Texts from Last Night-ish

by FemmeMalheureuse

Summary

A P&P-based fic written after browsing a website to which people submit crazy texts they send or receive. No idea what possessed me to start this series, but a complete story is gradually emerging. This is a work-in-progress without a set posting schedule.

This has been posted at another JAFF site, however it will be posted in smaller, drabble-ish chapters on AO3.

[Graphic: based on sketch of Thomas Philip de Grey, 2nd Earl de Grey, by JAD Ingres c. 1816; original image out of copyright, mod by the author.]
CeeBee: My body hates me. Pretty sure I drank 3 pitchers full of coffee last night and took two Adderall. I slept and ran a marathon at the same time. You should see my bed.

Stepping off his treadmill with cellphone in hand, Darcy hit Call to reply.

“Damn, Darcy, I literally just sent you a text message.”

“I know. Coffee and Adderall both, Charles? Really?”

“Yeah, so not a good mix. But I really needed to finish crunching these numbers last night before our meeting this morning.”

Darcy sighed. “You’re just being unusually anal retentive. I already had all the numbers nailed down two days ago, and I had Rich go through them again yesterday before close of business.”

It was Charles’ turn to sigh. “Right. I should know by now that Super Darcy would have been all over this deal. If only Vulcan mind melds were a thing, you could have downloaded all your work into my brain pan.”

A snort emerged from Charles’ phone. “I can tell you’re still whacked out on caffeine and ADD meds given the use of mixed pop culture metaphors. Anyhow—maybe we can meet at the coffee shop across from the meeting place and double-check our paperwork before we head into the meeting? Say, 9:00 a.m.?”

“Two hours should be plenty of time. Is Rich coming?”

“No. He’ll hold down the fort and be available to email or text any information we might need during the meeting.”

“All right, gotta’ run. See you in an hour and a half, Darce.”
LuckyLucas: *I woke up hugging my purse and I found a business card in my underwear. How?*

Lizzzzbeth: *Don’t ask me, I woke up alone in a hotel room clutching a bible to my chest. Explain that.*

Pressing Call, Lizzy heard nothing but high-pitched squeals of laughter. “Charlotte!” The laughter got louder.

“CHAR!” Lizzy tried to yell while snickering.

“Okay, okay—*gasp*—too funny.” Charlotte guffawed as Lizzy giggled while holding her head.

“Liz, only you could make a perfectly innocent sales trip sound indecent.”

“And you? I know that yours was far from innocuous. Whose business card was it anyhow?”

“Some guy named Bill I met at the bar after dinner. I only remember he had sweaty hands and soft, slobbery lips.”

“Ugh. Don’t even. I need coffee, I haven’t eaten, I cannot deal right now.”

“Heh-heh. That’s okay, I can’t remember much anyhow. Your sister is such a troublemaker.”

“Mary? What’s she got to do with this?”

“Mary? Who said anything about her? I meant Jane! Look, just wait. I’ve got to get in the shower, just watch for text messages, I’ll add you to the group.”

LuckyLucas: *Hey, i can’t remember much about last night. What happened?*

JaneyB: *We should probably feel disgusted that we took turns eating and drunkenly passing around a burrito the size of a small dog.*

LuckyLucas: *But i’m ok with it, LOL*

JaneyB: *I’ll just say margaritas just taste better when they're bigger than your head*

Lizzzzbeth: *OMFG JANE WHUT?!!*

JaneyB: *Ooops. Good morning,Lizzy!*

“Don’t you good morning me, missy! You were out last night with Char? I didn’t even know you had gone with her to Hatfield!” Jane winced and held the phone away from her ear as her younger
sister yelled at her.

“Lizzy, please, not so loud. I have a wicked headache and stomach ache right now, and I need to keep it together before our meeting this morning.”

“Great, you’re hung over, too? This is so not the day for that.”

“I know, I know. But you know how hard I’ve worked already on getting the numbers together, and all the work I put in on this proposal for Char’s customer, too.”

