A New Life at Pemberley

by LizzyOakenshield

Summary

The life of Mr. & Mrs. Darcy a few years into their marriage. Pure Fluff.

Notes

Now expanding into a series. All characters are property of Jane Austen. Please R&R!
Chapter 1

Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy was awoken quite suddenly by a loud, shrill noise that was still somewhat alien to him. Beside him, his wife slumbered peacefully, remaining blissfully unaware of the sound that was emanating from the room just next door. Before leaving bed, Darcy gazed at the face of his sleeping wife. The signs of fatigue lined her face, a result of the lack of sleep they had both been experiencing over the past few months. To Darcy, nothing could ever diminish his wife's beauty. In fact, the reason for her fatigue had only increased his love, adoration, and devotion to this woman. The woman whom he had loved since the moment he saw her at the ball at Meryton almost four years ago. The woman who had soundly rejected him and swore that he was the last man in the world she could ever marry. 'How times have changed,' Darcy thought to himself. Not only was the incredible Elizabeth Bennet his wife and the mistress of the Pemberley estate, she was now the mother of his child. The cries from the nursery next door grew louder and more impatient. He had lingered far too long; the cries of the baby were starting to wake Lizzie. Her eyelashes fluttered as she opened her tired eyes and her dark brown orbs met his blue ones.

"Remind me again, my love, why we didn't employ a nurse," Lizzie questioned drowsily as she snuggled closer into Darcy's chest.

"I seem to recall that you wanted us to raise our child on our own, and not by nurses and governesses, sweetheart," Darcy replied, kissing her forehead. "Good morning, Mrs. Darcy," he said and softly kissed her lips as he did every morning.

"At night, I fear that it may not have been the wisest choice I've ever made, Mr. Darcy," she replied with the beginning of a grin gracing her sleepy face.

"This stage will pass, my love, no doubt sooner than we want it too. Just ask Jane and Charles. I'm sure that they are missing this stage of our nephew's life. Though I doubt that they are missing it at this early hour," Darcy chuckled, "We should enjoy it while it lasts. But, as for right now, I will see what I can do to try and get us some peace and quiet."

With that, Darcy finally pulled back the sheets and put his feet on the cold mahogany floor. After a quick stretch and putting on his dressing gown, he walked, rather briskly, to the room next door where he found the unhappy infant. The nursery was furnished in all things delicate and feminine. The walls outfitted in ivory wallpaper with subtle pink flowers. Matching ivory curtains framed the windows, which were catching the pale glow of sunlight that was just starting to peak through the trees that covered the beautiful grounds of Pemberley. When Darcy reached the ornate cradle, he saw the most beautiful thing in the world, the most precious thing that has ever been housed in the great estate of Pemberley: his four-month-old daughter.

She truly was, in his not so humble opinion, the most beautiful baby he had ever laid eyes on. She was absolutely perfect. Her looks favoured neither of her parents, but there were definitely features of her tiny face that more strongly resembled either her mother or father. The shape of her little face, eyes and lips definitely more closely resembled her mother. 'She will be a great beauty, just like my Lizzie,' Darcy thought to himself. He reached into the cradle and lifted out the tiny baby. Her crying subsided almost instantly when she realized she was now comfortably held in the strong, protective arms of her father. She continued to whimper until she heard his deep, soothing voice talking to her.

"My little love, you are making quite a fuss, aren't you? Just in need of a little attention aren't we my darling, Rose?"

Her cries ceased almost immediately as she looked up contentedly at her father. Her brilliant blue
orbs were unmistakably those of her father and were surrounded by the longest eyelashes Darcy had ever seen on an infant. As Darcy continued to talk to his daughter, he ran his fingers through the dark auburn curls that covered her tiny head.

"Well, we are quite well now, aren't we? I think you may have awoken the entire house. The sun is nearly up now, can you see?" Darcy asked as he walked over to the window that overlooked the very handsome and managed grounds. "What do you say, Rose, do you think we should go see if your Mama is awake yet? How about that, my darling?"

The infant replied with a small, toothless grin.

"I'll take that as a yes," Darcy whispered as he beamed down at his daughter as he made his way towards the master bedroom to find his wife peacefully sleeping again.

"Lizzie, my love, we have a visitor," Darcy whispered as he entered the room. Lizzie's eye fluttered open slowly, but she was awake instantly after seeing Darcy carrying their daughter in his arms.

"My two favourite people in this entire world," Lizzie beamed at the father-daughter pair. "Please, husband, bring me my precious little angel." Darcy willingly obliged and handed off their daughter into her mother's warm arms, followed by a sweet, delicate kiss. "My darling Rose, you grow more beautiful everyday."

"Just like her mother," Darcy replied, briefly taking his eyes of their daughter and gently placed kisses on Lizzie's temple and Rose's forehead.

"I can't believe that we created something so beautiful, Will. Can you believe how perfect she is?" Lizzie asked smiling down at Rose, brown eyes meeting blue.

"I fall more in love with her every day, just as I do with you. I never thought that I could love anyone or anything as much as I love either of you. Do you know how lovely you are my Rose? You and your Mama are the most amazing things in the entire world. There is nothing that I wouldn't do for either of you, I hope you never forget that," Darcy said as he wrapped his arm around Lizzie's waist, pulling her closer to him. "You two have filled my life with so much love and happiness that it seems a sin to be so incandescently happy."

