



Compromised
by TF

Chapter One

Longbourn—just after the Netherfield ball

*It is a truth universally acknowledged that opposites attract—
like magnets!*

Sleep evaded Lizzy while she sat by the windowsill in the wee hours of the night, contemplating and mulling over the previous events that had taken place at the Netherfield ball—totally mortified at what had happened between herself and Mr. Darcy.

Of course, the gossipers of Meryton were going to have a field day come morning with all that had accidentally occurred. But then nobody would really believe the truth. Certainly not when what everybody at the ball had witnessed with their own eyes spoke of something much more improper.

Alas, Lizzy was not one to usually allow idle talk to bother her normally happy and perky disposition, but this predicament in which she now found herself with regards to Mr. Darcy was indeed quite disconcerting. It was enough to send her nerves afluttering and her chest full of pains! And, oh my. how she felt herself becoming exactly like her nerve-wracked mother—poor Mrs. Bennet

What was Lizzy to do now? The impropriety of it all was so embarrassing. How could it have happened in the first place? It came upon her so suddenly. She was caught so unaware...

There he was standing so very close to her, Mr. Darcy, in all his arrogant, conceited and insufferable manner. How insupportable, how unjust, how confusing and mystified she now found herself to be. She had utterly misunderstood Mr. Darcy.

Realizing only now when it was too late, his previous looks were not of censure, but more like...desire!

Lizzy had merely wanted to find a simple escape from another foolish dance set with her ridiculous cousin, Mr. Collins. When Mr. Darcy offered a request to continue their heated discussion, she hurriedly decided that it was the lesser of two evils to be in his company instead of her cousin's, or so she had thought at that moment.

Well, now it was too late to mend her past behavior. What was she thinking? This impulsive, passionate, often uncontrollable urge to speak her mind, impertinently ensuring she have her say in any conversation, had once again caused her much trouble. Although, unfortunately for her this time, the damage may last her a lifetime of sorrow, perhaps even total banishment from her home and family.

And dear sweet Jane—her innocent, naïve and so angelic forgiving sister—Lizzy remembered seeing her out of the corner of her eye. Jane's mouth agape, her eyes as big as teacup saucers, her face blushing with embarrassment that Lizzy should be found out in such a compromising situation—with of all people, Mr. Darcy!

Oh! That man is insufferable. How could he? What nerve he has! What indignation!

Lizzy was totally livid as she recalled the night's events, and how this present dilemma could have been avoided all together if not for her impertinent tongue!

Earlier that evening in the Netherfield ballroom, he had been a perfect gentleman when they had danced together. It was just the one dance, when everyone's eyes were upon them. Mr. Darcy had singled her out. Charlotte had commented on it. Apparently she was the ONLY ONE he had chosen to dance with that evening. Oh how blinded she had been all along toward Mr. Darcy's prolonged stares.

But at the past Assembly Ball in Meryton when she had first overheard his comment about herself to Mr. Bingley, she had assumed since then that Mr. Darcy only looked upon her with disdain and disapprobation. After all, he did state she was only "tolerable and not handsome enough to tempt him," so undoubtedly somewhere along the way the gentleman had changed his opinion of her.

"Oh my!" Just the recollection of Mr. Darcy's confession and what transpired between them in the Netherfield library made her blush with shame!

Of course, Lizzy realized that it was entirely her fault in the first place to provoke him in such a way, but she simply could not help herself. There was a burning within her, the desire to defend Wickham and in some way acknowledge to Mr. Darcy's face that she considered him far from having gentlemanly behavior in regards to Mr. Wickham's present poor situation in life.

"If only I had been able to hold my tongue!"

If only she had not been so very impertinent. If only she had not allowed Mr. Darcy to provoke her further. If only she had not followed him out of the ballroom into the hallway—and thither into the library to be alone with him!

Oh, if only so many things had not happened the way that they had! Now, it was all too late.

Her angry passion wanted to defend Wickham, and yes, she had to admit that her own disappointment with him at not attending the Netherfield ball had contributed even more so to her animosity towards Mr. Darcy. It had only added fuel to her previous prejudice against that gentleman.

Lizzy realized again how correct her father was to constantly be reminding her that a headstrong, impertinent disposition in a woman was not apt to be attractive.

"No indeed not."

But Lizzy was never one to care about such matters before now. She had prided herself in this.

But now, oh it was all too late.

It had suddenly occurred to her by such forward behavior that Mr. Darcy, obviously thought quite the opposite of her!

How very unfortunate for her, it now appeared, that she only realized this much too late while trying to make her escape from his presence and ardent manner.

When she reached the hallway, all eyes were upon them. How absolutely disgraceful both she and Mr. Darcy appeared. She knew in an instant her reputation was ruined and she was completely compromised!

In reflection of her few recent encounters with Mr. Darcy and his so reserved, brooding and solemn countenance, he seemed to always be staring at her in disapprobation, seemingly wanting to provoke her to be impertinent, perhaps wishing for just such a sinister plan in mind to occur.

Could Mr. Darcy be that calculating?

Oh, to be sure the man was handsome and rich, but this did not impress Lizzy at all! Oh how could he? He appeared to have been much more attracted to her than she ever was to him?

Now, unfortunately, it was simply too late.

In the confines of her quiet room, Lizzy worked herself into such a state of agitation as to have allowed herself to be found out in such a compromising situation with Mr. Darcy. She continued to fret about the talebearers who would definitely be wagging their tongues today, the day after the Netherfield ball. With such a spectacle to have occurred in front of everybody, such a scandal she imagined that would be the talk of all Meryton before the day's end. In fact Lizzy would not be surprised if the whole countryside became aware of her situation very soon.

Mr. Darcy and his ten thousand a year—

Humph!

She not handsome enough to tempt him—

Liar!

Oh dear!

What was she to do now? Poor, distraught Lizzy. As far as she could recall, surely **the whole of Hertfordshire had never seen anything like it!**

Chapter Two

Netherfield Park—the same night

Fitzwilliam Darcy was in a quandary. Pacing back and forth in his bedchamber, unable to sleep, he occasionally stared out the window into the darkness of the moonless, cloudy sky.

What a to do!

Such a spectacle he had created earlier at the ball. He—who prided himself on his decorum and fine genteel breeding—had totally lost all his reserve when faced with those “fine eyes” of Miss Elizabeth Bennet!

How exquisitely she appeared before me in the library. Her temper, peaked into anger towards me shining through her fine eyes while she pierced my heart with her tirade in defense of that scoundrel—Wickham!

He had been stunned and shocked, but not surprised that Wickham had distorted the truth to his advantage—used his natural charming abilities to deceive *his* Elizabeth.

Well, she is not yet mine, but then again after this episode perhaps she soon will be.

Wickham's motives Darcy could understand, but Elizabeth's vehement defense of that man's character was undeniably based on his plans to deceive and mislead her!

Of course she would have not the least suspicion to doubt Wickham's tale of woe and misfortunes!

The rascal had always been gifted with the talent to charm and trick his way through many an advantageous circumstance—after all, had not Wickham deceived Darcy's own excellent father for all those many years? Darcy perfectly understood how Elizabeth could have been tricked into drawing the wrong assessment of his own character by whatever lies Wickham had told her. This was another reason he again singled her out, to further discover from her exactly what falsehoods Wickham had told her to slander Darcy's character and integrity.

After their heated discussion during the one dance for which he had the pleasure of her company, Darcy simply needed another opportunity to not only continue in her presence, but to somehow remedy whatever damage Wickham had done to defame him in her eyes. Darcy knew the danger for him to be alone with Elizabeth, but he could not bear knowing she thought ill of him.

Upon entering the library Darcy realized he had willingly succumbed to her arts and allurements, drawing him deeper into desiring her company. He could no longer contain the pull of his heartfelt longings to draw her closer to him—*perchance more intimately.*

If he even had the power to turn back time—he would not—as scandalous as the outcome had transpired, he could not truly regret his rash, passionate actions with her. However, he found that his present distress and restlessness was for Elizabeth's sake alone. She had been totally humiliated and disgraced, which he later confessed to himself was entirely his fault. He had utterly compromised her.

He had meant to redeem himself in her “fine eyes” as the gentleman he was bred to be rather than the rake his behaviour had displayed during their heated arguments about Wickham—when she suddenly tried to escape his ardent manner toward her! He just could not resist her anymore...he found her so tantalizing...the minx! Her defense of Wickham, though misguided, was to him quite courageous and very stimulating. Never had a lady of the *ton*, nor any woman for that matter, ever stood up to him in the manner that Elizabeth did. He had realized she was not impressed or intimidated by either his position in society or by his wealth or consequence, and how he admired her wit—the liveliness of her mind...*dearest loveliest Elizabeth*... Oh how he desired her!

But, now, in the solitude of his bedchamber, he pondered, and plotted, hoped and prayed that the morning light would come as soon as possible. He knew exactly how to act to set things right! He would briefly inform Bingley of his intentions and then ride to Longbourn to speak directly to Mr. Bennet. His honor and duty demanded it, but he realized that this was not a burden on his part at all. He recognized that once he had her father's consent and blessing, his hardest challenge would be to convince and persuade Elizabeth that all would be well.

Darcy had finally admitted to himself that he ardently loved her, wanted her to be his life's companion as Mistress of Pemberley—Mrs. Elizabeth Darcy --*the companion of his days and his nights—sharing everything he had with her and most of all sharing love and passion with her.*

At last, he now had a plan. He would take advantage of any opportunity to explain everything to her. He would first set things right with her father. For her sake he would swallow his pride and give an explanation and apology for what had happened between himself and his daughter in the Netherfield library. He would declare his love and use every means of persuasion available to bring Mr. Bennet to an understanding of his honorable intentions and to the advantageous benevolence not only towards Elizabeth, but the entire Bennet family! Darcy had no doubt that his suit would be accepted simply on the merit of his reputation and consequence.

Fitzwilliam Darcy had decidedly made up his mind. Elizabeth Bennet was worthy of him in spite of her low connections and lack of wealth. He had struggled and argued with himself long enough. No matter what his relations may object to this “love match”, for in truth on his part at least, this actually was *the* deciding factor—he was

in love with Elizabeth Bennet. He was going to follow his heart, swiftly court her and win her love, too!

Yes! I will conquer this. Everything will turn around for the best. This scandal will soon be forgotten.

Darcy would use every means in his power to make it all right for Elizabeth throughout the whole society of Hertfordshire. He would restore her good name! He vowed to himself that he would devote the rest of his life to making *his soon to be wife*—Elizabeth—very happy, indeed!

Chapter Three

Longbourn—the next morning

Lizzy had planned to weather the storm of scandal secluded in the safety of her bedchamber, not wanting even to face her family. This was especially true of one in particular, her mother, who had ranted on so cruelly their entire way home from the ball. Elizabeth, in tears, had immediately run up to her room slamming the door, bracing a chair against it to not even allowing Jane to enter.

