley sisters had left as soon as there was a hint of a true illness! Lizzie and Georgina had become great friends but still, Darcy does leave for awhile to forget Elizabeth but you can guess how that goes! Wonderful read from a new Author I hope she will continue!

Sheila Majczan says

3.5 rounded up to 4

We do spend a lot of time inside Darcy's head, as he expresses his opinions about his family, his friends and the acquaintances he makes in Hertfordshire. We also read as he argues with himself about Bingley's relationship with Jane and his own with Elizabeth. And then there is the recent sad affair between his sister and Wickham...as he hashes over what is best for her and who could help her come out of her shell.

As the story description tells us: Jane becomes deathly sick while at Netherfield and thus both she and Elizabeth stay longer. When the local apothecary bleeds Jane, Darcy takes the matter into his own hands and sends to London for his own physician. He makes a trip to bring Georgiana to Netherfield which allows a close friendship between Elizabeth and Georgiana to develop. Elizabeth's advice to Darcy when she learns of the history with Wickham (who has shown up in Meryton) is to inform Georgiana and allow her to make a decision as to whether or not she needs to leave the area.

Part of what made this story delightful is, first, that Bingley makes up his own mind as to where things are going with Jane and, secondly, that Mr. Bennet shows a lot of insight. He and his wife seem to change behavior while their two oldest are at Netherfield. We don't really learn why or how they came to this decision but it makes a difference. Additionally there are Mr. Bennet's observations of Darcy and his remarks to that man letting him know that he sees what Darcy is attempting to hide and/or deny...and he demands that he act honorably in his relationship with Elizabeth.

Lydia and Wickham proceed at first in their behaviors as in canon but in the end they are handled differently...much to the readers' delight. Mr. Collins also has a change in his path as he finds he has much in common with....?

Elizabeth is invited to visit Pemberley by Georgiana but she has determined that she will never be of romantic interest to Darcy as their societal levels are so different. Throughout this story that is how we read her thoughts over and over again. She even assures her father that he is wrong if he thinks Darcy is interested in her. But it is at Pemberley that Darcy makes headway; both he and his staff see a perfect fit. But the story does have a minor mishap...it seemed to be almost unnecessary to the story...but Darcy realizes that one must grab happiness while one is able.

This was an enjoyable variation which didn't have a lot of angst nor was there a lot of deviation in the basic premise.

Donna says

I loved this book. There are some typo and proofing errors, but it is relatively minor. I did like seeing a more involved Mr. Bennet, a Mrs. Bennet who was not quite as dumb, and not as much problem from younger sisters, a more forceful Bingley, and a Lizzy who was more thoughtful. The book held my interest, though there were parts where it dragged. I was disappointed that the book did not take us to the actual wedding (no wedding night either) of Lizzy and Darcy and suddenly appeared several months later in the Appendix. This would have been a 4.5 star book if the ending had not been rushed. Otherwise, I did love the book. This Darcy is one to feel for. This Lizzy is more forgiving. I was glad that Wickham did not appear so much.

Darcy apparently took care of him in a more forceful way to get rid of him. I was glad to see Carolyn Bingley removing herself from the action to avoid a contagious disease, and a Georgiana for Lizzy to develop a close friendship with.

In the early 1800s with the state of medical care, survival of scarlett fever, especially without major health issues afterwards, was not so likely, considering the state of medicine. Physicians were the most skilled of medical practitioners from a wonderful essay that one of regular writers did and put on line. There were no antibiotics then. Jane was lucky in Mr. Darcy's physician.

I did love this book.

S.C. Lehman says

More Narrative than Storytelling

While having an excellent plot that unravels all the knots Austen wrote in her original work but still having a healthy dose of angst, the story unfolded more as a narrative than the characters coming to life and telling their own tale. Several sections had no dialog at all and the last 20% of the book had very little character speech. If the author had taken the time to slow down the scenes and write them out, this easily could be a 5 star book.

Leslie says

This book is less than 200 pages but it felt longer. It begins like P&P with Darcy and Lizzy at Meryton assembly and Lizzy being insulted. When Jane falls seriously ill at Netherfield the Bingley sisters flee leaving Lizzy and Darcy & Bingley to care for her. Darcy sends for Georgiana to act as chaperone (??) and Lizzy & Georgie become besties. Lizzy believes that Darcy disdains her and tries to figure out how to be polite to both Darcys.

When Jane recovers Lizzy credits Darcy for her survival and sings his praises. Mr. Bennet realizes that he has been a lackadaisical land owner and set on a path of self improvement. When Collins shows up he is immediately enchanted with Mary. When Wickham shows up he can't whisper disparaging remarks about Darcy in her ear. When Lydia & Kitty act up at the ball Mr. Bennet sets them on an improved path. Bingley & Jane are quickly engaged as are Mary & Collins. This causes Mrs. Bennet to dial back her nerves and be less desperate to marry off the remaining daughters.

