Mr. Darcy did not lack anything – until …

by jpasdk

Summary

Almost Canon - from an aspect of 'lack' - and later on 'miss'
Everything belongs to Jane Austen.

Mr. Darcy did not lack anything – until …

As 27 years old, Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy looked like a contended man. He was extremely prosperous and owned both a large estate, Pemberley, and a house in London -

- he did not lack anything.

Naturally, many mothers to young women regarded him as an exceptional advantageous match, once he wanted to marry, but Mr. Darcy was far from being stupid and naive. Too frequently he had experienced matchmaking mothers only interested in his wealth and position in society, and gradually he had found them out. Their behaviour repelled him, and by that he had acquired an arrogant and aloof manner against almost anyone, he met.

He did not care about the reactions of his surroundings – least of all it bothered him that he appeared unattractive – he lived contently in his own wealth. Yet to his closest family and friends he was gentle and obliging, and he was kind to his tenants and servants. However, he did not like his aunt, Lady Catherine. She constantly meddled in his life and always reminded him that he had to marry her daughter, Lady Anne – the mere thought he found abominably! Lady Anne was feeble and would never become a good match, neither for him nor for the responsibility of heirs to Pemberley.
He was very fond of his little sister Georgiana, to whom he was a guardian together with his cousin colonel Fitzwilliam, and they wished to protect her against all the malignities of the World. With the skin of the teeth, Mr. Darcy saved her from an elopement with the scoundrel Mr. Wickham, and that merely made him more distrustful.

In his childhood, his father and mother loved him, and his first years were happy together with Mr. Wickham as his close playmate. In his age of eleven years, this living had an abrupt termination. His beloved mother died in childbed after giving birth to Georgiana. After that, he lived in mournful loneliness, his father mentally removed from him and cared only for Georgiana and Wickham, while Fitzwilliam Darcy was sent away, first to a boarding school, and later to the university at Cambridge.

It was intended that Mr. Darcy in due course as the only child had to take over Pemberley, and his father repeatedly enjoined the words **duty and responsibility** and impressed upon him a proper and kind behaviour towards the servants and tenants of Pemberley – after all, they did the hard work at the estate. Mr. Darcy was amenable and he tried to the best of his abilities to qualify himself for the tremendous responsibility of managing the great estate with the many people.

He felt comfortable in Cambridge unlike Wickham, who spent the time at gambling, drinking and women. At first Mr. Darcy was astonished, later contempt, and he did not understand that his father cared so much for Mr. Wickham. Mr. Wickham crowned the achievement trying to seduce Georgiana and grab her dowry at £30.000 – enough of that, and Mr. Wickham was forever banished at Pemberley!

During his studies at Cambridge Mr. Darcy had been acquainted with some of his fellows, among them the straightforward and charming Mr. Bingley, whom he really appreciated, but otherwise he was satisfied managing his great estate, enjoyed his life and socialize with his closest friends.

Women? He kept them at a distance. If they had similar social positions as him, he might endure their company, until they began to flatter him – as an example he found Miss Caroline Bingley, Mr. Bingley’s sister, rather insufferable and did not listen to her meaningless torrent of speech. In addition, if the women had other much lower positions, he rebuffed them with his derogatory and contemptuous remarks -

-no, he did not think, he lacked anything.

As a consequence, he reluctantly received an invitation from Mr. Bingley to be his guest at Netherfield in Hertfordshire. The estate was fine, but the nearby village, Meryton, had only inhabitants of a rural character. Yet Mr. Bingley persuaded him to participate in the local ball, although Mr. Darcy regarded it as a mere waste of time.

On the other hand, Mr. Bingley was delighted – he won everybody’s hearts by his friendly and charming behaviour, and he enjoyed to dance with the women of the village. It did not last long before a certain Miss Jane Bennet, with whom he danced several times that evening, captivated him. Mr. Darcy was satisfied to dance with Mr. Bingley’s sisters – he knew them previously, and when Mr. Bingley would encourage him to dance with Miss Jane Bennet’s sister, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, he looked at her and made a despicable remark: *that she was tolerable, but could not tempt him*.

Unfortunately, several people had heard him, and the resentment against him spread in a moment – admittedly, Miss Elizabeth Bennet was at times very open-minded and frank, but no true gentleman should ever say such things about a woman. Naturally, she became offended, but Mr. Darcy lived in his own mental world and paid no regard to the reactions – he was indifferent.

