The arrival at Pemberley

by jpasdk

Summary

Elizabeth's and Darcy's first arrival at Pemberley as newlyweds. Canon with a minimal touch of the 1995-series and P. D. James: "Death comes to Pemberley".

I owe everything to Jane Austen for her marvellous 'Pride and prejudice'.

The celebration

They celebrated the double wedding at Netherfield, because the journey to Pemberley would take at least two days with all their wedding gifts and those of Elizabeth’s belongings, she could not do without.

At the celebration, the Bennet’s relatives naturally included Mrs. Phillips, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. Only Lydia was missing, but all – except maybe Kitty - were very satisfied, that Lydia was far away in the north of England with her 'dear Wickham'. Mr. Bennet sincerely rejoiced that he could unite his two eldest daughters with men they really loved, while the success marrying two daughters to wealthy men overwhelmed Mrs. Bennet.

There were many guests as Mrs. Bennet meant that the family Lucas should participate in the family’s great triumph. Mr. and Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley represented the Bingley family. From Darcy’s family came rather few, as Lady Catherine de Bourgh had banned Mr. Darcy’s choice of bride, but Colonel Fitzwilliam and Georgiana attended joyfully with Mrs. Annesley.

Quite unexpectedly, Mr. and Mrs. Collins were present. They wanted to avoid Lady Catherine’s anger and right now preferred to stay away from Rosings for a while. Elizabeth was surprised and
very pleased – she had so much to talk about with Charlotte.

Neither Miss Bingley nor the Hursts were particularly happy, and Miss Bingley was enforced to realize that all her dreams of becoming mistress of Pemberley had fallen in ruins. Bitterness was of no use, if she would like to visit Netherfield or Pemberley. From now on, she must be civil to both Mrs. Jane Bingley and Mrs. Elizabeth Darcy, and if she wanted to marry, she had to search for a suitable match in the town.

Georgiana cried of joy at the prospect of getting a new beloved sister, and Charlotte was happy on Elizabeth’s behalf. She enjoyed that she was right in her suspicions, that Elizabeth - and that way back from the ball at Netherfield – had captivated Mr. Darcy.

The Gardiners were extremely pleased and thrilled, being able to help their dearest nieces, Jane and Elizabeth, and see that both the prettiest and the wisest of the five Bennet sisters each had found a lovely husband after all their hardships. They looked delightedly at each other and agreed that Mr. Darcy had made the wise choice, as Mrs. Gardiner had suggested in her letter to Elizabeth.

After the celebration, Elizabeth and Darcy went to sleep – they would defer the wedding night until Pemberley. As they would like to arrive alone, they agreed with Georgiana, that she and Mrs. Annesley would come a few days later.

The journey

The following day the couple departed from Netherfield. The two brides gave each sister, their mom and dad a big hug, Mrs. Bennet, Jane and Elizabeth cried their farewell tears, but they all promised soon to meet again.

After all the congratulations, shouts of joy, tears of farewell, Elizabeth and Darcy finally settled in the carriage, which contained Elizabeth’s indispensable belongings from Longbourn. Her other things would come later, and she had changed to a handy travelling dress - but wanted to have her wedding gown as a memory of their wonderful day, so it was carefully packed with her other clothes.

Darcy looked devotedly at Elizabeth – to him it was still most unbelievable that she really was here, happy as his dearest wife – after all these events!

Imagine it was she, that barely a year ago emphatically had rejected his disastrous proposal. She had said harsh, but true words, and icily concluded that he certainly was the last man in the world, she would ever marry!

He will never forget her sincere words - but curiously it became his great luck, that it was just she, who had lectured him and caused him to reflect about and change his behaviour into a more gentle, kind and obliging man.

With a shudder, he thought it might just as well have been Anne de Bourgh or Caroline Bingley, who might sit beside him – with the first, everything would be truly bleak, and with the other, it would be boring.

