Letters from the past

by janetimothyfreeman

Summary

Darcy didn't save the day and this has changed irreversibly the history.

Ten years later, however, destiny requires one last review of each other's choices.

There's still hope.

Notes

I decided to translate my first fanfiction ever to English! I hope you enjoy it!

It's not beta'ed AND, as you can see, english is not my first language, so tell me if you have any trouble with the understanding, ok?

The upcoming chapters gonna be longer, I swear!
Thank you so much! <3

See the end of the work for more notes.
"Rome, November 5, 2012.

Dear Charlotte,

How long I've been expecting news from you! How are Nicholas and the kids? I heard that you are a proud and careful mother of two little girls. You've already found out who told me all this stuff, haven't you? Don't be mad at my mother, she is insane about grandchildren. Jane is the top model in Europe, my little Lydia is doing her best in her acting career and I won't have children with my stupid husband, so the woman is hopeless (and freaking out)! Send my best to all your family, including Maria and your parents.

Love,

Lizzie."

Elizabeth dropped the pen on the table and breathed deeply.

- Lizzie, my beloved wife!

Trying hard not to do a face of disgust, she looked at the husband.

- I bet you bursted the limit of your credit card.

- Honey, you don't miss a thing! You know well how much a man needs money to pleasure himself while his wife keeps him in complete celibacy.

- Hear this, Wickham. You and I both know why this marriage existed for ten long years. I have gave up a lot of things for our contract, but I will never let you touch me. You are a horrible human being.

- You aren't the best one too. Just give me the damn money!

Elizabeth took one hundred euros from her wallet.

- This is enough for today, the market of arts isn't much productive in this times. Take care of yourself.

The husband has only looked at her with scorn and left in silence.
Silver Ink

Chapter Summary

Lizzie's best friend, Charlotte, is more clever than appears to be.

Chapter Notes

Hello, guys!

So, I'm gonna to update it on mondays, wednesdays and fridays, what do you think? Because the story is already complete.

I hope you enjoy it even more!


Dear Lizzie,

I am so happy to receive your letter! I have missed you so much, even for talking about the same meaningless things. I must confess, however, that I cannot see the reason for you preferring letters over e-mails.

I don't care about your mother's gossip, really. I have two beautiful daughters: Emily and Anne. They are the reason of my life! Don't judge me, Miss! You haven't seen a better father than my Nicholas.

Jane is always on the covers of magazines around here. Is she ok? After that incident, she has never looked like her normal self again. She seems to be hiding emotions with beauty. Paradoxical? I also think so, but it is the only explanation!

Mary has just published a book, have you heard? I've read the last reviews and all of them are energetic: she is the number 01 of this year. If I know her well, it must be an incredible book! I've already bought it, just need the time to read, lol.

Lydia is a huge success! Her last villain has shooked us all in here. The talent of Kitty as her agent helps a lot. It's always fun to tell about my childhood with the famous sisters of the world!

Your sacrifice has worth something...

Lizzie, allow me to say some words: It's not my business, but this story could be solved on a less traumatic way. You didn't have to marry that bastard to protect Lydia. Whatever he has done, I think the police could deal with it.

Despite that, you have been in love with someone else...

I'm sorry.
"With love,

Charlotte."


Dear and big nose Charlotte,

Thank you for answering the letter and for worrying about me all these years. I prefer the letters, they are so nostalgic! Furthermore, Wickham won’t get near to mail. He thinks it is "obsolete".

Even connected to him, I can live well. I’m paid to buy and sell artistic stuff (being the source of George’s money). While I can afford all his "needs", my life will be nice. I barely see him at home, which is wonderful.

Char, that is amazing! I am so happy for you. Your daughters should be beautiful because you and Nicholas have an exotic kind of beauty. Send me pictures of them, please!

Jane has changed a lot. Ten years have gone and she remains ice cold, hiding emotions deep inside her. Ah, Char, there must be something I can do... I have saved only one of my two unfortunate sisters! It is so sad, I love them equally! At least I know Lydia, Kitty and Mary are ok.

I understand your worry, but it was my choice. Believe or not, I knew it was the only thing that would stop that jerk. Lydia would be ruined by now if I haven’t done what I did. Don’t be fooled: Wickham is a disgusting lizard, but I regret nothing. You know what I mean, Charlotte: family is above all things.

To your knowledge, I don’t love anyone, charming prince doesn’t exist.

Ok, ok, Nicholas is the only one.

Hugs,

Lizzie."

After answering the letter, Elizabeth noticed one gold envelope over the desk. Her name and address were written with silver ink. Decided to open it:


Estimated Elizabeth Bennet,

The Royal Academy of Arts of the United Kingdom has the honor to invite you to converse in our Annual Congress for your relevant services to the community. We offer a dinner in your tribute.

Contact us for confirmation and reservation.

