



## The Red Chrysanthemum

*Linda Beutler*

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## **The Red Chrysanthemum** Linda Beutler

“Pride and Prejudice” and the language of flowers...

When Fitzwilliam Darcy leaves the inn in Lambton after a tense but fruitful visit with Elizabeth Bennet, her words cultivate his hopes. “Less naturally amiable tempers than Mr Bingley’s have found ways to forgive you.” Has she excused his flaws of character and errors in judgement? While dining at Pemberley, Elizabeth is confounded when Darcy says of her scent, “Now I find I am more fond of lavender than ever... certainly even more fond of it than I was in, say, April.” Has he pardoned her intemperate assault on his pride?

As her esteem blossoms into love and his desire flourishes into devotion, the meanings of every leaf and petal allow Elizabeth and Darcy to express emotions too vulnerable to speak aloud. But can messages in fronds and leaflets save their fragile hearts when scandalous news arrives from Longbourn?

Perhaps flowers do not always say it best.

Join garden writer Linda Beutler (*Gardening with Clematis*, 2004 and *Garden to Vase*, 2007) as she plants herself in Jane Austen’s most admired novel, bringing her love of all things blooming with her. The gardens at Pemberley may never be the same!

## **The Red Chrysanthemum Details**

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# **From Reader Review The Red Chrysanthemum for online ebook**

## **Candy says**

LOVED this story!!! The RED Chrysanthemum is a Pride and Prejudice variation that had me hooked from the very beginning! It has quickly moved up to being one of my top favorites!

What if ...while Elizabeth is touring with the Gardiners, Darcy and Elizabeth have more time together at Pemberley? What if ...when Darcy goes to Lambton to see Elizabeth, the letter she is reading from Jane does not contain the dreadful news of Lydia's elopement? Allowing them to have a different conversation. Allowing them more time to get to know each other and heal misconceptions. Although, not everything is coming up roses (pun intended), and there are still some misunderstandings to work out. And then, of course, Lydia does run off with Wickham causing more troubles for everyone in concern.

Bingley is a little more astute in this story, and quickly figures out Darcy's feelings for Elizabeth. When he learns of Darcy's part in separating him from Jane...well, let's just say I was delighted with the way Bingley began his discussion with Darcy on his part in the matter.

From almost the beginning of this story it evoked emotion in me. From a gentle warmth in my chest when Darcy and Elizabeth were first together in Lambton, to crying with Elizabeth and Mrs. Reynolds, and at times laughing out loud! I loved this story!

For those who care, there are some sex scenes after Darcy and Elizabeth are married. I wouldn't let that stop you from enjoying this story. I feel you can easily stop reading after they get married, because isn't the chase the best part?!? Although, you would miss Darcy's letter to Mrs. Bennet which I found hilarious!

I thought The RED Chrysanthemum was brilliantly done! I would recommend it to anyone who enjoys Pride and Prejudice variations!

Disclaimer: I was given a copy of the book for my honest review.

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## **Leslie says**

2.5 Warning this book contains adult content. Now where do I go from there. This is Pride and Prejudice in a blender what if. It is filled with drama. This Lizzy is incredibly neurotic, to the point that I found her very annoying. The only person more annoying than Lizzy is Darcy. He is whiny, weak and insecure.

There is a major subplot about the language of flowers. So two people who seem to always misunderstand one another decide to communicate in a language that is subject to interpretation because.... how better to fail.

The story begins with Lizzy arriving at Pemberley then sheer craziness ensues, including Lizzy cleaning the Still room at Pemberley because she is bored. There are some P&P variations I can't put down and others I force myself to finish and this was definitely the latter.

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## **Vaarin says**

I absolutely loved it!

Utterly romantic and hilariously funny read.

Entering by the time Elizabeth visits Pemberley and ventures off canon immediately.

Loved the messages they sent each other through the language of flowers, very romantic but it was also plenty of hilariously funny moments. The scene with Bingley, Georgiana and Darcy in the library being one of the highlights.

The banter between the Darcy siblings being another.

The book ventures from romantic and funny, into suspense midway through when the Wickham debacle ensue. The lack of self-confidence in ODC through this part adds to the suspense created by Wickham. The flowers, tender moments and confirmations from their friends should have made them more sure but it was not annoying to such an extent that I would deduct a star.

We are allowed a lot of happiness during their courtship and wedding which is my favourite trait in a book. Not to forget several new laugh out loud moments. The carriage ride to Pemberley on their wedding day, some letters from Darcy to his mother-in-law and a debacle involving Mrs Bennet and the Bingley's has me laughing so hard...

Some well written passionate interludes adds to my overall good impression of the book.

Heartily recommend this book!

