ARTHUR

(Clearly an excuse to enter the room where Mary is.)

Ah. There it is. My book.

MARY

Oh yes. My copy has the green cover, yours the blue. I think.

ARTHUR

The dangers of… similar… reading habits.

MARY

Rare are the moments in the life of a library that evoke danger.

ARTHUR

Books harbor ideas and ideas provoke change and a changing mind is a dangerous thing indeed.

MARY

Quite true. I suppose our only recourse is to abandon the practice of reading altogether.

ARTHUR

Oh Miss Bennet, no, that’s absurd.

MARY

(Trying to correct him)

I agree Mr. de- 

ARTHUR

(Not hearing her)

What worlds open up to one in a book! In fact I gain nearly all my worldly pleasures from books-

MARY

As do I, I was merely-

ARTHUR

I can lose myself in other worlds entirely-

MARY

Mr. de Bourgh! I was making a joke. A sorry attempt at one. Apparently. Forgive me. Perhaps my sister Lydia is more accurate than I give her credit for, at least when it comes to how dull of a wit I can be.
Oh. Well. No. I do not mean to be so bold as to contradict your sister, but she is entirely wrong. I would be the duller one by far. And. That is to say… I do hope to hear more from you. You are so very full of song.

MARY
Sometimes I am. And sometimes I am full of things much less pretty.

ARTHUR
I don’t believe that. You seem to me… enough of… prettiness.
MARY
(Looking at the book of maps)
Last night I left off in Australia but you seem to set me in Brazil and I am quite unprepared for the Amazon.

ARTHUR
Oh. Well. Watch out for the fish. They bite.

MARY
Do they? And have you been to the great river?

ARTHUR
Oh no. Much like you, I travel on pages and in ink.

MARY
Regardless. I shall heed your advice and guard my toes.

ARTHUR
And were you also reading Mr. Darcy’s copy of Lamarck’s Philosophy?
(indicating Mary’s book, which has a green cover)
It is quite a stimulation.
(He indicates his own book, with the blue cover.)

MARY
It is. And it is my copy, actually. Which I did find stimulating, and disorienting, all at once.

ARTHUR
As did I. Exactly that combination.

MARY
It is the talk of life’s drive to greater complexity that most interested me.

ARTHUR
And the inheritance of traits. Fascinating.

MARY
Indeed. And the bit about giraffes.

ARTHUR
The giraffes were quite a surprise I thought.
Miss Bennet:  
Christmas at Pemberley

MARY

As did I.

(Awkward pause. Followed by an even more awkward sentiment)

MARY

Those giraffes.
ANNE
Arthur. We must leave immediately. I am ready to be away from this place and these people!

ARTHUR
I…
(Looks at Mary, looks back to Anne)
No. No, I don’t wish to leave.

ANNE
You don’t… what? We have an estate to run, we have a wedding to plan. Arthur. Come.

No.

ANNE
Arthur.

ARTHUR
Miss de Bourgh. I… foremost I do not wish you any pain or displeasure. But I cannot marry you.

ANNE
Excuse me? You cannot be serious, Arthur.

I do not love you.

ANNE
Oh, of course you do. And I you. Since we were children. Now can we please –

ARTHUR
I do not love you. It is as simple as that. I do not wish you any harm, but you must acknowledge that this is an arrangement and not a match of hearts.

ANNE
A match of - ? What are you even talking about? You require a wife and I a husband.

ARTHUR
I cannot, I will not marry without happiness.

ANNE
Everyone marries without happiness.
Miss Bennet:
Christmas at Pemberley

ARTHUR
But they do not have to. We do not have to.

ANNE
You might not have to, but I do. I have to marry, I have to marry you or else I lose everything, Arthur, don’t you see? And it is not fair, and I don’t like it either but Rosings has always been my home, and it was mother’s wish for my future, and what will happen to me if I am stripped of my home? I will be nothing, I will be lost, and I will not be muted or caged or thrown aside any longer.

ARTHUR
Neither will I. And I will not let you suffer, I promise you on my honor, you will be given whatever you need. But I will not deny what I know is true. Love is... attainable. And we are both of us deserving of it. Of something finer and more free than either of us thought possible, something that is a complement rather than a command. Human hearts are built for stronger stuff than convenient duty.

ANNE
For pity’s sake, the kind of love you speak of is fiction. It is the stuff of novels and operas... the ones where everyone dies in the end.

ARTHUR
It is not fiction. It is very real.  
(Turns to Mary)

I know it is. Now I do know it.