Respectfully,

Royal Academy of Arts of the United Kingdom."
Elizabeth felt pride about herself. She never had heard about the Academy, but one fast search showed her how respected it was. She decided to confirm her presence immediately. The event would take place in two weeks, so Lizzie could organize the buys and sales.

- Dearest wife, why are you so happy? I haven't seen you in this mood for a long time.

A shadow has passed by Elizabeth's eyes.

- It is past. - Deep breath. - Wickham, I will be honored by a University in London.

- A trip? You can count on me.

She crossed her arms and looked at him.

- I'll give you five thousand euros: don't come with me.

- We have a deal!

A mercenary husband was always a huge advantage.
Chapter Summary

Fitzwilliam and Charles chat.

Chapter Notes

Hello, guys!

I know, I know, the first chapters are really small, but they are almost like an "introduction" to the story, ok? I swear there will be chapters at least 1K+ longer!

Thank you so much for reading!

"1st January, 2013.

From: F. Darcy

To: C. Bingley

Subject: London

Bingley,

When are you coming to city? I would like to share some ideas and bets with you on horse race. What do you think? Bring Caroline, Georgiana is impatient about pregnancy and Brandon needs to relax. Women!

Indeed, my friend, women!

Expecting your answer,

F. Darcy."

"3rd January 2013.

From: C. Bingley

To: F. Darcy

Subject: (no subject)

Darcy, my buddy!

Caroline is freaking out! We haven't seen you two for some months and she really misses
Georgiana and you (if you know what I mean).

Brandon must be going nuts! Pregnant women are full of hormones. It's like watching the world burning! Thank goodness, my sisters aren't that yet.

We must get there around the 8th, ok? Prepare yourself, I've been studying statistics and my victory is certain! If I win, I will get your nephew an awesome gift!

What do you mean with "women"?! I thought you liked them…

Till then,

Charles. 

"4th January, 2013.

From: F. Darcy
To: C. Bingley
Subject: Arrival

I know what it meant and you already know what I think about.

Don't be such a fool.

See you soon,

F. Darcy"
The (dis)pleasure of memoirs

Chapter Summary

A horse race and a chat about the past. They couldn't hurt that much, could they?

Chapter Notes

Hello again!

So, Caroline is being an idiot. What is new, really? haha.

Thank you so much for reading. I hope you enjoy it!

– I bet on the 4th horse.
– Are you sure? It's the worst.

Caroline, Darcy, Gigi (with her huge belly), Charles and Brandon were on the hippodrome's cabin.

Bingley's sister, Caroline, made her way between the men and stood next to Darcy:
– Listen to him, Charles – forgetting to say "friend" on purpose. – Darcy is a numbers' enthusiast!

Georgiana rolled her eyes, but no one could see it.

– A better bet, but still a bad idea. – Darcy had mentally evaluated the horses again and made his choice. – I'm going to bet on the 2nd horse.

Caroline readily complimenting Fitzwilliam about his knowledge.

Bingley has laughed and said:

– Do you know what that reminds me of? Darcy said on some party words like these: "I have been meditating on the very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow." When did this happen…?

– On our trip to New York. – Caroline was looking mad at her brother.
– Oh, that's true... – And an enigmatic expression took Bingley's face.

Darcy remained serious, but his breath was accelerated.

– We don’t have to talk about this fact. - Gigi tried to ease the situation.
Bingley agreed:

– Sure! Let's change the subject. Does somebody have news about any of our friends? We have met some nice people and...

– Jane Bennet is the top model of this moment. – Bingley's face assumed an expression of sadness. - Mary Bennet has written a book; Lydia has a great career as actress with the help of her sister, Kitty. Charlotte is an artist and... – With a dramatic pause, she had raised her eyebrows and finished: - Elizabeth Bennet, the lady with the precious eyes, is working with arts in Italy and is married to George Wickham.

Total silence. Knowing that Darcy still had feelings for Elizabeth, Caroline took the chance to misrepresent her.

– Oh, God! – Gigi has pretended an expression of pain. – That's probably one of those false alerts. – She has got the attention, but Darcy was still tense. – I am so terrified! It can happen any moment now!

– Darcy, I am going to travel on 20th January, but don't want to leave Gigi alone. Would you mind to take care of her in our chalet?


Everybody was thankful, but Gigi noticed the distant look that took Darcy's face for the rest of the day.
Cupid syndrome

Chapter Summary

Elizabeth and Fitzwilliam can avoid each other, it's fine.
They didn't count, however, that their friends were the most shippers of all!

Chapter Notes

Hello, my dears!
Now I'm serious, the story will be updated every monday, wednesday and friday, ok?
Please, please, let me know if you are enjoying it!
Thank you!

"I'm going nuts.
That all happened 10 years ago, but I'm still having hallucinations.
What are the chances to see him here and now?"

