

"Truly our contemporary Jane Austen."

Jill Barnett

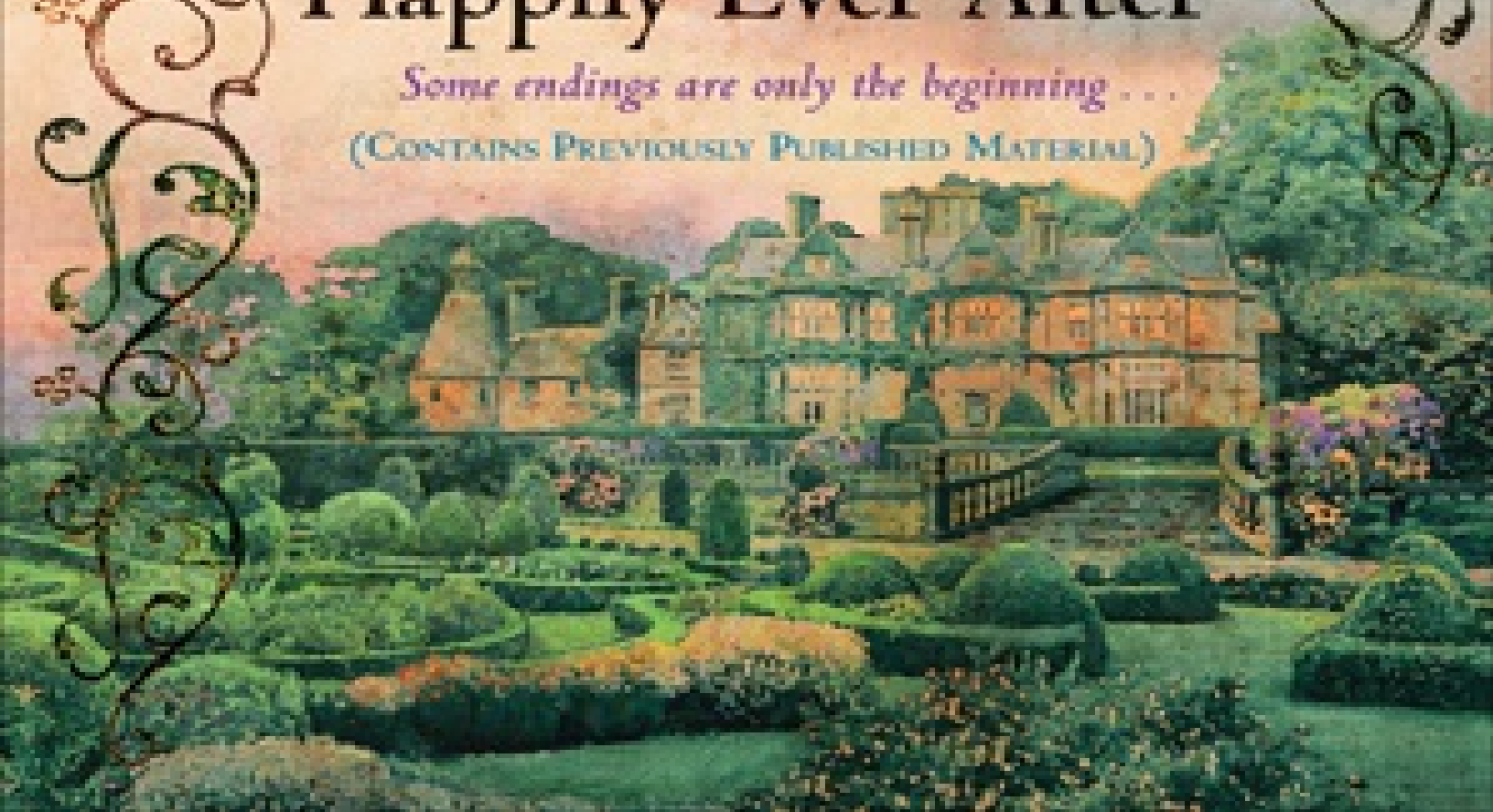
NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLING AUTHOR

