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### Critical Introduction

The fanfiction that I chose to do is a filler for *Pride and Prejudice*. There is a point in the story where the male characters of the novel exit the narrative and voyage to London. I thought that it would be interesting to fill the parts of the novel which do not focus on the male characters, and I would create an alternative narration where both Bingley and Darcy are gay for each other.

My fanfiction mainly comes from four parts of the novel. The first is the opening scene where Elizabeth meets Darcy and Bingley for the first time and the narrator remarks how distant Darcy is being. I take this moment and rewrite it so that the reader can see that Darcy is actually in love with Bingley and is thinking about dancing with him the whole time at the party. I also reframe the narrative so that it shows that Darcy views Elizabeth as a friend and thus his words, actions, and sentiments about her all come from a place between friends. The second instance is Austen's use of carriage rides as modes of revelation. A character's purpose, ambition, or true nature are usually revealed throughout or during carriage rides. This is the setting where I have Darcy and Bingley reveal their true feelings for one another. The third instance is filling the sequence of events that passed in London where the reader of *Pride and Prejudice* does not know all that has transpired. Finally, I used Darcy's return to his aunt's house and Elizabeth's confrontation of his actions toward her as the final resolution to the events which passed between Darcy and Bingley. Please enjoy, Forever Yours: A *Pride and Prejudice* Fanfic.

Forever Yours: A *Pride and Prejudice* Fanfic

It is a truth universally accepted that a man who seemingly fancies others of his same-sex must suppress and hide all the sentiments and romantic thoughts which become crafted when observing a most fine and agreeable gentleman. For Mr. Darcy of Pemberley nothing more could be truer.

It undoubtedly gets tiring watching yourself be put on a block—eyed by every single woman out there. To which nothing is more humiliating than having to perform and having to act in a manner which I am not comfortable with; above all, I loathe the way they stare at him and express anything to the degree which I would call ‘inadequate behavior’ from the women of the lower class. Imagine for a singular moment, the man with the most potential for the ever-on-going search for a partner of the opposite sex ironically does not enjoy the hunt at all. It is by far easier to be held to a standard than to perform it. People think I loathe to dance, but the truth is I absolutely love the act...I just would prefer to dance with him. He’s cheerful, charming, and everything one could wish for in a partner. I find myself always being dragged along with him; and although I have to constantly watch him fool around and talk with women whom he could marry, it makes it worth it knowing that I am always close to him even if it means I must suffer emotionally in consequence.

It seems Mr. Darcy’s options became limited as to the degree in which he could be expressive toward his romantic sentiments for ‘him’. Darcy longed for the freedom to be close with the other person—whom occupied half of his thoughts and feelings—similarly to the way in which the many women of England seemed freely to do. No one could question the actions

of two close young ladies, but they could deem it seemingly inexcusable for two men to act in the same manner.

The dance seemed not to occupy Darcy's thoughts, and he rather seemed to be getting lost in his imagination of what life could be like for him if he had the one thing he could not get: the man whom he seemingly fancied. The other people in attendance seemed to perceive Darcy as a rather anti-social, annoyingly cocky, and above all a prideful unagreeable gentleman. The likes of which had not drawn Miss. Elizabeth Bennet's interest but rather her disdain. For Darcy, Miss. Elizabeth Bennet had attracted his, but not in the way a gentleman of this time ought to.

I had begun to look 'round the room for someone who could save me, and after having our first encounter with one another, Miss. Elizabeth seemed my only way out of this frivolous party. I took to her immediately, as a friend—of course—but I feared that she believes me wanting to court her rather than simply passing the time in which I wish I could with another. I think it in my benefit to keep this woman around, yet I do hope for progressing my absent attempts of acquiring the mutual feelings of him—Mr. Bingley.

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As time had passed for Mr. Darcy, it seemed that his relations with Miss. Bennet had progressed as had Mr. Bingley and Jane's. Mr. Darcy could not help in stopping Elizabeth's growing attraction toward him, but he knew that if he distanced himself from her, she possibly would forget everything charming she decided about his character. While he felt bad doing this to Elizabeth, he knew it necessary so that she would not get misled, but he could not directly tell her why. He loved Elizabeth, but as a fellow intellectual; conversationalist; and, even, as a

friend. Elizabeth was the only person who Darcy could adequately say matched his sass, passion, and education—though he would never admit such a thing to anyone but himself.

As for the matter of Jane and Bingley, Darcy could not help but get increasingly jealous about the manner which Bingley seemed to ignore all the obvious signs Darcy gave to him about his feelings. Something drastic had to be done in order for Bingley to understand the extent to which he felt. As time went on, Darcy continued crafting a plan where he would not only stop any relations between Bingley and Jane, but where Mr. Darcy could express himself. It just so happened that winter seemed to be coming, and they both would be returning to London. Here, Darcy would execute his plans.

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Packed up, Darcy and Mr. Bingley had begun their four-hour carriage ride toward London. Each man sat across one another for the duration of the journey. At this moment, Darcy began to unfold his sentiments:

“You know,” Darcy suddenly spoken, “it seems that there is a rather, pressing, issue which I would like to speak with you about.”

“Well then, if it is so much so unapologetically scraping at the forefront of your mind then certainly express whatever it is you wish.”

“You know, Jane is rather close to you, and I find that highly inappropriate and abnormal of you. You constantly flirt and spend time with her, yet it is always I who is around you; so much so, that I am beginning to think you’ve forgotten me entirely. You see, you’ve occupied your time with her, yet why is it you’ve invited me with you to London?”

