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ENGL 4505

8 May 2019

### Critical Introduction

I decided to adapt *Pride and Prejudice*, because as my favorite of Austen's novels, it felt quite easy to rewrite in my own way. Initially, I thought it would be interesting to imagine how Jane and Bingley's married life would look like, except fatally horrible. Just because Bingley was one of my least favorite characters, and the fact that the couple didn't stand out to me at all made it an easy choice to try and write. They simply didn't seem like a couple that would last beyond the honeymoon and initial phases of interest. However, when I began to actually write, it became increasingly difficult to. I could not imagine any aspect of Jane and Bingley's relationship. So, though I adore Elizabeth and Darcy, decided to use them instead.

It was not an Alternate universe, but the same; I chose to look at what Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage would entail if the only aspects of their relationship were the initial interest and romance. Though it made me uneasy to write so negatively against wonderful Elizabeth, I chose to mainly focalize through her point of view: what Pemberley life was like, what marriage was like, regrets, wishes, and despair and the thought of losing her own identity and individuality at the altar.

Elizabeth receives a letter from Jane, inviting her to stay with her, which gave me the opportunity to show exactly how Elizabeth thought of and how she interacted with Darcy. .

It is a truth very seldom acknowledged that marriages between two infatuated individuals are not assuredly successful once said marriage has occurred. In fact, very little is said about the success of marriages once the two, man and woman, have come together in holy matrimony, with friends and family, loved ones and the abhorrent neighbor your mother made you invite.

There are things your mother doesn't pass onto you when the time comes for you to get married: the first, that you abandon your identity for the blessed opportunity of becoming 'one' with your husband- literally and financially. The second, that after the hustle and bustle of the blinding honeymoon phase, it is all that remains: the remembrance of how it used to be in such a phase. And the third, that sometimes even the busiest of homes, with the busiest of individuals can still feel abundantly empty. Whether it's in hopes that Elizabeth's marriage was to turn out explicitly different from her mothers, or exasperation that every marriage was like her own, the matter of the fact is Elizabeth Bennet's mother seldom acknowledged the reality of marriage.

Here, Elizabeth finds herself, in the very cold, grandiose, and lonely Pemberley, longing the days when she was free to walk about in the wild and untamed backyard of her family home; book in hand, imagination upheld, inspiration flowing freely, and mud on her boots. Now, she is allowed to walk on the land of Pemberley, oh yes, however; there is a certain hesitation in her step. She moves more slowly as if there is no mission in her heart, no earnest attempts to explore or gaze around her. It's simply a walk about the House, with a housemaid trailing close behind, in case Elizabeth may need anything of sorts.

It was quite easy for Elizabeth to remember that she lost her independence in marriage when there were individuals always tailing close to her, always ready to serve; when there was always a supper, a tea, a biscuit on the table, and she never had to lend a hand to get it there; when, if her heart desired- and it always did-, a new novel to read, there was always someone to

pick it up for her, and it appeared on her bedside table after bringing it to Darcy's attention one night in the sitting room.

It's not that Elizabeth was not grateful for the help she received, she was quite fond of all the servants, cooks, housemaids, tailors, carriage drivers, land tenders, the steward, butler, and footman. She enthusiastically dedicated all her time to forming close relationships- as close as each individual would let her, which were not many,- and let each know she thoroughly appreciated each's efforts. Longbourn had servants, of course, though very few and each was very close with the family.

Upon moving to Pemberley, Elizabeth was bombarded with help and assistance in any possible manner she could have. Unused to such help, it took quite a getting used to for Elizabeth to understand that as a lady of status, she no longer had to do anything she didn't wish to do anymore, the phrase anything quite literally meaning anything. The fact of the matter was, Elizabeth quite liked doing things; she liked having to walk a few miles to town and browse the newest items in the market; she enjoyed hanging up newly washed clothes to dry on a line, only to take them down a few hours later and fold the fresh sheets.

There was something so liberating entailed in the way she could use her own hands to produce labor so satisfying and beneficial. Now, she lost that entirely; Darcy never lets her so much as touch a wet sheet to hang, or clean up a plate after supper- not in his sights anyway. Elizabeth still finds moments where hidden from his prying eyes, she can sneak into the kitchen and help Mrs. Smith prepare the days biscuits. And it suffices to say Mrs. Smith quite enjoys the company.

