



The Bad Miss Bennet

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Lydia was never the most upstanding of the Bennet sisters, but who ever said that moral rectitude was fun?

At least she bested her elder sisters and was the first to get married. She never could understand what all the fuss was about after she left Brighton with her gallant. It is a shame, though, that Mr. Wickham turned out to be a disappointing husband in so many aspects, the most notable being his early demise on the battlefields of Waterloo. And so Lydia, still not yet twenty and full of enterprising spirit, is in urgent need of a wealthy replacement. A lesser woman, without Lydia's natural ability to flirt uproariously on the dance floor and cheat seamlessly at the card table, would swoon in the wake of a dashing highwayman, a corrupt banker, and even an amorous Prince Regent. But on the hunt for a marriage that will make her rich, there's nothing that Lydia won't turn her hand to. In the meantime, she has no qualms about imposing on her sister Elizabeth's hospitality at Pemberly. After all, what is the point of having all that fine fortune if not to aid a poor, newly widowed younger sister?

While Lydia rattles around the continent from Paris to Venice and to the home of the disgraced Princess of Wales in Italy and back again to Darbyshire, you, dear reader, will be greatly diverted by the new adventures of Jane Austen's consummate and incorrigible anti-heroine, who never ceases to delight.

The Bad Miss Bennet Details

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Author : Jean Burnett

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From Reader Review The Bad Miss Bennet for online ebook

Lindsey says

Sure, the title is the BAD Miss Bennett, but that doesn't mean Lydia has to engage in every single dubious and immoral activity that comes her way. And honestly, what are the chances of a simple country girl getting the chance to sleep with the prince, become involved in an international spy ring and become a lady-in-waiting to foreign royalty. With each new event, I was just astounded-and not in a good way. I should have realized the direction the story would go-filled with anything and everything without a thought to what Austen's characters would actually DO-when I opened the book and saw the larger font, always a sign that space must be filled with something, anything just to drag it out.

Linda says

The Bad Miss Bennet is a bit of a misnomer; by the time the book opens, Lydia Bennet has been married for about three years, and is now the Widow Wickham. However, neither marriage nor widowhood has served to improve her character; she is still the same vain, foolish, egocentric, impulsive girl we met in the original *Pride and Prejudice*, without even a needle on her moral compass.

The book is written in the first person, from Lydia's viewpoint. Since she can hardly be considered an unbiased observer, it is not surprising that she has some scathing remarks about Darcy, Elizabeth, and Georgiana when she visits Pemberley. These seem to be the source of most of the negative reviews about the book. (How dare she traduce such beloved characters?)

However, taken on its own merits, I rather enjoyed *The Bad Miss Bennet*. It's sort of like watching a trainwreck in progress. Lydia careens haplessly around England, the Continent, and even farther, going from man to man, and scandal to scandal. There is a hint of a possible soulmate, but that will have to wait for the sequel ...

Marty says

****Caution - Some spoilers ahead****

Cross Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet with William Makepeace Thackeray's Becky Sharp, and you have Jean Burnett's version of the scandalous but likable Lydia Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice* infamy.

Lydia is slightly older and wiser now. She's recently become a widow, Mr. Wickham having died at the battle of Waterloo (or so she tells anyone who asks). Still 'extravagant in her wants,' Lydia is not quite as 'heedless of the future' as she used to be. She's become a successful card sharp in order to supplement the small allowance Mr. Darcy gives her in order to keep her away from Pemberly, all the while keeping her eyes peeled for an eligible rich husband. Lucky as she is at the gaming tables, trouble still finds her, sometimes through no fault of her own. While she might shed a few tears when her schemes go awry, she picks herself up over and over again, and ultimately finds a way to escape or turn a bad situation to her advantage.

In the course of the book, she becomes embroiled with a highwayman, the Prince Regent, a doomed banker

and an Austrian count. Forced to return to Pemberly after her plot to flee to Paris is discovered, Darcy forces her to take a position as a companion to a rich elderly lady in Bath. Lydia cleverly manages to convince her new employer to travel to the continent, where a tragedy turns into surprising good fortune. Later Lydia becomes a pawn in an espionage plot against her lover, Count Ferenc. She also becomes a friend to the exiled Queen Caroline.

