



The Madness of Mr. Darcy

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The year is 1832 and regrets beleaguer Fitzwilliam Darcy. All he ever cared for has been taken from him: his pride, his sister, and his true love, Elizabeth Bennet. Now, having nearly murdered a man in a fit of rage, he might lose Pemberley, too. More than just his home, his very identity is at stake. In desperation, he seeks the help of Dr. Frederick Wilson, owner and proprietor of Ramsey House, a madhouse for fine ladies and gentlemen. Is Darcy's confinement the inevitable end to his tortured descent, or will he rediscover what he lost in the most unlikely of places?

The Madness of Mr. Darcy Details

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EM Clark says

Wonderful and thorough!!

Not only am I impressed and thankful for the research that went into this, but the story itself is well thought out and enjoyable!

I came to see that many of the seemingly unthinkable things that befall our favorites were in fact completely reasonable given their personalities and a simple change in storyline.

Realistically, what would happen if Darcy never found Lydia?? In our hearts we hope he would have married Elizabeth anyway, but what if his sense of duty to his sister kept him from it, along with the expectation that Elizabeth would never forgive him??

Jane would be the only one pretty enough to secure a marriage still, though not at a level she could have previously aspired. Mr. Bennett would likely die of guilt. Where would Lydia be, if she had tired of Wickham and reveled in the freedom of his circle? What would happen to Darcy, who always showed a predisposition for anger and selfish despair?

This answers those questions and illustrates those probabilities in stark but truthful accuracy. Again, I am terribly impressed. Wonderful story!

Rita Deodato says

I have read The Madness of Mr. Darcy twice and can truly say this is one of the most different storylines I've read in P&P fan fiction.

What if Mr. Darcy was unable to locate Lydia, and Wickham told him she had been sold to work as a prostitute?

What if Lydia were to return to Longbourn, months later, completely mad and in need to be institutionalised?

And what if Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth only met 20 years after the Lambton Inn episode? Would they still love each other?

The Madness of Mr. Darcy follows this path and it is the first book I've read starting the story so late in our beloved characters lives.

Their lives during these 2 decades makes the anguish in this book so big, the sadness surrounding all characters so intense that I would not believe the book would be this good if I had not read it.

Georgina dies shortly after getting married and Darcy isolates himself from the world, living a life of guilt and sorrow.

Elizabeth lives a life full of sacrifice and is employed in a mad house. Jane marries, and after her husband dies, has no other option but to live out of her sister in law's charity.

Even Wickham has a terrible faith.

Among all this sadness, the intensity the author was able to bring to this book was unbelievable. It takes a long time before we actually see Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy have any interaction with one another, but unlike other books, this didn't bother me. I really wanted to read how their lives had been, and what were their feelings and thoughts.

Even though Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy do not interact with one another in the first chapters of the book, I just wanted to keep reading to see when some of these characters were finally going to find some happiness. And they do, don't think this book is only about sadness. It's not! It's about never giving up hope, never stop fighting and being faithful to your feelings.

The love Elizabeth has and shows for Mr. Darcy in this book is one of the most beautiful I've read. Their interactions are special and meaningful. And other characters from other Jane Austen's books such as Maria Rushworth, Lady Elliot, and Mr. John Knightley are a delightful addition to the book.

The only thing I wasn't too fond of was the ending. I understand it is the only possible ending for this book, but it does make me sad to know that Pemberley will no longer belong to a Darcy.

But overall, I really enjoyed reading it, so much I've done it twice.

Cassandra Grafton says

An incredibly original concept, there is no denying there is darkness in *The Madness of Mr Darcy* (as you would expect), but it's also an uplifting and encouraging story, educational in its underlying setting, but also an incredibly romantic and satisfying read, with some brilliant laugh-out-loud one-liners! Once I'd started the book, I didn't want to put it down!

Basically, the impact of Lydia's elopement has been profound, as have the ramifications, as on this occasion, Darcy was unable to save the day and the ripples from this spread far and wide, culminating in a rather shocking act of violence some 20 years after the end of *Pride & Prejudice*. It is clear Darcy has needed help for some time, and now his family step in to ensure he gets it, and in the process, he becomes re-acquainted with a certain lady from his past.

Ms Adams clearly has a strong understanding of her subject, and I found the footnotes incredibly helpful in explaining various aspects of the treatment of mental health conditions in the 19th Century.