By the first light of day she had cried enough...



NOW THAT MORNING HAD come and gone—along with Mr. Darcy's recent departure from Longbourn, she was even more confused and puzzled about all that had taken place.

Despite her resolve during the night to hate him for all eternity—this morning, after her very lengthy discussion with Mr. Darcy...rather...uhm...*Fitzwilliam*—her feelings had undergone a great upheaval and were quite the opposite toward that gentleman!

Her father had summoned or rather *commanded* her presence in his library even before she had the opportunity to partake of breakfast. She had hoped to avoid speaking to anyone until she had gained control over her emotions but, to her utter shock, she was taken aback by Mr. Darcy's presence likewise in the library at so early in the day.

To further surprise Lizzy, her father *insisted* that she remain alone in his library with Mr. Darcy and emphasized that she pay close attention to what Mr. Darcy wished to discuss and reveal to her.

Her father quickly gathered a couple of his books and hurriedly exited, declaring, "Hill will shortly bring a tray of tea and refreshments." Her father was sensible to the fact that she had not partaken of her breakfast and would need sustenance to endure all of what Mr. Darcy was to relate. He further indicated they would not be disturbed until Mr. Darcy summoned him again to the library.



WHILE MR. BENNET LEFT Darcy to plead his case with Lizzy to persuade her to accept his marriage proposal, he

knew he now had a very unpleasant task to perform. He had to deal with Mr. Collins who had given Mrs. Bennet every indication he planned to make Lizzy his bride, thus securing the Bennet family from the future misfortunes of Longbourn's entailment to that gentleman.

There was nothing to do but make haste of informing Mrs. Bennet and then Mr. Collins that Lizzy was soon to be engaged to Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bennet could hardly wait to see the distractions unfold as he unleashed this information.

Once Mrs. Bennet heard from Mr. Bennet what was occurring in his library between Darcy and Lizzy, she immediately abandoned the vexing thought of the entailment. Furthermore, as Mr. Bennet rolled his eyes at his wife's response to Mr. Darcy's claims to have already been in love with their daughter, she squealed in delight as if their scandalous behaviour the night before had never even occurred in her way of thinking. Instead, she prepared to visit her sister, Mrs. Phillips, to share her good news!

"Mr. Bennet, our Lizzy is a sly one, trapping Mr. Darcy into a proposal with her arts and allurements. I imagine that incident in the Netherfield library was somehow planned to bring about this fortunate alliance."

"Mrs. Bennet that is quite enough. It is unfair and cruel for you to think this of Lizzy. According to Mr. Darcy, the whole affair was an accident. I warn you madam, if you persist in gossiping with your sister, I insist that you do not even mention that incident at Netherfield library. Mr. Darcy has convinced me, in spite of his wealth and consequences being an advantageous alliance with our Lizzy, that he indeed cares for her...even claims to have fallen in love with her and above all he is willing to do whatever it takes to restore her reputation. However, I give you my full consent to feel free to indulge your fanciful imaginations, for Mr. Darcy plans to not only court our Lizzy before they are married, but to hold a grand engagement ball in honor of their union."

"Mr. Bennet, you astonish me; how and where can this be?"

"Madam, when you return I will discuss this further with you, after Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth come to an understanding. He is quite an extraordinary young man, having convinced me of his honorable intentions. After having discussed with him several other significant issues, he has managed to change my negative opinion of him as an arrogant conceited man, to one of the best men I have ever had the pleasure of meeting. He has certainly enlightened me with facts and proof against the slanderous rumours that have previously been circulating about him. Pray his persuasive abilities will overpower Lizzy's stubbornness!"

Mrs. Bennet listened to her husband with her mouth agape, but when he was finished all she seemed to focus on was that her Lizzy would soon become the Mistress of Pemberley—with an income of ten thousand a year or perhaps more. Oh what pin money Lizzy would have, how very

fortunate her married life would be to Mr. Darcy and what much better advantages this would be for the whole Bennet family! Even though Mrs. Bennet's nerves were all a flutter, her mood was very enthusiastic. She could hardly wait to inform Mrs. Phillips of this new development—a grand engagement ball. The scandalous incident was insignificant in her mind now that she knew there would be much work to be done in preparation for such an event, that would certainly be the talk of the whole of Meryton!



AS FOR MR. COLLINS, when he heard this news, he secretly made up his mind that he would follow through on his alternate plan to secure a wife. Charlotte Lucas had been very amiable to him, especially last night at the Netherfield ball. After all, when that scandalous display of behaviour had occurred between his cousin, Elizabeth, and Mr. Darcy, he knew her reputation had been utterly compromised. Thus, in his mind he had already decided to abandon his first plan to propose to any of his Bennet cousins, lest the scandal tarnish his own reputation. If any of it ever reached Lady Catherine, he knew she would be outraged.

As it turned out, Charlotte did accept Mr. Collins' marriage proposal. They were married in a quiet ceremony with only family and close friends in attendance, for Mr. Collins was anxious to present his new bride to Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Indeed, it was a good and prudent decision for Charlotte's situation, and the whole Lucas family was pleased for her good fortune.



IT HAD STARTED OUT very awkwardly with Lizzy grateful for the momentary distraction of serving tea to Mr. Darcy. She purposely refused to look directly at him, all the while keeping her puffy red eyes either downcast or out the window, knowing he had come to do his duty. The honorable thing for him was to offer his proposal.

However, she was extremely outraged, not only at Mr. Darcy, but also at her father! How could he possibly further compromise her, by leaving her all alone in a closed room with Mr. Darcy? She was much too distraught at the moment to completely pay any attention or even reply to whatever civilities Mr. Darcy was speaking.

Instead, her thoughts were engaged in preparing to refuse him...

When she finally calmed, composing herself enough to listen to him, she warily glanced at his face—saw the intensity of his eyes—so filled with sorrow, so guilty for his

behavior, so...? There was something else more significant in his look toward her.

What is the meaning of the look he has toward me?

At that very moment she heard him declare *his love*...

Mr. Darcy had actually said he loved her!

How astonishing?

She could not help herself as her mouth dropped open, her eyes ablaze. She froze—as if in a dream. She must have paled, for he immediately came to her side as she sat stunned. Wide-eyed and momentarily immobilized as he placed both his warm hands tenderly on each side of her face—imploping her with his intense gaze—she could not speak.

He then tilted her chin upward ever so cautiously, and gently kissed her lips. By then Lizzy had closed her eyes and given in to the power of the sensations she had never before experienced. He was quietly whispering endearments to her as he continued to kiss her in such a way. She found his tongue suddenly probing her mouth, igniting such passions throughout her whole body that she felt as if she were about to swoon. At first trying to push away from him, she chose simply to give in to all the wondrous feelings that warmed and tingled down to her toes. As Darcy felt her body relaxing he deepened his kiss, still whispering such loving things to her; she felt herself melting in his arms. Lizzy could no longer resist him, clinging to him with both arms around his neck—imitating his kisses and seeking his mouth, both of them boldly discovering the delights of this sudden intimacy.

Finally, breathless, he reluctantly loosened his grip on her but still gently held her head as he continued declaring his love for her repeatedly. Looking deeply into her eyes with such intensity, he dropped to one knee and laid his head on her lap—as he began to beg her to relieve his suffering and consent to marry him...

Chapter Four

Indeed, the compromise was complete!



Darcy's London Townhouse—the wedding night

Since Lizzy could not sleep anymore, she sat contemplating what else to include in her letter to Jane. She thought back to all that had transpired since she had come to London as Mrs. Elizabeth Darcy and all the wondrous whirlwind events that had taken place. She found it hard to believe that so little time had passed—over a month. Yet her entire life was totally changed along with her feelings toward the gentleman who was still quite fast asleep in the middle of the huge bed she had vacated moments ago.

She could feel the heat on her face and turned to look at her flushed complexion in the mirror thinking of what had occurred only hours previously: their first night's intimacies which had taken place with her William, as she had endearingly been calling him—now her very dear husband and lover.

As much as Lizzy had always hoped that one day she would meet a man and marry for love, she had no idea how exquisite the divine bliss of love was to feel in the arms of Fitzwilliam George Darcy. In her estimation he truly was the best of men—and although she knew he was not perfect, she had come to admire and respect him...love him wholeheartedly.

She had abandoned her letter and sat dreamily staring at the fireplace flames. William kept telling her that all he wanted to do was give her pleasure and make her happy. Briefly thinking back to the very moment of that morning back at Longbourn when she surprisingly answered him with an anxious “yes” to his marriage proposal, he had begun what he called “courting” her!

It had to have been his kisses that changed her mind... whatever presence of mind she had left back then...for all was forgot when she gave in to her feelings that had been so astonishingly ignited with such burning passion. How very wanton she had felt ever since. Even now she blushed with shame, remembering her teasing moments stolen these past few weeks with William whenever it was possible for them to escape the stifling confines of her family at Longbourn. William wanted her—loved her most ardently. This time she knew it with everything in her whole being—though she didn't quite understand it. Every feeling—every fiber of her body was screaming for *more* of his touch. She had realized she enjoyed these passionate sensations running throughout her body. She liked how he made her feel and had given up trying to rationalize why, for somehow he had made her fall in love with him!

SO FAR THIS WEDDING night had been heavenly...he had promised her it would be, that there was absolutely nothing to fear but every pleasure to look forward to experiencing. He had been so considerate, tender and gentle; assuring her there would be no need to hurry for they had all the rest of their lives together to learn to love each other. He was not going to force himself on her just to consummate their union. Instead he insisted that her pleasure was more important to him—he wanted her to trust him and feel comfortable together as she became more accustomed to their intimacy with each other.

She indeed felt very wanton—not at all fearful. Armed with the forthright and honest information about the wedding night duties from her mother was not what had brought her comfort. Instead, it was her aunt, Mrs. Gardiner, who had graciously and with much tact and understanding from her own experience of a very loving relationship with her husband provided and reassured Lizzy that all would be well. After talking to her aunt, Lizzy become more and more certain of what Darcy intimated: that the marriage bed was not just a marital duty, but there was so much gratification to be had for both husband and wife.

During the past few weeks, they had taken every opportunity to talk and listen to each other. He wanted her to know everything about himself; he wanted no secrets between them, and, honestly, neither did she. He answered her every question. She replied in detail to him; the misunderstandings had been brought out in the open and dispelled. Even though Darcy was a very private and reserved man, he came to realize after that disastrous, scandalous event that took place between Elizabeth and him at the Netherfield ball, he needed to change his behaviour toward her—if she ever was to embrace him with any kind of affections as his future bride.

Foremost of their misunderstandings, he began with confronting Wickham's deceptions...

Once she had agreed to marry him, and Darcy had regained his composure—also struggling to gain control of his ardent passion for her—he circumspectly began to convince her to agree to the plans he was determined to execute for their future together.

