

her. She does not stop talking.

ANNE. ...It would just be through here then? Will I ever—? Arthur! There you are. I was just saying to Mr. Darcy that he must forgive the lateness of the hour, but when I didn't hear from you, I departed Rosings for Oxford to retrieve you, and was told that you had traveled to Pemberley, goodness knows why.

LIZZY. Mr. de Bourgh came here to spend the holiday with—

ANNE. Of course you were distracted by your grief, but you should have come to Rosings, Arthur, directly!

DARCY. But now you are both welcome to stay and—

ANNE. Though I prefer Rosings, Pemberley shall do for this Christmas, despite there being—my *god*—a tree in this room.

LIZZY. It is a popular German custom—

ARTHUR. I'm so sorry; what are you doing here?

ANNE. What are *you* doing *here*? Instead of at our home?

ARTHUR. *Our* home?

ANNE. The servants have been preparing to welcome you for Christmas and there are arrangements to be made.

ARTHUR. Arrangements?

MARY. Excuse me, who are you?

ANNE. Excuse me, who are *you*?

DARCY. Miss Mary Bennet. Please let me present, Miss Anne de Bourgh, daughter of the late Lady Catherine de Bourgh—

ANNE. And Arthur's fiancée.

ARTHUR. My *what*?

MARY. Your what?

LIZZY. Your what?

LYDIA. (*Stepping in, obviously eavesdropping outside the door.*) His what?

Lydia gasps. Arthur looks to Mary, Mary looks to Arthur.

Lizzy and Darcy turn to each other.

Blackout.

End of Act One

ACT TWO

Scene 1

December 24th. morning. The room is now fully decorated for Christmas with holly and ivy over every door and table. The tree looks beautiful with candles and paper ornaments and ribbons.

It is snowing outside.

Lights rise on Mary at the piano. She is thinking of Arthur. She is angry, embarrassed, and deeply disappointed. But mainly just mad.

Arthur enters, desperate to explain to her.

ARTHUR. Miss Bennet, may I please have a moment to explain.

MARY. No I think not, Mr. de Bourgh. I think I heard enough last night.

Mary glares and throws her copy of Lamarck at his feet and exits.

ARTHUR. (*Calling after her.*) Please Miss Bennet, I'd like to explain. I can explain.

He picks up her book, frustrated and—

Mary storms back in, grabs her book from him. Then takes his book and throws it on the ground instead.

Miss Bennet this is all a terrible misunderstanding—

MARY. I understand you have a fiancée, is that true?

ARTHUR. Well. Yes it seems so but—

MARY. Then there is nothing left to say. Not to me. Not ever. I would have rather stayed invisible than have been made a fool, Mr. de Bourgh.

ARTHUR. Miss Bennet, please—

MARY. (*So mad.*) *Mr. de Bourgh.* Do you recall my advice about surviving a bear attack?

ARTHUR. Yes?

MARY. You would be wise to *use it.*

He does. He raises his hands and backs slowly away from her.

She exits.

Arthur is at a loss. Anne enters, talking authoritatively and without pause.

ANNE. My goodness Arthur, there you are! I am shocked at how easy it is to get lost in this house. And the rooms—they are somewhat more open than I remember; there is a brightness I find unappealing, do you not agree?

He doesn't respond.

Arthur. Arthur!

ARTHUR. (*Lost in thought.*) Sorry? Yes. What?

ANNE. Brightness. Also, the drawing room furniture is not so fine as what we have at Rosings. It has been remarked on that the style of the furnishings at Rosings is unparalleled. I would never say it myself, but who am I to disagree. Mr. Collins—have you met our Mr. Collins yet?

ARTHUR. No, not—

ANNE. He said just the other day that one of my mother's most enduring legacies would be her handsome style. Also her willingness to give freely of her opinion and advice, a trait he suggests lives on in me.

ARTHUR. Does it?

ANNE. It does. You'll be relieved to know there is scarcely a thing that will need doing at Rosings after you arrive, save for the wedding preparations and making room for some of your things. I cannot imagine you have much, perhaps a dusty book or two, which we can easily tuck out of sight.

ARTHUR. Out of sight?

ANNE. We are to be married, Arthur. I will tell you what is of

interest and what is not. My mother was of great help in that regard to my father. I shall be so for you.

ARTHUR. I—I'm sorry, Miss de Bourgh, I am inexperienced with engagement, especially as ours seems to have caught me unawares, but—

ANNE. Our marriage was my mother's wish. To keep the estate intact, of course.

ARTHUR. Yes, but...

ANNE. And to continue the de Bourgh line.

ARTHUR. Oh my goodness.

ANNE. And your father would have wanted it as well. With the fortune left to me and the estate to you, you cannot possibly object.

ARTHUR. Objection is really at the discretion of the objector, but—

ANNE. *Arthur.* It isn't as though you are otherwise attached, and your life as a student is rather complete, and bachelors make people uncomfortable. We have always been fond of each other. Don't you recall, Arthur, how fond we are of each other?

She takes a moment.

Rosings is my home. I will not be made to leave my home. It is all I have of my mother. Where would you have me go?

ARTHUR. Well I don't really—

ANNE. So it is settled.

ARTHUR. I just think that—

ANNE. It's settled. (*Starting to leave.*) Of course we will have more to discuss before the new year, but I have it all in hand. And we shall be on our way just as soon as the holiday passes.

(*Casting a disparaging look toward Lizzy's tree.*) It would appear my mother was right about the new Mrs. Darcy—the unconventional upbringing of the Bennet girls has allowed some curious habits to linger. I can assure you there will never be a tree indoors at Rosings. Come along, Arthur.

He goes with her. They exit.