# JULIA QUINN

## THE BRIDGERTONS: Happily Ever After

*Some endings are only the beginning . . .*

(CONTAINS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED MATERIAL)





JULIA  
QUINN

THE  
BRIDGERTONS:  
Happily Ever After



AVON

*An Imprint of HarperCollinsPublishers*

## Dedication

*For my readers,  
who never stopped asking,  
“And then what happened?”*

*And also for Paul,  
who never stopped saying,  
“What a great idea!”*

# *Contents*

[Dedication](#)

[Dear Reader](#)

[The Duke and I](#)

[The Duke and I: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[The Viscount Who Loved Me](#)

[The Viscount Who Loved Me: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[An Offer From a Gentleman](#)

[An Offer From a Gentleman: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[Romancing Mister Bridgerton](#)

[Romancing Mister Bridgerton: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[To Sir Phillip, With Love](#)

[To Sir Phillip, With Love: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[When He Was Wicked](#)

[When He Was Wicked: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[It's In His Kiss](#)

[It's In His Kiss: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[On the Way to the Wedding](#)

[On the Way to the Wedding: The 2nd Epilogue](#)

[Violet in Bloom](#)

[Violet in Bloom: A Novella](#)

[About the Author](#)

[By Julia Quinn](#)

[Copyright](#)

[About the Publisher](#)



Dear Reader—

Have you ever wondered what happened to your favorite characters after you closed the final page? Wanted just a little bit more of a favorite novel? I have, and if my conversations with readers are any indication, I'm not the only one. So after countless requests, I revisited the Bridgerton novels, and gave each one a "2nd" epilogue—the story that comes *after* the story.

For those of you who have not read the Bridgerton novels, I would caution you that some of these 2nd epilogues might not make much sense without having read the accompanying novel. For those of you who have read the Bridgerton novels, I hope you enjoy reading these short stories as much as I have enjoyed writing them.

Warmly,  
Julia Quinn



## *The Duke and I*

Midway through *The Duke and I*, Simon refuses to accept a bundle of letters written to him by his late estranged father. Daphne, anticipating that he might someday change his mind, takes the letters and hides them, but when she offers them to Simon at the end of the book, he decides not to open them. I hadn't originally intended for him to do this; I'd always figured there would be something great and important in those letters. But when Daphne held them out, it became clear to me that Simon didn't need to read his father's words. It finally didn't matter what the late duke had thought of him.

Readers wanted to know what was in the letters, but I must confess: I did not. What interested me was what it would take to make Simon *want* to read them . . .



## *The Duke and I:* *The 2nd Epilogue*

Mathematics had never been Daphne Basset's best subject, but she could certainly count to thirty, and as thirty was the maximum number of days that usually elapsed between her monthly courses, the fact that she was currently looking at her desk calendar and counting to forty-three was cause for some concern.

"It can't be possible," she said to the calendar, half expecting it to reply. She sat down slowly, trying to recall the events of the past six weeks. Maybe she'd counted wrong. She'd bled while she was visiting her mother, and that had been on March twenty-fifth and twenty-sixth, which meant that . . . She counted again, physically this time, poking each square on the calendar with her index finger.

Forty-three days.

She was pregnant.

"Good God."

Once again, the calendar had little to say on the matter.

No. No, it couldn't be. She was forty-one years old. Which wasn't to say that no woman in the history of the world had given birth at forty-two, but it had been seventeen years since she'd last conceived. Seventeen years of rather delightful relations with her husband during which time they had done nothing—absolutely nothing—to block conception.

Daphne had assumed she was simply done being fertile. She'd had her four children in rapid succession, one a year for the first four years of her marriage. Then . . . nothing.

