



# **The Darcys & the Bingleys: A Tale of Two Gentlemen's Marriages to Two Most Devoted Sisters**

*Marsha Altman*

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A Tale of Two Gentlemen's Marriages to Two Most Devoted Sisters

Three days before their double wedding, Charles Bingley is desperate to have a word with his dear friend Fitzwilliam Darcy, seeking advice of a most delicate nature. Bingley is shocked when Darcy gives him a copy of an ancient, illustrated book of sensual secrets-but it does tell him everything he needs to know.

Eventually, of course, Jane finds this remarkable volume and in utmost secrecy shows it to her dear sister Elizabeth, who goes searching for a copy in the Pemberley library...

By turns hilarious and sweet, The Darcys & the Bingleys follows the two couples and the cast of characters surrounding them. Miss Caroline Bingley, it turns out, has such good reasons for being the way she is that the reader can't help but hold her in charity. Delightfully, she makes a most eligible match, and in spite of Darcy's abhorrence of being asked for advice, he and Bingley have a most enduring and adventure-prone friendship. (20080903)

## **The Darcys & the Bingleys: A Tale of Two Gentlemen's Marriages to Two Most Devoted Sisters Details**

Date : Published September 1st 2008 by Sourcebooks Landmark

ISBN : 9781402213489

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Format : Paperback 417 pages

Genre : Fiction, Historical, Historical Fiction, Romance, Historical Romance, Regency, Womens Fiction, Chick Lit, Adult, Classics, Retellings



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## **From Reader Review The Darcys & the Bingleys: A Tale of Two Gentlemen's Marriages to Two Most Devoted Sisters for online ebook**

### **Jody Mena says**

I found this book abominable.

The basis of the plot seemed promisingly comedic, but was abandoned before the halfway mark - there were minor nods in its direction throughout, but ultimately, the story rambled aimlessly. The only interesting bits were not even about the Darcys or the Bingleys, they were about Lord Kincaid, so the book was misnamed from the outset. There was barely enough conflict to fill a thimble, and that little conflict was artlessly introduced, utterly unlikely (not in an interesting, unexpected way, but more of an absurd 'what?!" way) and painfully cliche in its resolution. The language and sentence structure were forced and unconvincing. The characters were portrayed as gross parodies of themselves, which would be fine if one were to view this as a satirical work, but if it was meant to be read as such, that intent was too foggy to be effective.

I could almost believe this book was written for the benefit of juvenile readers if not for all the references to the Kama Sutra. I just kept turning the pages, thinking 'surely it will start to get better, any second now the story will emerge and my patience and forebearance will be vindicated'. Never happened. I will admit I got a few laughs out of Darcy when he was drunk, but that was not nearly enough to justify the rest of it.

There are simply better ways you can use your time than on this book. Sorry Ms. Altman. Better luck (and writing) next time.

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### **D.G. says**

#### **DNFed at 41%**

BO-RING! Nothing exciting has happened so far and I don't have the interest or time to read 200+ pages of nothing.

At least it's out of my TBR after 5+ years!

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### **Pam says**

This was kind of a fun book, but it didn't really have the same flavor as Jane Austen--the language seemed

more modern, and some of the situations seemed more modern. The book seemed to obsess about sex, too, even though there was nothing graphic, it really had a lot more than Jane Austen would have included. I'd like to try some other Darcy sequels and see how they compare.

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### **Éowyn says**

As far as Austen sequels go, I've read better, but I've also read worse!

The plot was amusing, but think too hard about it and it all becomes illogical and full of holes!

My biggest problem was the language - use of 'okay' and people being 'perfectly fine' ring rather awkwardly for my ears.

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### **Becky says**

Altman, Marsha. 2008. *The Darcys & The Bingleys: Pride and Prejudice Continues: A Tale of Two Gentlemen's Marriages to Two Most Devoted Sisters*.

