i have loved you for a thousand years (i'll love you for a thousand more)

by BookPirate

Summary

A collection of drabbles from my tumblr that are all about Pride and Prejudice. I'll update this as I write them but they're all disconnected unless I note otherwise. They're pretty much all going to be modern aus because I don't trust myself enough to try and write in the Regency style.

Notes

If you don't want to follow this for updates my tumblr is book-pirate. I'm basically shitposting trash, but I also reblog a lot of fandom stuff on top of my fics so idk check it out if you want.

Title from that Christina Perry song.
it's a small world after all

Chapter Summary

Will Darcy takes his sister to Disneyland for her fifteenth birthday and she's super excited about it. Darcy's not, because, well, he's twenty-three, and has never ridden a roller coaster before. He's not scared, okay? He's just a little nervous.

Cue Lizzie Bennet to the rescue.

Chapter Notes

Based off the tumblr prompt: “this is my first time on a roller coaster and you’re sitting next to me and i don’t know you but i’m fuCKING SCARED CAN I HOLD YOUR HAND PLEASE” au

Title from the annoying Disney ride I have a huge soft spot for.

It is a truth universally acknowledged that Will Darcy will do basically anything for his younger sister Georgie. Not only is he eight years her senior, but he’s also her legal guardian, and pretty painfully shy. Part of him feels guilty because he knows it can’t be easy having your brother raise you because both of your parents died when you were really young but he’s trying, he really is. It doesn’t help that he also has crippling social anxiety, but he’s working on it.

It’s Charles’ idea to go to Disneyland for Georgie’s 15th birthday, which he is forever thankful for because when he mentions it to her her smile is so bright it could probably light up a city. Unfortunately she doesn’t have really any friends so he has to go with her. It wouldn’t be too bad if he could just stand around and eat, and maybe get some work done on his phone, while she goes on the rides, but of course she doesn’t want to go alone, so of course Darcy’s faced with having to go on every roller coaster they can get on in a day. It’s intimidating, mostly because he’s never been on a roller coaster before.

He knows it sounds ridiculous when you really think about it. He’s 23 and never been on a roller coaster. If he’s being honest he’s a little ashamed, but at the same time, his youth was spent with hard studies and being groomed to take over the family business, so his idea of fun was just being able to spend a day or two without having to learn something. He loved his parents, he still does, but they didn’t really give him a childhood, and that’s something he’s trying to make sure Georgie gets.

“Come on, Will, please,” she’s currently begging. “I need to go on the Big Thunder Mountain Railroad, everyone says it’s the best and so we have to do it first while it's still early enough that the park isn’t packed, please.”

He sighs and gives her his hand. “Lead the way.”

She tugs him to the line, which is mercifully short, and before he knows it they’re being seated.
They’re two to a seat in the cars, so he’s glad he’ll get to sit with Georgie, but before he can snag her, they get separated, so he’s sitting behind her with an admittedly pretty woman. She’s chatting with the girl that sits next to Georgie, and gathers they’re siblings, too.

“Now, Kitty, don’t forget, we’re doing Splash Mountain after this. I swore Jane that’s where we’d meet her so I don’t care how badly you want to see the Country Bears.”

The younger girl grumbles in reply, which causes the woman next to him to sigh as she sits back. She catches his eye and gives him a quick smile. “Younger sister, right?”

“Mine is pretty well behaved,” he finds himself responding. He usually refrains from talking to strangers but there’s something about the girl’s green eyes that has him captivated.

“Lucky,” she mutters as she turns to watch the workers do a double check that everyone on the ride is safe. “Kitty threw a fit that we were going to do the Matterhorn first so I volunteered to take her here instead.”

“Who else are you here with?” he asks. Georgie half turns to look at him with wide eyes. He doesn’t blame her, because he’s surprised he’s talking with the woman, too.

She reaches up and ties her curly brown hair up. “Two of our other sisters. It’s a sort of treat for the younger two because they’re relatively well behaved. My youngest sister is grounded until the end of the century so she had to stay home.” She gives him a grin and he feels his heart flutter.

“Who’re you here with?”

“It’s my sister’s fifteenth birthday.” He grips the lap bar as the cars begin to lurch forward.

“You’re a good big brother to take her here, then.” She takes in his pale expression. “Hey, are you okay?”

He nods, swallows the bile he feels rising in his throat. “I’m fine. It’s just,” he exhales shakily as the car starts to gain momentum, “this is my first roller coaster.”

“Ever?” she shouts as they begin to ascend the tracks.

He nods, not trusting himself to talk.

She clutches one of his hands on the lap bar. “Hold on to my hand! It’ll make you feel better, I promise!”

He lets go of the bar to grasp her hand, and she intertwines their fingers. He really can’t believe he’s doing this, but he trusts the woman beside him, even if he doesn’t really know her.

The first drops and turns are hard, and he squeezes his eyes tightly shut at first, squeezes the woman’s hand harder, but he can hear his sister whooping with joy and the woman next to him screaming in delight, so he slowly opens his eyes and finds himself enjoying the ride more than he thought. He’s even smiling by the end of the ride, but he still doesn’t drop her hand. He likes the feel of it in his.

As the pull up slowly back to the start of the ride, the woman gives him a wild smile. “See? That wasn’t so bad, was it?” she asks.

He takes in her windblown hair and pink cheeks. “No, it wasn’t,” he answers truthfully. “Thank you.”

He has to drop her hand as they scramble out of the cars and feels a little bit disappointed. They
meet up with their sisters who are waiting for them outside the ride.

“Wasn’t that fun, Will! Where do you want to go next? I want to see everything! Kitty was telling me that they’re going to Splash Mountain, what do you think?” Georgie talks in a rush.

His heart swells at the sight of his sister being so carefree, to a degree he hasn’t seen in years. “Whatever you want, Georgie.”

“Do you want to come with us?” The girl that must be Kitty asks Georgie. “Mary only wants to do the baby rides, and it would be fun to do the bigger ones with someone.”

“Hey, don’t I count?” the woman asks, with a half-smile.

“We couldn’t possibly infringe on your day like that,” Darcy argues. “You probably have it all planned out.”

She laughs. “Not at all. We’re just winging it. We come to Disneyland every few months since we live close by, so we don’t have any pressing things we want to do. Come on, it’ll be fun.”

“Please, Will?” Georgie asks, eyes wide and mouth pouting.

He sighs, trying to sound long-suffering. “Fine. Lead the way Miss Kitty.”

Kitty giggles in delight and grabs Georgie’s hand running off towards the hill that he knows is Splash Mountain. The woman beside him laughs as they follow at a much slower pace. “Thank you for coming along. Kitty doesn’t have many nice friends.”

“Georgie doesn’t have many friends, period, so you’re really doing me a favor as well,” he says.

“I’m glad, then, that you two are tagging along.” She smiles at him. “And this way you won’t have to go on another roller coaster.”

“I don’t know, I actually quite enjoyed it,” he admits, blushing a bit. He attempts to flirt by saying, “Especially since I had a beautiful woman holding my hand.”

She blushes prettily at that. “I’m happy to be of service. I guess I should introduce myself. Elizabeth.” She holds her hand out to him.

“Will.” She’s got a firm grip, on top of being a great hand holder, and he finds himself even more attracted to her. This should be a good day, he thinks, possibly even the best day he’s had in years.

(Later, he finds out her sister Jane is none other than the Jane Bennet Charles has been dating. Georgie and Kitty become fast friends and exchange numbers, with promises to hang out soon. Darcy also gets Elizabeth’s number, although he’s got much more romantic reasons for wanting it.)

(When he’s got her pressed up against the door of his bedroom a month later, his lips attacking hers as she responds with fervor, he thinks he should probably get a permanent pass to Disneyland for introducing him to the woman of his dreams.)
Darcy is Bingley's man, and now that the wedding is over and the reception is in full swing, all he wants to do is sit and enjoy his drink. Lizzie Bennet has other plans.

Title from 'Shut Up and Dance' by Walk the Moon. (I love that song SO MUCH)

Based on the prompt: “you are the host of the wedding entertainment and when the dancing/DJ segment comes in you KEEP DRAGGING ME OUT ON THE DANCE FLOOR and everytime you saw me sitting back down YOU AGAIN DRAGGED ME OUT why are you doing this to me i want to sit my feet hurt and i feel awkward dancing while you are an amazing dancer leave me to watch EVERYONE DANCE AND DWELL IN LONELINESS And oh why are you bringing me out to slow dance?? oh no- ok fine yes your hands feel nice in mine and i like being in your arms so this is ok” au

“You’re very lucky you’re my best friend,” Darcy hisses at Bingley from where they sit at the head table.

Bingley just laughs, arm loose around his bride, who is talking quietly with one of her younger sisters. Darcy can’t keep them straight, but, honestly, who could? He knows Jane, and the maid of honor, Lizzie (honestly he couldn’t help knowing Lizzie at this point) but the other three are a mystery.

“One, just let go and have a good time,” Bingley says, still grinning like an idiot. “It’s my wedding, man.”

“As if I can forget.” he scoffs, but he leaves Bingley alone after that, nursing his scotch. He is glad that his best friend has married Jane Bennet, if he’s being honest, however. She’s nice and gentle, quiet, honest, and intelligent, exactly what his friend needs after years of being chased after just for his money.

However, this is the first time he has met the Bennet family in its entirety, and all he can think is holy shit. His family is pretty fucked up, he’ll admit, but the Bennets are just batshit insane. The father does absolutely nothing to reprimand his youngest daughters, who are definitely taking advantage of the open bar, and definitely underage. The middle one seems to be going through some sort of goth phase, and Lizzie, well, Darcy has a huge issue with Lizzie right now. She’s smart, funny, and just overall great, except for when she’s being a huge pain in his ass, like now.

“Are you sitting down again, Darce?” She’s panting as she walks up to him. “Come on, you have to dance!”

Darcy grumbles the whole way there, knowing from previous experience she will bug him until he snaps if he doesn’t comply and that would make Bingley sad, and, well, it is his wedding after all.

This is the third time she’s done it, and honestly he’s not entirely sure why she keeps bothering to drag him out to the dance floor. It’s not for lack of dance partners; when he saw her earlier she
was perfectly happy dancing with a group of her friends, no male in sight, but every time she sees him sitting down, she comes over.

He keeps sitting down partly because his feet hurt, and he wants his drink, but also because Caroline Bingley will not take no for an answer, and she keeps trying to palm him through his trousers. There is only so much he can put up with, and if she tries again he will punch her, regardless of the fact that she’s Bingley’s sister.

Lizzie shimmies next to him as he awkwardly tries to dance, cursing his tall and lanky frame, all elbows and knees, while she moves around like she was born to dance. She’s all soft curves and creamy skin, bright eyes and a smile that would put the sun to shame. It also helps that she doesn’t have a giant stick up her ass, his cousin Rich would say if he were here. He scowls at the thought.

He sees his opportunity to slip away as she gets lost in the music (again) and closes her eyes (again), so he leaves before Caroline can find him (again). She stays away from him as long as he’s next to her brother, which is rather awkward, considering all he wants to do it be next to Jane, but he figures Bingley owes him this one.

It seems as if he’s just sat down and taken a gulp or two of his scotch again when Lizzie marches up to him, hands on her hips. “Seriously? Don’t be a baby, Darcy. Come and dance.”

“I’m just trying to enjoy my drink, Lizzie, really!” he grumbles. “Can’t you find someone else to dance with?”

“Nope,” she says, popping the ‘p’. She holds her hands out expectantly to him, and he scowls as he takes them in his own.

It isn’t until they’re on the dance floor that he realizes it’s a slow song they’ll be dancing to. He gulps nervously, because, even though he learned how to waltz as a child, it’s been years.

Lizzie must realize this, because, she stands up on her tiptoes to whisper “Relax” into his ear, before bringing one arm to wrap around her waist, and the other to clasp her hand. They then begin dancing in slow circles, closer together than Darcy was taught was acceptable. He can’t bring himself to care, however, because he’s still in shock at having Lizzie Bennet in his arms.

He knows she’s beautiful, has always known it since the moment he looked at her. Yes, Jane is more beautiful in a classic sense, but Lizzie has a vibrancy and joy that radiates from her, a star shining too brightly for Darcy’s dark skies.

She’s soft in his arms, warm, and it sparks something in his soul long forgotten. He’s staring down at her long, curly brown hair when she speaks. “Don’t they look happy?”

He shakes his head a little to clear it, turns them so he can see what she’s talking about, and there are Jane and Bingley, slowly swaying in circles, smiling at one another like there is no-one else in the world.

“Yes,” he says hoarsely, clears his throat, tries again, “Yes, yes they do.”

She hums, continues looking at them even as she continues talking to Darcy. “She’s always been such an angel, you know, the nicest person I’ve ever met. And I’m not just saying that because she’s my sister, it’s the objective truth.” He nods, and she bites her lip, looks up at him. “All I’ve ever wanted is for her to be happy, and I’m glad she met Charlie, because he makes her the happiest I’ve ever seen her. That’s why I wanted to make you dance, because I wanted her to have a perfect day, and I thought it might be happier for her if she had some alone time with the groom, without the best man.” Her eyes are laughing, but not at him, which mollifies him.
“Sorry,” he grumbles.

“It’s okay,” she says brightly. “I noticed the last time that Caroline was getting a little grabby, so I figured I’d rescue you this time.”

He chuckles at that. “Well, thank you very much. I am in your debt,” he says with a bow of his head.

“Ooh, Darcy owes me a favor.” She waggles her eyebrows at him. “I wonder what I should cash it in for.”

“Whatsoever you wish,” he answers, humoring her. He likes it when she smiles. And frowns. Okay, he likes basically anything she does. He likes her, really.

“A car?” she asks, looking up at him innocently. “A nice new Porsche?”

He groans and tips his head back. “If you really want, though I would recommend a Ferrari instead.”

“Hmmm, never mind then. I already have a Porsche, don't need another one,” she jokes.

She’s quiet as they circle around a couple more times. The song is ending soon, so he tries to memorize as much of the moment as he can, before it’s over.

“A date,” she says suddenly. He looks down at her in surprise. “A date with you, I mean, for that favor.” He’s quiet in shock, can’t believe what he’s hearing. Her bright expression dims a little bit. “Or, not. Never mind. I, ah, I’m just going to go. Let's forget this ever happened, okay?”

She moves to get off the dance floor, so he reacts the only way he can at the moment, which is to pull her to him and kiss her, thinking lizziebennetlikessme, lizziebennetLIKESme the entire time. And the her lips part under his and he takes the opportunity to taste her, to breathe her air. He’s trying to soak up as much of her as he can, like she’s his salvation. Maybe she is. God, if Georgiana could hear him now she would laugh at what a sap he is.

Bingley suddenly coughs pointedly next to his ear and Darcy jumps back, reeling still from the kiss. “What?” he snaps at his friend, still clutching Lizzie close. He’s pleased to note she’s as flushed and affected as he is.

“Just thought you might want to save it for when you’re not giving the room a show,” his friend says mildly, as Jane blushes bright pink next to him.

Everything starts to come back to Darcy, and he groans as he realizes everyone is looking at them, Mrs. Bennet like she might weep for joy, and Caroline like she might kill someone.

Lizzie smiles, though. “Thanks for the heads up, Charlie.” She then slips her hand into Darcy’s, smiles up at him. “You want to get out of here?” she asks, shyly.

“Oh God, yes,” he says fervently. She laughs as he pulls her quickly off the dance floor and into the elevators of the hotel, where the entire wedding party has their rooms.

Their lips meet again before the elevator doors close and he’s stripped of everything but his pants and shirt by the time the doors open again on the 14th floor. Everything after that is a haze of laughter and pleasure.

The next morning he wakes up to the sight of Lizzie Bennet curled up against his chest, snoring softly in her sleep. He swears that one day he’ll make it so he can wake up to her every morning.
for the rest of his life.

Two years later he makes that promise a reality.
“Ted Murphy, what on Earth are you giggling at?” Lizzie Bennet said sharply, causing the rest of her eighth grade class to sit up straight and look forward, to where she was standing against the blackboard of her classroom.

“Nothing, ma’am.” Ted tried to hide the small paper under his book, but Lizzie quickly snatched it up.

There were several groans, and she glared at the worst offenders as she unfolded the note in her hands.

“Larcy? Dizzie?” She scanned the note, trying to make sense of it. There were little hearts around the two names, and the words ‘OTP 4EVER’ in the corner of it. She sighed. “Anyone want to explain this?” She brandished the note in front of Ted. “You, Ted? Or what about you, Jackie? Don’t think I don’t see you smirking. Was this you?”

Jackie Moss quickly sobered up from her seat behind Ted. “No, ma’am.”

“Well, it’s your handwriting. Or, at least, part,” Lizzie noted. There were some perks to being a middle school English teacher, and becoming bizarrely good at identifying handwriting was one. “I can identify two other people from this. Robbie Daniels and Mattie Cartwright. I’ll see you four after class.”

