

Scene 7

Darcy and Bingley settle in the room.

Darcy reads.

Silence.

BINGLEY. Darcy.

DARCY. Yes, Mr. Bingley.

BINGLEY. Ought we not be presently occupied in some useful manner?

DARCY. I don't think so.

BINGLEY. Are we not meant to be...?

DARCY. What?

BINGLEY. I don't know. Hunting?

DARCY. No.

BINGLEY. At business?

DARCY. It is a holiday.

BINGLEY. Walking...briskly?

Darcy looks at him.

DARCY. We are gentlemen, Bingley. We sit. And we wait for the excitement to come to us.

At that moment, Arthur rushes into the room in an agitated state.

ARTHUR. Darcy, I think...yes, I think I need your help. I find myself in a state of some kind of upheaval and I fear I need some guidance. Of a masculine order.

DARCY. I will endeavor to help you, sir, though I know not if I belong in that religion.

BINGLEY. What do you need, de Bourgh? Is something wrong?

ARTHUR. Yes. No. I don't know. I'm rather overcome with a terrible confusion, a rare and strange perplexity of which I know not precisely its origin, yet I can surmise its provenance in part.

BINGLEY. What on earth are you talking about?

DARCY. What is the matter, friend?

ARTHUR. I think. Miss Bennet. Is the matter.

BINGLEY and DARCY. Miss Bennet?

ARTHUR. Yes, I believe it is entirely her fault.

DARCY. Well, you're talking to the two gentlemen with most and completest knowledge of your particular kind of affliction.

BINGLEY. Yes, we have suffered much as you are now. And let me wish you a smoother passage than we had to our Miss Bennets.

ARTHUR. I don't understand.

BINGLEY. Well. You do find Miss Bennet...to your liking? Is that not the source of your confusion?

DARCY. Yes I thought you were telling us you admired her?

ARTHUR. No. Yes. I don't know. I find myself worried for her.

BINGLEY. Worried?

ARTHUR. Yes, I worry that she will think me unkind or ungrateful. I worry that she is unhappy or lonely, or does she prefer to be alone and my presence is what is making her unhappy? Or perhaps that her sister's loudness is aggravating her, or that I am aggravating her, or that every time I try to speak I worry that the sound might be too loud when in fact I think there is no sound at all. Is she well? Is she well right now? How am I to know?! You see? It's worrying.

DARCY. De Bourgh, I do believe that what you call worry is, for most people, called love.

BINGLEY. I would have to agree. Definitely love.

ARTHUR. Is that what it is? It's a rather uncomfortable feeling, isn't it?

DARCY. Deeply—

BINGLEY. I rather like it actually.

DARCY. —yet it can resolve rather nicely if you let it.

BINGLEY. Once you get beyond the difficulties of courting.

ARTHUR. Wait now, gentlemen, wait. Suppose I might, in fact, admire Miss Bennet in some extreme. How do I...proceed? We

have only just met; do I not need years or decades to study and then formalize this feeling?

BINGLEY. Decades? Good lord, man. I knew the moment I saw Mrs. Bingley that I loved her.

ARTHUR. And you also knew right away?

DARCY. Oh, there were early stumbles, but yes, rather quickly.

ARTHUR. And. How does one confirm that the something one might feel is also felt by such a someone else?

DARCY. On occasion, it is remarkably hard to tell.

BINGLEY. I wish I'd just spoken plainly. "I find you charming Miss Bennet. Do you reciprocate?" That would've sped the whole thing along, don't you think?

DARCY. While it caused somewhat the opposite reaction I was hoping for when I was first honest with Mrs. Darcy, after some clearing up of misunderstanding, all was resolved. I find that, if you are worried there might be any confusion, a letter can be useful in clearly expressing your feelings.

BINGLEY. Or you could ask her sisters.

Arthur begins to take notes.

DARCY. Write her. Write her the truth of your affection for her, of your interest in her interests. Write her of...hope. Hope that you may one day meet as partners. Say the very words you long to hear from her.

BINGLEY. I would still recommend asking her sisters.

DARCY. De Bourgh, I am likewise impressed with Miss Mary Bennet, and what I know of her is a young woman of growing confidence and clarity of mind. I see potential in this match. Have faith in yourself and be honest.

BINGLEY. And ask her sisters.

ARTHUR. This is an unexplored area of which I know so little.

BINGLEY. You know how you feel and you are of excellent skill when it comes to spelling. That is all you need at present.

DARCY. Good evening, de Bourgh.

ARTHUR. Yes. Good evening, gentlemen. And thank you.

Arthur starts to go, pondering what he would write, when—

BINGLEY. One thought, de Bourgh. Ladies tend to like mention of their fine gait. And fine hair. And laugh. Oh, and the kindness of their eyes. Or the sparkle of their eyes. Some such about their eyes. Put that in as well. Just a thought. Good luck.

Arthur is now overwhelmed and nervous and leaves them.

Again, a silence descends over the room.

Bingley sits. Mr. Darcy returns to reading.

After a moment...

Well. That was exciting. Perhaps an impending marriage?

DARCY. Perhaps indeed. The family grows and just when you and Mrs. Bingley are adding to our ranks as well. Any day now.

Bingley is obviously a bit nervous at being a father.

BINGLEY. Any day. The anticipation consumes me entirely.

DARCY. Understandably. Have you decided what sort of father you plan to be?

BINGLEY. The good sort, I hope. Although how does one come to decide such a thing? Do you know what sort of father you'd be?

DARCY. The good sort, though I'm not sure my decision matters much. So little is actually in the rearing when it comes down to it.

BINGLEY. How do you mean?

DARCY. Well, look at the Miss Bennets, for example. Same mother and father throughout, same house, same upbringing. And yet each is so different. Their father likely had uneven influence if any at all. No, Bingley, though I have decided to be the good sort of father, the best I can do is pray.

BINGLEY. If you don't mind, can we go back to just sitting?

DARCY. As you wish.

Darcy goes back to reading, and Bingley just stares, consumed with thoughts of a baby in the house. Darcy notices Bingley's distress and offers him brandy as they exit.