

Sense and Sexuality

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I may be alone in this, however I have always wished for a novel that was Pride and Prejudice's lesbian equivalent. As I update this story, I am sure it will be obvious where it is heading. This is not something I have ever intended to conceal, as everyone knows that Mr Darcy and Elizabeth get together in the end. If you have read the original book, you will see that I follow it closely, however I intend to diverge a bit later (obviously at least a bit, because otherwise Georgie would be straight). I am by no means trying to create any sort of masterpiece â who could compare with Austen's works? â I am just trying to create something that I wish existed (in this form, at least). So here we go. A tale of Georgie Lynfield.

Published on
Booksie

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Table of Contents

Sense and Sexuality Chapter 1

Sense and Sexuality Chapter 2

Sense and Sexuality Chapter 3

Sense and Sexuality : Chapter 1

It is widely expected by many mothers of girls that one day the fruit of all of their years spent grooming their beloved daughter will present itself as the eternal uniting of her, dressed all in white, with a man in a three piece suit. This hypothetical occasion, while subconsciously, is stubbornly engrained in these mothers' minds, and such a long-standing wish is not easily deterred.

"You are at university now, and it is about time you begin searching for a nice man to settle down with," said Mrs Lynfield.

"Well, mother, I have much more of a focus on my studies at the moment," sighed Georgie.

"As it should be," Mr Lynfield said, giving Mrs Lynfield a silencing look.

Mrs Lynfield snorted.

"Quite ridiculous, Georgie, you are nearly twenty two!"

"Still young, mother."

Mrs Lynfield took no notice of her daughter.

"Well, no matter," she said with a scheming smile, "for you will never guess who has bought the estate on the hill!"

Mrs Lynfield glanced at her husband and daughter in turn, eyes sparkling. She continued with no encouragement.

"Master Lawrence!" she exclaimed.

"Who is he?" asked Georgie.

Mrs Lynfield rolled her eyes.

"Who is he?!" she cried in disbelief, "He is only from the wealthiest family in Cardwell. Everyone in Herten is talking about him. They say he's looking to invest in some of our very own businesses, right here, in Herten! Now would you believe that!"

She was clearly very excited.

"Well he cannot be intending to invest in our farm, so I fail to see what excites you so much," Mr Lynfield said.

"You cannot be serious, Mr Lynfield! I do not care for his investment in businesses, only for his investment in time with our daughters!"

"A very poor investment indeed," Mr Lynfield said, winking at Georgie.

Georgie laughed, but Mrs Lynfield was not in such good humour.

"Why, you rattle my bones for pure enjoyment, don't you?" said an exasperated Mrs Lynfield.

Sense and Sexuality

"I must admit, I do take great pleasure in it from time to time," he smiled, eyes twinkling.

"You may think this funny, but I will be very displeased if you will not agree to have him visit here before the turn of the week!"

Mr Lynfield chuckled, and Georgie shook her head.

"Honestly, Mother, I don't understand why you are so fussed!"

"Oh," Mr Lynfield began with stately sarcasm, "but a rich and single man is a very great prize, Miss Georgie, no matter what his disposition!"

"You mock me now, but Georgie - or any of our daughters - they will match well with him certainly!"

"But Mother, I do intend to further my studies -"

"Educated women must settle down eventually, and sooner rather than later. There is no use in becoming a career woman, they are so uptight that they are probably barren!"

"And that won't do very well when you decide you'd finally like to give us some nice little grandchildren, will it now?" Mr Lynfield said, humouring her.

Mrs Lynfield nodded fiercely.

"All this talk of grandchildren is making me nauseas," Georgie said, wiping her hand across her brow theatrically.

"Well that ought not to be the case, Georgie, for it is like that we shan't have any should Mr Lynfield refuse to invite the Lawrences to visit us here," Mrs Lynfield said sharply, "We are suffocating in a social vacuum in Herten, so we should make advances as soon as appropriate suitors move close by! It is a very rare thing, my dear."

"Well perhaps if Georgie finds the idea of having children so nauseating," Mr Lynfield said, "I should revoke my invitation to the Lawrences to visit us this Saturday, for it seems inevitable that grandchildren will spawn from such an event."