Lizzy sighed. “You’ve earned a long break and a bonus, Jane. We just have to pull this last meeting off and you can drink a margarita bigger than my ass.”

Jane snickered and snorted. “I don’t know if I can handle one quite that big, sis.”

Liz rolled her eyes at Jane’s predictable reply. “I’m just finished packing, and I’ve already done an automated checkout. I’ve got an hour drive ahead of me. You and Char better wrap up because you have nearly as long a drive. I’ll meet you in the board room at 9:30 am, okay?”

“Sure, Liz, my aspirin and water will have caught up with me by then. Char’s driving, so you know we’ll get there ahead of you.”

After saying goodbye, Liz sent whipped off a text.

Lizzzzbeth: Drive carefully, leadfoot. but I won’t mind if you take a few of those hills a bit faster on the way to the office.

LuckyLucas: OK. But hills? Why?

Lizzzzbeth: Sis needs to master limits of business dinners and happy hours, jsyk.

LuckyLucas: Ah. *wink*

Lizzzzbeth: Have her back before 945, and don’t forget a barf bag kthxbai

LuckyLucas: Ugh you witch LOL

At 9:20 am, Lizzy laughed as she approached Longbourn Corporation’s unoccupied board room, from which she spied Jane running toward the ladies’ room down the hall.

It’s going to be a bloody big day, but taking things too seriously will only make it worse, thought Lizzy, grinning her way to her place at the conference table.
Chapter 3

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PapaBear: *I shouldn't be drunk at 3 pm but alas, here we are...*

Lizzzzbeth: *Dad, couldn't you wait to send that until after I got out of the ladies' room?*

PapaBear: *Nope. The Chivas made me do it.*

Lizzzzbeth: *Hey sis, flag the barkeep, no more for Dad.*

JaneyB: *Already did. Unfortunately after a big tip, bartender is a 'friend' of Dad's, sez he'll call a cab for him.*

Lizzzzbeth: *Just great. Except the bartender won't be there to explain to Mom why Dad has been telling the entire bar he and mom do it to 80's cardio music.*

JaneyB: *Ugh. Now he's all 'Talk about a workout.' Get out here, stat.*

"Okay, Dad, time to go. I'll pull the car around and take you home." Lizzy said with a gimlet eye upon her father, no actual gimlet having been consumed before or after she’d run to the ladies’ room.

"C'mon, just one more for the road, LizzyB. It's not every day a guy sells his life's work to some pompous swell with a stick up his ass."

"No, I think we'll pull the bottle of jillion-year-old Laphroaig you've been saving for special occasions out of your desk drawer in your home office, and toast with that." Lizzy tugged on her father, while Jane pushed him from behind off the bar stool.

"Hey, how do you know about my reserve Scotch?"

"I know almost all your secrets, Pop. It's how I make sure everything runs smoothly when you're tied up keep Mom out of our hair, or busy with a business deal."

Tom Bennet waved to the bartender, who continued wiping glasses as he snickered at his earliest drunk of the day. Jane took one arm as Lizzy took the other, tugging the older man toward the door.

"Just a few more steps, Daddy. We've got you."

"I know, Janey. You girls have been so good to your old man, made the business what it's become."

Janey nodded her head to signal Lizzy toward the direction of the door.

"Back in a flash, Pop. The car will be at the curb in a sec." Lizzy bolted out the door toward the parking lot.
Tom sighed heavily, giving his eldest daughter an unexpected hug before she led him out to Lizzy’s car. He felt the weight of the world pressing upon him, in spite of having sold off his majority interest in the business for a very pretty penny. The Scotch hadn’t numbed his worries about his daughters’ futures. Had he done the right thing by them, saddling them and their minority interests with that private venture capitalist outfit?

He’d worry about it tomorrow afresh, after his well-earned hangover dissipated.
Chapter 4

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CeeBee: Rich, where u at? You haven't answered my text messages.

MrDarcy2U: Nor mine, Richard. Your communications etiquette is deplorable.

