You've Got Mail

by satterthwaite

Summary

This summer, Caroline Bingley is summoned by her parents to find herself a job to support her expensive needs. She ends up delivering the mail for the whole neighborhood, which soon turns out to be a great occasion to indulge in her favorite occupations: being nosy and interfering in other people's relationships.

Notes

Working as a postman myself this summer, I came up with this crack-y idea of an AU. Even though this is largely inspired by my own experience, I wanted to let you know I didn't read people's mail (well, maybe some postcards...) and never made out with my boss either! For obvious reason, this fic has a modern setting, but people in Jane Austen Street are hopelessly romantic and still write each other's letters... I also took some liberties regarding characters' age - Caroline is 20 and so is Charles, but Louisa is 30 and has been married for 5 years. Darcy is 23, Elizabeth is 19, Jane 20 and Fitzwilliam is 25 — more or less.

Also, thanks to Polly for pushing me to write it!

i. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

Oh sister, have you heard the dreadful news already?! Yes, it's true - Mum and Dad are forcing
me to work. Me. To work. During my summer holidays! And to say I was looking forward to this
time to finally get a grab on Darcy by inviting him multiple times to enjoy our swimming pool - I
bought the loveliest bikini the other day, its color screamed "man-eater" to me. And now I won't
have the occasion to do so! Now I'll have to settle for ugly t-shirts with that huge post sign
embroidered on it and that ugly cap... Let me tell you one thing Louisa - I hate Mum and Dad.

ii. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

First day at work - or rather, first day in Hell. This place is full of middle-aged who seemed to
have never seen a woman in this place before. The look they gave me! I believed I shrieked with
one of them touched my arm and then kissed my cheek! This is positively awful Louisa, and the
amount of letters I have to sort out is terrible! That will never do - you know how completely
useless I become when it's a matter of using my hands and sorting out things. I tried it out today
and the postman whom I'm working with had to correct me and guide me almost all the time!
This was really shameful. The t-shirts they gave me are positively ugly, as I had guessed, and
cherry on top, it's "compulsory to wear a yellow vest for your safety"! Oh Louisa - if you saw me
you'd find me to be the epitome of ridiculousness.
But I haven't told you the worst thing yet... I'm delivering the mail in our neighborhood. Which
means all of our friends will see me like this. Delivering their letters and parcels. I think I might
die.
My boss is called Colonel Fitzwilliam, but I don't see why people call me "Colonel". We're not in
the army!

iii. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

I think I found out why they call him "Colonel". That man is a maniac who likes to order people
around like we're some kind of soldiers. It's almost as if the other postmans here salute him when
he passes by! I think I won't like him, Louisa - which is a pity since he's only 5 years older than
me and quite handsome... Anyways, with the way I look, I have absolutely zero chance to attract
any handsome man I might encounter. Go me.
Today was horribly embarrassing, since Eliza Bennet saw me while on duty, and couldn't help but
get the biggest smile on her face. I swear Louisa, I could have strangled her! I would, had I been
alone and not with this stupid postman who has to show me around. As if I needed instructions to
put a bunch of letters in a mail box... I cannot wait until I'm on my own, to get this over with as
soon as possible! This man keeps talking and talking and talking and we're amongst the last to
finish our service! This is positively infuriating. Besides, it is so hot outside - I couldn't wait to be
home to take a dive in the swimming pool, even though there was no Darcy to admire this most
exquisite bathing suit...
I wish you were here, Louisa - why did you have to marry and go live in Scotland?! Well, I guess
with your well-off husband, you'll never have to work as a postman... and though I'm sure
Scotland is awful, I still envy you. Come and rescue your little sister, won't you?

iv. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

At this point, I'm just thinking about the money I'm going to earn when this is over. It was so hot
today and there seem to be so many things to deliver! I couldn't see the end of it, truly. Thank
God we're Friday and I'm not working on the weekends! This is perhaps the only pro to this God-
forsaken job from the depths of Hell. Next week I'm working alone and I promise you, I'll get this
over with as soon as humanly possible.
Mum wrote to me after I sent her an email to tell her how much I had to walk and how little I could eat during the day, due to all the work I had, and do you know what she replied? "This will improve your figure, Caro" As if my figure needs improvement! I was mortified and so upset! She can talk - she is with Dad on some remote islands in the Pacific, lying on the beach, while I'm working my ass off, because of them! I hate them even more Louisa.

v. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

First day alone - first disaster. I broke a nail! There were so many letters I had to grab, and this happened and I seriously felt like crying. My manicure is ruined, and it was Yves Saint-Laurent nail polish! The weather is still so very hot - has there been an earthquake, a landslide and England is suddenly under the fucking tropics? I can't stand that much heat. My face turns all red and sweaty and my hair becomes wild and awful...