Darcy would make swift arrangements for their wedding to take place as soon as possible. He was mindful to ask her if there was anything in particular she preferred to have done or to change in these plans. But she was still in a daze and simply decided to acquiesce to his prodigious plans. Lizzy's mind was racing in many directions and her feeling for this gentleman sitting so close to her were at war within herself. He was gently holding her hand, caressing it with

his thumb while gazing into her eyes, waiting patiently for her to respond.



“DEAREST ELIZABETH, I KNOW you may be feeling quite besieged, but I assure you, it is to your benefit as well as your whole family that we make haste with our marriage arrangements.”

“Indeed, Mr. Darcy, I am feeling somewhat overwhelmed, but I do understand all that you have stated to be necessary.”

“Elizabeth, please call me, Fitzwilliam.”

“Oh, sir...I thank you...I...I did not know your full name.”

“Yes, well...I was named after both my parents’ families. My mother, Lady Anne was a Fitzwilliam. If you are interested I will tell you more about my family and relations another time. My full name is actually Fitzwilliam George Darcy—my father’s name was George Richard Darcy.”

“How interesting...Mr. Dar...excuse me...Fitzwilliam, so then it appears that your sister Georgianna was also named after your father and your mother?”

“Yes, in fact, you will soon become acquainted with her. My cousin, who is really like an older brother to me—my father was his godfather—Colonel Richard Edward Fitzwilliam, will most likely escort my younger sister, Georgianna, to come stay with me at Netherfield until our wedding. I hope you will become a good friend to her. Like me, she is rather shy with strangers.”

“Oh, well...yes, Mr. Dar...I mean...Fitzwilliam, I will be honored to meet your sister and cousin. Will they be the only members of your family I will meet?”

“I plan to invite my uncle and aunt, Richard’s parents: the Earl of Matlock, Lord Edward and Lady Sophia. But with such short notice I do not yet know if their schedule will allow them to attend. I will also include Richard’s older brother, the Viscount_____ and his wife, Lady_____, in my invitation.”

Lizzy seemed flushed when he stated this, “*Oh my, who would have imagined I am soon to align myself in marriage to such illustrious personages...?*”

Darcy noticed her countenance change when given this new information about his family. There was much more to convey to her yet little time, especially of his dear sister. He asked if she was well enough to continue to hear more, she simply nodded in agreement.

He then cautiously proceeded to deal with the topic of Wickham...



LIZZY WAS SO VERY mortified and ashamed when he revealed the whole side of his story about Wickham and the despicable advances toward Georgianna. He told her about his shared guardianship of his sister with his cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam, referring to him for adequate confirmation of the truth. Darcy was so kind and understanding of her being fooled by Wickham, explaining that the rascal had always been able to play the part so well that even his father had been deceived by Wickham.

He showered her with such tenderness, holding her and comforting her as she cried in his arms, too much overcome with guilt and shame. She felt unworthy of his complete forgiveness, realizing she never knew herself before to be so foolish and prejudiced. Much was revealed to her that morning back at Longbourn. She was now so very grateful that her father had insisted she listen to Darcy.

Since that momentous time in her father’s library, they continued to spend time together, getting to know each other better. He told her more about the history of his family. He briefly told her about his cousin, Anne—how his other aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, would most likely be quite disappointed upon hearing of his coming marriage, further explaining his aunt’s wishes, which were never his, to marry his cousin, Anne. Lady Catherine wanted Rosings and Pemberley’s grand estates to be joined, rather than any concern for the feelings or desires of either her daughter or himself.



MANY A DAY THEY walked around the countryside. Their favorite place was at the top of Oakham Mount where they talked, cuddled, and kissed each other in privacy. He remained ever the gentleman, never demanding, never forcing liberties in which she was uncomfortable. These times together, though brief, gave them much opportunity to know each other better, and their affections for each other grew.

Lizzy recalled it was her own forward behavior that shamed her as she longed for more from him but did not know exactly what this yearning was all about. Her thoughts whenever she was with Darcy were almost always wanton.

I am very much looking forward to experiencing our wedding night, especially after secretly reading that forbidden book Papa had hidden in his library!

During one discussion, Darcy admitted he had been angry with her for falsely accusing him so horribly, but he also claimed to love her even more for her courage and strength to passionately stand against him so fearlessly. He admired her sense of loyalty, as much as her wit and the clever turn of her mind. He told her often that he ardently loved her and was determined to change those weaknesses in his character that she had so vehemently pointed out

to him—his arrogance, his conceit, and the insensitivity to the feeling of others that he had previously felt were so beneath him.

He even went so far as to vow he would make all things right in regard to her compromised reputation. All of Hertfordshire would come to respect once more the name of Bennet and to understand the consequences of being so favorably connected to the esteemed family of the Darcys of Derbyshire and the Fitzwilliams of _____shire, his uncle, the Earl of Mattock.

Indeed, he had accomplished it all just as he had promised.



WHEN THE GRAND EVENT of their engagement ball was over, Darcy had succeeded in completely changing the country shires' opinions—it had spread throughout to every notable personage in Meryton and the surrounding areas. All were totally impressed and struck with awe by the magnificent splendor—that a local country lass, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, was fortunate enough to have formed such a prestigious attachment—indeed, it had been the talk of the whole of Hertfordshire.

The old gossip of the scandal at the Netherfield ball was never mentioned again.

Darcy rented out the Meryton Assembly Hall and had given “carte blanche” to Mrs. Bennet and her small staff with details on how to prepare for this extravagant ball. He had sent word by express to London and Pemberley for additional staff to help with all the preparations. Darcy further made a big to-do in personally visiting several prominent families of the neighborhood to invite them all to his and Elizabeth's engagement ball celebration.

Fortunately, by divine providence, the militia had decamped away from Meryton to Brighton, thus solving any untoward or embarrassing circumstance involving anyone in the militia that had to do with Wickham.

Hence, Darcy was relieved when Georgianna along with Colonel Fitzwilliam arrived at Netherfield to support Darcy during this courtship period. They both had been utterly charmed upon meeting Elizabeth. Georgianna was especially delighted to know she would soon have a sister—actually more than one sister. She became fast friends immediately with Mary and Kitty for different reasons.

However, Lydia was in awe of Georgianna and a little envious of her but learned much by observation of how a young lady of genteel breeding behaved. Both Elizabeth and Jane were very thankful to Georgianna for her discreet influence in bringing such a change to Lydia's silliness. Even Mrs. Bennet realized the benefit of her daughters paying close attention to Georgianna's ladylike behavior, knowing in the future she could introduce them to other men of consequence as prospective husbands.



BINGLEY WAS BESIDE HIMSELF with joy and happy in his own right. With Darcy's strong influence and especially having to chaperone the newly engaged couple, Bingley and Jane were pleasantly forced into each other's company almost as often as Lizzy and Darcy were together. The sisters had very little time alone with each other to share their new experiences. Instead they discovered that each was spending more time getting to know their fiancés.

Naturally, both couples' attachment also grew more intimate. Bingley and Jane let their engagement be known to only three people. They had chosen to tell Mr. Bennet to gain his consent and blessing; but, other than Elizabeth and Darcy, no one else was to know until after the wedding so as not to be a distraction; although it was quite obvious to everyone that Jane and Bingley had some kind of understanding.

Indeed, it was fortunate that Mrs. Bennet was much too preoccupied with the preparations involving the wedding of her other daughter, Elizabeth. Mrs. Bennet's vanity was too caught up having been charmed herself by such a prominent and esteemed gentleman as Mr. Darcy, knowing his value of more than ten thousand a year. She hardly paid much attention to the fact that Jane and Bingley were as much a couple as Lizzy and Darcy. Mrs. Bennet's self-importance had been boosted from the attentions of Mr. Darcy who paid her every respect due her as his future mother-in-law. Especially since he had personally put her in charge of not only the grand engagement ball festivities, but she was also responsible for carrying out the wedding festivity plans.

Thus it was that Jane and Bingley's secret was safe until the wedding breakfast when Bingley gave a toast to the newlyweds and then announced his own engagement to Miss Jane Bennet to the joy of all in attendance. Mrs. Bennet was surprised but managed to keep her nerves calm when Mr. Bennet embraced her with an affectionate hug—knowing precisely what Bingley was about to announce. It was indeed a very happy occasion for the whole Bennet family, thus completely restoring their status amongst the local society of Meryton.



NETHERFIELD PARK WAS FULL at last with almost all of Darcy's closest relatives staying there for the wedding, as well as accommodating the extra servants from London and Pemberley who had stayed on after the engagement ball to help and attend the wedding festivities of their master and his fiancée. Georgianna and Colonel Fitzwilliam had been there the longest; Darcy's aunt and uncle, the Lord and Lady Matlock, along with their eldest son who

was Richard's older brother, Viscount_____, and his wife, Lady_____, had arrived a week prior to the wedding.

The Colonel was able to smooth out the disagreements of his parents and brother against Darcy's announcement to them of his engagement to a simply country lass. When once they were all introduced and spent some time in company with Darcy and Elizabeth, they were able to see first hand how very happy their nephew was with Elizabeth as his fiancée. Indeed, Elizabeth was able to win their affections and respect with her clever wit and charm.

Lady Matlock especially sensed a kindred spirit with Elizabeth and took a liking to her immediately. She reminded her husband, the Earl, of her own family background and connections that had not been at first favorable to his parents in the beginning of their own courting days.

The Earl found the company of Mr. Bennet most entertaining and was surprised to discover that Elizabeth's father did not at first accept Darcy's suit, for he was not impressed by his wealth or status in society. No, Mr. Bennet wanted Darcy to first assure him of his affections toward his beloved favorite daughter. Could he love, honor and above all else respect her as his wife? The fact that Mr. Bennet did not immediately give his blessing or consent impressed the Earl. He realized Mr. Bennet and even Elizabeth were not mercenary, since they were reluctant for her to marry Darcy as the only solution to having been compromised. In spite of the fact that Darcy, who was known by the *ton* as one of the most eligible bachelor's in London's society, was also known to avoid those matchmaking high society mothers and their insipid daughters. Both the Earl and Lady Matlock concluded this was indeed a "love match."

Of course Darcy's aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, was sorely vexed when this news reached her through Mr. Collins. But Charlotte was very pleased to know that her dear friend, Elizabeth, would be advantageously settled and happily married. With her father's help, Sir William Lucas was able to send a carriage to Hunsford for Charlotte to come for an extended visit with her family in Meryton and thus have the opportunity to be present for all the wedding affairs. Mr. Collins remained at home for fear of further offending his ladyship.