In the end, the Count tricks her into taking a position with the Portuguese aristocracy in order to be rid of her. The end of the novel closes with yet another trip overseas and a surprise reunion. I'm guess Burnett plans a sequel to this novel - her conclusion is certainly tantalizing. I really enjoyed this novel. I hope we do find out what makes of her new life.

Robyn Smith says

A silly book in many ways, but harmless fun. Lydia, of all the Bennett sisters provides more character and spunk than Mary or Kitty (though I often wondered if Mary had hidden depths) to develop in a book. The plot borders on hopeless, but Lydia is true to Jane Austen's portrayal, in her lack of sympathy for Wickham's demise and her swindling, cheating and lying ways, honed to perfection by her marriage to Wickham, of course.

I cringed at Lydia's portrayal of Darcy; this is when I thought the book lacked credibility and could have been better written in the third person rather than the first. Poor Lizzy came off second best as well, coming across as so different from Lydia that they didn't even seem to come from the same family.

However, Burnett managed to write a book that held the reader's interest and provided a few laughs.

Tintaglia says

E infine cedo le armi.

Anche se ci tengo a precisare una cosa: non abbandono questo libro scappando via urlante, come per i tremendi A Little Bit Psychic: Pride & Prejudice with a Modern Twist e Prom and Prejudice: lo abbandono sbadigliante, senza esser riuscita minimamente a interessarmi alle vicende della novella vedova Wickam, ai suoi nuovi compagni d'avventure nè alla maniera in cui vede i personaggi austeniani classici.

Non ho trovato verve nemmeno nella scrittura dell'autrice, purtroppo: non per mancanza d'impegno (cerca di mantenere sempre un tono allegro, frizzante e divertito), ma di talento; non riesce a far sorridere, nè a volgere le imprese di Lydia in grottesco - cosa che avrebbe potuto funzionare, triangolando con Northanger Abbey e con i romanzi gotici che Lydia legge continuamente nel corso della storia.

Inizio a pensare che gli spin off austeniani, semplicemente, non facciano per me. :(

A Holm says

I almost abandon in the beginning but the book does show through Lydia the history of the time and options women had besides marriage.

Georgiana 1792 says

Quando Lydia diventa Tom Jones in gonnella

Si sa che Jane Austen scriveva solo di quello che conosceva per esperienza. Molti le rimproverano questo suo limite, che ci ha fatto conoscere solo la parte più rispettabile, patinata e senza macchia della società. Eppure, nel periodo Regency non era tutto moralmente irreprendibile, anzi! Con *The Bad Miss Bennet* esploriamo insieme a Lydia ogni vizio e malcostume dell'epoca. Perché la sorella Bennet meno rispettabile non disdegna di abbassarsi ai più sordidi espedienti, combinandone di tutti i colori. Purtroppo, la cara Lydia — sebbene abbia urgente bisogno di trovare un marito ricco che la sostenga economicamente — è attratta dai mascalzoni. Wickham non le è bastato: dopo essere stata rapinata da un bandito neanche-tanto-gentiluomo, Jerry Sartain, rimane affascinata da lui, nonostante continui a cercare uno 'sponsor' per una vita agiata, possibilmente in un'agognata meta europea. Affiancata dalla fedele amica Selena Caruthers e dal di lei marito Miles, un giocatore sempre pieno di debiti, Lydia intraprenderà mille avventure che la sbalotteranno da una parte all'altra dell'Inghilterra e dell'Europa... e chissà quale sarà la meta finale della nostra anti-eroina.

Abbiamo dunque una vasta panoramica di tutto ciò che nel periodo Regency *si sapeva ma non si diceva*, in particolar modo si parla di gioco d'azzardo, di traffico di gioielli, di spionaggio ma, soprattutto, della vita non così irreprendibile del Principe Reggente — che incontriamo già cinquantenne e appesantito a Brighton, nel Royal Pavillion che fece costruire seguendo un modello di architettura orientale — e della moglie, la principessa del Galles Carolina di Brunswick. I due principi conducevano vite separate ma popolate da numerosissimi amanti e la nostra protagonista entrerà a far parte di entrambe, anche se fugacemente.

