Stories from Pemberley

by iceprinceofbelair

Summary

Even the Darcys know how to have a little fun, they just prefer to do so within the privacy of their own home.

Notes

I just like the idea of Darcy and Georgiana being loving siblings and showing that openly when in private.
At the ripe old age of six years and four months, Georgiana Darcy knocked on the door to her brother's bedchamber, wiping at her crying eyes and sniffling in a way which Mrs Younge would have frowned upon. Ladies did not sniffle. Georgiana knew this. However, she could see no alternative.

When the door was drawn back to reveal her older brother clad in comfortable wear for the summer, she gazed up at him while further tears spilled down her cheeks.

"Georgie?" He whispered, crouching down to her level. "What is the matter?"

Georgiana wasted no time in embracing her brother so fiercely that she knocked him off balance so he was forced to sit down in a manner which lacked his usual grace. Quickly, Darcy scooped her up into his lap where she settled with her head against his shoulder.

"Are you hurt?" He asked, concern showing in the crinkling of his brow. She nodded and Darcy squeezed her delicate form gently while she pulled up the dirtied skirt of her dress to reveal her grazed knee. "Oh, my. Shall I send for a doctor, do you think?"

Georgiana knew he was simply teasing her and pouted to convey her annoyance.

"Now, Georgiana, pouting is most unladilike," he smiled, bouncing her on his knee lovingly. Being twelve years her senior, he had little difficulty standing without first pushing her away and began his decent to the kitchen where he would clean her wound. "What have you done to injure yourself so?"

"I fell in the grounds," she sniffled.

"Well, that was silly," he teased jovially.

"I did not mean it!" She replied indignantly and Darcy laughed.

"I know, my dear," he said, still chuckling. Seeing her forlorn expression, he made an attempt to cheer her up by imitating their regular doctor as he sat her on the worksurface. "Shall we tend to your injuries, Miss Darcy?"

It had the desired effect and she giggled against his shoulder, watery eyes brightening in good humour. He asked the first servant he saw to prepare a bowl of lukewarm water and fetched a cloth from where they were kept. In an attempt to keep her attentions focussed towards the light-hearted, he pretended to examine her knee closely, humming and ahh-ing at regular intervals.

"Ah, yes," he said at last while the servant returned with the water. "I am afraid I have no choice but to cut off your leg!" He finished while he tickled her sides impulsively. She squealed with delight and continued giggling softly even after he had ceased his tickling and was already far through cleaning her knee.

He decided there was no need for a bandage and lifted her to the ground where he crouched down to her again.

"I hope we shall not have a repeat of this incident," he said with a smile. Georgiana shook her head. He observed her dirtied petticoats with a sigh, albeit fond. "You must try not to get so dirty. It is not becoming of a lady, or a gentleman, for that matter."
Becoming serious, Georgiana nodded and promised quietly that she would try to be more careful. He drew himself up to his full height once more and took her hand, observing with pleasure how she placed weight on her injured leg without a qualm.

(Later, when asked by one Caroline Bingley if he would wish his sister to make such a spectacle as Miss Bennet in allowing her petticoats to become so dirty, he replied that he most certainly would not while silently contemplating with fondness how much a certain lady reminded him of his dear Georgiana.)
Talent

The music room at Pemberley was the room in which the late Mrs Darcy had spent much of her time and it would seem that her undying love for the pianoforte lived on in Georgiana who could spend every waking hour playing and practising for days at a time. Sometimes, Darcy would flounder outside the door on his way past to listen to her clumsy, childlike fingers plodding through pieces far too complex for most girls of her age. It was remarkable what she had achieved with Mrs Younge as her governess. She would certainly grow up to be a most accomplished young lady.

The piece she was playing today was one he had heard her practising religiously for weeks. It sounded increasingly seamless and flowing with each passing day and he did so long for the time to come when she would play it for him. While he did not wish to rush her - her self-confidence was so delicate - he could not help it would be soon.

