A Rose in the Wilderness

by LovedLik3WildFire

Summary

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth have been married for three months. In those three months, Lizzie has noticed something about Darcy's character that bothers her. He loves her, she knows that; but, he is also very private and hardly confides in her. Will Lizzie be able to break through his tough exterior, and reach is heart, before it's too late?

Notes

Pride and Prejudice belongs to Jane Austen. I own nothing; just borrowing the characters.
The entire village of Longbourn had been stunned by the news of Elizabeth and Darcy's engagement. Lizzie Bennet's disdain for Mr. Darcy was well known throughout the village, and the idea of Mr. Darcy succeeding seemed improbable. However, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth were married, and the news of their union soon fell from the lips of townspeople. There was other gossip to circulate, and certainly, while Mr. Darcy was a notable man, he was not worthy (in their opinion) of continued talk.

Elizabeth Darcy found herself thrown into a word of importance unlike anything she had ever known. She was now the Mistress of an estate that far exceeded her prior residence, and secretly, she loved it. Every room was filled with new treasures to uncover, not to mention the multiple libraries to explore. Mr. Darcy had told her that Pemberley housed three libraries; two were of substantial size, while one was tremendous. It gave Lizzie such delight to be afforded the pleasure of these rooms. However, among the grand rooms and even grander grounds, she found one particular item not affixed to Pemberley more worthy of her attention than anything. Her husband, Fitzwilliam Darcy.

He was a treasure beyond anything she could imagine. While she knew, without a shadow of a doubt that his heart was her own, Lizzie still found Mr. Darcy to be a closed book. He was quiet and content within the confines of his own mind. Rarely did he venture to reveal a smile, unless in the presence of those he truly trusted. He was like a meadow, hidden among miles of trees and brush; difficult to discover, yet marvelous when found. It was her mission to unlock the real Mr. Darcy hidden behind his facade of stately pride.

One particular Saturday morning, Lizzie decided she was going to begin her journey of opening up that heart of Darcy's. Mr Darcy, Lizzie and Georgiana were seated in one of the drawing rooms, making gains in their various employments. Mr. Darcy sat at a little table by the window, writing various letters of business. Georgiana was working on fixing the trim on a bonnet, while Lizzie sat quietly reading one of her favorite novels. As Lizzie finished the fifth chapter, she closed the book and decided to take a turn about the room. Her legs were fatigued from sitting in one position for so long, and while admiring the various charms of the room was enjoyable, what she truly desired was to be outdoors. The sounds of the birds singing beckoned her like a long lost friend.

"Mr. Darcy," Elizabeth said coming up to the table. "Are you quite finished with your letter writing?"

He looked up at her, smiling softly. "I have only a few more lines, and then I am at your disposal."

She grinned. "Wonderful, because I am eager to walk outside for an hour or two, and I am in need of some company." Turning away from him, Lizzie addressed Miss Darcy. "Georgiana, I do believe we are due for a duet. Would you honor me with the pleasure of your company while I wait for your brother?"

Georgiana looked up from her bonnet. "I would be delighted!"

The two moved from the sitting room into the one of the many rooms with a piano forte. Lizzie smiled as she remembered her first visit to this particular room, when she had first met Georgiana. She was a shy girl, much like her brother. However, unlike Mr. Darcy, when you discovered her true personality, you were greeted with a spirited young lady. Sitting down to the piano, she began to leaf through the various duets until a suitable song was found. Music filled the air as Lizzie did
her best to keep up with Miss Darcy's astounding abilities. She played with a grace and poise left for the most proficient of musicians.

“You are marvelous,” Lizzie said, looking over at her quickly, before bringing her eyes back to the keys.

“Thank you,” She responded softly. “Your playing is quite improved since our last endeavor together.”

She laughed loudly. “You flatter me, Georgiana, but I will not be fooled. My playing is completely insufficient compared to yours.” The duet lasted a few more minutes before the music stopped. Georgiana began looking for another piece, but Lizzie stopped her by addressing her. “May I ask you a question?”

She looked up and nodded. “Of course; anything.”

“Has Mr. Darcy always been so...quiet?”

“Quiet? I do not understand.”

Lizzie smiled at the innocence in Georgiana's eyes. “My dear sister, do not take offense to what I am about to say, but I feel I must be forthright. Your brother and I have been married for three months, and he hardly shows any difference between his being married or single!”

Georgiana's eyes widened slightly. “Oh Lizzie! Do not fret over such things! I now understand what you mean by 'quiet.' My brother has always been honorable and generous with anyone, particularly those he cares for. However, he does tend to keep to himself. All his thoughts and emotions are bottled up inside his heart, and his actions reflect that. It takes someone with fire in their eyes to bring it out of him. And you,” She said pausing shortly to smirk. “are just the woman to take on such a task.”

She laughed as a smile spread across her face. “Our good Lord willing, I will be successful at this undertaking you find me so suitable for.”

“What is all this talking of?” Mr. Darcy said, walking into the room. “I could make out the sound of voices almost the entire time you both were in here. How is it that two young ladies can play and talk in the same moment?”

“We women never divulge our secrets, Mr. Darcy,” Lizzie said smirking. “Are you ready for our walk together?”

He nodded just as she came up to him and slid her arm through his. Georgiana had such confidence in her ability to reach her brother, to see what was going on in the workings of his heart. As they made their way outside, uncertainty began to cloud her mind. Was she truly up for this sizable task? And would Mr. Darcy let his guard down so easily? She glanced over at him and smiled. Lizzie had captured his affections once, without her realizing; certainly, she could uncover them again.
Wind whistled through the trees as Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth made their trek away from Pemberly. There were many paths to walk around the estate, and Lizzie was fond of all of them. However, there were two in particular that caught her fancy, and though she never mentioned either of them to Mr. Darcy, he led her toward her absolute favorite. A small smile formed on her face and she relaxed a bit, feeling this walk would yield the answers she desired.

“What is on your mind?”

Lizzie looked up, startled by Darcy's voice. “Whatever do you mean?”

A smirk formed on his face. “I know you well enough, Lizzie, to know when something is on your mind. You have a certain air about you, when something is troubling you.”

She frowned at his deduction of her character. “You believe to know me so well, do you?”

He said nothing, but gave a small nod. This answer only added fuel to the fire of her uncertainty of his true heart. While she had difficulty peeling back the layers of his character, he seemed to be able to read her like a book. A thick silence fell between them, chasing the contentment away she had once felt. Mr. Darcy did not seem to be effected by this silence. After a few moments, Lizzie stopped their walk promptly and turned to look at him.

“What is it?” He asked, concern touching his voice.

“You puzzle me, Mr. Darcy. You puzzle me more exceedingly now than before we were married.”

He looked at her in confusion, but again said nothing.

She sighed, trying to keep her temper. “May I ask you a question?”

He nodded, remaining silent.

