

## 27 ott 2020 - Jane Austen

### "Mr Darcy Proposes to Elizabeth"

p. 319

The passage signs the lowest moment in the relationship between Darcy and Elizabeth: so far they have acted kindly to each other, but now instead they are very aggressive to each other.

While Elizabeth is visiting her best friend, she is visited by Mr Darcy, who unexpectedly proposes to her.

The first part underline Mr Darcy's agitation and upsets.

Abruptly he make his proposal.

The first words are wrong, since he says that it was a struggle to make that proposal.

Elizabeth, who already feels like she has to defend herself, weights his words.

Elizabeth reaction is beyond expression: she is **silent**.

He lists the reasons why he shouldn't have proposed

His sense of her inferiority – of its being a degradation – of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding, but was very unlikely to recommend his suit.

There are three stages of her reaction:

- She feels sorry, because she will refuse him
- After that she feels resentful
- And then she becomes angry.

She get angrier and angrier when she realizes that he is sure she will accept.

He spoke of apprehension and anxiety, but his countenance expressed real security.

Elizabeth is very clever and dignified, but also very prejudiced: the anger she has so far experienced deprives her of the possibility of thinking clearly.

The reasons for her negation are:

### First reason

His sense of her inferiority of its being a degradation of the family obstacles which judgment had always opposed to inclination

### Second Reason

The way the proposal has been done

- Against will
- Against reason
- Against character

### Third Reason

Mr Darcy has caused the separation between Jane and Bingley

Had not my own feelings decided against you – had they been indifferent, or had they even been favourable, do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?

Darcy reaction is unexpected, since she thinks he would be remorseful, but he isn't.

### Fourth Reason

Mr Wickham is a negative character. Before Mr Wickham father died, Darcy promised that he would help his son to start a career, and so he did. He got him a sum of money, but Wickham squandered this money on whores, drinking and gambling; then he became an army officer.

After he had squandered all his money he came back to Darcy to ask him more money, which he refuses. So Wickham eloped with Georgiana, Darcy's sister who was then 13. Darcy had to go and get his sister back.

When Wickham meets Elizabeth tell her that Mr Darcy has appropriated his own money, and so Elizabeth believes in him.

In the end, Elizabeth believes that Darcy has deprived Wickham of his right inheritance.

"And of your infliction," cried Elizabeth with energy. "You have reduced him to his present state of poverty – comparative poverty. You have withheld the advantages, which you must know to have been designed for him. You have deprived the best years of his life, of that independence which was no less his due than his desert. You have done all this! and yet you can treat the mention of his misfortunes with contempt and ridicule."

### Fifth reason

When Elizabeth and Darcy first met, she overhears Darcy saying to Bingley that the only girl at the ball who could attract his attention is Jane, and that Elizabeth is tolerable. She is

not beautiful enough to **tempt** him

Their first meeting so has been negative.

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Mr Darcy at her negation became pale, and he feels very bad: he is **surprised, angry** and **upset**.

But Mr Darcy is strong, and doesn't accept all his accusation. He accuses her to be pride. He is dignified.

these offences might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. These bitter accusations might have been suppressed, had I, with greater policy, concealed my struggles, and flattered you into the belief of my being impelled by unqualified, unalloyed inclination; by reason, by reflection, by everything. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence.

Her reaction is even stronger: she says terrible phrases

You could not have made me the offer of your hand in any possible way that would have tempted me to accept it.

Darcy feels **astonished, incredulous** and **mortification**.

At the end he goes away.

After that he leaves, she cries for hours, because she realizes that she had refused the man she loved.

## The End

After a while she receive a letter from Mr Darcy, where he admits separating Jane and Bingley because he thought that Jane was not in love with Mr Bingley. At the same time he reveals the truth about Wickham and his misbehavior.

Elizabeth starts reconsidering her attitude towards Wickham, Darcy and herself. The truth bursts out on her suddenly, and the change is permanent: she doesn't have doubt about Darcy anymore.

When she experiences this **epiphany** many themes are concerned

1. **Pride**
2. **Vanity**
3. **Prejudice**

4. **Love**

5. **Reason**

Elizabeth balances good and bad qualities and she comes out changed after this long self reflection. She becomes aware that her good qualities became distorted and useless when they are influenced by vanity, mistrust and prejudice.

Now Elizabeth is humiliated, because she understands that she has made a mistake, but she is undergoing a process of self realization which makes her suffer, but which will make her a better person.

In the end the two characters will come together