The moment she recognized the Darcy she married was quite different than the Darcy she fell in love with, life became both easier and difficult. Easier, because she was, now, aware of the

man Darcy is; his habits, his moods, his tendencies all became rather clear to Elizabeth after their honeymoon. It only took the fact that Elizabeth was now Darcy's to sink in for Darcy's true colors to appear. He was seldom in a pleasing mood, and after dealing with finances and work all day, would come home expecting Elizabeth to appease his sour atmosphere. His vision of home was very different from the home Elizabeth envisioned.

Darcy wished for a peaceful night in front of a fire, reading with his wife, polite conversation in between. Elizabeth didn't mind these nights, though she did think that they were rather boring to conduct *every* night. But Elizabeth wanted a little more excitement; perhaps a walk with her lover, hand in hand around Pemberley and under the moonlight, or a game of Patience. Something, *anything*, other than the same routine they always had.

So, when Elizabeth received a letter that Jane wished to see her, and invited her for a stay at Netherfield Park, she quite literally jumped at the offer and wrote a quick reply to be sent off immediately. She knew she would need to speak to Darcy about the plan, and though he was off on business at the moment, she went ahead and planned for the trip. With the help of her maid, she pulled together a few outfits and necessities and eagerly awaited when she would hear next from Jane, that night if delivered fast enough, or the next morning. There was so little she could be doing to occupy her buzzing mind. Nothing to do but wait for Darcy, as it seems Elizabeth is always finding herself doing.

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When Darcy appeared later that evening, tired and grumbling, Elizabeth knew that the talk ahead would be daunting, to say the least. Though Darcy was very willing to give Elizabeth whatever she needed, it was more to keep her satiated and satisfied than an act of doting. She

was sure he would let her visit, but it was always a wild card with Darcy, and while Elizabeth liked wild, when associated with his moods she was less than willing to experience it.

The bags he had brought in were carefully taken to his study, his cloak was coaxingly taken from his shoulders, and his shoes removed at the door to be cleaned and polished for the next day. Elizabeth found herself eagerly waiting by the door. It was a sight that Darcy didn't often see anymore after the two had grown a bit apart. So to see his Elizabeth waiting for him both fueled his ego and filled him with dread.

'What could she want or have to say? Was it bad news?' he thought. 'Perhaps not, if her expression resembles one of a child in an attempted controlled silence.'

"Elizabeth," Darcy greets, extending a hand and pulling her closer. A kiss on the cheek, to show his affection, as was an established habit, and she accepted it gingerly.

"Darcy," she responds. "How was your trip? Satisfactory, I hope?"

"It was, of course, as to be expected. I always get my way," he smiles, the ambition behind his eyes easily accessible.

'Of course you do,' Elizabeth thought and smiled towards him instead of replying. As they walk to the sitting room, her arm inside his, he begins to question her.

"So to what do I owe the pleasure of having my wife meet me immediately upon arrival?"

“Well,” she begins, nervously. “Jane has invited me to visit and stay with her for a bit.”

She waits to see what his expression will tell, and when it hasn't changed she begins again.

“It wouldn't be for too long, of course. A week at most.”

He remains silent and Elizabeth grows nervous; she knows how he feels about her family, and although Jane has bettered herself by marrying Charles Bingley- Darcy's words, not Elizabeth's- she knows he still holds the pride of believing to be better than the Bennet's.

“It's just- you know I haven't seen dear Jane in so long, and she is my closest confidant and friend, and I quite miss her-”

“Why, of course you may go, Elizabeth. You seldom need to ask to visit your dear sister,” he interrupts the beginning of her rambling to say.

She sighs in relief, kisses his hand, and pulls their favorite nightly reading as of late. Elizabeth had not felt this much excitement in quite a bit of time. Jane! The lovely Jane will be expecting me, and our time together will be exquisite. What a gem, that Jane is.

When the night had become exhaustive, and Darcy's book began to bore, while Elizabeth's had just picked up, the two headed towards their bedrooms. Darcy's room: the farthest suite on the left of the east wing, Elizabeth's just across. Separate bedrooms, and it had

been that way since a few weeks after their honeymoon when the magic spell of romance had worn off.

They bid each other goodnight, with an uncomfortable kiss unpin Elizabeth's forehead, and swept into their rooms. Elizabeth's maid already waiting close by to rid her of her clothing and prepare her for bed.

"Now then, Mary," Elizabeth begins. "Whatever shall I pack to take to Jane's? Let me have a look at what you've pulled already...."

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