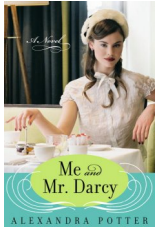


Me and Mr. Darcy : a novel

Me and Mr. Darcy



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While suffering withdrawal pangs from Downton Abbey last week, I came upon Alexandra Potter's light but literate Me and Mr. Darcy. Like Downton Abbey it offers fancy English estates, afternoon tea on fine china, cool British accents, and couples in love.

You can tell that Alexandra Potter, a Brit, writing about an American heroine, has spent a lot of time in the States. Her bio notes that she travels often to New York and L.A. She has the American idiom down and captures Yankee humor well.

The book starts out with Emily (a New York bookstore manager) out on a date with a cheap guy who is calculating how much extra she owes for the pizza that they just shared. (She added toppings for her half.) Unfortunately, Emily has a track record of being unlucky in love. Her fashionable friend, Stella, who also works at the bookstore, invites her on a winter beach vacation with the hope of meeting new men. Emily refuses. Glancing at a flyer on the counter, Emily has a ready excuse--she can't because she's going on a one week "Jane Austen Tour." Impulsively, Emily snags the last spot for the event and joins a coterie of much older ladies on the bus tour. The only two men are the aged driver and a rather obnoxious, poorly dressed reporter who will be covering the event.

Potter has a good ear for snappy dialogue. Spike, the reporter, and Emily don't click at all. In fact, Emily really

dislikes him. There's lots of nice parallels with the real Pride and Prejudice including someone who lies and betrays a friend, a ball where two people dance who both like and are repelled by each other, and lots of conversations where a man and a woman though seemingly continents apart move closer and closer toward each other.

There are a few elements that push the believability factor such as several appearance by the real Mr. Darcy, but Potter handles these scenes so seamlessly that you buy in and enjoy the fun. Potter provides nice character sketches of some of the fellow Pride and Prejudice tourists, including one of a former actress and another of an Irish woman who gave up her child when young.

The book is an easy intelligent read. It keeps you rooting that two fashionably-challenged people will get together in the end.

For another take on Jane Austen's work transformed to the 21st century, try Compulsively Mr. Darcy by Nina Benneton. But careful, this one is less passionate about literature and more passionate about other things.

Posted by Dory L. on March 27, 2012

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