“Do you really love me?” Her words came out sharper than she intended them to. Regret clouded her heart as she realized how unloving the question sounded. Of course he loved her, that much was true. No one in their right mind would marry her for anything less than love. Lizzie was an odd brand of woman for her time. With a quick tongue and an even quicker mind, it would take a special kind of man to be her husband.

“Forgive me for my frankness,” He said slowly, choosing his words carefully. “What type of question is that? Of course I love you.”

She smiled at the emotion in his voice. Now they were getting somewhere. “Forgive me, for such a silly question. I know you love me, Fitzwilliam; of course I know. It’s just...”

Before Lizzie could continue, the sound of carriage wheels coming up the lane interrupted them. She could see Mr. Darcy wanted her to continue with her statement. However, her train of thought was broken, and continuing now would only result in unjust words. Looking toward the carriage, joy filled her heart as she realized who it was.

It was her sister; Jane Bingley.

The carriage came to a stop beside them, revealing a smiling Charles and a radiant Jane. It had
been two weeks since their last visit to Pemberly. In that time, they had been visiting various friends and family in London. The excitement of the trip still glowed from Jane's features as she stepped out of the carriage, grinning from ear to ear.

“Lizzie,” She said, giving her a warm hug. “We were going to surprise you with our visit, but it seems our surprise has been spoiled.”

“Not at all,” Lizzie responded. “I am just as surprised here as I would have been in the house. We are delighted to see both of you.”

“We are delighted to be here,” Charles said, laughing at Lizzie's apparent excitement, before turning to Mr. Darcy. “How are you, Darcy?”

Mr. Darcy nodded. “I am well, thank you. How was your trip to London?”

“It was wonderful!” Jane said softly, answering for her husband. “We had a lovely time. I look forward to returning soon.”

Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley walked away from the sisters, leaving them to discuss whatever private affairs they desired. The sisters moved in the opposite direction, toward the end of the large lake that sat in front of the estate. Their walk was taken in silence until they reached the end of the lake. It was Jane who broke the silence.

“Lizzie, there is something I must tell you.”

Concern colored her face. “What is it? Is something the matter?”

Jane laughed, smiling softly. “Oh, of course not! On the contrary, something is wonderful.”

“Well, do not leave me to dwell in suspense. What is it?”

“Before I reveal my secret, I must ask you yours.”

Lizzie looked at her sister, puzzled by her expression. “There is no secret I have kept from you.”

“I believe there is. However, if you wish not to speak of it, I will submit to your wishes. It is just...as Charles and I were coming up the lane, it looked like Mr. Darcy and yourself were having quite the conversation.”

She blushed, realizing now what Jane was speaking of. “Oh, yes; you will forgive me, as I must retract my last statement. I do have a secret which I have kept from you. However, I will not speak it to you now. In this moment, I wish to here your secret.”

Jane laughed softly and paused a moment. “I suspected it to be true for about a week, but my suspicions were not confirmed until I saw the doctor yesterday.”

Her eyes widened, and a smile spread across her face as she realized the news. “You are not?!”

She nodded. “Yes, it is true. I am expecting a child.”
Mr. Darcy listened carefully to his dear friend as he talked away about various topics. He moved effortlessly from subject to subject, barely taking a breath. A small smile formed on his face as he turned to look out the window. Contentment nestled quietly inside of his heart; Darcy had missed his friend dearly.

“Are you listening?”

Mr. Darcy turned toward Mr. Bingley. “Yes, I am. Please, continue.”

He gave him a suspicious look before continuing on with his story. Words of Mrs. Bingley's enjoyment of London drifted through Mr. Darcy's mind as his attentions faded from his friend. Looking back toward the window, he sighed softly, wondering what his wife and her sister were speaking of. While he was delighted by the arrival of his friends, he was upset their conversation had been cut short. Lizzie had surprised him with her question of his love. Everything he did, he did with the knowledge that it would effect her. He loved his precious Lizzie with every fiber of his being.

“And that is when she broke the news!”

He turned, blinking several times at his friend's exclamation. “What news?”

Mr. Bingley sighed, shaking his head. “You have not been listening at all!”

Guilt crept into Mr. Darcy's heart. He smiled apologetically. “Forgive me; my mind has been...preoccupied. However, you have my fullest attention now. From what I gather, you have something of importance you wish to say to me.”

He sighed again, but a smile formed on his face. “As Mrs. Bingley and I were heading off to bed the night before our departure, she thrilled me with the most wonderful news. We are going to have a child.”

Surprise filled his heart at his friend's news. Mr. and Mrs. Bingley had been married for almost as long as Mr. Darcy and Lizzie. It should not surprise him that his friend was going to be a father, but still, the surprise came. Thoughts of a year ago came to his mind. Never would he have dreamed Mr. Bingley and himself to be married, let alone having children. And now, here stood his friend, beaming with joy and delight, at the prospect of being a father.

“Congratulations, Charles,” He said, finally able to find his voice. “Jane and yourself have been surely blessed, indeed.”

He smiled at his friend's praise. “I know I am run away with my excitement but, you must answer me something.”

“What?”

“You and Elizabeth will be our child's godparents, will not you?”

He chuckled softly. “You are running away with your excitement. Jane probably has not been with child for more than two months.”

“Yes, I know,” Charles said, slightly embarrassed. “I am just so pleased!”
At this, the sound of footsteps found its way into the drawing room. Mr. Darcy smiled at his wife's
colorful countenance and concluded Jane was with her also. A moment after, Lizzie and Jane
appeared, moving to their respective partners. Charles grinned at his wife, as a child at Christmas
gifts at his gifts. Mr. Darcy smiled at Lizzie, placing his hand on the small of her back.

“How was your walk, Mrs. Darcy?”

Lizzie smiled softly, as a faint blush tickling her cheeks. “It was lovely; thank you.” She paused a
moment to collect herself before continuing. “If I am not mistaken, it would seem Charles could
not wait to break the news.”

Mr. Bingley laughed. “You are right, dear sister. I could not contain my excitement and set out to
make the news known to my friend. He seemed quite pleased.”

“As he should be,” Lizzie replied playfully. “Congratulations to the both of you. You will make
excellent parents, I know this.”

For another hour, the party conversed over various subjects, none more so than the coming child.
Lizzie and Jane toyed with names, laughing at the ridiculous ones and rejoicing over the suitable
ones. Charles and Fitzwilliam spoke of business and fishing, the latter of which Charles was eager
to do. The conversation moved on as they did, stopping only when one of them would find
employment in a letter or a novel. It would pick back up again, with the same joy and animation.
Before they knew it, dinner was finished and it was time to rest.

“I hope you do not mind,” Jane said yawning. “But I am going to turn in for the night. The
journey has left me quite worn.”

Charles nodded. “Yes, I think I will turn in also. Thank you for the wonderful company; I eagerly
await our fishing tomorrow morning, Mr. Darcy.”

“As do I,” He replied, smiling.