Without a doubt, *The Darcys & The Bingleys* is a good book. As a sequel to the original novel by Jane Austen, people may be wary. After all, some are of the opinion 'the more the merrier' and welcome all prequels, sequels, companions, and retellings. Others have their reservations and look down their noses on authors that dare to try to walk in Austen's shoes. And then there are a few of us--myself included--that wish that there were books that could do justice to the original. We hope Austen-related books are well-written, but often are disappointed. Yet still the hope lingers on (however small) that a good one can be found among the many wanna-bes out there.

*The Darcys & The Bingleys* reads more as three short novellas. (Though it isn't arranged that way at all. The narrative just has three distinct stories that slide together.) The book is told from multiple perspectives: Charles, Darcy, Jane, Elizabeth, etc.

The first part of the novel begins a few days before the double wedding ceremony of Charles and Jane and Darcy and Elizabeth. This portion has a few potentially squirmy sections as Bingley seeks out his best friend for some advice. He has some questions about the wedding night. Darcy, dear that he is, won't really talk about that. But he will gift his friend with a book (*The Kama Sutra*) on the matter. While that book plays a small role in the book, Bingley's surprise at the illustrations for example, it is rather refreshing and quite a relief that once the ceremony takes place, the reader is left outside the bedroom door. The intimate details of marriage are left to the readers' imagination--if they choose to go there--and we're not "blessed" with them.

The second part of the novel focuses on the first pregnancies of Elizabeth and Jane. They're both expecting at the same time--and deliver about a week or two apart, I believe. The men are in competition--who will deliver first, what sex the babies will be, etc. They are both ecstatic at the idea of becoming dads. This occurs around Christmas and New Years, and they are all together at Pemberley.

The third part of the novel occurs about a year (maybe a little longer) later. Charles' sister, Miss Bingley, wants to be married to a Lord Kincaid. But Charles has reservations. He seeks out his best friend, Darcy, to

obtain his opinion. Darcy and Charles set off for London to meet the fellow and investigate him. And if the situation arises, to prevent the marriage from taking place. Jane--expecting her second child--is left behind with Elizabeth for company. This part of the novel seeks to give depth to Miss Bingley as a character. And it also seeks to illustrate the close friendship these two men share.

I won't go into details on how the situation resolves--if it is resolved--but I will say this, the book is good and well worth reading. The book is true to the original as far as characters and social conventions. There is NO premarital sex, for example. And there are no graphic sex scenes after marriage either. If you've been frightened away by Linda Berdoll's books, you'll find these to be the exact opposite: well written, true to the book, and entertaining. (I stomached part of one of her books. The second sequel actually. And I found the fact that she had Jane and Charles so miserably married--him cheating on her and bringing an illegitimate child into the world--simply unacceptable. She did the Bingleys a great disservice, Jane and Charles both lacking in love, common sense, and heart.)

© Becky Laney of Becky's Book Reviews

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### **Meredith (Austenesque Reviews) says**

This book isn't the best Pride and Prejudice Sequel I ever read, but I did find it a very entertaining book. It is not close to the style of Jane's writing, her characters (I don't think she would have Mr. Darcy be so easily drunk), or her style (she would not be writing about the Kama Sutra). Nevertheless, it is a fresh sequel to Pride and Prejudice and depicts the lives of the Bingley's and the Darcy's right before and long after marriage.

If you are critical (and there is nothing wrong with being critical) in your selection of Jane Austen Sequels and other writings, I wouldn't buy this book right away, maybe borrow it from the library first, see how you like it.

Of course a Pride and Prejudice sequel wouldn't be a Pride and Prejudice sequel without Caroline Bingley. I would say 1/4 of the story is about Caroline Bingley and her choice of fiance. If you are not a big fan of Caroline Bingley, you might not care for this book then.

By reading the other reviews and the plot on Amazon you might think this book is all about Kama Sutra and might be rated R. There really isn't that much about the Kama Sutra later in the book and it is not graphic or explicit. I would even say it is more PG-13.