No, he certainly was lucky! Indeed, Elizabeth was a very rare jewel. Virtually all the other women, he had met, flattered him and they were mainly interested in his wealth and social position. But, she was different – unimpressed, open-minded, challenged and teased him. She was vivacious, sweet and kind, sensible, and definitely not without refinement, despite her family’s general lack of propriety.
Actually, he had seen, that it was in fact Jane and Elizabeth, who tried to improve the manners of both their parents and their younger sisters – but they all in their family took care of and loved each other, no matter how much they quarreled. And he had to admit, their caring was in no way strange - he did exactly the same for Georgiana! When he at that time harassed Jane and Bingley by separating them, he had not grasped Elizabeth’s anger due to her feelings for her sister, but he certainly felt it, when she told him to his face!

In addition – her handsome, dark eyes and graceful figure!

Admiringly, he asked his beloved: "What would you like, I call you, my dear?"

She laughed: "I am not so fond of 'my dear' - my dad always says so to my mother in a jaded, ironic tone, but when I honestly hear it from you, that might be -" she looked teasingly at him "- tolerable!"

The word embarrassed him - he still profoundly regretted he said it the first time they met, offending Elizabeth.

She looked kindly at him: "Pardon, my beloved, I know, it is not your opinion any more! Nor, I like 'Lizzy', mother have always scolded me using that name, even when I no more was a child!"

"Call me Elizabeth – and - if you are in good temper, you may use your kind words you said to me at our long walk – they really touched me!" She chuckled: "But, oh great Mr. Darcy, what may I call you?"

He smiled and reflected for a moment, questioning: "Dearest, loveliest Elizabeth -?" She nodded delightedly with a big smile. "- call me William or Will – my mother always did, indeed I have missed it." For a moment, he was grieved, looking down by the thought of his late, beloved mother.

Elizabeth took his hands to comfort him and said compassionately: "I know, how much you miss your mother – although my mother sometimes is very annoying, yet she is still around, and for that I am grateful."

He leaned against her: "Yes, I admit, I terribly miss my mother – and afterwards Pemberley became all quiet and gloomy - I have lived too many years in that atmosphere, and never, never! I have liked it."

Then he got enlightened: "But now the living at Pemberley is going to be joyful – not least thanks to you!"

Elizabeth laughed shyly: "Well, I am only Elizabeth Bennet and cannot make miracles –" She was tense, although she enjoyed escaping her mother’s inappropriate comments and her sisters’ silly behaviour.

Darcy sensed her pensiveness: "My beloved – do not put yourself down - I see, you are somewhat anxious – I suppose, it is due to the prospects of your new and very different life." He took her hands and said definitely: "My love - my Elizabeth Darcy, do not worry - I promise, I will help you and support you with all my strength!" He smiled and look into her fine dark eyes: "Trust me – we will make it out."

His words comforted her, and she looked grateful at him: "Dear William – you exactly read my thoughts! As everything is new to me, I naturally feel somewhat uneasy. You are right, it will probably turn out fine, but you must promise to tease me kindly, when I get into a mess," she said embarrassed and chuckled.
He smiled: "Of course I promise! – so many things are new to me, too – it is the greatest joy in my life to bring you home as my wife to Pemberley! And for a long time, I had lost all hope at it."

She laid her hand at his arm, pleased by his words and said earnestly: "You stuck to your hope, and thanks for that! At first, your proposal stunned me, then I got furious, but afterwards your letter revealed that I was wrong in many ways. I have read it again and again, and saved it as a serious reminder to me."

She went on: "When we then happened to meet each other at Pemberley, I was surprised – now you behaved friendly and polite in a gentleman-like manner! Little by little, I sensed your warm affection to me, I conquered my embarrassment and seriously began to like you. But when I had to leave because of Lydia’s elopement, I feared, you were totally unable to associate with me and my family due to the scandal, and I had to resign myself at the idea that you anyhow would not think ill of me."

"Elizabeth, I had the great fear, you did not wish to see me, because I was too shy and in time had not explicitly warned you all against Wickham’s character – I thought, I was to blame for the scandal, and I somehow still cherished my hope and had to act. As I then met the snorting angry Lady Catherine, who told me you had refused to comply with any of her demands, I sensed it as a revelation. Very few dare reject her, but you did! – you are fabulous and I got such a respect for you!"