TrickyDicky: Currently in a meeting. I am playing the not throw up game. God i hope i dont lose.

CeeBee: Clearly you agreed yesterday's meeting outcome was tops?

TrickyDicky: Not effing now. Gonna

CeeBee: Rich?

MrDarcy2U: OMFG I'll bet he lost the game and his cookies. Not in that order. Call me. You first, Charles. When you recover, Richard.

"I'll say it again. That was a fascinating meeting, one of the most interesting I've ever been in."

Darcy rolled his eyes, glad that Charles couldn't see him. "Yes, yes, this must be the twentieth such exclamation of pleasure as result of that M&A meeting. It's all you talked about last night over dinner and at the pub."

"And the comptroller, what a dream, an absolute angel!"

"Oh my god, really? Are you going to show up in my office in a minute, bearing nail polish and temporary tattoos, wanting to do my hair while we talk about the opposite sex?"

"Of course not. I can hardly do that when I'm on the road to perform the final due diligence."

"I was kidding, Bing. Your gushing about the bean counter, though, it's so typically you. Yet another 'she's the one for me' chick."

"Wow. You know, she might be just—"

"Stop. Right there, just stop. I've heard this all before, dozens of times now. And this time it's about a new business associate, assuming there are no hiccups in the final contracts or the due diligence you're performing."

Charles sighed so deeply that Darcy had to pull his phone away from his ear. "Yeah, you're right. This is going to be weird. She'll be a subordinate. Way to block the—"

"Halt. Don't say it. Still on the company dime here. Let's get down to business, make sure we’re on the same page."

Charles coughed; Darcy could imagine his friend squirming behind the wheel like an overgrown
"Okay, let 'er rip."

"You're going to check the equipment list against the last inventory at the final site."

"Check."

"You're going to take photos of the equipment, with the serial numbers included in at least one shot of each piece."

"Check."

"And you're going to check all the computer equipment and printers against the inventory, matching ID bar codes and serial numbers."

"Check."

"This should be quite easy. These sites have been the most organized of all the facilities we've ever audited before acquisition, with a blueprint of each manufacturing facility’s equipment layout. Your new smartphone bar code scanning app has made this a breeze."

"Yes, indeedy. Can you believe those two gorgeous women implemented this system, too? That operations veep was pretty hot, too. And saucy? She had your number, had all the answers before you could finish your questions. And those eyes, as fine as her sister's were bright—"

This time Darcy coughed.

"Oops, sorry, boss. I got carried away. I promise, I won't do anything actionable in a court of law."

"Bloody well better not, Charles. While we may agree about those fine eyes, we don't need a sexual harassment suit. We're too busy for that, and the paps don't need a reason to swoop in on us."

"Message received, loud and clear. Speaking of message, I still don't have any texts in reply from Rich. I sure hope he's okay."

"Nothing's wrong with him that time, aspirin, water, and common sense can't cure."

"Later, Darce, gotta' drop off, traffic's getting heavy."

"Thanks, Charles, drive carefully."
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TrickyDicky: Hey cuz, you and Bing left the pub way too early last night. Some of my friends dropped in for a nightcap, just when the place was starting to hop. 

TrickyDicky: There was a point where some of my friends attempted 'moi’s', which stands for makeout on introduction. 

TrickyDicky: It involved going up to women and very aggressively trying to make out with them upon meeting them. 

TrickyDicky: Surprisingly the success rate was exceedingly high. 

TrickyDicky: Wish I could remember how well I did. 

MrDarcy2U: -____- << This is my impressed face. It should be familiar. 

TrickyDicky: Wow, the bitter on that one. Somebody needs to get laid. 

MrDarcy2U: Somebody recalls asking for a phone call. 

Darcy hit Accept as soon as his phone lit up, before it even rang. “I take it your hangover has dissipated, given your improved dexterity at texting?” 

“Yeah, the toxins are out of my system and I’ve swallowed my weight in water and pain relievers. Good to go.” 