More groans sounded, but Lizzie ignored them and continued on with her scheduled lesson. She wasn’t honestly that curious about the note, especially since she recognized the acronym OTP from Lydia and Kitty’s hard to decipher text messages. ‘One True Pairing’, or something along those lines. She wished she could get her eighth graders as excited about English as they were about relationships, but Elizabeth wasn’t so old she didn’t remember middle school herself, and, well, it sucked.

Still, she thought, as she waited for her classroom to clear, she hoped she wasn’t as bad as her eighth grade English teacher. Mrs. Burbank was the worst.

“So, care to explain this?” She held up the note as the four troublemakers crowded her desk. No one met her eyes. “So I suppose I should be writing detention slips up instead?”

The students seemed to be having some non-verbal communication before Mattie finally snapped. “It’s just, well, it’s embarrassing, Ms. Bennet, to tell you.”

Lizzie raised an eyebrow. “More embarrassing than not being able to spell the word dizzy properly, Matti?”

“It’s a ship name,” Ted blurted out, before clasping his hands over his mouth, eyes wide. Robbie, who was next to him, stamped on his foot.
“Good going, loser,” he grumbled.

“Hey,” Lizzie snapped, “I don’t want to hear that kind of talk, understand? Now, Ted, what’s a ship name?”

“A ship name is the name of two people combined that you want to be in a relationship,” Jackie explained. When everyone else glared at her, she shrugged and stood up straighter. “What? I don’t want detention tonight, and if she keeps us any later we won’t have time to finish lunch.”

“Like Brangelina?” Lizzie asked.

“Yes!” Jackie said. “Exactly like that.”

Lizzie considered the note again. “So, why is this ‘ship’ so important that you need to be talking about it and passing notes in the middle of my class?”

Mattie sighed. “This is the embarrassing part,” she said.

“Why’s it embarrassing?” Lizzie asked, half-amused. This sounded like exactly the thing Lydia and Kitty would be getting in trouble for.

“Because you’re part of the ship,” Mattie admitted, looking down at her desk with flushed cheeks.

Lizzie opened up her mouth, only to snap it shut. She examined the note again. She remembered how Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie’s names had been combined, so it wasn’t long before she was exclaiming, “I’m in a ship with Darcy?” She then clamped her mouth shut, swallowing the variety of curses she wanted to spit out, like ‘fucking hell’ and ‘what the actual fuck’. She took a deep breath. “Who else?”

“Who else what?” Robbie asked sullenly.

“Who else thinks we’d be good in a relationship?” she snapped. “From what I know of this ‘ship’ business, unless it’s popular it doesn’t really need its own name. Now, who else?”

They were quiet before Ted blurted out, “The entire eighth grade class! Honestly.” There were more glares but he threw his hands up. “Do you think they can give the entire eighth grade detention? And, anyways, that’s the truth. Everyone ships you two.”

Lizzie was aware she looked rather like a fish in that moment, because she was opening and shutting her mouth quite more than a few times. Eventually she said, in a rather strangled voice, “Okay, out. I don’t want to hear or see anymore of this, okay? Darcy and I are colleagues, and nothing more.”

There were several eye rolls, but the four students left her room quietly. She was staring at the back wall of her classroom, unaware of how much time passed, when Charlotte Lucas found her.

“Lizzie? You missed lunch, and I -” She paused in the doorway before rushing to Lizzie’s desk. “Oh, God, are you okay? What’s the matter?”

That snapped Lizzie out of it long enough for her to put her hand to her forehead. She thanked God she had an entire free period to try and explain this to her best friend. “Char, do you know what shipping is?”

Later that day, when Charlotte and Lizzie were sitting in her classroom, eating Chinese takeout
and grading tests together, Charlotte brought the topic up again. “You know, Lizzie, I can kind of see where they’re coming from.”

“Who?” she asked absently, as she was trying to decide if the synopsis of *the Lion King* was an acceptable answer to the question ‘What is the plot of Hamlet?’.

“You know, your students. You and Darcy do have some sort of chemistry, and, honestly, Lizzie, you could do worse,” Charlotte said between bites of chow main.

Lizzie looked up at her friend, trying to process the words that she had just heard. “I’m sorry, did you just say I could do worse than *William Darcy*? Please tell me I didn’t just hear that.”

“It’s true,” Charlotte said defensively. “He’s smart, good-looking, comes from money -”

“Which we only know because Caroline’s mentioned it, several times -” Lizzie interjected.

“Regardless. I bet you if you asked him out for coffee he wouldn’t say no.” Charlotte shrugged.

“Did you forget the part where he said he thought English was a throwaway subject? And that I was a barely competent teacher? Because I feel like those would be two very strong incentives to say no to the crazy English teacher,” Lizzie shot at her friend. “Honestly, it’s like our entire history has been wiped from your memory.”

“Mark my words, Lizzie Bennet,” Charlotte waved her chopsticks in the air, “you and William Darcy would be perfect together. You just have to see it.”

“Christ, it’s like you teach Divination instead of History,” Lizzie snorted. Charlotte stuck out her tongue, and they went back to grading.

Now that Lizzie knew of this ‘shipping’ business, as she called it in her head, it was impossible for it to not color her interactions with the middle school Math teacher. Now, whenever they passed in the hallways, she would blush as she curtly responded to his greeting, and when they had to talk further than that, she found it hard to look him in the eye. It got so bad, in fact, that as he was questioning as to why she needed the overhead projector for the next day, he finally snapped, “Good heavens, what is it?”

She did look him in the face then. “What?” she asked, eyes wide.

Darcy scowled at her, and Lizzie was once more reminded of just how attractive he was, causing her to blush again. “You’re acting very strange,” he finally noted.

There was tittering around her, which is finally what snapped her out of her daze. “All right, you guys, get back to class. Darcy, I’m fine, I just think there’s a better use of my time than to argue in the middle of the hallway about the overhead projector, of all things! If you want it that badly, take it,” she spit out before she turned on her heel and walked away. She cursed herself for blushing furiously, and for catching Ted Murphy’s eye. “Do you want detention, Ted? I said get to class.”

As he scrambled away, she sighed, knowing she had just given her students more fodder for their ridiculous daydreams. Had she been this invested in her teachers’ love-lives as an eighth grader? God, she hoped not.
A week later, and a week before the spring semester ended, Darcy barged into her classroom. She was so startled, she dropped the chalk she was holding as she was trying to explain iambic pentameter to her students. He had rolled his sleeves up so his forearms were showing, and she swallowed nervously. “Yes?” Her voice cracked, so she winced and tried again. “I mean, yes?”

“I need to borrow some chalk. Mr. Stepto has used all of mine up,” he said, scanning her notes on the blackboard. She moved wordlessly to grab some fresh pieces, trying very hard to not be visibly affected. It was a vain cause, because then Darcy decided to say, “So, you’ve reached sonnets, have you? Do you have time to reach the more modern aspects of English literature? We’re very close to graduation.”

“For someone who thinks English is a throwaway subject you’re showing a remarkable amount of interest in it right now,” she snapped, thrusting the pieces of chalk at him. He froze, and she heard the collective gasp of her class. Mentally berating herself for snapping, she said, “I apologize, Mr. Darcy. It’s been a long day. Here’s the chalk.”

He wordlessly left the room, and her students began whispering furiously as he disappeared. Once the door had shut behind him, Lizzie turned to the class. “Back to the subject! And I swear if you start talking about ‘shipping’ I will give everyone in this room detention, am I clear?”

A grousing chorus of “yes, ma’am” had the class back on track, but she was still mentally shaken for the rest of the period.

Thankfully, it was her last class of the day, and she was looking forward to unwinding in her bathtub with a large glass of chardonnay. She was just wiping off her board before leaving, when a throat clearing broke her quiet concentration.

“Hang on, Char, let me just finish this up,” she said as she finished wiping it down. “There, all,” she started to say as she turned around, only to see Darcy in the doorway instead of her friend, “done. Mr. Darcy, I didn’t realize -”

“I take it you overheard me at the staff meeting last year,” he said quietly.

She blushed. “Yes.”

“I didn’t,” he cleared his throat again, “I didn’t know you had. I apologize.”

“It’s fine,” Lizzie said as she turned to her desk. “You don’t have to apologize. I know that the liberal arts aren’t a big deal anymore and -”

“No, Lizzie,” he replied as he shook his head. He stepped from the doorway and shut the door. “I apologize because I was flustered and taken by surprise by a very intelligent, very,” he cleared his throat, “beautiful English teacher, and Bingley’s question had taken me off guard. I’ve always had the utmost respect for your subject, and you as a person.”

She felt the blush migrate from her cheeks to the rest of her body. “Oh.”

“I don’t,” he sighed as he rubbed the back of his neck, “I’m not good with words, but I would like to try and make up the rudeness I’ve shown to you. Would you like to go to dinner with me this Friday?”

She opened her mouth, only to snap it shut. “Um.”

He looked a little crestfallen, and turned to go. “Ah, I see. Don’t worry, I won’t bother you in the future.”
“Wait.” She thought about his eyes, and how eager they were whenever he interacted with her, how hopeful he had seemed for a moment just now. “I would like that, Darcy, very much.”

He smiled then, and it was like the sun. “Excellent.”

Three dates later, they were curled up in his bed, falling asleep entwined together. “Hey, Will?” Lizzie asked sleepily.

“Hmm? What?” he murmured into her hair.

“Does the term ‘shipping’ mean anything to you?” She hid her face against his chest. She had been putting off this conversation, but she knew the kids at school were going to have a field day when they got back from break to find their OTP more affectionate with each other.

“I assume you mean in more than the sense of sending something from one place to another?” He pressed his lips to her hair before pulling back to look her in the eyes. He smiled as he kissed the tip of her nose. “Yes, Lizzie, I’m aware our students ‘ship’ us.”

“For how long?” she demanded, twisting up to look at him. “I’ve only known for three weeks.”

He looked like he was trying very hard to stop smiling. “I believe I may have risen to your defense in my class once, early in the year, when Grant Stepto suggested English wasn’t important. I believe Ted Murphy was overcome with what he called ‘feels’. I put two and two together when I saw Julia Blake doodling ‘Dizzie’ in her margins. I have a younger sister, you know.”

She bit back her own smile. “So, a month?”

He held up two fingers. “Two.”

“William Darcy!” she laughed and moved so she was lying on his chest. “I had to forcibly pull it out of Ted and his cohorts. Even with three younger sisters, I had no idea.”

“I would have told you sooner if I knew you would look on it favorably, but I was convinced you hated me.” His eyes grew softer as he ran his hands through her hair. “If only I knew then it was because you thought I hated you.”

“It’s okay, because here we are,” she said, smiling brightly, “in a comfortable bed, in a very comfortable position,” she trailed off, moving her hips against his suggestively.

He groaned and shifted so he was pinning her to the bed. “Maybe I should get our students a better graduation gift than we have planned.”

She trailed her fingers down his chest. “I think we should probably stop talking about our students now, don’t you?”

“Oh, God, yes,” he said, before leaning in to kiss her.

Later, at graduation, where she and Darcy were seated next to each other (because of their names’ alphabetical location), she discreetly took his hand, intertwining their fingers. She saw his smirk, and suppressed her own. They had talked about what they would do during the ceremony over breakfast that morning, and decided some discreet payback was the best option.
She counted down from ten, and, just as she hit one, saw the moment Robbie Daniels realized they were holding hands. He nudged the person sitting beside him, as did they, as did they, and soon the whole lot of them looked like they were struggling to remain quiet.

When it was time for them to throw their graduation caps in the air, she saw Ted Murphy pull in Jackie Moss for a hug, jumping up and down screaming. She looked up at Darcy, and saw him looking at them, too, an expression of amusement and exasperation that she was sure she had mirrored on her own face moments before.

He noticed her looking, and kissed her hand. She grinned, and if anything, the screams grew louder. “I’ll never understand it,” he said, shaking his head, “but I’m happy they shipped us.”

“Bizarrely, I am too,” she responded with a grin.

(A year later she proposed to him by having a cake iced with the writing ‘DIZZIE OTP 4EVER Y/N’

He said yes as soon as he stopped laughing, and then they posted the picture to tumblr, where she knew their students would see it.)

(They did, and a week later Lydia asked why people were asking her if she was related to Lizzie Bennet of Dizzie, but that’s different story for another time.)
“Seriously, Jane, I’m fine,” Lizzie protests as she is dragged to the car by her older sister.

“Seriously, Lizzie, no, you’re not,” Jane replies, opening the door and pushing her sister in gently, because as annoyed as Jane might be, she’s never anything but gentle. Lizzie hates it sometimes.

“It’s just a cold, it’ll pass,” she insists.

Jane just starts the car and begins driving to the hospital. “You have a fever of 102, you have a terrible stomachache, and you puke every time you try to eat. Something is wrong.”

Lizzie crosses her arms. “Ten bucks says you’re wrong.”

Jane, however, is right, and soon Lizzie learns that she could’ve died of appendicitis if she hadn’t come in sooner. Well, that last part might be an exaggeration, but that’s definitely what she’s telling her mother, just to freak her out.

The surgery itself goes by without a hitch, but there are some complications. The surgeon tries to explain that apparently she’s allergic to the stitches. “It’s very rare, but happens once in a blue moon. You’ll have to stay here until we’re certain there are no more complications.”

“That doesn’t sound like a real thing,” Lizzie slurs, still high off the anesthesia. “You’re making this up. Who are you even?”

He looks at her amusedly. “Your surgeon.”

She scoffs. “Yeah, okay, buddy. That’s what they all say.”

Jane buries her face in her hands.

Two days later, the surgeon comes in again. “Ms. Bennet?”

But Lizzie has successfully amassed enough pillows that she’s managed to make a fort around her upper torso. It might be a little lopsided, because damn, those pain meds are strong, but it’s pretty great. “Fuck off.”

“I really need to take a look at your stitches, Ms. Bennet.” The surgeon has that same, amused tone that rubs Lizzie the wrong way.

“Fight me,” she slurs, tugging on the pillows ineffectually as he carefully takes her fort apart.

He gives her a crooked smile as he examines her stitches. “Maybe later.”

Three days later, Lizzie feels she definitely should’ve left the hospital at least two days earlier, but unfortunately she’s gotten some infection, and now needs to be super medicated, instead of just regular medicated, so she’s basically got to be watched 24/7 until her antibiotics regimen is
The surgeon stops in again. She groans and thumps her head back against her pillows. “Why are you even here?”

“You are my patient,” he remarks, almost laughing. “I do need to make sure you’re not dying.”

She just groans again. “Fight me, asshole,” she snaps, but then she starts hacking up a lung, because her life sucks.

He looks like he’s trying really hard to not laugh, and is grinning widely at her. Once she’s calmed down, he says, “I’d rather not fight you, because I’m fairly sure you’d win.”

“Damn straight,” she says, and then falls asleep, because coughing is exhausting.

Finally, a week later, she’s ready to be released. She hasn’t seen the surgeon again, but she figures that’s because she actually healed up from the surgery pretty well, and that is was just everything else that kicked her ass. She hates hospitals.

She wakes up the day of her discharge at one in the afternoon, because, well, she’s enjoying the time off from work, honestly. When she does wake, however, there’s a coffee next to her, that’s still pretty warm, from Starbucks. She frowns, because Jane is supposed to stop by at four to get her, and Charlotte’s still out of the country, and Jane never told their family because Lizzie swore her to secrecy, so she has no idea why she has coffee from Starbucks.

She picks up the cup and sips at it, sighing in delight when she tastes the mocha. Whoever got this is a saint, and she wants to thank them, so she examines the cup closely.

Sure enough, on the side, there’s written in delicate handwriting ‘Fight me? - Dr. Darcy’ with his number printed underneath. She laughs, delighted. Maybe hospitals aren’t so bad, after all.
Fitzwilliam Darcy has been working for 20 hours nonstop. Not only has there been a crisis within his own company (the Japanese branch had a small fire break out on the factory floor), but now his aunt’s company is in pandemonium is well.

He loosens his tie as he shouts across the Rosings trading floor, which has erupted into pandemonium, “Calm down, everyone, we’ll get this under control!”

“These stocks are worthless!” his aunt cries. “What on Earth am I supposed to do? What will Anne do? Oh, we’ll be destitute and poor!”

Darcy rubs his temples. “I’m taking care of it! I’ll go and speak Richard right now, just, stay here and don’t touch your computer!” he orders before storming to the elevator. “And for heaven’s sake, calm your employees down! It’s not a bloody zoo!”

He can feel his heart thumping in his head, and his chest tighten. The lack of sleep and caffeine crash on top of his stress is making him woozy. He braces himself on the wall next to the doors, so when they finally open he can just slip in and brace himself on the elevator wall without any hassle.

Richard’s floor is four floors up, so when the elevator slows after only one floor he curses. Then, as if his day can’t get any worse, the doors open to Elizabeth Bennet. He curses himself silently for forgetting she was spending the week at Rosings, visiting her friend Charlotte.

He’s been infatuated with her since he met her, but she seems to have never cared about him. He doesn’t even know if he’s ever spoken in her presence, even though his best friend is dating her sister.

“What an awful day, isn’t it?” Elizabeth says cheerily. “Charlotte wants me to fetch Richard, she’s sure it’s something to do with the main server.”