Il racconto di Lydia — ebbene sì, è lei la narratrice e non sembra neanche così sciocchina come la dipingevo suo padre in *Orgoglio e pregiudizio*, ma neanche la persona più avveduta del mondo — è esilarante: alla nostra Mrs Wickham ne accadono di tutti i colori, ma lei affronta tutto con una grande forza d'animo.

Per alcuni tratti questo romanzo mi ha ricordato *Angelica, la Marchesa degli angeli* dei coniugi Golon, se non altro per lo spirito del libro, che ricostruisce con accuratezza il periodo storico e i suoi vizi, sebbene si parli di epoche e nazioni diverse. Per periodo storico e spregiudicatezza Lydia potrebbe sembrare Becky Sharp, la protagonista di *Vanity Fair*, se non fosse che *the bad Miss Bennet* è molto meno scaltra dell'eroina di Thackeray.

La struttura del romanzo, quasi picaresco, mi ha invece ricordato il capolavoro del '700 di Henry Fielding, *Tom Jones*, in cui i personaggi sembrano spostarsi senza meta da una località all'altra. E — smentendo ciò che ho precedentemente scritto, ovvero che Jane Austen scriveva solo di ciò che conosceva personalmente — il rapporto fra Lydia e Selena sembra quello fra le due protagoniste del romanzo giovanile di Jane Austen, *Love and Freindship*, ma solo perché la Jane Austen adolescente era fortemente influenzata da Henry Fielding e scriveva di argomenti che non conosceva in maniera goliardica e talvolta sconclusionata.

La Burnett omaggia la grande scrittrice storica Georgette Heyer, che ha ambientato i suoi romanzi proprio nel periodo Regency: Lydia a un certo punto del romanzo si fa laccare le unghie dei piedi d'oro, esattamente come faceva Lady Barbara Childe, la protagonista di *An Infamous Army* (*L'incomparabile Barbara*).

Naturalmente, non vi aspettate una bella immagine di nessuno dei personaggi di *Orgoglio e pregiudizio* presenti sulle pagine di *The Bad Miss Bennet*: Lizzie e Darcy vengono raccontati da Lydia in modo totalmente diverso rispetto a quel che sappiamo da Jane Austen. Eppure, se proviamo a vederli attraverso gli occhi meschini e invidiosi della più giovane delle sorelle Bennet, sono fedelissimi agli originali, proprio ciò che dovremmo aspettarci!

Una lettura divertentissima che ci guida attraverso i 'vicoli sotterranei' della società Regency con grande precisione storica e tantissima ironia; un romanzo originale, spiritoso, ironico.

Potete trovare la recensione completa (e le obiezioni di Tintaglia) QUI:
<http://ildiariodellelizzies.blogspot....>

Eustacia Tan says

I hardly ever do this. I've been putting down more books (I'm too lazy to read a book I can't connect with), but I hardly ever write a review for a book that I put down halfway. But yet, this book infuriated me so much that not only did I have to stop reading (I tried, I really tried), but I had to rant about it.

Yes, you have been warned, this is a rant.

I think, if you know me well, you can tell that I hate it when sequels change characters drastically. Especially for classics like *Pride and Prejudice*. So why one earth did the author change almost every character from *Pride and Prejudice*?

Look, Elizabeth is described as being without a sense of humour, Darcy has become some conservative uptight noble and Georgina is exactly like the rumours Wickham spread of her. It's as though the entire last chapter (or last few chapters for that matter) was ignored. There's a lot of say, but the one thing that made me so mad that I couldn't finish the book was Georgina's upcoming marriage. Not only does she choose a womaniser, she's portrayed as an irrational, jealous fiancée. Really? This is the sweet girl whom Elizabeth is close to, and sees how her sister-in-law and husband function? Really?