Yet, at the next social gathering, he was enforced to revise his impressions. Well – she was not
beautiful in the ordinary sense, but he noticed her graceful figure, her vivacity and her handsome
dark eyes, that suited her face so fine. She played and sang with a nice voice, and in her own
peculiar way, she behaved properly and decently – in contrast to her mother and her three little
sisters.

Then it struck him: Why on Earth did he waste his time being interested in her? It was completely
illogical, quite different from his normal way of thinking. Miss Bennet was far below his social
position. He tried to compose himself, but was distracted when she determindly passed him
towards her inane little sisters, whom she would reproach for their inappropriate behaviour.

Sir Lucas, who was a kind and pleasant host, meanwhile stopped Miss Bennet and encouraged
Mr. Darcy to ask her for a dance. Mr. Darcy was ready, but to his astonishment, she declined with
a couple of polite remarks, curtsied, turned away from him and went on.

What in Heaven’s name was this? Never had he been rejected by anyone, with whom he wanted
to dance. Miss Bennet was evidently different from other women he had met. Reluctantly, he in a
way admired her – she was neither impressed of wealth nor social position. He succeeded in
snubbing Caroline Bingley’s caustic remarks about Miss Bennet by some indifferent words – he
just let Caroline babble along.

Miss Bennet surprised him constantly. She was frank, she teased and provoked him – now and
then blatantly - to get him out of his general silence, and certainly, she was a fresh blow – to his
friend’s consternation she had walked three miles alone across the fields in mud and slush to care
for her beloved sister, Miss Jane Bennet, who was ill at Netherfield.

What was it with this Miss Elizabeth Bennet? For the first time after his mother’s decease, and
after he for a long time had encapsulated himself in his own world -

- he began to doubt – did he lack or perhaps miss something?

At the last ball at Netherfield, he finally succeeded to ask Miss Elizabeth Bennet to dance, but
their conversation during the dance was not successful. To Mr. Darcy’s great anger that rogue
Wickham had flattered himself into everyone – by defaming Mr. Darcy.

Therefore, he was relieved, when he persuaded Mr. Bingley to leave Netherfield with the
intension to detach him from Miss Jane Bennet. Darcy was satisfied preventing Bingley to engage
with her. The Bennets behaved in an inappropriate manner, they had a modest estate, no fortune
and kept very few servants, although he admitted that both Miss Jane and Miss Elizabeth were
sensible and behaved properly. Darcy also enjoyed being free of Miss Elizabeth’s annoying banter
– he had never experienced anything like that.

In his letters to Georgiana, he had several times mentioned Miss Bennet and he expected many
curious inquiries about her, as he previously never had written about any female acquaintances –
apart from Miss Caroline Bingley. When he came to London, he was content to claim his staying
in Hertfordshire had been an interesting interlude, but now it had ended. He was going to Rosings
at Lady Catherine and had other things in his mind. Surely, he still was a little upset, but the time
would remedy his feelings.

He was wrong – from Lady Catherine’s remarks, he comprehended that there were guests in the
parsonage at Hunsford. The new mistress Mrs. Charlotte Collins – former Miss Charlotte Lucas –
had her sister Maria and a friend, a certain Miss Elizabeth Bennet as their guests. Mr. Darcy was
shocked to hear it, but he would immediately from curiousity call on her at the rectory. His cousin
Colonel Fitzwilliam would go, too, and as it turned out that his cousin had an easy and pleasant
conversation with Miss Bennet, Mr. Darcy to his big surprise got jealous!
Mr. Darcy did not understand himself any more – why did he react so violently? Miss Bennet was so far from his position – it was lunatic! Why, why could he not get her out of his mind? His sense just told him to forget her, but frequently he felt like a helpless insect, keeping on flying into the light, until it went ablaze –

- yet maybe he lacked or missed something…. maybe ….

Then his sense came back: This he was able to amend, due to his wealth and position – he could propose to Miss Bennet; undoubtedly, she would gratefully accept it. He cared neither for her family’s position and improper behaviour, nor for Lady Catherine’s anger. It would be no problem for him to live with that, because the solution to his troubles will instantly be there -

- and then he would not lack anything!