With that, Mr. and Mrs. Bingley left the drawing room and headed to sleep. Lizzie yawned,
stretching herself out on the couch. Mr. Darcy watched her carefully, for any sign of her unease
which afflicted her this morning. He could not find any alter in her air and a sense of peace settled
over him. Thank you, Lord. He whispered to himself.

“If you need me, I will be in the library,” She said suddenly, standing from the sofa.

He nodded and watched as she disappeared around the corner, and with her, his peace. How
could she possibly think me indifferent toward her? The thought rang in his mind like a bell in a
steeple. It found its way into every corner of his heart and mind, pulling up every doubt and fear
about himself he so tried to forget. Memories of their courtship flashed through his mind, and a
still knowing settled inside of him.

Of course she would think him indifferent! He was a quiet man, rarely voicing his feelings to
anyone but close friends and family. Even then, he was reserved. If openness were required, he
would comply. Otherwise, he lived inside the confines of his own thoughts, participating in a
dance only he was aware of. Regret tickled at his heart, and he sighed harshly, seating himself
onto the sofa. How would he be able to change his very personality, to show his wife that he
loved her as thunder loved the rain?

To his surprise, Mr. Darcy found he had spent nearly an hour sitting in the same position,
meditating on his predicament. Rising, he made his way toward their bedroom, fully intending to
get some sleep. However, something stopped him and without missing a beat, he spun around and
headed toward the library. Walking slowly, as not to announce his coming, Mr. Darcy looked around the corner. There, curled up on one of the large, high-backed chairs, was Lizzie sound asleep.

Continuing in quietness, he crept over to the chair and knelt down in front of her. Several strands of hair had fallen over her face, and with a gentleness that would rival a feather, he pushed them away. Lizzie moved slightly, before sighing and nestling closer into the chair. A smile tickled his lips.

“Oh Mrs. Darcy,” He said, knowing what that term of endearment signified. Kissing her forehead, Mr. Darcy effortlessly sat down onto the chair, while sliding her onto his lap. “You may not believe me,” He said whispering, kissing her lightly again. “But you still bewitch me, body and soul.”
Chapter 4

As light filtered through the large glass windows, Lizzy sighed softly, slowly waking from her sleep. Normally, she would find herself curled up in a ball, hand laid gently on her pillow. However, as consciousness tickled at her mind, something occurred to her. She was uncomfortable; extremely uncomfortable. Her muscles were tense and a soft ache worked it's way through her body. This discomfort was what brought her completely from her slumber, and into the realization she was not in her bed.

Blinking several times, allowing her eyes to adjust to the light, Lizzy found herself in the library. Faint memories of last night came to her mind, and she remembered her trip to this place after Jane and Charles turned in for the night. As those memories fade away, she adjusted herself in her favorite chair. The soft sigh of another person startled her, causing Lizzy to turn her head and come face to face with her sleeping husband.

“Oh my word,” She whispered, uncertain of how she came into this position. From what she can remember, she was reading a piece of literature when she fell asleep. At that time, she was alone. Now, as she looked at their situation, a small smile formed on her lips. Lizzy was in her usual sleeping position – curled up in a ball – only this time, she was not in her bed. She was in her husbands lap.

With deliberate slowness, Lizzy slid off his lap before placing a soft kiss on his forehead. Watching him for a moment, she decided to continue with the piece of literature she had forsaken last night. She eased herself onto the sofa, flipping to the bookmarked page. However, after a minute or two of this, she found herself unable to concentrate. Instead, the prospect of watching Mr. Darcy sleep won her over. As she closed the book and adjusted her position on the couch, she noticed something.

Mr. Darcy looked perfectly at ease and completely vulnerable.

It was as if every wall he built up around himself came crumbling down when unconsciousness struck. His face held the peace of a small child, and the serenity a still morning. Joy filled Lizzy's heart at the sight of the man she loved. He looked absolutely beautiful.

“What are you thinking of, love?” She whispered, bring her knees to her chest and resting her chin there. “What lovely thoughts are dancing through your mind?”

Her words must have pulled him out of his slumber for a moment, because he sighed again and adjusted his position, before falling back into his dreams. Lizzy breathed a small sigh of relief for not waking him completely. She wanted to sit like this a little while longer, taking in the sight before her eyes. Her accusation of his not loving her flashed through her mind, suddenly, and guilt accompanied it. How could she accuse him of not loving her? Her mind told her it was utter nonsense; she should simply throw away all doubt and simply continue on with her life as per usual. Her heart, however, was dissatisfied with this prospect. Mr. Darcy's true affections for her would be found out, she would make sure of that. For now, Lizzy would be content with just sitting with him, while he oblivious was to her gaze.

*****

Jane sighed softly, looking down at her sleeping husband. The light from the window drenched him, giving him an almost heavenly glow. This caused her to say a silent thank you to Jesus, for bringing such a man into her life.
“What have a done to deserve such love, Lord?” She whispered before rising from the bed and making her way into the hallway. As she continued slowly through the halls, she found herself at one of Pemberly's libraries. It had been quite some time since Jane had picked up a book. Perhaps she would do a little bit of reading before Charles woke up. Walking toward the door, she stopped quickly and hid herself from view. Peeking around the corner, Jane saw Mr. Darcy asleep in one of the chairs, with Lizzy seated on the couch adjacent to him, watching.

A smile formed on Jane's face as she watched her young sister take in the sight of her husband. There was something almost surreal about the entire scene. Lizzy looked perfectly radiant as she watched her husband sleep, while Mr. Darcy looked...well, he looked positively content. Jane had never seen him so at ease; it was a beautiful sight to behold.

Realization hit her like runaway carriage; she was watching a moment that was meant for only the two people involved. To most, it looked simply like two people sitting together, but Jane knew it was much more. This was a wife learning about her husband, taking in his very presence and tucking it neatly away into herself. She blushed before turning slowly and making her way back down the hallway. By the time she reached her room, she was practically running. Coming into the room, she attempted to control her breathing, so as not to wake her husband. Her efforts were useless, however, as he was already awake.

“Jane, darling, what's the matter?” Charles said, sitting up in bed.

She closed the door as another blush crept onto her face. “Oh nothing. Just went for a little walk, that is all.”

He smiled and gestured for her to come lay next to him. She complied and settled into the crook of his arm, relaxing into him. After a few moments, her breathing settled into a rhythm with his own. Despite their being married almost four months, Jane still was a little nervous around her husband. She had never been one to be candid with anyone, so learning to be completely open and vulnerable with Charles was difficult.

“What is the matter?” He whispered into her hair.

She adjusted herself so she was looking up at him. “How can you tell something is the matter?”

Charles laughed softly, touching the side of her face softly. “You are reserved when you are content, but when something is bothering you, it’s like I lose you for a time.”

Her eyes widened at his candid response. “You will never lose me,” She said, kissing him softly. “It's just that I...I saw Lizzy and Mr. Darcy in the library.”

“They're up early,” He said. “But why would that bother you?”

“How can you tell something is the matter?” He whispered into her hair.

