

The Write Touch

YOUR THOUGHTS, YOUR STYLE, OUR FINISHING TOUCH!

Heroines We Love...and Why

(Excerpt)

What a treat—what an indulgence, to cast my mind back over the hundreds of heroines whose lives I’ve vicariously lived, in order to choose some I admire, and then have the leisure to analyse why. Why have these women stayed with me, in my hard drive, if you will, though I may have read their stories years and years ago? What did I identify in the way they conducted their lives, voiced their thoughts, chose their actions that gave me satisfaction, gave me pleasure, gave me something to emulate?

I’ve limited myself to four heroines that I’d like to discuss with you today, and they cover a range of ages and time periods. Two are British, and two American. The youngest is “not one and twenty”, and the oldest, we follow to her death in her early sixties. Each, I think draws me because she exhibits emotional intelligence, as well as intrinsic moral fibre, and a willingness to learn, to grow, to change.

There are many readers who like their heroines to exhibit fearless feats of derring-do, to be risk-takers, maybe foolhardily so, but what I’ve discovered about myself is that I do not. I like to watch heroines who can quietly, intelligently, arrange the lives of those around them, who can influence

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through the high esteem in which they are held by others. They may not be world-savers of the James Bond variety, but they do affect the microcosm of the worlds in which they live, and they do it exhibiting resolve, bravery, and by going against convention in some—usually small but always significant way.

I don't expect you all to agree with me and my choices, but the beauty of this topic is that it is so totally subjective, and so I have the opportunity to subject you, for the next few moments, to my thoughts on female fictional characters I do admire.

My first heroine is Elizabeth Bennet, Lizzy of *Pride and Prejudice*. I think I was first introduced to her when I was about thirteen, and of course, my opinion of her has had the opportunity to change as I've matured. Now, of course, I can look on her with the "wisdom of the ages", can think of her as someone young enough to be my daughter, and can acknowledge all the things we parents know about most young people—that they are headstrong, willful, and think they know everything! So, in a very genteel way, of course, does Lizzy. Burdened with an utterly airheaded mother and three completely silly sisters, not to mention a father beloved, but so sarcastic and indulgent in irony that he will lift not a finger to correct any of the inappropriate behaviours of the majority of females in his household, Lizzy must educate herself in the ways of the structured society in which she lives, and consequently forms opinions based on nothing more than her own native intelligence.

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Inevitably, there comes a day when she is forced to admit that she has blown it big time. She has been “blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd”. Lizzy is humiliated by how despicably she has acted. She who has “prided herself on her discernment,” who has “valued herself on her abilities” has fallen prey to vanity and “driven reason away”. She chastises herself for thinking herself so clever in taking a dislike to Mr. Darcy, “without any reason”, because “It is such a spur to one’s genius, such an opening for wit, to have a dislike of that kind.”