He was terribly wrong – she vehemently rejected him! Instead of meeting joy and gratitude, he got his biggest defeat in his life! He was totally unprepared to Miss Bennet’s reaction. She despised and hated him for several reasons: His detachment of Miss Jane Bennet and Mr. Bingley, his behaviour towards Mr. Wickham, his derogatory remarks about her and her family, his arrogance, his conceit and his disdain for other’s feelings. Certainly, he was the last man in the world, she ever could be prevailed upon to marry! Deeply shocked, he tried to defend himself against the accusations, but it ended in a quarrel. His proposition had turned into a personal disaster!

What now? Never had he imagined this situation, he was hurt in his innermost soul. Here he was with all his wealth, his social position and offered her everything, but she would have none of it – she was completely unimpressed! Obviously, Miss Bennet did not fit into the expected framework of women’s behaviour.

He had to compose his chaotic thoughts: No one at Rosings should know of this defeat! When he returned, he excused himself to Lady Catherine and colonel Fitzwilliam, retired to his room, sank exhausted into a chair and reflected.

Why in heaven's name did it turn out so wrong?

He had totally misinterpreted Miss Bennet. She bluntly loathed him! In her eyes, he was abominable, he had an obnoxious behaviour, repelling people, and he had not been aware how much it meant to his reputation.

He had with his best intentions detached her beloved sister Miss Jane Bennet from Mr. Bingley, and here he had misinterpreted, too, and naturally, Miss Elizabeth Bennet was angry at her sister’s behalf.

He had frankly insulted her, telling her about her family’s improper behaviour and low social position. Even if it was true, it was not appropriate for a gentleman to say it, and he had completely neglected her caring and feelings for her family.

Finally there was the ‘affair Wickham’ – here he was right and Miss Bennet was wrong.

His sense of honour called for a defence - but how? To ask for another meeting was out of the question, the gossip would immediately flourish. He decided to write a letter in which he explained and defended himself. It had to be worthy, and he must try to get it hand-delivered before he left the next day for London. He expressed himself very carefully, but due to his pride he made almost no apologies. He was satisfied with the letter, and he succeeded to deliver it to Miss Bennet with a few formal words. Then he merely hoped she as a gentleman’s daughter not would burn it before she read it -
- yes, she told him, he at least lacked something about his behaviour!

Back in London, he naturally would avoid to talk about the disaster. He escaped colonel Fitzwilliam’s inquiries; but Georgiana knew him too well; she felt something was quite wrong with him. Much of the time, he locked himself up, spoke barely anything and looked very unhappy. After several attempts from her, he at last consented to tell – he knew that he could confide to Georgiana.

She felt a deep gratitude and affection to him and would be glad to help him, because in his letters, she found his descriptions about ‘this Miss Bennet’ very interesting - maybe even promising! During the last year she had matured much after the ‘affair Wickham’, and to his pleasant surprise she had become a good discussion partner and during their friendly talk she maintained some very sensible points of view. She had two proposals:

The first point was the hardest: He unconditionally had to change his behaviour towards people, he did not know. Although they might have modest positions in society, in reality many of them were good and honest people. He must leave off his arrogance and conceit, and learn to behave like a true gentleman, be polite, friendly and accommodating. Darcy meant it would be difficult, but Miss Bennet’s harsh words to him had a core of unpleasant truth, and he will never forget them.

As to the second point, he was able to choose. If he wanted to cut off his acquaintance with Miss Bennet, it would be easy. He had proposed and was turned down with a reproof – no more about that! In his privileged position, it would be easy to find a suitable woman to marry in his social circles.

However, if - IF! - he still had an affection to Miss Bennet, he somehow had to contact her to find out, whether she had read his letter of defence, trying to convince her about his intentions. It would not be easy – propriety forbade him to write to or call on her. Maybe he could send a trusted man, but whom could he trust, yes, whom? In addition, the gossip would spread very quickly!

In this connexion, Georgiana strongly encouraged him to marry for love, not for duty. He already had a huge responsibility for her, for Pemberley and for his house in London - he should not enter into a joyless marriage, he was too good a man for that! Darcy listened attentively and thanked for her kind advice, and Georgiana finished encouraging him: He should remember, he was a Darcy and they were immense stubborn! If Miss Bennet really was as his descriptions, she would become a fine partner in his life –

- and besides his lack of behaviour, now it was obvious for him, he missed something.