Elizabeth knew that Lady Catharine would not attend their wedding, since her hopes for her daughter, Anne, were ruined. *Someday, I will try to persuade William to reconcile with his aunt.*

As for the Hursts, they had returned from London dragging Caroline with them. Mr. Hurst's business matters had kept them in London longer than had previously been planned. Fortunately, the three had not even been aware of Darcy's proposal nor been able to attend the engagement ball. But, they had all descended upon Netherfield Park just days before the wedding ceremony.

At first Caroline had been very angry, disappointed and vexed to learn that Darcy had given in and been forced into a marriage with that chit, Eliza Bennet, after such a

compromising scandal. But Darcy himself informed her later, when he admitted to Caroline that she had been correct after all—referring back to that day at Lucas Lodge when she teasingly congratulated him on his choice of a wife.

It stunned her sensibilities.

Indeed, the whole Bennet family would now become *his* beloved family. He especially emphasized to Caroline that he was indeed proud of his future mother-in-law, Mrs. Bennet. He then proceeded to tell her of the successful engagement ball that all of Meryton and most of the landed gentry of Hertfordshire had attended. They were impressed by the expertise shown and splendor of such pomp all done under the orders of none other than *Mrs. Fanny Bennet*. He further went on to declare his ardent love for the most handsome woman of his acquaintance—his dearest, loveliest bride-to-be—Miss Elizabeth Rose Bennet.

Thus, both Bingley and Mrs. Hurst strongly recommended Caroline attend the wedding so as not to offend Mr. Darcy which would thereby prevent her being banned from receiving another invitation to Pemberley.

Lizzy couldn't help but laugh out loud again recalling the sober looks and fake civility upon Caroline's face as she greeted Lizzy with her insincerities at the wedding reception.



AS THE MORNING SUN began to peek through the draperies, Darcy awoke hearing his wife's giggles, realizing that she was no longer next to him in bed. When he looked around the room he noticed her curled up in one of the wing chairs with her knees drawn up to her chin, staring at the flames. Her beautiful chocolate brown curls flowing down her back made him groan so loud with such admiration and desire that it startled Lizzy. She turned to him giving him a most brilliant smile in return.

"Come back to bed with me, dear wife. Are you unwell?"

"No, my love, I am very well. I was just woolgathering, thinking back to all that has happened—I am so astonished that little over a month has passed."

"Yes, it has been quite overwhelming, so do come back next to me, Lizzy, for I am in need of some comforting!"

"Silly man, you are quite incorrigible!" She slipped back underneath the covers, when Darcy huskily murmured...

"I want our skin to touch, my love..."

As she complied he gently took her in his arms and started kissing every spot of her soft skin, slowly removing the rest of her clothing.

Lizzy was wiggling and squirming beneath him—giggling in delight as he pleased her with his greedy warm mouth. Gently at first but then with more vigor he began to circle one breast with his tongue laving over her nipple and sucking as if trying to feed his hunger for her at her

luscious breasts. She felt like swooning from the satisfying sensations as his fingers kneaded her other nipple. Her moaning was driving him further on...his hands caressing every other part of her exposed body. She was almost delirious while murmuring and whimpering, "William, do not stop...more please..."

All the while Lizzy was secretly hoping and desiring that his hand would pleasure her private area as he had done previously during their first intimate time together earlier on their wedding night. How startled she had been at first and then embarrassed when he had gently spread her legs. She tried to prevent it, but with the fingers of his hand he began to gently touch and tease that private part of her body. With his mouth he continued to nip and peck, suckling her breast and alternately kissing her. Lizzy had surprisingly experienced such wondrous feelings she had never had before as he probed her with his fingers simultaneously using his thumb to further stimulate her.



WILLIAM BEING ALWAYS SENSITIVE to her subtle needs was more than happy to oblige continuing his caresses, all the while struggling to control his own growing desires for her—whispering to her how much he wanted her, how beautiful and attractive she was, how sweet and delicious she tasted to him.

He changed positions, dropping further down her body, throwing all the bed covers to the floor in the process as he gently held her legs, spreading them apart. Apologizing to her for such abruptness he tried to reassure her that he wanted to please her more by having her experience even greater sensations.

Lizzy herself was becoming desirous of something more...

"William, my love, my very dear husband, make me truly your wife for I am not afraid of you."

"Are you sure, darling, I do not want to force you..."

"William, please, I very much want to join with you..."

"How I adore you, my love..."

"I know you told me that we did not have to rush...but William, I desire more..."

Then he teasingly stated that he knew eventually she would come to beg and even cry out to him for more, but had not expected this to happen so soon! With her complying nod, he began to gently caress and knead her flesh, easily beginning to nibble and peck the tenderness of her inner thighs, his hands and mouth daringly exploring all over her lower body.

Lizzy was momentarily in a daze, still recovering from the effects of his previous attentions. It almost took her breath away when she felt his tongue and mouth upon the most central private part of her body.

At first, she had let out an embarrassed whimper trying to close her legs together which soon brought him back up to hover over her. Her protests were immediately muffled with a very wet kiss that almost smothered her. She curiously smelled and tasted her own scent upon his mouth...

"My love...my wife...my dearest loveliest Elizabeth, just relax and enjoy this...I want you to experience more pleasure...*before I must cause you some pain*...close your eyes and give in to all the sensations...do you trust me?"

"Yes, William...but...I...I am so embarrassed by this..."

"Darling, there is no need to be...I love you. I want to worship your whole body...I want to know you...all of you and I want you to know me...all of me...every part of you is so beautiful in my sight...and I desire to feast upon every inch of you...please let me love you, Lizzy. I promise you will enjoy this."

As Lizzy nodded, trying to calm herself, she closed her eyes and fell back against the pillow. She then felt him return between her legs and gently begin to lick and suck and circle her core. His hands were equally busy touching and caressing everywhere else he could reach. He had lifted her legs over his shoulders as Lizzy became lost in the wondrous feelings of pure bliss, murmuring and sighing and groaning her satisfaction as she began to overwhelmingly experience what she had yet to know. With what little rational thought was left to her, she was amazed that Darcy seemed to know when and how to continue laving, sucking and gently probing her inner core with his tongue—all the while the burning sensations were building within her body which began to tremble, shivering as uncontrollable wave upon wave inundated her whole being. She shuddered as her whole body felt ablaze, calling out his name when she reached the peak of her pleasure.

"Ohhhh Williammm..."

He smothered her face with more kisses, whispering all the more, "I love you, my dearest...oh, how I love you, too..."

Lizzy hardly had time to recover, when Darcy immediately plunged into her. She gasped feeling the piercing sensation of pain...but it soon subsided. He struggled for control and stopped.

"Are you well, Lizzy, my love? Have I caused you much pain?"

"I am well, William..." she whispered, her words barely audible between her moans.

Overwhelmed with love for her, Darcy kissed her again trying to pour all his ardent love into her, then slowly and gently he began to move within her, carefully in a slow tempo, urging her to do likewise, all the while groaning his own pleasure and whispering into her ear.

"Lizzy, tell me how you are feeling, tell me you are enjoying this...Lizzy...my love...?"

Whispering, "William...this is so...I can hardly... Oh William...do not stop...my love, please...do not stop..."

With her eyes tightly shut...she continued to moan for she was barely able to speak...writhing and aching her back

Chapter Five

Darcy's London Townhouse—continued...

and hips in rhythm with him, caught up in the wondrous feelings building throughout her whole body.

“Almost breathlessly, William cried out to her, “Open your eyes Lizzy, my love, look at me, I want to see your beautiful eyes...”

She forced her eyes wide open as he continued to move faster never taking their deep gaze away from each other, causing their ardent passions to build within while she deliriously whispered for him not to stop. When she suddenly called out his name in glorious tones of blissfulness, he knew she reached her peak. Only then did Darcy allow his own release while groaning her name and declaring his love for her over and over again; while spreading more kisses over her face, covering her mouth with another long passionate kiss.

While they were still together as one, Darcy relaxed over her and then carefully moved to her side. Grabbing a cover off the floor he wrapped them both in a loose cocoon—huskily proclaiming her the most amazing woman and how very thankful he was for her love. Lizzy nuzzled atop him with his shoulder as her pillow, their legs still entwined. Exhausted from their wondrous coupling, Darcy continued to caress and pet her until their breathing finally calmed. Then they both gradually gave in to a deep peaceful sleep, huddled together, satiated in each others arms.

It had only been a fortnight that Darcy had been back in his London townhouse, yet he was still bemused, wondering whether or not this dream-like fantasy would soon end? He could not recall a time in all his eight and twenty years that he had ever known such happiness. Mrs. Elizabeth Rose Darcy was here with him as his darling blushing bride—for it seemed that ever since their wedding night her countenance always appeared a rosy bright shade of pink! He loved her immensely...he adored everything about her...he felt intoxicated just by her unique aroma...she claimed it was only the lavender-rose mixture that she and Jane created in the still room at Longbourn. Whatever it was, when in her presence—her scent was always his undoing—and his self-reserved control was lost.

Darcy had every intention of being patient, slow and gentle with his new bride on their wedding night. He thought he had convinced himself and her—that it was of no significance if they did not consummate their marriage immediately—that their becoming familiar with pleasing and getting to know each other should come naturally and gradually as Elizabeth felt more comfortable. That was how it had started out...

Darcy had promised himself and her many times in the few short weeks of their courtship that he would be gentle...reassuring her and discreetly instructing her of the pleasures available to them as a married couple that were not just the marital duties required to gain an heir—as her mother had so inconsiderately frightened Elizabeth with, describing only the mere stark insensitive act itself.

Yet, as it turned out, he ended up “ravishing” her as she urged him on...

He had underestimated his wife's liveliness and courage...Elizabeth was not about to let anyone or anything or any situation intimidate her. Not his Lizzy! She confessed at having “studied on her own” from some forbidden book her father had kept well hidden on the top shelf in his library. Elizabeth had discovered it quite by accident one day to be completely taken aback by the content. Before her marriage she justified that now would be the best time for her to do a more thorough reading of it.

After all, I will soon be a married woman and do not want to remain an ignorant innocent naïve maiden.

Thus, to his surprise and delight she came to him better aware and quite eager to experience a completely blissful lovemaking wedding night with her new husband.

Indeed, every night since and even a few times during the daylight they had enjoyed their lovemaking sessions. It seemed they were both insatiable! Her arts and allurements as his wife had utterly seduced him to be totally besotted.



HE CHUCKLED TO HIMSELF recalling his valet, Fletcher's face that first morning...it was late, closer to noon time... for both he and Elizabeth had fallen fast asleep and only the slight familiar sounds of his valet's movements in Darcy's dressing room awoke him. He still had his arms around Elizabeth's body as she was nestled on his chest with her legs saddled over his lower body. He had tried to gently move her off without waking her—impossible—but she only stirred a little, moaning perhaps from her discomfort of their nightlong pleasures; soon she fell back fast asleep in a curled up position. He immediately covered her with more blankets, striding straight away to his dressing room to grab his robe to cover himself.