"I can only tell you that I feel the same, my love. Just a few years ago did you ever think that we could have a life this perfect together?" Lizzie asked. "Irrevocably in love, married, and now with the most beautiful baby girl that England has ever seen?"

"I confess, sweetheart, that after your rejection at Rosings I feared that this life, the life I dreamed of with you, was never going to be possible. But when your affections changed, and I daresay my love and desire for you only grew, this dream was finally within my reach. But never in my wildest dreams was it ever this perfect. I wouldn't change a thing about the past, it is what led us to this amazing life that we are living now."

Rose started to fuss, only to regain the attention of her parents to let them know that she was in need of some breakfast.

"Well, someone is hungry," Lizzie said as she smiled down at her baby. "Sweetheart, could you get someone to bring up our breakfast this morning, I confess I don't want to leave this room for a while."

"Of course, my love. I'll tend to that while you feed to her." Darcy only had to leave the room for a moment before he found one of the servants and requested that their breakfast for the day be
brought up to their room. When we reentered the master bedroom to find Lizzie propped up against several pillows with their daughter at her breast suckling greedily, her tiny hand wrapped around one of Lizzie's fingers and her big blue eyes focused on her mother. "Looks like someone was very hungry," Darcy chuckled as he slid onto the bed, being careful not to disturb the baby.

"Very hungry this morning, but she's a growing girl, aren't you Rose?" Rose suckled a little while longer, until her little tummy was full. Lizzie handed the baby off to her husband who burped her as Lizzie put on her dressing gown and rejoined her little family on the bed, snuggling closely into her husband's arms. Both Lizzie and Darcy smiled down at their daughter and were rewarded with a beautiful toothless infant smile.

"How are you this morning, Mr. Darcy?" Lizzie asked flirtatiously, followed by a brief, but passionate kiss filled with love and adoration.

"Never been happier, Mrs. Darcy," he replied with a smile. "And how about you, Miss Darcy?" he asked his beautiful little Rose, who replied with a contented gurgle, wrapping both of her tiny hands around her parents fingers. The lives of the Darcys of Pemberley couldn't get much better.
Chapter 2

It was a warm, and somewhat surprisingly sunny, May day at Pemberley: the gardens on the grounds were in full bloom, the trees were covered in beautiful rich green leaves that danced as a gentle breeze passed over them and the robins were nesting in the hedgerows. It was so lovely outside that Lizzie had decided to take Rose out for a walk around the grounds to their favourite spot under the willow overlooking the lake. Fitzwilliam was busy in his study attending to various pressing business matters, so Lizzie took the opportunity to spend some alone time with her daughter.

At seven months old, little Rose Georgiana Jane Darcy was the pride and joy of her parents as well as all of her family and even the staff at Pemberley. She was undoubtedly a credit to both her parents in every way. Not only was she an exceptionally beautiful little girl, she had a joyful and charming countenance to go along with it. In looks and demeanor, she took after both of her parents. Her appearance and budding personality favouring neither her mother or father. She had her mother's dark auburn curls that framed her delicate face. She also shared her mother's porcelain skin and rosebud mouth. Her eyes, which Lizzie often referred to as "fine" to tease her husband, were definitely her father's: a brilliant cerulean blue which stood out even more because of the contrast with the colour of her hair.

Rose was an extremely happy infant, who inherited her mother's love a smiles and laughter. Whenever she saw either of her parents, she always greeted them with a large, toothless grin, giggling and reaching towards whichever parent it was, wanting to be held and snuggled. Her parents were always obliging in her need for affection, wanting their daughter to grow up having no doubts about how much the loved her, and they themselves liked nothing better than to dote on her, showering her with kisses and cuddles whenever they possibly could. However, Rose could be quite a serious and focused child, especially given her age, definitely taking after he father in that sense. Some of Darcy's favourite time alone with his daughter was when she would sit at his desk with him while he was carrying out his business affairs: writing letters, checking over his accounts or even just reading a book. Both father and daughter would glance over the pages with the same serious look on their faces, deep in concentration, while slowly twirling a piece of hair around their finger. Lizzie had caught her favourite pair like this a few times, sometimes even catching them sound asleep in Darcy's favourite armchair, his arm wrapped protectively around his daughter's back, one hand resting just above his heart, the other gently wound into the hair just behind his ear. She often wished that she could capture these precious father-daughter moments forever.

After a pleasant walk through the gardens, Lizzie and Rose reached their favourite spot under one of the large willows by the lake. Lizzie laid out the soft blanket that she had brought with her and gently laid Rose down on it and shortly followed suit and laid next to her daughter. Over the past few months, Rose had grown much more aware and attentive to the world around her and loved to look around and discover what she could about the world for herself. Lizzie continued to lie there, soaking in the warmth of the sun watching and listening to her daughter babble about what she was seeing.

"Are you watching the birds, my darling?" Lizzie asked her daughter while running her fingers through her daughter's curly hair. At almost that moment, Rose started flailing her little arms and kicking her legs with a broad smile on her face. "Are you trying to fly away like the birdies? Aren't you a clever girl!" Then, Rose rolled over onto her tummy and started reaching in the direction behind Lizzie's head. "What are you seeing over there, my love?"

"Oh, nothing in particular, sweetheart," came the deep, velvety voice of her husband. "How are
my two favourite girls faring on this fine morning?" he asked while scooping up Rose into his arms and sitting her in his lap on the blanket.

"Just spending a little time out of doors while the weather is still fair enough to do so. It's such a fine day that I thought I would take Rose outside for a little adventure. She adores the birds. What brings you out here, my love?"

