

not sport with your impatience, by reading what he says on that point. What relates to yourself, is as follows: ‘Having thus offered you the sincere congratulations of Mrs. Collins and myself on this happy event, let me now add a short hint on the subject of another; of which we have been advertised by the same authority. Your daughter Elizabeth, it is presumed, will not long bear the name of Bennet, after her elder sister has resigned it, and the chosen partner of her fate may be reasonably looked up to as one of the most illustrious personages in this land.’

“Can you possibly guess, Lizzy, who is meant by this? ‘This young gentleman is blessed, in a peculiar way, with every thing the heart of mortal can most desire,—splendid property, noble kindred, and extensive patronage. Yet in spite of all these temptations, let me warn my cousin Elizabeth, and yourself, of what evils you may incur by a precipitate closure with this gentleman’s proposals, which, of course, you will be inclined to take immediate advantage of.’

“Have you any idea, Lizzy, who this gentleman is? But now it comes out:

“‘My motive for cautioning you is as follows. We have reason to imagine that his aunt, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, does not look on the match with a friendly eye.’

“*Mr. Darcy*, you see, is the man! Now, Lizzy, I think I *have* surprised you. Could he, or the Lucases, have pitched on any man within the circle of our acquaintance, whose name would have given the lie more effectually to what they related? *Mr. Darcy*, who never looks at any woman but to see a blemish, and who probably never looked at *you* in his life! It is admirable!”

Elizabeth tried to join in her father’s pleasantry, but could only force one most reluctant smile. Never had his wit been directed in a manner so little agreeable to her.

“Are you not diverted?”

“Oh! yes. Pray read on.”

“‘After mentioning the likelihood of this marriage to her ladyship last night, she immediately, with her usual condescension, expressed what she felt on the occasion; when it became apparent, that on the score of some family objections on the part of my cousin, she would never give her consent to what she termed so disgraceful a match. I thought it my duty to give the speediest intelligence of this to my cousin, that she and her noble admirer may be aware of what they are about, and not run hastily into a marriage which has not been properly sanctioned.’ *Mr. Collins* moreover adds, ‘I am truly rejoiced that my cousin *Lydia*’s sad business has been so well hushed up, and am only concerned that