

Letter from Captain Wentworth to Mr. Darcy

At a simultaneous instant in time: At the beginning of Persuasion AND the proposal scene in P & P

Dear Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy

Please accept my apology if you find this letter an intrusion into your private affairs. I have recently been portrayed very unfairly by a writer, Miss Jane Austen, and I understand that you have suffered a similar fate. In my case, prior to the beginning of Persuasion, I am portrayed as a headstrong young man who goes back to sea with a full portmanteau of hurt feelings. I understand that you have also been treated unfairly. The representation of your words and actions when first proposing to Elizabeth Bennett is harsh and slanted. You spoke from your heart with real feelings which are presented in the book as cold and derogatory.

How will the books proceed? Most likely we will be forced to have major changes in attitude or personality, while the female characters will be allowed to remain as they are. Miss Austen will lay the blame (or reader's perception of blame) to Lady Russell and to Elizabeth Bennett, when the blame is certainly all Miss Austen's for her unfair portrayals of our character and morals.

As we will make no progress appealing to Miss Austen's better nature (she has none, as can be seen in her letters), I hereby propose a plan of action. One of the sillier tasks that people do is to write sequels to Jane Austen novels. For us to sponsor a sequel to state our case would most likely have little effect. It would be just another such curiosity in a sea of curiosities and will most likely not be able to overcome the damage done to our character in the books as the books proceed forward from where they are at this point.

I would like to propose that we jointly sponsor a prequel that will be a more accurate portrayal of our personalities and moral standards. It should include (among other things):

- A history of our relationships with our sisters and what warm loving brothers we have been.
- Our lack of previous romantic entanglements, which demonstrates that we have always conducted ourselves as gentlemen and have shown proper respect to young ladies and have not played with their emotions or given false hope.
- Our responsible positions in society and the good deeds that we have done.

The purpose of the prequel will be to provide Miss Austen's readers with a fairer and more balanced knowledge of our character.

As I am going to sea shortly, I would like to begin this process immediately, if you find it acceptable. I will be placed in situations of some danger. If for some reason I do not return you have my full permission to disclose my private affairs, as necessary, so that a better understanding of our character can be achieved by the reading public.

You do not have a brother, but I feel that I am your brother in spirit (we have both been treated unfairly by Miss Jane Austen). Please accept my best wishes for your future happiness and may Miss Jane Austen treat both of us fairly in the future.

Respectfully

Captain Frederick Wentworth