Four Letters between Elizabeth and Charlotte

by jpasdk

Summary

Canon. Exchange of letters - Elizabeth tells Charlotte about her engagement.

I owe everything to Jane Austen's beautiful novel.

Notes

For Elivra26 in Fanfiction - I think, these letters will supply 'Correspondance' nicely.

Four Letters between Elizabeth and Charlotte

Elizabeth to Charlotte

Hertfordshire, Longbourn House

Monday, October 19, 1812

My dearest Charlotte!

I think it is time, I inform you of some important matter. However, due to strict confidence between us, I must ask you to reply containing our prearranged watchword, before I can reveal the
Charlotte, I apologize for the inconvenience - but from experience, I know that anything of your husband’s knowledge immediately will be shared with your protector, Her Grace Lady Catherine de Bourgh. In addition, right now this might be very unpleasant for both you and Her Grace.

With my kindest regards,

Always yours &c.

Elizabeth Bennet

Charlotte to Elizabeth

Hunsford Parsonage, Kent

Wednesday, October 21, 1812

Dearest Elizabeth!

As you know, our watchword is not precisely my opinion:

’Marry for affection, not for anything else.’

What is going on? With anticipation, I expect your next letter!

Yours

Charlotte Collins

Elizabeth to Charlotte

Hertfordshire, Longbourn House

Friday, October 23, 1812

My dearest Charlotte!

Thanks for your letter - maybe your husband still not has received a letter from my father – anyway, I suppose you know the rumours.

I am engaged to Mr. Darcy and in a short time we are going to be married! - I am the happiest woman in the world!

Actually, it will be a double wedding, as Jane and Mr. Bingley are engaged, too; my father has given his consents and blessings, and my mother is quite ’distracted’ at our family's luck.

Now I can confidently tell you:

When I last spring enjoyed your hospitality at Hunsford, the last day he was there, Mr. Darcy declared his love to me and proposed! I was astonished – never in my life I had expected that! At that time I scorned him - you know, I am neither impressed by wealth nor social position. During the proposal he among other awful issues directly offended my family, I got angry, rebuked him and said many harsh words, both about his behaviour and about some of the issues, which had made me furious. Finally I rejected him and said, he certainly was the last man in the world, I ever
would marry!

Naturally, he was shocked, and afterwards he tried to explain and defend himself in a letter, he managed to deliver to me next morning before he left for London. When I read the letter, it turned out, he was wrong in some matters, but I was completely wrong in others!

Charlotte, I must confess - I have been so blind and let my first impressions bewilder me in my opinion of him! You were right to tell me that I should not have despised him and preferred Mr. Wickham. I have kept Mr. Darcy’s letter as a serious reminder to me in the future.

After these events, I felt miserable, ashamed and very stupid; now I had made two rejections to proposals, and my words to Mr. Darcy were terrible and mainly unjust. What will ever become of me, but a cross spinster!

Later last summer, it was a comfort to me, when I went on a holiday trip to Derbyshire with my dear aunt and uncle, the Gardiners. They persuaded me to visit Pemberley, although I was reluctant, afraid of meeting Mr. Darcy again. The housekeeper assured me, he still was in London, and then we visited the fine mansion and beautiful surroundings.

As a matter of coincidence, Mr. Darcy had returned a day earlier than expected – you can imagine my shame and embarrassment to meet him! However, besides his astonishment, he was polite, kind, hospitable and behaved as a true gentleman toward the Gardiners and me. I did not see it at that time, but he was still in love with me and was pleased to see and talk to me; my aunt observed it, but due to my rejection I regarded it as impossible. Anyhow, Mr. Darcy was eager to present his sister Georgiana to me - we had a fine talk about music – she is somewhat shy, but I really appreciate her – I must say, I at the same time felt both embarrassed and honoured – that he would talk to me at all and obviously forgive my behaviour at Hunsford!

They even invited us to dine at Pemberley, and I met Mr. Bingley, who kindly asked about my family and especially Jane. One of Mr. Darcy’s misdeeds was his detachment of Jane and Mr. Bingley last winter, because he did not think they were in love – one of the issues of my rejection!

We stayed in Lambton close to Pemberley, and quite unexpectedly, I had to leave for home due to Lydia’s elopement with Mr. Wickham. When I read the news from Jane, I had a small collapse, and accidently Mr. Darcy was present and informed. In my confusion I first later felt, that he maybe would propose to me again!

Charlotte, I barely can describe how horrible we all in my family felt; unfortunately - your husband's visit was no help to us. He merely noticed our family's disgrace in the light of the scandal and did not give us any comfort.

Finally, we got reassuring news from London! Mr. Gardiner had discovered the couple in London, he paid for their wedding and a commission as officer in Newcastle for Mr. Wickham – this was a great relief to us all!

However, due to the scandal, I regarded it as quite unlikely, that Mr. Darcy ever again would call at my family and me, but he appeared with Mr. Bingley, probably encouraging him to propose to Jane. Later Mr. Bingley did, and got Jane’s delighted yes! Mr. Darcy was very silent, but promised to visit us again.

Shortly afterwards I was very surprised, Lady Catherine called at me in my home. I am sorry to tell you, but Her Grace was furious, she scolded, rebuked and offended me in every possible way, and finally demanded that I should promise her never to accept a proposal from Mr. Darcy!

It was very unpleasant, and I got rather confused, as I at that time not was engaged to anyone, and
I did not know the rumours, but you know me too well – I did not anymore despise Mr. Darcy, and refused to promise anything to Lady Catherine. She left me with a cascade of angry and offending words.

At Longbourne, on their road to Newcastle, Lydia revealed Mr. Darcy was present at their wedding in London – why in Heaven’s name was he there? Everyone knows he hates Mr. Wickham. I was stunned and wrote to Aunt Gardiner for information.

