To Love And To Cherish

by sqbr

Summary

A little deleted scene from near the end of (the new and improved!) Wedding is Destiny and Hanging Likewise, taken out for being too implausibly fluffy. Contains background Kitty/MOC/MOC.

Notes

See the end of the work for notes.

I have always had my heart set on finding the most sensible, prudent, level-headed wife in the world. But, on the other hand, it is very important to me that she possess one very particular flaw: she must have no sense whatsoever where I myself am concerned.

--Sanditon, Jane Austen

They made the loveliest pair of brides Georgiana had ever seen.

Of course, they were the only pair of brides Georgiana had ever seen, but that did not make the statement any less true. Joy had made Mary beautiful. Anne's pale cheeks were pink with excitement and her eyes sparkled. Georgiana did not always find her cousin easy company, but she loved them both, and was glad to see them so happy. Glad to have another sister, too, of a distant sort. To think that two years ago she had had none!

"I am sorry Fitzwilliam would not let me see the ceremony," she said to Mary. "I am sure it was not so very illegal. Lydia tells me it was lovely." Specifically, she had said, “It was a lovely church service that was definitely not a wedding,” then given a large wink and wandered off to find breakfast.
"Mr Hewitt followed the standard book of prayer," said Mary. "Although there were some minor changes, it was quite similar to Kitty's wedding in most respects. You need only imagine Anne and I as the married couple."

Kitty's own wedding had been just as illegal, of course, though not as obviously so. Not unless you noticed the order some of the guests sat in, and the fact they did not all wear the clothes of the sex they had been born into. Georgiana had naturally been surprised when she learned of her friends' unusual romances, but it had not taken long for her to decide she liked them as well as any other. And how unfair it was that they were all forced to hide from the law when that same law said nothing against the likes of Wickham, or others even worse.

"Well, I am sure it was charming," said Georgiana, "And I am honoured to attend your wedding breakfast. I am sure you and Anne will be very happy together. Although I suppose not much will change, since you were already living together." Georgiana had visited them in Caversham a few times over the past few months and had been delighted by their household every time. She would not change Pemberley for the world, but Anne and Mary's small country house had its own charms, with its pretty little garden and elegantly furnished rooms all filled with comfortable chairs and lots of books. Or perhaps it was just the happiness of the inhabitants that made the house so charming.

"Some things will change," said Mary.

Georgiana giggled. "Are you blushing, Mary?"

"A little," said Mary. "I was only married an hour ago, and it still feels strange. I am married. I am a wife. I have a wife. And that wife is Anne." She gave a dazed smile, still blushing.

Recently married people were adorable. At least when they loved each other, and there was no doubt about that here.

"Where is your wife, then?" asked Georgiana, and was rewarded with another smile.

"I am not sure," said Mary. "We were both talking to Darcy, and then we were separated and I have not seen her since. It seems that everyone wishes to talk to us, and wish us well. I am of course quite grateful for the sentiment, but..."

"MARY," cried Kitty, flying across the drawing room and pulling her sister into a tight embrace. "Is being married not the most marvellous thing?"

"Yes," said Mary.

"Now you must come with me and settle an argument between David and John about sixteenth century Etruscan poets or some such nonsense."

"I do not believe that there were any Etruscan poets in the sixteenth century..." began Mary before she was hauled away by her sister.

Georgiana smiled and went to find something to eat.

"I recommend the poached eggs," said Mr Bennet, joining her at the serving table. "Although you should not tell my doctor that I have eaten so many. Just the right amount of vinegar in the water, I must compliment my daughter-in-law's cook."

"Thank you," said Georgiana. She put a poached egg on her plate.

"I never thought I would have a daughter-in-law," added Mr Bennet. "But my children delight in
surprising me. It is a good thing I have run out of daughters, for I do not like to think what the next one would have to do to beat Mary. Marry a tree, perhaps. Or two trees; she would not want to be outdone by Kitty."

"Do you not approve, Mr Bennet?" asked Georgiana. She had gotten the impression that Mr Bennet was relatively accepting of Mary and Anne, but it was hard to tell when he was teasing, and she was fairly sure Anne would not like to be compared to a tree. She knew that Mrs Bennet had not been told about the wedding at all, while Lady Catherine had been told and had refused to acknowledge it. Though Anne and Mary hoped to win over both their mothers in time, Georgiana felt for them, things had been hard enough for Fitzwilliam with their family after he married Elizabeth.

"Approve?" said Mr Bennet. "Why would I not approve? All five daughters married off? It is more than I ever dreamed of. Well, I must admit I had some doubts about your brother, but he has turned out a respectable sort of fellow, in the end."

He winked, as if he was worried Georgiana would not have realised he was joking. As if anyone could ever disapprove of Fitzwilliam!

"I suppose you will be next," he added. "Just so you know, there are some handsome poplars in the garden, although I am not sure of their breeding. I suspect their roots of being French." Mr Bennet himself was very brown for an Englishman, but Georgiana was too polite to speculate on where his own roots might be from.

"One day," she said, pretending to be indecisive over a plate of identical bread rolls. If she was honest, she rather doubted she would marry any time soon. She was very happy with her life at Pemberley, and with at least one niece or nephew on the way had no need to have children of her own. And what was so bad about being an unmarried woman? Waiting had suited Anne, and there were many women who were quite happy never marrying at all. Even if, like Mrs Annesley, they sometimes had to invent a dead husband to get away with it.

Georgiana chose a roll at last and put it on her plate. "I will not marry until I am quite sure of the gentleman," she said.

"Or lady," said Mr Bennet.

"Or lady," said Georgiana. She had never fallen in love with a woman, but until Anne neither had Mary.

"Or tree."

Georgiana laughed. "Or tree. As long as their roots are not too French."
I was in the middle of writing this scene when I heard the news about same sex marriage being legalised in the US. It was very inspiring! It is rather an odd contrast when my story is about someone who thinks legal marriage is terrible, but I am pretty sure that if Anne had access to a modern English legal marriage she would enter into it happily, much less hassle than all that fiddling about with wills etc she'll have to do to share her life with Mary.

And now Anne and Mary's story is really, truly done. Unless I decide to write some more one day :)

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