



July 9-23, 2018

Dear Readers,

How is it that a love story written over two hundred years ago can still resonate so strongly with us? Current technology allows us nearly unlimited access to information, including books. So many books. But there is still something powerfully emotional about words like Mr. Darcy's: "If you will thank me," he replied, "let it be for yourself alone. That the wish of giving happiness to you, might add force to the other inducements which led me on, I shall not attempt to deny. But your family owe me nothing. Much as I respect them, I believe, I thought only of you."

What was your first or most memorable interaction with one of Austen's works? I can still remember walking into a crowded movie theater with my husband to see the 2005 movie version of *Pride & Prejudice*. I remember the exact moment when the romance of the movie hit me. It was when Darcy turned away after helping Elizabeth into the carriage. He flexed his hand. That was it. A flex of his hand. Less than five seconds of screen time, but those seconds showed his feelings so perfectly.

I do not consider myself as eloquent as Jane Austen (or the screenwriters who created that adaptation, for that matter). Not at all. I write for the contemporary reader. I write for women like myself, who live busy lives and want to escape for a few minutes—or hours—after the little people's bedtime and before their own. I write for women who've followed their passions into careers that both drain and exhilarate them, women who want to enjoy a short reprieve in the pages of a book during their lunch hours. I wrote this book for you.

I'm not sure at what age I first read *Pride & Prejudice*. My early teens, probably. I've read it numerous times through the years. My first fur-baby was a Cavalier King Charles Spaniel named Mr. Bingley. (Sidenote: he was also a literature lover. We volunteered in our local library's "kids reading to dogs" program for years). So, from one Austen lover to another, allow me to say, "You are too generous to trifle with me." Thank you for reading this book.

Lacy Williams

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