I saw Jane Bennet today, and even though she only had nice words to say to me after I handed her the parcel she'd been waiting for for weeks (I suspect it's a new gown from Asos, judging from the package - lucky bitch), I was absolutely sure I could see pity in her eyes. I tried my best to remain civil and told her about how I was enjoying this job, thank you very much. But I'm sure she'll go gossiping around and with a mother like hers, soon it will be known up to London that Caroline Bingley was delivering letters all summer long. This is all terrible, Louisa. Now I'm sure I'll be the subject of mockeries until the day I die, or kill everyone who knows about this happening. I have no other choice left. "Mass-murderer Caroline Bingley" sounds better than "Postman Caroline Bingley" anyways.

vi. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

So, let me explain the emergency situation in which I find myself in: I look like a fucking cooked lobster for most of the days, I sweat like a pig, and Fitzwilliam Darcy is attracted to Elizabeth "I'm better than you" Bennet. And before you ask how I know it - yes, I read Darcy's letter to her. I mean - doesn't every postman do that from time to time?

Louisa, it was terrible, and it seems to have been going on for months! No need to tell you how my day was ruined afterwards... But I will get my revenge, Louisa. Wouldn't it be a shame if Miss Bennet's answer got lost? I think so, too... At last, I'm starting to see the advantages of being the postman for our dear friends! I won't be mocked, and they won't get rid of Caroline Bingley so easily, let me tell you!

PS: I joined to this letter a copy of that Darcy sent to Eliza, so you shall admire the monstrosity that came out of a mind that could have been mine.

vii. Fitzwilliam Darcy to Elizabeth Bennet

I don't really know how to start this letter, nor how to go on, let alone how to finish, but I'll write it anyways since now I'm sat at a table with paper and pen in hands. I wanted to tell you that even if our first encounter when I first moved into your neighborhood wasn't glorious, I haven't stopped thinking about you for months, and every time I'm lucky enough to see your face, I only feel pure bliss and delight. I know my behavior on our first meeting wasn't exactly what you could call gentlemanly - saying I wouldn't date you ever while a drunk Caroline Bingley was hanging to my neck wasn't the best way to show my good side to you. I do hope this party is by now quite forgotten and you won't forever have this pathetic image of me, for I sure would date you, Elizabeth Bennet - very much. The more I think about you, the more I find you to be one of the handsomest woman of my acquaintances - I must confess there is a thing about your eyes that has
the gift to amaze me every time I meet your glances.
I'm looking forward to hearing from you - even if it's to tell how much of a prick I've been.

Caroline's note: Awful, isn't it? And how dare he mention that party? It was all Charles' fault - he knows what effects tequila shots have on me and he still dared me into that stupid drinking game!

viii. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

Oh Louisa, how I wish you would have been there to witness Darcy's face when I told him there was no mail from Miss Bennet! I wanted so much to add a snarky comment about his letter, but then it would have risen suspicions and I don't want him knowing about me reading what he sends. But that look, Louisa! This is the kind of look I live for!
Now I have a question that's been in my mind ever since I opened that letter: should I reply to him and make him believe I'm Eliza? Perhaps that would be too cruel and too suspicious... And besides, I have taken the decision not to lust after Darcy anymore - I won't run after a man who is so obviously in love with another one. But I so despise Elizabeth Bennet, I would take for too much pleasure in interfering in her relationships... Will I tame my evil instincts or will I let them run free, I wonder... Or perhaps I should concentrate on my work.
Talking about work, I must confess that Colonel Fitzwilliam is even more handsome than I thought he was at first look. You see, I spend quite a lot of time with him since I'm not yet accustomed to the work and I still make awful mistakes... and since he's my direct superior, I have to address him whenever I have a problem. So I have been observing him rather closely... Too bad I'm mostly flushed all the time and looking like I've been running a marathon.

ix. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

He has a very fine pair of blue eyes. Colonel Fitzwilliam, that is - though he explicitly asked me to call him Richard. Isn't it such an old-fashioned name? Well, I guess nothing can be worse than Fitzwilliam... Anyways, I found out that listening to music while filling mail boxes makes the task much more agreeable, though I'm still not over the disaster that my nails are. The weather is still so very hot - I think I should be as tanned as Mum when she comes back from Whatever Island... My legs do hurt so very badly and I have to nap for at least 2 hours when I get home. Afterwards I usually go for a swim with Charles, when he can be persuaded. He seems to be spending a lot of time out of the house, and I wonder where he goes. He never tells me anything! God, am I not his twin sister, for God's sake? It is very infuriating that he should keep secrets from me! Or perhaps he just goes at Darcy's and doesn't want me to know because he still thinks I'm fancying him? Because I'm definitely not. From now on I'll be chasing other birds... without getting drunk at parties where those birds might be. Also, I think my postman skills are improving! I'm taking much less time than at the beginning! A week ago I wouldn't have thought this would be an achievement I'd be proud of but, here I am, taking whatever little pleasures life is giving me at the moment... In two weeks I shall be rich and do whatever I please with my money!

x. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

Now we are facing a REAL emergency case, Louisa! Charles is in love with Jane Bennet! Yes, I read his letter, too... But I'm his sister and he read my diary when we were 14 so really, I have every right! Anyways, the situation is alarming - my brother seems really... enthusiastic about the Bennet eldest. Does every decent man in this neighborhood will fall for those Bennet
girls? Perhaps if they had a brother I would understand why they all fall for them... Whatever - actions need to be taken! I can't let my brother be enraptured this way.

xi. Jane Bennet (Caroline) to Charles Bingley

My dear Charles, even though I was very touched by your lovely letter (even though your handwriting hasn't improved and it's barely readable), I think I must tell you that perhaps I have misled you into thinking I felt the same for you - while what I feel is only deep friendship. Sorry.

xii. Charles Bingley to Caroline Bingley

I recognized your handwriting, you dumb bitch. Remember that I daily read your diary?

xiii. Caroline Bingley to Charles Bingley

Twat. I hate you.

xiv. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

Abort mission - I failed. Charles is dumb and Jane Bennet is even dumber for liking him. I think I should stop being nosy and actually concentrate on my job - I misplaced several letters yesterday. I hope people won't complain about it... Anyways, doesn't everybody know everybody in this neighborhood? It feels like it, anyways! Whenever someone's not there to reception a parcel, there is always a neighbor to come and tell me to give it to them! I had to talk to Richard about this, to know if this was really an acceptable thing to do, and he seemed okay with it. He is acting less and less Colonel-like with me, not getting angry anymore when I make mistakes and actually checking on me to see if everything's alright with me. He is actually quite nice, once you've overlooked his maniacal and military manners.

xv. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

He is Darcy's cousin. I just found out that Richard Fitzwilliam is Fitzwilliam Darcy's cousin. I am doomed, Louisa. Your little sister is doomed. Please take me to Scotland so I can hide forever and possible raise sheep and never be seen again.

xvi. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

He fancies me. I'm not fantasizing this time. He sent a letter to Darcy - well, rather asked me to give a letter to his cousin. And well, you know me... I read it.

xvii. Richard Fitzwilliam to Fitzwilliam Darcy

Cousin, I seem to recall that you're great friend with Charles Bingley, and I appear to be working
with his twin sister and hm - to put plainly, I quite like her. There is something about her eyes when she comes running because she put the letter in the wrong mail box, and the mess of her hair after a day at work and she's got such a fine pair of blue eyes... As you can imagine, I could go on for much longer, but I'll try and be brief - is she as nice as she appears to be?

xviii. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

Darcy's reply got lost. What a pity. It wasn't very interesting anyways - it featured way too much talk about my drunken behavior, and no one wants to know about that, I believe. Anyways my work here is almost done, and Richard told me there wasn't too many complaints about me, which is quite a first. I don't really know how to act around him, though, now that I know... Perhaps I should take my chances? But he's Darcy's cousins and I have vowed I wouldn't have anything to do with him ever again.

xix. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

We snogged. Yesterday I went into his office to ask him about a letter I wasn't able to deliver and we sat at his desk to look at it, and then we casually turned around... and it happened. He kissed me, and it was very agreeable - much more than I would have thought (perhaps because all my former boyfriends were lame and Darcy only kissed me because it was a dare...). And then we found it was very unprofessional to heavily make out while I was still working under him. So he'll wait until my work here is done - which means tomorrow.

xx. Caroline Bingley to Louisa Hurst

The summer holidays are over, and so is my job. Charles and Jane have been locked up in Charles' room for about an hour now, so I retreated into the garden to be sure I don't hear a single thing. The good thing is, a gentleman was waiting for me there - a gentleman that is, until he threw me in the swimming pool while I was still fully clothed! But since he jumped right afterwards and then spent the next 10 minutes kissing me to make amends, I still consider him to be very, very kind to me.

So it wasn't quite as bad as I had imagined it would be, since I am now rich and not obliged to share with Charles (Mum and Dad told him he would have to work if he wanted more money in the future, and I so want to watch that!), and I also managed to get myself a boyfriend. I'm not quite sure I'll work as a postman again, though - letters are way too tempting for me... I hope no one finds the "lost" mail, though, or it might get me into trouble. I saw Darcy and Eliza the other day, walking together. Apparently the lack of reply didn't prevent them from getting together... I'm so looking forward to seeing you at Christmas - I miss you so very much! Apparently we're going to the Caribbean this year, and I'm allowed to invite anyone I want. Richard is looking excited already... I may be in love. Perhaps. Nothing is certain...

Yours,

Your little sister.