On January 20th, Lizzie arrived to London to her dreamed lecture. One functionary of Royale Academy has advised her to stay on a chalet around the city and even arranged her a ride.
The event would happen only on the next day, so she decided to take a shower and rest. Peace of mind after all these years!

When she has entered the car, the driver handed a note to her.

T3mpt m3
– It's a password for the university's website. - He has explained.

After a while, they finally got to the destiny. Lizzie took his baggage off the car and, after that, it drove away. She lifted the suitcases with some difficulty, but the happiness in her chest has overshadowed it.

After opening the door, Elizabeth has thought she was dead. Nothing on Earth could prevent her from this.

He. The man he most hated and... loved? No, she surely didn't love him. Love was supposed to be strong and son of friendship and time. However, she couldn't avoid to feel her heart tighten in her chest.

She was deadly frozed at the door, truly hoping that a thunderbolt would fall on her head. When
he looked at her, Elizabeth saw the same speechless surprise on his eyes.

Suddenly, Lizzie noticed that it WAS real. Painfully real.

– Elizabeth?

"Georgiana was plotting without I could notice! ", thought the man, not sure if with amusement or irritation.

He was trying to ignore, but his heart was bumping painfully faster inside his chest. His head was thinking of so much things at the same and it almost ached. Inside his soul, however, there were only three feelings:

Frustration: he couldn't protect her from that terrifying destiny;

Love: she was the most amazing woman he had ever known. Elizabeth would do anything for her sisters.

Sadness: he wasn't the man because of who her heart sped up.

– Elizabeth? - He said again. His expression should be laughable. - What are you doing here?

Swallowing, she took some air before reply, the skin of her cheeks becoming more colored:

– I'm the one who needs to ask. The Royale Academy has reserved this chalet for me and...

Darcy left a nervous laugh go out his lips.

– Georgiana. - He looked deeply in her eyes. - We were deceived, Lizzie... I mean, Elizabeth. My little sister has conspired against us, taking you here because of the university and making me worry about her pregnancy.

– Why? I mean, why would she do that?

– I have no idea. - But he knew. He totally knew it! Darcy protected her on past, now she was doing that with him! - Did you receive something: key, note...?

– The driver gave me this. - And she showed the paper to him.

While Fitzwilliam was scanning it, Elizabeth noticed an envelop on top of the fireplace.

She has began to read out loud:

"Dear Lizzie and dear Fitzwilliam,

We apologize, truly and deeply. You were suffering in vain for many years because of past. So, we decided, with Lydia's lead, to help you two to move on.

We really don't know what is going to happen after that, but we want you two to be happy. It will only be possible if the past go away.

It's your choice. The door is open and a driver is at your service.

Lizzie, type the password in the vault on the second floor. Fitzwilliam can show it to you.

With love,
Lydia, Georgiana, Brandon, Bingley, Charlotte, Jane, Mary e Kitty."

– Are you kidding me?!
Judgement

Chapter Summary

Lizzie and Darcy have to face some issues and judgements.

Chapter Notes

Hello, guys!

Haha, I've missed you already! How are you?

I hope you like it! :D

Thanks a lot for reading!

See the end of the chapter for more notes.

Elizabeth and Darcy looked at each other.
– What are we going to do? – Darcy asked.
– I don’t know about you, but I’m leaving. Perhaps she could find a hotel on London…
– Are you going to run away? – The anger on his voice was clear. – We are hopeless! You have wasted your time and I’ve lost my patience! I will pay for everything you have spent so far, but, for God’s sake, can we just finish this drama?
The surprise on her face made him step back a little.
– I’m sorry, I didn’t want to alarm you, but I think…
– I don’t care about what you think or have thought! I start to wonder if you really aren’t involved on this!
Elizabeth regretted that instantly: she never has seen Darcy so furious.
– How do you dare to blame me for this? If I had the courage and wish to see you coming back, it would happened ten years ago!
– How do you dare to say me that? Wish? What about all the ‘love’ you’ve felt for me? Have it disappeared so fast?
Hurt, Darcy stepped back.
– Don’t say that. – Elizabeth had no idea about the nights Darcy hadn’t slept, always trying to figure out a way to save her. He knew she didn’t feel the same for him, but Elizabeth was a wonderful person, she didn't have to pay for another one’s mistakes. Darcy was feeling so tired and hurt that he has only lowered his head and breathed deeply to clear his mind.
– I-I’m so sorry... I didn’t mean it. – Elizabeth became paler. When Charles had left her sister because of Darcy's advice, she thought it was unforgivable, but he, at least, was trying to help a friend. Wickham, however... – Please, don’t be like that.
– It is fine. – Darcy said after a couple of minutes. – Listen, Lizzie. – and he has looked her in the eye. – I know Georgiana is involved on this, but I don’t know anything about it, I swear. I hid things from you, but I have never lied.
And it was true.
– Darcy... – She swallowed. – Are you really ready to see what is in that vault? There must be so
many memories, some good, some bad...
He sighed.
– If we not do this now, there won’t be peace.
He led her to the second floor and typed the password on the vault.
Inside, there was a huge box with a note.