She adjusted herself so she was looking up at him. “How can you tell something is the matter?”

Charles laughed softly, touching the side of her face softly. “You are reserved when you are content, but when something is bothering you, it's like I lose you for a time.”

Her eyes widened at his candid response. “You will never lose me,” She said, kissing him softly. “It's just that I...I saw Lizzy and Mr. Darcy in the library.”

“They're up early,” He said. “But why would that bother you?”

“He smiled and gestured for her to come lay next to him. She complied and settled into the crook of his arm, relaxing into him. After a few moments, her breathing settled into a rhythm with his own. Despite their being married almost four months, Jane still was a little nervous around her husband. She had never been one to be candid with anyone, so learning to be completely open and vulnerable with Charles was difficult.

“Do you remember when you were courting me?”

Joy filled his eyes. “Yes, yes I do.”

“People would often allow us time alone, because we were getting to know one another. It was a beautiful time, for our eyes only. We didn't do anything,” She said blushing. “But we were learning about one another in a way. That is what Lizzy was doing with Mr. Darcy. She just sat there, taking him in as he slept and it seemed like a moment I should not have witnessed. As if I intruded.”

He laughed softly again, wrapping Jane in his arm. “You, love, did nothing wrong; I promise. Put it out of that beautiful mind you have, and just relax.” And as Jane relaxed into his arms, she felt all her worry begin to melt away. Whatever Lizzy was looking for in Mr. Darcy, she hoped her
sister found it, because if it felt anything like this, it would be stunning.
Chapter 5

The rain outside pelted the window with a thousand tiny droplets. A soft sigh escaped Lizzy's lips as the prospect of her morning walk vanished with the arrival of another storm. For the last three days, it had poured like the world was going to flood. Thoughts of Noah popped into her mind, and she smiled at the story she often heard on Sunday mornings. The sound of moaning turned her attention away from the window, and back to her sister.

Jane sat in the corner of the bedroom, looking paler than normal from the nausea which had overtaken her. As the rain had come these last three days, so had the morning sickness. It had surprised both Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy when Jane did not appear for breakfast that Monday morning.

“What is keeping, Jane?” Mr. Bingley said worried, as Lizzy walked into the breakfast room.

She smiled at his innocence. “Mr. Bingley, you must know Jane is as well as to be expected. She will not be coming to breakfast this morning.”

“What's the matter?” The worry in his tone increased, as did the anxiety in his eyes.

Lizzy smiled again as she sat down next to her husband. “You really care to know?” He nodded fervently, causing her smile to turn into a smirk. “Well, then, Jane is quite sick with nausea. Morning sickness, I suspect, from the baby.”

His face colored a deep red, and to her surprise, a laugh escaped from Mr. Darcy's lips. “Come down, Charles,” He said as his laugh faded into a smile. “We men may not be privy to all the details of what a woman goes through during her nine months; however, we are well aware of that.”

The subject was dropped immediately by Charles, and since then, he had not again asked where his wife was when she did not appear at breakfast. Now, as Lizzy knelt before her sister, holding back her hair as she brought up her dinner from the night before, she was glad Charles did not bring up the topic again.

“Oh Jane,” Lizzy whispered as Jane began to cry. “There must be something I can do to ease your burden.”

Her tear-stained face looked up, smiling faintly. “I am afraid this is something I must bear alone; the good Lord will see me through. And we should not forget the goodness which will come from this. I'm going to be a mother.”

She smiled at her sisters quite confidence. “What do you hope it to be?”

“Anything, as long as he or she is healthy. Though,” She paused a moment, allowing another wave of nausea to pass. “I do know Charles is hoping for a boy.”

Lizzy laughed. “Don't all married men?”

A soft knock at the door broke their attention away from one another. Lizzy smiled as she heard the voice of her husband outside the door, asking how Jane was feeling. She stood up, brushing the wrinkles out of her dress. Moving quickly, she opened the door and slipped out to find Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley standing before her.

“She is fine, Charles,” She said, seeing the worry in his eyes. “I must admit, I am quite proud of
my sisters confidence in God throughout her struggles. Despite all her trouble, she still has a beautiful hope. You ought to be proud of your wife.”

“Oh, I am!” He said, smiling widely. “May I go in and see her?”

“Of course,” She responded, opening the door for him. As the door clicked closed, she turned to her husband and smiled. He returned her smile and led her down the hall and around the corner, before stopping again.

“What's wrong?”

Mr. Darcy smiled knowingly. “You weren't totally truthful with Charles, were you?”

Her eyes widened, before a soft smile formed on her lips. “I told him the truth; just not all of it.”

“Ah yes, I thought so. May I know the whole truth?”

Lizzy's smile widened. “Of course you may! Jane really is being remarkably positive about the entire situation, but...it is exceedingly difficult for her.”

His smiled faded to concern. “Shall I send for a doctor?”

She shook her head. “There is nothing a physician could do for her. Jane simply will need to ride out the storm until it passes.”

Mr. Darcy nodded and began to walk away, before turning back. He stood a few feet away from his wife, looking at her intently. The intensity in his eyes was too much for Lizzy to handle, causing her to break her gaze from his. However, after another moment, she returned his gaze. As their eyes locked, Mr. Darcy moved quickly toward his wife. Taking her face in his hands, he kissed her with an urgency that took her breath away. This breathlessness lasted only a moment, before Lizzy returned the kiss with just as much urgency.

Just as quickly as his kiss came, it went and before Lizzy could utter a word, Mr. Darcy had moved down the corridor and out of her sight.

******

“Darling, is there anything I can do?”

Jane looked up at her husband's fretful face and smiled. “No sweetheart, I am afraid there is nothing anyone can do. I would like it very much if you would sit with me, though.”

Mr. Bingley smiled and sat down on the edge of the bed, across from his wife. An awkward silence settled between them, and he wished very much to alleviate it. What should he say to his wife, who is obviously in great distress? Charles never had any inclination toward understanding morning sickness. He had no ability to compare Jane's condition with his Mother's, as his Mother had Caroline when he was just two years old. As he continued to assess the situation that lay before him, he heard a small chuckle.

Looking up, he saw Jane smirking slightly. “What is so amusing?”

Her smirk turned into a full smile as laughter escaped her lips. “Oh Charles, you look positively dumbfounded. I am sick, not dying.”

Now a smile found it's way to his face. Getting off the bed, he knelt in front of his wife, taking her hands in his. “I must remember to keep my musings inside my mind, and not allow evidence of
them to escape onto my face. Yes, I am...dumbfounded, as you say, but my reasons are pure, I can promise you that.”

“I know,” Jane said gently, bringing his hands to her lips and kissing them softly. “This is new territory for both of us. You must not spend these next few months wrapped in worry, because I am in capable hands. Lizzy is here with me, and I asked her to write to Mama, to let her know my condition. Women have been having babies since the creation of the world; if the women before my time could do it, then so can I.”

“Lizzy was right,” He mused. “You are taking this incredibly well.”