"Well, I just finished up my business affairs for the day and I couldn't find you in the house, so I figured I would find you here at our favourite spot," he said, placing a kiss on the top of Rose's head, causing her to giggle. "Besides, I have some news for you."

"News?" Lizzie asked inquisitively. "What news would that be, Will?"

"Some of the best sort, I assure you. At least I hope you find it so. Though, I must warn you, it comes at a cost…"

"A cost?" Lizzie asked flirtatiously, cocking an eyebrow. "Oh dear, it must be very good news indeed. What do you think Rosie? Should I ask your Papa what sort of price he is asking for this news?" Rose gave her mother a large grin and started to gurgle and wave her little chubby arms. "Well if you agree, sweetest heart, well then I supposed I shall," she agreed leaning over and placing a kiss on her daughter's cheek. "Name your price, Mr. Darcy."

"Well, Mrs. Darcy," he replied using all the charm he could muster, "the price I am asking is two fold. One, allowing me to accompany you and our gorgeous daughter for the rest of the day…"

"Done."

"Patience, my Lizzie. Don't make any hasty decisions. And second, a kiss from the most beautiful woman in England."

"Well then, husband, you had best start looking for her, she may prove difficult to find," Lizzie said ardently, leaning in for a kiss.

"Indeed she may. Well, since you have agreed to both my terms, I'd best be off to try and steal that kiss form a beautiful lady," Darcy said standing up and passing Rose back to her mother. "Could be a very long day of looking," he stated plainly and walked off behind Lizzie in the direction of the trees.

Stunned, Lizzie quickly turned her head to find her husband, who had apparently already disappeared. She turned back rather quickly and closed her eyes for a moment 'Well, that was odd, very odd,' she thought to herself shaking her head. When, suddenly, to her utter amazement and surprise, she felt his lips in hers, drawing her into a tender, yet passionate kiss.

"Mmm, found her," Darcy whispered, his lips a breath away from hers. "It turned out that I didn't need to travel so far after all. And the other most beautiful girl is right here!" he exclaimed, taking Rose from Lizzie's lap, kissing her little cheek and started tickling her tummy, which caused her to squeal with delight. After he stopped tickling her, Rose wrapped her little arms around his neck, never wanting to let her dear Papa go. "Your Mama can be quite silly sometimes, my darling girl," he whispered to his daughter, "where could I possibly find any girl or lady who is more beautiful than either of you?"

"Well, dearest, I think I have paid both of the prices that you asked of me and you have had your laugh. Now, tell me, what is the news you wish to tell me?"

"Very well, sweetheart," Darcy complied, sitting back down on the blanket. "The news is that Jane and Charles will be arriving here tomorrow and will be staying for a fortnight."
"Oh, that is indeed wonderful news! Will they be bringing little David with them? He is such a dear boy, and I wish very much to see my nephew along with my sister and her husband."

"He will be accompanying them, yes. I do long to see him, and Charles and Jane as well. It will be wonderful to see them, as always, and for little miss Rose here to get to know her aunt and uncle and play with someone who is more her age for a change."

"What time will they be here tomorrow, Will?"

"They are expecting to arrive shortly after noon, depending on the roads and if they can depart at the time they desire in the morning. Charles has informed me that travelling with a toddler can prove difficult at times, even with a child as compliant and amiable as David."

"Well this is marvelous news; it was definitely worth the price I had to pay and would willingly pay again, if you would oblige me sir," Lizzie replied just before placing another gentle kiss on her husband's lips. "Thank you, my love. Now, would you and our darling daughter care to join me on the blanket and watch the birds for a little while longer?"

"Most definitely, my Lizzie."

As the little family lay together on the blanket, Rose started to drift off to sleep on her father's chest; her little eyelashes fluttering as she rose and fell with each breath he took and Darcy's arm wrapped tenderly around her tiny body. When she had finally drifted off, Lizzie slid in, snuggling even closer into Darcy's side and ran her finger across her daughter's cheek.

"She is so beautiful," Lizzie whispered to her husband, careful not to wake the sleeping infant. "I sometimes still cannot believe that she is ours."

"Of course she is beautiful," Darcy replied, "how could she not be? I will tell you this, my darling, when you marry the most beautiful woman in England, you are bound to have the most beautiful children anyone has ever seen."

"And the same goes, of course, when you marry the most handsome and wonderful man in England," she replied, stealing another kiss, then returning both of their gazes to their daughter's sleeping form.

"I suppose so," Darcy said smiling, drawing Lizzie in closer and rubbing his hand gently up and down Rose's back. "There is one thing that I have no doubt about, sweetheart."

"And what would that be, Will?"

"I am not the happiest, nor the luckiest man in England." This confession caused Lizzie to look up into her husband's eyes, completely puzzled.

"Is that so, my love? And how is that possible, might I ask."

"I am not the happiest man in England because I am the happiest and luckiest man in the world." With that, Darcy pulled Lizzie in tighter, kissed her temple and the couple joined their daughter in a peaceful slumber, probably the last private and peaceful moment they would have for at least a fortnight when their guests arrive tomorrow.
Chapter 3

Elizabeth woke in her husband’s strong arms as the sun started to filter in through the large master bedroom window at Pemberley. She had had a difficult time sleeping during the night, the anticipation of seeing her sister, brother-in-law and nephew keeping her awake and restless. Darcy still slept peacefully beside her, he had been very busy with estate business over the past week and had been busy all day yesterday preparing for their guests’ arrival. Easing her way out of her husband’s arms and placing a gentle kiss on his lips, Lizzie left the warm comfort of their bed went to her own private chambers to prepare for the day. After dressing in her favourite salmon-coloured gown and having one of the servant girls, Bessy, do her hair for the day, Lizzie went across the hall to the nursery.

