

7 March, 1814

~~Dear Mr. Stanhope,~~

Dearest Henry,

Forgive the impropriety of writing to you directly. My brother is occupied and asked me to write to assure you that your estate is well looked after in your absence, and that he calls regularly to see if we can offer any assistance in these trying times.

But now that I have the pen, I must write for myself and say that you must not stay away a moment longer! Cooper remains closed, my bookmark abandoned in his pages, until you return, for while I cannot bear it alone, your enthusiasm brings new color to the dull pages. Should you ever want me to finish the poems, I must have you here to tell me why I should love them as you do.

In return, I shall continue your education on the matter of Barbauld. It does seem to me that you have won out in this bargain, but if you bring me a bouquet and your lively voice, I shall forgive the injustice.

Do bring your young brother again. It was a joy to show him the library, to help him with his spelling, and to practice our French together. I feel so often that I am seen only as one to be taught, and I delight in the chance to do the teaching for once.

Do not mistake me - you never produce such dissatisfactory feelings in me! In our visits I feel an equal, one whose voice and mind are valued beyond what they can bring to the pianoforte or polite conversation over tea. You must return soon or I fear those traits you find most appealing in my company will wither from disuse. Elizabeth and

Fitzwilliam are quite rightly busy with their dear twins, leaving me only my aunt and the occasional visit from the Bingleys for company.

Caroline asks after you, as is her way, and sends her regards for a safe journey home from your aunt in Bath. She mourns your absence almost as deeply as I do. I say "almost" with purpose.

I hope by this point you are alone, and reading this letter away from prying eyes.

Please forgive my commands for your swift return, as I know you are needed where you are. Know that you are needed here as well by one who loves you as fervently as any other on earth. When I feel I can no longer bear another day without a visit from your searching eyes, I open a volume

and admire the flowers from you I have pressed over these wonderful months. I can hardly choose a book without bits of blue, purple, red, white, and pink floating from its pages, so full are they with the petals and stems you have given me alongside your heart.

In the months since the assembly where we first danced, then danced again, and yet again, I have seen a world open to me I thought forever closed. You worry your family's troubles will prevent you from giving me a life like the one I live at Pemberley. Please believe me that its charming garden and stately furniture lose all their luster when you are not here to illuminate them. I have no doubt that the meanest accommodations are likewise brightened by your good heart and curious mind.

I have tried to be a good and proper Darcy, a gentlewoman, a lady. But to be beside you,

sailing the sea or teaching a schoolroom of children to read (yes, even dreadful old Cowper) in yesterday's dress is a far richer future.

I will tell them soon, I swear it. Elizabeth has shown my brother that station need not determine fate, and the joy she brings Fitzwilliam is such that he must wish the same for me. I have reasons for my hesitance that I will share with you, finally, upon your return. They are no matter to me anymore.

Return to me when you can, but only once your aunt can spare you. What are the flowers like in Bath? Will you bring me some, to allow me the illusion that I was with you all the while?

With all my heart,  
Georgiana