



# Building Mr. Darcy

*Ashlinn Craven*

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*It is a truth universally acknowledged...*that Jane Austen set the bar for romantic male leads way back in 1813. What mortal man could live up to the gruff yet golden-hearted Mr. Darcy?

Now programmer Zoe Bunsen thinks she has the cure to two centuries' worth of female disillusionment: a new artificial intelligence program that looks, talks, and thinks like Darcy. No way will she let the chauvinistic atmosphere at her company nor her stuffy colleague, Max, get in the way of her wildest dream--creating the perfect man. Even if he isn't quite human...

Max Taggart, project manager extraordinaire, has crossed a continent to secure this high-profile position. His frustrating teammate Zoe may not know it, but everyone's jobs depend on not only the duo meeting the nearly impossible deadline but the new AI being a huge success. Mr. Darcy needs to sell, even if that means selling out a few literary details.

When the AI starts using its scary degree of emotional intelligence to reveal their individual secrets, Zoe and Max must rethink everything, and a surprising connection begins to develop. Will these two unlikely cohorts cling to their prejudices or toss pride aside and admit love is stronger than a fantasy?

*Sensuality Level: Behind Closed Doors*

## Building Mr. Darcy Details

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Author : Ashlinn Craven

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# From Reader Review Building Mr. Darcy for online ebook

## **Bex says**

Free book I downloaded onto Kindle. I like some regency stuff, And I was fascinated by the idea of an AI being built to be like Mr Darcey, though to be honest I don't know Pride & Prejudice inside out. Some interesting questions about AI, morals, feelings, etc from an author who knows her context - in amongst the somewhat Mr D/Lizzie storyline of the main characters.

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## **Alara says**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that... no book with a Pride and Prejudice trope will ever make justice to the real thing. This book has a cute premise, and I liked the concept of bringing Darcy to the 21st century. However, I had problems with the interaction between the main two characters. There is barely any building to their relationship, and some strands of the plot (i.e. the criminal brother) take too much explaining but don't bring much to the story. Decent quick read nonetheless if you don't want to think much...

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## **Starla says**

Interesting spin on the Pride and Prejudice trope. Decent quick read for a fluff book.

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## **Amy says**

I absolutely loved this book! Craven did such an amazing job of building in a subtle similarity between Zoe and Max and Lizzie and Darcy. And though the relationship is perfectly paced and grows (with it's ups and downs and back and forth) both personally and professionally throughout the novel, I would say the first 2/3 of the book is focused on Mr. Darcy. It's all about the AI they are building and I love how Craven--and Zoe--balance everything Austen fans love about 19th century Darcy with 21st century knowledge and sensibilities. When I read a romance novel, I often find myself wanting to be the heroine's best friend. I can imagine myself just having a chat and hearing all about their latest romantic developments and foibles. But with this book, Craven crafted both characters so that I wanted to be BFF with both of them. I was rooting for them to get together and work things out for both their sakes! And I worried about how Darcy would fit into their relationship because I grew just as attached to him as Zoe. I love this book. I will recommend it to anyone I know who enjoys romance and especially fans of Pride and Prejudice. I think Jane Austen would heartily approve of this novel.

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## **Danielle McCoy says**

Good book but not thrilling. A fun read.

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## Jojo says

I have no idea why these characters even liked each other. Cute premise, but I couldn't connect to anyone, and this just wasn't the enemies to friends to lovers story I thought it would be. Not my cuppa!

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## Vicki says

If you are like me and love Pride and Prejudice, and love Artificial Intelligence, then you will adore this book. It is a perfect blend of everything Austin and AI.

Max is just an adorable main character with his intelligence, his super focused intellect, and his amazing blue scarf. He really makes the story pop. I found him so likable and so adorable. Zoe is an Austin authority and huge fan. She loves all things, Darcy. These two are really cute when they work together even when they are working against each other. And boy do they work against each other.

Darcy is also an amazing character. He may be computer chips and software, but he captured my heart and made me love him. The way he treats Zoe and interacts with all the staff was wonderful. He made me laugh and he made me sad. He was a well-rounded character.

I am very impressed with Ashlinn Craven's writing. She wrote a charming book that makes fantasies come to life. I dream of being able to interact in a virtual reality like her Austinland reality. Her writing made this story come off the pages. I am now a total fan and I will be searching for other books by her past or future.