And what was all this for? To make Lydia more appealing (at least, that's the only reason I can find), by making everyone else so unlikable. Lydia is the "free spirit", the "fun one", the one that's supposed to appeal to the modern female audience. Except that she doesn't.

Lydia is selfish, manipulative and has no brains whatsoever. Oh, and she thinks the world of herself, being so "romantic" and all. So fine, you want to write an unlikable heroine, that happens (I remember Ok, no more talk). But at least write a good plot. If I don't like the protagonist, I should at least want to finish the book to find out what happens.

But no, Lydia drifts aimlessly from one event to another, whining and trying to scheme the whole way. And for some reason, there's a new character (Jerry) that she "falls in love" with, and he falls in and out of the plot in the most unbelievable ways (so he dies, but didn't really die, but then he leaves for America?). Can we have some consistency here?

So no, I did not like this book at all. It could have been a fun take on Jane Austen's classic, but it all went downhill when the author mangled the well loved characters of *Pride and Prejudice*. Add in a weak (or if I was harsher, non-existent) plot, and there's absolutely no reason to keep reading. I probably wouldn't have written a review either, but you do not mess with *Pride and Prejudice*.

Disclaimer: I got a free copy of this book from NetGalley in exchange for a free and honest review. I was (obviously) not obliged to write a positive review.

First posted at Inside the mind of a Bibliophile

Kalika says

I found this book truly boring and the only reason I finished it is that I usually finish all the books I start. I picked it up because being an ardent Austen fan, and totally into *Pride and Prejudice* (like many many women of my generation), I found the premise interesting. One always wondered what Lydia Wickham née Bennet had gotten up to after her marriage with the wicked Capt. Wickham. I know that it is a farce but heavens, just how farcical can you really get. Lydia is cast as a 19th century Mata Hari, going from lover to lover, and escapades that get sillier with each turn of the page. The end of the book leaves the story open to continuation in another continent. "Spare me", is all I can think.

Caz says

2.5/3 stars

I normally steer clear of modern sequels to the classics, but this one looked intriguing. The eponymous heroine is, of course, Lydia Wickham, née Bennet, the youngest and arguably silliest of the Bennet sisters in *Pride and Prejudice*.

We meet her again three years after her elopement and marriage, and it's immediately clear that she has not changed very much in the intervening years. She is still shallow and self-centred and at nineteen, is a widow of meagre means. Her marriage was not a happy one, Wickham having lived up to his reputation as a wastrel, and Lydia has become rather more cynical and hardened to life as a result. In many ways, she reminds me of *Vanity Fair*'s Becky Sharp in that she has to exist on her wits and not much money and that her outlook is constantly one of working out how to turn any given situation to her advantage. As such, Becky is not always a likeable heroine, and the same can be said of Lydia. The difference, however, is that where Becky was clever, Lydia is not; and when - like her or not - there were times the reader is rooting for Becky as she gets one over on the society that looks down on her, the same is not true of Lydia, who in this novel, lurches from one disaster to another randomly and without exerting much (if any) control over her situation.

Using Lydia as the central character means that it is possible to construct an 'adventure' story around her, because she is already established as someone who does not behave according to convention and who has little regard for propriety. The novel is, then, a romp as our hapless anti-heroine is plunged from one intrigue to another via various sexual encounters (including one with Prinny himself!), a couple of romantic liaisons that don't amount to anything - and eventually ends up being used to spy upon the behaviour of Princess Caroline in Italy.

There's a handsome highwayman/ thief, a disreputable banker, a murdered aristocrat - in fact, numerous plot-threads that land Lydia into all sorts of hot water, but which, when it boils down to it, turn out to have very little to do with the story overall; and the dénouement is not at all satisfying. In fact, the book ends so abruptly as to have made me wonder if there were some pages missing!

The Bad Miss Bennet is frequently entertaining, well-written and often tinged with humour, but Lydia makes a very poor heroine. Her only ambitions in life (apart from wanting money) appear to be to dance at Almack's, to go to Paris and to meet Lord Byron who, she tells us at several points (albeit not in such terms) is the object of her sexual fantasies.