The days continued to pass as they always had and always would but Georgiana showed no signs of ever inviting her brother to hear her play. It saddened him to think that perhaps she had misjudged her ability. It would not be the first time but, though he feared otherwise, he hoped it would be the last.

The following evening, Darcy excused himself early from the dinner table under the pretense of having a pressing matter of business requiring his attention. What pressing matter of business could concern a man who had not yet reached the age of twenty his father could not fathom but he made no objection. Instead of retiring to his bedchambers, Darcy stole into the music room and hid himself behind a rather impressive harp which stood in the corner of the room, untouched since the passing of their mother and covered with a dust sheet.

Sure enough, Georgiana arrived promptly and settled herself at the pianoforte without even scanning the room. She came here so often now, it would appear, that she had little reason to observe anything but her own beloved instrument. Almost immediately, she began her piece haltingly, shoulders tensed in frustration as she tried desperately to get the notes right. Only once did she pause to begin a particularly tricky phrase again at half the original speed but she picked up her pace again markedly quickly and stumbled her way to the end with a graceful clumsiness Darcy would never again see repeated in anyone but herself.

The moment she finished, Darcy sprang from his hiding place to applaud her, receiving a startled gasp and flinch in return before she recognised him.

"I did not see you!" She gasped breathlessly, standing to approach her brother shyly. "Did you approve?"

He looked thoughtful for a moment. "Did I approve, you ask?" And he would have continued to tease her had he not thought the suspense to be too cruel. He grinned. "Why, of course! You were magnificent."

Gleefully, he took hold of her under her arms and lifted her up to meet him, spinning her round once before gently placing her back on her feet. She laughed delightedly. She did love when her brother devoted his time to amusing her. She never felt so loved as she did in those moments when he would offer her a compliment or a kiss on the forehead.

"I dare say you will be the finest musician in all of England," he continued with a smile.

Darcy could not help his fond squeeze of her hand. He had quite expected her to disagree though he did so wish she would share in his celebration of her achievements. It was difficult to remember that she was merely seven years old when she acted so wise beyond her years - already aware that boastfulness was frowned upon in polite society.

Darcy took up her seat at the pianoforte and motioned for her to join him. They could scarcely fit and their shoulders bumped together uncomfortably but they did not mind.

"I used to watch our mother play this very instrument," he told her, brushing his hand across the keys. "She always played with such feeling and fluidity that it mattered not when she played ill."

Georgiana observed him without understanding. He continued.

"You focus too hard on the notes. It does not matter how well you play, provided you feel the music coming from you," he tapped the left side of her chest with his index finger.

She poised her fingers above the keys as though to begin but faltered and gave a soft sigh. "Mrs Younge says it is not so."

Darcy frowned. "I will speak with her. Of course, you should seek to enhance your skill at every opportunity but you should not let that conquest deny you the enjoyment of the music itself."

There was a brief moment of silence during which Georgiana fiddled with her hands in her lap until Darcy stood again and took up a seat where he could watch without imposing.

"I long to hear you play," he said and told her of how he listened as he passed the door. "You are, truly, a wonderful musician."

Without a word, she began her piece again and Darcy was glad to see her at the very least trying to relax into the flow of the music. The journey of one thousand miles began with a single step, after all.
In the months that followed, Georgiana's music lessons received the occasional spectator in the form of her brother. He had spoken to Mrs Younge about allowing Georgiana to embrace the music in addition to enhancing her abilities and, though usually quite strict in her teachings, she complied willingly. A great lover of music herself, she had always struggled to remain detached. It was a relief to know she no longer had to concern herself with doing so.

One such afternoon, Mrs Younge was persuaded to demonstrate a new piece she had obtained for the extension of Georgiana's repertoire. It was a lively piece and brought an idea to the forefront of Darcy's mind. He stood and crossed to where Georgiana sat observing and bowed, offering his hand to help her stand.

"Miss Darcy," he smiled. "May I have the pleasure of this dance?"

Georgiana smiled almost shyly. "I would be honoured, Sir," she said, placing her small hand in his and curtseying.