Darcy, who has started seeing double, only grunts, feeling relieved once the elevator starts moving again.

“Are you okay?” she asks. “You’re awfully pale.”

He opens his mouth to make some sort of reply, but finds himself slumping forward instead. The
last thing he sees before he blacks out is Elizabeth’s worried face, and thinks to himself, “Well, this isn’t such a bad way to go.”

The next thing he knows is someone is tapping his face very lightly. “Darcy, Darcy!” someone says. “Wake up.”

“You’re not slapping him hard enough, Lizzie. Here.”

Someone slaps him hard across the face, causing him to jump up and accidentally push Elizabeth away from where she was leaning over him. Richard is looking at him with a wide grin. “What the bloody hell, Richard?”

“Thought you would want to hear the good news. While you were sleeping Ms. Lucas located the computer issue. Everything has calmed down, so maybe you should head home and get some rest.” He winks at him. “Maybe Elizabeth can help you get back to Pemberley?”

“Oh, of course!” Elizabeth agrees. “Richard told me that you haven’t slept in almost 24 hours. You have to take better care of yourself.”

He looks at her, wide eyed. “My apologies.”

“Well, I best be getting back,” Richard says with a smile. “I’ll see you two tomorrow.”

Elizabeth helps Darcy up, and leads him back to the elevators. She loops his arm around her shoulders for support, which he doesn’t need but he’ll definitely take. He’s thanking every lucky star that has blessed him with this moment.

It’s a quiet elevator ride, but once they get to the employee parking lot in the basement, she looks up at him. “I can’t believe you fainted… straight into my arms. You know, if you wanted my attention you didn’t have to go to such extremes.”

He cracks a smile. “Once again, I apologize. I’m sorry if I frightened you.”

“Think nothing of it,” she pats his chest sympathetically, “but, next time, perhaps you’ll just ask me for a cup of coffee?”

“I’ll keep that in mind.” He wonders if his face can permanently crack open from how wide his grin is.

“Although I suppose for a first date, I could count getting takeout and making sure you don’t faint again as one. What do you think?” She’s not looking at him, blushing furiously.

He presses a kiss to her head, nuzzles a little when he feels her body relax with relief. “I think that sounds wonderful.”
Elizabeth Bennet has been the head chef at Longbourn for five years, a restaurant originally opened by her father. Known for its traditional American fare, it wasn’t until Elizabeth took over that it became famous, and earned it two Michelin stars. Everything should’ve been looking up for her, but unfortunately she spends most of her days with a perpetual frown on her face, courtesy of one Fitzwilliam Darcy.

“Just because he was trained at Le Cordon Bleu doesn’t give him the right to tell the press I’m ‘a glorified burger flipper’,” Elizabeth grumbles into the phone as she wanders the aisles of the grocery store she’s in.

Jane yawns over the line. “You shouldn’t let him get under your skin like that, sweetie. You know you’re the best chef in the world.”

Elizabeth smiles. “That is just objectively not true, but thanks, Jane. How are you doing?”

“Tired. I think I’ll head to bed now.” She yawns again. “Speaking of which, what are you still doing up? At least I had an excuse.”

“Doing volunteer work at a 24-hour veterinary clinic is a good enough excuse I guess,” Elizabeth teases. “I couldn’t sleep. I’m looking for a snack to help me get to bed.”

“Well, don’t stay up too much later. Nothing good ever happens after two in the morning, and it’s already three.”


“Love you, too.” The line clicks and Elizabeth slips her phone into her pocket.

She wanders into the noodle aisle, and looks for something easy to whip up so she won’t have to spend more than 15 minutes preparing her middle-of-the-night snack. The run to the grocery store was supposed to be in-and-out, but she spies someone at the end of the aisle, and recognizes that’s not going to happen.

“Well, well,” she says with a smirk, “how the mighty have fallen.”

Darcy freezes, before turning around slowly. “Ms. Bennet.”

She folds her arms, raises an eyebrow at him. “Forgive me, I didn’t realize the great chef of Pemberley used ramen in his recipes.”

He scowls at her. “I’m not in the mood to argue with you, Ms. Bennet. Tease me if you must, but I’m buying this ramen.”
She looks closely at his face, notices the bags under his eyes and the pale tone of his skin. “Are you okay, Darcy? You don’t look so well.”

He stiffens. “Thank you for your concern, but I’m fine.”

She chews on her bottom lip, and debates about what to do. He watches her carefully, and she decides to take pity on him. She reaches past him and grabs a handful of the instant ramen on the shelf. “Well, I don’t know about you, but I don’t feel like making much other than ramen, especially at three in the morning.”

He seems to relax a little. “I understand completely.”

“I also know that I wouldn’t mind some company while I make it,” she offers, extending an olive branch, “even if it’s with someone who considers me a mediocre chef.”

He sighs, runs his hand through his hair. “I really am truly sorry. I don’t suppose you would believe me if I said I was misquoted.”

“Probably not,” she agrees.

The muscles in his jaw work. “Ms. Bennet,” he pauses, “Elizabeth. I think you’re one of the best chefs I’ve ever had the pleasure of meeting. The fact that you specialize in comfort food does not make you any less of a chef.”

She bites back a smile. “Well, in that case,” she takes his basket from him, “why don’t you come over, and we’ll try and see if turn this ramen into something almost edible.”

“Are you sure?” He eyes her skeptically. “I wouldn’t expect you to forgive me this quickly.”

“I don’t think I said anything about forgiveness quite yet,” she says, considering him, “but we should start somewhere, and I think now’s as good a place as any.”

A small smile graces his face, the first one Elizabeth thinks she’s ever seen on his face. “I agree.” He offers her his arm. “Shall we?”

She smiles, taking his arm. “We shall.”
Chapter Summary

Prompt: “i got you for secret santa so i got you this really expensive but sentimental gift that you’ve always wanted, hoping you’ll never find out it’s from me - and that i’ve been in love with you 1234567 years”

Title from 'Merry Christmas Baby' by Otis Redding

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes

“Fuck you, Richard,” Darcy mutters under his breath as he scribbles his name on a piece of paper. Richard just beams and clasps his hands together. “Alright, now that every has written down their name, please put it in the hat that’s going around now!” The santa hat makes its way around the twenty or so employees gathered, and Darcy stuffs his name in with particular force. He curses the day he let his cousin take over Human Resources. “Okay, now pick a new name as the hat goes around again! If you get your own name, put it back and choose another, or you’re fired!” Richard says jokingly. The employees laugh with him, like they’ve never laughed with Darcy.

He’s just in the middle of imagining permanently gluing Richard’s lips together when the hat comes to him. He draws out a slip of paper and begrudgingly unfurls it. In neat, plain script it says ‘Elizabeth Bennet’. His eyes flit involuntarily over to where she’s standing, smiling and talking with Georgie, who’s interning, before going over to Richard. Richard is smirking at him, and Darcy doesn’t know whether to kill him or kiss him.

Later, when everyone has gone back to whatever it is they’re supposed to be doing, he stalks to Richard’s office and slams the door behind him. “What did you do?”

His cousin doesn’t even look up from his laptop. “I’m fairly certain I just gave you an excuse to talk to Elizabeth, so you’re welcome, you ingrate.”

“She doesn’t even work here!”

Richard tsks. “She’s visiting us in a professional capacity as a favor to her uncle. She should be included, and you should stop avoiding her.”

Darcy pinches the bridge of his nose. “Isn’t this supposed to be anonymous? It’s called ‘Secret Santa’, for Christ’s sake.”

Richard sighs and snaps his computer shut. “Look, we both know you’re going to get her something extremely personal, and she’ll want to know her Santa was, and eventually she’s going to guess it’s you, after which you two will have a conversation, where she will presumably thank you, and then ta-da! You will have a perfect opportunity to ask her out.” He stands up and loosens
A muscle jumps in Darcy’s jaw. “This whole plan could’ve been foiled if I had received another name, you realize.”

His cousin hums thoughtfully. “You would be right, except I paid Mrs. Reynolds a hundred dollars to make sure the name closest to the top would be hers, although at this point I’m certain she would’ve done it for free. She’s seen your pining looks.”

Darcy ignores this. “And what if I get her something unremarkable, like a stationary set?”

Richard gives him a look that says he’s thoroughly unimpressed. “I’m not going to dignify that with a response.”

There’s a beat of silence when Darcy realizes he has been bested. “I hate you, cousin.”

“I’ll make sure to mention that you weren’t onboard with this plan during my speech at your wedding,” Richard says cheerfully as he claps Darcy on the back. “Now, I believe it’s your turn to pay for dinner.”

“Just run over everything in your head that you know about her,” Georgie offers, as advice, when he asks for some.

He groans and drops his head on to his desk. “I don’t see how that’ll help,” he sighs, “not to mention this is probably all a waste of effort, anyway. She loathes me.”

Georgie pats him on the back from where she’s sitting on the corner of his desk. “I assure you she doesn’t. No one as nice and intelligent as she is could ever hate you. You’ve just had some… misunderstandings.”

He barks out a laugh and sits back in his chair. “Let’s see, I’ve managed to insult her appearance, her family, her behavior, her family’s behavior, her house, her friends.” He glances over at his sister. “Do I need to go on?”

She winces. “You’re just going to need to buy her a very nice gift.”

“There is no gift nice enough.”

“You told Charlie about Jane, right?” Georgie asks, biting her lip. “That’s why they’re back together now, after all. That’s a good place to start.”

“Yes, I’m going to give her a gift with a card that says, ‘I’m sorry I’m an ass, but I told Charles he was being an idiot which is why he’s back with your favorite sister now, so will you reconsider going out with me?’”

She sighs. “Well, at least you have some time to think about it. You don’t need to get a gift for another month.”

“Thanks, Georgie.” He drops his head back on to his desk and thinks maybe he’ll just stay like that for the rest of his life.
“You absolutely cannot tell Jane about this, Charles, you have to swear it.”

“Yes, fine, I swear, whatever,” his friend crosses himself with an eye roll, “but haven’t you considered Jane might be of help?”

“Jane is Elizabeth’s favorite sister, and I assume the feeling is mutual. Sisters aren’t very good secret keepers, Charles, I don’t know if you’ve noticed.”

Charles winces. “Good point. But this brings me to another question. Why not have Mrs. Reynolds buy it for you? That’s what you’ve done in the past with these sorts of things, hasn’t it?”

Darcy feels like shaking him. “Mrs. Reynolds is on Richard’s side with this one. You and Georgie are my lone allies, Charles. I am in desperate need of help.”

“It wouldn’t kill you to say please, you know.”

Darcy refrains from rolling his eyes. “Please.”

Charles smiles brightly. “Yes, well, since you asked so nicely. What does she like?”

“Books, nature, dogs, cats, roses, chess, swimming, the ocean, musicals, black and white films, sitcoms -”

“I get the picture!” Charles stops him. “Christ, man, you’ve got it bad, haven’t you?”

“I was willing to admit to you I was wrong, wasn’t I?”

Charles meets his eyes and they regard each other silently for a minute. Darcy never apologized for his role in the break-up, outside of saying he had misjudged things, but he likes to think Charles understood.

Finally, his friend sighs. “I hope for your sake she comes around. She’s certainly able to put you in your place, something you desperately need from time to time, Darce.”

“I know,” he says miserably, “believe me, I know.”

“Let’s go back to the beginning,” Charles says. “She loves books, and has quite a few, correct? So if you risked getting her a book, there would be a large chance she owns it already, or otherwise dislikes it.”

“I think the same goes for any of the things she likes. If she liked it well enough she would just get it for herself. She’s made it very clear to me she doesn’t need to be taken care of.” Darcy walks to his sideboard and pours himself some scotch. “This is hopeless.”

“You give up too easily.” Charles takes Darcy’s glass and sips from it, causing Darcy to scowl and pour himself another. His friend ignores him, however, and contemplates the ceiling of Darcy’s study. “Okay, what if you got her some jewelry?”

“Something tells me she wouldn’t care for emeralds or diamonds from a stranger.”

“I’m not telling you to give her the Hope Diamond, Christ’s sake. What if you got her some book-themed jewelry, or something of that sort? You gave Georgiana a charm bracelet two years ago, didn’t you? What about something like that?”

Gears are clicking in Darcy’s head, and he finally feels like he isn’t drowning anymore. “Charles, you’re brilliant.”
The day of the exchange finally comes around and Darcy spends the entirety of the day trying to remain calm. He slipped Elizabeth’s gift under the tree with the others early in the morning and then bolted to his office, where he remains, alternating between pacing and sitting and staring blankly at his computer. He thought asking her out the first time was hard, but that was nothing compared to this.

Finally, Richard announces it’s time to receive the gifts, so he slowly makes his way to the tree, and tries very hard to stay in the back, away from the spotlight. Which is hard, given his tall frame, but he’s had years of practice, so he likes to think he’s pulling it off relatively well. He’s handed a gift from Mrs. Reynolds that he absentmindedly pockets as he tries to watch Elizabeth open her gift without openly staring. His nerves become too much, however, and just as she’s ripped the paper off, he walks quickly to the elevators, and slips inside before he can see anything else happen.

He mutters a string of swears as he enters the employee parking lot and walks towards his car. He can just sell his shares of Pemberley to Richard, and never leave home again. It sounds like a good plan.

“Darcy! Wait!” a voice shouts out across the parking lot.

He freezes and turns slowly, only to see Elizabeth herself hurrying towards him. She’s panting and flushed by the time she reaches him, carrying her heels in one hand and the box containing his gift in the other. “Are you alright?” he asks worriedly.

“You still love me, don’t you?” she asks, cutting him off. “Even after all this time?”

He swallows loudly, and wishes she didn’t have a quite so good poker face. Still, he sees no point in lying. “Yes, yes, I do. I’m sorry if that makes you uncomfortable. I can go to -”

She cuts him off again, but this time but throwing her arms around his neck and surging up to kiss him. He stumbles backwards, but manages to regain his balance, and wraps his arms around her waist, kissing her as if he’ll get another chance. For all he knows, he won’t, so he makes sure he is warm and passionate, matching her intensity with all the skill he has, so she won’t think him a terrible kisser. He hasn’t kissed many people, however, and is afraid it shows.

Finally, they have to separate for air, but she doesn’t step away from his embrace. Instead, she presses her forehead to his neck and laughs. He stiffens a little. “What’s so funny?”
“You just ran out of the offices,” she says, smiling up at him brightly. “You didn’t even open your own gift.”

His eyebrows raise. “It was from you?”

She steps a little bit away from him, still smiling. “Open it.”

He hurriedly pulls it from his pocket and fumbles a bit with the wrapping before finally ripping it open. It’s a box, much like the one Elizabeth’s necklace came in, and he fumbles with that, too, until she gently takes the box away from him, and quietly opens it for him. His eyes widen as they take in the sight of his father’s old pocket watch, looking like it’s brand new. He recognizes the coat of arms, however, and the Darcy family motto, ‘Fortis In Arduis’. He quickly opens it, and finds it ticking with precision, a picture of his family, father, mother, sister, and himself, on the inside. “How did…” He can’t find the words to finish his sentence.

“Georgie helped me,” she admits. “I was helping her go through some of your old things in the attic, and it rolled out of a box. I didn’t want you to know it was from me because I didn’t know if you would approve of me doing something so personal but—”

This time it’s him that cuts her off, and presses his lips to hers. She tries to leverage herself up to meet his lips better, so he pushes her against the nearest car to try and leverage her up. Unfortunately, this sets off the car alarm, and startles them both out of their kiss.

Elizabeth bursts out laughing, as does Darcy. He slips his watch into his pocket, grabs her free hand, and pulls her along after him, stopping only to pick up her shoes. He leads her to his car, and presses her up against it once again. Before he captures her lips, however, he brushes her hair out of her face. “Elizabeth, I want, well…”

“Yes,” she cuts him off, “whatever it is, yes.”

He laughs a little breathlessly, and presses his lips to hers briefly before pulling back again, just because he can now. “I love you, and I want to be with you, for as long as you’ll have me. Does that sound agreeable?”

“I believe I already answered your question, Mr. Darcy,” she teases, before looking up at him seriously. “I love you, too, Fitzwilliam, just so you know.”

It’s the first time she’s used his first name, and it makes his heart swell with joy. “Do you want to get out of here?”

She smiles. “I thought you’d never ask.”

One year later, he replaces his old family portrait in the watch with a picture of them on their wedding day, with their wedding party. He figures his parents would be okay with the change.

Chapter End Notes

‘Fortis In Arduis’ means ‘Brave in Difficulties’ just so you know!
Tumblr is here.
love me (if that's what you wanna do)

Chapter Notes

Prompt: “My bullshit curse can only be broken by True Love’s Kiss so I kind of just swooped in and kissed you, but it didn’t work?? haha wow okay this is awful in so many more ways than I’d thought it would be” au

Title from ‘Love Me’ by the 1975

“There are worse things to be than pink, Darcy,” Charles tries to console him as he pats him on the shoulder.