Beyond all this, however, it is also a tale of the enduring love of two people whose lives were separated by circumstances beyond their control, and I found myself willing them to 'find' each other again and understand each other's heart.

All I long for in a good read is that the author makes me 'feel', and this book certainly did that. I was gripped by the plotline, at times felt shocked or saddened, but also full of hope for Darcy and very much emotionally

engaged in his journey, as I shed a few tears but also often laughed out loud. A skilful blend of light and shade, Ms Adams has written a thought-provoking, well-researched story with believable characters and a lovely conclusion.

The Madness of Mr Darcy is a book that will stay with me for many years to come.

Debbie Brown says

What a gem in the "What If" P&P world!! I find it ironic that this is the opposite extreme from the same author's "First Impressions: A Tale of Less Pride and Prejudice," where all obstacles were swept away almost effortlessly.

Instead, the flashbacks to the familiar story from the perspective of 20 years in the future are almost Dickens-like in how WRONG everything has gone for the Bennets and Darcys. By the year 1832, Darcy has become an eccentric recluse and, after coming close to murdering Wickham, is pressured by the current Lord of Matlock (formerly Colonel Fitzwilliam) to agree to treatment for his madness.

Fortunately, his doctor has devised a new treatment that is very progressive for the era and Darcy goes to the good doctor's home, where there are only a handful of patients of the gentry. Several of the housemates are taken directly from other Jane Austen books with various degrees, manifestations and causes of their particular forms of madness consistent with the characterizations in their respective stories. In this environment, Darcy encounters Elizabeth again for the first time since the horrifying day she received Jane's letters at the inn in Lambton, which was the turning point in both their lives.

There are interesting obstacles: Each is understandably wary of what the other's feelings might be after the years and life changing events that have separated them, Elizabeth receives a marriage proposal from someone other than Darcy, Lady de Bourgh's daughter Anne has grown up to be a chip off the old block, and there is a villainous housekeeper in the mix. I was particularly impressed with a plot twist near the end involving Wickham, but I don't believe in giving out spoilers so you will have to read for yourself to discover it.

The book is without distracting grammar or spelling errors, and Ms. Adams' writing comes as close to Regency-style prose as I've found anywhere. There is no salacious content beyond heated gazes, joyful embraces and stolen kisses. Some may find parts of the storyline to be too dark, but I appreciated that the depressing elements were primarily contained in the back stories. Once our hero and heroine were reunited, I thoroughly enjoyed the journey to the inevitable happy ending.

Carole (in Canada) says

From the first page to the last, this is one of the most emotionally charged variations I have ever read. I cannot count the number of times tears welled up in my eyes, let alone streamed down my face, blurring the pages before me.

The anguish of loss, guilt of failure and utter hopelessness assails Fitzwilliam Darcy twenty-one years after

being refused by Elizabeth Bennet. Will being a 'guest' at Dr. Frederick Wilson's Ramsey House bring him the spark of hope he needs to overcome his descent into madness.

"As Sir Fredrick so rightly said, nothing could be worse than the torture inflicted by one's own mind." (quote from the book)

As for the Bennet family, their trials and struggles have been just as difficult and at times overwhelming, especially for Elizabeth. Her courage rises at every attempt to intimidate her. This alone has one admiring her even more.

As dark as this subject may be, there is also great hope within. The human spirit is resilient if given the right care and time needed to bring it back from despair.

This is the second time I have read this book, and one I will come back to again and again. I highly recommend this to all, not only for the depth of emotion, but what people with mental illness had to endure during this time.

Bravo Ms. Adams!

Talia says

Holy moly, I was not expecting that right at the beginning of the book. I loved this one. Loved! It wasn't full of romance and some parts dragged like the chapter explaining the background of everyone in the house but it deserves 5 stars for thinking way outside the box.

Meredith (Austen-esque Reviews) says

TYPE OF AUSTENESQUE NOVEL: Pride and Prejudice Variation

TIME FRAME: 21 years after Elizabeth and the Gardiners visit Pemberley

MAIN CHARACTERS: Elizabeth Bennet, Mr. Darcy, George Wickham, Lord Matlock (Colonel Fitzwilliam), Lady Matlock (Anne de Bourgh), Sir Frederick (a.k.a. Dr. Wilson, master of Ramsey House)

THE SYNOPSIS:

What if Darcy, no matter how hard he tried, was not successful in recovering Lydia and saving the Bennets from scandal?

What if nine months after her flight from Brighton, Lydia finally returned to Longbourn, in tatters and mentally disturbed?