Upon opening the door, Lizzie heard one of her favourite sounds in the world: the squeals of joy made by her daughter playing with the mobile hanging just above her in her bassinet near the window. Rose loved the small, delicate figures of birds that flew in circles above her head, which were now just within her reach and flew faster when pushed with her little fingers. Lingering just outside her daughter’s line of sight, Lizzie watched her daughter for a little while, reveling in the pure, unhindered joy of her daughter’s play and laughter. Lizzie offered a silent prayer, however unlikely that it may be, that Rose may experience such happiness and joy for as long as possible before being weighed down with the stresses and anxieties that come with growing up, especially since she was a Darcy.

“Well now, my darling, shall we get you ready for today?” Lizzie said, lifting her daughter out of her bassinet and snuggling her close to her chest. Rose instinctively wrapped her small, chubby fingers into Lizzie’s curls just as she did every morning while Lizzie was getting her ready for the day. “Your Aunt Jane, Uncle Charles and cousin David are coming for a visit and they are very excited to see you,” Lizzie cooed to the infant, tickling her tummy as she dressed her in a light blue gown that matched her eyes perfectly. Unbeknownst to Lizzie, Darcy had silently slipped into the room, watching mother get her daughter ready for the day.

“Well now, my darling, shall we get you ready for today?” Lizzie said, lifting her daughter out of her bassinet and snuggling her close to her chest. Rose instinctively wrapped her small, chubby fingers into Lizzie’s curls just as she did every morning while Lizzie was getting her ready for the day. “Your Aunt Jane, Uncle Charles and cousin David are coming for a visit and they are very excited to see you,” Lizzie cooed to the infant, tickling her tummy as she dressed her in a light blue gown that matched her eyes perfectly. Unbeknownst to Lizzie, Darcy had silently slipped into the room, watching mother get her daughter ready for the day.

“Are you two ladies just about ready? Our guests will be arriving any moment now,” teased Darcy, wrapping his arms around Lizzie’s waist making her jump.

“You are just in time, my love. I think we are both suitably attired, aren’t we, Rosie?” Lizzie said handing Rose over to her father. “Does she not look beautiful?”

“She always looks beautiful, just as you do,” Darcy whispered before leaning in to kiss Lizzie for the first time that day. “Good morning, wife.”

“Good morning, husband. Now, before you try and distract me further,” Lizzie teased, straightening Darcy’s cravat, “let us downstairs so that we will be there to welcome our guests.”

“Very well.”

Anyone unfamiliar with the Darcy family would easily mistake the fact that they were one of the wealthiest families in England. The way that the Darcys carried out their daily routine was so simply domestic, delighting in the modest and everyday joy that their small family could bring to their lives. Pemberley had changed greatly since the marriage of Mr. Darcy to a seemingly common daughter of a southern country gentlemen. She had brought with her a breath of fresh air, changing the very atmosphere of the house, most especially the master of the house. Though still a quiet and somewhat serious, Fitzwilliam Darcy was a changed man. His smiles, which had seemed to be a rare right indeed, were now much more common and his countenance now seemed much more open and familiar. And with the recent arrival of their daughter, Rose, Pemberley was rejuvenated. The change brought by a new baby in a house, even one so great as Pemberley, lifts
the spirits of all those affected. Rose was not only the apple of her parents’ eyes, but also that of the entire estate.

Waiting patiently in the large entrance hall, Rose had started to play with Darcy’s cravat, twisting her small fingers in the soft fabric leaving it irrevocably wrinkled, her parents looking on in affection. Lizzie straightened out her dress and attempted to straighten out Darcy’s cravat and wrapped her arms around the two people she loved most in this world, waiting anxiously for their guests. After what had seemed to be ages, but could not have been more than fifteen minutes, the footman appeared.

“Mr. and Mrs. Bingley have arrived, sir.”

“Thank you, Webster. Please show them in and have their things brought up to the red guest room, it has been made ready for them. David’s things may be brought to the nursery.”

“Very good, sir.”

“Lizzie!”

“Jane!” Lizzie nearly yelled, running towards her sister, enveloping her in a hug. “Oh, how good it is to see you! You look well.”

“As do you, my dear sister. Charles will be along with David in a moment. Now where is my niece?”

“Jane, how do you do?” said Darcy. “Here is the lady of the house.”

“Oh, she is more beautiful than I remembered. Hello, sweetheart, do you have a smile for your Aunt Jane?” Jane cooed to the baby who smiled back with a toothless grin at her aunt, reaching out to play with the necklace that hung from her neck. “She looks just like you, Lizzie.”

“Thank goodness for that,” Darcy jested.

“Darcy!” Lizzie said smiling. “She does look like me, I think. Though she has her Papa’s eyes, which he finds just as ‘fine’, or so I am told. This is such a wonderful surprise, Jane. Darcy only told me that you were coming yesterday.”

“I am glad to be here, Lizzie. Charles, there you are.” Jane said as Bingley appeared in the doorway. He walked in bent over with David walking just in front of him, his hands wrapped around his father’s fingers, taking wobbly yet confident steps in the direction of his mother. David had his mother’s soft, angelic features and his father’s slightly curly, ginger hair. He had a calm and happy countenance, which was unsurprising given his parentage, and was always smiling and eagerly sought affection of those around him. He was a most charming little boy.