"We really appreciate your courage, it is priceless. The password is the first of the memories: t3mpt m3, or tempt me, was your common phrase.
We hope the memories can help! Strenght for you, our dears!
Lizzie & Darcy’s Shippers.
PS: Darcy, how could you say that about Lizzie? Shame on you! - Char."

The time machine has started to run.

Chapter End Notes

Please, let me now if there is any mistake about the English! :D
Tempt me 1.0

Chapter Summary

Darcy and Elizabeth open the envelope number 1.

Chapter Notes

Hello, guys!

So, I've made some changes (and I'll make it to the earlier chapters as well) like using quote marks for dialogues and trying to improve my english. I'm not a native speaker, as you must have noticed, but I'm working on it!

if any of you speaks portuguese or knows english very well and wants to help me with the translation or the correction, I would be delighted.

I really hope you enjoy! Sorry about the delay, I wasn't at home.

Annie.

It's funny how friends can be annoying and entertaining at the same time.

After a nervous laugh, Darcy took the lead and opened the box.

"Several envelopes", and picked up one. In this was written the number '1'.

"What are they up to? It seems far beyond 'heal the wounds'."

He sighed resignedly.

"If there is not another way..."

Lizzie opened it. As always, one more statement inside:

No matter the exact chronological order or even the script. What you should do is re-enact every memory that is inside the packages to understand how the minds of each other worked on that moment.

- I should have imagined! One sister is actress, another is model, my best friend is an artist...

Lizzie poured the entire contents of the envelope on the floor (cautiously) and became aware of the photos. Lizzie, Jane, Lydia, Mary, Kitty and Charlotte smiled in front of a grand ballroom; in another one, there were the girls (smiling), Darcy (dour), Caroline (disgusted) and Bingley (happy)... Then she has looked on the back to make sure on what day it was taken: July 29, 2002.

"I do not remember all the details, but I think it was the birthday of one of the cousins of Bingley, our friend from school."
"Exactly", Darcy replied. "We had just arrived in town."

"You three were so funny!", Lizzie gave a hearty laugh. "People say that the British are charming, but it was so strange to hear you speak!"

Darcy laughed.

"I'm still English. Do I continue to talk funny?"

She smiled.

"Once English, always English." Turning her eyes to the picture, she tried to remember and retrace their steps at the party...


"Char, that's wonderful! I love the parties of this century!", and she began to laugh, a very common and admired trait of her personality. "I can dance if I choose to! And no gentleman will dare to dance with me, since I am the most insufferable creature in the universe."

Charlotte laughed on a more restrained way.

"Lizzie!", Jane scolded with tenderness. "Stop being so arrogant! This is all façade, as you are the kindest soul I've ever seen."

"She must have a mirror in the face!", exclaimed Charlotte and the three burst into laughter.

The group - five Bennet sisters and Charlotte - were sitting near a window, since the place was extremely stuffy. Kitty and Lydia had laughed and whispered incessantly, to the point that Mary just shook her head in disgust about so stupid social convention.

Lizzie, seeing the birthday girl, Isadora, pass by, nodded to her.

"I'm so glad you all came!", The girl exclaimed. "My party would not be complete without you!"

Although the girl was 23 years old, there was still a hint of traditional little party with cake and balloons.

All the girls hugged her.

"Dora, dear. Is it true that some of your cousins have moved to here?", asked Jane.

"Yes, my adorable cousins of England.", and she rolled her eyes. "They seem to belong for an old book! Charles and Caroline are my blood, but the best friend of them, Fitzwilliam Darcy, is considered in the same way for us. They are finishing college". She whispered: "Fitzwilliam is so hipster, makes me so uncomfortable!". She took them by the hand. "Let me introduce you! Maybe American people can cheer them up..."

And she began to laugh.

The first member of the group they have met was a boy with medium height, very blond hair and green eyes as well. His modes were sweet and the smile did reach his eyes: this was Charles Bingley.
The second member was a girl with an air of disdain, as saying that the English people were superior. Her hair was as blond as her brother's and she was stunning: Caroline Bingley. 

The latter was considered for some time the most charming boy at the birthday party, all because of the combination of height, black eyes and black hair, shyness and his alternative style. This thinking, however, didn't last much: he could be very handsome, but his presumed shyness was nothing more than a sneer, a profound mockery of those people who were enjoying themselves.

What a snob, Lizzie thought.

"Dear cousins, these are my dearest friends: Jane, Lizzie, Mary, Kitty and Lydia, who are sisters, and Charlotte."

