

The Darcy Myth: Jane Austen, Literary Heartthrobs, and the Monsters They Taught Us to Love

BY RACHEL FEDER

Reading Group Discussion Guide

- Rachel Feder uses characters from several popular pieces of media as examples of “Darcys.” Do you disagree with any of them? Are there any you would add?
- The author includes a quote from scholar Daniel Kasper that claims, “there are no reformed rakes, just books that end.” Do you agree? Can you think of any examples of truly reformed rakes?
- Does the author’s description of *Pride and Prejudice* from Lydia’s perspective as a story about “a young heroine who is neglected, seduced, lied to, abducted, trapped, rejected, and ultimately chained to her predator” change your opinion of the book?
- The author talks about the literary device of “the marriage plot” as part of *Pride and Prejudice*. What are other works that use the marriage plot? Do you still see the marriage plot being used in modern media?
- Do you agree that *Dirty Dancing* is an example of an anti-Darcy myth? Are there any other books or movies you can think of that fill that role?
- Are there any adaptations or reimaginings of *Pride and Prejudice* that you think change the story for the better?
- Do you think that we will ever move away from the Darcy myth? Or is the trope too appealing?
- Do you agree with the author’s perspective that the trope of Darcy-like romance is directly tied to other systems of power, such as politics or healthcare? Why or why not?