“I hope Lizzy painted me in an honest light.” She said, standing from her chair and walking toward the window.

“She always does.”

Another silence fell between them, this time more ominous than the last. Charles could not fathom the change in the air around them. It certainly was not due to his worry for his wife; it was strong but not room altering. Looking over at Jane, he noticed the faint smile on her face had disappeared and was replaced with one of uncertainty.

“What is the matter?”

She looked up at Charles and smiled again. “I can hide nothing from you, can I?”

“You would want to?” He said, standing behind her and wrapping his arms around her waist.

“Of course not!” She said, turning her head to look at him. “I was merely stating what I have now discovered.” There was a pause on both their parts before Jane continued. “You asked me what the matter was, and the matter lies with Lizzy.”

“What is wrong with Lizzy?”

She sighed and wrapped her arms around his. “Have you been watching Mr. and Mrs. Darcy this last week?”

He nodded. “Yes, but not studying them, as I believe you have been.”

“There is something the matter between them; I can feel it. We both know Mr. Darcy does not show affection easily, even when the affection is toward those he holds most dear. Lizzy is completely the opposite, showing her emotions when oftentimes they are not necessary to be seen. I fear...”

“What?”

“I fear Mr. Darcy may not understand Lizzy's need to see his affection for her, not just know about it.”

Charles smiled at his wife's concern. “Darling, they have not been married six months. These things take time. I have known Mr. Darcy far longer than you have and, I am certain, he and Mrs. Darcy will know each other perfectly, in due time.”

Jane smiled at her husband's confidence, but something inside her whispered words of doubts. They would come to know one another in due time; however, she feared the time would come too late.
Chapter Notes

Pride and Prejudice belongs to Jane Austen. I am simply borrowing her characters.

Lizzy was able to hear her long before she appeared in the drawing room. Mrs. Bennet's voice was as clear as the morning sky. Her words echoed down the hallway, like church bells ringing through the steeple and into the air. It was no surprise to see Mrs. Bennet had found her way to Pemberly. The devil himself could not have kept her away from her precious Jane.

“Jane, dear!” Mrs. Bennet called as she approached the drawing room.

Apparently, Jane had been too enthralled with her needlework to notice the entrance of her mother. Whatever she did not notice in her entrance, she now heard in her voice. The look of surprise on her face made Lizzy chuckle, and she had to turn away for fear of being noticed. However, no amount of surprise would keep Jane from greeting her mother with the same warm affections she always had.

“Mama, what on earth are you doing here?!”

Mrs. Bennet beamed, obviously thrilled to have surprised her daughter. “Oh Jane, how could you expect me to stay at Longbourn, when my eldest is with child!”

Jane blushed at her mother's exclamation. “You did not need to rush all the way to Pemberly! We would have come to you and Papa.”

“Nonsense. A woman in your condition is not fit to travel, I dare say.”

Lizzy watched their dialogue for another moment before returning to her book. Any other daughter would have been hurt to have her mother fawn over her eldest sister without so much as a look in her direction. But she had become accustomed to her mother's outlandish behavior long ago. They would have their moment together in due time. Until that time, Lizzy would occupy her thoughts with the book before her.

Unfortunately, her thoughts did not remain with the novel for too long. They strayed quickly to what had been the center of attention for a couple of days. Lizzy had been certain Mr. Darcy's affections for her were not as strong as she believed; he loved her, yes, but that love did not go as deep as her love for him. She had been coming to terms with the fact when he had surprised her with the kiss. Oh, that kiss. It had taken her breath away and made her feel like she was on cloud nine. It was absolutely...wonderful. But what could she account for it? Had her question of his love for her stirred something inside his heart? Any woman would have seen a kiss like the one Mr. Darcy gave her as undeniable proof of his love. Instead, it only confused her more.

“I see you are deep in thought.”

Lizzy jumped, as her hand flew to her chest. Looking up from the window seat which she occupied, she found Mr. Darcy look down at her. His face was set to be unreadable, but she could still see the way his lips twitched to hide a smirk. She laughed softly at this, and smiled.

“Mr. Darcy, you should know never to interrupt a woman when she is reading.”
He nodded once, agreeing with her. “Yes, but the woman I interrupted was not reading. In fact, she had not turned a page in her book for quite some time.”

Before Lizzy could respond, Mrs. Bennet realized Mr. Darcy had entered the room and immediately her attentions were fixed on him.

“Mr. Darcy, you are too kind in allowing my Jane to stay with Lizzy and yourself.”

He smiled slightly, though only Lizzy noticed. “It was my pleasure to welcome both her and Mr. Bingley. They may stay as long as they wish.”

This declaration brought on a wave of praise from the woman, of his glorious character and manifold qualities. Despite Mr. Darcy's hard demeanor, Lizzy knew he was giving her mother his fullest attention. This was one of the first aspects of his character she had misread during the first moments of their acquaintance. She saw only what her eyes could see, which was a man who looked positively miserable to be in the room with anyone but himself. However, now she knew differently. Mr. Darcy may have looked solemn, but he was in fact happy to please anyone in his family, especially the mother of his wife.

Mrs. Bennet could have continued on with her praise for a hour, but Lizzy wanted to spare her husband the possibility of this. Walking over to him, she stood at his side and addressed her mother.

“Mama, would you be so inclined to allow me a moment with Mr. Darcy?”

Her mother smiled. “Of course dear! I will go see if Jane needs anything.” With that, Mrs. Bennet walked away, leaving Mr. and Mrs. Darcy alone.

“Is something the matter, Lizzy?” Mr. Darcy asked.

She smiled and took his arm, walking him over to the window seat. “Nothing. I simply wanted to keep you from being overcome by Mama's praise. I assure you, she could have gone on like that for hours.”

He laughed softly and sat down. “I appreciate your concern; however, I am certain I would have found a way to direct her attentions elsewhere.”

“I wonder what possessed Mama to come all the way to Pemberly.”

“I invited her.”

Lizzy looked up at him, surprised. “You did?”

He nodded, adjusting his posture in order to see out the window. “I knew she would want to be with Jane. It seemed only fitting that I should extend an invitation.”

Her heart warmed at his thoughtfulness. “You didn't need to do that, but you were kind in thinking of Mama. She truly would rather be nowhere else.”

There was a paused in their conversation, and Lizzy felt Mr. Darcy wanted to say something more. Her assumption proved to be correct, as he turned back from the window to look at her.

“I must confess, however, that my intentions were not so pure as you may believe.”

“What do you mean?”
“While I did believe it would bring joy to your Mother to be here, I also had other motives.”

Lizzy leaned closure to Mr. Darcy, eager to hear his hidden motives. “You have peaked my interest; tell me quickly, what was your other motive?”

Mr. Darcy smiled at his wife's eagerness. “Tomorrow, I am needed in town for some business. The duration of the trip is uncertain; however, I do believe it will last at least four or five days. You have been so busy with helping Jane, I thought you might want to rest. You are more than welcome to accompany me into town. There will be times when I cannot be with you, but I – .”

