Wilfully misunderstood

by Sti

Summary

Darcy once accused Elizabeth of wilfully misunderstanding him. What if she really misunderstood him and in a completely unexpected way?

Notes

Thanks to Danielle for betareading and Maria for pre-reading. You girls are the best.

Please note, this story will contain Regency society and its opinions on certain matters which could be really insulting. It's not me presenting my view on it.

Prologue

April 1812, Hunsford Parsonage

“In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.”

Elizabeth’s astonishment was beyond expression. She stared, coloured and doubted. “I-“, she started haltingly. “Mr Darcy, I am honoured that you trust me so much you would solicit my assistance practising your declaration of love. However, my experience in these matters is very superficial, I am afraid I can’t help you much.”

“Miss Elizabeth?” Darcy asked confusedly. “You refuse-“
“Oh, no! Of course not.” Elizabeth interrupted him quickly. “I count you amongst my dearest friends; how could I refuse? I will do my best to help you.”

“Help me?” Darcy faintly repeated her words.

“Do not worry, we will prepare it together.” She comfortably patted his shoulder. “Please stop pacing and sit. It would be best if we write everything down; I think that the object of your affection will hardly appreciate an avowal of love from a suitor who can’t even look them in the eye while professing his love.” She smiled sadly.

“O-object?” Darcy pinched himself discreetly. This could not be real! Was he trapped in a nightmare?

“Yes, now shush.” Elizabeth reprimanded him motherly. “I have only received one such declaration and it was not pretty.” She smiled grimly, remembering Mr Collins words. “So, I will advise you what not to tell.”

Darcy could not even talk. What is happening? Something went horribly wrong there. He just was not sure yet what it was.

“First of all, your struggles are understandable; nobody can argue that. However, you cannot begin a declaration of love with these words.” Elizabeth explained patiently, her heart giving another painful squeeze.

“That was badly done.” Darcy admitted slowly, finally seeing what she was about. Fool. Instead of complimenting I managed to insult her with a stupid comment about my struggles. “I apologize-“

“Oh, you must not apologize to me.” Elizabeth interrupted again. “These words were not meant for me, so I do not take any offence.” A sad look crossed her face for a moment.

“Not for you?” Darcy was again lost. What is she talking about? Frustrating woman!

“However, I am afraid I must warn you.” Elizabeth continued. “It is really dangerous to mention such feelings unless you are completely sure you will be accepted or it could end very badly.”

“I won’t be accepted?” Darcy has given up on trying to understand. This was obviously a dream. A very nightmarish one. Wake up, wake up, wake up!

He looked so crushed; Elizabeth’s heart went to him. She began carefully. “While in London, I observed Mr Walker most carefully and it pains me to tell you that his – ahem-“ she coughed “interest, lies in another direction.”

“Mr Walker?” Darcy’s voice sounded suddenly very high-pitched. “Mr Walker is courting you?”

He asked in panic. No, Elizabeth! Not that scoundrel.

Elizabeth gave him an odd look. “Of course not. He is a rake and he disgu-“ she stopped herself suddenly and bit her lip undecidedly. She didn’t want to cause Darcy any pain but she had to be truthful. “Surely you must know that he is not a good man. And to risk your life for him-“ she paused, overcome with emotion.

“Why would I risk my life for him?” Now, against him for all his lecherous looks at MY Elizabeth in a duel, I would do that. But for him?

“Mr Darcy!” Elizabeth was now exasperated. Must he make me to say it? To break my heart even
more? “Surely you know that your affection for him, should he choose to expose you, is a hanging offence.”

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