She had been surprised when she realized that her youngest had reached his first birthday, and she was not pregnant again. And then he was two, then three, and her belly remained flat, and Daphne looked at her brood—Amelia, Belinda, Caroline, and David—and decided she had been blessed beyond measure. Four children, healthy and strong, with a strapping little boy who

would one day take his father's place as the Duke of Hastings.

Besides, Daphne did not particularly enjoy being pregnant. Her ankles swelled and her cheeks got puffy, and her digestive tract did things that she absolutely did not wish to experience again. She thought of her sister-in-law Lucy, who positively glowed throughout pregnancy—which was a good thing, as Lucy was currently fourteen months pregnant with her fifth child.

Or nine months, as the case might be. But Daphne had seen her just a few days earlier, and she *looked* as if she were fourteen months along.

Huge. Staggeringly huge. But still glowing, and with astonishingly dainty ankles.

"I can't be pregnant," Daphne said, placing a hand on her flat belly. Maybe she was going through the change. Forty-one did seem a bit young, but then again, it wasn't one of those things anyone ever talked about. Maybe lots of women stopped their monthly courses at forty-one.

She should be happy. Grateful. Really, bleeding was such a bother.

She heard footsteps coming toward her in the hallway, and she quickly slid a book on top of the calendar, although what she thought she might be hiding she had no idea. It was just a calendar. There was no big red X, followed by the notation, "Bled this day."

Her husband strode into the room. "Oh good, there you are. Amelia has been looking for you."

"For me?"

"If there is a merciful God, she is not looking for *me*," Simon returned.

"Oh, dear," Daphne murmured. Normally she'd have a more quick-witted response, but her mind was still in the possibly-pregnant-possibly-growing-very-old fog.

"Something about a dress."

"The pink one or the green one?"

Simon stared at her. "Really?"

"No, of course you wouldn't know," she said distractedly.

He pressed his fingers to his temples and sank into a nearby chair. "When will she be married?"

"Not until she's engaged."

"And when will that be?"

Daphne smiled. "She had five proposals last year. You were the one who insisted that she hold out for a love match."

"I did not hear you disagreeing."

“I did not disagree.”

He sighed. “How is it we have managed to have three girls out in society at the same time?”

“Procreative industriousness at the outset of our marriage,” Daphne answered pertly, then remembered the calendar on her desk. The one with the red X that no one could see but her.

“Industriousness, hmm?” He glanced over at the open door. “An interesting choice of words.”

She took one look at his expression and felt herself turn pink. “Simon, it’s the middle of the day!”

His lips slid into a slow grin. “I don’t recall that stopping us when we were at the height of our industriousness.”

“If the girls come upstairs . . .”

He bound to his feet. “I’ll lock the door.”

“Oh, good heavens, they’ll *know*.”

He gave the lock a decisive click and turned back to her with an arched brow. “And whose fault is that?”

Daphne drew back. Just a tiny bit. “There is no way I am sending any of my daughters into marriage as hopelessly ignorant as I was.”

“Charmingly ignorant,” he murmured, crossing the room to take her hand.

She allowed him to tug her to her feet. “You didn’t think it was so charming when I assumed you were impotent.”

He winced. “Many things in life are more charming in retrospect.”

“Simon . . .”

He nuzzled her ear. “Daphne . . .”

His mouth moved along the line of her throat, and she felt herself melting. Twenty-one years of marriage and still . . .

“At least draw the curtains,” she murmured. Not that anyone could possibly see in with the sun shining so brightly, but she would feel more comfortable. They were in the middle of Mayfair, after all, with her entire circle of acquaintances quite possibly strolling outside the window.

He positively dashed over to the window but pulled shut only the sheer scrim. “I like to see you,” he said with a boyish smile.

And then, with remarkable speed and agility, he adjusted the situation so that he was seeing *all* of her, and she was on the bed, moaning softly as he kissed the inside of her knee.

“Oh, Simon,” she sighed. She knew exactly what he was going to do next.