Fletcher had only been prepared to do his regular toiletry duties for his master and was not anticipating any need to concern himself with the new mistress. For that, of course, she had her own lady's maid to attend her.

So when Darcy began giving orders to Fletcher to fetch a basin of warm water and get him whatever was necessary for him to attend his wife—Fletcher was aghast! Fortunately for him, Darcy then realized that it should be Elizabeth's lady's maid that could accommodate his requests—so he immediately rushed out of his dressing room dismissing Fletcher, telling him that he would not need his services at all until much later.

Darcy was able to return to his bed with all that he needed to minister to his wife's present need for relief. As he had crawled back into the bed to slowly tease her awake—he found his erection fully alert and ready to give them both more pleasure; but he choked down any more sensual feeling to concentrate on soothing away his bride's discomforts first!

He knew she would be surprised and again embarrassed by his prodigious attentions to her, but he reassured her his reason was to simply give himself and her more ways to be intimate. Besides, he secretly relished the opportunity to closely see and touch more of her beautiful body even if he had to curtail his own pleasure.

When he had finished cleansing her private area and rubbing and massaging her lower back and legs against any possible cramping, they again made love. He had unknowingly formed a habit that would continue throughout their married life—he would minister to her comforts in every way possible after making love to her.

Each day since, he knew that Lizzy was becoming more trusting of him and allowing him even more liberties, free

to express his ardent love for her in ways that were much more satisfying than his fanciful imaginations had ever been.

He knew because of her clever mind, and lively and playful spirit that she would be a force to be reckoned with when they made love. His Lizzy was not at all shy or modest anymore. He took great pleasure in the fact that she often was the initiator of their lovemaking sessions.

Once she got over her embarrassment and feelings that he would disapprove of her wanton behavior, she became a tigress—almost insatiable. How wonderful she made him feel. Lizzy was eager to learn how to please him and give him pleasure as well. He never even dared to imagine the liberties that his wife would take to please him. He knew he was one very fortunate man to have such an eager and willing partner in the marriage bed.

She was just as fascinated by his body as he was of hers, often telling him he was “god-like” in his figure like the sculptures she had once seen in a museum.

Lizzy had finally confessed the name of the forbidden book that she found in her father's library. Darcy was not as shocked as she had assumed he would be...for he surprised her by giving her a copy of that very same book from his own library. He further explained that he too had discovered this book long ago hidden by his own father. Together, they had gleaned some very interesting postures and techniques with which to experiment during their lovemaking sessions.



IT WOULD BE A few more weeks in London before they made their way home to Pemberley. They would first travel to Hertfordshire to attend the Bingleys' wedding and then spent some time at Longbourn before continuing their journey home. Darcy could hardly wait to show Elizabeth his ancestral home. He had no doubts that she would come to love it there as much as he did. Both Georgianna and Richard praised the grounds surrounding Pemberley and confirmed to Elizabeth, knowing how much she enjoyed her daily walks in the country lanes of Hertfordshire, that she would indeed find the woods and natural beauty enough to keep her entertained for all her life. With her lively and clever wit and charms at making people around her comfortable and at ease in her company, Darcy was absolutely certain she would be the perfect Mistress for Pemberley.



DURING THE TIME THAT had passed while in London, Lizzy still felt as though in a whirlwind of new adventures and ex-

periences. They had dined several times with the Earl and Lady Matlock, meeting several more acquaintances of the *ton*. Elizabeth soon became a favorite. With her natural personality, playful and clever wit she easily charmed all those who met her. Even a few of those who were determined to not like her simply because she had been the one to capture Darcy's heart, could not but admit that it was indeed a marriage of love and not just for convenience nor mercenary benefits. Those who were observant enough could not help but notice the seductive glimpses each had for the other. Even across a crowded room, Darcy's smoldering looks betrayed his adoration for his new bride. The tension of their ardent love for each other permeated between them no matter who else's company surrounded them. They had eyes for no one else but each other. It was simply too obvious how much they were in love.

They had also enjoyed a few visits to the opera and had the pleasure of including the Gardiners in their party. Darcy especially enjoyed his newfound friendship with Mr. Gardiner, discovering their mutual love of fishing. He invited them to come any time to Pemberley to partake of this peaceful sport. He also promised Mrs. Gardiner a grand tour of his home and the grounds. He was delighted to know she grew up in Lambton and they shared many stories of that quaint little village. Mrs. Gardiner told Darcy she remembered seeing his mother, Lady Anne, on a few occasions when she came into Lambton to shop with her own mother. Although they did not move in the same social circles, Mrs. Gardiner shared that when she met Georgianna the first time, she was reminded of Lady Anne as a very beautiful and elegant woman and that Georgianna already favored her mother in beauty and stature. Darcy could not help but agree with her.

Mr. Gardiner was even able to introduce Darcy to several of his successful business associates to solicit means of making profits that would enable Darcy to more wisely invest his assets and increase better living conditions for his tenants at Pemberley. Mr. Gardiner may only be in trade, but he was indeed a very shrewd yet humble and wise businessman.



NOW HE SAT AT the desk in his study in front of a pile of correspondence that begged his immediate attention. Much had happened since he had determined back at Netherfield to woo and court Miss Elizabeth Bennet...it was past the time to deal with these other pressing issues concerning the Master of Pemberley!

How an I to distract myself from the many delights of my darling blushing bride? For here I sit dumbly staring into the fireplace with my thoughts completely overtaken with her.

Elizabeth's confidence in being mistress of her own home was growing. The London staff adored her and all were very

pleased to see the changes in their master which was obviously a direct result of his very amiable and charming new wife! Mr. Bennet's influence and training when she assisted him with his duties for Longbourn had already prepared and laid the basic skills for her to know how to manage an even larger staff at the London Townhouse. Darcy was surprised how well Elizabeth understood some of the problems facing him from the correspondence he was daily receiving from his steward back home at Pemberley. How blessed Darcy felt all the more to realize that his choice of wife would also lift some of the responsibilities and burdens he had solely endured all these past lonely years.

Chapter 6

Pemberley

Elizabeth was sound asleep. Darcy had made her as comfortable as he could as she had nestled her head on a little velvet cushion he had strategically placed on his lap. Her legs were slightly curled along the rest of the seat in their luxurious carriage. They were finally on their way home to Pemberley. Although they had been eager to remove to Derbyshire and home, this stop over at Longbourn had been essential since they both were required to stand up in the wedding of Bingley and Jane.

As Darcy stared out the window, not really seeing the scenery flashing by, his thoughts drifted back to the days just before they had left London for Hertfordshire. That morning he had awoke with fright at hearing his dear wife's retching sounds. If left to his own concerns, this trip would never have taken place. They had argued, with him fearful for her health. *He* insisted she see a doctor. *She* insisted she would be fine and had tried to persuade him that perhaps it was the evening meal that did not agree with her.

As it turned out, once the doctor had finished his examination of her, Darcy could not have been more astonished and pleased to discover that his dearest, loveliest Elizabeth was with child—*already*. She had conceived an heir for him—and Pemberley—endearing her to himself even more.

He teased her, saying she probably conceived on their wedding night. She was surprised to be told she was so soon with child; but, after the doctor had asked her when was the last time she had her *courses*, Lizzy realized it had not been since before they had married which now was a little over two months ago.

The doctor assured William that Mrs. Darcy was well able to travel and that the “morning sickness” was very common during the first few months of her coming confinement. Darcy realized how fortunate for them that the timing of the Bingleys' wedding would take place soon.



THE CARRIAGE HIT A rut in the road and startled Lizzy awake which brought Darcy out of his reverie. As she sat up, she immediately apologized for her continual fatigue, but William would hear none of it.

“My dearest Elizabeth, it is perfectly understandable considering your condition. Why you insisted on leaving

Longbourn after so short a stay, I simply do not understand. I presumed that you would have wanted to spend a little more time with your family, at least with your father.”

“No, my love...I...well...that is...I thought so myself when I was away in London these past weeks. I did so miss my family, especially Jane and Papa, but it had been so strange to be back in my former home. I no longer felt like I belonged there. As I watched and observed my mother and sisters and all the familiar fussing and silly bickering amongst them all, I realized that I did not feel a part of them anymore. Oh, William, do you think I am being unappreciative and unfeeling toward my family?”

Darcy was staring out the window as he held her tightly against him, keeping his arm embraced around her waist as she laid her head upon his shoulder. The significance of what she confessed gave him more of an understanding of how very intimate they had become. He realized it was not merely their physical manifestations in the marriage bed of becoming one flesh in the biblical sense, but also the true melding of their minds, emotions, and spirits. He somehow knew this had been what was truly troubling Elizabeth, an unease they had not the opportunity at Longbourn nor the privacy afforded them in London to talk of openly. Pemberley would give them both.

Yes, I am very glad we are going home to Pemberley.

“William? Did you not hear what I just said? You are far away from me again in your thoughts?”

“My darling, forgive me... I did hear you. I was just mulling over in my own mind that this had been the cause of your unusually pensive behaviour during our visit to Longbourn. I noticed you were not your usual lively playful self.”

At her silence, he continued, “But to answer your question—NO, of course I do not think that you are unappreciative or unfeeling of your parents or sisters—rather I believe you have simply been able to transfer your loyalties, and if you will allow me to say...your familial allegiance to me—that is, to us. It is not only a fulfillment of your marriage vow *to cleave only to me* as is your wifely duty, but that your first love is now me, your very dear husband, as my first love is you.”

“I am your first love am I not, my dearest wife?”

“Oh William, you are my ONLY LOVE!” And...yes... indeed...upon reflection that is what I also concluded. I knew from everything that I have heard and all that you, Georgiana, and even cousin Richard have told me...I wanted to go *home* as soon as possible...to Pemberley.”

Darcy could not resist reaching over to kiss her, not just passionately as one lusting after a pretty face, but with all his heart—and she returned his kiss in kind.



SINCE DARCY KNEW IT would take more than one day to reach Pemberley, he had his servants ride on ahead to make the appropriate accommodations for their stay in at least two very reputable inns along their journey home. He tried to anticipate the possibility of Elizabeth's health and safety, if she found herself too weary to travel longer distances than his normal experience of two days to reach Pemberley. If they had to prolong traveling for three days, so be it for he would not allow her to tax her strength or stamina now that she was carrying their unborn child.

Besides, I am not yet willing to relinquish the privacy of our time alone. My estate responsibilities will undoubtedly take up much of my time away from her close presence. I want to savour this precious time together before the demands of being master of Pemberley come upon us.



IT HAD BEEN A tearful parting when the Darcys said their goodbyes to the newly married Bingleys as they prepared to leave for their month-long honeymoon tour to the Lakes. But it was also with much joy and anticipation, for the Bingleys planned to pass by Pemberley for at least a fortnight visit before returning to Netherfield.