Such a lovely read. It will be one I read over and over just for the happy feeling I derived from it. It has become a favorite. I loved every word of this book. I could have happily continued reading it for days.

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## Elley Murray says

I love a good story about woman in STEM, and I'm going to go ahead and say female programmers totally count. Zoe Bunsen and Max Taggart are both programmers with very different approaches to programming. Zoe is way pumped to be put on a project for a new Mr. Darcy AI project because she's a huge Jane Austen fan. Max actually reminded me a lot of Darcy in many ways, with his very analytical approach and sensible level-headedness. Likewise, Zoe has some of Elizabeth Bennet's free-spirited character, and in some ways this is a sort of modern day Pride & Prejudice retelling that also talks about Pride & Prejudice in this crazy, Darcy-filled inception kind of way.

This was a really enjoyable read. I loved the interaction between Zoe and Max, and how they grow to learn more about each other and come to appreciate more of how the other works. I also love the party where Darcy does his oh-so-Darcy thing and advises against a certain match because one of the party's family is less than desirable. Oh Darcy, you never learn, do you? Even when you're a computer generated AI intelligence type of dealie-ma-bob. (Technical term there, dealie-ma-bob.)

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## Kate Maxwell says

Sci-fi meets *Pride & Prejudice*. Cute story about a software engineer who is trying to save her fellow computer programmers by making sure the company's new AI, one Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy, gets properly tested. Not only is Zoe Bunsen (like the burner) a software geek, she is also a Jane Austen fan who has basically memorized *P&P*. Enter Max, a software efficiency expert who was brought in to ensure that the new AI/personal assistant gets properly tested and a success in the stores. Loved Darcy 1.0, whose take on modern society was quite amusing. Fun read.

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## Debbie Brown says

### 4.5 rounded up to 5 stars

This is a clever modernization. It has enough *Pride and Prejudice* to satisfy Jane Austen Fan Fiction lovers with enough originality to keep you guessing as to where the story is going next.

We have two computer programmers, Zoe Bunsen and Max Taggart, who are working on testing and programming the final tweaks on a Max Headroom/Watson-like prototype called Darcy designed by a British software company. The program is intended to interact with users as Jane Austen's Mr. Darcy with mannerisms suggested by the famous novel. It has all the smarts and efficiency of a computer that also interacts seamlessly with other programs and data bases. This means Darcy can analyze situations and present relevant data, and Darcy can also interact with your coffeemaker to get it brewing when you want!

Zoe may be a computer programmer, but she is also a *P&P* addict who loves Mr. Darcy and can't believe her good luck in getting this assignment. She is determined to give this "Mr. Darcy" a personality that matches his name. Max is a hotshot Silicone Valley programmer recently hired by Zycorp Ltd. specifically for this project, but he hasn't even read *P&P*. Consequently, he approaches the project from a purely technical point of view.

The initial sit down between the two have them both disappointed in their assigned partner. Theoretically, they are co-project managers, but each wants to set the parameters of what they're testing and how. It doesn't help matters when Zoe shares her negative opinion of Max with her friends in the company (Laura, Jose and Evan), which Max overhears.

It turns out they have bigger problems than their disparate approaches, though. Any glitches in Darcy must be discovered and fixed so he is absolutely flawless by the fast-approaching deadline, at which time the Darcy software will be released. Zycorp's previous AI (Artificial Intelligence) software packages have all lost massive amounts of money. If this project is not commercially successful, the company will ditch its AI department, and its cognitive programmers will lose their jobs.

There are also some serious company politics throwing some roadblocks against them. Zoe has to scramble (with some help from Darcy) to keep from getting fired.

A lot of the computer language lost me, since I'm pretty clueless in that area. When Zoe and Max mention

certain programs, I'm not sure whether they're REAL or imagined for this book. It doesn't really matter, since computer geeks do have a language all their own, and this doesn't interfere with the enjoyment of the story as it develops. I absolutely love when Zoe gets to dance with Mr. Darcy in a Regency virtual reality set-up.

Max and Zoe are characters that the reader gets to know and like. Laura, Jose and Evan become integral to the story, doing much more than just providing Zoe with people to talk to about her concerns about the Darcy project. And yes, the computerized Mr. Darcy is a lovely touch. (His program has to be tweaked when it turns out he professes love rather freely.)