Darcy loves Lizzy more than oxygen but believes he must deny himself and she interprets it as loathing - there's a thin line between love and hate right? After Jane's wedding she accompanies the Darcys to Pemberley. [Reader note- Since Mrs. Annesley is there I guess they are 'chaperoned'] There Darcy endeavors to improve her opinion to get her to love him so he can propose. This isn't a haughty Hunsford proposal but a truly heartfelt one so of course immediately afterward Lizzy falls and hits her head. When she recovers they travel to Longbourn so he can gain Mr. Bennet's permission then off to Rosings so she can visit Mary & Darcy can tell his aunt he won't be marrying Anne. Then back to Meryton to get married. The end.

Talia says

I liked this book very much. Georgianna was a favorite of mine. I think the author's version of G is my all-time favorite. The drama near the very end of the book seemed to add nothing to the story and for that I knocked off a star.

Camille Fiore says

Very Much Better, Mostly

This variation gives Elizabeth the brains she thought she had in the original. Because she spent more time with Darcy, she really did get to know him somewhat despite his taciturn behavior. When Wickham tried to poison her mind against Darcy, she refused to listen. Mr and Mrs Bennet also grew and learned so many of the problems caused by their folly is avoided. It is a fun read even without those setbacks.

Carol Perrin says

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A delightful story. There were bumps and vexations during the early part of Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship, but much of this was from Darcy's reactions to his feelings for Elizabeth. Jane being sick at Netherfield was a bit more calamitous than a cold since Jane had contacted scarlet fever. Caroline and the Hursts left Netherfield immediately after the diagnosis. Needless to say, they were not missed. When she wasn't getting better and Darcy could see how tired and worried Elizabeth was getting, he summoned his doctor from town. Georgiana was also summoned so that she and Mrs. Annesley were chaperones. Eventually after Dr. Walters took over, Jane got better. Bingley for once stood up and became his own man. He knew he was going to marry Jane Bennet and no one was going to get in his way. I liked that when Mr. Collins came to Longbourn he was smitten with Mary and there were no advances towards Elizabeth. We meet Wickham, but he is shut down by Elizabeth's supportive relationship with him. Bingley gives his ball, and the Darcys return to London the day after. Georgiana is angry at her brother and rides out to see Elizabeth. Not knowing where she has gone, when Darcy finally finds her, he is curt with Elizabeth. Angry at his reaction, Elizabeth decides to forget about him. This is going to be difficult, because she thinks about him all the time. In London, Darcy is having his own problems with his less than happy sister. Realizing that he needs Elizabeth Bennet to be his, they return a week before Bingley's wedding to Jane. Try as he might, Darcy cannot seem to get a chance to speak with her. When he finally does, she forgives him for his hasty words before Christmas. He needs to confront Wickham after wicked Wickham accosted Georgiana in Meryton. When Elizabeth enters the confrontation, Wickham threatens her. Georgiana having had enough of his lying ways, knees him just like Colonel Fitzwilliam taught her. The ladies return to Netherfield leaving the scoundrel writhing in the alley. Elizabeth visits Pemberley as Georgiana's guest. She meets the Fitzwilliams when they come for Georgiana's sixteenth birthday. His uncle and cousin tell him to get on with it before arriving in Kent. They tell him he's a bit transparent. During her month stay, Darcy aims to show her he has changed and wants to propose. He finally gets her out on a ride, proposes, is accepted, but on the way back to Pemberley she is thrown from her horse and injured. Recovered, they travel to Longbourn then on to Kent. Meeting Lady Catherine was a real treat, but when Anne speaks her mind for a change, Lady Catherine falls silent for the most part. Darcy makes a deal with Mr. Bennet, a month's engagement for the

family visiting Pemberley during the summer. The Bennets, Gardiners, Bingleys, and the Collins families all visit the very happy couple. I liked that this author did not let Caroline and Wickham dominate this story. I also loved the cover since it looks like Colin Firth's Darcy and Jennifer Ehle's Elizabeth walking to Oakham Mount through the lavender. The cover grabbed me into buying the book. Glad I did since I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

Kasia Burlakoff says

I really enjoyed the first part of this book. Darcy and Bingley proved their worth, and Bingley's sisters showed their selfishness. The interactions between D&E were sweet Bingley had more of a back bone than in canon, and I always love it. After the return of the Bennet sisters to Longbourn the story plot felt a bit flat. there were some inconsistency of behavior, and it seemed to have dragged until the end of the book.

Otherwise a pleasant read.