All the other guests and relatives staying at Netherfield were also soon preparing to leave. It had been suggested by Darcy that they all were welcomed to meet again at Pemberley for a family reunion during Christmas time.

Colonel Fitzwilliam had since returned to Hertfordshire to accompany Georgiana back to his parent's home in _____shire until Darcy wrote that he and Elizabeth were prepared to receive Georgiana back to Pemberley, perhaps in another month's time. She had very much enjoyed her prolonged stay at Netherfield becoming better acquainted with the Bennet family. Georgiana had spent more time at Longbourn to the dismay of Caroline. However, Darcy had left specific instructions to Bingley and Jane to care for his sister until the Colonel returned from his duties.

Georgiana had previously sought Elizabeth's advice on how to persuade her brother to allow an extended visit in Hertfordshire, that she may attend the Bingley's wedding. It was also Georgiana's desire to become better acquainted with all her new sisters, rather than return to _____shire with her Uncle, the Earl of Matlock and her Aunt, Lady Sophia, when they had left shortly after the Darcy's wedding.

The Hursts along with Caroline would proceed back to their London townhouse, taking care to close down Netherfield with just a few servants remaining to maintain its upkeep until Charles and Jane returned.

Caroline was happy to have been present when Darcy extended the invitation for all to come to Pemberley during the Christmas season. Still being sorely disappointed

that Darcy was happily married to that chit, Eliza Bennet, Caroline was at least grateful she would not be denied visiting the grand estate of Pemberley. Few of the *ton* were able to boast a close acquaintance with the Darcys of Derbyshire, so Caroline could at least still be coveted for that distinction.



DARCY HAD MADE NO fixed plans on how long they would remain at Longbourn. He wanted Elizabeth to spend as much time as she desired, knowing her confinement and long distance to Pemberley would keep her away from her family for several months. He was therefore surprised to find that they were on the road but a day later than the Bingley's departure and on their way home to Pemberley.

Elizabeth, quite refreshed from her nap and in a pensive but playful mood, was nonetheless restless due to the confines of the carriage.

Of course, Mrs. Bennet made such a fuss about their departing so soon, but Mr. Bennet intervened. Even though he would sorely miss his favorite, he perfectly understood Elizabeth's desire to reach her new home, especially in her present condition. After all, Darcy had privately encouraged Mr. Bennet to come visit Pemberley anytime he chose, tempting him with descriptions of his well-stocked library.



DARCY NOTICED THE SMIRK on her face and asked, "What are your thoughts, dear wife? Will you not share them with me to explain the mirthfulness of your countenance?"

With a burst of giggles, Elizabeth had to catch her breath a moment to exclaim, "I was thinking of our last dinner at your Uncle and Aunt's home when our cousin, the Colonel, maneuvered you into revealing the happenstance of our scandalous behaviour in the library during the ball at Netherfield."

"Yes, I certainly received more than my share of teasing that night."

Darcy tried to maintain his stern brooding look, hoping the topic would be dropped. He had not minded a little good-humored chiding for himself, but had not wished for Elizabeth to relive any embarrassment of the uncomfortable censure that would remind her of the forced marriage arrangements that had occurred shortly after that unfortunate compromising incident.

In the end, all agreed that it had turned out as a blessing in disguise since all of Darcy's family could see how very happily married the two were now.



“ELIZABETH! MY LOVE...WE HAVE not had the opportunity to discuss this further for I have been quite determined to put that whole affair out of my mind! You realize that I have gone to great lengths to have that scandalous event quieted—to have it all but forgot.”

“Yes, of course, William, and I *am* most grateful. It is fortunate that you succeeded. My family’s good name and my reputation have been restored because of your extraordinary efforts, my love.”

“Then I hope you will not mind explaining to me your reason for keeping that torn gown as some sort of treasured keepsake.”

Lizzy burst into a fit of giggles again. “My dearest William...for one thing—at the time—it was one of the very few ball gowns that I owned. Why the lace alone on it is quite expensive.” She delivered this last sentence in her best imitation of Mrs. Bennet!

“Can you not be serious, Elizabeth? You now own several much more elegant gowns and can easily discard that torn one to have it replaced by several more!”

She coyly looked up to him, batting the lashes of her fine eyes, and seductively teased him. “My dearest, gentlemanly, almost perfect husband...that torn gown is my only tangible proof that there is a bit of a scoundrel within you!” Where upon she grabbed his face and kissed him ever so wantonly.

Breathless, he emerged. “You little minx!” He gave her another long, languid kiss to leave her as breathless before he continued.

“I beg you, darling wife; you are trying to avoid answering my question. You know it was a complete accident on my part that I ripped your precious gown. When you suddenly jumped up from the sofa, I had not known that my foot was entangled with the bottom of the hem.”

“Well, you should not have stood up to stop me from exiting the library. When you moved to sit so close to me, your rakish looks and ardent manner suddenly caused me to realize the danger of how my situation would appear if someone had come upon us alone unexpectedly.”

It is my natural habit; a gentleman always stands in the presence of a lady... he mumbled to himself and then added, “Darling, I could not help myself at the time, for at that moment I had also realized how much I loved you...how much I desired you and could no longer hide my feelings for you.”

“And to think that I always deemed your glaring at me was from disapprobation, my low connections at being a mere country lass, and my intolerable looks. If you remember, at the Meryton Assembly, you thought I was not worthy enough of your attention to dance with me.”

“Elizabeth, my love... Did you not forgive me of *that* unfortunate incident long ago? May I also remind you—that

eavesdropping on your part is something for which I have been inclined to forgive you, too! You were never meant to hear that remark, as you well know now!”

“Oh, William, please let us not argue over those times long past. Do you really wish me to throw away that gown?”

“Elizabeth, I will not demand it of you, but I only want you to understand that for me, it is a reminder of a time when I must have terrified you, when I caused you to want to run away from me. The mortification I felt when it suddenly ripped as I grabbed you trying to prevent your leaving. At the time it seemed your fear of me caused you to swiftly escape my presence out into the hallway. It only took me a moment to realize the horrendous consequences when I tried to immediately scoop up the remnants of your gown and rushed out to hopefully pull you back into the library. It was all too late... I had utterly compromised and ruined your reputation, obviously—caught red-handed with your ripped gown in what appeared a most scandalous circumstance.”

Lizzy could not help giggling again.

With an indignant and confused look, Darcy exasperatedly stated, “Madam, I fail to see the humour in any of this!”

“Forgive me, dear William, but we are such a silly pair... Please allow me to explain myself.

“Yes, I did want to escape you, but not because I was frightened of you... I was startled by my own feelings that had begun to emerge for you...and you had the same *look* on your face that you had in my father’s library just before you proposed. No, I was not afraid of you. I was confused... And I was too angry at you to notice it then, but I remembered thinking later that I was already affected by your handsome face and demeanour. My own pride and vanity had been wounded by your remark to Bingley about my not being handsome enough to tempt you. Yet, your stately, god-like figure had indeed tempted me. I must confess that I was attracted to you from the first time I saw you enter the Meryton Assembly Hall. I stifled those feelings when you turned away and refused to offer to dance with me. Wickham’s deception and lies only increased my ability to deny that I had any kind of positive interest toward you. Instead I looked for any kind of fault you displayed.”

Elizabeth bit her bottom lip as she tried to further explain, “My love, you must learn some of my philosophy. Think only of the past as its remembrance gives you pleasure...” Her smile lit up her face.

Darcy stopped her with a kiss that continued until they reached the first inn—interspersed with playful intimacies, tender caresses, and whispers of loving endearments.



IT WAS LATE AFTERNOON when they arrived at the inn where they enjoyed an early, hearty super. When they finished,

Darcy called for the proprietor to prepare hot baths for them in their bedchamber. When all was ready, he quickly bathed first, his intentions being to minister to his wife's comforts, dispensing with any need for service from his valet or her lady's maid.

Managing to dress himself without the use of his valet, he immediately entered her room. Elizabeth was leisurely soaking in the tub situated close to the fireplace, her head leaning back comfortably upon several folded towels and her exposed breasts slightly immersed under the water. Darcy was immediately aroused at the sight of his wife's magnificent, naked body.

He whispered her name so as not to startle her. "Lizzy, my love, I have come to help you bathe."

Lizzy sat up, instructing him to fill the other bucket with the hot water and add the cooler water from the large pitcher on the counter to rinse the soap from her hair. He returned to watch her as she lathered her luscious chocolate-coloured tresses, having a very difficult time controlling his wanton desires for her.

"William, I am now ready for you to help me rinse the soap from my hair. Please pour it over my head slowly."

"Of course, darling, but I am curious to know how your lady's maid would manage to lift up such a heavy bucket to pour over you?"

"You silly man!" She laughingly told him of the smaller container that is used to scoop out the water from the larger bucket. But Darcy insisted that he was well able to slowly pour out the water directly from the bucket over her with little trouble at all. Lifting it, he proceeded to do just that while Lizzy began to protest.

"Hold your breath, Lizzy, while I pour the water over you now!" He immediately began spilling the water all over her *and* the floor as she hurriedly managed to rinse all the soap out of her hair!

Sopping up the excess to keep from tripping, he asked, "Are you finished, my love? Let me get your robe and towels to dry you off. Come closer to the fire."

Lifting her out of the tub and onto a thick carpet, he proceeded to thoroughly rub her body with a towel—presumably trying to dry her—while trying to keep his ardour for her at bay. Darcy could hardly wait to carry her over to the large canopied bed.



"ELIZABETH, I BELIEVE I love your body more now that you are carrying our child."

"Really, William—stop teasing me, I know my waist has thickened into a less than fashionable silhouette."

"Not at all, darling. In fact I find enjoyment in your more enlarged and full breasts... I love caressing your delightfully curvaceous and womanly body, *and* I love seeing you blush."

She tried to protest, but he had already captured her lips in a long sensuous kiss while his hand found the now familiar path down her silky arms, across her belly to the area between her legs to busily stroke her, teasing her sensitive core. He continued passionately kissing her as he sensed her body responding to his tantalizing caresses.

She begged him to relieve her suffering, groaning and murmuring for more, "Dear William... I want you..." as she moaned for more of him.

"Yes...Lizzy... Enjoy the way I am pleasuring you, my darling wife."

When he lowered his head between her legs to begin to pleasure her anew with his tongue and lips, he marvelled at how intensely she shivered, writhing and moaning his name, groaning how much she loved him.

When she begged him once more, he swiftly entered her luscious core and proceeded to enjoy taking pleasure in their familiar rhythm together, slow at first, then swiftly increasing the tempo as they passionately kissed in-between their murmuring of affections for each other.

They reached their peak of satisfaction almost simultaneously with him collapsing atop her only momentarily to catch his breath. Then gathering her in his arms they nestled side by side, entwined in their favorite position, facing each other. He was still nipping and placing sweet little pecks along her face and neck.