“Yes,” She said quickly, interrupting his speech.

“You have not allowed me to finish.”

“There is no need; I would love to accompany you into town. What time will we be leaving?”

He smiled again at her eagerness. “It will be early; the carriage should be ready by 7:30am.”

She looked up at the clock quickly, then back to her husband. “I must see to getting my clothing ready for the trip, then.” Standing up, Lizzy smiled at Mr. Darcy and began to walk away. Without either of their notice, Mrs. Bennet and Jane had left the drawing room. It was only after Lizzy rose and walked halfway across the room did she notice their absence. Seeing they were alone, an idea rose within her mind. Instinctively, a smile spread across her face, and she put her hand in front of her mouth to conceal it.

Mr. Darcy was already standing when Lizzy turned around to look at him. His eyes flickered to her face, and it was all she needed to go through with her idea. Closing the gap between them, she gripped the front of his shirt and pulled him down for a kiss. She could feel his surprise, making her smirk against his mouth. The kiss lasted only a couple of seconds, but that was enough for Lizzy. She broke it off and quickly left the drawing room.

“Now you have something to mull over, Mr. Darcy,” She whispered, giggling softly.
Chapter 7

Chapter Notes

All Characters belong to Jane Austen. I'm just borrowing them. :)

The sound of rain pattering against the window awoke Lizzy from her calming sleep. For a moment, she did not know what day it was. However, as memories of yesterday flooded her mind, a smile played on her lips. Today, Mr. Darcy and herself would be taking a trip to town. Most women wouldn't see a simple trip to town as something exciting. Elizabeth Darcy was not most women. The anticipation alone could have roused her completely from her morning fatigue. For five days, she would have her husband all to herself. Well, almost all to herself. Of course, he would need to spend time taking care of the business this trip required, but all his time would not be so occupied. Rolling over slowly, she took in the sight of her sleeping husband.

Though Mr. Darcy oftentimes looked perfectly miserable while awake, he looked perfectly lovely sleeping. His facial features were softened to that of a young child, and his expression always gave way to what he was dreaming about. As Lizzy looked on, another smile formed on her lips. Mr. Darcy must be dreaming of something positively wonderful.

Without warning, Mr. Darcy's eyes fluttered open. He looked as uncertain of what day it was as she had. However, when his eyes caught her's, he smiled softly.

“Good morning, Mrs. Darcy,” He said softly.

The sound of that name made her heart skip a beat. “Good morning, Mr. Darcy. How was your sleep?”

He sighed, stretching his arms out above his head. “Fine, and yours?”

“Fine.”

Looking over at her, he smiled again. “You do not hide your excitement well, you know.”

Lizzy laughed softly, sitting up so her head rested against the bed post. “I would be more so, if the rain would let up.”

“It should ease up by the time we leave, which by the way, is in two hours.”

She nodded, throwing her legs over the side of the bed. Stretching slightly, she rose and walked over to the window, pulling the curtain back slightly to see the view better. A frown began to form on her face. The clouds outside were black and ominous looking. Whatever fair weather Mr. Darcy believed was coming, he was certainly mistaken. This storm looked as if it would stay for a week, maybe two.

Lizzy turned to say something to Mr. Darcy, but to her surprise, he was no longer lying in bed. Looking around the room, she found no trace of him. The frown on her face deepened, and a bit of anger rose within her heart. Sometimes that man infuriated her. One moment he was sweet, another he was the same old indifferent Darcy.
Coming back around to her side of the bed, she sat down. Thoughts of the trip began to appear within her mind once more, but with a different tone to them. The moment her eyes opened to the morning, Lizzy was certain this trip would be just what Mr. Darcy and her needed to make a change. It would be as if they were engaged again, with all the sweetness and light of new love. Now, as she ran her hands along the edge of the bed, Lizzy Darcy was certain of one thing only. She would do all she could to seek the truth from Mr. Darcy, and figure out why he had fallen into his pattern of indifference once again. She loved him too much to sit idly by, while doubts of his love for her grew. No, she was much more determined than that.

“Charles, we should go downstairs quickly. Lizzy and Mr. Darcy will be leaving any minute now.”

Charles looked up from the book he was reading, and smiled. “Let me just finish this page, and I'll accompany you.”

Jane sighed softly as she watched her husband slowly turn the page of the novel he was reading. Memories from what seemed like ages ago flooded her mind. She remembered the dance where Mr. Bingley had tripped over his words, trying to convince her he was perfectly able to read. A small smirk formed on her face. She should have known in that moment, as his eyes searched hers, that his heart would be hers forever. Oh! How uncertain she had been of his affection toward her.

Walking behind him, she slowly wrapped her arms around his shoulders, nuzzling her face into his neck. He squirmed slightly before letting a laugh escape his lips.

“It will take me longer to finish with you distracting me like that,” He said playfully.

“What do you mean?” She asked innocently. “You can't concentrate when I do this.” She tickled his neck once again, as she nuzzled her face against him.

Another laugh, louder this time, echoed from Charles. Turning around, he surprised Jane by pulling her toward him, capturing her lips with his. They stayed like that for a moment, before he pulled away from her. The excitement in her eyes made his heart sing.

“Who can't concentrate now?”

“Come on,” She said laughing and walking around the chair to take his hand. “We must see the happy couple off.”

Mr. Darcy watched from the entrance to the carriage, as Lizzy hugged her sister and mother goodbye. He knew, despite her abounding excitement for this trip, her joy was clouded. She would miss Jane greatly, that much was certain. She would even miss her mother. However, part of him did not mind whisking his bride away from Pemberly. It would give him a chance to be alone with her, and to straighten out what he knew was on her mind. Oh, Lizzy thought he had no idea what was going through her mind. On the contrary, Mr. Darcy was more aware of it than she could even fathom.

The question she posed to him all those days ago still rang in his ears, as if the words were freshly spoken. Do you really love me? Up until that point, Mr. Darcy would have bet his entire life on the belief that Lizzy knew the depth of his love for her. How could she not? Thoughts of their courtship – if you could call it that – floated through his memory. Everything that could prove his
love for her was done. And when she – much to his delighted surprise – accepted his second offer of marriage, Mr. Darcy assumed the heavy labor was over. Their love for each other was proven; now all that needed to be done was to reap the harvest of it. Apparently, he was mistaken.

“Mr. Darcy?”

He looked up to see Charles standing before him. “Yes?”

“Where was your mind running off to? I have been standing her for almost two minutes, trying to get your attention. Am I to expect this distance every time I want to speak with you?”

Regret filled his heart. “Forgive me, Charles; I have not been myself lately. Is Lizzy ready?”

He nodded, turning toward his wife and sister-in-law who were now beside him. “It would seem so.”

“Shall we go?” Lizzy said, looking at Mr. Darcy with expectation.