Darcy greeted them with a nod; effusive Caroline gave them kisses on the cheek with false delight; Charles, good-hearted, shook hands with each of them, expressing particular attention to the eldest Bennet, who was, without a doubt, the most obvious beauty of the room. 

After the proper introductions, they separated. Bingley had a lot of fun and even danced with the girls, while the two affected human beings remained on the sidelines of the party.

Isadora just raised her shoulders and sighed. Rude people!

At one point, Darcy approached Bingley, who was talking to Elizabeth. 

"Excuse me, Lizzie.", and he turned to his friend, without, however, leave her aside. "Darcy, my good friend! How can you not enjoy such fun? So many beautiful and friendly people! New York is indeed the city that never sleeps. See our friend Elizabeth.", and gave her a wink. "Is not she, in fact, an extremely lovely girl?

Elizabeth smiled gratefully.

"You know I hate dancing with strangers. Also, this girl is not beautiful enough to tempt me; get your attentions back to the eldest beauty and leave me alone."

And he left. Bingley's embarrassment was palpable. Lizzie dismissed his responsibility with a warm greeting, but in her heart boiled a new sensation: a great contempt for that selfishness and arrogance that almost put her sick.

She, however, has told with good humor the episode to the girls. They laughed, but their indignation against the man was huge.

The girl that almost did not stay with the group was Jane, as Bingley had expressed a special interest for her.

The party ended and everyone went to their separate ways, but new feelings flourished in each of those hearts.

After the flashback, Darcy was shocked.

"I did not remember such impertinence. How could I be so rude? No wonder you hated me."

She smiled, penalized. 

"I confess that this offense intensified my repulse about you, but my hate was based on much
deeper reasons." Seeing Darcy blushing, she said softly: "We should discuss this on one of the next memories."

"Time to open the envelop number 2!"
The beautiful eyes

Chapter Summary

Darcy and Lizzie watch some videotapes.

Chapter Notes

Hello, my beautiful readers!

I hope you are enjoying yourselves! I'm certain I am! :D

Please, tell me if something goes wrong, ok?

Thank you again!

Annie.

Darcy pulled another envelope from the box and it felt heavier than expected.

"Lizzie, I believe these are not photographs!"

She approached and took the package from his hands.

"Apparently", Elizabeth looked inside, "this envelope contains videotapes!"

Darcy looked paler.

"Videotapes? Why did they have to put the videotapes in this?"

Lizzie watched Darcy losing control.

"Hey, calm down! Why do they let you so nervous?"

The pleading look almost made she feel sorry for him.

"You will not like to know."

"We have agreed that we would continue with their plan, right? Think about the future.. I am looking for a less painful one."

Darcy sighed, but nodded.

"Okay. Let's watch this tape for once!"

He led her way to a room with a player k-7, inserted the tape and handed the remote control to Lizzie.

. . . (Isadora's parents have offered a lunch to their daughter's friends. Several young people, including the Lucas and Bennet's sisters and the cousins of the host, are present. The background music is soft rock. Bingley decides to enjoy his passion: filming. However, Jane caught his attention and he passes the camera to Kitty, who focused it on Charlotte and Lizzie.)

'Char, Jane and Bingley were made for each other, don't you think? He is so kind to her, so gentle! If I know her well, I would say that she is falling in love very deeply!"

"I wonder if he also realizes that, Lizzie. - Replied the other, pointing toward the eldest Bennet, who was smiling with a contained manner."

Elizabeth laughed.

"If he doesn't realize, I can only feel sorry for him."

Charlotte rolled her eyes.

"He did not know her like we do, silly!"

"Kitty, get outta here with that camera!". The camera shakes and a loud laugh is heard, but the focus remains on the two girls."Char, Jane is shy and reserved. How could she behave differently? It would be a lie!"

"I know, I know, but they were not left alone long enough for these feelings rise up, my dear. He is unsecure, it is noticeable. Will Bingley continue to express these feelings for Jane if he doesn't get more warm reactions?"

"Again, if he doesn't realize she only has eyes for him, then Bingley can piss off, because he doesn't deserve her."

"Lizzie, I love Jane too. We've been friends for many years! I really hope Bingley learn to recognize Jane's feelings like we do."

"Kitty, get out of here!". The camera is pushed away from the girls. Later, it captures the eyes of Fitzwilliam Darcy focused on Elizabeth. Then, the image fades.

The man in the chair was livid.

"Are you okay?"

He took a deep breath.

"It only scared me a little bit to see how I was different then."

She laughed.

"Very hipster, for sure!", but she was suspicious the real reason for his awkwardness was not that one. "Shall we continue? We can have dinner afterwards!"

"Of course", and he looked back at the TV.

Rolling her eyes, Elizabeth pressed play.

At the same party.
The possession of the camera went back to the owner, who is sitting next to Darcy.

Beside they, on another couch, is sitting Elizabeth.