In a friendly letter she told me, it actually was Mr. Darcy, who did everything – he found them in London – he arranged and paid for the wedding - he paid for Wickham’s post as an officer in Newcastle - he paid all Mr. Wickham's debts - in fact he insisted to pay everything, as he meant that he was to blame for the scandal, but he did not want to be credited for any of his expences! My aunt praised him highly and she was certain, he still had a great affection for me, which was the main reason for all his actions. Oh, I am so grateful for her letter, what a lovely Aunt I have!

With this news, I must admit that I was overwhelmed – did he really all that for my sake? The only answer is: Yes! – and lo, how ashamed I got! I have been so ignorant and ungrateful – no wonder, if he would stay away from me. Then I had to resign and only hope, he would not think ill of me...

But, to my surprise, Mr. Darcy kept his word and called again. We had a long walk together - I tried to thank him for what he had done, but he said bluntly that he only has had me in his mind. He confessed he still loves me ardently, and when he tentatively asked about my feelings - yes, he has become an honest and civil gentleman! - I had to confess that I profoundly have changed my mind. We agreed that it finally was Lady Catherine’s actions that encouraged him to call - on her way back to Rosings, she had visited him, too. He sensed a hope, as I not directly had rejected him. In all humility he proposed to me a second time with many lovely words - I got so delighted and happy, and could do nothing but say yes to him by all my heart!

Truly, I admire and love him – he is generous, he has turned into a kind, although somewhat shy man; he said so many grateful words to me and will never forget my offending words at his first proposal – because he meant they were true! Can you imagine, he claimed they have turned him into a better man, although I told him that I profoundly have regretted them! And despite my awful behaviour he has maintained and cherished his love to me during the many months. He did not want me to be grateful – he stubbornly thinks he is to blame for the scandal, no matter what I try to tell him.

Charlotte, I have been so lucky to find him - he is truly the best man, I ever have learned to know - in addition I will get a new sister, who really appreciates me!

And I have learned a lesson for life – as a punishment, I assure you, I had a very hard task to convince my family about the ‘true’ Mr. Darcy! First, my dear Jane regarded me as lunatic, when I told her; I had to argue with her a whole night, but at last my happy charisma convinced her.

To my dear father it came as a bombshell, when Mr. Darcy asked him for my hand. Although my father gave his consent, he insisted to talk to me, because he was very worried on my behalf - my dear father - he cares so much for me! I repeatedly assured him, I love Mr. Darcy, and as I still felt my father's scepticism, I better had to tell him about Mr. Darcy’s deeds. He was shoked, but to my relief he finally gave his blessing, kissing me gently with kind words!

And my mother - she is overwhelmed and silent, oddly almost as she promised me after my rejection to Mr. Collin's proposal - it is very strange to witness in the family!
However, Charlotte, in the midst of my great happiness, I am worried about you and Mr. Collins, as Lady Catherine is very angered due to our engagement.

Right now I do not know her reactions; Mr. Darcy has sent her a letter, but I fear that you and Mr. Collins may suffer for this, and his position at Hunsford Parsonage may be endangered.

Charlotte, please do tell me, if you need any kind of help - you must not be ashamed to ask - I am your friend and am obliged to you! I have mentioned it to Mr. Darcy and surely, he will be able to help you, if necessary.

Your happiest friend and woman in the world &c.

Elizabeth Bennet – soon to become Elizabeth Darcy

Charlotte to Elizabeth

Hunsford Parsonage, Kent

Sunday October 25, 1812

Dearest Elizabeth!

My heartfelt congratulations to you – and to Jane, I am so glad on your behalf!

Thanks for your long, honest and kind letter – I had a suspicion about many of the things you mentioned, but I too must confess I did not know that Mr. Darcy was so generous! You are right - I think many of his actions merely were due to his love for you - you know, I already sensed it during your stay here. He is certainly a good man, and I think, you deserve each other!

I sincerely apologize both for my husband's behaviour at his visit and that I was unable to stop the rumours, when they appeared. I still feel ashamed, when I unadvisedly passed them to my husband. You are right, until now he has told Her Grace everything, he knows and even more. I could not do anything, when I heard and saw Her Grace and Mr. Collins worked themselves up - it was so abominable! I felt misery for you, as I know how you really are.

And I am so sorry for your inconveniences with your confrontation to Lady Catherine. We both know Her Grace can be kind to everyone, if they only obey her! But I never expected she could behave so improperly to anyone – in comparison your mother’s behaviour is a mild breeze in the spring; in her own way she merely wishes the best for all her daughters.

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Dear Elizabeth, indeed, you are a good and faithful friend! By my heart thanks for your consideration for us - do not worry, I will not feel humiliated, if we have to ask for help!

However, I do not think, we are immediately endangered; Her Grace still receives us at Rosings - well, we have to listen to endless unpleasant monologues of angry and offending words towards you and Mr. Darcy. Lady Anne, on the contrary, surprisingly looks rather relieved -!

I feel relatively calm here before a possible storm, but you are right - later on Her Grace may condemn us and dismiss Mr. Collins – guilty through associations with you! Right now he and I have agreed the best thing for us is to avoid Her Grace’s company for a while, and we will leave Hunsford in all silence, telling Her Grace some reasonable other purpose. Now even my husband feels somewhat uneasy about Her Grace - he has never done that before - and he will not reveal the truth about our voyage!
And we will be very honoured and participate with great joy in your double wedding! Do not worry about our stay for overnights – Lucas House has plenty of room for us, although neither the shelves in the closets are comparable to Hunsford's nor the chimneys to Rosings' (giggle!).

Kind regards to you and Jane and thanks

Your devoted friend &c.

Charlotte Collins

The end

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