He nodded and held out his hand, helping her gently into the carriage. A small smile formed on his face as he felt Lizzy squeeze his hand before letting go. Mr. Darcy bid farewell to his friends and family, and stepped into the carriage himself. Looking up, he smiled softly at his wife, whose eyes were dancing with excitement. Reaching out his hand, he took hers and entwined their fingers together. Whatever doubt Lizzy had in her mind of his love for her would be dealt with immediately. The primary reason for this trip may have been for business, but Mr. Darcy decided in that moment to change his focus. Yes, he would complete whatever business he needed to complete. More importantly though, he would do all in his power to make this trip a milestone in their marriage. Doubt would be replaced with absolute certainty, as Mr. Darcy did everything in his power to win Lizzy's heart.

Again.
The rain pattered against the top of the carriage in an almost rhythmic pattern. Despite Mr. Darcy's assurance of the clouds holding off their storm, the rain came. It started as a slow drizzle, barely noticeable at first. However, as they moved farther away from Pemberly, the rain increased substantially.

It took all of Lizzy's willpower not to look disappointed. Maybe they did not need nice weather to start off their trip, but she had hoped for it. The blue sky and big, fluffy clouds could serve as a cheerful reminder of what lay ahead. Unfortunately, the only reminder the skies gave today was one of dread and despair.

“I am sorry the weather did not hold.”

Lizzy turned her gaze from the window to her husband. “Yes, I am sorry as well.”

He smiled softly. “Lizzy, may I...”

“What?” She asked, curious as to what could make her already reserved husband more so.

“May I ask you something?”

She smirked slightly. “You already have.”

Mr. Darcy laughed quietly, shaking his head. “Yes, that is true, but I wanted to ask you something more.”

Sitting up straighter and giving him her fullest attention, she nodded her head. “Go ahead, darling.”

Something akin to childlike delight began to rise within Lizzy's heart. Was it possible, not even an hour into the trip, she would discover what her heart had been longing for? Could it have been as simple as a carriage ride? Leaning forward slightly, Lizzy waited in eager expectation for the question Mr. Darcy was about to pose to her.

After several second, Mr. Darcy let out a small, anxious sigh. “You know me well enough to understand the unease I find in broaching a difficult subject. I have tried countless times to allow my mouth to speak so freely the words in my mind.” He paused a moment, finally looking up at her. “Why did you decide to come with me?”

The question startled her for a moment, as it was not the one she had been expecting (or hoping for). His tone did in fact reveal his difficulty at discussing this mystery subject, but there was something else as well. There was a soft desperation in Mr. Darcy's voice; one she had not heard since the first time he proposed to her. Fidgeting slightly, Lizzy carefully chose the words she wanted him to hear.
“To be completely honest with you, there is only one reason I came.” She said, pausing to allow those words to sink in before continuing. After a moment, Lizzy pressed on. “I came because – .”

Her words were cut off by the sudden stop of the carriage. They had been traveling at a reasonably steady pace, so this sudden stop caught them both off guard. Lizzy feel forward slightly, only to be caught gently on the shoulders by her husband. She laughed once at her clumsiness, but the laugh faded quickly as she looked in Mr. Darcy's eyes. They were no longer filled with discomfort, but rather, worry.

“What happened?” She said quickly, peeking her head out the window. However, before she could see what was outside, Mr. Darcy pulled her back toward the center of the carriage. “What are you doing?”

He looked at her sternly. “Stay here; I will go out and see why we have stopped.”

The worry in his eyes was quickly filling up her own. “Do you think – .” Again, her words were cut off.

“Shh,” Mr. Darcy said softly, bringing a finger to his lips.

Before she could protest, he opened the carriage door and stepped out, smoothing the wrinkles from his clothing. Though Lizzy would have slipped out behind him any other time, the stern nature in his tone before cautioned her otherwise. Whatever was going on could easily be handled by Fitzwilliam, she was certain of it. However, just as peace began to sweep itself over her, she heard a sound that was terrifying. Two gunshots pierced the morning air like a knife. A small cry escaped her lips, and without thinking, she flung open the carriage door and stepped out.

Lizzy had suspected to find someone outside the carriage. Yet, to her surprise, there was no one. She looked up at where the driver out to have been, but again, found no one. Closing the door of the carriage as softly as she could, Lizzy walked around the horses and peeked out from behind them. Her eyes widened at what she saw. Laying face down on the ground was their carriage driver. From what she could tell, there was a single gunshot wound to his head. Panic filled her heart; she had heard two gunshots. The other could have been for...

“You heard what I said, Mr. Darcy. I suggest you move quickly or I may be tempted to fire another shot.”

Lizzy looked up at the unfamiliar voice and found a man standing in front of her husband, a gun pointed toward his chest. A pain too startling for words ripped through her own chest, as if the gun was fired at her. She felt herself begin to shake, starting with her hands and traveling through the rest of her body. It was as if an earthquake was happening, but was only known to her. Moving back farther behind the horses, she tried desperately to remain calm and focused.

“Relax, Lizzy,” She whispered to herself. “Panicking will do no one any good.”

Despite the words of encouragement she gave herself, Lizzy found there was nothing she could do to stop the fear from overtaking her. Tears began to flow as easily as a river, causing her to let out a small cry. The sound was quiet enough that no one should have been able to hear her, or so she thought.

“Oh, I see,” The stranger's voice said, closer this time. “You have been keeping something from me.”

Just as Lizzy turned to hear what he was saying, she felt a firm grip on her left arm. Before she realized what was going on, the man pulled her out from behind the horses. Another cry escaped
her lips, this one from physical pain, rather than emotional. The man tightened his grip on her arm.

“Mr. Darcy, did you think I would not find out? You told me you were the only person in your carriage.”

Mr. Darcy responded in a tone that conveyed absolute calm. “No, you are mistaken. You asked whether there were any other men in the carriage. I have no been dishonest.”

His response caused the stranger to tighten his grip on Lizzy's arm even tighter. “Sarcasm will get you nowhere. In fact, it has gotten you farther from what you desire. My original demands have been altered, since this little princess arrived.” Lizzy cringed at the name he gave her. “I do not want your money, any longer. Now, I would like something better.”

“What is that?” He said, his voice faltering.

The stranger laughed, and quickly moved the gun away from Mr. Darcy's chest and to Lizzy's head. “You will allow me to take your wife with me, and you can keep your money. However, if you demand your wife back, or try to take her from me, she dies.”
Chapter 9

If emotions could kill a man, Fitzwilliam Darcy would have been dead in a moments time. He had known Lizzy was standing behind the horses the entire time. Fervent prayers went up to God in a constant flow, as he asked Him to keep her safe. Part of him was frustrated with her; he had specifically told Lizzy to stay in the carriage. Another part of him was relieved when he heard the carriage door click open. Maybe she was running for help from the sound of the gun shots.

Now, as she stood in front of the carriage robber, with a gun pointed to her head, it took all his resolve not the beat the man senseless. It was one thing to threaten his own life; it was another to threaten the life of his wife. However, Mr. Darcy knew any hasty actions could lead in Lizzy being injured, or worse.

