

though with the greatest patience in the world, which is always the way with her, for she has, without exception, the sweetest temper I have ever met with. I often tell my other girls they are nothing to *her*. You have a sweet room here, Mr. Bingley, and a charming prospect over the gravel walk. I do not know a place in the country that is equal to Netherfield. You will not think of quitting it in a hurry, I hope, though you have but a short lease.”

“Whatever I do is done in a hurry,” replied he; “and therefore if I should resolve to quit Netherfield, I should probably be off in five minutes. At present, however, I consider myself as quite fixed here.”

“That is exactly what I should have supposed of you,” said Elizabeth.

“You begin to comprehend me, do you?” cried he, turning towards her.

“Oh! yes—I understand you perfectly.”

“I wish I might take this for a compliment; but to be so easily seen through I am afraid is pitiful.”

“That is as it happens. It does not follow that a deep, intricate character is more or less estimable than such a one as yours.”

“Lizzy,” cried her mother, “remember where you are, and do not run on in the wild manner that you are suffered to do at home.”

“I did not know before,” continued Bingley immediately, “that you were a studier of character. It must be an amusing study.”

“Yes, but intricate characters are the *most* amusing. They have at least that advantage.”

“The country,” said Darcy, “can in general supply but a few subjects for such a study. In a country neighbourhood you move in a very confined and unvarying society.”

“But people themselves alter so much, that there is something new to be observed in them for ever.”

“Yes, indeed,” cried Mrs. Bennet, offended by his manner of mentioning a country neighbourhood. “I assure you there is quite as much of *that* going on in the country as in town.”

Everybody was surprised, and Darcy, after looking at her for a moment, turned silently away. Mrs. Bennet, who fancied she had gained a complete victory over him, continued her triumph.

“I cannot see that London has any great advantage over the country, for my part, except the shops and public places. The country is a vast deal pleasanter, is it not, Mr. Bingley?”