



# Fitzwilliam Darcy Such I Was

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## **Fitzwilliam Darcy Such I Was** Carol Cromlin

Fitzwilliam Darcy is arguably the best known, most charismatic hero Jane Austen ever created but he is also the most unfathomable. Who exactly was Mr. Darcy? What principles guided him? What desires drove him? How did he come to be the character Austen, so vividly, portrayed?

Carol Cromlin offers a window into the private life of this young, landed, Georgian gentleman. Her story presents events during the first eight and twenty years of Fitzwilliam Darcy's life that shaped his personality and established his character, making him the man who so decidedly won Elizabeth Bennet's heart, despite her absolute determination against him.

## **Fitzwilliam Darcy Such I Was Details**

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Author : Carol Cromlin

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# From Reader Review Fitzwilliam Darcy Such I Was for online ebook

## Madenna U says

This wonderful book is a back story for Fitzwilliam Darcy. There is only a small hint of his true love, but I admire the story just the same. He was so wanted and loved. He learned his lessons the hard way. Other than some over the top descriptions of food, I enjoyed the style and the emotion. I think it caused me to love the man even more.

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## Barbara says

I received this book through Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

Fitzwilliam Darcy Such I Was is a Jane Austen pastiche that tells the story of our Darcy before he met his Lizzie.

His life from beginning right up to catching his first glimpse of Elizabeth Bennett is examined and brings us a better understanding of his less than pleasing demeanor.

A great read for JA fans.

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## Leslie says

I have to admit straight up I am not a fan of P&P Prequels. I don't need an origin story. Much like people complain about superheros prequels; how many times do you need to find out how Peter Parker became Spiderman, or the unnecessary and awful Star Wars prequels (curse you George Lucas), when you don't see John McClane or Martin Riggs going to the police academy or where Jaws was before it went to Amity. It starts by incorporating what I call Austen Babies (H/T to Muppet Babies)

This book adopts the 2005 P&P time period -Darcy is born in 1766 and the assembly is in 1793. And gives me more info about Darcy than I ever, ever, ever, wanted. From his birth, to his first horseback ride, to his encounter with the gypsies, to his popping his cherry. I know feel like I know as much about being a student at Cambridge in the 1780s as did actual students at Cambridge. It doesn't feel enjoyable it feels like the author saying "Look I did so much research" "LOOK!"

We have Col. Fitzwilliam's first name revealed to be Reynold, I can handle Richard and Anthony but this was just jarring. Charles Bingley has an older brother named Edmund who is the Bingley which Darcy befriends at school. Alas Edmund dies as does Charles' father; but to the best of my understanding the author omitted sending Charles to University; which would deny Charles any chance of claiming gentleman status. And if you are looking for a Bennet in this book you will be sorely disappointed. They aren't mentioned, not at the assembly and not about Mr. Bennet visiting Bingley.

I also learn that Darcy was practically born with a stick up his butt, he was never fun, or carefree. Even on his grand tour he is more like Rick Steves ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick\\_St...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_St...)) than Eurotrip (<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0356150/>).

Anyway I plodded though this tedious tome; things I did instead of reading included cleaning a bathroom and sorting out my twitter followers into new lists, I was at least able to observe it seemed to be error free. Until pages 326 - 329 where I was given Kempton for Kympton; then my most despised error loose for lose and lastly a threat to send Mrs. Younge to goal rather than gaol. For a book the used the word shewed, shew, shewing & shews a combined 22 times you'd think lose, gaol & Kympton would be a piece of cake. but then I decided that the proofreader must have gotten as bored as I was and just skipped to the end.

If you want a good book about a younger Fitzwilliam Darcy read *The Coming of Age of Elizabeth Bennet* <https://www.goodreads.com/book/show/3...> by Caitlin Williams

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### **Theresa says**

I thought this book was tons of fun. I especially liked reading the details of a gentleman's Grand Tour with the reactions to the Paris salons and fashions!

The only situation which I feel didnt fit into my concept of Darcy and thus was rather out of character for him was his encounter with Lady Evelyn. Otherwise, I found the story delightful!

I should disclose I was a very lucky winner of this book.

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### **Julie says**

I really liked this book overall, but there was a point in the middle where I felt like I was stuck in the mud. Apparently English duels and tours of Europe aren't my cup of tea...Darcy's early years and when he took over Pemberley were especially fun. I'm not sure if my favorite scene was when Darcy "ran away" or when he met Charles Bingley. They were both a lot of fun!