"Dear nephew!", and the man approached Darcy. "One of the greatest pleasures of my life is to see young people talking about smart subjects. I can assure that Eliza here", and he sat down beside her, "has these qualities."

"Surely she has, uncle.", and with a serious look on the lady, Darcy has said: "With all the technology and the increasing speed of information, I would be disappointed greatly if it was different."

The uncle smiled.

"Bingley likes to talk, but this is not your character, Will."

"I do it whenever my attention is caught."

"Yes, it's true. And when this happens, I have great pleasure in seeing it."

He turned to Lizzie, who was trying not to laugh.

"Eliza, dear! What a wonderful opportunity. You and my nephew are very similar, although you speak a bit more than him."

He turned back to the boy.

"I can assure you that she has the best mind in this room! Let me introduce you two and..."

The girl stood up abruptly.

"You are a gentleman, but it is wrong to think that I sat here looking for company. Right now, I'm in search of silence."

"But that would be a shame! With this talented mind of yours...!"

Darcy stood up as well.

"Stay, Elizabeth, I'm enjoying this conversation."

She smiled on a mocking way.

"It is very gentle of you.", She turned and left the place, being followed by the father of Isadora.

"I think I know what you're thinking", Said Caroline, approaching.

She sat beside Darcy.

"I can not believe you do."

"Oh, I do: you are measuring the horror of spending days in the company of these barbaric... people. I fully agree."

"You are mistaken. I've been thinking about the pleasure a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow."
"Oh, Will!", She felt flattered. "May I ask who is your inspiring muse?"

"Eliza Bennet."

The indignant expression of Caroline made the camera shake with Bingley's laugh.

"Since when do you like her so much? If I am not wrong, you almost insulted her at the Isadora's party..."

She continued to speak for a long moment; however, Bingley found Jane Bennet a much more interesting subject and the recording ended.

The man's eyes were closed.

"Wow!"

"It was terrible, isn't it?"

"You were so different! So..."

"Arrogant?"

She smiled apologetically.

"Well, yeah. Even your compliments to me were offensive!"

Darcy lowered his head.

"Much has happened since that time..."

Elizabeth was silent for a moment.

"Do you know ... I've always thought you and Caroline would be together."

"Really?"

He was genuinely amazed.

"Are you telling me that you did not know she was crazy about you?"

"She still is. Why would I fall in love with her?"

"Well, Caroline was so beautiful. Your minds were quite compatible (at least at the time of the tape), you knew each other for ages, your aunt would approve it, I've married the man you hated the most..."

"Caroline remained the same, but I would never, ever felt something like love for her."

"It doesn't make any sense! Why?"

"Lizzie, I was an arrogant bastard, but I've never hurt anyone. At least, not consciously. All my actions are based on the well-being of the people I care about. Caroline was willing to do what she could to achieve her goals. Her pride only served to make her even more selfish. " He took a deep breath. "If love is borne by admiration, then I can never feel for her..."

What I feel for you.
The two were silent for a moment.

"If you excuse me, I will take a bath", Said Darcy, quickly leaving the room.

Lizzie leaned her head on her knee and cursed, mentally, one fateful day in July.

The day which have changed the fate of all them.
Mummy Bennet, the matchmaker

Chapter Summary

Elizabeth and Darcy open the next envelope.

Chapter Notes

Hello, my dears!

So, I hope you are liking it! I must warn you, however: I am not quite sure about this chapter, the translation was rather difficult. I need you: tell me about any mistake I've made, ok?

Thank you so much for your time!

After that awkward situation, Elizabeth decided to eat something and call it a day.

How many things could happen in 24 hours!

She didn’t meet with Darcy that night again, he was avoiding her for sure. It was probably better that way, though: there were still many memories to remember, it would be very stressful.

She even tried to eat, but nothing could pass through her mouth. Elizabeth fell asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow.

Darcy remained wake up with eyes fixed on the ceiling during a good time of the night. He just could not believe that the past was worse than the Pandora's Box imagined by him.

The man was afraid of what was to come, but he should face his ghosts.

Darcy didn't fell asleep until dawn, completely exhausted .

The next day , the two met in the video room to open the third envelope.

"Ready?"

"This has to end sometime, right? Let’s do it."

September 18, 2002, Central Park.

There was only this note inside the envelope.

"Elizabeth , that day means something to you? I can’t relate it to anything important."
Lizzie looked at him with deep regret.

"Oh , Darcy , for sure I remember this day. Let me tell you a long story..."

**September 16, 2002 , Central Park , New York.**

**The five Bennet girls and their parents decided to relax that day.**

They were a strange family: his father was a serious businessman; his mother was a fool and, seeing the same folly in some of her daughters, she encouraged it, thinking it would bring them an advantageous marriage: in such a competitive world, it would be better if a man stood beside them. Yes, sexist behavior, but not an uncommon one! The fact that her husband would left all his heritance to a cousin, since her daughters were not interested in business, has made her even more insistent on that subject.