She looked smiling at him: "Indeed, William, we have been both stubborn and lucky!"

He nodded and remembered something of his concern: "Dearest Elizabeth, may I ask you to get dressed in your wedding gown a second time, before arriving at Pemberley? I do not know if it is decent, but I really want to present you in the right way for all the people. We can drive to the inn at Lambton and get a little rest and some refreshments, while I send for a carriage, telling them we will come in a short time. I will change to my groom dresses, I have them with me."

He looked roguishly at her: "One of our – not anymore my – carriages will then take us the last way."

She laughed: "I think, you are right, it is not entirely appropriate, but William, yes, I would love to!"

**At Lambton inn**

After they broke their journey and stayed for a night, they finally drove to the inn in Lambton, got a bath and changed. When Hannah, the maid, recognized Elizabeth, she exclaimed: "Dear Miss, I do remember you! You stayed here last summer, and were so unhappy when you unexpectedly had to leave – I have been worried thinking of you, and now I am relived to see you are doing well."

Elizabeth was rejoiced by her remarks and smiled pleasantly: "How kind of you to have me in your mind! You were right, but my husband had prevented the misery."

Hannah got astonished: "Your husband? Are you married? Congratulations ma’am – well, my goodness, is it with the very Mr. Darcy?"

"Yes" she smiled: "will you help me to put on my gown? It has to fit properly."

"Surely, Mrs. Darcy – oh my God - it is a wedding dress! You have just married? I am so glad on your behalf, how you have surprised me today."

"Yes, we think it is the right thing to do, before I the first time arrive to Pemberley as mistress. My
family lives in Longbourn in Hertfordshire; we have travelled for two days."

"Dear ma’am, it is a great pleasure to help you – indeed, working with wedding dresses is not everyday occurrence for me – and it suits you brilliantly!"

"Thank you for the compliment, Hannah." Then Elizabeth got a daring idea: "You have cared for me in an exceptional fine way, I wonder if you might want to come and serve at Pemberley?"

Darcy had also changed his clothes, and was now standing beside her and nodded approvingly.

Their offer quite overwhelmed Hannah, she blushed and curtsied: "I – I – Oh my dear, I do not know what to say - thanks a lot, ma’am – sir – it is a great honour, I – excuse me – it came so suddenly - may I consider the matter for a while?"

Elizabeth smiled: "Certainly – you may just send a note to the housekeeper and mention my name. And if you ever need any recommendation, you are most welcome to contact me."

When Hannah had left, Darcy said in astonishment: "Elizabeth, how on Earth - ? - You did so fine! It is just that kind of people I would like to have at Pemberley."

She blushed and chuckled gratefully: "Thanks William – I think, it is simple - I am kind to everyone, who is kind to me – and you of all should know!"

He admitted: "Yes, you are right, and I am grateful - you really have taught me in the hard way!"

In a short time, a carriage came from Pemberley with the familiar livery. Coachman and servants greeted reverently, the goods were loaded, and off they went. With excitement, Elizabeth recognized the woods and the beautiful park. The last time she was here, she would at all costs avoid to meet Darcy – and now he is sitting beside her, holding her hand! The carriage drove down the hill, through the portal to the main entrance.

The preparations at Pemberley

As expected, Darcy’s note to Pemberley had caused great activity. The butler, Mr. Stoughton, and the housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, immediately called everyone together, who were in and around the mansion. She said: "We have received a very important note from our master – right now he is in Lambton, he has newly married and in a short time he will arrive with his bride!"

They looked at each other in eager anticipation – a new mistress! She went on: "It is a great day in the history of Pemberley, and obviously you at once have to put up in your finest clothes."

They asked: "Do we know anything about our new mistress?" The question caused an anxiety among them, could it be Anne de Bourgh? Then the living at Pemberley would really be gloomy, and Lady Catherine de Bourgh would definitely stay here for a long time and sincerely make their life miserable… In addition, if it was Miss Bingley, it was not better…

Mr. Stoughton tried to calm them down: "We only know our master’s note – our new mistress comes from Longbourn in Hertfordshire, and was formerly Miss Elizabeth Bennet. She is the second sister of five. The oldest sister, former Miss Jane Bennet, married at the same time to Mr. Bingley. Maybe some of you might know Mr. Bingley, as he is a close friend to our master, and has visited us several times – but now you all must hurry, the carriage can be here any minute!"

