Roll Over Beethoven

by Shrubbery_Girl

Summary

Fandom has long known that Elizabeth has a special, emotional connection with the musical works of Ludwig van Beethoven. This is the full truth of it.

(Rated M for swearing)

Fitzwilliam Darcy, Esq., laid aside the journal he had been perusing and instead observed the young female seated opposite him. He had tried to keep away from her so he would not have to inspect the conflicting feelings her sight invoked, but it was no use. He might just as well make the best of the situation and ask her the one question that he had been meaning to ask since the night before.

‘Miss Bennet,’ he said. ‘I wonder if I may be so bold as to make an enquiry of you.’

He could see from the surprise in her face that she had not expected him to speak to her at all.

‘Certainly, Mr Darcy,’ she said and raised that perfectly shaped eyebrow of hers. ‘I will reserve the prerogative not to answer, of course.’

‘As you may well wish,’ Mr Darcy said. ‘That being cleared, will you hear my question?’

‘With eager interest,’ she said, folding her hands in her lap.

‘The other night,’ Mr Darcy said, ‘when you and Mr Bingley’s sisters were playing on the piano, you refused to play any of Mr Beethoven’s works.’

‘Indeed, I did,’ Miss Bennet said.

‘I was wondering,’ Mr Darcy said. ‘Was there any specific reason for this?’
‘Yes, there was,’ Miss Bennet said.

He waited for her to explain herself, but she did not, so he had to continue.

‘Is it that you are not familiar with his work?’

‘Oh, I am familiar with it,’ she said. ‘Intimately, you might say. My aunt is a great admirer of his work and I have attended many performances of his work when visiting her in town.’

‘I see,’ he said.

She did not reply anything.

‘Forgive me, then,’ he continued finally. ‘What was your reason to refuse him?’

She actually blushed.

‘This is a bit embarrassing, you see,’ she said. ‘The thing is, you know, his work –’

He could see her swallow.

‘I prefer not to attempt to play his works in public because it – invokes certain emotions in me,’ she finished. ‘I would not – I would not want to expose my weaknesses to others.’

He was surprised by her frankness.

‘That is very understandable,’ he said. ‘I must commend you for your restraint.’

‘You know, I do like to play Beethoven,’ she said. ‘Or at least attempt to. I will never be as good as Mr Bingley’s sisters.’

‘Nonsense,’ he said instantly. ‘I bet you will do the great man the honour he deserves.’

‘Oh, no,’ she said. ‘I fear that when my emotions overcome me, I can just not do his work justice anymore.’

He swallowed hard, thinking about the request he wanted to make.

‘Would you – would you play Beethoven for me?’ he finally asked. ‘Only for me, I mean. No other audience.’

He could see her think.

‘Forgive me,’ he said. ‘I was too bold – I should not –’

‘No,’ she said at once. ‘I will do it. If – that is, if you promise not to laugh –’

‘I promise you,’ he said. ‘I never ridicule that which is done honestly and with good intent, and I would certainly not laugh at your heartfelt emotions.’

‘Very well then,’ she said. ‘Let us repair to the music room.’

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‘Will you close the door?’ Miss Bennet asked once they were in the music room.

He did as he was bid and then settled himself in an armchair whilst Miss Bennet sorted through
music sheets.

‘Do you want me to turn the pages for you?’ he asked, remembering how often he had done so for Georgiana when she played Beethoven.

‘No, thank you,’ Miss Bennet said and blushed again. ‘I think I’d like to have a bit of – space. You know.’

‘Of course,’ he said. ‘Entirely understandable.’

‘Well then,’ she said and sat down. ‘I will begin now.’

She moved her hands above the keyboard but did not lower them yet.

‘Do not expect very much,’ she said. ‘I told you, I’m not very good at this.’

Finally, softly, she began to play. It was a familiar piece; Georgiana played it often, knew it by heart and used it to warm up her fingers before she practiced. Miss Bennet’s fingers moved quickly over the keys, perhaps not as fast as Georgiana’s, but boldly enough. He thought he saw her fudge some keys with her left hand, but it did not sound very wrong.

She broke off.

‘I’m sorry, I missed a harmony there,’ she said.

He could see her bite her lip.

‘I’ll start again,’ she said.

She resumed playing and he thought she looked slightly more determined than before. Her fingers moved even swifter than before until -

‘I am sorry,’ she said. ‘It’s always that one chord.’

She began again. He thought her fingers moved more aggressive than before. She reached the tricky passage again. There was a certain glare in her gaze now – she missed it again and he thought he heard a little growl from her.

‘I really need to practice that bit,’ she said and blushed. ‘You see, I’m not good at all.’

He smiled at her.

She began playing anew, her gaze even more determined, her fingers moving more aggressive, hammering at the keys with even more force than before, going faster as the difficult passage came up -

When she missed the right chord, she hit the keys with both fists.

‘You German bastard!’ she shouted.

With a gaze full of blazing intensity, she began playing again, hitting the keys with such force that he feared for the pianoforte which he knew did not belong to Bingley at all. Once again, she missed the all-important chord. She hit the keyboard with two flat hands.

‘You mean-spirited little bugger!’ she shouted.

She reached for the music sheets and tossed them on the floor.
‘Why do you hate me?’ she cried and stood up with such force that she threw the stool over.

‘WHY DO YOU HATE ME, YOU SYPHILITIC GERMAN WANKER?’ she yelled and stomped on the music sheets.

‘DAMN YOU, LUDWIG!’ she roared. ‘YOU SELF-IMPORTANT VILE LITTLE FUCKER!’

She picked some of the sheets up and ripped them apart, her contorted face reddening constantly. Mr Darcy quietly closed the door behind himself and resolved never to ask Miss Bennet another question.

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