“You will not take her,” He said coolly, trying to remain as steady as possible.

The carriage robber laughed once, before putting the gun directly to Lizzy's temple. “Oh, really? What makes you so certain?”

Another wave of panic rose within his heart, but Mr. Darcy quickly pushed it aside. Now was not the time to get hysterical. “Apparently, you are not well antiquated with my wife.” He smirked slightly as he watched Lizzy's eyes filled with hope.

“This precious little thing,” The man said, pulling her farther toward himself. “She couldn't hurt a fly, let alone a grown made twice her size. You put too much faith in your wife, Mr. Darcy.”

“And you put too little.”

With these words, Mr. Darcy watched in anxiety as Lizzy turned quickly and punched the man square in the nose. He stumbled backwards, inadvertently dropping his gun in front of her. Lizzy hesitated for a moment, considering the best course of action. She could pick up the gun and turn the tables on her captor; or, she could flee to her husband, leaving the possibility for the gunman to retaliate. Mr. Darcy heaved a sigh of relief as he saw his wife turn toward him and jump into his arms.

“I am so sorry,” She whispered over and over again, as she clung to him tightly.

“Shh,” Mr. Darcy said, stroking the back of her head. “You have nothing to be sorry for.”

However, his words fell on deaf ears, as he felt Lizzy began to shake from all the fear, anxiety, and uncertainty bottled up inside her heart. Mr. Darcy held onto her as tightly as he could, doing his very best to reassure her that all was well. Unfortunately, the punch she had thrown at the gunman was not as strong as it ought to have been. Mr. Darcy watched in horror as the gunman, still on the ground, reached for the gun. Lifting it swiftly into the air, he pulled the trigger, sending a single shot in the direct path of Mrs. Darcy. Acting quickly, he pushed his wife out of his arms and behind the carriage. She hit the ground with a thud, but was not injured from the fall.
“NO!” She screamed, watching her husband stagger backwards slightly.

He heard her shout seconds before pain flooded his upper body. Looking down at his clothing, Mr. Darcy could see blood begin to spread out across the fabric on his right side. Without realizing it, he was swaying slightly, and before he could catch his balance, he fell to the ground. The last thing he heard was another scream coming from his wife, this time directed at the gunman.

Lizzy watched in horror as her husband collapsed to the ground. She had heard the gunshot and knew it was coming right for the both of them. If it was traveling fast enough, it could go straight through her and into her husband. However, she resolved in that moment not to move and pray it traveled slowly. Before she could say a prayer of forgiveness and help to God, Lizzy felt herself being shoved aside. Without being able to properly brace herself, she hit the ground hard. Two seconds later, and the bullet would have passed straight through her heart.

“You despicable man,” She screamed as the murderer jumped onto his horse. Unfortunately, her words were not heard as he rode of into the distance. Anger fumed within her like never before. Lizzy had not realized it was possible to be so angry at another human being. However, her anger was pushed aside as another emotion filled her soul.

Absolute dread.

“Well,” She whispered through tears. “Please...” Her voice faded into nothing, as Mr. Darcy lay still as a stone. Looking him up and down, Lizzy hunted for the wound. Seeing his right shoulder was bleeding quite heavily, she knew she needed to stop it. She looked down at her dress and began to tear at the bottom. Thankfully, the fabric tore with an ease sweeter than a summer rain, as if it knew the urgency of it’s assistance. Lizzy took the torn section of her dress and placed as much pressure as she could on her husband’s wound. As she watched the fabric turn from pale white to crimson, something else caught her attention. Blood was coming from the back of Mr. Darcy’s head as well.

“No,” She cried, louder this time. “No, no, no...please, dear God, no!”

As her cries pierced the morning sky, a soft sound tickled at her ears. Looking up, Lizzy saw the most beautiful sight in the distance. A carriage was coming toward them.

“A carriage,” She said softly, as her heart filled with hope. “A carriage!” Standing up from her husband’s still form, Lizzy ran several feet before stopping and wave her arms like a mad woman. “Please!!! Help me! Help!”

The carriage began to race toward them more quickly, causing a wave of relief to wash through her heart. Lizzy continued to wave her arms frantically until the carriage was practically upon her. The driver stopped the horses immediately when his eyes caught sight of Mr. Darcy bleeding on the ground.

“What happened, Miss?!” He asked, jumping down from his seat.

Tears started to flow from her eyes again, as she tried to explain. Thankfully, the driver was able to understand the gist of what happened, as Lizzy's weeping made it difficult for her to speak. Turning away from her, he walked over to the carriage doors and stuck his head inside the window. She stood there anxiously wondering what he could be doing. Moments later, he stepped back and the carriage door was opened.

A man of around eight and twenty stepped out. He was well dressed and held a cane in his left
hand. His soft brown eyes searched for the woman his carriage driver had just spoken of. When he found her, he turned and whispered something to another person in the carriage. As all this was going on, Lizzy returned to kneel at her husband's side.

“Mr. Darcy,” She whimpered. “Please, don't leave me.”

Just then, she felt a soft touch on her left shoulder. Looking up, she came face to face with a petite, pale young lady, who looked to be no older than she.

“Madam,” The woman said quietly. “Madam, if you will just come over here and tell me what happened, my husband can help your husband.”

Lizzy rose, looking puzzled at the woman. “Who are you?”

The woman smiled softly. “My name is Margret Brown, and that man over there,” She said pointing. “is my husband, Daniel. He will do everything he can for your husband. What is your name?”

“Lizzy...Lizzy Darcy.”

Margret's eyes widen slightly. “Lizzy Darcy? The wife of a Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy.”

She nodded.

“Well, it is an honor to meet you.”

“Forgive me,” She said. “But I am afraid I do not understand.”

“Your husband has been most gracious to the clinic Daniel opened several years ago. He has donated money on multiple occasions, and is a contributing factor as to why we are still in business.”

Lizzy felt her heart soften, as this woman spoke so kindly of her husband. “You are too kind in your admiration toward Mr. Darcy.” She turned to look at him still lying on the ground. “Will he...will he be alright?”

Daniel Brown rose and came over to Mrs. Darcy. “I cannot tell at this moment. Mr. Darcy has wounds and injuries which need special attention. God be praised that I was able to stop the bleeding from his chest. The head wound is still bleeding, but is not substantial enough to warrant immediate attention.” He paused a moment, allowing his words to sink in. “My clinic is just up the road; less than two miles. I can properly assess his condition there.”

Lizzy nodded and allowed Margret to lead her to their carriage. Since the moment the gunshots rang out, she had felt a weight on her shoulders, too much for any one person to bear. Now, as they made their way down the road, Mrs. Darcy felt the burden lift a little. The condition of her husband was still to be known, but one of her many prayers had been answered by the arrival of this doctor and his wife.

If God could answer that prayer, surely he could answer the prayer to spare Mr. Darcy's life.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!