Darcy scowls at Charles as he applies as much foundation and cover-up as he can. Hopefully he can replace Georgiana’s supplies before she notices, but he thinks being neon pink is worse than having a few zits. “Shut up, Charles. Can you imagine anyone taking me seriously like this? I have a company to run, for fuck’s sake.”

“And you can’t fix it?”

Darcy sighs, growing more frustrated by the minute. The pink keeps bleeding through the makeup, and he has a meeting in two hours. “If I could fix it, don’t you think I would’ve already? Until I know why I’m pink, I can’t fix it, and I don’t bloody well know why.”

“Look, I’m just trying to help, mate.” Charles holds his hands up in surrender. “Do you want me to phone the office and let them know you won’t be in today?”

“No, I’ve spent months trying to get this contract, and I’ll be damned if I let it slip through my fingers.”

“Well, do you want me to give Jane a call? Maybe she knows something we don’t about these sorts of things.”

Darcy narrows his eyes at his friend. “Just because I’m a cleric doesn’t mean I don’t also know witch magic, Charles.”

“But don’t you think an actual witch might be better at it?” his friend prods.

Darcy scrutinizes his own face in the mirror before throwing the empty tube of makeup in the sink. “Yes, fine, call her. I’ll check the library again.” Before he can leave the bathroom, however, the doorbell rings.

Darcy glares at Bingley, who protests, “I didn’t tell anyone where I was going when you called this morning, I swear. It’s definitely for you.”

Mrs. Reynolds meets them in the hallway, obviously looking for them. “It’s Ms. Bingley,” she tells him with an disapproving sniff, before she heads off to the kitchen.

“Yeah, she’s definitely here for you,” Charles says. “I’ll go call Jane.”

Darcy can’t imagine Caroline having anything interesting to tell him, so he’s already got his mouth
open to tell her to bugger off as he steps into the living room, when she sticks her tongue down his throat. “What the fuck?” he shouts as he shoves her off of him.

She looks upset, but not embarrassed or repentant. “It didn’t work?”

“What on earth are you talking about?” he demands, scrubbing at his face so he can remove all traces of her. He’s known about the crush she’s had on him for a while, but has hoped the fact that he absolutely detests her would deter her from doing, well, exactly what she’s doing now.

“You’re still pink!” she says, as if it’s an explanation.

“I’m more than aware. What the hell did you think you were doing? You have three seconds before I forcibly remove you from the premises.”

“True Love’s Kiss!” she blurts out. “It’s supposed to break the curse.”

Darcy feels like he’s about to explode. “Caroline, did you do this to me?”

“It was supposed to prove to you that we’re supposed to be together!” she cries helplessly.

“And now it’s proof that we’re not,” he says firmly. “Get out. You’re not allowed here again, and if anything like this ever happens again, I will have you thrown in jail.”

“But I love you!”

“OUT!” he roars, as he himself stalks out of the room, bumping into Mrs. Reynolds and Charles at the same time. “Mrs. Reynolds, please show Ms. Bingley to the door, and notify security that she isn’t ever to set foot on Pemberley’s grounds again. Charles, we have to go to Longbourn. Caroline cursed me with a TLK curse.”

“Oh, for fuck’s sake.” Charles sighs as he rushes to call for a driver. “I don’t know what to say, Darcy, only that I’m terribly sorry.”

“It’s not your fault your sister is worse than a nun in hell,” Darcy grumbles as they rush into the car. “You should probably call Jane again and let her know we’re on our way.”

“That was actually her suggestion in the first place, so she can get a better look at you. Although, now that we know it’s a TLK curse, is there really any point?

Darcy sighs and leans his head against the (thankfully) tinted windows of his car. “I need to kiss Elizabeth. She’s my only hope.”

Charles fidgets in his seat. “I didn’t know you were still in love with her.”

“I don’t think I could ever stop at this point, Charles.” Darcy tries to count the trees they pass. “If there is such a thing as true love, she has to be mine.”

“Even if she doesn’t feel the same way?”

“I know it’s a shot in the dark, but I need to try. If she hates me still, after everything, I need to know regardless. I rather thought we were becoming friends,” he adds softly. “Maybe if we’re true loves, she’ll begin to love me back.”

Charles sighs, and pats him consolingly on the back. “Well, like you said, it’s worth a try.”

Thankfully, Longbourn, house of the Bennets, isn’t too far away. By the time they arrive, Darcy still has an hour to make the meeting, if he’s lucky. Although, if he learns Elizabeth Bennet is his
true love, he might just send Richard in his stead anyway.

By some stroke of mad luck, Elizabeth is the one who opens the door. “Bloody hell, Darce, you look like someone dunked you in highlighter fluid. It’s a good thing -”

Before he can lose his nerve, he presses his lips to hers, cutting her off mid-sentence. She’s frozen against him, and after precisely two seconds, he realizes what a terrible idea this has been. “I’m so sorry,” he manages to say, before running back to the car. His hand has just touched the door handle when he finds his feet sinking into the dirt below him, and is turned of his own accord back to Elizabeth, whose hand is outstretched, obviously manipulating the ground beneath him. Charles has scampered into the house, he notes distantly. He’d rather his friend had stayed, just so there would be a witness to his murder, since the driver is most likely not paying attention.

“What,” Elizabeth glowers, “the hell was that?”

He sighs, and drops his gaze to the ground. “I’m sorry.”

“I didn’t ask for an apology, I asked for an explanation.” Her eyes seem to be flashing red, dangerously, even though he knows for a fact they’re bright blue.

His heart keeps shattering in his chest with every breath he takes, and he wishes, for the millionth time that day, that he had never gotten out of bed. “Caroline cursed me, with a TLK, and I just thought, well, I don’t know what I thought.”

Elizabeth walks slowly up to him, searching his face. “If you came here and kissed me before saying anything, it seems to me that you know what you thought.”

He swallows, even though his mouth feels as dry as the Sahara. “I know, and I apologize. I’ll leave you alone from now on, I promise. I won’t force my company on you any longer.”

She searches his face for a few moments longer, before relaxing. “You’re an idiot, you know,” she says, almost conversationally.

His gaze drops back to the ground. “I know.”

“No, I don’t think you do.”

He looks back up at her, and is surprised to see that there’s a hint of a smile in her eyes, no longer red but back to the bright blue he knows. “What?”

Her smile takes over her whole face, and she smooths out the lapels of his jacket, almost shy. “A True Love’s Kiss only works if both parties realize their feelings are reciprocated. It’s not true love if it’s one sided.” She peeks up at him through her bangs. “It didn’t work because you didn’t realize that I love you, too, and,” she clears her throat, “and that I didn’t realize you still loved me.”

Darcy is convinced he’s somehow died, and that this is what heaven is, everything he’s ever dreamed of coming true. “So, you love me?” he asks gently, afraid she’s going to change her mind.

“You really are an idiot,” she says fondly, before pressing her lips to his.

He feels the magic working, his skin tingling and a warm sensation in his stomach as he opens his mouth for Elizabeth to explore. She tastes like magic, too, though he can’t exactly describe the taste, only that it feels more powerful than any other kiss he’s ever had. He wraps his arms around her and crushes her to him, her arms winding around his neck enthusiastically, her hands fisti
his hair.

A polite cough breaks them apart, and he is only marginally embarrassed to find the whole Bennet clan, including Charles, watching them with fond smiles on their faces (with the exception of Mrs. Bennet, who looks like she might cry from happiness). Charles comes up and claps his shoulder. “I am very pleased to inform you that you are no longer pink, Darcy.”

He beams at his friend, and then at Elizabeth, who looks almost as happy as he does. “Do me a favor, Charles, and call Richard. He needs to be at the meeting in half an hour.”

“Will do.” Charles then opens the door to the car. “Right then, off you two go. Enjoy the day!”

Darcy moves to tug Elizabeth into the car, only to find himself almost toppling over. “Um, Elizabeth?”

“Oh, right, sorry!” She snaps her fingers, and he is no longer bound by the dirt underneath his feet. She then grabs his hand and tugs him into the car, followed by the sounds of Kitty and Lydia wolf-whistling.

He pulls the door shut behind him, and can’t help but press another kiss to her lips. It turns messy and passionate quickly, and leaves him scrambling to hit the divider button, so they have some privacy from the driver, who’s chuckling. When they finally break apart, he presses his forehead to hers. “So, what do you want to do now?”

“Anything that involves you,” she answers truthfully, and he can’t help beaming. He could definitely get used to this.
“I really, really don’t want to be here right now, Char,” Lizzie whispered heatedly to her friend.

Charlotte just threw her a smile over her shoulder. “Come on, Lizzie, we deserve to have a little fun after that nightmare of a semester, don’t you think?”

“Maybe you do,” Lizzie grumbled.

The nightmare with Wickham was over, true, and he was banned from campus forever, but that didn’t mean Lizzie was done kicking herself over the ordeal. If only she had paid more attention to Lydia, if only she had told her parents what Darcy had told her -

“Look who it is, Lizzie!” Charlotte snapped Lizzie out of her reverie. “Fitzwilliam Darcy himself, who has deigned to spend a night with us mere mortals. We should go say hi.”

“Actually, I’m pretty sure we shouldn’t,” Lizzie answered, grabbing Charlotte’s hand and dragging her towards the drinks table.

Charlotte ignored her, shouting, “Darcy!”, and waving him over.

“Christ,” Lizzie groaned, feeling her cheeks heat up as their former TA looked over to them. She gave him a small wave, determined to act like a normal human being. He nodded, but didn’t smile, and made his way over.

Lizzie could feel her heart racing in her chest. Of all the stupid things she had done over the course of her life, hell, even in the last year, the stupidest was by far falling in love with Fitzwilliam Darcy, after there was no hope of him returning it. Sometimes she felt like going back in time and strangling herself, because of how she had treated him.

“Ladies.” Darcy’s voice brought her back to reality, his eyes burning into hers.

“Darcy, what a surprise to see you! I thought you never came to parties,” Charlotte told him.

“I try not to,” he said seriously, “but Bingley managed to drag me out. He’s run off, though, with Jane.”

“Yeah, she ditched us the moment we stepped through the door.” Charlotte must have noticed the way Darcy’s eyes stayed on Lizzie’s, because the next thing out of her mouth was, “Well, I’ll go get us some drinks, then. Want anything, Darcy?”
He finally tore his gaze away from Lizzie, raising the unnoticed cup in his hand. “I’m all set, thanks.”

“Be back in a bit!”

Lizzie cast a panicked look at Charlotte, but her back was already turned, so she looked after her, keeping her eyes away from Darcy. It seemed safer that way. It was silent for a few beats before she began chewing on her bottom lip, not knowing what to say.

Darcy didn’t seem to have the same problem. “Elizabeth -” he began to say.

Lizzie’s eyes widened as she saw George Wickham making his way through the crowd towards the drinks table. She then looked up at Darcy, who had noticed her expression. He frowned in curiosity, before beginning to turn and see what she was looking at.

She knew she had half a second before he turned around fully and saw Wickham, too. She also knew that if that happened Darcy was going to kill him, and Lizzie really didn’t want that to happen. Not that she cared about Wickham at all, but Darcy didn’t need to be thrown in jail over someone who wasn’t worth the time of day.

“Darcy,” she said low, urgently, causing him to look back at her.

“What -” he started, but Lizzie cut him off by throwing her arms around his neck and pressing her lips to his.

He froze under her lips and for a horrible, terrifying second, Lizzie was convinced she had fucked up past all possible redemption. She began to pull back, face already burning red with embarrassment, when he surged against her, wrapping his arms around her waist and pulling her tightly against his body.

She responded enthusiastically, tugging gently on his bottom lip and then soothing it with her tongue, and had just started opening her mouth to his when a pointed cough had them breaking apart.

Charlotte was grinning at them, wide and a little bit smug. “Let’s keep it PG in public, yeah?”

“Shut up,” Lizzie snapped at her, dropping her arms and blushing.

Darcy ignored Charlotte completely. “Elizabeth, can I talk to you?” He cleared his throat nervously. “In private,” he added.

His words had her already racing heart going into overdrive. “Yeah, of course.”

He didn’t move to touch her, and her stomach dropped to what felt like her knees. She began steeling herself for a crushing let down as he led her outside.

He cleared his throat once more before asking, “Would you mind explaining to me what that was?”

She debated about lying to him, but there was an earnestness to his eyes that had her admitting, “I saw Wickham, and I didn’t want him to ruin your night, or life. I thought you might’ve killed him if you saw him, and I didn’t want that.”

“Why?” His face was inscrutable.

She worried her bottom lip. “He’s not worth your time. You deserve to have a nice night, without
him throwing a wrench into the mix, and I now realize, rather belatedly, that kissing you without your consent may have ruined your night anyway, so I just want to -”

“Lizzie,” he said hoarsely, cutting her off, “shut up.”

Her cheeks flushed red with embarrassment again. “What -”

He leaned down and kissed her again, his hand cradling the back of her head as his lips moved against hers gently. Where the first kiss had been passion and urgency, this one was sweet and gentle, and Lizzie melted into it, gripping his shoulders as her knees went weak.

Eventually, he pulled back for air, and rested his forehead against hers, keeping his eyes closed. “Lizzie,” his voice was rough, “fuck, I want to kiss you all the time, okay? I love you, I love you so much.” He opened his eyes and met her gaze. “Is that alright?”

Lizzie smiled and gave a small laugh, feeling her heart burst with joy. “Yes, of course it’s alright. I love you, too.”

“Good,” he murmured, before pressing his lips to hers again.
The first person that comes to mind once Lizzie gets turned into a frog is Fitzwilliam Darcy. Yeah, she should probably go to Jane or even her father, but her father is better with potions, and Jane with charms, and this is definitely a curse, so to Darcy she’ll go.

It also helps that he’s pretty much her best friend now, since Charlotte moved to be an apprentice to Mr. Collins (bleh).

It was an astonishment to everyone, including her, when she’d come to that realization, but it was true all the same. After a disastrous beginning, they’d slowly stopped fighting with one another and, after he apologized to Charles for breaking up his relationship with Jane, began enjoying each other’s company instead.

Which brings us back to where she currently is, hopping up and down on the windowsill of a hallway at Pemberley. Unfortunately, she can’t do much more than that, so it’s a while before somebody notices her.

She supposes she should get used to it.

Thankfully, it’s Georgie who spots her first, instead of one of the servants. They might shoo her away, but Georgie should be able to recognize a magical creature.

“Oh, hello, what have we here?” Georgie coos as she opens the window.

Lizzie ribbits.

Georgie holds out her hand so Lizzie can jump on to it. “And just who are you, Mr. Frog?”

Lizzie croaks indignantly.

“Sorry, miss, then.” Georgie sighs. “I suppose I should take you to my brother, then, since it seems you’re unable to talk.”

Lizzie sags with relief against Georgie’s hand, exhausted from an afternoon of jumping. Her muscles ache and it feels weird.
She must doze off on the journey, because the next thing she knows she’s getting poked with a stick, and jumps about ten feet in the air.

“Good afternoon, there.” Darcy peers down at her over his glasses. “I thought you were going to spend the rest of the day asleep.”

Lizzie puffs out her throat in defense, and then falls off the desk in surprise. She doesn’t think she could recreate that if she tried.

Darcy chuckles as he picks her up and places her back on the desk. “I take it you’re not originally a frog, then? One croak for no, two for yes.”

Lizzie croaks once dutifully.

“And I take it I know who you are, outside of your, em, frogginess?”

Lizzie croaks twice.

“Right. Well, unfortunately for you, I know a great deal of people, so we’re going to have to think of a slightly more complicated system of communication.”

He begins to look over his bookcases, pulling down books he thinks will help, and Lizzie watches him with a sigh. She doesn’t know what that warlock cursed her with, just that he did because they had gotten into an argument in her class about Magical Species Classification (werewolves are people not creatures).

Just as Darcy finally lugs the rather large stack of books back to his desk, his phone rings. He balances the books precariously in one hand as he answer it. “Darcy. Oh, hello, Charles.” He frowns. “What do you mean she’s missing? Of course I haven’t -” He stops abruptly and looks up. “Lizzie?”

Lizzie jumps up and down, croaking with excitement. He sighs and turns his attention back to his phone. “Never mind, Charles. I found her.” He dumps the books on his desk. “No, she’s cursed. I haven’t figured it out yet, but she’s a frog.” He pinches the bridge of his nose. “Tell them I’m taking care of it. Yes, see you.”

He ends the call and sits in his chair, leveling his glare at Lizzie. “Was it the warlock in your MSC class?”

Lizzie ribbits meekly.

“I told you not to upset him.” Lizzie starts to croak in protest, but Darcy cuts her off. “I don’t care if he was being stupid, warlocks are notorious for not having any real control over their powers!”

Lizzie sighs and slouches.

“Well, never mind, it’s too late now.” Darcy opens the first book in the pile. “We’ll figure out what’s wrong with you, don’t worry.”

Three hours and eight books later, Darcy reaches for his wand. “There’s one last thing I think it could be. I really hope it’s not, but if it isn’t, we have to track down that warlock, okay?”

Lizzie ribbits sadly.