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## **Ceri says**

This is a 'what if' variation on Pride and Prejudice. The story begins at Lambton when Mr Darcy goes to see Lizzy. In P&P she's just finished reading a very distressing letter from Jane, but in this book the letter doesn't contain any alarming news and Mr Darcy gets the opportunity to speak to Elizabeth. She and the Gardiners are invited to Pemberley, get to know Mr Darcy and Georgiana better and Mr Bingley is made aware of Jane's feelings towards him.

One of the big themes in this book is the language of flowers. Each flower has a meaning, and Darcy and Georgiana prepare a nosegay for Lizzy that would hint to Darcy's continuing feelings for her. In return, Lizzy leaves a floral message for Mr Darcy which is a bit more coy, but the centre of it is a red chrysanthemum, which means 'I love'. Unfortunately, the stem is cut too short and it falls out of the arrangement so he doesn't see it at the time. Lizzy knows that Darcy has feelings for her but feels that she can't expect a man she rejected so vehemently to propose again, and Darcy knows her feelings have softened somewhat towards him but can't trust that they've changed enough to risk a second proposal. Some things are too important to leave to the language of flowers...

I enjoyed this romance although I felt that the characters were more open with each other than I felt was likely - Georgiana's near elopement was known by pretty much everybody rather than being the closely-guarded secret that it was in Pride and Prejudice, and the characters were also more touchy-feely than I felt was likely. I also felt that it was unlikely that after so much encouragement on both sides that either Elizabeth or Darcy would have doubts in relation to the other's feelings. Aside from these quibbles I found

the characters amusing and engaging.

I would add in a warning for those people who don't like sex scenes, the last section of the book following the wedding deals with Darcy's lustful thoughts and Elizabeth's sexual awakening in some detail, so for those people I'd advise skipping the last 60 pages or so and going straight to the epilogue.

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### **Tamra says**

I am torn with how to rate this. I'd say it's more like 3.75 for me. For the most part I enjoyed this P&P variation but there were a few things in the book that just didn't sit well with me. First off, too many people knew about the Georgianna and Wickham scandal including Lady Catherine. Secondly, Darcy and Elizabeth were too open with everyone about their feelings for each other, yet childish in doubting the others regard. The other issue is the first 3/4's of the book read like a clean regency and then bam, it became a bodice ripper after they were married. Not that there's anything wrong with a good bodice ripper but it just seemed out of character with the first part of the book. I think it would have been better to make it a clean regency than switching gears so abruptly. Other than that, I really enjoyed my time with my beloved P&P characters. If you are a JAFF fan like me, you will enjoy this book. I believe this is the authors first novel and I look forward to reading more JAFF by her.

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### **Ruth says**

#### **Wow such a good Variation!**

I really enjoyed this book and probably put it in my top ten variations of Pride and Prejudice. It is a great love story and this variation enhances Darcy and Elizabeth's characters exactly so well. The dialogue between them full of double entendres and sweet earnestness, it was such a delight! Darcy's letters to Mrs. Bennett an absolute hoot! I will no doubt read it again simply because it is that good!

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### **Sheila Majczan says**

I read this book twice. And read all the reviews also in an attempt to sort out my own thoughts. Finally, I have mixed feelings. First, since the book is entitled "The Red Chrysanthemum" I was disappointed that the flower theme was only explored in the first half of the book. Why would Georgiana put these flowers on the grave sites if that messaging was not carried on through out the marriage. And he never sent flowers while she was at Longbourn. I expected rose or lavender petals to be spread on their bed, at the least.

Furthermore: Both Elizabeth and Darcy cannot seem to trust what they are hearing from others or what is communicated by the flowers along with the notes. Why? Even Mr. Bennet seems to get it before Elizabeth. It was reassuring to read that Darcy was determined as he pictured Elizabeth as the Mistress of Pemberley, in his words to Col. Fitzwilliam, etc. Having him learn of her attentions to the tenants at Longbourn was a nice touch to the story. Lizzy hugging Mrs. Reynolds - very warm thoughts.

Charles, Georgina and Anne were more developed and stronger in this tale. Good for Bingley to send his sisters off! I don't know that I like Fitzwilliam calling his sister "Georgie" or even "Gosling" but that is a

minor detail.

Wickham ending up with a broken nose and the loss of 2 teeth was well done by Col. Fitzwilliam and Darcy...all as he "resisted arrest"! I wanted to slap him as he crudely described lusting after Elizabeth. Too bad Lydia didn't hear that.

I think, even though it certainly was not in character for any of the persons involved, that Darcy's letter to Mrs. Bennet and her subsequently bursting in on Jane (with Charles under the table pleasuring her), Mrs. B. telling Jane/them how Darcy is training Lizzy to be a "Columbine", "ouch", "damn", and then Mrs. B. peeking under the table to then view Charles' naked butt is just so hilarious! Again, not in character for anyone but oh, so funny! And Darcy's follow up letter put the exclamation point on that! How rude Mrs. Bennet was to scold Lizzy for not becoming pregnant immediately...(speaking as one who doctored for years to become pregnant.) Hope that shut her up about that subject for ever and ever....with all her daughters.

