Summary

George Wickham tries to seduce Georgiana Darcy for his own nefarious purposes.

Georgiana tossed and turned in her bed, trying to sleep. She was exhausted, and she was frightened. What if he asked tomorrow? What could she do?

She remembered Wickham’s coal-black eyes with a thrill that was only half fascination. She was pleasantly easy in his company, but out of it, doubts rushed into her mind. At times like this, she was terrified.

The light from the full moon poured onto her bed. Georgiana shut her eyes tightly, her fists clenching.

*Mama,* she thought, *weeping silently, why aren’t you here? I need you! Why did you leave?*

The hot, uncomfortable air turned chill; the breeze rushed in, swirling around her. Georgiana gave a startled shriek and leapt halfway across the room. Was it Wickham? Was he going to carry her away? Instinctively, one hand went to her neck.

A shadow crossed the moon, and the wind swirled. She could catch hints of colour, snippets of blue-white --

And then as she looked she saw that it wasn’t mere air at all, but the shape of a tall woman with strong aristocratic features, her hair piled high on her head, wearing a dress in the fashion of some
twenty years earlier.

Georgiana gasped.

The ghost looked distinctly startled. ‘I did not know there were any necromancers still left,’ she remarked.

Georgiana gulped. She heard an incoherent but certainly sinister whisper from outside her window, and a flash of dark hair, shining eyes, and ashen skin passed before her vision.

‘I . . . I’m not . . . Mama, is it you?’

The ghost’s hands went to cover her mouth. ‘Georgiana? My daughter? Why, you are quite grown!’

Georgiana managed a shaky laugh. ‘You do look like Fitzwilliam. Papa always said you did.’

‘Why, what is it? Why did you send for me?’

She burst into tears. ‘He’s coming, I’m sure he is, and I don’t know what to think and I . . .’

The soft steady steps were closer now. Lady Anne whirled, just as Wickham slipped into the room.

‘My love -- ’ he began.

‘For shame!’ cried Lady Anne. ‘Have you no sense of honour, of obligation? Preying on your benefactor’s daughter like this!’

He looked distinctly perplexed. ‘I . . . your ladyship, I understood you were . . . dead.’

‘You are hardly one to be too particular about such distinctions,’ Lady Anne pointed out.

Wickham took one step in Georgiana’s direction. She could see the glint of his fangs in the darkness, and the world swam before her. The wind whistled in her ears.

And suddenly the room was crowded with ghosts. Wickham took a step backward, eyes widening so that she could see her reflection in them.

‘Well, I declare!’ said her great-great-aunt Agatha.

‘Never trust a vampire, that’s what I always say,’ Sir John, a Cavalier with long ethereal curls, declared.

‘Quite so, my dear fellow, quite so,’ a very handsome monk, and many-times great-uncle, agreed.

‘-- urne gedæghwamlican hlaf syle us todæg and forgyf us ure gyltas swa swa we forgyfað urum gyltendum and ne gelæd þu us on costnunge ac alys us of yfele soþlice,’ prayed the Lady Æðelflæd.

Georgiana fainted.

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