Darcy mutters an incantation and waves his wand over Lizzie. There’s a flash of pink light in the
air, and Darcy slumps back in his chair with a sigh.

Lizzie is screaming internally. Everyone knows what that pink light means. True Love’s Kiss.

“Right, of course you had to get cursed with a TLK,” he groans. “Any romantic prospects I don’t know about?”

Lizzie wants to jump in front of a bus. *You!* she wants to yell, but she can’t, so she just croaks.

The awkward part about this business is that Darcy had loved *Lizzie*, a year and a half ago, and Lizzie had turned around and laughed in his face when he confessed. Even though they became friends six months later, he hasn’t brought it up since, and Lizzie’s pretty sure he’s over it.

However, she isn’t. She’s been in love with him for an entire year. She’s figured it’s her punishment for being so mean to him in the first place. But, if anyone is her true love, it has to be Darcy. And since he doesn’t love her anymore, she probably doesn’t have a true love. Which means she’s stuck like a frog forever.

“Don’t worry, Lizzie, I’ll figure something out,” he promises.

Lizzie wonders if frogs can cry.

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Three weeks later, Lizzie still can’t believe that *this* is something Fitzwilliam Darcy, of all people, thought of. They’re in a bar, and Darcy is soliciting kisses for her, looking extremely uncomfortable the entire time. The first few days it had been funny, but now it’s just sad.

“Just one more week and then you have to apologize to that warlock, okay?” Darcy makes her swear after the umpteenth kiss doesn’t work, just like she knew it wouldn’t.

Lizzie ribbits sadly. She misses being human, but not quite enough to want to apologize to that smarmy warlock.

Later that night, after Darcy has dropped her off with Jane, she tries to get comfortable on the rock in the tank her sister bought for her.

Jane strokes one finger down Lizzie’s back, comforting her. “I wish I knew what to do.”

Lizzie ribbits in agreement.

“Have you tried throwing yourself at his face?” she suggests. “He might get the hint.”

Lizzie croaks in frustration. Of course she’s not going to jump him, literally. It wouldn’t work and then she’d just be sad. Well, sadder than she is now, anyway.

“I think he’s pretty hung up on you, if it helps.”

Lizzie makes this weird noise that is apparently what frogs sound like when they laugh.

Jane frowns at her. “I’m serious! He hasn’t dated anyone since he met you, and you should see the way he looks at you! Even now, when you’re a frog!”

Lizzie jumps away from her sister, into the small pond in the tank.

“Just,” Jane sighs, “think about it, okay?”
And, because life as a frog is the most boring thing Lizzie has ever experienced, she does. For hours and hours she goes over every interaction she and Darcy have ever had since they became friends.

Finally, as the clock strikes two a.m., she decides that it’s worth a try. He put his heart on the line for her, so it’s only fair she do it in turn. *Tomorrow*, she promises herself.

So, the next morning, when Darcy shows up, looking the same as ever, Lizzie prepares herself for potentially destroying her friendship with him. Jane chats about work so she's got a bit of time, but when he finally reaches out to take her, she leaps towards his face instead.

She ends up sort of smacking his nose and smudging his glasses, but she thinks the message came across rather loud and clear.

Darcy freezes and Jane stammers, “I think I’ll just leave you two alone now,” before slipping out the door.

Once she’s gone, Darcy very carefully places her on the sofa. “Lizzie, what do you think you’re doing?”

She leaps at his face again, with a croak.

He puts her back on the sofa before taking off his glasses and running a hand over his face. “Lizzie, you can’t - you can’t be doing this just because you’re desperate, okay?”

She croaks once for no, and hopes he remembers.

“You -” but words seem to escape him, so he just leans forward and presses his lips to the space between her eyes.

She feels the warmth of transformation take over her body, and a sort of stretching, until suddenly she’s human again, and has Darcy’s lips on her forehead. “Oh, thank fuck,” she breathes, before pulling back to kiss him properly, throwing her arms around his neck.

His eyes shoot open and he loses balance, toppling over and bringing Lizzie with him. Their foreheads and noses bump against each other, and the back of Darcy’s head bounces against the floor. “Ow,” he groans.

Lizzie scrambles to get off of him. “Jesus, Darcy, I’m so sorry.”

His arms wrap around her waist to hold her still. “Just, give me a second.”

She stills instantly. His eyes are closed, but she’s pretty sure that’s because she’s naked. “Are you okay?”

He finally opens his eyes, and ignores her question. “How long?” he asks, gazing at her intently.

She meets his eyes nervously. “How long what?”

“How long have you been in love with me,” he says flatly.

Lizzie’s positive this isn’t how he’s supposed to be acting, at least, if he were happy. “A year.”

“A year?” he asks incredulously, rolling them over so her back is against the carpet. “An entire year.”
“Yes?” She bites her lip. “Sorry.”

“You’re an idiot,” he tells her, before pressing his lips to hers.

He kisses her slow and deep, making her toes curl. It’s the best kiss of her life, but laughter keeps trying to bubble up, and it’s getting harder and harder to tamp down, so she bursts into giggles. He pulls back, lips swollen and hair wild, from where she was running her hands through it. “What?”

“I’m just happy,” she says with a smile. “I love you.”

He smiles and presses his forehead to hers. “I love you, too.”

“I know,” she tugs on the lapels of his jacket, “you’re my true love. We’re going to live happily ever after.”

And they do.
The thing about being a prominent political figure is that every once in a while, you’re going to get death threats, and attempts on your life. Especially if you are particularly opinionated, and unwilling to waver in your beliefs. Prime Minister Elizabeth Bennet is the perfect example of this.

It drives Fitzwilliam Darcy insane.

As King, he realizes it’s not really his job to worry about the health and safety of the Prime Minister. As someone who is completely and irrevocably in love with her, however, he can’t really help it.

It’s not like he meant to fall in love with his Prime Minister. If he could’ve chosen to remain indifferent to her emotionally, he would’ve. Unfortunately, as anyone who has met Elizabeth Bennet can attest, she’s not really someone you can remain indifferent about. Smart, expressive, and not afraid to be loud about it, Elizabeth had wormed her way into his heart before he could stop her. He had been in the middle of it before he knew it had begun.

It’s awkward, though, being in love with the Prime Minister when he’s the reigning monarch. There’s definitely a conflict of interest there, even if there’s not law explicitly against it. So he’s never said anything, just tried to emotionally distance himself from her, which has worked as well as he expected, that is, not well at all. Bingley, his oldest friend and Deputy Prime Minister, teases him relentlessly about it. Sometimes he hates his life.

He’s brooding about it in the backseat of his car when his drive taps on the partition. “Your Majesty, we’re here.”

“Thank you, Reynolds,” he says, almost absentmindedly as the door is pulled open by his security.

As he steps into the bright sunlight, he sees Elizabeth giving him a tight smile, clasping a folder to her chest. “Your Majesty.”

“Prime Minister.” He falls into step with her as she leads him towards Parliament. “Are we set for the meetings?”

“Yes, I’ve got the schedule -” but she’s broken off by the shouts of security.

Darcy whirls around and sees a man aiming a gun at Elizabeth. Instinctually, he throws himself at her, and tackles her to the ground. There’s a gunshot, and a sharp pain in his back, before his world goes dark.
Elizabeth can’t believe Darcy’s stupidity. As if a monarch was more expendable than a Prime Minister. She stares at his comatose body as she’s curled up in the chair by his bed. “Stupid, stupid man.”

“Prime Minister?” Her head of security steps into the room.

Elizabeth quickly wipes at her cheeks, to hide the evidence of her tears. “What is it, Denny?”

“The Deputy Prime Minister is here. He wants you to join him outside to make a statement to the press.”

She sniffles. “Please tell Lord Bingley I have the utmost faith in his ability to provide a statement on his own.”

“As you wish, ma’am.” He gives her a short nod before leaving the room, closing the door behind him.

Once he’s gone, she drags her chair closer to Darcy’s bed and clasps his hand in both of hers, being mindful of the wires attached to him. She presses a kiss to his hand and lets her tears fall freely. “Fitzwilliam, please, you need to wake up because I can’t do this without you.” She muffles a sob against his knuckles. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.” Darcy’s voice is hoarse from disuse, and it shocks her into sitting upright and dropping his hand.

“What the fuck, Darcy?” she screeches.

He winces and moves to take her hand again. “I would rather you didn’t shout right now.”

“Right, sorry.” She gnaws on her bottom lip, considering him. “So, you heard that?”

He gives her fingers a squeeze and looks at her blearily. “Yes. Please don’t tell me you regret it.”

Her heart feels like it’s about to burst. “No, no of course not.” She takes her hand and strokes his cheek. He leans into her hand, and she can’t help smiling. “I do love you, you idiot. I can’t believe you took a bullet for me.”

He smiles back. “Well, you’re rather important to me, you know.”

“Promise me you won’t do it again,” she brings his hand to her lips and brushes a kiss to his knuckles, “please.”

He cups her face. “I would do it again and again, as many times as it takes to keep you safe.”

She bites back a sob before leaning over to presses a hard kiss to his lips. His lips move against hers just as fiercely, until she can tell he needs to breathe. She pulls back and rests her forehead against his. “You’re rather important to me, too.” She pulls back with a sniffle. “I suppose I should call a nurse in here, to tell them you’ve woken up.”

He grabs her hand again as it moves towards the call button. “No, please, let’s just have another moment or two before we have to deal with the world.” He tugs her hand until she half sprawled on him again. “Does that sound okay?”
She presses her lips to his again. “That sounds perfect.”
“Oh my god, Lizzie, just ring his doorbell.”

Lizzie groaned, turning her head so she could look at Charlotte without getting up. “But what if he’s not dead? What if he’s alive and well and I’m just being overly dramatic?”

Charlotte rolled her eyes, scoffing as she flicked through her magazine. “Then don’t ring his doorbell! Just make a decision, and soon, because I cannot stand to listen to you moan about this anymore.”

“You don’t have to be here, you know,” Lizzie grumbled, turning her head back to face the cushions of the couch she was lying face-down on. “You can leave.”

Charlotte sighed and came over to flop down on Lizzie. Being much smaller, it didn’t cause Lizzie much discomfort, but she groaned dramatically anyway.

“And miss your crisis?” Charlotte poked Lizzie’s cheek. “Never. Look, Darcy is most likely alive. If he had died, Charlie probably would’ve told us.”

“But he and Jane are all the way in Guatemala for their Doctors Without Borders thing, so how would he even know?”

Charlotte sighed. “God damn it.”

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“Are you seriously making a list of pros and cons of knocking on Darcy’s door?” Charlotte asked a few days later.

“What?” Lizzie jumped in her chair, trying to hide the piece of paper she was writing on. “No.”

Charlotte groaned and flopped down on the couch beside her friend. “Lizzie, seriously.”

Lizzie sighed, and shifted the paper so Charlotte could see it. “Listen, either he’s alive, in which case he wouldn’t want to see me, or he’s dead, in which case I’d be dealing with a dead body. There are so many more cons than pros.”

Charlotte eyed her skeptically. “You’re still going to do it, though.”

“Probably.”
Lizzie always found Lamaze breathing exercises comforting, so she was doing the hoo-hoo-hee-hee-hah-hah repetitions as she stood on the doorstep of the Darcy townhouse. It was across the street from her apartment, and the front door was easily seen through her front windows. Over the course of their acquaintance, she had hated the fact that they were so close, and had kept her blinds permanently shut for almost six months straight.

However, that had now changed, and she had gotten used to seeing him exit his front door every morning as she was getting ready for work. She knew she had no right, but the sight of him made her happy, even if it was bittersweet. He probably hated she was so close to him, after her spectacular shooting down of his confession of love.

She regretted it now, of course, but he had probably moved on, so she was trying to move on, too. But she still wanted him to be happy, and alive. She hadn’t seen him in a week, and was worried.

All of this was running through her mind as she poised her hand to knock. Taking one final deep breath, she brought her fist down, just as Darcy opened the door.

Her hand hung limply in the air between them, and her eyes widened in shock. “Darcy?”

“Elizabeth?” he asked, equally confused. “What are you doing here?”

“I thought you were dead,” she blurted out.

He gaped at her, and then at her hand, still in the air between them. “Um, I’m not?”

Lizzie was sure she was the color of a tomato, and quickly brought her hand back to her side.

“Yes, I can see that. I just, you haven’t left your house in a week, and I was worried.”

Darcy’s brow furrowed in further confusion. “You’ve been keeping tabs on me?”

“No!” Lizzie said, perhaps a little too quickly. “No, I just - I’ve gotten used to seeing you leave in the mornings as I get ready for work. You haven’t left your house in a week.”

“I’ve been doing some work from home,” he told her. His eyes searched her face, and she could feel herself getting redder by the second. “I’m sorry to cause you such concern.”

“I’m sorry for being such a creep.” She sighed, and turned to go. “Well, I’m glad you’re okay. I’ll, um, see you around.”

His hand quickly grabbed her wrist. “Lizzie?”

She turned back to look at him. “Yeah?”

“Do you want to come in? I was just about to order a pizza.” He smiled tentatively.

She returned it full force. “I would love to.”

“Hey, hey, Will,” Lizzie said, poking him with her foot, “you dead?”

Darcy snorted and flung out an arm to wrap around her waist, turning to face her. “Are you ever going to get tired of that?”

“Gotta make sure you don’t die on me,” she said cheerfully. “You promised me forever, after all. I have to make sure you don’t rescind on your promise.”
The ring on her fourth finger glinted in the light as Darcy brought it to his lips for a kiss. “I’m not planning on it, Lizzie.”

She smiled widely. “Good.”
“I’m just saying, statistically speaking, you’ll be the only person in this family to have a soul mark, Jane,” Lizzie explained as she finished washing her dishes.

“Just because only one in seven people have a soul mark and we have seven people in our family doesn’t mean you won’t have one, Lizzie,” Jane insisted optimistically as she helped her sister dry.

“Statistics don’t lie, Jane,” Lizzie said, flicking remnants of dish soap at her sister.

Jane swatted Lizzie with her towel. “They’re the third type of lie, according to your statistics professor. Don’t you pay attention in class?”

“Like I’m ever going to need statistics after college,” Lizzie laughed, before being swatted at again. “Ouch!”

“If you’re paying for it you may as well try an learn it, Elizabeth,” she said sternly. “And, anyway, you’re ignoring my original question. Do you or do you not want me to stay up with you tonight?”

Lizzie sighed and leaned against the kitchen counter. “No, no, don’t worry about it. I know you have that date tomorrow with the mystery man I literally know nothing about.”

“If it goes well enough, I’ll tell you about him,” her sister promised. “I just don’t want to get my hopes up again.”

Lizzie grit her teeth at the allusion to Henry Crawford, who had said, “You look like an angel”, the words that lined Jane’s rib cage, to her the moment they met. Her sister had been hopeful, even after it turned out Henry didn’t have a soul mark. They had made it three months before he ran off with another girl.

“Crawford was an idiot and you deserve better,” she assured Jane. “I’ll see you tomorrow night either way, right?”

Jane smiled at her. “Well, you’re never turning twenty one again, right?”

“Fingers crossed.”

Despite having told her sister she was positive she wasn’t going to be one of the lucky people deserving a soulmate, Lizzie was still nervous enough about it to be standing stark naked in front of a mirror three minutes before one a.m., the moment she had been born.
If she was being honest with herself, she would admit she didn’t know what she feared more, if she learned that there wasn’t anyone out there perfect for her, or if she learned there was only one out of billions. Both terrified her equally.

“Lizzie!” Charlotte banged on her bedroom door. “I’m coming in!”

“No!” Lizzie shrieked, “I’m not dressed, Charlotte!”

The door swung open with a kick anyways, Charlotte’s hand clasped firmly over her eyes. “Well, put some clothes on then! Er, or just a bra and some underwear. Want to make sure we see your soul mark,” she added in a cheery tone.

“I’m going to kill you,” Lizzie muttered as she slipped on a pair of short shorts and a tank top.

“Oh no you won’t, dearest bestest friend of mine,” Charlotte said with a grin, “because then how would you know your soul mark is on your back?”

“Did you peek?” Lizzie demanded as she tried to twist her head to look at her back.

Charlotte rolled her eyes. “We’ve gone skinny dipping together before, Liz, of course I peeked. Look, it’s on your shoulder.” She pulled the shirt out of the way to read it properly. “Don’t worry, I don’t actually want to talk to you, I just need a place to sit.”

“What the fuck, Charlotte, be serious.”

“I am serious, Lizzie, that’s what it says.” Charlotte snapped a picture of the text with her phone and handed it over.

Sure enough, the rude words were staring back at her, penned in impeccable handwriting, sitting prettily on her left shoulder. “What the fuck,” she murmured in disbelief.

Charlotte clapped her on the arm “Well, at least there’s no risk of multiple people saying that to you.”

“That’s putting it lightly.” Lizzie sighed, handing the phone back over. “Alright, now, you, get out.”

Charlotte smacked a kiss to her cheek before shutting the door, calling out, “Happy birthday,” over her shoulder.

“Yeah,” Lizzie said to herself as she traced the skin where she knew the ink to be, “happy birthday to me.”

