Where Is Thy Victory?

by Elizabeth (anghraine)

Summary

Georgiana Darcy is almost the last to hear of her parents' deaths.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes

Georgiana's aunts knew about the accident before she did.

She knew something was wrong, of course. Papa usually managed everything – and everybody – with a light, indulgent hand, but he was very particular about some things, and so was Mama. Seven quarrels had broken out in the last week, and neither of her parents had swept in to silence them.

There had been no balls or parties either, which was stranger still. Mama's love of company had ensured that Georgiana spent many happy hours up on the balconies, peering through the railings as strangers in brightly coloured gowns or coats whirled through the great ballroom, glittering in the gleam of candles and moonlight. Yet she had not seen anybody so much as call at Pemberley, not until Aunt Catherine came.

Aunt Catherine was Mama's sister, and so busy sticking her nose into every part of her own parish that the Darcy children rarely saw her. Now, however, she was sticking her nose into Pemberley, pointing out specks of dust and smears of dirt.

“If my poor sister were here, she would not stand for it!” Aunt Catherine averred.

Georgiana looked up at her brother. He was older than she was and had always seemed much, much wiser. “But Mama is here – isn’t she?”

“I – do not know.” He was dead white, the hand clasped around Georgiana's clammy and trembling.
He looked, she thought, as if he did know, and the knowing terrified him. “They must be here. They're here. They are.”

The next day, they were summoned downstairs to see Aunt Catherine. Georgiana thought their aunt would be as angry with them as she seemed to be with the servants, but they had never seen her so gentle. She even embraced them, her strong grip almost painful, and wept when she looked into her nephew’s dark eyes.

“We will take you home, to the South, until we find out what your father wanted done,” she told Georgiana.

“My – father?” said Georgiana dazedly. “Do you mean – do you mean that – ”

For the first time they could remember, Aunt Catherine looked sorry about something. “Has nobody told you?”

“Nobody tells us anything.”

Aunt Catherine turned away, swallowing, then knelt down to look her directly in the face. “Your mother and father are dead. It was – an accident. I am - ” her voice had a very peculiar tremor in it - “I am so sorry. The funeral will be on Wednesday.”

More relatives came in the next few days, and said mostly the same thing. Georgiana did not care.

“Papa isn’t dead,” she told her brother. “He can’t be, not Papa. Not Mama. Somebody made a mistake. They mistook somebody for them, some cousins, or – or – ”

“Georgiana - ”

“He's not dead. You know it too, don't you?”

A parlourmaid rescued him. “Sir,” she said, with a lower bow than either of them had ever before received, “Lady Lisle wishes to see you in the blue parlour.”

He gratefully obeyed, following the maid downstairs. In the parlour, Aunt Catherine was staring at the fire, her posture stiff and erect, while her companion slumped a little, staring out the window.

Lady Lisle – formerly Miss Darcy, Papa’s only sister and their favourite aunt – whirled to look at him. She was nothing like Aunt Catherine – tall and stout, with Papa's quiet smile and kind eyes. If she had ever raised her voice to anyone, it must have been long before either of the children were born.

“Catherine told me that you – that you know what happened,” she said, her voice shaking. “I cannot - I cannot say anything that will make it better, darling, but I hope you know that – if there is anything – you need only write to me or your uncle. There is nothing we will not do for you.”

“Thank you,” said he, glancing away from her tear-streaked face. Aunt Catherine, who had never liked her, gave an audible sniff.

“Before they died,” she said, turning to face him, “your parents expressed . . . concern for your sister.”

Lady Lisle swallowed. “She is very young, and has always been so – highly-strung. Your parents wished us to ask – well. You will look after her?”
For the first time, he felt tears sting his eyes.

“Of course, Aunt Georgiana,” said Edward.

End Notes

In case it isn't clear, little Georgiana is Darcy and Elizabeth's daughter; her older brother, Edward, is their son; Aunt Catherine is Kitty Bennet; Lady Lisle is canon Georgiana; Darcy and Elizabeth are tragically dead. I have no soul.

In the interests of full disclosure, I did take some liberties with historical accuracy. As Kitty and Georgiana are both married, Edward and bb!Georgiana wouldn't use their first names - Kitty should be their aunt Stanley, and Georgiana their aunt Lisle. It wouldn't have worked that way though, so poetic license!

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