Lydia has very little to recommend her, and although she is sometimes given to short-spells of self-

awareness, they are very rare and soon disregarded. She isn't very likeable and is, in fact, rather dim-witted; she spends the entire book being thrown from one difficult situation to another and is completely RE-active to events. It's very hard to identify with a character who is so vacuous and I doubt she, as depicted here, could have served as the principal character in any other book for those very reasons. Giving her an established "name" has enabled the author to construct a fairly complex story without having to do much in the way of establishing or developing the character; Lydia ends the book two years older, but not at all wiser.

On a more positive note, I enjoyed the author's writing style, and apart from a couple of slight anachronisms, found her dialogue and manner of expression to be good. I would like to see her tackle a story in which she features her own creations and in which she crafts a more cohesive plot.

With thanks to the publisher and NetGalley for the review copy.

Suze Lavender says

Lydia Wickham is a young widow and Mr. Wickham hardly had any money, so she has to find a way to make a fortune on her own. She only has one huge weakness, an appalling taste in men. Together with her friends she organizes gambling evenings that should bring in some money. She also has an adventure with a highwayman, who keeps making her an accomplice because Lydia can't resist his charms. She even has a royal affair, but she can't seem to find a suitable husband. She can't marry any of the men she meets while a prosperous marriage is exactly what she needs.

Lydia has her maid Adelaide by her side and together they're trying to find luck and wealth. When Lydia screws up one time too many she's being punished for it with a position that might actually make her wishes come true. However, her fortune never seems to last. Will Lydia finally find the money she so desperately wants or is she destined to be poor forever?

Lydia Wickham's sister is married to Mr. Darcy and she doesn't get along with her brother in law at all. Her sister Elizabeth and her husband are respectable people, but Lydia loves a gamble, she likes to party, she can't resist charming men and she isn't good at saying no. She's delightfully shallow, she isn't that smart, but she can be cunning and she never thinks about the consequences of her actions. Having fun is her main goal in life and she's fabulous at it. I loved reading about her successful and not so successful quests to make money. Lydia is absolutely fantastic and the more flaws she has the better. She flutters from one disastrous situation to another like an upbeat bright colored butterfly that everyone can't help but notice.

Jean Burnett has a great sense of humor. She combines this with writing that perfectly suits Lydia's fancy upbringing. I love it that she's given the black sheep of the Bennet family her own chance to shine. I often laughed out loud while reading Lydia's story and loved that she lands herself in so many comic situations. I advise you to take the time to read this story, don't try to fly through it, but read slowly and savor the scenes. It's a book that doesn't deserve to be rushed through, because there's a chance to overlook too much of the wittiness that way, which would be a real waste. I'm a big fan of Lydia Bennet, she's amusing and daring and her stories are captivating. I loved this funny first Lydia Bennet book very much.

Meredith (Austenque Reviews) says

Lydia Wickham is set free from the confines of her unhappy and ill-fated marriage just three short years after her imprudent and “infamous elopement” to George Wickham. Because of Wickham's untimely and misfortunate death, Lydia is left to depend on the generosity and sympathy of her relations. While the Darcys bestow upon Lydia an allowance that will allow her to live respectably, comfortably, and independently. Lydia prefers a more lively and luxurious lifestyle. She eschews their suggestions of remaining at Pemberley or returning to Longbourn, and instead makes haste to the country's capital where she intends to procure the means to live in Paris.

What ensues in the next four hundred or so pages is a succession of spoiled schemes, misadventures, and frequent changes of address. London, Brighton, Bath, Paris, Venice – Lydia does an exhaustive amount of traveling throughout the span of this novel. Along the way she supplements her income by swindling inebriated gentlemen with deep pockets, accepting jewelery and finery from her lovers and patrons, and eventually working as a lady's companion. No matter where she goes or what she does, Lydia seems to end up in hot water and perilously close to disgrace and ruin. “I have progressed from a living death of boredom at Pemberley to an uncomfortable proximity to the criminal underworld” - page 120. Will Lydia ever be able to escape the scandals and scrapes that surround her?