"Forgive me, Elizabeth, I know you must be exhausted from our travels, but I could not help myself. You are my undoing, Madam. I am completely besotted by your beauty that I cannot resist your allurements. I must have you, my dearest, loveliest Elizabeth. I am utterly insatiable when in your sweet presence."

Laughingly teasing him, she proclaimed he was indeed a scoundrel. "William, my very dear husband, there is nothing to forgive. If you had not made love to me, I would have been sorely disappointed."

"But, my love, I could have taken you more gently, been more considerate of your condition. I may have caused harm to the baby?"

"My dear husband, we women are not like fragile glass. We will not break—besides the baby is well padded."

"Then as long as you are well, my love, expect this occurrence often, especially whenever I am present to help you bathe."

"Oh, but I do not think the servants will appreciate having to mop up all the spilt water!"

Neither could help but laugh at Darcy's less than masterful abilities with the bucket.

"In future I promise to use the tried and true technique of the shallow pail to keep from flooding your dressing closet."



ELIZABETH FOUND AS THEY drew nearer, she was impatient to see Pemberley. They continued their journey quite early and decided to merely stop for refreshments at the second inn, canceling their overnight reservations. Elizabeth managed to convince Darcy that she was well able to travel, unable to hide the fact of her being very anxious to arrive that much sooner to her new home.

Since Darcy was also in anticipation, they continued on their way, reaching Pemberley's grounds before dusk.

I can hardly wait to have my dearest loveliest Elizabeth with me in my bed...at Pemberley.

As they drove along, Elizabeth watched for the first appearance of Pemberley Woods with some anxiety; and when at length they turned in at the entrance lodge to Pemberley's boundary, her spirits were in a high flutter.

The park was very large, and contained great variety of ground. They entered it in one of its lowest points, and drove for some time through a beautiful wood, stretching over a wide extent.

Elizabeth's mind was too full for conversation, but she saw and admired every remarkable spot and point of view. They gradually ascended for half a mile, and then found themselves at the top of a considerable eminence, where the wood ceased, and the eye was instantly caught by Pemberley House, situated on the opposite side of a valley, into which the road, with some abruptness, wound. It was a large, handsome, stone building, standing well on rising ground, and backed by a ridge of high woody hills;—and in front, a stream of some natural importance was swelled into a greater body of water, but without any artificial appearance. Its banks were neither formal, nor falsely adorned. Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste.

Darcy had the coachman stop the carriage at the precise juncture on the road that would give Elizabeth a spectacular view of her new home. They had reached this point just as the sun was setting illuminating the large pond in front of the mansion.

Elizabeth was enchanted...

They descended the hill, crossed the bridge, and drove to the front door where the housekeeper, Mrs. Reynolds, and the Pemberley staff had lined up in the front hallway to greet their master and his new wife.

Darcy immediately took charge and addressed his staff with a brief introduction of his bride.

"I thank all of you for wanting to warmly welcome us home to Pemberley. Please allow me to introduce your new mistress, my dear wife: Mrs. Elizabeth Rose Darcy."

Everyone bowed or curtsied as Darcy continued...

"I beg you would please forgive us if we ask to dispense with greeting you individually at this time for we have travelled a great length to reach home. My wife is naturally exhausted."

He turned to Mrs. Reynolds and asked her to dismiss the staff, thanking her. Then he turned back and was about to direct Elizabeth towards the dining-parlour.

Elizabeth hesitated only a moment, as she touched Darcy's arm to get his attention then whispered her request. He nodded his approval then addressed his staff again. "One moment everyone. Mrs. Darcy would like to say something to all of you."

Elizabeth turned to the crowd with a bright smile and her fine eyes sparkling, "I just want to briefly thank you all for kindly gathering to greet and welcome us. I see a few familiar friendly faces among you who were in attendance with us in Meryton. I do hope in the near future to become better acquainted with each of you." Then she gave them all a slight curtsy, indicating that was all she intended to say.

Darcy could not help smiling at her as he put his arm tenderly around her waist, signaling to Mrs Reynolds with his other hand for her to finally dismiss them all. He then proceeded to gently direct Elizabeth down the hallway. Most of the staff who were fortunate to be close enough to observe the master's face, were delightfully surprised to see his countenance so changed. Clearly it indicated a man besotted by his charming and beautiful new bride.

As the servants dispersed, those who had attended their master's wedding festivities shared their experiences and impressions of the time in Meryton. They expounded on the many virtues and worthy characteristics they had noticed in their new mistress. It was commented by many that their master was obviously a changed man, most happy and contented, which was accounted to the beloved new bride of their master.

Mrs. Reynolds was a respectable looking, elderly woman, much less fine, and more civil, than Elizabeth had any notion of finding her. She followed them into the dining-parlour. It was a large, well-proportioned room, handsomely fitted. Elizabeth, after slightly surveying it, went to a window to enjoy its prospect. The hill, crowned with wood, from which they had descended, receiving increased abruptness from the distance, was a beautiful sight to behold. Every disposition of the ground was good; and she looked on the whole scene—the river, the trees scattered on its banks, and the winding of the valley, as far as she could trace it—with delight. As they passed into other rooms, these objects were taking different positions; but from every window there were beauties to be seen. The rooms were lofty and handsome, and their furniture suitable to the fortune of their proprietor; but Elizabeth saw, with admiration of her very dear husband's taste, that it was neither gaudy nor uselessly fine; with less of splendor, and more real elegance, than any stately mansion she had ever visited previously.

She was not so surprised since the London townhouse was similarly furnished. But the grounds around Pemberley were incomparable to any other place Lizzy had ever in her limited experience seen such natural beauty and elegance.

"And of this place," thought she, *"I am to be mistress!"*

“Elizabeth, I believe this brief tour of Pemberley house may be overtaking your strength. My love...we can partake of a light dinner now and retreat to our rooms later if you wish? Or would you rather go immediately to your bedchamber to refresh yourself first?”

“Yes, please, William... I would prefer to see our rooms and perhaps have something sent up to us there. I really am very tired now.” She turned to Mrs. Reynolds, “I thank you for all your preparations, but pray excuse me for not being able to enjoy your provisions at this present time.”

“Mrs. Darcy, 'tis no trouble at all, I perfectly understand. I will instruct cook to prepare a tray and have it sent up to your sitting room. Your lady's maid, Sarah, will join you shortly.”

Just as Elizabeth was about to again thank Mrs. Reynolds, Darcy turned to his housekeeper.

“That will not be necessary. Mrs. Darcy will not need Sarah's services. I alone will take care of my wife tonight. Have the staff prepare our baths and send up the food trays to our adjoining sitting room. We will not need any more assistance until we ring for help tomorrow.

With an emphatic, “Thank you, that will be all,” he wished Mrs. Reynolds a good evening.

Mrs. Reynolds' reaction was impeccable, yet with a slightly raised eyebrow, she replied, “As you wish, sir, I will inform the staff—does Fletcher know of your instructions?”

“He does, Mrs. Reynolds, thank you. We will retire to our rooms now. I will meet with you sometime tomorrow, after dinner to be apprised of any concerns you may have.”

“Very good, sir.” She nodded and quickly departed down the opposite hallway.

He thought, *She knows me well enough to see right through me...how mortifying... I will hear her mind tomorrow...for I am impatient to bed my wife!*

Elizabeth was desperately trying not to giggle, but as soon as Mrs. Reynolds was out of sight, she could not help herself.

“William, are you always so serious in your manner with her? Your brooding countenance is frightful. Must you address your staff with such...haughtiness?”

“My love...this whole affair was quite embarrassing to me. The woman has known me all my life, well...since I was four years old. She has been more like a mother figure to me and Georgianna all these years.

“Forgive me, William, I am teasing you. I cannot help but observe that your behaviour here is quite different than with the London townhouse staff.”

“Elizabeth, many of the older servants here at Pemberley have known me since I was a child, often still treating me as such; that is not the case with the staff in London.” “But...” he seductively whispered in her ear, “I would rather not have this discussion at present, dear wife. My mind is more agreeably occupied with other matters. Come...let me show you our bedchambers.”

Lizzy arched her eyebrows, but remained silent as she was led up the large stairway to the family quarters.



DARCY HAD DECIDED TO take a slightly longer route to their bedchambers, knowing it would take time for his servants to prepare his requests. They passed through the large picture gallery of his ancestors. He briskly walked ahead of Elizabeth pointing out to her some of whom the portraits were and a little history of each person. She could not help pausing before the one with his parents and young Fitzwilliam as a mere boy of about nine years old. Darcy mentioned it was the last portrait of them as a family of three. His mother was soon after to become with child—referring to Georgianna.

“Come...my love, we can spend more time here later. I promise then to be more thorough in relating to you the history of my ancestors.”

“William...wait...this one of you, standing alone...when was this likeness taken? Surely, it cannot have been too long ago?”

Impatiently pausing again to comment, he replied curtly, “Elizabeth, that one was painted over five years ago, when my excellent father was still alive. Why do you think it is a recent likeness of me?”

Teasingly again...she coyly responded, “Well, sir...I very much recognize that brooding, reserved glare in your expression...the one you seemed to always direct at me—in the beginnings of our acquaintance—when I mistakenly thought you disapproved of me. In my opinion the artist has captured that look quite well, indeed.”

“Elizabeth, enough! You may come here to the gallery as often as you wish to stare at my handsome “god-like” figure...but I beg you now make haste.”

“William, if you are in such a hurry to reach our bedchambers than why did we come this way at all? I do not understand you?”

“I knew it would take a little time for the servants to prepare our baths. The family quarters are just around the corner. If as I presumed you would want to return here later, perhaps on your own, you may now do so without getting lost since you have only had a fractional glimpse of Pemberley, my dear wife. Come...” He entreated. “We are very close...and I am anxious to have some privacy!”



MRS. REYNOLDS WAS QUITE an efficient housekeeper, having already anticipated some of her young master's needs. So their bathing essentials had already been prepared in ad-

vance. The servants were just leaving as Darcy and his new bride entered her bedchamber.

Elizabeth was again enchanted by what she saw. The room was very large, but the delicate furnishings made it quite warm and inviting. It was similar to her room in London, but on a much grander scale. Darcy insisted that she could change anything to her personal liking. It had been his mother's rooms. But Elizabeth loved everything just the way it was.

One of Pemberley's cooks had accompanied the other servants to insure that the small dining table in the adjoining sitting room was set out perfectly. He also hoped to glimpse again the new Mrs. Darcy, since he had last met her at their engagement ball in the Meryton Assembly Hall and had been one of the few servants from Pemberley who remained to prepare the wedding feast. He had continued his correspondence with Longbourn's housekeepers—Mr. & Mrs. Hill.