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### **Meredith (Austenque Reviews) says**

Have you ever wondered what Mr. Darcy's past was like before Elizabeth Bennet? Was he really a spoiled by his parents and taught to be "selfish and overbearing?" How different was his childhood from his cousins and friends because he is the heir and expected to inherit a prominent estate and legacy?

In her debut novel, *Fitzwilliam Darcy Such I Was*, Carol Cromlin offers a prequel to Jane Austen's beloved novel, *Pride and Prejudice*. Using Jane Austen's descriptions and narratives as a guide, Carol Cromlin fleshes out Darcy's character and imagines scenes from his childhood, youth, and young adulthood. Covering the span of twenty-eight years, this story jumps around and touches upon significant moments and life-changing events in Darcy's life that help define and shape the reserved man Elizabeth meets at the Meryton Assembly.

What I loved most about this prequel is that is readers witness a little bit of everything in Darcy's life. The night of his birth, the happy scenes from his childhood, the scrapes he gets into, the trials, tragedies, and relationships, his years at Cambridge, his tour of the continent – it is quite inclusive and illuminating! I appreciated how Ms. Cromlin showed great care, respect, and perception with her portrayal of Darcy. The

hero we love was easily recognized in his younger years by his serious nature, honorable moral code, and duty to family. And yet, he was real – he had flaws, made mistakes, got into some trouble...

Another aspect of this story I greatly enjoyed was witnessing Darcy's interactions with his family, cousins, and friends. I especially enjoyed his relationship with his parents, how they were unconventional with their hands-on childrearing and how they instilled in him, even at a very young age, the importance of his future role and responsibilities:

“Of paramount importance is that Pemberley is what connects a Darcy to the other Darcys who came before him, and to all who shall follow...It is for us to do what is required to preserve our home so that Darcys shall continue here through eternity. It is Pemberley that makes a Darcy who he is. It is Pemberley whence a Darcy draws his strength. That is a great gift, but it is also a great responsibility.” – George Darcy (page 52)

In addition, I loved seeing how Darcy came to know the Bingley family and become an instrumental mentor and friend to Charles Bingley. I also took pleasure in the brotherly and fiercely supportive relationship between Rennie Fitzwilliam (soon to be Colonel) and Darcy. I loved seeing Rennie look out for Darcy during his years at Cambridge and comfort him during the difficult loss of his father.

Now it might shock some people to hear me this, but...the one relationship I wish I saw more of was Darcy's friend-turn-foe relationship with Wickham. I know, can you believe it?!? I would have loved to see a little more of their childhood where they were chummy companions and then later the scenes of disagreement and discord over the Kympton living and his attempted elopement with Georgiana. Since he is the antagonist in Darcy's story, I wish we saw him interact more with Darcy and witness their confrontations take place on the page.

Regardless of my quibbles, I found much to appreciate and take pleasure in with this debut novel (and hopefully a continuing series) from Carol Cromlin! An introspective and revealing tale about an “ardently loved and admired” character! I recommend!

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## **Ceri says**

I have abandoned my attempt to this book at 100-something pages. It wasn't bad by any means but I just couldn't summon up any desire to read it. You know sometimes you read a book and it's got errors and the author's style isn't great but you still can't put it down despite yourself? Well, this was the exact opposite; style was good, in keeping with period etc but once I put it down I found myself avoiding reading rather than picking it back up again! I just didn't find it interesting, it was kind of meandering through various incidents in Darcy's early life, which I'm sure some people would enjoy but I found it a little boring and wanted some plot. I am clearly a minority though, as it has some great reviews so don't let my DNF put you off it, you might love it!

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## **Laura Hartness says**

What would *Pride and Prejudice* be without Fitzwilliam Darcy? This man of substantial means and highbrow refinement has possibly received more attention than any of Jane Austen's memorable characters. But who is this gentleman? How did he become the man Elizabeth Bennet encounters at the Meryton

Assembly? Carol Cromlin addresses these speculations in her award-winning novel, *Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was*.

Those researching *Pride and Prejudice* may find somewhat of a debate as to which year the novel was set. Some scholars date Darcy and Lizzie's meeting in 1793, 1799 and even 1811. In Carol Cromlin's case, she has chosen 1793 as her starting point. Then the story regresses to 1766, the year that the heir of Pemberley would have been born within that timeline.