Most of the summer he spent in London, trying to get on from his defeat and forget Miss Bennet. He failed; in the daytime, she remained in his mind, and at night he often dreamt of her, walking and laughing together with him in the fields of Pemberley. He had embraced her words, although it was hard to change his behaviour, but gradually he succeeded – his friends wondered and rejoiced that he had become more friendly and gentle.

Totally absorbed in his mourning of a broken heart, he had for a long time neglected Pemberley, and he resolutely went a day ahead for Georgiana and his guests to get rid of all the matters that had accumulated, while he had been away.

As he rode down the hills of Pemberley, he felt relieved and happy – now he was home! A carriage was standing in front of the mansion – some visitors – well, they expected he will come a day later, and they would not bother him. He came closer and saw three persons, presumably a married couple and a young woman, very much like Miss Bennet.
No, she did not remind – she WAS Miss Bennet! Why on earth was she here? In his great astonishment, he remembered to be polite and asked to her family. To his great relief, she did not clear out, but responded very shyly – she was travelling for pleasure in Derbyshire and apologized for intruding his privacy – they would never have come, if they knew he was here.

It was an unlikely luck, he came across her – it gave him a welcome opportunity to talk to her! He rushed into the mansion, changed his clothes and was in time for Miss Bennet and the couple, before they left Pemberley. For everything in the world, he wanted they would stay a little longer -

- now he was sure, it was Miss Elizabeth Bennet, he missed!

Once more, he had luck – he persuaded them to stay for a while. Miss Elizabeth was still embarrassed, but at his polite encouragement, she presented him to her Aunt and Uncle Gardiner, and Darcy had a pleasant conversation about the village Lambton and he invited the uncle to come and fish in his ponds.

Miss Elizabeth was stunned by the change of his behaviour; however, she did not reject him, as he had feared. To his great relief she agreed to walk with him, and as she had calmed somewhat down, she felt pleased and thanked him for his wish to present Georgiana to her, when she came. At their departure Miss Elizabeth even turned her head in the carriage and looked curiously after him -

- maybe there still was a hope, that he was able to do something with that, he missed!

Darcy was delighted, and immediately after Georgiana had arrived, he drove with her to Lambton in a curricle. When Bingley heard about it, he eagerly would join them on horseback – he was still in love with Miss Jane Bennet and would like to hear news of the Bennets and naturally about Miss Jane.

Miss Elizabeth was surprised and honoured to Mr. Darcy’s rapid response; he presented Georgiana to her and the Gardiners, and to Darcy’s great pleasure Georgiana and Miss Elizabeth fell easily into a fine conversation about music and their families. On behalf of Darcy, Georgiana invited them to come and dine at Pemberley. Darcy cheered for himself – he thought, it at length turned the right way, and at the road back to Pemberley, Georgiana talked approvingly about Miss Elizabeth, she liked her very much.

The dinner at Pemberley fulfilled Mr. Darcy’s expectations. Miss Elizabeth was relaxed, she played and sang prettily - although she did not think it was particularly good. Then she persuaded Georgiana to play for them all; Georgiana had never ventured that before, and Darcy was delighted to see it. Only the Bingley sisters were not pleased, as they did not like Miss Bennet - they regarded her as a country girl from a family in modest circumstances.

Apart from the Bingley sisters, they all parted with many kind words. Georgiana had noticed Darcy’s great affection to Miss Elizabeth, and felt he with a little bit of luck almost was on the brink successfully to propose again, as a friendly and congenial manner had appeared between them. Definitely, Miss Elizabeth had become obliging - maybe even a little captivated by him, as he now had amended his behaviour.

Mr. Darcy was a man of action, and early next morning he left for Lambton, but his plans came to nothing. Miss Elizabeth was broken-hearted – her sister Miss Jane Bennet had written two letters telling of their youngest sister, Miss Lydia Bennet has eloped with Mr. Wickham! Miss Elizabeth wanted immediately to turn home to Longbourn to help and support her father. Then he and Mr. Gardiner might find Lydia in London.