Mrs. Reynolds got pensively - Miss Elizabeth Bennet? – She recognized the name, but right now was unable to remember the occasion. However, she kept the name in her mind – and anyway, she trusted Mr. Darcy – the master has always been sensible – she was certain, he has made a suitable choice!
In a hurry, the people rushed in and got ready in their best clothes. In the bustle, there were many comments:

"It is long ago Pemberley has received a new mistress. When I was young, I still remember Lady Anne, I was so touched, I almost cried."

"At last our master has married – it may cause great changes for us, we must hope for the best."

"Yes, we cannot do anything but hope, I feel somewhat uneasy."

"We will get another living here – I wonder, how it will become?"

"Do not be frightened, our master is a sensible man."

"Anyone of you, who knows something about this Mr. Bingley?"

"Yes, last time, he stayed here with his sisters, Mr. Hurst and some other guests. One of the guests, a young woman, played and sang nicely with Miss Darcy. She and Mr. Bingley were very kind. As for Mr. Bingley’s sisters – well, let us be silent."

"I have never heard of Longbourne - cannot be a great estate - two sisters out of five – it looks rather plain, nothing of the ton."

"I believed, our master had to marry his cousin, Anne de Bourgh. Lady Catherine demanded and expected it, but I am relieved he has chosen his own way – I am impressed he dares!"

"And what about our new mistress? It will not be easy for her – poor thing - she will have to cope with the awesome Lady Catherine."

"Our master has always taken good care of us, I hope our new mistress will do the same."

"When our mistress’ sister at the same time was married to the nice Mr. Bingley, I think, it looks promising. Pemberley needs badly some joy and happiness – We have missed it, since Lady Anne passed away."

The arrival

They all managed to dress properly and stood in lines, as the carriage arrived.

Darcy got off first – he was smiling broadly! For many years, they had not seen him like that, and with gaping curtseys and bows they greeted him. Then he took Elizabeth by her hand and helped her out. When they saw her, a rush of infatuation went through the rows – what a lovely bride! Mr. Stoughton directed three cheers for the couple.

Elizabeth looked wonderfully in her wedding dress, and their reception moved her profoundly. To everyone’s surprise, she curtseyed to the people and said: "Dear all, thank you for your welcome. I confess, I am not accustomed to the great conditions here at Pemberley, but I assure you all of my good intention to make the things out. If I get in doubt, I beg you to help me when I have to ask you about something."

She looked lovingly at Darcy, and again stunned them by giving him a big kiss in front of them all. Darcy looked entranced – never before they have seen him like that! In the lines, they whispered that their master certainly had married for nothing but love, and with such a pretty and apparently kind woman!
Darcy first presented Elizabeth for Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Stoughton. They immediately recognized Elizabeth, she was the kind woman, who took great care of Georgiana, played and sang with her last summer. Mrs. Reynolds was profoundly relieved and took a deep breath: "Dear ma’am, our heartfelt welcome to Pemberley and congratulations! I remember – you visited us with some friends – and you said, you already knew our master a little?"

Elizabeth blushed: "Thank you, Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Stoughton, you are right, I visited Pemberley with my uncle and my aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner."

Darcy laughed with a teasing glance at Elizabeth: "Yes, and knew much more than just a little!"

Elizabeth smiled heartily and gave him a big hug. The couple's frankness and their lovely words fascinated them all. She said: "Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Stoughton, will you do me the honour to present me to everybody? I probably cannot remember all the names, but I will do my best."

One by one, they presented the servants to her, and all delightedly noted that she took her time to talk to and shake hands with everyone. They appreciated her style – she respected them and regarded them not merely as servants, but as human beings! She has already captured their affections.

Darcy noticed the presentations with great satisfaction, too. No, he had not been wrong – Elizabeth did it marvellously! Indeed, she was a gentleman’s daughter with an appropriate, yet friendly appearance. She would become a fine mistress at Pemberley, admired by them all!