From there, Darcy's life is traced through the decades, from his birth, to early romance, to the day he meets Elizabeth Bennet. I loved the span of time we were given with this character. The fact that his future bride's name isn't even signified does not detract from the novel whatsoever. This narrative is focused on Fitzwilliam and those in his life up to the Meryton Assembly in 1793. Many pages were given to his father, which was so very satisfying. Getting to know the man-behind-the-man was wonderful, and the character that Cromlin has crafted in the elder Mr. George Darcy felt spot-on, consistent with the tone of the original characters in *Pride and Prejudice*. His ideals and manner are very much echoed in his eldest child, and it is no wonder that Fitzwilliam Darcy turned out to be the man he did.

As a mother of two boys, it is no surprise that I enjoyed the time spent with the young Master Darcy, prior to his teen years when he was just a lad. He was so inquisitive, and finds himself in some amusing situations, whether it was fighting off a horde of bees with a young George Wickham, hanging out with poaching gypsies on Pemberley lands, or making a dangerous ride on his own, through the night to fetch a doctor.

The arrival of Georgiana was heartbreaking, as it spelled the end of Lady Anne Darcy due to complications from childbirth. The loss of Anne echoes throughout the novel, as it affected the family in a profound way. I could understand Fitzwilliam's initial hesitation in accepting his sister. As an eldest child, I know that tough adjustment to a younger sibling. But to pair it with the loss of his mother? It's no wonder that twelve year-old Darcy struggled in his feelings toward the baby. He makes a dramatic transformation, in time becoming her fiercest protector, particularly in the events surrounding George Wickham over a decade later.

Wickham's antics throughout Darcy's life are so consistent with what would be expected from this character. Even at a young age, he is selfish and conniving. At first Darcy may not see him as such, but over the years he wearies of his tie with this irresponsible lout. The climax of the novel, in my mind, very much revolves around the relationship with Darcy and Wickham. Although as a Janeite I was well aware of how his relationship with Georgiana would end, Cromlin's ability to craft her tale left me in suspense and turning pages quickly.

Many chapters are spent with Darcy as a young man, both at University and in his Grand Tour later on. I enjoyed his collegiate days, as we also are introduced to the Bingley family and continue to see his relationship with Wickham deteriorate. However, I felt the story lagged a bit during the chapters regarding the Grand Tour. Those are essential years in Darcy's life and taking such a tour is common practice among those in his society, but my interest waned during these chapters. However, when Darcy is called back home to England to tend to family matters (and later deal with Wickham's relationship with Georgiana), the plot picks back up speed, leading to a very satisfying ending at the Meryton Assembly, setting Darcy at the cusp of the next era in his life: his relationship with his future bride, Elizabeth Bennet.

As a Best Indie Book by Kirkus Reviews, *Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was* is no fluff piece of Austenesque fiction. Carol Cromlin has clearly done her homework in all things *Pride and Prejudice*, as well as in the history of the period. Her writing is excellent without being too highbrow for my taste. Reading this novel was a long time coming, and it was worth the wait. As Carol's narrative concludes at the outset of the

beginning of Darcy's time with Elizabeth, I do hope that this author will continue her development of these classic characters. With the work she has done with such a beloved gentleman as Fitzwilliam Darcy, I can only imagine the delights that would be emitted from Cromlin's pen with the Bennets. As Kirkus suggests, *Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was* will delight long term devotees of Austen's work, but can easily encourage neophytes to pursue the original source material as well. That is high praise indeed.

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## **Patty says**

**Fantastic Austenesque writing.** I wasn't sure what to expect from this new author but was pleasantly surprised. I've read a lot of P&P fan fiction and this is one of the better ones out there. It stays true to Austen characters. The writing is beautifully done in the Regency style.

The book does a good job taking us through Fitzwilliam Darcy's life before he meets Elizabeth, helping explain the character we all fell in love with. Since this is a P&P prequel about Darcy, the familiar characters from the original novel are the ones connected with him. So it's not a Darcy and Elizabeth story. However, there are some great scenes and dialogue with Col. Fitzwilliam, Georgiana, Wickham, Lady Catherine, and many new characters. My favorite in the book is Col. Fitzwilliam, who is so much fun. I think Austen fans will love this book. *Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was*