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### **Sam Still Reading says**

This book is a bit like a family block of chocolate- very yummy and intriguing at first bite, but the last bite leaves you wondering how you got this far.

Unfortunately Ms Altman is not Jane Austen. The language at the start of the book is promising and she has some witty dialogue, but not the description of Pride and Prejudice.

\*\*SPOILER ALERT\*\*

We all know the characters, Darcy, Bingley and the Bennet sisters. Of course we knew that they would live happily and have children, but a murder at Pemberley? Miss Bingley marrying a -gasp- doctor? Darcy a cheap drunk? I enjoy alternate storylines, but there are some things in this book that read more like The Bourne Identity meets The Bold and the Beautiful.

The first book, although modern in its subject, I felt was more true to what \*I\* believe happens after the end of P & P. This was enjoyable.

The second book- well, I couldn't really care too much about Caroline Bingley and I'm sorry, but I didn't feel sympathetic towards her (mainly because she seems to have created the sensationalist storylines). I took off a star for this book.

This book is okay if you want escapist fare, but it's not Jane Austen. If you enjoy P & P fan fic that's well written, please get this book.

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### **Victoria says**

This was my second time reading this book, the first being before I joined Goodreads so I never wrote a review for it!

This book was published by Sourcebooks back when Sourcebooks was posting everything P&P related, and this was definitely one of the better offerings. At first it was a bit dull, but when we got to the matter of Caroline Bingley's engagement it was very enjoyable and thrilling to read. The witticisms between Darcy, Bingley, etc are clever and fun, albeit possibly a bit OOC but that's ok. It made me keep the 4 star rating I originally gave it all those years ago.

A word of warning, this book is book 1 of a 10-book series about the Darcys and Bingley's and I must confess I gave up after book #4. It just became such a unique world with so many adventures and original characters I lost interest.

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### **Lesli says**

This is a fan fiction sequel to Pride and Prejudice. I read this book in its entirety and I guess it was a fun read, but it was a low quality writing in my opinion. I didn't think the author did a very good job of capturing Austen's characters' true personalities, or capturing Austen's writing style. It seems that she instead picked and chose what she liked out of the character's personality and ignore the rest. The first part of the book was also slightly smutty, and I think Jane Austen probably rolls in her grave every time a fan writes smutty stuff out of one of her characters, since Miss Austen was a lady I'm sure she never implied what fans have sometimes interpreted. Altman is by far not the only author who has done this. But the second part of the book was fun even if the author didn't do a very good job of character representation. I thought she made Darcy's character unrealistic, I find it highly unlikely that he would have made a 180 in personality adjustment after marriage. Darcy would still be Darcy, marriage does not really change people. Then again, I am a minority in thinking Darcy is not a knight in shining armor. I like Darcy as much as the next girl, but he is always a pompous jerk, and that is why he is so appealing, no one really wants someone perfect. Darcy is not the symbol of perfection that most fans make him out to be. He would still be rich and insolent whether he married

Elizabeth Bennet or not.

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### **Jill says**

For a little while, Kindle offered a bunch of Jane-Austen-related books for free, and I snapped up a few of them. This was one of them. I guess I got what I paid for.

The book wasn't badly written and I thank whoever proofread it (she commented on here) because it was a refreshing change to read an ebook not riddled with grammatical and spelling errors. But the dialogue was far too contemporary and the characters often acted, well, out-of-character. Darcy a cheap drunk? Jane threatening to strangle Bingley during her pregnancy? There wasn't much plot for 400+ page book

The first half of the book focused entirely too much on the Darcys' and Bingleys' sex lives, and while I appreciated that it was not graphic, it was still more than I needed to know. How did Elizabeth and Jane handle suddenly finding themselves mistresses of these large estates? What did they do all day? We don't get any detail on that, but plenty of detail on what they did all night! The second half of the book was somewhat more interesting plot-wise than the first, in that there was an actual plot, but by then I was so "over" the book that I still found myself rushing to the end. There were a few humorous bits that made me smile, which got this review to two stars, but overall, I've read much better P&P-related books.

