

**Miss Bennet:**  
**Christmas at Pemberley**

**BINGLEY SIDE**

ARTHUR

How do I... proceed? We have only just met; do I not need years of decades to study and then formalize this feeling?

BINGLEY

Decades? Good lord, man. I knew the moment I saw Mrs. Bingley that I loved her.

ARTHUR

And you knew right away?

DARCY

Oh, there were early stumbles, but yes, rather quickly.

BINGLEY

Right away I knew. That very night.

ARTHUR

And. How does one confirm that the something one might feel is also felt by such a someone else?

DARCY

On occasion, it is remarkably hard to tell.

BINGLEY

I wish I'd just spoken plainly. "I find you charming, Miss Bennet. Do you reciprocate?" That would've sped the whole along, don't you think?

DARCY

Honesty and openness are never inappropriate. While it caused somewhat the opposite reaction I was hoping for when I was first honest with Mrs. Darcy, eventually and after some clearingup of misunderstanding, all was resolved. I find that, if you are worried there might be any confusion, a letter can be useful in clearly expressing your feelings.

BINGLEY

Or you could ask her sisters.

DARCY

Write her. Write her the truth as you know it of your affection for her. Write of your interest in her interests. Write her of... hope. Hope that you both can one day meet as partners. Say the very words you long to hear from her.

**Miss Bennet:**

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**BINGLEY SIDE**

BINGLEY

I would still recommend asking her sisters.

DARCY

De Bourgh, If I may observe, I am likewise impressed with Miss Mary Bennet, and what I know of her is a young woman of growing confidence and clarity of mind. I see potential in this match. Have faith in yourself and be honest.

BINGLEY

And ask her sisters.

ARTHUR

I am accomplished at many things but this is an unexplored area of which I know so little.

BINGLEY

You know how you feel and you are of excellent skill when it comes to spelling. That is all you need at present.

DARCY

Good evening, de Bourgh.

ARTHUR

Yes. Good evening, gentlemen. And thank you.

*(Arthur starts to go, pondering what he would write, when-)*

BINGLEY

One thought, de Bourgh. Ladies tend to like mention of their fine gait. And fine hair. And laugh. Oh, and the kindness of their eyes. Or the sparkle of their eyes. Some such about their eyes. Put that in as well. Just a thought. Good luck.

**Transition**

*Mary enters and sits at the piano, playing with unpleasant force. She finishes with a minor key flourish and a sigh and departs.*

**Scene**

*Bingley is attempting to assemble a toy that is intended for the baby, which is not going well as he is not exactly handy. Darcy watches, amused.*

*Arthur enters the library with great bluster.*

**START:**

ARTHUR. Gentlemen. I am here to inform you that I have...ruined everything.

DARCY. Good morning, then.

BINGLEY. Not from the sound of it.

ARTHUR. I have packed my bags and, with great pardon, I will excuse myself just as soon as I gather my books...and Miss de Bourgh. She and I are leaving...together...as she is soon to be my wife. Good day, gentlemen.

BINGLEY. What did he say?

DARCY. Miss de Bourgh arrived late last night and is under the impression that she and Mr. de Bourgh are engaged to be married.

BINGLEY. Engaged to Anne de Bourgh?

ARTHUR. Can one be engaged without one's own knowledge? Apparently one can.

BINGLEY. *(Smiling slightly.)* Did you propose to Anne and forget?

ARTHUR. No, I don't think so. I fear it is quite time to leave before I cause any further disruption or embarrassment.

BINGLEY. Arthur. Stop. Breathe. And explain.

ARTHUR. It was her mother's wish, her mother who is so recently

departed. And I am required to marry her to maintain the estate and preserve the line and oh dear god I need some air.

DARCY. De Bourgh, you needn't leave and you needn't marry Anne. ARTHUR. I...what?

DARCY. The inheritance is deemed yours by law, not by Lady Catherine. You do not need to marry anyone to claim Rosings as your own. You do not need to marry at all, unless that is your wish. BINGLEY. Do you want to marry Miss de Bourgh?

