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**Potiphar**

by Elizabeth (anghraine)
Chapter 1

She laughed, not as a lady of Gondor would, but with her head flung back, her long golden hair rippling.

“Piles of gold, and pearls? Do not mock me.”

He could only laugh in return, even as he tried to make her understand. “We are mariners, Vidumavi, we sail the far shores and bring these things back.”

She blinked. “But — whatever for? What do you do with them?”

“Turn them into rings, and bracelets, and coins,” said Valacar, “and sometimes, just let them run through our fingers and enjoy our own wealth.”

“Jewellery I understand,” she said, throwing a faintly envious glance at the collar at his throat.

“I will have a necklace made for you,” he replied impulsively, “tell me what you want and it will be done.”

She lifted her eyes to his. “Valacar . . . I want . . .”

That was enough for him. He took an eager step towards her, seized her small hand in his. “Vidumavi. All of the wealth of Númenor would not be enough, it could never make me happy, unless . . .”

Her fingers tightened on his. They were strong. “Yes?”

“Unless—” how could he be nervous?— “unless, when I return to Gondor, you are at my side, as my wife.”

He was astonished when she flung her arms about him, laughing and weeping, and kissed him fervently.

Perhaps it was a Northern custom.
. . . I know I am not to gossip, but Elizabeth asked what I thought of our cousin’s wife. I can only say, please come home, and send for me as soon as you do; and I have enclosed this sketch. I do not think Mary or Jack — especially Jack — would appreciate the comparison, so you must not show anyone except Elizabeth, and then burn it. She is really very terrible, I think I dislike her very much.

Give Elizabeth and the children my best wishes.

Your loving sister,

Georgiana Darcy

For a moment, both Darcys were silent, staring at the wicked little sketch. Then Elizabeth (who did not appreciate their cousin’s attempts to flirt with her husband) laughed until her chest ached and tears rolled down her cheeks. Darcy gasped, then covered his mouth, his shoulders shaking.

It was a slim, pretty woman, dressed in a modest approximation of Egyptian garb, and indeed the title, written in an incongruously neat, delicate hand, was Potiphar’s Wife; but the face was that of their newest cousin, Mary Fitzwilliam née Crawford.

“I don’t know what Fitzwilliam was thinking,” Darcy said more soberly, after he had thrown it in the fire.

“He was thinking of her pretty face and figure,” Elizabeth replied, “not to mention her twenty thousand pounds.”