

Rainey McBride

### Critical Introduction

For my fanfiction work I decided to explore the romance of Anne and Wentworth in *Persuasion*. However, I wanted to focus on their romance before the novel begins. I always thought it was interesting how Austen began the novel with no background on their romance in the past. She leaves that entirely up to the reader's imagination. Therefore, I decided to explore their youthful romance when Anne was only nineteen years old.

I chose to set my fanfiction in a more modern time because I wanted it to be more relatable to my peers. I wanted to seek to relate one of Austen's great works to my peer's lives so that they would then be encouraged to read Austen's original work. I was inspired by Curtis Sittenfeld's *Eligible*, which is a modern retelling of *Pride and Prejudice*. Sittenfeld does an amazing job of modernizing *Pride and Prejudice* and relating Austen's themes of the nineteenth century to those of the twenty first century. I am striving to write a piece of fanfiction that resembles that of Sittenfeld's *Eligible*.

My fanfiction is set in the twenty first century when Anne is a beautiful, well-known and loved girl of nineteen who comes from a wealthy family in New York, but goes to school at SMU in Dallas, Texas. Frederick Wentworth, more commonly known as Derick, is a handsome, aspiring writer from New York. However, he is undistinguished and although he claims to be on the path toward accumulating wealth from his novel, he currently does not have any money to his name. Anne and Derick meet at a party in New York of a mutual friend. My fanfiction solely consists of emails written back and forth from Anne and Derick after they meet for the first time in New York.

A Tragedy of Timing

Dear Anne,

I loved getting to talk to you at the party last night. I was instantly impressed by your vast knowledge of Dumas, Wilde, and so many other authors who have inspired my own writing. I cannot help but wonder if fate had a hand in our meeting last night. I have never met someone in New York as educated and passionate about the classic works of literature as you. All of that to say, I am afraid I did not get to hear nearly enough about you and your life as I would have liked to. If you are willing, I would like to change that. Could I take you out to lunch some time next week? Let me know and I hope you are having a great day.

Best,

Derick Wentworth

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Dear Derrick,

I think I would be lying to myself if I didn't admit that my heart skipped a beat when I saw this email from you. I loved getting to listen to you talk about these great authors as well. It is evident that you are passionate about literature and this will take you very far in life, especially with your own writing. I am sad to say I do not actually live in New York anymore. I go to school at SMU in Dallas and I was just in town for the weekend visiting one of my childhood best friends.

However, I will be home in about a month, for the entire summer! I will be working for my Mom, well, she isn't actually my Mom, but she acts like one to me. Her name is Jane Russell, I think that you two would get along very well. Anyway, I would love to get lunch with you then, if you would still like to?

Sincerely,

Anne Elliot

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Dear Anne,

Clearly, I did way too much of the talking on Saturday because I had no idea you went to school in Dallas! I deeply apologize for being selfish and taking control of the conversation. Well, even though we won't see each other for a month, I would love if we could still keep getting to know each other until then. I guess I could begin by asking you all of the questions that I should have asked you on Saturday. First, what you are studying in school? And, if you know, what do you want to do after college or later in life? Also, did you just grow up living with Jane? Or does the rest of your family live in New York as well? I look forward to hearing back from you.

Best,

Derick Wentworth

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Dear Derick,

Please do not apologize! I loved hearing about your writing, and I must say, I cannot wait to read your novel. It sounds fascinating and I am sure it will be a wide success. I think getting to know one another is a great idea and I cannot wait to hear more about your writing and your plans with it. I am actually studying both English and Journalism because I would love to be the editor for a magazine, specifically *Vogue*. I know that this is probably an unrealistic dream, but I always think it is better to aim high, don't you? Anyway, I don't know if it will end up working out, but I do think working for Jane this summer will help!

I grew up basically being raised by Jane. My Dad and two sisters, Elizabeth and Mary, lived in New York with us too and they still do. I love them dearly, but I wouldn't want to waste your time talking too much about them. They are a bit of a handful to say the least. Do you have any siblings? Also, I didn't even ask, are you in college? And if so, what do you want to do after school? I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Anne Elliot

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Dear Anne,

I am always one to encourage dreaming big. Your vision is inspiring, and I cannot wait to hear about all of the things that you accomplish, especially this summer. I am curious, did anything in particular inspire you to pursue writing? Also, you are very kind to say that about my writing. I am very excited about it finally being published and I really do hope that people enjoy reading it! What does Jane do and what will you be doing working for her? I actually grew up with my aunt and uncle here in New York. I never had any siblings, but my cousins were a handful enough, so I completely understand what you mean about your siblings. I attended NYU for my Freshman year of college. However, right now, I am currently not in school because my aunt and uncle could not afford it along with putting my cousins through high school. But, after I get published, I am going back to NYU to finish my undergrad and I will hopefully be able to support myself and pay for the rest of my school. I know that is all dependent on whether or not my book is successful, but I have to stay optimistic.

Since you want to write for *Vogue*, do you see yourself staying in Dallas after college or do you think you would want to move back to New York? Also, I'm assuming you are now in

the midst of finals or they are quickly approaching? Does that mean that you are coming back to New York in a couple of weeks? I cannot wait to see you soon.

Best,

Derick Wentworth

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Dear Derick,

I am so sorry I have not responded in over a week and a half. I have been extremely busy with school here. I am currently in the midst of finals and have not had time to do anything but study and I greatly apologize for taking so long to reply. That is so kind of you to say that my vision is inspiring to you. I actually grew up reading classical literature and I think that played the largest role in inspiring me to be a writer. Jane is actually a personal stylist for a lot of our friends that live in New York so I will be shadowing her and helping her with anything that she needs. I am so excited to learn from her and get to grow more in my knowledge of fashion.

I admire you so much for striving to be independent and pay for your education.

I think that you are handling everything very well and I cannot imagine the stress you are under right now. Also, I am pretty sure that I want to move back to New York after college since my family lives there and, like you were saying, my dream is also there. I am coming back home for the summer this weekend actually! I cannot wait to see you too and look forward to getting to know you even better.

Best,

Anne Elliot

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Dear Anne,

I am so excited to see you in person again and get to hear all about your past month in school.

What are some of your favorite restaurants in New York? And what day would be best for you to meet? Finish the year strong and I look forward to hearing back from you, and this time in New York!

Sincerely,

Derick Wentworth

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Dear Derick,

I cannot believe I am doing this, but I don't think I can see you anymore. I can't truly explain why but I have to end this. I know this must feel very out of the blue and you are probably feeling very blindsided right now. I want to apologize for how this is ending, and I wish I could explain why I am ending it, but I can't. I truly wish you the best and I encourage you to keep pursuing your writing. I wish you the best with your book and I know it will be a huge success. I will keep this brief since you are probably very angry with me and never want to speak to me again, which I completely understand. Once again, I am genuinely so sorry for how this is ending and I wish you the best in everything that you do.

Sincerely,

Anne Elliot