Sexual content: OK, very detailed, but I often wonder at all these authors who have their heroine having multiple climaxes during their first experience. Rather like the Barbie dolls all being so well developed, in my opinion. I did appreciate the narrative showing Darcy's problem controlling his physical responses and how Elizabeth was naive in how she could affect him.

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**elaine m. suda says**

### **Flowering Love**

I thoroughly enjoyed reading your book. The ups and downs between Darcy and Elizabeth in their relationship was crazy. I'm glad they used the herbal garden book to profess their feelings of love for each other. It was unique and it was something they really felt. Although they started off wrong, they surely built a rich, lasting and loving relationship. I look forward to reading more of your work.

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**Eliza Baum says**

Reread 10/9/16

I enjoyed this the second time around, though I'll admit I skimmed some of the middle bits and skipped most of the epilogue.

Original read 12/16/15

This is the third (and I think last) of this author's P&P based books I've read. I was really impressed with

both the style and the depth of story in the first one, and I'm glad to see that quality continued here. I'm always in favor of Darcy and Elizabeth getting more time together in a story, and I liked that the subtle variation here allowed for that. There were times when I thought Darcy was a bit too gushy and romantic, and the things that kept them apart (view spoiler) dragged on a bit farther than was probably believable...but the only part that truly dragged (and my only true complaint) was the ending after their marriage. I think this is partially because I only recently read *Longbourn to London* by this author, and there was a lot of repetition. It might not have bugged me if I hadn't had the other fresh on my mind.

Overall, though, I really enjoyed this, and I would read another by this author, if she ever writes one.

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### **Debbie Brown says**

These are nicely fleshed out characters who are completely in synch with the original P&P. The many pages of conversations are thoroughly engaging. I enjoyed the interplay with the flower bouquets, which was much more interesting than I expected (not being an avid gardener).

Overall, it is a delightful book. The only element that prevents me from giving it 5 stars is the unbelievably high level of angst Darcy and Elizabeth experience regarding each other's feelings despite lots of shared heated gazes, pleasant conversations with blatant hints, and the fact that, regardless of the dropped flower, the bouquets they gather for each other clearly express way more than friendship.

But for those readers who love lots of Darcy-and-Elizabeth together and in love, this book is a sure winner. Roughly the last quarter of it focuses on the first days of their marriage. If you object to any explicit sexual content, it may not be your cup of tea, but I found those scenes very sweet and, at times, funny as Darcy tries to hold his ardor in check through the 2-day trip to Pemberley while Elizabeth is comparatively naive and clueless, unintentionally making it more difficult for him. All in all, a very entertaining read!

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### **Katherine says**

What if Lydia and Wickham's elopement happened a few weeks later allowing Darcy's unexpected visit to the Rosings Crown not to be sullied with news of Wickham? In this novel Elizabeth gets to fall in love with Darcy at Pemberley when she spends a number of weeks in his presence along with the Gardiners. Georgiana loves her! Mrs Reynolds loves her and Darcy loves her more than ever. With Bingley at Pemberley he is quickly able to remedy his error and Charles sees Darcy in a new light when he realizes he is in love. I loved the scene of Charles and Georgiana questioning Darcy after Elizabeth and Gardiners first dinner at Pemberley! Of course the path to love is not easy.. Darcy cannot believe that Elizabeth would forgive him enough and love him enough to want to marry him whereas Elizabeth cannot believe that Darcy would propose a second time. Through a series of flowers they try to communicate their feelings about the other but since Darcy doesn't note the red chrysanthemum he doesn't realize she loves him back and she worries she was too forward when it didn't move him to action! I loved all the scenes at Pemberley! Of course Wickham does attempt to elope with Lydia, lady Catharine will still disapprove of Elizabeth (and I love the set down she gets) but we all know this literary couple will find happiness. I loved the book to the point of 6 stars until it got to the part of marital relations. I personally don't think the reader needs to be in the bedroom with her characters knowing all the details of their personal lives and thus my rating fell. I did laugh out loud at the scene with Mrs Bennett near the end Lol but I was saddened at the novel's conclusion which ends 50 years

later when our dear characters are no more and others talk of their love. I know it should be moving and beautiful but I prefer our characters alive when the book closes even though the summary of their marriage in those final pages is beautiful.

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### **Meredith (Austen-esque Reviews) says**

What if Lydia and Wickham's "elopement" took place a couple weeks later? What if Darcy and Georgiana invited Elizabeth, Jane, and Mrs. Gardiner to spend the month of August with them at Pemberley?

