

Slowly, very softly, he kisses her on the lips. For both, it is obviously a very great moment. Then for a second they stand, lost in each other's eyes.

JANE Dear Mr. Bingley.

BINGLEY Dear, dearest, Miss Bennet.

DARCY enters. He hesitates for a moment, then moves to the claret cup and takes a glass. They become aware of his presence.

JANE Mr. Darcy.

DARCY I trust that I do not interrupt.

JANE No, of course. I was about to join our party in the ballroom -- excuse me, sir?

DARCY bows slightly and JANE exits.
BINGLEY stands looking after her.

DARCY (helping himself to claret) Bingley, my dear fellow -- there is something I must say to you; and I trust you will also realise that the saying of it is neither easy nor pleasant -- I do so only as your friend.

BINGLEY You feel, no doubt, that I am neglecting my guests, and must dance no more with Miss Bennet.

DARCY Rather more than that I fear. Your sisters have expressed to me -- and I am bound to say that I agree -- their great distress concerning the attachment you appear to be forming.

BINGLEY I have an excessive regard for Jane Bennet.

DARCY And she for you? (He shakes his head)

BINGLEY You think she does not care?

DARCY Her look and manners are open and engaging to be sure, but without any symptom of peculiar regard. But if you are so serious about it, I shall consider the matter as absolutely settled. You will have a charming mother-in-law, to be sure, and of course she will always be with you here at Netherfield. Dear friend, you are being blinded. Their Uncle, I think I have heard you say, is an attorney in Meryton. And I believe

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DARCY
(Contd)

they have another who lives somewhere near Cheapside. That really is capital, do you not think so ?

BINGLEY

If they had Uncles enough to fill all Cheapside, it would not make them one jot less agreeable.

DARCY

Possibly. But it must very materially lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world.

BINGLEY

(hurt) I see.

DARCY

I am truly sorry if I hurt you, Charles. But facts do need to be faced.

COLLINS and CHARLOTTE enter.

DARCY

We will talk more of it later -- in the meantime had you not better join our guests ? There are many you have not yet danced with.

BINGLEY hesitates, as if about to speak, then he turns and exits.
COLLINS has been pouring claret for CHARLOTTE. He now brings it to her.

COLLINS

What a charming amusement for young people this is, Mr. Darcy. There is nothing like dancing after all. I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished society.

DARCY

Certainly, sir; and it has the advantage of being also in vogue amongst the less polished societies of the world. Every savage can dance.

COLLINS

Ah, you tease me sir !

ELIZABETH has entered and is talking quietly to CHARLOTTE. COLLINS now sees her.

My dear Miss Elizabeth, why are you not dancing ? Mr. Darcy, you must allow me to present this young lady to you as a very desirable partner. You cannot refuse to dance when so much beauty is before you.

ELIZABETH

Indeed, sir, I have not the least intention of dancing. I entreat you not to suppose that I moved this way in order to beg for a partner.

DARCY

I would not think of supposing so, Miss Bennet. I imagine that dancing bores you as much as it does me.