Living in such a big city was not easy. Going to the park was their routine, a way to relieve the tension of every day.

Lydia and Kitty went the park daily and soon have heard that a group from a college would train there for the next city marathon. They became delighted!

After a few days, the college boys arrived. Many were very respectful and professional ones, but some of them...

On the Bennet home there wasn’t another matter of subject. Lydia and Kitty had even personally met some people of the group and lived whispering in the corners.

"Good heavens!", Complained the father one day, tired of such hysteria. "Can’t you two be a little less futile?"

"Hush, my dear ! Stop criticizing the girls. I, at their age, loved a college boy. And, despite that, they are your daughters, for God's sake! Parents shouldn’t complain about their children this way."

"Yes, dear, you were the wisest of girls back then." And he rolled his eyes while kissing her head. "But I can’t help to pay attention to the folly of both."

At that moment, a note and a bouquet of roses were delivered.

"Jane, dear! ", The Bennet mother ran screaming inside the house. The gift was from Bingley!

**Dear Jane ,**

Come dine with us tonight. I would feel very happy for that , because you are so dear to me!

The bouquet is a gift from Charles as an apology for not being able to join us this time.

Yours,

Caroline .

"Can I take the car?"
"No way! It is night and the roads are dangerous. You are going to take the subway, my dear."

Everyone looked startled to Mrs. Bennet.

"Mother", Elizabeth tried to argue. "It is late, something could happen to her!"

"Nonsense! She knows the city like the back of her hand. Also, your dad needs the car for a high society’s dinner tonight."

As soon as Jane left, a heavy rain fell on the city.

The next day, Jane called. She wasn’t feeling well, her whole body hurt due to a cold and the Isadora’s family would not let her return until she has fully recovered.

"If Jane had died, all of this would worth it. For God’s sake, my love, such action only because of a wedding?"

"No one dies of a cold, dear."

"I'll go to Isadora’s.", Elizabeth said.

"You'll get all disheveled, pass a bad impression and, worse of all, break the privacy of your sister! I forbid you!"

Lizzie shrugged. Bringing Lydia and Kitty with her, the three left.

The two youngest went to Central Park. Elizabeth headed her way to Isadora’s house.

Her arrival nearly caused an uproar. Everyone was eating lunch, except for Jane, and they’ve stopped their meal only for her.

Isadora, her parents and Bingley ran to hug and kiss Elizabeth. Darcy muttered something and Caroline just smiled.

Eliza asked about Jane and then immediately went to see her. "

"Remember what I have told you about Caroline being selfish? That day, she tried in every way to say ill of you. She said: 'How Elizabeth dare to appear here, a respectful house, without being invited?'. I couldn’t think of a proper answer because… you were really beautiful. The exercise did well to your skin.

Elizabeth blushed.

"Thank you!", she looked at her watch. It was past noon. "I need to eat something. We can continue later?"

"Of course!"

As she left, Darcy blamed himself. How could he flirt like that at such critical moment?
After lunch time, Lizzie decided to have a walk around the place. It was far away from the city, enough for stop her from running away, but also too close, and she couldn’t get rid of those emotions. Not yet.

Elizabeth found a little garden and headed that place.

“It’s insane. INSANE! Why are we talking about those things again? It’s not like they can be fixed.”, she argue with herself, despite knowing the answer better than anyone else.

Darcy decided to take a nap after lunch. It was an awful meal, he couldn’t eat more than a bite and he knew too well the reason of it: they were talking about old dramas (things he believed were buried deep inside his heart and soul) and, worse than that, he couldn’t stop those old feelings from coming back. It’s like their story had been paused and the feelings were frozen: when he laid his eyes on Elizabeth again, everything went back to where it had stopped.

Since he wouldn’t be able to sleep anymore, Darcy opened the window and observed the view. That chalet was dear to him because of its surroundings: peaceful and silent - one of the things he appreciate the most about England. The Arcadian style was a way of escaping from such a miserable life, full of privations, hurry and problems of the big cities.

Looking at the chalet’s garden, he noticed Elizabeth. She was very, very concentrate, and her feelings were on display, making her so magnificent Darcy thought he had never seen her so beautiful before… She was like a painting! He searched for pen and paper around the office and, coming back to his lucky spot, he started drawing her.

Lizzie, without noticing it, looked around once more and their eyes locked. Despite their initial trembles and hold of breath, none avoid each other’s gaze. Fitzwilliam was creating an Elizabeth just like what his eyes showed him; Lizzie’s eyes allowed him to do so.

The final art was filled with a foggy view, only the lady’s features were clearly defined on that draw. Darcy took some notes about the colors he would like to use on the back of the paper and locked it all inside one of his packs.

He owned an absolute treasure.

**

Afterwards, Elizabeth and Darcy joined the same room again.