ARTHUR. Well...she says we are fond of each other, and she wishes to remain at Rosings. It is her home after all and what kind of man would I be if I set her away from it.

BINGLEY. You do not need to marry to ensure Anne remain at Rosings, de Bourgh. It is quite enough house for the both of you, is it not?

DARCY. And neither Miss de Bourgh nor her mother can simply declare your engagement. You must be aware that I was at one time likewise intended for the same Miss de Bourgh.

ARTHUR. How is it that you are married to Mrs. Darcy then, and not Miss de Bourgh?

DARCY. Lady Catherine was determined to provide for her daughter, and for a time, she had a notion that I was the answer. But unintentionally, Lady Catherine's interference brought Mrs. Darcy and me to the understanding that we did and do love each other.

BINGLEY. And if love is not at the root, the tree will not be strong enough to grow.

DARCY. Well said, Mr. Bingley. De Bourgh, your marrying Anne would also seem counter to your position at the precipice of a truly wonderful match in Miss Bennet.

ARTHUR. Miss Bennet...wants nothing to do with me any longer and I cannot blame her.

BINGLEY. Did you mention the bit about her eyes?

ARTHUR. I did not get the chance to mention her eyes before my fiancée arrived and with great declaration sent Miss Bennet out of the room with haste. When I spoke to her this morning she made it quite clear that I was as welcome in her presence as a cone snail.

BINGLEY. A what?

ARTHUR. They're poisonous. I don't see how Miss Bennet could love me much less speak to me after I rather proved myself a coward and a fool. I see that you are trying to help me, but I have no recourse. Miss Bennet is decided about me, and Miss de Bourgh is abandoned without me. So. Why not marry her and make someone happy?

DARCY. Because there is truth in your heart left to tell; you will never forgive yourself if you do not tell it.

ARTHUR. I am not like you gentlemen. I have never had this kind of...responsibility. I have never planned anything but for myself.

BINGLEY. Well, life rarely goes as it is planned.

ARTHUR. My point exactly. Thank you both for your counsel but...the course is set, gentlemen.

DARCY. Arthur, please—

ARTHUR. I am so sorry to ruin the holiday. Good day sirs.

*Arthur leaves.*

DARCY. Oh dear.

BINGLEY. Poor man.

DARCY. Are we going to intervene?

BINGLEY. Recall, Darcy, how past intervention has not always helped matters along in the way we'd hoped.

DARCY. True. But in this case, surely...

BINGLEY. Right. Find the women.

*Darcy and Bingley hurry off together.*      **END**

### Transition

*The two men are momentarily empty. Then Mary wanders in. She finds the table where she was sitting and Arthur still sitting on the piano, where it was left the night before crumpled in a ball. Mary begins to play a stormy piece by Beethoven.*

### Scene 3

*Lizzy and Jane enter. Lizzy and Jane listen for a moment. Finally, losing her patience...*

LIZZY. I am sorry, Mary, but I cannot stand this music any longer. JANE. Lizzy, as nicely.

LIZZY. Please, Mary. You really must play something else. Anything else.

JANE. Perhaps something cheerful for the holiday?

MARY. It is cold outside, it is cold inside. Where is this cheer of which you speak?

LIZZY. It is Christmas Eve, Mary! Look at my spectacular tree.

MARY. Spectacularly out of phase and over-dressed. I must say I empathize.

JANE. Mary, you were sour, then you say, and now so upset.

MARY. *I am not upset. Beethoven is upset.*

LIZZY. Mary—We are only concerned for you.

MARY. As I am not entirely accustomed to the amount of concern being poured in my direction, I would kindly ask you to turn your sisterly attention elsewhere. If you like, I am happy, we are happy, Christmas is happy.

*Mary plays a decidedly unjoyful chorus of "Joy to the World." Lydia enters.*

LIZZY. And while I was so enjoying the new Mary's humor and light touch.

*With this, Lizzy bangs the piano closed, stopping Mary's sorry playing.*

*Lydia comes over to the piano.*

LYDIA. Oh dear, is she upset about Lord Arthur?

MARY. What? No.

LYDIA. There was quite the event last night even before Miss de Bourgh's surprise entrance.