What if twenty years later finds Darcy, suffering from severe melancholia and an eccentric recluse battling insomnia and alcoholism?

This variation kind of put me in mind of *It's A Wonderful Life*, but like a *Pride and Prejudice* version – what if Darcy never saved the Bennet family from scandal and shame, what would become of them? How many characters would have altered fates because of the change in Lydia's fate?

WHAT I LOVED:

This Poignant and Riveting Premise: Disgraced Bennets, a mad Mr. Darcy, twenty years of separation for our dear couple. When have we seen such a unique combination of elements in a *Pride and Prejudice* variation?!? Truly a brilliant and original concept! And kudos to Alexa Adams for executing it perfectly – these alterations didn't feel outlandish or out of character.

A Historical Fiction Read: Besides being a poignant tale of past regrets and harsh trials, this story includes much that enlightens and educates the reader about mental illness in the 19th century – the conditions of madhouses and asylums, and the popular treatments and various schools of thought regarding mental illness at the time. It is evident that Alexa Adams thoroughly did her research with this novel, and I think her efforts made this story all the more interesting.

The Narrative Voice: Ever since reading *First Impressions: A Tale of Less Pride and Prejudice* in 2010 I have been impressed with Alexa Adams's knack for emulating Jane Austen's witty and ironic voice. I love her narrative asides, sharp social commentary, and humorous observations. Just look at the dry humor she employs in this tale...

Darcy suddenly asked, "I am surprised Anne agreed to this scheme of yours at all, Richard. Surely she invoked my late aunt's shock at the notion?"

Richard smiled with genuine good humor. "Anne is always careful to ensure Lady Catherine receives her share of the conversation..." page 48

Familiar Friends: I always love it when an author mix together characters from different Jane Austen novels. It was wonderful to see Mr. Darcy encounter Maria Rushworth, Lady Elliot, and Mr. John Knightley and to learn what brings them all to Ramsey House. In fact I loved all the quirky and eccentric characters assembled in Ramsey House and the attention paid them. I also loved seeing their interactions with one another – the games, the experiments, the conversations. They were a colorful and endearing bunch.

Everlasting Love: The romance in this story was so pleasing to witness. Both Darcy and Elizabeth remain fervently devoted to each other through all their trials, hardships, and years of separation. The journey each of them has been on is emotional and heart-wrenching, but to see the constant love they have for each other is deeply satisfying. I love how Elizabeth wanted to see Darcy again, I loved seeing her defend him and protect him from the other Ramsey House guests, and I especially loved her letters. I greatly enjoyed how Ms. Adams depicted both Darcy and Elizabeths internal feelings, private thoughts, and reactions to being once in each others' company. Just brilliant.

WHAT I WASN'T TOO FOND OF:

Ummmm....that it ended?? Can't really find anything I didn't like...was so sorry to see this story come to an end!

CONCLUSION:

Alexa Adams created a compelling and unique journey for our dear couple to traverse and I truly loved every minute of it! The ending was pure satisfaction in every sense of the word – all past sorrows were erased and I felt each character experienced healing and peace. I highly recommend this exquisitely crafted variation!

Tlotem says

What a heartbreaking story! Sometimes I needed to stop reading and breath. I won't share the story as you can find it in other reviews but know that it is a very uncommon "what if story" of Pride and Prejudice.

Elizabeth Hossenlopp says

Who Truly is; Mad or Sane?

What an enthralling book! And taxing on the emotions too. The research was fantastic. Just an amazing, poignant book. Well worth it.

Madenna U says

This Pride and Prejudice Variation features a very depressed Darcy. His behaviors are so troubled that his family convinces him to attend a mental health facility. Tragedy from every corner, including the loss of his prospects with Elizabeth due to Lydia's indiscretion, plus no real sense of purpose keep Darcy in a fog. It is 20 years since they have last scene each other, as Elizabeth has spent her time caring for Lydia. Lydia was driven mad by her experiences. By fate, Elizabeth is the matron at the facility Darcy attends, which gives him hope for a shared future. A very well crafted series of communications help our happy couple and maybe some friends, find their happily ever after.

The author did an amazing job explaining the treatments and issues related to mental health in the Regency era. How people were treated was unbelievable. If I had one complaint, it would be that there was too much back story to the other persons at the facility. I didn't need that much information.