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## **Carol Perrin says**

### **Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was ( Jane Austen's Men )**

Interesting story about the early years of Fitzwilliam, his relationship with his mother, her death, the resulting relationship between he and his father, and eventually his love for his baby sister, Georgiana. The heartbreak he's gone through throughout his young life sets the personality of our hero. At the age of twenty - three, he and Georgiana lose their last parent. Accepting the responsibility for running the great estate of Pemberley, takes up the greater part of his life. Overwhelmed, he gets more stoic, shy, and withdrawn into himself than before. Before his father died, he tells Fitzwilliam to marry for love and that Lady Catherine was the only one wishing to marry off her daughter, Anne, to him. Both he and his mother did not want this at all especially when they observed her as she grew older. They knew they would not match. The last chapter in this book is Bingley settling at Netherfield, and the night of the Meryton Assembly. Remark about her beauty was not made and when she walks by with a smirk on her face, he continues to search her out as he moves throughout the room. Quick read.

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## **Susan says**

How did the character of Darcy come about? What was his life like before he met Elizabeth Bennet? Here we read of the life of Fitzwilliam Darcy, of his parents, of Pemberley, his cousin Fitzwilliam and of course Wickham. Including his time at university where he meets a Bingley, followed by Grand Tour of the continent, up to the time of the Meryton Assembly. This means that only a glimpse is seen of Elizabeth.

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## **Candy says**

I enjoyed reading Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was. Concentrating mainly on Darcy's life, we don't meet Elizabeth in this story, but I was fascinated with seeing how Darcy grew up and what shaped him.

The story briefly begins at Netherfield, then goes back to when Darcy is born. The beginning chapters stop at different ages in Darcy's life, showing us some milestones and special moments Darcy experienced. For example, meeting some gypsies camped in the woods of Pemberley, the birth of his sister and death of his mother, along with a first love.

For me, the story took off when Darcy was older. I really enjoyed seeing his relationship with his cousin Rennie (Colonel Fitzwilliam). Meeting Bingley had a bit of a different twist to it, which I enjoyed! Georgiana's near elopement with Wickham was exciting and tense!

Seeing Darcy's relationship with his father was very special. I always pictured it somewhat differently because of Wickham, but Cromlin's portrayal of Darcy's father, Wickham, and Darcy make it come alive for me. I could understand how Mr. Darcy could enjoy Wickham's company so much and to favor him. I always thought that meant he favored him over Darcy, but that's not so.

Fitzwilliam Darcy such I was is a wonderful back story of the man we all love!

Disclaimer: I received an e-copy of this book for my honest review.

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## **Adelia says**

Very Well Written. I really enjoyed this book. I've haven't seen many P&P prequels so I was really interested to read this one, and it was a good decision. It is beautifully written; in a style very much like the Austen era. Telling the story of Darcy's life before he appears in P&P, the book covers the major events in his life. There are credible story lines on how Wickham could go from childhood friend to nemesis, how Darcy came to be great friends with Bingley. I don't want to give away many spoilers, so I will just add that there are great stories involving Georgiana and the funny Col Fitzwilliam. I hope there is another book in store from the author.

On a side note, I love the cover and then saw that it was designed by a Charles Brock. I did a double-take because there is a famous Austen book illustrator from the 19th century named Charles Brock. But I looked him up and yep, he is real, just a funny coincidence.

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## **Sharon says**

E-book gifted by author for review

The story of Mr. Darcy's life from birth up to the night he saw Elizabeth for the first time is wonderfully written and would make Jane Austen proud if she was indeed alive today to read it for herself.

I absolutely loved every single thing about this book, the use of the "old" English in the telling of this tale is one thing that stood out for me and made reading it a much more pleasurable experience. After reading Pride



and Prejudice and seeing the mini series and movie based on the book I often thought to myself about Darcy's childhood and what made him into the man that he turned out to be. This offering from Carol Cromlin answered those questions and, opened my eyes to many other aspects of Mr. Darcy I had not thought about.

He is one of the most talked about figures in literature and it is lovely to see an author come up with a wonderful, heart warming tale about his childhood, family life, trials and tribulations and his ever present awareness of the fact that he is something bigger than just himself. His relationship with his cousin Rennie was a delight to read about and proves that complete opposites can indeed relate to each other extremely well. The favourite parts of the book for me were when he took his "tour" after university to see what life is like outside of the world he knows and you see him awakening to just how different others live and interact. The other being the inclusion of correspondence between the characters, I truly believe it made the story that much better. If you are a lover of all things Pride and Prejudice then this is definitely a book that you have to read.

If I could I would have given this book a 10/5 star rating.

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