Mrs Lynfield peered at him suspiciously, and Mr Lynfield nodded in confirmation. Georgie sighed, dreading Saturday already.

Mrs Lynfield whirled. "Oh you have been winding me up all along! That is so clever of you! Isn't he a tease?," she asked her daughter, ecstatic, before turning back to her husband, "But now don't be silly, dear, children do not come of a mere meeting! We must make succeeding plans as soon as possible!"

At that, Mrs Lynfield twirled out of the room in a dramatic flurry of apron and freshly curled hair.

Mr Lynfield was a strange character and so it was not unusual that only Georgie really understood him. He displayed such a variety of wit, sarcasm, scorn and apathy, and it was so interchangeable between these, that Mrs Lynfield could not recognise the difference. She understood him to be a loving and loveable vexation, with no knowledge of society. He, on the other hand, found her worries trivial. He was fond of her though, in the way that one is when one must be.

Chapter 2

Mr Lynfield was in fact one of the first to visit the Lawrences, after all they weren't all that far away and it was a neighbourly thing to do at the least. He had always intended on calling on the Lawrences, though he concealed his doing so from his wife until the last moment.

She was elated, and had rushed off, only to return with the rest of her daughters at her heels.

"Hurry, hurry now,"

"What is it, Mamma?" moaned Beth, "Why are we in such a rush?"

"Oh do be quiet, Beth, stop that whining, you do pain my poor head, and now sit down. Yes, there, and you too Cathy, Lucinda. Julia, you take the armchair. Now girls - your father has some very exciting news," Mrs Lynfield gave her husband an expectant stare, eyebrows raised.

When he made no sign of speaking, Mrs Lynfield continued.

"And do you remember Master Lawrence?"

"Yes, yes!" said Cathy, fidgeting.

Mrs Lynfield paused for effect.

"Mamma, please," said Lucinda, "Tell us!"

Mrs Lynfield smiled.

"Your excellent father has visited Master Lawrence and he is expected to visit us this Saturday. It will not be long after then that we will be dining with him!"

Lucinda and Cathy leapt up and danced around the room.

"Oh Lucinda, we shall have to choose our dresses so well! What do we wear in the company of such men?" Cathy sang.

Julia smiled at the news, and looked at Georgie, who rolled her eyes at both their sisters' and mother's delight.

"And mamma," said Cathy as soon as she remembered, "We did see Mrs Little in town this morning and she promised to introduce us to Master Lawrence at the Lovell's party."

"And won't she be shocked to see that we will already be acquainted with him!" Mrs Lynfield said. "Perhaps," she said happily, "we will have the privilege of introducing him to *her*!"

Cathy giggled, "Wouldn't that be a laugh!"

"What say you, Beth? You sit there very quietly involved in that book of yours." asked Lucinda. Cathy laughed and skipped around Lucinda.

"I don't think she cares much for handsome, rich men," Cathy teased.

Sense and Sexuality

Beth looked up from her book to glare at Cathy, "I don't care much for the silly girls that chase them either."
"Beth, Beth, you will have your chance too," Mrs Lynfield with unconvincing assurance.

"And Cathy," their mother said, returning her attention to the more promising prospective wives, "even though you are the youngest, I am sure that Master Lawrence will dance with you at the party."

"And why should he not? I may be the youngest, but I am the tallest. I am determined not to be overlooked! I certainly shan't be shadowed by Bethany, that's for sure."

"Cathy, that's enough," Georgie said sternly.

Mrs Lynfield, Cathy and Lucinda spent the rest of the evening speculating what they should wear when Master Lawrence came to visit, and how soon should they invite him to dinner.

Chapter 3

Try as they might, and to their utmost dissatisfaction, Mrs Lynfield and her daughters could get no description of Master Lawrence's character out of Mr Lynfield. It was a difficult feat to outwit Mr Lynfield, as he saw through their curved questions and plotting quips instantly. An account of his looks and manner from their neighbour, Mrs Gaunt, had to suffice. While this report was less favourable, it still proved to quench an amount of the Lynfield girls' desire for this intelligence. It had happened that her husband, Mr Richard Gaunt, had met with Master Lawrence and had thought him a highly agreeable young man. He had also learned that Master Lawrence had every intention of attending Mr and Mrs Lovell's party, for he did love to dance!

