



Lydia. The Wild Girl of Pride & Prejudice

Books Reviewed:

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~~Not a Choice:~~

off

Media type:

Book

BfK Rating:

4

It is a brave author who takes on a classic; it very rarely works. Natasha Farrant has boldly decided to enter the world of Jane Austen. Does she succeed? She does. In the first place she is careful not to be Jane Austen. The period setting is lightly handled, her dialogue refreshingly contemporary without jarring. Nor does she focus on the characters that are central to Austen's plot. Rather she takes Lydia who, though important, nevertheless does not appear for much of the original. Even so her character is very definite - and Farrant takes advantage of this to develop her for a modern audience who will meet someone they can recognise - a teenager rebellious, independent, often naive but also resourceful. By using the diary format, the reader steps into Lydia's life. It is a technique that is admirably suited to the story Farrant tells; she takes the period that Lydia is off stage and fills it in while cleverly embedding it inside Austen's plot. She remains true to the original characters - but seen through the eyes of an exasperated and exasperating younger sister. Wickham is well presented, not an out and out villain - but very much as Lydia says "a gambler and a chancer", a charmer - as she is. Would there have been Lydias in Austen's world? Indeed, yes, just think of Becky Sharp.

A terrific romp and a great antidote to the many teen novels full misery. Very much recommended - and maybe it will introduce new readers to the ultimate classic, **Pride and Prejudice**.

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