As the weeks turned into months, Lizzie found herself more and more on edge. She hated the mark for turning her into a person that felt like they were on the precipice of something, only waiting for a hand to push them off the edge one way or another.

The mark, of course, fascinated everyone she knew, including her mother, which was most unfortunate. Lizzie already had a hard time dealing with her mom, but now she had to deal with a call almost every day about whether or not she had met the person she was destined to be with forever yet.

“For the last time, Mother, I’ll call you when I meet them! Stop calling me!” she snarled into the
“Rough day, dear?” Jane asked as she let herself into Lizzie and Charlotte’s apartment with her spare key.

“If anything, Mom’s gotten worse with me since you found Charlie,” Lizzie said as she flung an arm over her eyes while reclining on the couch. She didn’t have to be looking at her sister to know the lovesick smile that split across her face at the name of her soulmate.

“She just wants you to be happy, Lizzie,” Jane gently reassured her, moving Lizzie’s feet into her lap so she could also sit on the couch. “It’ll calm down in time,” she added, massaging her sister’s feet, “she always does.”

“Yeah,” Lizzie muttered, “unless I never find them.”

Jane tutted. “You’ll find them. I had my mark for almost three years before I met Charlie. It’s not even been a full year yet.”

“Okay, but even if I do find them, they sound pretty rude, right? I mean, why would I even want to be with someone that talks to strangers like that?”

“You’re overthinking things, Lizzie.” Jane sighed, and patted her ankle. “Come on, get dressed.”

Lizzie pouted. “I thought we had planned to stay in.”

“We need to get your mind off of things. Call Charlotte and tell her to meet us at Netherfield.”

Lizzie wrinkled her nose. “Ugh, how is seeing you with your boyfriend supposed to make me feel better?”

“It’s not,” Jane said sagely, “but his free drinks will.”

Three beers in, Lizzie sat back in the corner of their usual booth in Charlie’s bar. Jane was supposed to be getting more drinks, but from what she could see, had forgotten and was chatting up her boyfriend instead.

Charlotte was out on the floor dancing with a boy, looking carefree, and Lizzie found herself feeling jealous of her friend, not for the first time. She sulked into her beer and took another sip.

She was startled out of her thoughts when someone flopped down on the bench next to her, causing some of her beer to slosh out of her glass and onto her shirt.

“What the fuck,” she muttered to herself, trying to examine the stain on her top in the dim lighting.

“Don’t worry,” the person sitting next to her said in a deep voice, “I don’t actually want to talk to you, I just need a place to sit.”

Lizzie looked up, forgetting all about her drink. Her eyes went wide as she took in the chiseled jaw and stormy eyes of her apparent soulmate. He wasn’t even looking at her anymore, eyes flitting from person to person.

It made her explode. “What the fuck, you rude piece of shit! You sit down in my booth and have the audacity to treat me like that?”
His eyes snapped back to hers, widening under her glare. “What?”

She tilted her chin up. “You heard me. Now go away.”

Instead, he leaned in closer to her. “No, you don’t understand, what’s your name?” he asked desperately, staring to undo his tie and unbutton his shirt.

“What the fuck, you rude piece of shit! You sit down in my booth and have the audacity to treat me like that?” stared back at her, written in her very messy scrawl. Her hands were halfway to his mark before he caught them in his own.

“Where’s yours?” His voice had that same desperate edge to it, and it snapped her out of her stupor. He looked so hopeful, and so nervous, she felt herself melting under his gaze.

She fumbled with her shirt, wishing she had worn something other than a t-shirt, before finally just yanking it over her head completely and twisting her torso so her own soul mark was visible.

She couldn’t see him like this, but heard the sharp intake of breath when he saw her shoulder, and felt the tips of his fingers trace the words. She felt like she was going to burst into flames at his touch, and turned back to him. “I can’t believe -”

He cut her off, however, by crushing her to his chest and capturing her lips with his. She gripped his shirt fiercely, keeping him anchored to her as the world seemed to tilt on its axis. When he pulled her into his lap, she whimpered and broke away for air, only to be thoroughly embarrassed by the sight of Charlie over her soulmate’s shoulder.

She tugged on her soulmate’s shirt, making him look up in confusion. Charlie then cleared his throat, catching the man’s attention.

“Darcy, Lizzie,” Charlie said with a smile. “I take it you two are soulmates?”

“Yes,” her soulmate, apparently named Darcy, replied roughly, as Lizzie nodded her head.

Charlie’s smile grew wider. “Well, as happy as I am for the both of you, I should probably remind you that you are, in fact, in public. Maybe you should continue this somewhere else?”

“Right,” Lizzie nodded, sounding somewhat breathless, “you’re completely right.”

After fumbling to get her shirt back on with help from Darcy, he took her hand and lead her out of the bar, where he tugged her into the alleyway beside it.

“Sorry about that,” he said, rubbing the back of his neck in embarrassment. “I didn’t mean to get carried away, or be that rude.”

She squeezed the hand still holding hers. “You must’ve known the words you said to me would be awful, considering my response.”

“It’s been six years since my mark arrived,” he told her, “so I’ve tried not to think about it.”

“I’m sorry I made you wait so long.”

He smiled at her. “Don’t apologize. At twenty one I don’t think I would’ve made a very good soulmate. I,” he paused, looking nervous, “I had just gained custody of my eleven-year-old sister.”

She squeezed his hand again. “Maybe that’s when you would’ve needed me the most.”
“I think I’ll always need you,” he told her honestly. “I’m sorry for being so rude, again. I haven’t even introduced myself, have I? William Darcy.”

She slid her free arm around his neck. “Elizabeth Bennet. I’m so very pleased to meet you.”

“Likewise,” he murmured, before leaning in to kiss her again.

Later, when they were curled up in Darcy’s bed, limbs intertwined, Elizabeth asked, “So, why did you just need a space to sit?”

Darcy sighed, nuzzling the top of her head. “Charles’ sister Caroline is convinced we’re meant to be, even though she doesn’t have a soul mark. I was trying to avoid her.”

“Well,” she said, stifling a yawn, “hopefully she’ll get the picture now that you’ve met me.”

“Honestly, I couldn’t care less what she thinks.” He tilted her head up so he could meet her gaze. “I just hope I can make you happy.”

She smiled up at him, pressing a chaste kiss to his lips. “I would say we’re off to a good start already, rudeness notwithstanding.”

“I’ll spend the rest of my life making it up to you,” he promised.

She traced the words under his collarbone. “You better.”

And he does.
Prompt: “Have you looked in the mirror? You take my breath away.”

Sequel to Chapter One of this collection.

Title from Disney's "It's a Small World"

“I think I’m going to be sick,” Lizzie groans, clutching her stomach and curling up on the king size bed in their hotel room. “Maybe I shouldn’t go.”

Darcy kneels by the side of the bed, smoothing her hair away from her face. “Are you sure you’re really not feeling well? Or is it just because you don’t want to face the company fundraiser?”

She peeks up at him guiltily. “It’s possible it’s the latter.”

He presses a kiss to her forehead before getting up and looking for his tie. “You know I hate these things, Lizzie, and I would enjoy it much more with you by my side, but if you really don’t want to go, I won’t try and make you.”

Lizzie exhales and rolls on to her back on the bed. “Will…”

“It’s fine, Lizzie, seriously.” Darcy loops his tie around his neck before going back over to the bed to press a chaste kiss to his girlfriend’s lips. “Now, will you help me with this tie or should I fumble with it on my own?”

“Well, if you insist.” She sits up, loops the tie ends around and knots it effectively. Before he can move away, however, she uses it to bring him down for a kiss. “Thank you,” she whispers against his lips.

He smiles and cups the back of her neck, drawing her back for a few more tender, lingering kisses. “My pleasure.”

Once Darcy leaves (looking a little disheveled, but Lizzie can’t be blamed for how well he looks in a suit and tie), she turns on the TV, flipping through the channels looking for something to watch. She finally lands on House Hunters International and mindlessly watches some couple fighting over apartments in Barcelona, all the while worrying about Darcy.

When he asked her to go to his company’s fundraiser, she had said yes without hesitation. At first it had sounded fun, getting all dressed up and spending the night with Darcy, drinking fancy champagne and dancing the night away. But as the night of the fundraiser had drawn closer, she had started feeling nervous about the whole thing. It would be filled with rich people and executives that Darcy dealt with in his day to day life. A part of her knew it was ridiculous, but she was worried that once she crossed the line into the other side of Darcy’s life, he’d realize he was too good for her, and dump her.
She sighs and tries to sink further into the pillows. Darcy really had wanted her to go, though, and the guilt is settling in her stomach like a stone. Her thoughts are interrupted, however, by the ringing of her cell phone. The caller ID flashes Kitty’s name, so she picks it up. “Kitty? What’s up?”

“You never sent Georgie and me pictures of your dress!” she screeches. “You promised!”

“Oh, shit, one second.” She scrambles off of the bed and towards the closet. “So, Georgie’s over? Or are you at her’s?”

After the day at Disneyland, Georgie and Kitty had become best friends, and Kitty was over at the Darcy household almost as much as Lizzie herself. Kitty giggles. “Over at her’s, obviously. They’ve got HBO, Liz. Now, are you going to send us the photo or what?”

Lizzie sighs and snaps a picture of the dress hanging in the closet. “Satisfied?” she asks after she hits send.

There’s a moment of quiet on the other end before Kitty demands, “Why aren’t you wearing it? I thought the fundraiser was tonight.”

“I ended up not going, Kitty. I wasn’t feeling well.” Lizzie bites back her admission of guilt. “Darcy understood.”

“But he was so excited, you should’ve seen his face when you told him you were coming,” Kitty whines. “Georgie says this is the happiest he’s been about going to one of these things since ever.”

“Alright, alright,” Lizzie grumbles, her already weak resolve crumbling. “I gotta go get ready.”

The combined screeching of Kitty and Georgie makes her wince as she hangs up on them. With a sigh she turns back to the dress in the closet. “Well, better get this over with.”

As Lizzie steps into the ballroom of the hotel where the fundraiser is taking place, she has to constantly remind herself to not bite her bottom lip. She has no desire to reapply her lipstick.

She wanders around the outskirts of the party, grabbing a champagne flute as she looks for her boyfriend. Finally, she spots him near the center of the crowd, and makes her way to him quickly. He’s nervously adjusting his tie as he talks to an elderly couple, so she taps him on the shoulder, instead of trying to catch him unawares. “Darcy.”

He turns around, surprised. “Elizabeth!” He smiles widely, pulling her in and tucking her under his arm. He turns to the elderly couple. “Mr. and Mrs. Fairbanks, may I introduce to you my girlfriend, Miss Elizabeth Bennet?”

She beams and holds out her hand to the couple. “Pleasure to meet you both.”

Darcy tightens his arm around her and presses a kiss to her temple, and she suddenly realizes she wouldn’t want to be anywhere else.

Later that night, after Darcy has made the rounds, he spins Elizabeth around the dance floor. “So,” he says, as he pulls her closer, “what changed your mind?”
“Kitty and Georgie called me and knocked some sense in to me.” She rests her head on his shoulder. “They said it would make you happy if I came.”

“Oh, so you listen to your younger sister but not to your boyfriend, I see,” he teases her, shifting so he can see her face. Something on it makes him pause, however. “What’s the real reason you didn’t want to come, Lizzie?”

“I don’t want to tell you. It’s stupid,” she confesses, biting into her bottom lip. She winces as she feels the lipstick get on her teeth.

Darcy swipes his thumb next to her lip, tugging it out from underneath her teeth. “Hey,” he says, softly, “it’s just me.”

She sighs. “I was worried that once you saw me surrounded by people who are,” she pauses, looking for the right word, “more your caliber, you’d decide you didn’t want to be with me anymore.”

His jaw clicks together and he stills for a moment, before taking her hand and dragging her away. "Come on."

“Will, where are you taking me?” she asks nervously.

“You’ll see,” he says shortly, dragging her into an alcove. Pressing her against the wall, he dips his mouth close to her ear. “Have you looked in the mirror? You take my breath away.” He presses a kiss to the skin behind her ear. “You’re everything I’ve ever dreamed about, Elizabeth Bennet, and I thank God every day for that trip to Disneyland.”

Lizzie can feel her eyes filling with tears. “William -

“No, Lizzie,” he says, moving his lips down her throat. “Obviously I have not been treating you like you deserve, otherwise you wouldn’t be having any doubts about how I feel about you.” He pulls back to cradle her face in his hands, wiping away her tears with his thumbs. “I love you.”

She sobs involuntarily, throwing her arms around his neck and clinging to him. “I love you, Will. I’m sorry.”

“Don’t be sorry, I’m sorry,” he murmurs, his words muffled by her hair. “Come on, let’s go upstairs.”

“That sounds perfect.” Lizzie pulls back and presses as many kisses as she can to his face, not caring where they land. When she pulls back, he’s got red marks all over his face, causing her to giggle.

“What, something on my face?” he asks, grinning.

She takes his hand and intertwines their fingers. “Don’t worry, it’ll wash off.”

He hums, leading her towards the elevators. “If anything it’ll rub off on the insides of your thighs later.”

Lizzie lets out a shocked laugh. “My, my, getting rather bold, aren’t we, Mr. Darcy?”

“Only with you, Miss Bennet,” he replies cheekily. “Only with you.”

She smiles up at him as he presses the elevator call button. “I love you, Will.”
He smiles back. “I love you, too.”

The way he says it makes it sink in, makes the warmth unfurl in her chest. It feels like the beginning of forever, and there’s no one she’d rather be sharing forever with than William Darcy.
down for the count (and i'm drowning in it)

Chapter Notes

So I watched Rocky for the first time and Adrian and Rocky are like the cutest?!?! So anyways P&P AU obviously. Probably way OOC but whatever.

Title from "Helpless" from Hamilton

“I’m Lizzie,” the woman in front of the counter says as she thrusts her hand out for Darcy to shake.

He looks at her a little perplexed before finally grasping her hand. “Darcy.”

“I’ve been looking into expanding my collection of books, and Georgie, you know, your sister, told me you owned a bookstore and that I should check it out because you deal in really unusual and rare books, which is exactly what I’m looking for!”

Darcy blinks a few times, trying to process what she’s saying. Finally, what he comes up with is, “You know Georgiana?”

The woman, Lizzie, laughs as she lightly smacks her forehead. “I probably should’ve led with that! Yeah, I know Georgie! She’s in the self-defense class I teach over at Longborne Gym? We take the train headed to the same station so we’ve become friends, and she talks really highly of you so I figured I’d check your store out.”

The thing about Darcy is that he’s painfully shy. He doesn’t have many friends, and while he’s able to somewhat charm the people who are buying his books, and the people he gets the books from, this Lizzie woman has completely knocked him off balance. “Um, okay.”

“Cool! Thanks!” She gives him a wink that leaves him stunned for several minutes.

When he finally snaps out of it, he busies himself with tidying up the counter he sits behind. He’s curious as to what she’s going to say next, but also doesn’t particularly feel like trying to engage her. A loud thud knocks him out of his reverie. He looks up to see Lizzie contemplating him. “Find what you want?”

“Yeah, you’ve got a lot of cool books in the back. I really wanted that first edition of the Brothers K, but it’s a little out of my price range.” She considers his face. “You don’t talk much, do you? Or smile.”

He blushes a little as he rings her up. “No.”

She smiles up at him. “That’s okay. I’m gonna make you smile one of these days, just watch me. Your sister told me you need to smile more.”

As he watches her leave the store, he only has one thought. He’s going to kill his sister.
Lizzie Bennet comes in frequently after that, usually once every other day. She doesn’t always buy something, but she always has a corny joke for him. He’s almost cracked a couple of times, but he keeps quiet, partially out of stubbornness, but mostly out of the fear that’s taken hold. Lizzie is so bright, she’s going to lose interest once he finds out how boring and uninteresting he really is.

“So, what does a nosey pepper do?” She snorts as she pauses for dramatic effect. “It gets jalapeño business!”

The corners of his mouth twitch as he continues going over the sales receipts of the day, but for the most part his face remains stoic.

Lizzie finishes laughing at her own joke before smiling up at him. “Hey, it’s getting pretty late. Do you need someone to walk you home?”

This startles him. “No!”

“Are you sure?” Her smile falters. “I know I don’t look like much, but I’m tough.”

“I’m sure,” he says, avoiding her gaze.

“Well,” she looks away, “I guess I’ll see you later.”

He only looks up once he’s heard the door shut, and feels something that seems suspiciously like regret.

He hears the arguing before they enter the house, so he runs and hides in the kitchen. He scrambles to look busy as he hears Georgiana and what sounds like Lizzie enter the front door.

“Are you sure your brother knows I’m coming, Georgie?” she asks, sounding nervous.

“Of course! Would I lie to you?” His sister sounds bright and cheerful.

Lizzie snorts. “Absolutely.”

“Shut up,” Georgie says, still bright and cheerful. “Now, let me find him.”

When she bursts into the kitchen a few moments later, he eyes her warily. “What are you doing?”

