Mary rounded a cluster of topiary bushes near the edge of the garden to discover a well-formed, red-haired young man, scarcely older than she, sprawled across a bed of ornamental grasses. His head was thrown back, and a trickle of blood ran from a shallow gash at his temple; a pair of spectacles lay in the dirt next to him. Clutched in one hand was the sparking remains of some cunningly wrought glass instrument; his palm was cut up quite badly. The other hand clasped a length of polished wood.

Mary crept deeper into her sister Jane's garden, leaving Fordyce's Sermons abandoned behind her on the bench where she'd been reading for the past hour. The quiet, groaning noises coming from somewhere amidst the shrubbery continued unabated, but there was no repeat of the great cracking sound and heavy crash that had first caught her attention. A good thing, too; her sisters Lizzy and Lydia were the brave Bennet daughters, not she. Had there been the slightest bit more clatter, she might have run inside at once to report the disturbance, but as it was, she was rather more concerned for the poor soul who'd caused it. He-- or she-- was apparently in a great deal of pain. She felt it her Christian duty to investigate.

She finally rounded a cluster of topiary bushes near the edge of the garden to discover a well-formed, red-haired young man, scarcely older than she, sprawled across a bed of ornamental grasses. His head was thrown back, and a trickle of blood ran from a shallow gash at his temple; a pair of spectacles lay in the dirt next to him. Clutched in one hand was the sparking remains of some cunningly wrought glass instrument; his palm was cut up quite badly. The other hand clasped a length of polished wood.

Mary gasped at the sight of the wand. She and her sisters knew of the existence of magic-- indeed, the eldest three had all received Hogwarts letters at the age of eleven-- but it was not thought proper for women of her station to attend that sort of public institution, and most of the tutors they'd had had refused to teach them the more interesting sorts of spells. Still, they did each possess a wand, which they were instructed to keep hid away at all times.
None of the gifted Bennet girls had expected the great good fortune of meeting and wedding a similarly magical husband; most wizard-blessed families in their circle kept that knowledge just as close as the Bennets did, wary of exposure to the Muggle world their livelihoods and fortunes were irrevocably enmeshed with, and it was impossible to recognize them for what they were at any public gathering. Lizzy had been exceedingly lucky in that regard, but Jane had not, and she had yet to tell Charles or hire magical servants; Mary would have to hide the wand before returning for assistance. It was a lucky thing, indeed, that she'd investigated before calling for help.

She inched tentatively closer to the young man, dirtying the front of her gown as she knelt in the garden plot, and reached out to pluck the wand from his hand. There was a nervous moment as his grip tightened momentarily on the wooden handle, and his groans increased; a breath later, however, he had let go and the wand was hers. She discreetly tucked it under the handkerchief shielding the neckline of her dress and down between her bosoms where no one would dare investigate, then looked up, preparing to stand and head back toward the house.

She was startled into stillness again when she realized that he was watching her; at some point in the last few moments, he had opened his eyes, and his dull, heavy-lidded gaze was fixated upon her concealed cleavage.

Mary blushed, then swallowed. "I'll keep it safe for you," she said, nervously. "But I must return to the house for assistance."

He gave a half-nod, then groaned and closed his eyes again.

Mary ran back through the garden, heart beating altogether more quickly than the exercise warranted.

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