Mary says

A beautifully written, tender love story that will have you up all night , burning the midnight oil. It was heartbreaking at times to see the despair of Darcy and to see how low his spirits had sunk. The "if only" that resonated throughout the book, that was happily resolved at the end. I loved this book and read it in two days. I would highly recommend it..... But be warned, you will lose contact with the outside world until you have the pleasure of reading its last word.

26/07/2017

There is a short sequel to this story that I've just had the pleasure of reading.

To re-visit these characters was delightful, more so when we recall the torturous time suffered by Darcy, in the past.

Although still suffering from moments of anxiety and worry, Darcy now involves himself with aiding a tenant's son, which serves to distract him from an important, imminent event!!

To say more would spoil it for future readers, but I must add that I loved this snapshot into the Darcys' HEA. My thanks to Sheila for sending me this sequel!

Sophia says

I have enjoyed this author's writing from her first book right along to this latest effort. While I did enjoy her *Less Pride & Prejudice* series based on Jane Austen's original story for the direction she explored in that series of stories, I found this book to be so much more in background, plotting, characters, and tone. She went dark and deep and came up with something much richer for it. It was an amazing 'what if' variation sequel. It explored 'what if' in the original *Pride and Prejudice* tale Darcy had not succeeded in discovering his beloved Elizabeth's sister, Lydia and restored the family's good name and what if a chain of events followed that would leave all the characters in all, but unrecognizable places. Worst-case scenario stuff, a reunion romance and a truly shiver-worthy topic of madness and its treatment in a past era made for quite the engaging read. I read it in two sittings because I just could not put it down- not because it was particularly exciting, but just because it went some place so different.

It's the 1830s and Fitzwilliam Darcy hasn't been right for years. His family knows it, his servants know it, all of society knows it. Everyone knows of the horrid death of his beloved sister, but his issues began long before that. What was the cause? But now he has truly gone off the deep end. Darcy discovers an old enemy near a cottage fire on his estate. He assumes the worst and snaps when he throws the man into the flames. The witnesses are horrified, but no more than Darcy himself. As a result, he listens when his cousins beg him to seek treatment with a reputable doctor at his private home for the mentally afflicted. This leads him to encounter someone he never thought to see again.

Elizabeth Bennet has led a life of misery and misfortune from the moment she rejected the proposal of a truly good man whom she had wronged out of her own pride and blindness to his superior qualities. It is only in later years that she has found a good situation with Dr. Wilson as the matron of his home where he privately treats the mental ailments of those from upstanding families. Into her calm, ordered world comes the one man she has never forgotten. She can't imagine what would bring the proud, strong Mr. Darcy to his knees like this, but she sees this as her chance if she is brave enough to take it and with one everyone thinks of as mad.

The story takes place when Darcy and Elizabeth are middle age and care-worn from the lives they have lived. There is a certain amount of sadness about the whole story. Nobody is untouched by it and I just wanted to bundle all the characters up in a hug- even Wickham. *slow blink* Yep, you saw that right. I wanted to hug the villain. You'll have to read it for yourself to find out why.

One unexpected and fun aspect of this story was to find a few more familiar faces than just the *Pride & Prejudice* crew of characters. I loved seeing characters from *Emma*, *Mansfield Park* and *Persuasion* there as minor characters with interesting sequel stories of their own going on in the background.

The romance is a gentle one and it is one that comes on quickly in this story, but that's because it is a continuation from what went on twenty years before. It's like they picked up right from the last time they encountered each other. It's a sweet romance that is a bit blander than I would have liked, but still nice. I loved how things were wrapped up for all concerned.

All in all, I found this book had depth and emotion that challenged me from the start. I would definitely recommend it for Historical Romance fans that appreciate a gentle romance against the historical backdrop of madness and mad houses. It would work best for those familiar with the P&P storyline, but I think most people would get by fine. I would most definitely recommend this one to those who love Austenesque Historical Romance.

My thanks to the author for the opportunity to read her book in exchange for an honest review.

Sheila Majczan says

This book was one which grabbed me on the first page. I didn't want to put it down. Parts of this story are indeed dark. I did appreciate all the research the author did: parts of which are included in the storyline while others are explained with footnotes. This would have been a 5 star rating except for one fact.

A significant part of the story tells about the mental health system and some changes of the time while some pages are dedicated to giving us the backgrounds of the "guests" who will live with Darcy at Ramsey House...yes, Darcy signs himself in. (We have John Knightley from Emma, Mrs. Clay/Mrs. Elliot from Persuasion and Maria Rushworth from Mansfield with their own stories.)

