Summary

Wickham gets his just desserts, and Darcy reveals his powerset exactly why he's an archmage.

The moment when Elizabeth had seen the vampire sunk into her mind as deeply as his fangs did into Lydia's neck. Her poor, silly sister had given one shriek before collapsing into his arms. Elizabeth met the creature's eyes and cried aloud.

It was Wickham.

Everything Darcy had said sprang into her mind. He had not known, for certain, but suspected -- scattered words went through Elizabeth's mind as she ran after him.

Lydia -- Lydia -- Lydia --

-- lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil --

‘Miss Bennet? Miss Bennet? Elizabeth!’

Blinded by tears and rage, it took no effort for Darcy to stop her in her path. ‘What are doing? Do you not know what night it is?’

She struggled to free herself. ‘He has her -- he took her -- please, I have to stop him --’

‘Stop who?’

‘Wickham.’ She gasped for breath. ‘He has Lydia, he took her, I have to catch him, before --’ She
began sobbing, violently, uselessly. ‘But what can be done? We are only wizards, I cannot stop him, I know very well nothing can be done.’

And then she remembered to whom she spoke. ‘I beg your pardon, Miss Bennet’ he said grimly, and whirled, hurrying. Elizabeth ran to keep up.

‘You should not be here,’ he said, ‘I will manage Wickham.’

‘Lydia will need me.’

She had always thought that all wizards were basically the same, natural mages who could make things grow, sometimes send for a little rain in particularly bad harvests, all but the most powerful looked down upon by the mage-lords in Parliament.

Darcy was a wizard, as she was, as her father; but his mother, she had been a mage-lord, and all her family; if he had inherited anything, anything at all--

She was infuriated with his deliberation and ran ahead, the rocks tearing at her feet.

‘Elizabeth!’

Wickham was about to take flight. Elizabeth put forth the last of her power; vines crawled from the earth, wrapped around his legs and torso. There was a moment of hope before Wickham shook them off as if they were no more than thread.

‘Poor little hedge-witch,’ he sneered, ‘not even worth breeding -- ’

There was a mere whisper from behind her; and then Wickham froze, his eyes wide with fear. His arms dropped loosely at his side, his mouth dropped open. Elizabeth knew Darcy must be behind her, but they had been face to face before, and there had been nothing like this. And then Wickham began to scream, as if in the uttermost torment.

Darcy took several steps forward, until he stood a little ahead of Elizabeth. ‘Miss Lydia,’ he said, ‘go back to your home.’

‘But --’

His eyes flashed, and hers went blank. Immediately she began walked towards Longbourn.

Wickham looked somewhat less threatening as he curled into a moaning ball on the ground. Several cats began yowling. She wondered if she only imagined the distant roar of a dragon.

Wickham crawled to his feet, and Elizabeth could scarcely help herself from shrinking back. She was exhausted; she would fight to the death, but she knew, on her own, it would be to the death.

Yet his dark eyes had the same glazed, empty expression that Lydia's had. He took out a stake.

‘You should not see this,’ Darcy said.

‘No, I want to see,’ she told him vindictively, knowing she must look a heathen creature with the wind tearing and tossing her hair about.

‘As you wish.’ He watched Wickham with every appearance of great interest, as the vampire methodically thrust the stake into himself, slowly disintegrating into a pile of ash. The harsh breeze blew the remnants far and wide; and Elizabeth took Darcy’s hand.

‘We owe you everything,’ she said, meeting his clear eyes.
‘I do not wish your gratitude,’ he said, beginning to step back. Elizabeth held on tight.

‘Fitzwilliam,’ --he started -- ‘you never did tell me what your gift is.’

‘You did not guess?’ He met her eyes squarely. ‘Persuasion, of course.’

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