“Listen, Will, you’re going on a date and you’re going to like it,” she tells him, putting her hands on her hips.

“Georgiana,” he tries to say sternly, but she glares him down.

“Don’t you ‘Georgiana’ me, Fitzwilliam.” She softens. “Look, you’ve hidden behind your books for too long. You need to get out there and have some fun.” She tugs on his sleeve. “I promise Lizzie’s nice.”

“I know she is,” he grumbles, though he puts up no more resistance to his sister as she tugs him into the hall.

“Have fun you two! Darcy likes to ice skate! Don’t come home before midnight!” Georige calls as she pushes them out the front door and slams it shut behind them.
It’s definitely awkward silence that’s between them as they start to walk away from the house. Lizzie breaks it first, however, by clearing her throat. “We don’t have to do this, you know. I thought Georgie was a little too excited.”

She looks so forlorn that Darcy trips over his words to answer her. “No, I,” he clears his throat, “I want to.”

She seems to perk up at that. “Okay, good.”

It’s a little strange to see her so shy, different from the joke-cracking woman he’s grown used to. He feels a little responsible, so he resolves to try and meet her at least part of the way. “So, where’re we going?”

“Well, if you like ice skating, there’s a rink that’s like ten block over that way,” she says, gesturing to his left. “I didn’t really think this through, I’ve just been so busy training.” She looks at him out of the corner of her eye. “I don’t know if your sister’s told you, I mean, I didn’t tell you because I didn’t think you’d be interested, but I’ve been training to fight in a professional fight. I’m going up against Laila Ali, you know, Muhammad Ali’s daughter.”

He doesn’t know how to respond to that, so instead he tells her, “I don’t actually like ice skating.”

She pauses and looks up at him. “You don’t?”

He shakes his head. “No.”

“Well, what do you want to do?” she asks.

He considers what’s in the neighborhood. “I could go for something to eat.”

Her smile is bright in the dusk. “I can work with that.”

“So, my dad used to tell me that no one else was going to fight my battles for me, so I decided to get as tough as I could, mentally and physically. Too bad I was never good enough to go pro.” Lizzie sighs as she picks at her leftover fries.

“Why was that?” Darcy’s been opening up slowly, and finds he likes talking to Lizzie, though he’s still hesitant to open up about himself.

“I couldn’t put enough time into it.” She sighs and leans back into her chair. “I have three younger sisters, and it was mostly up to me and my older sister to raise them. I could only train on the weekends. So now, as an adult, I work at the gym, but it’s too late to go pro. You need to be young to do that, and I’m pushing 30.”

“I’m 30,” he says.

She grins. “I know.”

He coughs, a little uncomfortable with the full force of her smile. “So the fight?”

“It’s some publicity thing,” she gestures with her hand, “I don’t know the details. She picked me because I’m local and in her weight class. But she’s undefeated, so I don’t think I’ll win, but I’m gonna try my best. I mean, my life is pretty average, but to be the girl who fights an Ali? That would be something amazing.”
“I would read that book,” he confesses, smiling a little as he sees Lizzie’s face light up.

“You wanna get out of here?” she asks.

He exhales a little shakily, a little scared by the intensity of his feelings. “Sure.”

“I know it’s not much,” Lizzie says as she kicks off her shoes and throws her jacket and sweater into the closet, “but it’s close to work and affordable.”

He looks around the small studio apartment. It’s obviously an older, worn down apartment, but it also looks loved, pictures hanging on almost wall, with a couple of giant bookshelves brimming with books.

She laughs when she sees him drift over to the books. “Somehow I knew that was going to be your favorite part.” She steps close to him and points out her favorite books. “There’s the edition of the Divine Comedy I got from you the day I met you remember? And here’s my favorite copy of the complete stories of Sherlock Holmes. Oh, and I can’t forget my old edition of Jane Eyre! I got it for five bucks at a yard sale but I’m pretty sure it’s worth more because it’s a 1947 edition...”

She continues talking, but Darcy is suddenly struck by how close she is to him, and how her arm brushes his when she points out various books. “I should get going,” he interrupts.

She stops to look up at him. “Why?”

“Georgiana is probably expecting me. I should make sure she’s okay,” he tells her, still looking at her books.

“I think she’s fine, you know.” She hums thoughtfully as she steps so she’s directly in front of him. “I have a different theory about why you wanna leave. Do you want me to tell you?”

His mouth is dry as he meets her gaze. “What’s that?”

“I think you like me,” she says boldly, “and I think you’re afraid of it. Which is fine, you know, but there’s nothing to be scared of. I mean, you know me, and I know you, sort of. I know you enough to think that you’re a good man, and that you take good care of your sister. I don’t know what happened to you to make you so shy and afraid, but I think you’ll probably tell me when you’re ready, so I’m not trying to push you into doing anything you don’t want to do. If you want to leave you can, I won’t stop you. But I wish you’d be honest with me instead of using your sister as an excuse. Unless it’s that you don’t like me after all -”

“I do like you,” he confesses, interrupting her again. “I like you a lot.”

She smiles the biggest smile he’s ever seen. “Well, that’s good. That’s what I’d hoped for.” She steps a little bit closer. “So, you can leave if you want, but I’d rather you stay.”

He gulps. “And if I stay?”

“Well, we could watch TV or a movie or something, but I’d really like to kiss you. You wouldn’t,” she fumbles for words, and it amazes Darcy that he’s the reason she’s starting to lose her poise, “you wouldn’t have to kiss me back, but I’ve just been thinking about it for a while. We don’t have to, I just thought that -”

She’s cut off by the press of Darcy’s lips against hers, adrenaline running through his veins. He wonders if it shows that he’s never kissed anyone before, and the fear of being bad makes him start to pull back.
Before he can, however, Lizzie throws her arms around his neck, pulling him closer as she kisses him back, softly and sweetly.

Darcy loses himself in it, the adrenaline in his blood slowly filtering out as Lizzie grounds his thoughts with the gentle movement of her lips against his, never pushing him for more.

Eventually they have to part for air. When she pulls back and opens her eyes, showing the blown pupils among the warm chocolate of her irises, she smiles at him, and asks him, a little breathlessly, “So, you want to stay?”

“I want to stay,” he murmurs, before leaning forward again.

“And I want to say hi to my boyfriend Will! Hi Will!” The Lizzie on the TV screen waves enthusiastically.

Darcy tightens his grip on Lizzie’s knee as she laughs at her onscreen antics. “Oh man, I look terrible.”

“Why’d you do that, Lizzie?” he asks quietly, watching the way his thumb strokes the material of her pants as they stretch over her knee.

“Because I wanted to.” She props her chin on his shoulder. “Isn’t that reason enough?”

Emotion swells in his throat. “I suppose.”

She gently taps his cheek and gets him to meet your gaze. “Hey, are you okay? I’m sorry if I made you uncomfortable, I won’t do it again, I promise.”

“No, it’s just,” he exhales shakily, “it’s just been me and Georgie for a long time. I guess I’m just not used to someone else caring like that.”

“No one else?” She threads her fingers through his. “Not even a friend?”

“One friend and one cousin, but they have their own lives, and I have Georgie to worry about. I’m not exactly a catch.”

“Well, I have news for you, Fitzwilliam Darcy.” There’s the familiar glint in her eyes, like she gets before a match. “I care, and I’m not leaving you. So get used to it.”

Something like relief and hope flood his chest as he meets her lips for a kiss. Trust is new for him, but something tells him Elizabeth Bennet is worth the risk.

“Will! Will!” He can hear her shouts from the edges of the room, so he shoulders his way through the crowd, slipping around security and through the ropes. He sees her face, bloody and bruised as she continues to scream his name.

“Lizzie,” he breathes, as soon as he’s close enough to touch her.

“I did it!” she shouts, grinning with teeth stained with blood, looking like she’s queen of the world.
“I love you!” he shouts back, not able to hold it in anymore. The nights she spent with him, coaxing him out of his shell, and the days she spent trying to get him to smile, all because she looked at him and decided she liked him.

If anything her smile grows wider, so much that it looks painful. “I love you!” She throws her arms around him and allows him to spin her. “I love you!”

There’s probably blood all over his suit at this point, but he doesn’t care. The cheers of the crowd surround them, but the world shrinks down to the two of them, and it’s more than enough for him. He has Lizzie Bennet, and life has never been better.
you're the fire (and the flood)

Chapter Notes

Very very short but I had an idea and it just wouldn't let me go. Sequel to DTF, aka the fourth chapter of this collection.

"i did that annoying thing where i put loads of smaller boxes inside one big box and you’re getting really mad but you don’t know that the ring is in the smallest box and i can’t wait to see your face”

Title from 'fire and the flood' by vance joy

For much of Lizzie and Darcy’s two year relationship, they have been known to push each other’s buttons, goad each other into squabbles and arguments in the name of competition. Lizzie knows it sounds unhealthy, but they’ve got pretty good boundaries, and it’s fun 99% of the time.

Really, the only glaring exception that comes to mind is what’s going on right now, which is the mountain of boxes Darcy is making her go through to get to her Christmas present.

It had started with a box the size of a kitchen mixer, which is honestly what she thought it was, since they needed a new one. It would be a little strange for Darcy to give her one for Christmas, but she couldn’t guess what else it would be, until she opened it.

“Another box?” she had asked.

He had just smirked at her. “You’ll see.”

Now she’s on what must be the sixth box, and she’s glad they decided to do a private gift exchange on Christmas Eve, before they spend the day with her family on Christmas Day. This way, no one will see her murder him.

She tells him as much as she rips open the sixth box to find a seventh. “I’m going to kill you.”

“I’m sure it’ll be worth it.”

If she was paying attention, she might have noticed the way he was fidgeting with his watch, a tell-tale sign that he’s nervous, or the way he seemed to be holding his breath, as if he was as excited for her to get to the bottom of the boxes as much as she had started out being. As it was, she was too focused on trying to get through the small mountain of boxes to see anything else.

“I’m going to return your present,” she threatens. “You don’t deserve nice things.”

He runs his fingers over the cover of the 1947 edition of the *Brothers Karamazov* she had gotten him, a rare copy by the translator she knew he loved. “That would be a shame.”

“You should have thought of that before you gave me this ridiculous present.” She sighs, opening the box she holds to find yet another box, one that fits in the palm of her hand. “Is this payback for
the taco incident? Because I’ll apologize if you tell me what’s inside this damn thing.”

He smiles. “Just open the box, Elizabeth.”

She glares at him as she does, though once she manages to tear through the wrapping paper, she drops her eyes to the next box. Her eyes widen as she takes in what is obviously a ring box. “Oh.”

He takes it from her, all nervous smile and shaking hands. “Elizabeth, I know we got off to a strange start, but the severely ill patient I was treating caught my eye with her strong will to fight, and has been catching my eye ever since.”

“I wasn’t that ill,” she interrupts, tears burning her eyes.

“Yes, you were.” He takes her hand, holding it loosely. “Now can I continue?”

“Yes,” she says quietly, squeezing his fingers.

He exhales. “I’m not really good with words, as you know. But I want to spend the rest of my life with you, and I hope you want to do the same. I hope we keep fighting each other for a long time.”

She throws her arms around him, knocking him off balance from where they’re sitting on the floor, causing him to fall backwards. “Yes, yes, a thousand times yes.”

He catches his lips in hers, kissing her with a passion that makes her toes curl. They lose themselves in the kiss for a moment, before he pulls back to smile at her. “Would you like to see the ring?”

She nods, sitting up and getting off of him quickly. He opens the box, showing her an elegant band with an opal shining up at her, the blues and oranges of it catching in the light. “It’s beautiful,” she breathes, holding her hand out so he can slip it on.

“It was my mothers,” he says, just as quiet. “I’m glad you like it.”

She throws her arms around his neck again. “I love it,” she tells him, the words getting lost in the space between their lips. “I love you.”

“I love you, too.”

(Her mother screams when she sees the ring, but it’s hard to be annoyed when she feels her soul bursting with happiness. She’ll forgive her mother as long as she has Darcy by her side, which will hopefully be for the rest of their lives.)
Prompt: You pissed me off in class so I threw a book at your head and now I’m in detention and jesus fuck I hate you so much and the teacher made me apologise and wait you’re cuter up close and the way you talk is kind of nice actually oh fuck no. I twisted it a bit for grad school but whatever

Happy belated 204th birthday P&P!

Title from New Radicals

Some days Lizzie really wonders why she decided to take a philosophy class, even though she’s pursuing a Master’s in English. Like now, when she has to listen to the most idiotic ideas ever put forth.

“And, honestly, if we take Berger and Luckmann at their word, we end up in a Hegelian type of scenario, anyway,” the bane of Lizzie’s life, Fitzwilliam Darcy, is saying.

“The whole point is to not take Berger and Luckmann at their word! Accepting their notion of society as the only true one is a paradox,” she argues back. “And, anyways, we’re not even supposed to be talking about phenomenology. The whole point of the text was debunking existentialism.”

He scoffs at her. “Of course you would think that.”

His dismissal of her is the last straw. She’s been fighting with him for 10 weeks now, and she can’t take it anymore. Picking her copy of the book up off her desk, she flings it at him.

The rest of the class collectively gasps as they watch it arch through the air, finally hitting Darcy smack in the face. He grunts in pain as his hands fly up to his probably bloody nose, and Lizzie is left with a smug feeling of satisfaction for all of three seconds before their professor stands up.

“That’s it! I’m glad to see the passion ignited in both of you due to the subject matter, but this is unacceptable behavior. Leave and don’t come back until you’re both ready to behave like adults again.”

Lizzie throws her stuff into her bag and wills herself to not argue with the professor. She snatches her book off the floor where it fell after hitting Darcy and stalks out of the room.

Grad school is weird for Lizzie in many ways, but the weirdest thing seems to be the fact that no one really knows each other. She’s made friends, of course, and she recognizes people in her classes, but there’s no central stream of gossip like there was in college, no feeling like it was just high school 2.0.

It’s probably because everyone who’s there wants a degree, not an experience. Obviously Lizzie’s fine with that, since that’s also what she really wanted out of college. But it’s annoying because she can’t really just march up to anyone and ask what Darcy’s deal is. They’re not even in the
same program.

It’s probably better that way. She’d probably get kicked out of the English department if she spent every class arguing with Darcy. No matter how wrong he is.

And he is so, so wrong.

She’s running late the next week, having had the misfortune of running in to Collins on the way into the building. She’s almost running when she sees Darcy leaning against the wall of the hallway outside the class. He’s scowling at the floor, but addresses her as she reaches the door, “I wouldn’t bother. He’s locked it.”

“Why?” she asks, only a little out of breath.

He points at the bruise on his cheek. “Apparently we need to talk.”

She straightens, narrows her eyes at him. “I don’t see what about, unless you want to apologize.”

He looks at her incredulously. “Me? You’re the one who threw a book at my face!”

She tries not to be proud of herself, but it’s a losing battle. “To be fair, I wasn’t aiming at it. Just at you. In general.”

He scowls at her. “Great.”

“But you definitely owe me an apology,” she continues. “I know being an asshole is probably, like, written in to your DNA, but you can’t just treat people however you like.”

“Well maybe if your ontological arguments weren’t so useless -”

“Who the fuck cares?” she shouts, waving her arms. “Dude, it’s philosophy, literally everything is useless about it! I know I’m probably insulting your future career path, or whatever, but philosophy can only go so far before you have to go outside and interact with actual people.”

The corner of his mouth quirks up, even though it looks like he’s trying to stop it. “I’m not, actually.”

“What, a dude?” she asks, thrown by the question. “My bad -”

He laughs. “No, a philosopher.”

She blinks, stunned for a minute, before getting angry again. “So why the fuck are you arguing with me about my opinions then?”

He shrugs. “Just because I’m not a philosopher means I can’t have opinions on it?”

“No, you’re right, an actual philosopher might recognize all philosophy is are people’s opinions on how the world works,” she shoots back.

He smiles. “You’re right, I’m sorry.”

She opens her mouth to continue arguing, but pauses again. “What?”

“I’m sorry.” He rubs the back of his neck, sheepish. “I don’t really have an excuse.”

“I’m going to strangle you.”
He laughs again. “I probably deserve it.”

“Damn straight,” she agrees, but there’s a strange feeling in her throat and she doesn’t quite know what to make of him anymore.

Part of her hopes things will go back to normal for them over the remainder of their class, since they only have three more weeks to go, but they don’t. He doesn’t shame her, and actually ends up agreeing with her on several points. She leaves class each time feeling like she was just on an episode of the Twilight Zone.

In fact, if she were being honest, she’d say she was almost disappointed that he doesn’t seem to want to argue with her like he once did.

But she’s too busy with the rest of her classes to be honest with herself, so she doesn’t.

She’s stuffing papers into her bag as she walks out of the classroom and into the hallway when she hears someone call her name, “Lizzie.”

She spins around and almost bumps right into Darcy. “Jesus Christ, what?”

“Sorry,” he grins down at her. The bruise on his cheek is now a light purple. “I wanted to ask you something, since we’re probably not going to have class together next semester.”

“What is it?” She eyes him, wary.