“Sorry we took so long, Jane. Young Master Bingley here insisted on walking in himself. Darcy, good to see you my friend!”

“Charles, it is great to see you as well. My word, David has grown so much since last we saw him. And nearly walking on his own already!”

“Indeed. It is best when we try and help him walk around Netherfield. Who would have thought that babies could crawl so quickly!” Bingley smiled, lifting his son up and tickling him under his chin. “Luckily yours is still to young for you to be worrying about that.”

“Thank the lord for that,” Darcy said sounding relieved, beaming down at his daughter and ran the back of his fingers down her soft, round cheek. “This little one will be determined to get around
the house all on her own before we know it, she is her mother’s daughter after all.”

“It definitely appears so! Lizzie, how are you?”

“Very well, Charles, thank you. Did you have a pleasant journey?”

“Quite pleasant, though David could get restless. It’s a long journey for a fourteen month old.”

“It is good that you are staying for a whole fortnight then. Jane, shall we bring the children upstairs and let our husbands catch up over a glass of scotch?”

“That sounds wonderful, Lizzie,” Jane said taking David into her arms, Darcy handed Rose back over to her mother and they headed up the stairs towards the nursery. Just then, Webster reappeared, looking flustered.

“Mr. Darcy, sir. Begging your pardon, but were you expecting any more visitors?”

“More visitors? No I do not think so. Lizzie, my love, were you expecting anyone to visit the house today?”

“No, Darcy, why?”

“Someone has come to call. Who is it that has arrived, Webster?”

“Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, sir.”
“Mr. Darcy, sir. Begging your pardon, but were you expecting any more visitors?”

“More visitors? No I do not think so. Lizzie, my love, were you expecting anyone to visit the house today?”

“No, Darcy, why?”

“Someone has come to call. Who is it that has arrived, Webster?”

“Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, sir.”

“Lizzie, my dear girl, and Darcy, of course!” Mrs. Bennet exclaimed, surging into the room loudly, pushing past the servants, equally as eager to see her daughters and their families, as she was to admire the grandeur of the place Lizzie now called home. “Oh, how I always forget how grand your home is, quite magnificent, Darcy! But the roads are quite treacherous on the way to Derbyshire, what palpitations it caused me on the journey, so trying on my poor nerves...”

“Mama, what a surprise! How good of you to come,” Lizzie said loudly, trying to speak over her mother while squeezing Darcy’s hand gently, trying to calm him. She knew all to well that her mother could sometimes put him on edge. “I’m afraid we had no idea you were coming, nothing has been prepared for you and Papa.”

“Do not worry yourself, my dear. You know that I am never a burden to you and Darcy. You will scarcely know that I am here. And you have enough rooms to house half of Derbyshire, I’m certain of that, just as I tell your Aunt Phillips. Your house is so grand that I don’t know how you shall ever find me, isn’t that right my dear?” she longwindedly expressed, kissing her daughter on the cheek and turning towards her husband. “Is that not so, Mr. Bennet?”

“Just as you say, Mrs. Bennet,” Mr. Bennet said with a slight air of sarcasm. “I’m sure that Lizzie and Darcy will altogether forget about your presence here because of your... quietness.” As he said this, Mrs. Bennet had already turned her attention to Jane, Bingley and young David, fascinated by the babbled words and smiles of the toddler. After a brief moment, Mr. Bennet returned his attention to his second eldest daughter. “Lizzie, my darling girl, how I miss you at Longbourn! I have scarcely heard a word of sense since your wedding day!” He expressed, hugging his daughter closely, careful not to crush his granddaughter. “And what a beautiful girl you are becoming, sweet Rose! You look so very much like your Mama when she was a babe. But you certainly have your father’s eyes.”

“It is so good to see you, Papa. You are, of course, most welcome to our home,” Lizzie said, kissing her father on the cheek. “I sometimes wish that you did not live so far away so that you would be able to see her more often. She is growing up so quickly, I can sometimes scarcely believe that she is the same babe that I brought into this world a few months ago,” Lizzie said lovingly, gazing down at her daughter who, through all the excitement of the day, had started to fall asleep in her mother’s arms.

“As do I, my dear. Though, I am sure that you and Mr. Darcy enjoy more peace and quiet here at Pemberley than I do at Longbourn, with the exception of when I lock myself in the library. Who would have thought that a single room could bring such peace to one’s life!”
“While you are here, Mr. Bennet, feel free to make use of the library here should you feel the need for some quiet,” said Mr. Darcy, who had grown quite fond of his father-in-law. “The books there have been neglected of late as I have been kept quite busy with business affairs and spending time with my two beautiful girls.”

“I thank you sir,” he said shaking Mr. Darcy’s hand and patting his arm. “But I beg you, please do not tell my wife where to find the library. I think she has forgotten where it was since you gave us a tour of the house after the wedding. If she should find it, and me in it, I do not think that I will find another moment’s peace for the rest of our visit here.”

Mr. Darcy chuckled to himself quietly, a smile brightening his face. “I shall see to it personally, sir. I shall inform the servants to lead her to Mrs. Darcy’s library, she seldom uses it as we tend to share mine, the collection is more to her taste, as is the company, I believe.”