When Lizzy saw Maurice, she immediately went to greet him with her arm extended as he graciously took her hand and bowed respectfully to her. He blushed slightly, beaming with a huge smile.

"How good it is to see you again, Maurice."

"Thank you, Milady, the pleasure is all mine." He saw the master and immediately bowed to him and stated, "Welcome back home, sir. I hope the dishes we have prepared will be to your liking?"

"Thank you, Maurice, I am sure it will all be delicious. We appreciate all your thoughtfulness. Kindly give our apologies to the kitchen staff for their previous elaborate preparations. Mrs. Darcy and I are quite done in from our travels. As you are the only one of the kitchen staff who has been kept informed of Mrs. Darcy's condition from the Hills at Longbourn, you can now inform the others of her special needs and dishes she favors."

"Yes, of course, sir...I have already taken care of it. Do you have any further instructions for the kitchen staff, sir?"

"No...I believe you have everything under control, as usual Maurice...you may go!"

"Thank you, Maurice." Elizabeth again gave him a bright smile as he started to leave.

"Thank you, Milady... I hope your family in Meryton are all in good health? Please give Mrs. Bennet and especially Mr. & Mrs. Hill my regards when next you write."

"Oh...yes, indeed they are all in good health. I will Maurice. Perhaps tomorrow evening I may come down and see your kitchen. Mr. Darcy plans to meet with Mrs. Reynolds after dinner time. Is that not so, William?"

"Yes...yes...Elizabeth... Maurice you may go... We will discuss this later, thank you."

Bowing and walking backwards to exit, "Milady, it is good you at last have come home to Pemberley." With this remark he quickly departed leaving the master and his new bride alone...finally!

Knowing her very dear husband's patience was wearing thin as he quickly locked the door after his cook and ser-

vants departed, she approached him, reaching up to ruffle his hair and pulling his head down to her that she could more easily kiss his lips. Darcy did not resist, but immediately reciprocated with a slow, lingering, passionate kiss... gently forcing her lips open with his tongue and probing her deliciously sweet mouth. He was fully aroused and about to carry her to the bed, when they were startled apart by a familiar gasping voice—Fletcher—who had emerged from the master's adjoining bedchamber door.

"Oh! I beg your pardon, sir, madam..." as his cheeks colored and he abruptly turned around to exit from whence he came. Still blushing, he stammered that he had only intended to inform Mr Darcy that the bath water was in readiness.

This time Elizabeth immediately burst into laughter!

While Darcy, whose face and countenance one could conclude as livid, shouted out to Fletcher, "Go, man! I have already instructed you not to bother us until I call for you tomorrow."

"Yes, sir... I apologize, sir...forgive, me... I will leave now." Trying not to trip over his own feet, he immediately exited through the adjoining door. Elizabeth assumed that he had been in Darcy's dressing closet preparing for his master's needs.

Darcy turned to his wife and glared. "Madam, I am glad you find this all amusing at my expense, but it seems impossible to have a private time alone with you, even in my own bedchambers!"

"Oh William..." She had to take a deep breath to recover. "If you could only see the expression on your face!" She quickly nuzzled up to him, grabbing his arms and placing them around her waist. "You are such a fright, you know! I expect tomorrow you will apologize to Fletcher for he was only performing his duties as your loyal, trustworthy and diligent servant!"

Kissing her forehead, already calming in her glow, he replied, "You are right, my love...you are always right. Come, I may as well show you my bedchamber now, then we should probably prepare for our baths while the water is still hot. We can partake of some nourishment afterwards."

"That is a splendid idea, William. Help me undress."



THEY BATHED MUCH AS they had done at the inn. Elizabeth leisurely soaked in the fragrant warm water that smelled of lavender and roses. She waited for Darcy to come from his own more abbreviated bath to aid her, this time pleased to see that instead of a bucket to rinse Elizabeth's hair—his staff had a special large piece of porcelain pottery specifically used with a large ladle container that hung over the rim. He used it to easily scoop and pour water slowly over her hair to rinse the soap off, spilling not a drop of water. He

helped her dry off while she kept a towel wrapped around her hair and then aided her into her robe to keep her from being chilled.

Dressed only in their robes, Darcy escorted her to their shared sitting parlor near the fireplace where the small dining table had been set up. Elizabeth was hungry but still ate very little, feeling very tired from the effects of the long journey. Darcy could see from her face that she was exhausted.

After sipping a glass of wine, he stood and took the glass from her hand. He easily lifted her into his arms and carried her to his bed, settling her in the middle under the warmed covers.

"I shall return very shortly, Lizzy. I will just secure everything in your room and the others. I must blow out the candles and add more wood to the fire." He added with a wry smile, "I will also make sure that *all* doors are locked."

"Very well, William, I am not going anywhere else. I will wait for you...my love..."

But Elizabeth did not realize how very tired she was and quickly fell into a deep sleep.

When William returned he saw that she was sound asleep. He crawled underneath the covers, leaned up on his elbow and looked at his beautiful bride's face, kissed her forehead and settled in next to her. He embraced her waist with his arm and gently placed his leg over hers, nuzzling his face near her ear to breathe in her delicious scent. He, too, soon fell fast asleep...his last conscious thoughts of marveling how very fortunate he was to have her here...finally in his very own bed...at last home together at Pemberley.



IN THE MIDDLE OF the night, Lizzy awoke to the sound of William's light snoring in her ear. She tried to turn around to face him, but his hand was cupped over her breast and his leg was entwined, locked in place over both of hers.

Whispering, "William...my love... Wake up...please... William...I am trapped.

Moaning in her ear still asleep, "I love you, Lizzy... Do not leave me... Hmm? What...? Oh, what is wrong darling? Are you unwell?"

"William, you have me so ensconced that...I cannot move... I am sorry, my love... I must have fallen asleep. I do not recall you coming back to bed?"

"Yes, darling you were fast asleep. I knew you were exhausted, so I did not want to disturb you, my love... Go back to sleep."

He started to release her to change position, lying on his back and stretching out his legs. But Elizabeth had other desires on her mind. Her hair was still bundled in a turban style with the towel. She began to remove it and

her robe, then quickly plaited her hair tying it away from her face.

Darcy was already completely unclothed and still half asleep.

"What time is it, William?"

Mumbling, he barely replied as he tried to go back to sleep. "No idea..." yawning and stretching again, turning his back to her.

But Lizzy was wide awake now and feeling playful... "William, my love...*must* you go back to sleep?"

"Hmmm..."

She nestled up against his back slightly wiggling back and forth, with her breasts rubbing against him and nibbling at his neck. When he failed to respond, Lizzy reached in front of him grabbing his manhood and began with slow deliberate strokes.

Suddenly...Darcy turned over to roll atop her. "You little minx!" He immediately captured her mouth with a searing kiss.

Elizabeth was trapped once again, while Darcy's tongue forced her mouth open and proceeded to devour hers. One arm was locked under her neck while his other hand roughly caressed her breast and everywhere else he could reach.

She struggled to push him away, but he would not release her, except only momentarily to breathe as he continued to assault her mouth in a manner as if their tongues were fencing swords.

Darcy's hand followed the familiar path of her body down between her legs that he had separated with his knee. As she tried to reach his bunched*, with her hands at the same time trying to push him off of her, he grabbed both her arms. Lizzy was excited and laughing in between trying to catch her breath.

"Madam, I believe I am fully awake now. What is your pleasure?"

"Make love to me...but William...gently please."

"Hmmm..."

Still holding both her arms above her head he repositioned himself that he may suckle her breast while his other hand again traveled down between her legs to caress and further stimulate her.

Whimpering, she moaned, "Ohhhhhhh... William... Yesssss... More..."

"Behave, Elizabeth...and I will release your arms."

He immediately replaced his fingers with his tongue and continued to ravish her with his mouth, feeling her body shivering and writhing back and forth whimpering, "More...oh do not stop... I love this, William..."

Moving upon her, he immediately plunged into her core... capturing her mouth and lips again with his own...all the while murmuring... "I love you, Lizzy."

In a rhythm as old as time, they rode each other in perfect tempo—his hands cupping her face, his lips capturing hers—faster and faster they moved together in complete syncopation, looking deeply into each other's passion filled

eyes—she, willing herself not to swoon from the intense sensations, he, driven by the ardency of his love for her—each focused on the culmination of being satiated, until finally Elizabeth began to groan out loud...

“Ohhhhh... Williammm...yessss... How I love you!”

Darcy held back as long as he was able, his face contorted as he gritted his teeth, trying to keep the rhythm and holding his own release as he watched and waited for Elizabeth to indicate that she had reached her peak...finally...he burst forth within her crying out her name in complete and utter bliss.

Collapsing to the side of her, still whispering endearments breathlessly, nipping at her neck and lightly kissing her face, he murmured and nuzzled against her ear.

“Are you well, Lizzy?”

Trying to calm her breathing, she whispered, “Yes...dearest...yes, I am very well...thank you... I love how you love me.”

Turning on their sides facing each other, they continued to kiss and caress one another.

“My dearest wife... It is I who must thank you, for even accepting me in the first place.”

Cupping his face and looking deeply into his eyes, she stated, “Now...my very dear husband, we are not going to ever bring up any more unpleasant arguments again... please.”

“Not ever, Lizzy?”

“No...you must remember my philosophy dearest.”

“I do remember it, my love...you only wish to think upon those memories which give you pleasure rather than the opposite. However, my darling Elizabeth, it is not my nature to completely ignore and dismiss unpleasant things as if they never occurred.”

“Oh William... I know you have always considered yourself resentful.” Teasing him even more she added, “And you do brood so well my love as I have the proof of it in the painting of you in the gallery.”

“Little minx... I have been endeavouring to change those weaknesses which you, at first so vehemently expressed to me that day in the Netherfield library.”

“As far as I am concerned, William, I am resolved to forget those horribly mistaken things I accused you of so long ago. I was misinformed, and my knowledge of you at that time was very limited...prejudiced, as you well know.”

He turned himself above her again...whispering, “Then let us not recall those unpleasant events...my love...” With a smoldering look deep into her sparkling, beautiful, fine eyes, he sighed, “I desire you again...”

“Oh William...you incorrigible...loveable scoundrel... I want only you... Do make love to me again...” As she cupped his face and kissed him most ardently... “Slowly this time...my very dear husband.”

“With pleasure my dearest loveliest Elizabeth.”

The torn gown keepsake, the long forgotten scandal and their previous arguments faded from their memories. They

were both resolved and agreed that the unfortunate incident at the Netherfield ball which caused the compromise was indeed the means of happily uniting them.

FINIS

POST SCRIPT: I MUST at least mention that after several months, Elizabeth presented him with a healthy heir, their first born son—Master David Anthony Darcy.



**bunchnage: I know...I know it isn't at all a "regency" term, but I just had to get the word into my story somehow...in dedication to all my fellow "BoB" babes!*