“Let’s keep going.”

At the same day

Since Jane wasn’t getting better, Lizzie was forced to stay some more time there. She hated to have Darcy - the posh and detestable guy - around her, but at least Jane, Charles and Isadora’s presence made it slightly better. Elizabeth had a great care for Bingley. He was so gracious and kind to her sister, Elizabeth was sure there wouldn’t be another gentleman like him on Earth anymore. If Jane sneezed, Bingley would bring tissues in a hurry; he made her lots and lots of hot chocolate to make her cold better. They were almost all the time on the kitchen, talking and
drinking tea.

Elizabeth knew Charles wouldn’t take advantage of her sister in that state, but Jane was a mature woman and their like for each other grew every day. What a charming couple! She couldn’t imagine Jane with another (and better) human being.

On the other hand, only Charles seemed to notice her. Caroline was always seeking Darcy’s attention, what made her sick!

After the dine, she decided to join Jane and avoid listening what the other fellows could say to her.

“Again, Caroline tried by every mean to make you look bad, Lizzie. You should see how much Isadora and her father were mad because of it: they even left the room without saying their goodbyes. When I tried to go to my room, she teased me, saying hateful thinga about your eyes.” Darcy blushed a bit. “But I must tell you, Lizzie, that I found your eyes even more brighter and fantastic as ever that day.”

They avoided each other’s eyes for some moments, a creepy silence growing between them. Lizzie, wanting to end it as soon as possible, decided to keep going:

On the same evening:

Jane slept too late that night. Lizzie didn’t leave her side until she was sure her sister was comfortable.

Going back to the main room, she was invited to join them on some cards play; however, hating bets, she made her apologies and said she would prefer to read a good book.

Isadora’s father was very impressed by it.

“My dear, I know you’re a wonderful and well-manered girl, but choosing books, not a delicious game like this? I can’t understand.”

“Lizzie despises the games, uncle.” Elizabeth felt her teeth clench after hearing Caroline saying her name with such intimacy. “Nothing on this world would make her happier than feeling superior than other common human beings like us.”

“I don’t deserve your words, Caroline. Another things give me joy and happiness.”

“Taking care of her sister”, Bingley replied for her. “And I do hope Jane will fully recover very soon. “

Elizabeth thanked him with all her heart and her affection for him only grew more.

“Be free to read all the books you want from our library, my dear”, said Isadora’s father.

As Elizabeth tried to choose one of them to read, Caroline kept talking:

“What a small collection you have here, uncle! You should see Darcy’s: there are the most cult and newest editions of all books you imagine! It’s marvelous!”
“The collection is fed and taken care of for generations.”

“My humble property” - Caroline said after nodding at Darcy, “, which means, my future property is going to have a huge library. And I hope you do the same, Charles.”

The boy chuckled.

“Sorry, Carol, but I think it’s easier for me to buy Darcy’s.”

Lizzie was having the biggest fun since she came to this house, so she decided to sit between the Bingley’s.

“How’s Georgiana, Darcy? Is she a woman yet?”

“My sister is going well, thank you. She must be… about Elizabeth’s weight, I believe.”

“I’m so proud of meeting her! She is so full of talents: it’s the most clever on her class, plays the piano and draws even better than Darcy.”

“But-but this is so dull!”, said Bingley with exasperation. “I don’t know another person that is not claimed to have all those qualities. How can they handle such a pressure! “All people…”

“All people?” Interrupted Caroline with wide eyes. “Are you insane?”

“Well, all of them paint, read and study a lot. A least the ones I know.”

“The praised is done without any real standard.”

“Oh, you seem to expect too much of a person, Darcy.”

“Of course. To be praised, said person must have had read the great classics: Machiavelli, Voltair. Also, they must know all painting masters and be great artists themselves, and, of course, speak more than one language.” Caroline answered for him.

“I agree. I would say the reading part again”, Darcy said. “They must be well informed about all the news and the past of the World.”

That was too much for Lizzie:

“I’m not surprised when you say you only know six people that deserve to be praised as much. I’m surprised you know even one person like that! What an absurd criterion!”

“I agree with Lizzie”, said Bingley, earning an awful glare from his sister. “For myself, I haven’t read any of the author you mentioned, but I’m not a stupid man.”

Elizabeth felt like she had won a great championship. Darcy tried to argue:

“Do you despise human kind so much to the point of not believing it’s possible to exist such a human being?”

“I’ve never met a person like this before and, if you allow me to be sincere, I hope I never will.”

That stupid and absurd conversation was really tiresome: Elizabeth decided to say her goodbyes and join her sister once more.

“I still can’t believe you have such thoughts, Darcy.”
He chuckled.

“That Fitzwilliam is way different of myself, I can assure you.”

Both smiled: the peace was still winning on their game.

End Notes

So? :D

Thank you so much for reading!

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