“Thank you very much, Darcy. I owe you a great deal for this. I know that you will never have need to escape from your wife for peace of mind.”

“Think nothing of it and indeed I think not, I think that she is what gives it to me,” Darcy said, smiling at his wife.

“Well, you two, I think I must take this young lady to bed for her nap, I’m afraid the excitement of the day has quite tired her out,” said Lizzie, slowly rocking Rose who was now sound asleep, nestled against her mother’s chest.

“I will come with you,” said Darcy. “Mr. Bennet, Webster will show you and Mrs. Bennet to your room as soon as it has been prepared. We will give you some time to settle into your room and walk around the grounds if you wish, and will send for you for dinner.”

“Thank you very much, Darcy, and you Lizzie. I apologize for the suddenness of our visit.”

“There is no need to worry yourself, Papa. You are always most welcome here at Pemberley,” Lizzie whispered, leaning in to hug her father. “I shall see you at dinner, Mama. Jane, I must take Rose to bed, I’m afraid it is time for her nap.”

“Okay, Lizzie. When David is ready for his nap I will take him up to the nursery,” Jane said, watching over her son taking hesitant steps between his father and grandmother.

Lizzie smiled, linked her arm with her husband’s, her daughter resting soundly against his chest, and headed up the stairs to the nursery.

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Lizzie, Jane and Mrs. Bennet sat in the salon after enjoying a delightful meal that the servants had once again prepared, watching over the children as they played together on the floor. Mothers and grandmother, enjoying their cups of tea, looked adoringly over the children as they exchanged babbles and smiles. All was well between the cousins until Rose had gotten hold of one of David’s toys and refused to hand it back to him.

“Ma!” David exclaimed in a heartbreaking tone, large tears beginning to form in his light green eyes.

“Oh, my darling boy. All is well.” Jane said attempting to calm her son, how had crawled over to his mother. “You have so many other toys to play with, surely you can let Rose have one of them.” But David refused to be calmed, so Jane picked up the boy and hugged him closely, easing his tears, and convincing him to play with another one of his toys.
“Rosie, my sweet girl, you must learn to share your toys with your cousin,” Lizzie said, smiling down at her daughter who beamed back at her with a toothless grin and the stuffed bear she had taken from girl cousin firmly in her grasp. “For surely, some day you will need to share your toys with any siblings you might have.”

“Speaking of siblings, Lizzie, you and Darcy must surely be trying for another child soon.”

“Why do you say so, Mama?” Lizzie asked, surprised, but yet not surprised, that her mother would ask her such a personal question about her and her husband’s personal life.

“Well, my dear, as much as I love my dearest granddaughter, a girl cannot inherit the Pemberley estate. Such a think is unheard of, especially for such a great family and estate! You must provide Darcy with a son and heir to one day be master of Pemberley and to secure the inheritance.”

“Mama, how can you say such things?” Lizzie said, shocked beyond words, holding her daughter close to her chest, as though trying to shield her from Mrs. Bennet’s harsh words.

“It is the way of the world, Lizzie. Great men like your husband do not desire daughters they want sons. Heirs they can teach how to run the estate, hunt and ride. Jane has provided her husband with a healthy son and heir, and so must you!” said Mrs. Bennet, her tone growing more critical. Jane was shocked and embarrassed by her mother’s words towards her sister, and she hugged her son closely as he started to doze off to sleep. “Do you want your daughter to end up like mine? The estate entailed away from her, leaving you and her without a home after your husband passes away?”

“Mama, how can you speak to Lizzie like this? Darcy loves Rose, more than anything in this world! He does not fear for the inheritance of Pemberley.”

“So he makes it appear, Jane. But we know how good Darcy is at masking his true feelings, especially on such personal matters.”

“I have heard quite enough, Mama. How can you come into my home, unexpectedly at that, and speak to me thus? Of my daughter and husband? ‘ Lizzie paused to collect herself, trying not to overexcite herself or spill any tears in front of her mother and sister. ‘I must go to bed, I was up quite early, and Rose is tired as well. Though she is but a girl to your eyes, I love her more dearly than any riches or estate or anything in this world. Goodnight Jane, I will see you in the morning.” Lizzie hugged her sister and left the room with Rose, the tears she had been holding back starting to fall down her cheeks.

After enjoying their short visit in the dining room after their meal, Darcy, Bingley and Mr. Bennet got up to join their wives and children in the salon. All three men were surprised to see only two of the ladies and one of the children left, and the room was in complete silence.

“Where is Mrs. Darcy?” Darcy asked, with concern obvious in his tone.

“She has gone upstairs, she felt unwell and had to put Rose to bed,” Jane told Darcy, slowly walking towards him and her husband. “You should probably go and see her, Darcy, I am afraid she is quite distressed,” she whispered, touching his forearm.

“Thank you, Jane,” Darcy murmured back. “I’m afraid I must go to bed as well and check on my wife. Please feel free to stay and enjoy yourselves. Goodnight all.”

“Goodnight, Darcy,” the company all replied and were left in awkward silence.

Darcy rushed upstairs, unsure of why his wife would be so distressed after a seemingly good meal with her family. First, he checked the nursery to see if she was still with Rose. He entered the
room quietly, as not to disturb his daughter who was usually sleeping at this hour. Lizzie was not there, but Darcy entered anyways, brushed his finger down his daughter’s soft cheek and gently kissed her forehead.

“Sleep well, my dearest, darling girl.”

