

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

**LYDIA SIDE**

LYDIA

You did not tell me we were hosting a *lord*, Lizzie. My goodness.

LIZZIE

He is a relation of Mr. Darcy. He is family.

LYDIA

And he is handsome.

MARY

And you are married.

LYDIA

Of course I am married, but it is a harmless enjoyment to meet a gentleman and share some confidence. Perhaps a warm welcome letter to Lord Arthur to secure our new friendship.

MARY

What friendship? You've only just met the gentleman.

JANE

Lydia, you shouldn't.

LYDIA

Shouldn't what?

LIZZIE

Flirt.

MARY

With everything.

LYDIA

I'm not flirting! I'm merely talking!

MARY

Yes but for you they are one and the same.

LYDIA

It is widely known in proper social circles that a jovial temperament like mine is much preferred to a disagreeable and pompous one.

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MARY

If you mean me then you seem to confuse pomposity with precision. I simply refuse to favor politeness over honesty. And you are shameless with your giddiness.

LYDIA

And you should take your honesty to your spinster's attic and leave the rest of us in peace.

## LYDIA SIDE 2

ARTHUR. Ah. Well, this engagement was unexpected to all, including myself.

LIZZY. That is a rather unusual circumstance, Mr. de Bourgh. Though I do hope you and Miss de Bourgh are as happy and well suited as Mr. Darcy and I. A house with love and understanding as its foundation can weather any storm, I find. I hope your sittings will be so fortified.

ARTHUR. Yes. Well. So do I.

LIZZY. My best wishes to you, though we shall miss you at future family gatherings.

JANE. I know Mary in particular will miss your conversations.

ARTHUR. *(Standing at this—ready to go—can't stand to hear about Mary.)* Please do excuse me, Mrs. Darcy, Mrs. Bingley.

LIZZY. Mr. de Bourgh.

ARTHUR. I am so sorry to leave so suddenly but there seems to be no option. If you would please tell Miss Bennet... that I will miss our conversations as well and that... I am sorry.

JANE. Mrs. de Bourgh. At least tell her yourself.

*He bows and exits suddenly. It's all too much for him.*

LIZZY. And with that small encouragement you might have very well saved his happiness.

JANE. Everyone needs some kind of encouragement.

### START:

*Jane crosses to Lydia and sits as Lizzy listens.*

JANE. Lydia, I'd wonder if you'd permit me to make a request of you?

LYDIA. What is it? What have I done?

JANE. Nothing, save but to inspire me to ask you to come stay with us when the baby arrives. I would be so grateful for your company and...energy.

LYDIA. Come...live with you?

JANE. I would not ask to take you away from your home in Bath and your dear Wickham if it were not of such great importance, but I—

LYDIA. Mary is entirely wrong about me, you know. We have such happiness, Wickham and I. Such happiness.

JANE. I know you do, of course. But Lizzy will be so busy, and Kitty is in London, and we do not yet know what is to come for Mary. I look to you, dear sister, to help me in this most special time.

LYDIA. Perhaps Wickham could manage my temporary absence. It would be a great struggle for him without me but a sister's duty is foremost. Who are we if we do not help our family in time of need.

JANE. My thought exactly. Thank you, sister.

END

*Jane in a hug. The hug lasts a while. She does not let go.*

*Anne enters. Searching for Arthur. She looks annoyed that she can't find him. Lizzy walks over to Anne with a tray of decorations.*

ANNE. Arthur! Oh my, here I am again. In the tree room.

LIZZY. Miss de Bourgh.

ANNE. Mrs...Darcy.

LIZZY. I did not know your journey was imminent or we should have been more prepared. Please forgive me.

ANNE. If the matter was not so pressing I would not have had the necessity to intrude on your little festivity.

LIZZY. Certainly it is not an intrusion. You are always welcome at Pemberley.

ANNE. How kind. To be welcomed to a place one spent so many hours of one's youth by someone so recently positioned here. I ought to have come earlier to help you get oriented, dear.

LIZZY. Oriented?

ANNE. A sooner intervention might have prevented your more...eccentric style from rooting. Though it is understandable, coming from such inferior conditions as you did.

LIZZY. *(Carefully keeping her composure.)* I am surprised at your offer of help, Miss de Bourgh. I had always thought the residents of Rosings to be rather against my marriage to Mr. Darcy. At the least, I'm certain that was the belief held by Lady Catherine. She did seem unable to contain her opinion on the matter.

ANNE. *(Sharply emotional.)* I would ask you to kindly not speak of my mother. I feel her loss quite deeply.