*Building Mr. Darcy* is delightful and unlike any other Austenesque book I've read (and I've read a whole lot of them)! Highly recommend.

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### **Carlin says**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that I cannot resist books with a Jane Austen connection! And this one was super. The protagonist Zoe is a brilliant designer of AI (artificial intelligence) avatars, who along with a colleague Max are working on "Mr. Darcy," a virtual reality avatar based on the Pride and Prejudice character. Zoe lives and breathes her Jane Austen characters and is determined to make Mr. Darcy more than just a lifelike Google Assistant. She wants him to have real emotions. Max just wants to finish the project on deadline while under pressure from a supervisor to be sure it fails so the supervisor's priorities receive all the asserts and attention (while getting Zoe fired). I enjoyed all the techspeak and loved that Zoe was so brilliant. It was an unusual premise but it worked!

I wonder if anyone else noted that the author's first name, Ashlinn, is the pronunciation of Aisling, the Gaelic word for vision or dream? It seemed to be fitting for Zoe's creation of Mr. Darcy.

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### **Amanda Frank says**

From the first sentence of "It is a truth universally acknowledged that Jane Austen has been filling women with unrealistic expectations of men since 1813." I knew I was going to love this book and I was right. This book is full of laughs, twists and turns and subtle (and not so subtle) P&P quotes and references. I enjoyed every minute reading it and recommend anybody who loves P&P, Jane Austen or just Mr. Darcy to read it. I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Jennifer Craig says**

This is the first book I have read by Ashlinn Craven and I thoroughly enjoyed it. This was a delightful, funny romance with plenty of heart.

Zoe Bunsen has been a Jane Austen fan since first reading Pride & Prejudice as a teenager. With her personal life (such that it is) pretty much a disappointment, Zoe jumps at the chance to co-spearhead her company's development of a Mr. Darcy AI program, believing that "he" will be the perfect companion to women disillusioned with their own lives.

Zoe is teamed up with Max Taggart, who has been hired by the CEO to bring the Darcy project to fruition. Max is equally frustrated by and attracted to Zoe at the beginning. He fights the attraction part at the beginning as he believes she is currently in a relationship. All bets are off, however, as soon as he finds out she is unattached. The only problem is, they both have very different feelings about the source material.

Their developing relationship has several cute nods to Austen, while keeping things fresh. Can these two get past their differences and focus on what really matters. As with Jane Austen's works, the path towards happiness is full of bumps, which make for better reading.

I received a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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### **Sheila Majczan says**

This is a modern story using the female lead's love of *Pride & Prejudice* and in particular Mr. Darcy as to why she is so excited about her company's (a British software company) decision to program a Mr. Darcy AI. She is now teamed up with a new employee in the company who is a whiz with a perfect marketing launch record but with no knowledge about the story nor about Mr. Darcy's traits and his lasting appeal for woman over the centuries.

Much of the story has to do with corporate secrets and back-stabbing as various personnel have their own agenda. And when "Mr. Darcy" uses his links to the social media to secure Zoe Bunsen's position on that team he also sets himself up to be eliminated.

Max Taggart is not a modern version of Mr. Darcy: his older brother is a recently released convict who deals in drugs and his sister has mental health issues in a large part due to a mooching boyfriend who has commitment issues.

Zoe also has an ex-boyfriend who sucks energy from her and demands support in his song-writing and on his concert tours. She has no social life and when some of her co-workers convince her to team up with them to build and perfect a Virtual Reality world or two or three for Mr. Darcy in order to introduce him to various situations and to round out his world knowledge she finds herself existing in a nighttime world with them while trying to get Max on board during the day time to make Mr. Darcy more than a flat face on a screen.

The chemistry between the two main characters becomes the elephant in the room. Max is being told to do one thing by his boss who is also working to get Zoe fired and yet Max can't deny his feelings. And on top of that there is his perfect record to be considered. If Zoe goes down so do more than just she and her team.

This was an intriguing read. I am sure many readers know how political work places can become with jockeying for favors and for positions, trying to outdo the guy/gal next to you. This was a well done variation using that as part of the premise.

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### **Carola says**

I did not like Zoe at all. I found her utterly annoying, and a brat who did not care about jeopardizing anyone's

jobs and was still hung up on some other dude until the very last minute.

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