Darcy quietly exited the room and made his way to the master bedroom. He was surprised to hear his wife, attempting, but failing to hold back tears. Darcy quickly entered the room, closed the door, and rushed to her side.

“My love, why are you crying so? Are you unwell?”

“No, Darcy, I am quite well.”

“You are surely not well! You seemed quite happy at dinner, I saw you myself. You were smiling and laughing with your sister, Bingley and your father. Why are you so distressed now?”

“It is nothing, I assure you.”

“It is certainly not nothing. Dearest, we promised that we would always be open and honest with each other, as we have always been. Even from the very beginning, you always spoke your mind to me. Remember my first proposal? How freely you spoke to me then? Why not speak to me thus now? What is it that distresses you so?”

“It was something that Mama said, while you and father and Bingley were still in the dining room.”

“What did she say to you?”

Lizzie told Darcy the whole story. She explained how David and Rose were playing together, how Rose had taken one of David’s toys and Lizzie had said how Rose would need to learn how to share should she have siblings one day. As she approached what her mother had said to her, more tears began to fall on her already tear-stained cheeks.

“My mother then went on to say how you do not desire a daughter and how you don’t truly love her. She said that I have failed to give you a son and heir, unlike Jane who has given Bingley one. She says no fathers want daughters, only sons. She made me feel so unworthy of being your wife, and as though if I do not give you a son, you will always regret marrying me.”

“How could she say such things to you? Lizzie, you know how much I love Rose, I love her more than anything. You and her and the most beautiful and precious things in my life! I would gladly give up everything, this house, all our fine furnishings and carriages, the lot of it, if it meant that I would still have you both. Please, never ever think that I do not love either of you. You could give me only daughters and I would love them all as much as any sons! And who is she to say such things, a woman with no sons to speak of.”

“But if you don’t have an heir…”

“Then I shall have a very happy cousin. I think Colonel Fitzwilliam would quite like to call Pemberley his own, you know how much he admires the place!” jested Darcy, making Lizzie smile, slowing her tears.

“Are you certain, my love?”

“Of course I am,” he whispered, giving Lizzie a gentle kiss on the cheek. “Now, how about I go and fetch our beautiful little girl, I think we should spend the night as a family.”
“I think that would be wonderful,” Lizzie smiled and tucked herself into their bed. Darcy leaned in and gave her a kiss, then left the room to get Rose. He returned shortly, with their daughter sleeping peacefully in his arms. He lay the sleeping infant beside her mother, careful to move the pillows aside so Rose had plenty of space between her parents, and slipped into bed. Rose stirred slightly between her adoring parents, a contented smile crossing her tiny lips as though she could feel the love emanating from her parents as they gazed down at her.

“Goodnight, my beautiful girls. Never forget how much I love you,” said Darcy as he first kissed Rose on the cheek and Lizzie softly, yet romantically on the lips.

“And we love you, so very much.”
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After a much needed and restful night’s sleep, Lizzie began her day as she normally did. Darcy had taken Rose back to the nursery shortly after Lizzie had fallen asleep the night before, emotionally exhausted from the previous day. He had awoken early in the morning for business in the village, but promised to be back in time for lunch. After calling her maid to help her with her dress and hair and arranging what was to be prepared for lunch and dinner that day, Lizzie went down to breakfast with the Bingleys and her parents still feeling out of spirits from the events of the previous day. After a thankfully uneventful meal, Lizzie, Jane and the children decided to take a turn around the grounds. ‘It is a beautiful sunny day and the perfect weather to enjoy Pemberley at its finest,’ Jane said at breakfast, troubled by her sister’s unusual reserve, hoping to create an opportunity to speak more openly in private with her sister. She had a decent idea of what it was that was troubling her sister so, and hoped that both a walk and sisterly reassurance might help to cheer her.

The sisters had been walking for nearly half and hour and Lizzie had scarcely spoken, other than taking the opportunity of pointing out the colourful flowers or the birds flying around the Rose and David. Knowing they were far enough away from the house and that their mother would not be bothering them, Jane decided it was an opportune time to broach the subject of what had been said the night before.

“Dearest Lizzie, I know what it is that is bothering you so; would you like to talk about it?”

Lizzie exhaled, tension obvious in her features. Jane knew that what their mother had said had affected, but she did not know it was this greatly.

“Oh Jane, I do not want to burden you with my troubles…”

“Lizzie, I insist. I can see how unhappy you are. Let us lay the blanket down here and take a rest for a little while.”

Together, the sisters lay down the blanket on the hill overlooking the lake. David crawled around nearby, following butterflies and picking the small flowers. Rose sat on her mother’s lap, playing with a daisy that her cousin had picked.

“Now,” Jane said, “I know that what our mother said last night as made you very upset, and I understand why. It was very unkind of her to say such things to you and about your daughter – her own granddaughter – especially in your own home. Did Darcy not come and find you? He left the room in such a hurry and looking quite out of sorts when I said you were feeling unwell…”

“He did, and he was so compassionate. He said he would give up everything, including Pemberley, if it meant that I would still have Rose and I. He said…” Lizzie stuttered, choking back tears that threatened to fall again, “He’s too good Jane, too kind. I don’t deserve it…”

“Lizzie…” Jane whispered, moving in to hug her sister, “you deserve every kindness. Don’t you dare say that you have failed Darcy by not giving him a son. You haven’t, you gave him this beautiful baby girl that he loves more than anything. Rose is the loveliest, sweetest girl in the
world. She does you and Darcy great credit.”

