

**Miss Bennet:
Christmas at Pemberley**

DARCY SIDE #1

DARCY

Dear God, Mrs. Darcy.

LIZZIE

Isn't it grand, Mr. Darcy? Or perhaps it's stately. Do you not think it stately? Imagine it with ribbons and lanterns on the boughs. Perhaps we can cut out paper stars to decorate it. Would that not be handsome?

DARCY

I can make out that it is a tree, Mrs. Darcy. My foremost question is why the tree is *inside*.

LIZZIE

Because it is a *Christmas* tree. A popular German custom. Mrs. Collins wrote me of it last year during their travels to Hamburg. An evergreen reminds us of life even in the deep midwinter. Isn't that wonderful?

DARCY

It would be were we suddenly German.

LIZZIE

I'm attempting a new tradition at Pemberley.

DARCY

Which entails cutting down perfectly healthy trees and humiliating them in the drawing room.

LIZZIE

I am far from humiliating my tree. We celebrate its beauty and fortitude against the winter.

DARCY

Which I fear I shall never convince you should happen outside.

LIZZIE

No you shall not. Besides, what fun is a marriage of conviction, when it could be a marriage of surprise?

DARCY

You manage to surprise me by the hour, Mrs. Darcy.

LIZZIE

Which will keep us both young and forever intrigued.

**Miss Bennet:
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DARCY SIDE #2

DARCY

You seem quite prepared for such solitary adventures.

MARY

I fear you are making fun of me.

DARCY

Certainly not, Miss Bennet.

MARY

I do not mind being alone, Mr. Darcy, which is why I am likely not so valued a companion to my parents as my sisters when they were at home. I could comfortably go all day without speaking a word to anyone unless there was a good reason, but that is not the way at Longbourn, as you might recall.

DARCY

We are both quiet people, Miss Bennet. I do not value chatter for its own sake. This can come off as unmannerly to some, but I find it refreshing not to speak merely to fill the room.

MARY

Yes, well in a house with four sisters and a mother whose thoughts do not live until they are heard, often at volume, I was scarcely able to get a word in. I have learnt to enjoy my own company.

DARCY

Miss Bennet, if you'll excuse a spontaneous observation, I find you quite matured this visit. You are a young lady of wit and wisdom; it is a finding that displeases me only in that I fear the conversations I have missed not noticing it before.

MARY

Thank you, Mr. Darcy. I treasure that kind word from you.

DARCY

I mean what I say. And I might even venture far enough to also note that you are starting to remind me in some ways of your elder sister.

MARY

Well, you certainly cannot mean Jane as she is the sunshine to my shade. And Lizzie would, I fear, take insult from her dear husband if she heard him say such things.

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DARCY SIDE #2

DARCY

She would do nothing of the sort. Certainly not if she ceased treating you as the child you once were.

MARY

Yes. *If*. I don't mean to sound petulant, but neither she nor Jane have any conception of the invisibility I often feel around them. Around everyone.

DARCY

An invisible woman?

MARY

Who finds her strongest self buried in books and music and other things of the evanescent mind.

DARCY

My understanding was always of yours and your sisters' great love for each other.

MARY

Oh, indeed. But you see I grew up with the kindest, cleverest, and most beautiful *elder* sisters in the country; and with the loudest, silliest, and prettiest *younger* sisters in the country. This left few adjectives for me. I find I still suffer from lack of definition.