“Well, I was just wondering if you’d want to get coffee sometime?” he asks, in a rush.

She blinks a couple of times. “What?”

“Or dinner, or something else, I don’t know -”

“No.”

Hurt flashes across his face. “Oh, okay, I’m sorry I just thought -”

“Wait!” She closes her eyes and rubs her temples. “Yes.”

“Yes?” His voice is cautiously optimistic.

“No.” She opens her eyes. “Ugh, I don’t know.”

He sighs. “I get it. I won’t bother you.”

As he turns to go, she panics and grabs on to his sleeve. “It’s just, I don’t know you. I don’t know if you’re an asshole or not and it’s making me feel like everything is out of place.”

He looks at her with an unreadable expression. “Well, what would you like to know?”

“How about your real major, for starters?”

“Business.”

“Where did you do your undergrad?”

“Yale.” He pauses. “Wouldn’t it be better to do this over coffee anyway?”
She sighs. “You’re probably right.”

He smiles at her, and she has to admit, it’s a pretty sight. “I promise you won’t regret it.”

And approximately three dates and six kisses later, she tells him she doesn’t.
Even though they’ve only been dating for three months, Lizzie feels really good about her relationship with Darcy. Sure, every once in a while Darcy won’t understand that she’s teasing him, or he’ll say something that she reads too much into, but for the most part it’s been good, really good. He’s sweet and kind and gentle and exactly what she needs, which is why she’s surprised at how dramatic he’s being right now.

“You haven’t seen Star Wars?!”

It’s both an exclamation and a question, so she answers, “No?”

“You have?”

“No, I mean, I haven’t seen Star Wars.”

“What the fuck.”

Her eyes widen at his expletive, arms going around her legs as she watches him from the bed. “I didn’t know you had such strong feelings about Star Wars.”

He becomes sheepish at that, rubbing the back of his neck as he settles next to her against the headboard. “Sorry.” He pauses. “You honestly haven’t?”

“No, is that a problem?”

“No.”

“Really? Because it sounds like it is.”

He sighs and tugs on her arm until she’s sprawled next to him. “My parents died around the time the second episode came out, so I took Gigi to see it in an effort to cheer her up. It snowballed from there, and now it’s the one thing we do together. Which is why I thought it might be nice if we all went to see the new one together.”

She hums “So it is important.”

“Yes.” He looks at her carefully. “It’s okay if you don’t like the movies, you know. Gigi and I will just go by ourselves.”
“So you won’t break up with me if I don’t want to see it?”

He looks stricken. “Lizzie, no, of course not, I didn’t mean for you -”

She smiles as she curls closer to him. “Will, I’m just teasing. I haven’t seen Star Wars mostly because I’ve never had a reason to. It’s not like I hate them or anything.”

It’s only a little bit of a lie. She really doesn’t hate them, but she’s avoided them out of stubbornness, and because from the little she’s seen it looks like they suck. But this is important to her boyfriend, so she figures she can suck it up. Even if it means swallowing her weird pride at having avoided them for so long.

“So you’ll go?” His relief is palpable.

“I mean, we’ll have to watch all of the other movies beforehand, so I know what’s going on, but yeah, I’d love to go.”

The brush of his lips against hers has her tugging him down so they can kiss properly. He huffs a laugh. “Well, not all of them. I like to pretend episode one doesn’t exist.”

“Why is that?”

“It’s useless. Everything important you need to know from that movie is recapped in episode two.”

“I think you should let me be the judge of that.”

He groans and drops his head to her shoulder. “The things I do for you.”

She grins. “I know. I’m very lucky.”

“So, have you queued up episode one yet?” Lizzie asks, pouring the freshly microwaved popcorn into a bowl.

“No, we’re starting with Rogue One.”

She wrinkles her nose, watching her boyfriend as he grabs a handful of popcorn, sitting next to her with an excited grin on his face. “I thought I said I wanted to watch episode one.”

“And we will. Unfortunately,” he mutters, causing her to pinch his side. He grabs her hand and intertwines their fingers. “We’re watching the movies in a modified Machete order.”

“The words you just said make sense individually, but I don’t understand the sentence.”

He sighs. “The Machete order is four, five, two, three, and then six, which is the best way to watch the films, I think. But since new movies have come out since then, and you insist on watching one, we’re going Rogue One, four, five, one, two, three, six, and then seven and eight.”

“But why?”

“It’ll make more sense that way, narratively.” He presses a kiss to her forehead as she snuggles in closer. “Just trust me, okay?”

She sighs as if he’s putting a great burden on her. “Fine. I trust you.”
“You’ll see.”

Two hours and fifteen minutes later, she’s crying into his shirt. “They should have been able to escape! The shield was down!”

He strokes her hair. “The point of the movie was that sacrifices had to be made. It wasn’t all sunshine and roses.”

“But they all deserved to be so happy. Like, what about Bodhi?!”

“Do you want to stop?” he asks gently. “We don’t have to continue.”

She glares at him. “Don’t you dare. You got me into this mess, you’re getting me out.”

“It gets better, I promise.”

Two movies later, she has to admit she’s been missing out. The acting is cheesy in parts and the effects are definitely dated, but the action is exciting and she likes the chemistry between the characters. The last scene of episode five has her gasping. “So Darth Vader is Anakin Skywalker.”

“Right.”

“And he was Obi-Wan’s apprentice?”

“Yes.”

“But how did he turn to the dark side? What about Luke’s mom?”

He gives her a grin. “This is where the prequels come in.”

She hates to admit he’s right, but she really could do without the first one. It’s terrible all around, with bad acting, bad CGI, and plot points that make no sense. The best thing about it is Darth Maul and Liam Neison going at it with a young Ewan McGregor. Two is almost as bad, and Hayden Christianson is truly, truly terrible, and she doesn’t believe for a minute Padme would fall for Anakin with Obi-Wan around, but it does give her background.

“So that’s the Ben that raises Luke?”

“Yes.”

“And Padme is Luke’s mom?”

“Yes again.”

“But this all comes toppling down because none of this stuff makes it to four.”

“You seriously have to wait until we’ve seen all the movies, Lizzie.”

She groans, wrapping herself around a pillow as she presses her forehead against his shoulder.

Revenge of the Sith is better yet, Hayden’s emotional constipation lessening slightly so that he’s a little more believable. Padme’s character is basically destroyed, though, and she’s not a fan. “This is stupid.”

“But necessary.”
When Leia is named as Luke’s sister, she gasps. “Wait, but they kissed!”

“Of course that’s what you’d go to.”

“Shut up and put in the next one.”

She loves the Ewoks, and Han’s character development, as well as Leia’s badassery, cheering when the princess strangles Jabba. She cries again, though, at Darth Vader’s death scene. Darcy’s arm squeezes her from where it’s draped over her shoulders. “Are you okay?”

“It’s just sad that he could never meet Leia, as a good guy.”

“I don’t know, I think it’s better this way.”

She sighs and stretches. “Yeah, you’re probably right. So, next is the newest one, right?”

“Yes, The Force Awakens.”

“And then we’re seeing the new one tomorrow night?”

“With Gigi.”

She takes a deep breath. “I’m ready.”

Rey, Finn, and Poe are amazing, and she’s glad none of them are white men, even though she loves Han and Luke. And then she sees Han cut down by his son, and starts crying again.

Darcy looks down at her in concern. “I didn’t know this was going to take such a toll on you.”

She glares up at him. “Don’t try and tell me you didn’t cry when you saw this.”

“I may have shed a tear or two,” he admits. “But you like the movies?”

She rolls her eyes. “Oh my God, Will, I can’t believe you have to ask that. It’s not like I was crying because they were bad.”

“Just making sure!”

The next night finds them standing in line with Gigi anxiously awaiting the theater to open so they can find their seats.

“I’m so excited,” Gigi gushes. “I’m so glad you came, Lizzie!”

Lizzie grins from behind her new R2-D2 scarf. “Me, too. I just wish it wasn’t so cold.”

“We’ll be inside soon enough.” Darcy hands his sister a fifty. “Want to run and get us some coffee from the Starbucks across the street?”

“Be right back!” Gigi yells over her shoulder as she runs to get out of the cold.

Lizzie huffs a laugh. “Lucky girl.”

“Here,” he says as her wraps his arms around her. “Better?”
“Much.” She sighs and rests her head against his chest. “I can’t believe I’m actually waiting in line for a Star Wars movie.”

“Well, I’m really thankful you are,” he murmurs, lips pressing to the top of her head. “Hey?”

“Hm?” She tilts her face up to look at him.

His face is unreadable, but his eyes are sparkling. “I love you.”

If she didn’t feel so serious about him, and didn’t know him as well as she does, she would respond with ‘I know’, just because it feels thematically appropriate. However, she does know him very well, and understands that he takes this very seriously. “I love you, too.”

She loses her self in their kiss, everything else fading away as she brushes noses with him. They’re snapped out of it, however, by Gigi clearing her throat. “I brought your coffee, and the line is starting to move.”

They both blush, but Lizzie takes her coffee with a grin. “Thanks, Gigi.”

Darcy’s hand finds hers as they move forward, Gigi chattering away beside them. “Ready?” he asks her.

She smiles. “More than ever.”
i just want you for my own

Chapter Notes

Prompt: ‘You don’t realize I can see over the fence to watch you make snow angels like you’re five years old au’ except i changed it because i do what i want especially in the month of december

Title from 'All I Want For Christmas is You' by Mariah Carey. Because obviously.

See the end of the chapter for more notes

There’s something magical about snow falling in the middle of night, Lizzie thinks. Her hands are wrapped around a mug of steaming hot chocolate as she sits and watches the sky from the bay window in the room she’s been given, big fat flakes drifting towards the ground in silent waves. It helps that she’s out in the middle of essentially nowhere, surrounded by the woods that flank the Pemberly estate.

She still can’t quite believe she’s here, in this gorgeous house in the English countryside for the duration of her winter break. The strangest part about it is how much Darcy seemed to want her to be there. Yes, Georgie had invited her, but all she could see was Darcy’s face, looking more excited than she had ever seen him. Even though they were almost friends, having finally put all the bad blood behind them, she would’ve thought three weeks in his home would make him feel weird.

Apparently not, however. If anything Darcy’s been more relaxed than she thought possible. Instead of spending the holidays alone in her crappy little apartment in Boston, she’s in a castle in England having a handsome, kind guy giving her a tour of the country. It still doesn’t quite feel real, and the perfect snow falling does nothing to help that.

She takes a sip of her hot chocolate, closing her eyes briefly at the rich taste of it on her tongue and the feeling of warmth that spreads through her. It’s late, and she’s sure she’s the only one awake in this perfect moment, with the snow and landscape and warm drink in her hands. So she’s surprised to say the least to see Darcy trudging through the snow of the backyard.

Cupping her chin in her hand, she leans forward and almost presses her nose to the window to make sure she’s seeing things correctly. It’s well past midnight, and the Darcy siblings went to bed around ten. A sudden movement to Darcy’s right, however, explains the situation.

Georgie’s pet terrier Jasper is bouncing around in the snow, little nose peeking out from the two feet that cover the ground. She can see Darcy’s shoulders shake, as if he’s laughing. It is a cute sight, the way Jasper is engulfed by the snow, making her smile as she takes in his fight against the seemingly endless flurry.

She audibly laughs when she sees Darcy start making snowballs and throwing them, sending Jasper to madly dash after the clumps that meld back into the ground once they land. She never thought she’d get such enjoyment out of watching Darcy, but she’s suddenly struck by how glad she is that she decided to stay up to watch the snow fall.

On a whim, she winds a scarf around her neck and throws her heaviest coat on, slipping her feet into her boots once she reaches them at the bottom of the stairs. She has an urge to sneak up on
him, but the latch on the backdoor is loud so he looks up startled when she takes that first step towards him.

“Elizabeth?”

He sounds so confused, she thinks he might think he’s dreaming. “What are you doing out here at one in the morning?”

“Jasper had to go out, and I thought I’d let Georgie sleep.” He gestures to the dog, who’s now digging away at the base of a nearby tree. “What are you doing out here?”

She grins. “I was watching the snow fall, and then I saw you. Making snowballs and throwing them.”

He turns red. “For Jasper’s entertainment, clearly.”

“Yes, clearly.” She looks up at the sky. “You know, I don’t remember the last time I saw a snowfall like this. It’s beautiful.”

“Yes, it is.” For a half moment she expects him to be looking at her when she tilts her head back down, but to both her relief and disappointment, he’s still watching the snow fall. “It’s hard to leave and go back to America when the weather is like this. Not just because the planes usually get grounded.”

She snorts. “Darcy, did you just make a joke?”

This time he does look at her, a grin on his face. “Me? Joke? Never.”

“Yeah, you’re totally right. I mean, it’s not like I saw you making snowballs earlier.”

“Of course not. I would never get caught doing something so undignified.” He nods in mock solemnity.

She nods along, pressing her tongue against her teeth to keep herself from laughing. “So, you’re saying you would never make snowballs?”

He eyes her with growing suspicion as she steps closer to him. “Yes.”

“Even if I declared war?”

His eyes widen in alarm as she picks up handfuls of snow, packing them and getting ready to aim. He backs away slowly, still fighting a grin off his face. “Elizabeth.-”

Her snowball hits him square in the face.

Soon, they’re ducking and dodging behind trees, Jasper yapping excitedly as he chases the stray snowballs. He gets her good once or twice, but her greatest hit is when she catches him in the face again, snowflakes clinging to his eyelashes as he spits snow out of his open mouth.

She tries as hard as she can to stop laughing at the picture he makes. “I am so sorry -”

“You look like it,” he mutters, a gleam in his eye betraying him as he stalks closer to her.

“Will -!”

She doesn’t really know what she was going to say as he tackles her to the ground, probably something to attempt to get him to not tackle her. But, as his weight settles over her, his hands
pinning her arms to the ground, she realizes that she’s finally said his first name.

Judging from the look in his eyes, he’s noticed it, too. “Yes?”

He is really too close, and she’s having trouble focusing on anything other than the light dusting of freckles across his face. “What?”

“You said my name.”

“Did I?” She knows she comes off as breathless, but can’t bring herself to care. “I don’t remember why.”

He looks at her intently, eyes flicking down to her lips as he leans in. She holds her breath, only to be disappointed when he quickly gets up, offering her a hand. “We should go in.”

“Oh.” She looks up at him. “Are you cold?”

He looks at her in confusion. “Aren’t you?”

Something strange is settling in her gut. It is cold, but she’s not ready to go in yet. “Not really. Besides, there’s one more thing I want to do.”

“And what’s that?”

She grins and begins moving her arms and legs. “Snow angels!”

He bursts into laughter at that. “Somehow, I wasn’t expecting that.”

“Well, you should’ve been. I take my snow angels very seriously.” She stills, biting her lip briefly as she makes a decision in her mind. “The hardest part is getting up without messing it up. Help me?”

He bends over and reaches out his hand to her, and she takes it, allowing him to yank her to him, much more closely than he was anticipating. They stumble, and this time it’s his turn to fall flat on his back on the ground, with her landing on top of him. “Elizabeth!”

She grins as she hovers over him. “Yes, Will?”

He opens and closes his mouth, the use of his first name throwing him off. “Not Darcy?”

“Not unless you want me to stick to Darcy.” The grin slips off her face as she studies him, trying to reassure herself that she didn’t misread the situation.

“No, I like Will,” he says, quietly.

She hums. “I like Will, too.”

Something flashes in his eyes as he manages to topple her over and press her into the ground instead. “Elizabeth, you can’t –”

“Can’t what?” she asks, breathless again.

“Say things like that,” he sighs, “if you don’t mean them.”

She waits a beat, before saying, “And what if I do?”

Time seems to come to a standstill as their eyes lock, and he processes what she’s just said. His
eyes flick down to her lips for a second time this evening, before he leans in once again. This time, however, he doesn’t pull back, and she meets him half way.

Their kiss is wonderful and warm and everything she had ever hoped to have in a first kiss with someone she likes as much as she likes him. It’s so much that she even forgets they’re outside, until Jasper comes and tries to stick his head between hers and Darcy’s.

“Ugh, Jasper,” Darcy scolds, as he gets up and pushes the dog away.

She manages to push herself up off the ground, even though she still feels a little punch-drunk. “He’s probably freezing, like me.”

“I asked you if you were cold,” he reminds her, grinning as she takes his hand.

“Well, yeah, but obviously staying outside turned out for the better,” she glances up at him with only a little bit of worry, “right?”

He stops long enough to give her a lingering kiss, dispelling any doubts she was holding on to. His eyes are bright and happy as he pulls back, leading her towards the back door again, Jasper whining at their heels. “Does that answer your question?”

It’s her turn to grin as his hand finds hers. “I don’t know, you might have to explain it to me a couple more times.”

He smiles down at her. “As many times as you want.”

She grins, moving his arm so it’s around her. “Perfect.”

Chapter End Notes

I do just want to say that I really appreciate all the comments I get! I forget to reply to them because I have like zero attention span but it is what really keeps me going. Thank you all so much for reading these stories and liking them!!!!!!!

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!