“Thank you for sparing me further details. How was the meeting this morning with the accounting department?” 

“Good. They’ve done this enough that they’re nearly on auto-pilot. They’re combing through the last set of financials as I speak. On the face of it, the numbers look good, everything is tip-top.” 

“Excellent. I’m meeting with the bank shortly to address the stock transfer and payment. Shouldn’t take long, it’s nearly proforma.” 

“How are you going to handle the news with Aunt Catherine? You know she’ll dog you about investing in this opportunity as soon as the final press release makes the papers.” 

“Like I usually do, Rich. She’ll swear that my parents would have wanted me to let her into the company, and I’ll swear the board of director’s meeting minutes for the last 30 years say nothing of the kind. She’ll bluster and sputter, but as long as the board remains in sync with my parents’ original mission, and in agreement with me at the helm, she’ll settle down quickly.” 

“And Anne?” 

“Same as usual. We’ll work out some changes to her investment portfolio and she’ll be happy. Her mother is none the wiser, which satisfies both Anne and me.” 

“You’ve got this all down like clockwork after all these years, Darce. I have to say I’m impressed,”
and you know how much I dislike it when I have to acknowledge my younger cousin has trumped me.”

“I appreciate the sentiment, Rich. I know you mean it like a brother would, if I’d had one.”

“Closest damned thing you’ll have until you get married, dude.”

Darcy scoffed at the idea. “I don’t see that happening anytime soon.”

“Not even to Caroline? She’d make it easy.”

“Good god, Rich, she’s the very definition of easy. And don’t tell Charles I said that or I’ll dock your pay.”

“Hah. She’s only easy when it comes to you, and you know it. Lord knows she’s never given me the time of day.”

“Consider yourself lucky. You need a woman like her like you need a hole in the head.”

“And with that, I’m off to put my existing nasal holes to the grindstone.”

“You up for some raquetball this weekend?”

“Yup, just text me.”

“Will do. Just be sure to answer.”
Chapter 6

Chapter Notes

See the end of the chapter for notes.

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Lizzzybeth: Hey, you going to be in your department? Have questions for you re phonecall from Bingley.

JaneyB: Yup. I’ll be here, what’s up with Bingley?

Lizzzybeth: Sweet guy, but pesky, asking questions about consignment equipment. Need documentation.

JaneyB: Pesky? So sorry to hear that. I totally have a huge crush on him, which is fucking up my "classy she-demon with limited feelings" vibe.

Lizzzybeth: She-demon. You? I’m going to have to shut my office door to LMAO about that. Stay put, I’ll be there when I’m done PSML.

“I don’t understand why Mr. Bingley would need to call you. The equipment list was very concise,” Jane said, a knot of worry creasing her forehead as Lizzy entered her office with a sheaf of paperwork.

“Yeah, me, neither. I think he’s jumped the gun and missed the consignment list, detailing all the equipment customers have placed with us for measurements. He strikes me as flighty, maybe a bit ADD-ish.” Lizzy flipped through the papers until she found what she was looking for.

“Here—could you go through this and compare this copy of the equipment inventory we furnished Darcy Group at the last meeting, and make sure that all additions and removals since the meeting are reflected in this report? If there’s been a change, please print a new report and send it to Mr. Bingley by express courier.”

“Sure thing, not a problem. I’d be glad to assist him.”

“Uh-huh. That attitude is going to do a lot for your so-called she-demon cred. I mean, be appropriately helpful given our status as acquisition target, but don’t be a doormat, okay?” Lizzy gave Jane the side-eye, at which Jane blushed.

“Yes, sis. I’ll be careful.”

“Mm-hmm. You do that.” Lizzy rolled her eyes at her sister’s sigh. Jane thought so well of everyone, had not a skeptical bone in her body. She’d give Longbourn away in a heartbeat if she was left to her own devices.

Chapter End Notes
AN: Nope, no idea when I'll put up the next chapter. Haven't finished this story's outline yet; when it's done, I'll start cranking out the rest.

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