

14 July, 1811

My dear brother,

I know what I must say now will break your heart. I am inviting that dreadful scorn your eye so often casts on others, but never yet on me. It cannot be helped; I must dare it.

Fitzwilliam, Wickham and I are to be married. I ask not for your permission, nor your blessing. I would invite the latter, but the former is nothing when weighed against the permission granted by my own heart. You have always been good and kind, and I have tried to be the daughter our dear late parents would want me to be. I left Pemberley and the countryside a meek and polite girl, but the life and noise of London has stirred in me a boldness you surely do not recognize. I did not

recognize it myself for some time, but now I must embrace it and follow where it leads.

I know this will come as some shock to you. You and Wickham have had your differences, to be sure. But our father loved him, as do I. Brother, please trust in me that I do what I must for my own happiness.

Do you remember the picnic where Mr. Stanhope rescued my lost shoe from the mud? I told you I had strayed from the party to pick wildflowers, but it was not so. I was meeting Wickham just beyond the treeline. It was only the mud, the shoe, and Mr. Stanhope that stopped me from meeting and courting certain scandal, as I am sure the blush of my cheeks would have given me away. I felt certain Mr. Stanhope could hear

the pounding of my heart as he walked me back to the party; it only grew louder and quicker the further I was removed from my love beyond the trees.

Not shoes, nor mud, nor Mr. Stanhope, nor your dear self could stop me now. We are going to Gretna Green tomorrow. Scottish wildflowers will adorn my hair, and I will wed in my best summer gown with the yellow sash Mamma left me.

By the time you receive this letter, we will be beyond your reach and bound by holy matrimony. I hope that someday you can extend to us the love of a brother we both so treasure. Whether you will or no, I must insist on a settlement of my 30,000 pounds. The dowry will be owed to my

beloved husband in but a few short hours. Even that wait is too long!

When next we meet, I hope you will look kindly on us, and not feel too much derision for my choice.

I remain, as ever, your affectionate sister,
Georgiana