In this beautifully rendered *Pride and Prejudice* variation, Linda Beutler plays with the timeline of Jane Austen's beloved novel and allows the seeds of love to germinate and bloom in the natural splendor that is Pemberley. With Caroline Bingley and Lady Catherine out of sight and Elizabeth and Jane at Pemberley, you might think that a tender love would easily thrive under such favorable conditions. But alas, doubts, insecurities, and misguided notions keep this love blossom from fully opening its petals...

As you might have already surmised, I greatly enjoyed all the floral allusions, analogies, communications, and connotations in this novel. It was fascinating to learn all the different meanings of flowers and how one could reveal and proclaim feelings with the right bouquet. How I wish the language of flowers was something that was still practiced today!

Besides witnessing the burgeoning sweet romance between Darcy and Elizabeth, some of my favorite scenes in this novel include: Darcy's tortuous full disclosure to Charles Bingley and Georgiana, Mr. Bingley's assertive dispatch of his conniving sisters to their family in Scarborough, the touching and tearful goodbye between Mrs. Reynolds and Elizabeth, and Wickham receiving some of the physical retribution he so rightly deserves!

While I found many aspects of this variation to be well-written, thoughtful, and creative, there were a couple of instances that caused me to raise my eyebrow some. Seeing Darcy so open about his feelings and expectations felt a little uncharacteristic because he was open with so many people – Georgiana, Bingley, Colonel Fitzwilliam, the Gardiners, and Mrs. Reynolds were all aware of his heart and his intentions. I guess I felt he would be a little more private and guarded with his personal affairs. Also, after awhile, it seemed a little perplexing that Darcy and Elizabeth would still doubt or question each others' love – even after they heard confirmation of it from other people.

This book does have some mature intimate scenes after Darcy and Elizabeth wed, but none before that. Readers not wanting to trespass into the Darcys' bedroom can safely read up to 85% of this novel. The last sixty pages can be described as a slow seduction of escalating intimacy – building passions, delayed gratification, and intense self-control. I enjoyed these leisurely paced and passion-filled scenes between Darcy and Elizabeth. The only thing I wasn't too fond of was all the talk of Elizabeth acting as a "mistress" and learning how to be a "courtesan."

Despite my quibbles, I immensely enjoyed reading this debut Austen-esque release from Linda Beutler. I think many Austen-esque fans will delight in the sweet romance, well-drawn characters, and felicitous unions!

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## **Susanne says**

Absolutely **\*\*loved\*\*** this lovely variation of *Pride & Prejudice*--so romantic and so very sweet. A very different approach to Elizabeth and the Gardiners' visit to Pemberley and all that occurred afterward, complete with quite the lesson on the language of flowers. (I've taught students the symbolism of flowers during several online literature classes, from Shakespeare to DuMaurier's *Rebecca*--a fascinating subject!) I love that there were little guides (called a herbal) to the symbolism of flowers and herbs that were used by women in this time period.

This is a delightful, wonderful read--escapism and lovely romance all in one. I read it in just a day-and-a-half, so I consider myself quite addicted to the Austen variations of Linda Beutler!!

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## **Carol Perrin says**

### **The Red Chrysanthemum**

Very interesting story variation about Elizabeth and Darcy's time together at Pemberley. Many days were spent happily together getting reacquainted with Darcy and getting acquainted with Georgiana. The night of Elizabeth and the Gardiners' first dinner was everything delightful, because Bingley finally grew a backbone after his sisters insulted Elizabeth which was heard by Elizabeth, Darcy, Georgiana, Bingley, and the Gardiners. Caroline and the Hursts leave the next morning for Scarborough having been thrown out of Pemberley. At dinner, Darcy is informed that Elizabeth makes her own scents. He asks her to make one exclusively for Georgiana's seventeenth birthday. Before her arrival, which Darcy wants it to be a secret, he and Georgiana make up a bouquet of flowers and leaves. Using her Herbal Book, Darcy picks flowers and plants that shows how much he cares and why he cares for her. He leaves her a note that names the plant and explains what they each mean. After making Georgiana's scent, Elizabeth goes about the gardens making her own language of flowers for Darcy. Upon discovery of his bouquet, he uses the Herbal to understand her feelings for him. Unfortunately, the Red Chrysanthemum falls to the floor and is not seen by either Darcy or Georgiana. The key flower would have said it all, but at this point of the story, the novel would be a novella. So we must go through the anguish and angst until everything comes together. Loved how Darcy and Fitzwilliam handle Wickham. Finally gets a little of what's coming to him. This reformed Darcy, since the proposal failure in Kent, would make women's toes curl. Loved this Georgiana too. When Bingley starts the story from the days at Netherfield, she is appalled and shocked at her brother's actions and teases him constantly throughout until he finally makes his wishes known. Clever storyline using the Language of Flowers to explain their love.

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