Darcy got angry – not at Miss Elizabeth, but at Wickham, that scoundrel. Miss Elizabeth
immediately left together with the Gardiners, and later that evening, Darcy secretly left – he knew Mr. Wickham and was certain to find their hiding place. He meant he was to blame for the misfortune – not Miss Elizabeth, who reproached herself. His haughty appearance had prevented him to warn everyone at Meryton and Longbourn against Mr. Wickham. Now, he constantly had Miss Elizabeth in his mind, -

- yes, he missed Miss Elizabeth; he was deeply in love with her!

He recalled her character – she had so many fine qualities and would be the right partner for him. However, it tormented him, he did not know, whether she had fallen in love with him? He hoped it whole-heartedly, and it encouraged him to search for the couple in London and drive Mr. Wickham to the wall, enforcing him to choose between either marriage or court-martial and debtor’s prison, as Mr. Wickham both had deserted the militia and left a great debt everywhere.

Now he benefited, he had been polite and kind to the Gardiners – they were a useful and pleasant acquaintance, and they would willingly support him. Miss Elizabeth and Georgiana were right, it was of great use for him to behave properly – it gave him many new and good opportunities! In addition, he was certain he could find Mr. Wickham and Miss Lydia.

He was right, in a short time, he discovered them and agreed with the Gardiners they would house the fast wedding, however he insisted – yes, he was stubborn! - to pay for everything. He had wearsome days with negotiations with everyone, but he enjoyed the Gardiner’s company, as they were cultivated and sensible – he had become good friends with them. Darcy mentioned Miss Elizabeth very cautiously – but Mrs. Gardiner already was aware of they knew each other much more than assumed. On the other hand, Mr. Darcy comprehended that there was a confidential and nice relationship between the Gardiners and their two nieces, Miss Jane and Miss Elizabeth.

After the wedding, he encouraged Bingley to revisit Netherfield - at least for a while. Darcy wanted to know if Miss Jane Bennet and Bingley really were in love. If so, he would amend his unacceptable interference in their relationship. At Longbourn, he realized he had been wrong, when he saw them together - they loved each other. However he did not understand that Miss Elizabeth displayed no signs of emotion – was she afraid to reveal too much of her feelings or had she completely given him up?

Back in London, Lady Catherine quite unexpectedly visited him. She was so exited and angry that it lasted for some time, before he was able to reveal Miss Elizabeth was the cause of her rage. Lady Catherine had heard rumours that Miss Elizabeth was being engaged to him. She had accosted Miss Elizabeth in her home and would immediately stop the rumours, making Darcy to marry her delicate daughter, Lady Anne de Bourgh as planned. Lady Catherine was furious and had threatened Miss Elizabeth with all sorts of ill fortunes, if Mr. Darcy ever should propose to her and she accepted, but Miss Elizabeth Bennet would not promise her anything!

All at one Darcy realized, when Miss Elizabeth not had promised Lady Catherine anything, he anyway had a chance, as she had not given him up. He wasted no time, invited himself to Netherfield at Bingley’s great surprise. He met an overjoyed Bingley, who had proposed to Miss Jane Bennet and got her yes! Darcy congratulated, and for the first time in his life he had to ask Bingley for help – he would like to talk to Miss Elizabeth alone. Bingley did not mean it a problem, he visited Longbourn every day and could walk with Miss Jane, and then Darcy could walk with Miss Elizabeth.

At the walk, they were soon alone – he would have taken the word, but Miss Elizabeth came ahead, anxiously expressing her and her family’s gratitude for what he had done – he had found the couple in London and held all the costs at Lydia’s wedding. Darcy was surprised, but she explained that Mrs. Lydia had revealed it, not Mrs. Gardiner.
Miss Elizabeth went on with her gratitude, and Darcy felt it was now he had to discover her feelings and opinions about him. As he stated, his feelings and affection for her were unchanged since his first proposal, he got her to admit that her feelings had significantly changed. She had fallen in love with him, and realized that he would be the right partner for her, but on the other hand, she had expected it was out of the question due to the scandal in her family.

He mentioned Lady Catherine’s meddling, and she confirmed it was exactly for his sake, she would not promise anything, although she was taken by complete surprise at her visit. Lady Catherine’s action had renewed his hope. He had yearned for her, and he knew she would become the right partner of his life. She was adorable, sweet, vivacious, sensible, open-minded and lovingly teasing, and now she said yes – he had changed his greatest defeat in his life to his greatest victory – he loved her and she loved him -

- he had missed something, but now he did not any more!

The end.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!