Tragically, as we learn very early in this story, after learning from Elizabeth in Lambton about the elopement, Darcy finds Wickham but is told that he sold Lydia...into prostitution. Darcy is unable to track her down and the Bennet family is in disgrace. Darcy has Georgiana to present and he puts all his attention on that. 20 years have passed since Darcy and Elizabeth met in Lambton.

But as we read about the intervening time that has passed fate is not done with Darcy and here, I am not going to related the next dire event. BUT Darcy becomes rather quickly a recluse, and is unable to sleep as he is tormented with dreams of his ancestors setting upon him for his handling of the family honor and estate. He turns to alcohol and walks the estate during the nighttime hours. He doesn't eat much and THEN in a moment of madness triggered by a name which has followed him and cursed those he loves Darcy commits a heinous act!

His two cousins, who are now married, finally convince him to use the services of a man, an earl, who is attempting revolutionary ways to treat those insane who are not completely delusional and distraught...wild madmen or women. Darcy meets the man, interviews him and questions the regime. He is shaken when he learns that the matron in charge of activities with some of the "guests" is a Mrs. Bennet.

This author presents a premise that I have not read in any other JAFF book and she does an excellent job. I had tears in more than one place. Letters are read and just about break your heart...but they are messages of hope to a hopeless man!

I highly recommend this book.

2/21/17: In my initial review I subtracted a 1/2 star b/c: SPOILER: I wanted Elizabeth and Darcy to have one of those late in life babies so that a Darcy could inherit Pemberley. Lord and Lady Matlock's son didn't need it. End of SPOILER

Then Claudine located and sent to me this: Mr. Darcy's Christmas Present- The Madness of Mr. Darcy Continues and I was completely happy. So the rating is now a full 5 stars.

Katherine says

What an interesting spin on a great classic. The emotional turmoil experienced in this novel is much deeper than any other P&P what if story I have read. There were times my heart reached out in pain to our beloved characters. In this version Darcy never locates Lydia when he finds Wickham but learns she has been sold off and thus her character and the characters of all her sisters will be ruined. Darcy has no hope with Elizabeth and Bingley not with Jane either. Instead they are shunned and must then care for a deranged Lydia when she returns home almost a year later. In the 20 years that follow Darcy becomes more reserved, avoids society, drinks more, sleeps and eats less, loses his dear Georgiana and loses all ambition and pride in this duty to Pemberley. All of this combined causes Darcy to react like a fierce creature when he encounters Wickham and this leads him to his admittance in a madhouse. Unlike your typical madhouse of the day (which sadly we read about), this one is for the upper classes who have addictions to overcome such as alcoholism or gambling and thus not mad at all but shunned by their family. Darcy hadn't lost his marbles although he did lose his temper in an awful way but you pity his depression with his life's circumstances. But there is hope for him to see Elizabeth again so he admits himself to this facility where he will meet his love again. Elizabeth and her sisters have had a hard life these past 20 years but Elizabeth never married due to her care of Lydia and her love of Darcy. This novel is their opportunity to find love again after 20 years despite the troubles they and their families have faced. I was happy to see things work out in the end although the path to everyone's happiness was an emotional and difficult one ...even tough to read at times. And lost characters added to the pain however, it was well written to touch the reader so deeply.

Angela Withrow TheArdentReader says

The Madness of Mr. Darcy was a great read. I felt the era perfectly with the authors descriptions of the treatment of people at the time. The despair seems all too real to me.

The story was hard to read at some points, only because having read so many "what if" stories, I have grown to feel for the characters. When one, or more are hurt or no longer living, it is hard to get past it without emotion. But that is what I love about Alexa Adams' books, every one of them has drawn emotion both pleasant and not so pleasant, but the point is to make us feel.

I felt for Mr. Darcy at having these issues and anger that he had no control of. I felt for Mrs. Bennet, and the Dr too. Even Mr. Wickham garnered hereto undeserved emotion. I can't tell you what kind, it would spoil the book :)

Everyone has their part to play in this wonderful story. Truly something different in a genre that is very saturated with ideas that sometimes all run together. This was a new, fresh idea and I am happy to say, Bravo Alexa! This was a great read, even if it was quick for me, I had to get to the end as soon as possible!

I would recommend this to anyone who loves Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet. On a side note, the format of this book is perfect. I did not find one mistake of grammar, spelling or formatting at all. I really like it when that happens!