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### **Sheila Majczan says**

Claudine of the Just Jane 1813 blog has been recommending this book to me (along with the rest of the Altman series) for quite some time. So when she graciously sent me a paperback copy, what's a girl to do? I, of course, determined that I had to not only read this but also give her and anyone else who reads my reviews my honest feedback. I found this book very enjoyable. Although sex is mentioned (as in a "Elizabeth-rewarded-him-later-that-night-when-he-came-to-her-bedroom", type of comment) there are no graphic descriptions of the act. At 417 pages this was not a quick read.

The book begins in the countdown of days until the wedding for the two Bennet sisters. And here the funny stuff begins. Bingley comes to Darcy and in his mumbling shy style (I am sure you can just picture it.) wants advice from Darcy as to how to "make my wife...happy"!!! Can you imagine? I was laughing. We must now learn about why Bingley would ask this of Darcy. Does he keep a mistress? Has he seduced women of whom we have hitherto fore had no knowledge? Again: I am laughing. And we are told early in this narrative that Darcy limits himself to one drink. Could his experience with a certain Juliana back in his days at Cambridge have anything to do with that decision?

So Darcy refuses to talk to Bingley but he is off to London to retrieve a wedding present for Bingley. Here we have a book mentioned in Chapter Four (and in some later chapters) entitled THE BOOK. We are told that on the bottom of the cover is written "Translation by M. L. Watts" and while we are never given the title of the book I (and others) assume it is the Kama Sutra. Why? Well, immediately Bingley opens it and finds it full of illustrations and is blushing. Darcy keeps his copy of the book in a locked drawer with a false bottom in his desk. Bingley now decides to hide his under the mattress...I am suspicious of this decision as this leaves the possibility of the servants finding it.

That is just a small example of the humor in this book. Not all of it has to do with intimate relations in the bedroom. So now as we read on we find a rather tame tale of the first months in the two marriages, of pregnancies, of the Bingleys settling near the Darcys in their Chatton estate and of Georgiana's coming out. But all of a sudden, things begin to stir, and lead to some mayhem and physical harm to one dear character. Can you imagine Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth taking off into the lowlands of Scotland to spy out a certain man's background? And furthermore: Is there anybody on earth that you would imagine Bingley not approving of? Book 1 within this first novel gives us a surprise near the end and a little over half way through the entirety. Caroline Bingley being the unwitting author of all this is a new twist.

So as we get into the second book we learn how this situation is wrapped up. (Or is it?) New actors in this book, the Lords Kincaid and Dr. Maddox and his brother, Brian, add to the action. Again, as in canon, we read of the supposed importance of a person's fortune and connections. Hasn't anyone learned that lesson? No, some have to learn it for themselves, not through observation, and you may find a bit of satisfaction in just who is the recipient of that education and how they accept or don't accept the lessons given.

I loved Bingley's character in this book. Darcy tells us of how he was better at math and languages and we read of how close the two were at Cambridge and later. We also learn a little about how Darcy uses his fencing skills to sum up an opponent's character. I found it all well written and interesting. There remain a few flashes of Darcy's old act of staring out windows or giving a person a look of disdain, but his marriage has improved his reticence. Jane is Jane but her threats to Bingley while in her pregnancy are hilarious!

While this book has little of the angst I love, it did have events which stirred the families into action. There are some surprises, not ones of the characters acting in different behaviors, but in dangers posed to the peace and happiness of the Darcys and the Bingleys.

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### **Vicki says**

To be completely honest, I'm surprised so many of the reviews on here were as positive as they were. I found this book to be beyond idiotic, and when you really boiled it down, it was actually really dull. First of all, the plot lines were beyond ridiculous. Second of all, Elizabeth isn't so much dazzlingly witty and clever in this book as she is rude and kind of stupidly obvious in her comments. Not every word out of Elizabeth Bennet's mouth was a joke or a jibe at somebody else's expense.