"I would be contented to *such* a degree if one of my daughters were to become the lady of Chaplin Estate." Mrs Lynfield sighed wishfully.

On Saturday, as he had promised, Master Lawrence returned Mr Lynfield's visit, and they had had a cup of tea in Mr Lynfield's library. Master Lawrence did not express his disappointment at not being gifted the opportunity to make the acquaintance of his famed daughters. His manner was polite, if not a little awkward, and he most certainly was handsome. Of course, hiding the girls away was all a part of Mrs Lynfield's cunning plan: "they ought not look desperate, you see," she had informed her husband. The girls and their mother were shut away in an upstairs room, one which, incidentally, had the advantage of having a large window that overlooked the driveway. From this point, they were able to get a view of Master Lawrence and discuss between them his agreeable features, while poor Master Lawrence did not enjoy any such reciprocation. And at the sight of Master Lawrence departing in his shiny chauffeur-driven car, Mrs Lynfield rushed downstairs, Lucinda and Cathy at her tail, to hear an account from Mr Lynfield. Of course, all attempts to gain any sort of full description were thwarted. Mr Lynfield only spoke of Master Lawrence's regretful declination of his invitation to dine with them that evening, much to Mrs Lynfield's dismay. She had all but finalised the dinner plans in her mind, but these would have to wait. Master Lawrence had business back in the city, to which Mrs Lynfield snorted at. "What sort of business would he have back there when he has only just arrived here in Herten?" she wailed. The thought of him flitting about always running errands here and there and never settling in time to dine at their house clearly distressed her. Mrs Gaunt calmed her anxiety by assuring Mrs Lynfield that he was only fetching a large party of guests, to whom invitations had been gladly extended, to attend the Lovell's party with him.

Not long after that, the Lynfields heard that Master Lawrence would be bringing with him no less than twelve ladies and seven gentlemen. Cathy was terribly distressed at such a large number of ladies, and her mother shared her concern. "But I am sure there will be no shortage of fine gentlemen nonetheless," Julia said kindly, "There are some lovely men coming from Herten, I would be certain of it."

Mrs Lynfield huffed and puffed at the notion of Herten siring fine young men, finding it unfathomable.

Cathy and Lucinda were very glad to hear soon after that Master Lawrence would in fact only be joined by seven ladies, not twelve - his five sisters, a friend, and a cousin.

But when the Cardwell party entered the Lovell's grand hall on the evening, there were only five altogether: two of Master Lawrence's sisters and the husband of the eldest, and Master Lawrence's friend, a young woman - who did immediately make quite an impression.

Master Lawrence was good-looking and a smiling man - eager to please, and easy to talk to. His brother-in-law, Mr Humphreys, was a built man, though more of food and drink than of muscle. Master Lawrence's sisters seemed fine and accomplished women, although only by conventional standards. Much less conventional, but equally as striking, was Master Lawrence's friend. She wore her glossy dark hair in tight

Sense and Sexuality

pincurls and wore clothes fit for men, but tailored for women. It was not long before the whispers reached the Lynfields: the talk was that she was a American woman, an orphan and recently well financially endowed due to a very large inheritance. Mrs Gaunt heard that she had just moved back to England with her younger sister to her father's estate a few hour's drive from Cardwell.

"And is that the fashion in America?" Mrs Lynfield asked Mrs Gaunt quite seriously.

"Yes, I think it must be," Mrs Gaunt replied, equally intrigued.

Her name was Miss Annabelle Hammond, and she was a beauty, but in a somber, mysterious way. She was indeed well admired at the beginning of the evening, until it became obvious in her manner that she thought herself quite superior to her company. Perhaps, Mrs Lynfield scoffed sarcastically, she thought her American friends much more socially advanced. The overall evaluation of Miss Hammond over the duration of the night proved conclusive: she was proud and disagreeable. It was a general consensus that not even her good looks, large fortune and grandiose estate could redeem her vices.

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Sense and Sexuality

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