This, unfortunately, is one of those rare occurrences where I have more quibbles than praises. I love the idea of a novel about an independent and imprudent Lydia, and I greatly enjoyed the vivid and vibrant descriptions the author used while describing the clothing, food, décor, and cities in this novel. But I'm afraid my praise ends there. My biggest complaint with this novel is with the characters. I felt the characters were very poorly drawn in this novel. Lydia, our antiheroine, lacked emotion, substance, and development, Georgiana was peevish and malicious, and Lizzie was vapid and unidentifiable. I may sound like Jane Bennet for saying this, but I was hoping for some redeemable or likable quality in Lydia. Or at the very least, the opportunity to gain some understanding and insight to her character. Sadly, I remained detached and indifferent to Lydia and her plights, and throughout the course of the novel, my sympathies and regard for her progressively declined.

My other quibble for this novel was with the plot – it seemed to be a tangle of debacles, royal scandals, and tiresome card parties. There was an underlying royal mystery/scandal that I found intriguing, but unfortunately, it seemed to remain in the background and was never really satisfyingly resolved. The plot seemed to be in a pattern of introducing new characters, changing residences, and Lydia being forced to do accomplish some undesirable task. I did not enjoy witnessing poor Lydia continuously being used as a pawn.

I would have loved to indulge in a rollicking romp or madcap adventure with Lydia, she is Austen's wild child and I know she could have been a lot of fun! It is too bad she spent this novel embroiled in the affairs and exploits of others! It is not very often that I say this...but this is a novel I, unfortunately, cannot recommend.

Victoria says

Lydia is not one to be content with her lot, and with her ambitions tries to constantly advance herself to the life she feels she deserves. There's a whole host of secondary characters that surround her, but really it is Lydia herself that makes her fortune. There are plenty of mishaps, but in the end you feel optimistic for Lydia. Darcy, Elizabeth and particularly Georgiana's characterizations are terrible. Overall I think Jean Burnett overestimated how intelligent Lydia is, because I really feel that the Lydia from P&P is too dim to pull off any of these madcap escapades. It's as if the ghost of Wickham has possessed her. This really is Lydia Bennet/Wickham meets Vanity Fair. That's really the whole story.

Marilyn says

Lydia Bennet, a.k.a. Mrs. Wickham, finds herself widowed at the ripe age of 19, a mere three years after her scandalous marriage to George Wickham. As before, it is Mr. Darcy whom Lydia depends upon for financial relief. And as before, it is Mr. Darcy whom Lydia blames for her 'situation' while never accepting the consequences of her own actions.

Jean Burnett has done a wonderful job creating a comedy of errors, the likes of which we would not read in a Jane Austen novel, but delightful none the less. Example: Chapter 4, Lydia reflects on her rendezvous with a 'highwayman' named Jerry who has stolen her necklace and her heart . . . "We were transformed into a world of fleshly delights such as I had never experienced before." What a riot!

This was another Kindle Immersion read for me and the narration was captivating when it came to the humorous portions of the novel, of which there are many laugh-out-loud moments. The voice of Selena is perfect. The silliness of Lydia is absolute as she carries on her wicked escapades. But then again, "A widow in want of a fortune has no need of a penniless officer, even if he comes free with a wager."

Ah, what's a lady to do whilst stepping on heads in her comical attempt to climb the social ladder of Regency era England?

Carlos Allende says

This is an amazing book. I can't help to be cross at the people giving it 1 star. It is called "The Bad Miss Bennett," for God's sake not the other gooddie-goodie Miss Bennett! The main character, Lydia is selfish and inconsiderate and manipulative and that's the whole point! It is a comedy! She is immoral! It is not Pride and Prejudice revisited and not really a second part but a spin-off! If you are a fourteen year old that still believes in Prince Charming, this book ain't for you.

If you love old fashioned prose but you're a cynic, then it is for you. It is a perfect imitation of a picaresque novel, the like of Dangerous Liaisons, perhaps.