Darcy grinned and led her away from the instruments to an area of the room which they would be able to dance mostly unobscurred. It was a fairly simple dance with only one couple but Darcy found himself enjoying it all the same, despite the top of his partner's head hardly reaching his waist. She was well on her way to becoming a fair dancer. Though Darcy had a general dislike for the art, he found dancing with his sister to be a rather agreeable engagement and one in which he would happily partake whenever she proved willing.

"What a magnificent ball, Miss Darcy," he smiled. "Would you not agree?"

Georgiana giggled in a way typical of any child attempting to play along with her brother's antics and said, "Why, yes, Master Darcy! It is very...argable."

Darcy could barely contain his amusement. "Agreeable, my dear," he corrected with a smile and Georgiana blushed in embarrassment.

"A-gree-a-ble," she said slowly and Darcy nodded encouragingly. "It is very agreeable."

"Indeed it is," he confirmed with a chuckle.

When Mrs Younge's song struck the final chord, Darcy took a step back and bowed once more to his sister, able to see her courtsey even when bent low. He smiled again.

"You are a most wonderful dancer, Miss Darcy," he gushed, reaching forward to brush a her perfectly curled hair from where it had slipped into her eyes. "But I fear I am distracting you from your studies. My apologies, Mrs Younge," he said, bowing to Georgiana's companion and tactfully quitting the room.
Grief

Georgiana knocked timidly on the door of her brother's bedchambers. He had locked himself away two days prior and had refused all food and water. Mrs Reynolds had turned to her young mistress in utter desperation. Even with little over ten years experience behind her, Georgiana knew Darcy's neglect of his health could have serious ramifications. She did not wish to see her brother ill.

When she received no response, she called softly, "Fitz?"

Darcy could not abide that particular contraction of his name if it came from anyone but herself. She used this greatly to her advantage in such situations. Sure enough, Darcy's strong footfalls grew steadily louder until the door was pulled back to reveal her brother in a terrible state of disarray. She gasped in surprise.

His skin was pale and his eyes were ringed with purple as though bruised. His attire, while ordinarily impeccable, was rumpled and careless. A failure to tame his hair into its usual rugged appearance left him with a bedraggled look which Georgiana would later come to associate with grief.

Without a word, Darcy stepped aside and allowed her passage into his sanctuary. The door was shut behind her and the two siblings were alone in their sorrow.

Georgiana offered the glass of water she had brought as some small form of sustinance and placed the plate piled high with grapes down atop his dresser. She knew well that grapes were Darcy's favourite treat and hoped to enjoy the pleasure of seeing him eat after he downed the water in grateful gulps.

"You have not slept well, I fear," she ventured quietly, stopping Darcy's incessant pacing so he might observe her more thoroughly. She knew she looked exhausted herself but more sleep had been lost worrying for her brother's well being than grieving her father's passing.

"No," he said, voice hoarse. He began pulling the grapes from their stalks hungrily. Georgiana could not suppress a smile. "I am afraid I have not been a brother to you these days past."

Georgiana settled herself on the bed. "You needed your solitude," she said by way of explanation. Perhaps he had neglected her but Georgiana was wise enough to understand the duty all people should have to themselves, especially when one had been so accommodating of one's younger sister's needs throughout their lifetime.

Darcy hummed softly in response and brought the plate over to the bed where he sat next to Georgiana. The plate was offered and Georgiana took only two, aware that it was not she who was in danger of fainting.

"Will you not join us for tea tonight?" She began tentatively. "It would do Mrs Reynolds good to see you eat. She has been frantic with worry about you."

Darcy almost managed a smile. "Dear Mrs Reynolds," he whispered. "Such a kind soul. I could never willingly cause her concern."

"I know," Georgiana soothed.

The grapes were quickly finished and Darcy repositioned himself so his back was supported by the pillows. Georgiana moved next to him and nervously pushed her hand through his hair. Never
before had she seen her brother so vulnerable; predicting his responses was near impossible. However she need not have worried. He leaned almost unconsciously into her touch, allowing himself, for once, to be cared for and loved by his younger sister.

