

converse of that young lady, whose bright eyes are also upbraiding me.”

The latter part of this address was scarcely heard by Darcy; but Sir William’s allusion to his friend seemed to strike him forcibly, and his eyes were directed with a very serious expression towards Bingley and Jane, who were dancing together. Recovering himself, however, shortly, he turned to his partner, and said, “Sir William’s interruption has made me forget what we were talking of.”

“I do not think we were speaking at all. Sir William could not have interrupted two people in the room who had less to say for themselves. We have tried two or three subjects already without success, and what we are to talk of next I cannot imagine.”

“What think you of books?” said he, smiling.

“Books—oh! no. I am sure we never read the same, or not with the same feelings.”

“I am sorry you think so; but if that be the case, there can at least be no want of subject. We may compare our different opinions.”

“No—I cannot talk of books in a ball-room; my head is always full of something else.”

“The *present* always occupies you in such scenes—does it?” said he, with a look of doubt.

“Yes, always,” she replied, without knowing what she said, for her thoughts had wandered far from the subject, as soon afterwards appeared by her suddenly exclaiming, “I remember hearing you once say, Mr. Darcy, that you hardly ever forgave, that your resentment once created was unappeasable. You are very cautious, I suppose, as to its *being created*?”

“I am,” said he, with a firm voice.

“And never allow yourself to be blinded by prejudice?”

“I hope not.”

“It is particularly incumbent on those who never change their opinion, to be secure of judging properly at first.”

“May I ask to what these questions tend?”

“Merely to the illustration of *your* character,” said she, endeavouring to shake off her gravity. “I am trying to make it out.”

“And what is your success?”

She shook her head. “I do not get on at all. I hear such different accounts of you as puzzle me exceedingly.”