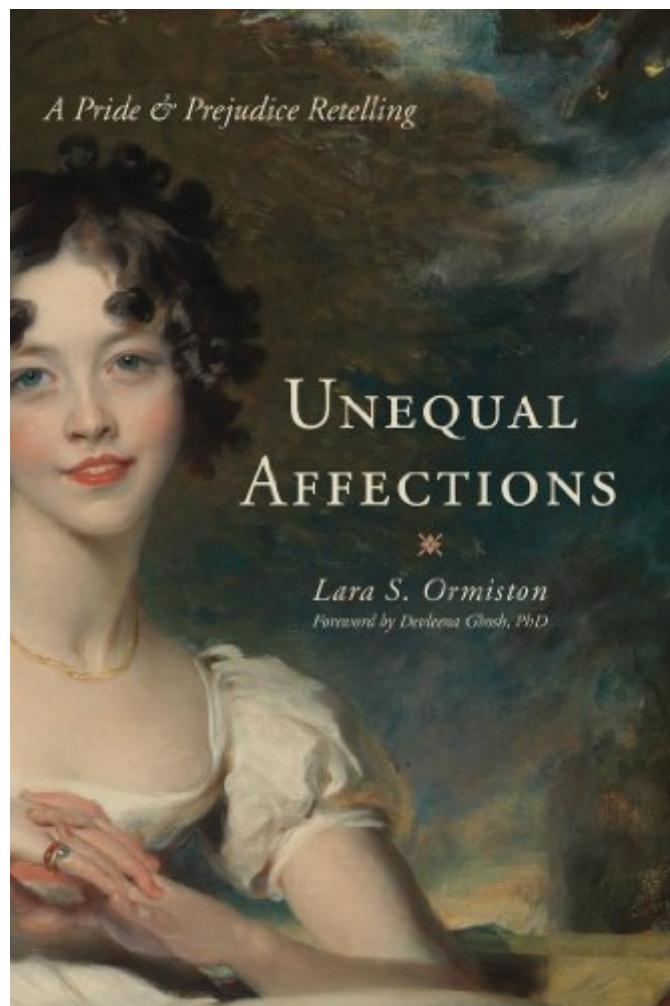


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Unequal Affections: A Pride And Prejudice Retelling



Synopsis

When Elizabeth Bennet first knew Mr. Darcy, she despised him and was sure he felt the same. Angered by his pride and reserve, influenced by the lies of the charming Mr. Wickham, she never troubled herself to believe he was anything other than the worst of men "until, one day, he unexpectedly proposed. Mr. Darcy's passionate avowal of love causes Elizabeth to reevaluate everything she thought she knew about him. What she knows is that he is rich, handsome, clever, and very much in love with her. She, on the other hand, is poor, and can expect a future of increasing poverty if she does not marry. The incentives for her to accept him are strong, but she is honest enough to tell him that she does not return his affections. He says he can accept that "but will either of them ever be truly happy in a relationship of unequal affection? Diverging from Jane Austen's classic novel *Pride and Prejudice* at the proposal in the Hunsford parsonage, this story explores the kind of man Darcy is, even before his proper humbling, and how such a man, so full of pride, so much in love, might have behaved had Elizabeth chosen to accept his original proposal.

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Customer Reviews

I've read a vast array of "Pride and Prejudice" retellings, and most of them really just are an excuse for the author to be a fly on the wall for sex scenes. It's a deeply cynical way of reducing Darcy's and Elizabeth's profound connection to its physical component, which Jane Austen herself clearly never had to introduce in her masterpiece because it was unnecessary. Ms. Ormiston refuses to take the easy way out with this novel. In it, we find an Elizabeth who is stubborn but also far more practical than the Elizabeth of Austen's novel. She does not yield to Darcy's impassioned declaration of love and proposal because she loves him but because she fears for the safety and security of her family--and only after demanding that Darcy give her time to reflect on the proposal. Nevertheless, she also experiences an immediate change of heart upon receiving Darcy's proposal because she realizes just how much she's misjudged his love as disapprobation. It's not so profound a change that she loses herself to him at once, but it is the catalyst for her own journey of self-knowledge and, eventually, love for the complex suitor seeking her hand and her heart. What I found most moving about this novel, however, was Ms. Ormiston's portrayal of Darcy. Here is a man who is one of the most inscrutable heroes in all of fiction; Austen remains silent on his inner struggles when Elizabeth refuses him after his first proposal. In this novel, however, Darcy has the distinct advantage of already securing Elizabeth's hand before he undergoes his own transformation into the man to whom Elizabeth gives her heart.

I waited until this book came out in Kindle, but was intrigued by the preponderance of 5 star reviews. As a buyer, I usually give a little less credence to overly-enthusiastic or overly-critical reviews, but the plot really showed promise. As it turned out, I found the promise fully fulfilled. It makes sense that a rational person, such as Elizabeth, would contain her anger and pique and think out how her decision will ensure the future of her family (not to mention her own security)--especially in an age in which marriage was just about the only way to ensure stability. From that premise, the rest of the story flows, and it flows very smoothly. I am impressed by the way that the author, layer-by-layer and step-by-step, nuanced a process in which Lizzy would come to genuinely love Darcy. It was very gently and subtly done, but no less believable for the delicacy of the process. I loved the insights into their feelings, their ups and downs, and their innermost thoughts. Very few--and I've read many--variations do as good a job depicting the reality of the moment. At any time, you understand the outside appearance (what others might perceive) and the inside reality (what the two characters are really thinking and feeling) and the two live side-by-side in a coherent whole that only the reader knows, since each character only knows his/her reality. It was masterfully done. The other persons in the P&P universe also exist and, for the most part, are portrayed true to canon. In the case of

Wickam, he is consistent to his true personality, but his resentments and cynicism are portrayed in different, but equally irritating ways. If you thought he was a rat before....Is there anything I would have preferred be done slightly differently? Yes.

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