Georgiana did not fully understand. She knew that she would never again hear her father's voice nor would things ever be as they were before. She knew that her brother was hurting in a way she had never before seen. But she could not possibly be expected to understand the extent of the mounting pressure Darcy now found himself beneath. Charged with Georgiana's guardianship and maintenance of the Pemberley estate, he was apprehensive at best and terrified at worst. He did not believe himself capable nor ready to take his excellent father's place as Master of Pemberley.

When the time for tea drew near and Darcy showed no signs of moving, Georgiana resigned herself to bringing him a more substantial meal the moment she had finished her own. With a sigh, she removed her hand from his hair which elicited a near inaudible whine from Darcy at the sudden loss of her comforting touch. She kissed his temple lovingly and heard his breath catch in his throat before she left with a meek courtsey and concern weighing heavily on her heart.

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Upon her return not an hour later, she immediately deduced that her brother had been crying quite consistently since her departure and she wasted no time in embracing him. Instead of tranquilising him, it served only to tip him over the edge of another break down. She felt awful.

"I- I apologise," she stammered, beginning to pull away. "I did not-

"Please," he whispered and the absolute desperation in Darcy's voice punched her in the gut. His watery eyes met hers and she saw his lower lip tremble as he asked her to stay.

Georgiana had never seen Darcy this way. He had always been careful to conceal his emotions from his sister though she had occasionally witnessed the aftermath to an emotional overload. Today marked the first time, and hopefully the last, she had ever seen her strong, untouchable older brother cry his broken heart out.

(It would not be the last, she would learn. He would cry many times, most distressingly of all in relation to herself and the marriage she had almost been naive enough to trap herself within at just fifteen.)

The meal she had brought him was lukewarm by the time he sniffled pathetically and pulled away, forcing her to remove her hand from where it had been stroking through his hair once again. (It had soothed him once before; she had seen no harm in testing its consistency.) Still, he refused her offer to have another made and picked apathetically at his food, clearly without appetite after his outburst.

"I am sorry you had to witness that display," he mumbled, flushing slightly. Darcy never mumbled and he certainly did not blush.

Georgiana rubbed his lower back. "You have nothing to apologise for."

"I should not have behaved this way in front of you," Darcy insisted. "It was not proper."

"Nor is loss," she countered. "Nothing about this situation can be considered proper."

Darcy chewed at his food, clearly unconvinced. She went on.

"I read a book in the library on grief," she told him. He raised his eyes from his plate with interest. She smiled gently. "It graciously informed me that there is no proper way to mourn the passing of
a loved one. I am grieving differently from you but that does not make my emotions nor my
behaviour any less valid in response."

Darcy considered this. "I had not thought of it in this manner before," he confessed, moving to put
another forkful of food in his mouth but stopping as something occurred to him. "How are you
grieving, Georgie?"

Georgiana smiled. "I play."

It was true. She spent endless hours sitting at her pianoforte, playing melancholy music to fit her
melancholy mood. Like Darcy, she cried when the feelings overwhelmed her and often she
longed to run to her brother in the middle of the night for comfort but she always feared disturbing
him and contented herself with wandering the halls in solitude until she felt she could sleep.

"Good," Darcy said simply. She thought this might have been the end of the matter but, always
observant, he did not stop there. "And what is this I have heard of you being out of bed at ungodly
hours."

Knowing she was discovered, she told him the truth and, as expected, it crushed him.

"I cannot apologise enough," he said, distraught. "I should have made it clear that you were
welcome to come to me. You are always free to come to me, Georgie, no matter the hour. We are
both mourning the loss of someone we were very close too and you must trust me with these
feelings," he paused to clear his throat where a lump was forming. Georgiana could hear his voice
on the verge of breaking again. "If you wish, you may stay with me tonight. I am unlikely to
sleep."

Georgiana relaxed against his side and he slung his arm around her, squeezing her shoulder
reassuringly. "I would like that," she whispered.

"Then so it shall be," he replied just as softly.

And so it was.

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