“But…”

“No buts, Elizabeth Darcy. Look at that gorgeous little girl in your arms,” Lizzie looked down on her daughter’s cherubic face, her bright eyes and toothless grin immediately lifting her spirits, “she is perfect in every way. You are the luckiest to have such a child.”

Lizzie smiled her first true smile of the day, lifting her daughter to her face, kissing her on the cheek and hugging her close to her chest. “Thank you, Jane. I know I should not let what Mama says affect me so. Rose is the pearl of our world and Darcy and I would not have it any other way. Now I most certainly will end up with a house full of daughters!” Lizzie joked and the sisters laughed together.

“I’m sure you will have a son one day Lizzie. But I do have a secret to tell you,” Jane alluded.

“Do tell! I’m sure that Rose and David can keep your secret as well.”

“I think that I might be with child again!” Lizzie screeched, hugging her sister again, being careful not to crush Rose.

“Oh Jane, that is delightful news! Have you told Bingley?”

“No not yet, I think I will tell him when we get home to Netherfield.”

“He will be so happy Jane, congratulations to you both!”

“I’m hoping for a girl this time, and she and Rose will be as good as sisters, just like us.”

The sisters hugged again and, realizing that it was approaching noon, started to head back towards the house for lunch with the rest of their family.

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Darcy was back from the village, having settled his business there. Lizzie met him quickly in the library before they went into lunch with the Bingleys and the Bennets. Darcy immediately noticed his wife’s improved mood. Lizzie explained that she had talked to Jane about what had happened and was feeling much better. Darcy kissed both Lizzie and Rose before going into lunch. When they had only family over as company, the Darcys preferred to keep it slightly less formal, allowing the children to be in the room while the adults ate. A bassinet was brought in for Rose and David, being older, sat contented on the floor playing with his toys, having eaten already. Rose, normally a calm and happy baby, was usually content for the duration of the meal and often nodded off to sleep, but today was an exception. She started to fuss shortly after lunch had been served and the families all tucked in to eat. Thinking she would quiet on her own, Lizzie let her be, but Rose grew more agitated. Lizzie got up from her place at the table and lifted Rose from her bassinet and tried to soothe the baby. Rose calmed slightly, but was still unhappy.

“My sweet girl, what’s troubling you?” Lizzie asked, swaying back and forth. She tried humming a familiar tune, but Rose was unmoved. “I’m terribly sorry everyone, I’m going to take her back to the nursery to try and calm her down.”

“Here, Lizzie, pass her to me,” Darcy offered, standing up from the table, “after all I have not seen her all day.”

“Are you sure?”
“Of course, let me see her.” Lizzie passed Rose into Darcy’s waiting arms, and she settled almost instantly, snuggling into her father’s chest.

“There now,” Darcy said smiling, gently rubbing Rose's back until she completely relaxed into her father's arms, “now we can all enjoy our lunch together.”

“This is most irregular, Darcy,” Mrs. Bennet chimed in. “I have never seen a gentleman with his child at the dinner table.”

“We are trying something new, Mrs. Bennet. Lizzie and I believe that we should spend as much time together as a family as we can, the occasional informality does not harm.”

“Indeed so,” Mrs. Bennet replied dismissively. “Rose is so fond of you Darcy, such a lovely babe. What a shame it is that she was not the heir that you desired.”

“Mama!” Jane exclaimed while Lizzie, Bingley and Mr. Bennet said somewhat dumbstruck that Mrs. Bennet would make such a comment in front of Darcy and Lizzie.

“Mrs. Bennet, I would not trade Rose for any number of sons. She and your daughter are the most precious things in my life along with my sister. If we are meant to have only girls than so be it, I will be the happiest of men,” Darcy said, reaching for Lizzie’s hand under the table, holding it tightly.

Dinner that evening passed without incident, and the subject of Rose being a girl and not a boy was not broached again. The Bennets and the Bingleys left the following morning. After saying goodbye to her parents, Jane, Bingley and David and waving to the carriage as it left down the avenue away from Pemberley, the Darcys breathed a sigh of relief. Lizzie loved her family dearly, but knew all too well how tiring they, particularly her mother, could be, especially for Darcy. The small family withdrew back into the house and sat in the music room overlooking the lake.

“Darcy?”

“Yes, my love?”

“Do you think we should try for another child?” Lizzie blurted out much more quickly that she had intended.

“Pardon?”

“Do you think we should try for another child?”

“A-another child? Has this visit from your family brought this on?”

“I believe so. But do you not think we should consider it? Rose will be a year old soon so I thought it might be a good time...”

“If that is what you desire, of course. But perhaps we should wait a little while longer? Let us enjoy this time with her while she is still so young before having another child?”

“You’re right, perhaps this visit has put something into my mind. Let’s think on it for a little while, but not too long otherwise Mama will think I need reminding again especially now that Jane…” Lizzie hesitated, and blushing looked away from Darcy.

“Now that Jane what?”

“Oh it was meant to be a secret, but I suppose there is no harm in telling you because I know that
you will not tell. Jane thinks that she is with child again! But she has not told Bingley yet.”

“How wonderful! Well, let us celebrate their happiness and then we can think on adding to our own,” Darcy said leaning in for a kiss.

“As you wish,” Lizzie teased, accepting his kiss. She leaned into him as they admired the view of the lake from the window, overlooking the spot where they had met unexpectedly during Lizzie’s first visit to Pemberley, contemplating how much had changed since then and all that the future had in store.

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