“Oh, I had not even thought of this thought. I rather enjoy your company and know that, as my close companion, you are constantly the one to whom I turn for advice and comfort. As for my relations with Jane, I thought her a rather agreeable woman whom I could potentially marry,” Bingley calmly replied. It seemed Darcy had begun to question the full nature about why Bingley always kept him around; the obvious factor which he attempted to hide from his friend of many years. Mr. Bingley could feel the anxiety of the situation bubbling up, rushing through his veins like wet concrete cementing slowly in the hot June English sun. A fact which could make Darcy no longer speak with him.

“Bingley, I would rather you not continue speaking to Jane as I overheard them discussing the truth behind her interest in you as strictly being economic. Her desire for you is nothing but a farce. You deserve someone who can confidently say how incredibly lucky ‘they’ would be in receiving your attention. Someone, who, understands what you need—” at this moment Darcy placed his hand on the knee of his companion, the terror and thrill both momentarily convulsing within the deep pleading brown eyes of Darcy as he stared into the swimmable and electric sea green eyes of Bingley.

Meeting the familiarly-safe gaze of Darcy, where only truth existed without constraint, Bingley replied, “what would you have me do? What chance is there to risk the loss of a potential future if there are none others presently affording me the chance of a happiness so interwoven...embedded, even, within the feelings of another? Tell me Darcy, tell me who else would be willing to offer me all which she has?”

Avoiding Bingley’s gaze as to perform, like Darcy was used to, a nonchalant attitude so as not to alert him just how much he cared, just how much he loved the other man, thought

about him for so long, wanted him for so long; Darcy replied: "You know as well as I that it is me who could give you all that you want and need. This fact has been known for some time, and I rather resent the absolute and utter ignorance you countlessly display when inviting me to your parties, inviting me to be with you always, trapping me not within my estate like a servant paying off their debt; but in a mental debt to which there is no affording to rid myself of; as you always knew you were doing because you, in fact, know all which you do." Darcy however much he wished to sound confident and matter-of-factly, portrayed a response was twisted with the many hurt feelings and nightly thoughts which commonly occupied his mind.

In this moment there was no going back, no possibility of pretending all which had just been confessed as being nothing but a ruse. Bingley was to make a choice: acknowledge and accept Darcy's confession, or pretend all which has been said to be ignored. Bingley gently took his palm and twisted Darcy's face gently toward him, away from the window which flooded with passing English country-side. Darcy and Bingley now looked at one another as if pleading each other to do as the other wishes. Bingley could hear the loud heart-beat in his ears feel the pulse of his blood running ramped like soldiers being drummed to battle. A simple understanding, a simple moment of tension neither person was ready for all that was going to happen after this moment. This was who they truly were; the façade had been broken; the ignorant blockade torn down. Perhaps Mr. Bingley had been ignoring every advancement by Darcy on purpose; to force him to confess all that he knew and hoped for. With Darcy's head in his hands, Bingley gently leaned forward and captured every thought, feeling, and aspiration held by both gentlemen.

After arriving in London, the two decided to further their recent discovery together. It was Bingley who moved into Darcy's London estate: Eberleton. There all that had passed was growing their relationship each day. All the servants dismissed except for the one's Darcy knew could keep their minds occupied with things other than his business; the estate became an escape for both men to do as they pleased. The men could stay within the confines and safety of Eberleton for the duration of winter and go in the public by day and resume normal behavior. Eberleton became a place like the Garden of Eden—full of temptation, discovery, and refuge.

However, Like the Garden, there was a serpent slivering, waiting to strike, and thus end all which had passed. Near the ending of winter, Darcy had proposed to Bingley an engagement which tested everything they had been grown to know and believe. Darcy had asked Bingley to run away with him and start life anew at Pemberley...lost in lover's bliss; Bingley promised that their relationship was more than a seasonal occurrence, and thus promised himself to Darcy. However, the next day when the carriage was being prepared for their departure, Darcy awoke to an empty bed and a single letter addressed to himself. Groggy with confusion and early-morning haze, he read the letter which said:

*Dearest Darcy,*

*I am writing to inform you that I cannot go through with all that I have promised. I enjoyed each moment spent with you, but you and I both know that we cannot go through with this. I'm afraid of what would become of us, you know as well as I that there is no chance of this working. I ignored Jane and Elizabeth when they were in London because I was with you, but I must choose Jane over you; she is safety and security in society.*

*Being with you would just cause us both social destruction and possibly our lives. I will not forget all that you've shared with me, given me, taught me. It is you who I will think of at night, but it will not be you who I lie with each time in bed, I hope you can forgive me for this, but I had not the heart to tell you in person. I will tell Jane that it was you who persuaded me to reconsider her, but you must tell Elizabeth the same and pronounce your intent to marry her. I know you are fond of her as a friend, but maybe if you try hard enough, you can be married and happy with her just as I will with Jane. Our time in London will always be in my memory, but it will only be in that alone. Our time is not forgotten, and I will be forever yours.*

With sadness crashing into Darcy's heart like a ship hitting an ice-field, he sat and reread the letter which would forever live within his memory. It was over, and Darcy knew there was nothing to be done.

Darcy returned to the country as he would visit his aunt where he knew Elizabeth would be. He rode back alone, and it was in that ride where he decided that he would ask Elizabeth for her hand in marriage and hoped she would accept. Although she was just a friend, it was his only chance at fooling his broken-heart and others of all that had happened in London. It was there at Lady Catherine de Bourgh's estate where he was confronted with Elizabeth's anger and feelings to which he afforded him to execute what Bingley advised him. He crafted a letter explaining everything which Elizabeth had rejected him for. Although he hoped the letter would alleviate her resentment, no matter what he did, at least he could fool one to preserve the nature of what he started with: performing an act.