The truth of the matter is that this book just struck me as lazy, and kind of stupid. If you want something better, try Helen Halstead's [Mr. Darcy Presents His Bride](#).

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### **Shannon says**

Maybe it was because I went into this book with exceedingly low expectations after reading the reference to the *Kama Sutra* on the back cover (don't worry it's just mentioned as something they look at but no details are given), but I had a fun time with this book. It's certainly not one of the most faithful books to either the storyline or to Jane Austen's characters, but Altman's dialogue and writing was just plain fun--in a few cases, even laugh out loud funny. I like her light and witty writing style, so I was able to overlook the way Altman "used and abused at [her] whim" the characters and just relaxed and had fun. Don't expect a faithful rendition if you read this, but you should have a good time.

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### **Anna says**

In *The Darcys & the Bingleys*, Marsha Altman picks up Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* just before Mr. Darcy marries Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Bingley marries Jane Bennet. In the midst of the chaos of planning a wedding, there is some talk about the nervousness of the wedding night. While Charlotte Collins assures Elizabeth and Jane that it's not as bad as Mrs. Bennet makes it out to be, Bingley turns to the reserved Darcy — and Darcy's advice is a copy of *The Kama Sutra*. This makes for some hilarious conversation.

With the couples settling into married life at their respective estates, the plot turns to Caroline Bingley, Mr. Bingley's arrogant sister who, in *Pride and Prejudice*, works to keep her brother and Jane apart and hates that Elizabeth catches the eye of Mr. Darcy, whom she hopes to wed. She's being courted by a Lord Kincaid, and there's something about this Scot that rubs Bingley the wrong way, prompting him to seek Darcy's help in digging up whatever dirt they can find on him.

I thoroughly enjoyed *The Darcys & the Bingleys* and found myself laughing out loud quite frequently. This is the most amusing Austen sequel I've come across thus far, and I appreciate how Altman makes the characters her own without compromising the original story. The book is filled with witty dialogue, and I loved the bantering between Elizabeth and Darcy and Darcy and Bingley. Moreover, I was thrilled that Altman included numerous scenes with Mr. Bennet, whose humor is among my favorite things about *Pride and Prejudice*. Some of the best dialogue occurs when an injured Darcy is high on laudanum.

Given that *The Darcys & the Bingleys* chronicles the early days of the couples' marriages, of course, there is sex talk. How can there not be when *The Kama Sutra* is involved? However, the scenes are humorous and tastefully done and not at all graphic. Thankfully, Altman leaves much to the imagination.

Altman creates new and exciting characters and merges them into the lives of the Darcys and the Bingleys quite seamlessly, from the shady Lord Kincaid to the quiet Dr. Maddox. It almost felt like they'd been there all along.

Some readers might be concerned about Altman's treatment of their beloved characters, especially Mr. Darcy who is not at all the arrogant ass he was in *Pride and Prejudice*. But marriage, and Elizabeth in particular, has changed Darcy, and I think Altman does a great job handling the character's evolution. I think it's important to emphasize that Altman isn't trying to rewrite *Pride and Prejudice*; she's building upon and broadening the world that Austen created. And considering all the laughing I did when reading and the fact that I breezed through more than 400 pages in just a couple of days, I'd say Altman was successful.

Review posted on Diary of an Eccentric

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### **Talia says**

First let me say that Marsha Altman is one of my favorite authors. You know what you are going to get with her, a well-written book that is clever and a joy to read. The first book in the series of ten, *The Darcys and The Bingleys* has not only a lot of charm but much humor and wit. I find a lot of Jaff is lacking in it or the wit is often too harsh and biting. Ms Altman is the master. I have read this one many times. It never gets old.