After the presentations she smiled: "William, can we have a banquet tonight for all, also with your tenants? I will be happy for such a night as a good start to our new life."

Darcy nodded: "My dearest Elizabeth, I fully agree!"

Addressing the people, he said: "Dear all, I thank you for your welcome, too; it is a great and wonderful day for us all here at Pemberley. This evening I think we shall have a party. For a too long time we have not had any, but this is a good opportunity – and oh, how we need it! May I ask you to send a message to all the tenants, so they can participate?"

They applauded – no one was in doubt. Their master had changed. How it suited him well to be married. Instead of shyness with his strict facial expression and commanding, but fair words, he appeared human and gentle, happy – and with such a mistress!

With joy and delight, they all started to organize a party for the night, and there were many accolades:

"Whew, I am relieved - what a lovely bride, and so friendly!"

"This is outstanding! Our new mistress wanted to shake hand with us all. She is so kind; there is nothing haughty at all about her."

"Did you notice, how happy our master is for her, and she for him?"

"How sweet and joyful our new mistress is, Lady Anne would have been pleased to know her."

"I got so happy about our mistress’ welcome, so dear and touching."

"I wonder what Lady Catherine thinks – surely her Grace is angry by our master’s choice."

"Never mind, her Disgrace may disgrace, whatever she likes – our master has made his choice, and did it so admirably! He will protect us against her."
"Her Disgrace, ha-ha, that is fine! Well, we will not see her for a while."

"Fellows, I quite understand your sentiments, but remember, when you serve at Pemberley, be careful – you may think, whatever you like, but we should not talk deprecatorily about any acquaintances of our master or our mistress – the walls have ears, and gossip spreads quickly!"

"You are right, I apologize."

"I look forward to know our mistress; to me she is like a breath of fresh air to Pemberley."

"Did you see her pretty dark eyes? – I have never witnessed our master so pleased."

"I think our master has fallen for her, because our mistress is so different in many ways. She does not flatter or submit herself; on the contrary, she looks joyful, vivacious, open-minded and teases him lovingly. It obviously pleases our master – and he loves her for it."

"It is so great to see our master falling in love – now he behaves completely different."

"What a lady! Open, friendly and straightforward. Miss Darcy will be delighted."

"Yes, our mistress is the kind young woman, I spoke of! Last summer I happened to see her with Miss Darcy. She made Miss Darcy for the first time to play for the guests. And the mistress herself, she sings really well, I think, they already are good friends."

While the preparations for the party were going on, Mrs. Reynolds asked them, whether the bride and groom would come down to the servant’s hall and participate in the party. Darcy looked at Elizabeth: "I would like to come, beloved!" She exclaimed happily to Mrs. Reynolds: "Oh yes of course – we will be delighted – it is even a day of celebration for us!" Then they retreated to Darcy’s bedroom.

Elizabeth whispered anxiously: "William, did I -?" Darcy looked amazed at her with a tear in his eyes: "Dearest beloved – I am almost in lack of words - you did it so fine! You greeted them all, you put your soul into it, and you touched everybody. They already like you!"

"Thanks, but please remember to tell me, if –" Darcy interrupted with a chuckle: "I do not think, I ever have to, my dear jewel!" He kissed her, and they rested after the long journey.

As Mrs. Reynolds left them, she smiled thinking: "I knew I could trust our master; he really has made a fine choice - what a lovely bride! She is so kind – it will be a pleasure to work with her. How happy they are together! Well, last summer she said, she only knew my master a little? However, I sensed my master’s affection, when she visited us. Definitely not just a little – they must have spoken together many times – perhaps at Rosings, when Lady Catherine could not hear them?"

The party

Before darkness fell, the people placed torches in front of the mansion, and they decorated the servant’s hall with dried flowers and garlands. It was December, but the ingenuity was great and the room looked nice and comfortable. Early in the evening, Mrs. Reynolds asked the couple to come, but they stopped at the impressive sight of the flaming torches in the darkness. Elizabeth almost lost her breath; she looked deeply moved at Darcy, who nodded, smiling at her. Yes, they certainly received his dear Elizabeth in a proper manner – he was joyful – they already liked her!

Hand in hand, the couple came into the servant’s hall. All got up and Mr. Stoughton proposed
three toasts, one for the mistress, one for the master and one for Pemberley. Then they all sat
down, eating, talking and admired the bride and groom. The couple sat in the middle at the top
table with Mrs. Reynolds and Mr. Stoughton on either side and they had a pleasant conversation.

Mr. Stoughton got up and spoke after a nod from Darcy: "Dear mistress and master, dear
Pemberley people. Today is a great day for us – our master brings home a bride, whom we
warmly welcome." He looked delightedly at Elizabeth: "We all hope that you, dear mistress, will
feel comfortable here at Pemberley. We already think, we have learned to know you a little, and I
promise you that we all will do our best to make you feel at home here."

There was a long ovation and again Elizabeth astounded them. She got up: "Dear all, I am so
touched by your friendly reception. I already have learned to appreciate you." She smiled the
smile, making Darcy’s heart to melt. "Now Mr. Darcy and I will have to establish ourselves in my
new home. Thanks to you all, I hope you will understand I miss my old home and my family, but
they will gradually come and visit us. I can tell you that my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner
with their four children will come and spend Christmas with us. Mrs. Gardiner grew up in
Lambton, and she is looking forward to visit her old friends."

With these words, Elizabeth sat down and gave Darcy a long kiss before he laughingly was able
to get up. People gaped, was it really their master? He was smiling and happy: "My beloved wife
has already said most of it – but also a heartfelt thank from me to you all! I will just inform you
that my sister, Miss Darcy, and Mrs. Annesley will come from London one of these days and they
will settle permanently."

He went on: "We will have something to eat and drink, but alas! We are tired of the long journey
and in a short time, we will retire for the night, but you are welcome to go on with the party."

Elizabeth nodded to him – she felt comfortable and relieved. The living at Pemberley will turn out
good well, she thought.

When the couple wanted to retire, all got up. Elizabeth and Darcy thanked for everything and
wished them all a good party. Smiling, Elizabeth took him in his hand, hugged and kissed him,
and all again noticed her forthright behaviour. They said friendly goodnight and asked Mrs.
Reynolds to wake them up the next morning.

Then the people start dancing and talking:

"I am stunned – I never saw our master so happy and full of joy – it is fantastic – he has become
obliging and gentle."

"I was moved to tears to see the mistress and master together."

"What a sweet, sensible and happy mistress, she is almost unbelievable!"

"We will get good times at Pemberley. Others will envy us."

"Our mistress is so friendly! I absolutely get warm in my heart just looking at her."

"I wonder, how they have learned to know each other."

"Well, they met here last summer, but at that time our mistress looked rather embarrassed. Maybe
something had happened between them, and they previous met at Rosings, when our master
stayed there?"

"Perhaps, but I doubt that Lady Catherine de Bourgh ever would tolerate such a lively and open-
minded behaviour by our mistress – I have heard, that Her Grace keeps strictly to the dignity!"
"If our mistress had been at Rosings – surely she must have given Lady Catherine some grievous shocks. Behold what an experience!"

"Well, I think, they first met in Hertfordshire, at Netherfield, Mr. Bingley’s estate, or perhaps in our mistress’ former home – was it Longbourn?"

"Sounds very likely, as our mistress’ sister was married at the same time."

It was a fine party, and naturally, there was much curiosity and talk about the newlyweds, and everyone agreed that there would be good times at Pemberley. Never have they seen their master like that, he was delighted, smiling and happy – and the mistress, so friendly, open-minded and vivacious!

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A fortnight later, a blushing Hannah very modestly presented herself at Pemberley. Elizabeth had recommended her to Mrs. Reynolds, who kindly received her. Mrs. Reynolds asked about her experiences, and as Hannah told about her many tasks at the Inn, Mrs. Reynolds was pleased and appreciated her attitude.

From that time, Hannah to her great delight served at Pemberley, a little proud knowing she had her mistress’ benevolence.

The end

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