

JANE AUSTEN

PRIDE AND PREJUDICE



ЭКСКЛЮЗИВНОЕ ЧТЕНИЕ
НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ

ДЖЕЙН ОСТИН

ГОРДОСТЬ И ПРЕДУБЕЖДЕНИЕ



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Джейн Остин

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Содержание

Chapter 1	6
Chapter 2	7
Chapter 3	8
Chapter 4	11
Chapter 5	12
Chapter 6	13
Chapter 7	14
Chapter 8	17
Chapter 9	19
Chapter 10	21
Chapter 11	22
Chapter 12	24
Chapter 13	25
Chapter 14	26
Chapter 15	27
Chapter 16	28
Chapter 17	30
Chapter 18	31
Chapter 19	33
Chapter 20	34
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	35

Джейн Остин / Jane Austen

Гордость и предубеждение / Pride and Prejudice

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Chapter 1

Everybody knows that a single man **in possession of a good fortune**¹ must look for a wife.

When such a man enters a neighbourhood, the surrounding families begin to think, that he is considered the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

“But it is,” returned she.

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

“Do you not want to know who has taken it?” cried his wife impatiently.

“What is his name?”

“Bingley.”

“Is he married or single?”

“Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!”

“How so? How can it affect them?”

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” replied his wife, “how can you be so tiresome! You must know that **I am thinking of his marrying one of them**.² When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to think about their future. My dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood. Consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them.”

“My daughters have nothing to recommend them,” replied he; “they are all silly and ignorant like other girls.”

Mr. Bennet was a mixture of quick mind, sarcastic humour, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develop. She was a **woman of mean understanding**,³ little information, and **uncertain temper**.⁴ When she was discontented, she treated herself nervous. The business of her life was **to get her daughters married**;⁵ she adored visiting and news.

¹ **in possession of a good fortune** – располагающий средствами

² **I am thinking of his marrying one of them** – я думаю о его женитьбе на одной из них

³ **woman of mean understanding** – невежественная женщина

⁴ **uncertain temper** – неустойчивое настроение

⁵ **to get her daughters married** – выдать своих дочерей замуж

Chapter 2

Mr. Bennet was among the earliest of those who told Mr. Bingley about his coming. Observing his second daughter decorated a hat, he suddenly told her:

“I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy.”

“We will never know *what* Mr. Bingley likes,” said her mother, “if we do not visit him.”

“And what will you say, Mary? You are a young **lady of deep reflection**,⁶ I know, and read great books and make extracts.”

Mary wished to say something sensible, but did not know how.

“While Mary is adjusting her ideas,” he continued, “let us return to Mr. Bingley. I have actually paid the visit, so we cannot escape the acquaintance now.”

The astonishment of the ladies was just what he wished; Mrs. Bennet began to declare that it was what she had expected all the time.

“How good it was of you, my dear Mr. Bennet! I was sure you loved your girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am!”

“Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you want,” said Mr. Bennet; and, as he spoke, he left the room.

“What an excellent father you have, girls!” said she, when the door was shut. Lydia, my love, though you *are* the youngest, I can say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball.”

“Oh!” said Lydia stoutly, “I am not afraid; I *am* the youngest, but I’m the tallest.”

⁶ **lady of deep reflection** – рассудительная девушка

Chapter 3

Mr. Bingley was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! **To be fond of dancing**⁷ was a certain step towards falling in love.

“If I can see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield,” said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, “and all the others equally well married, **I shall have nothing to wish for.**”⁸

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet’s visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had hoped to see young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father.

Mr. Bingley was going to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a number of ladies, but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing, that instead of twelve he brought only six with him from London – his five sisters and a cousin. And when the party entered the assembly room it consisted of only five altogether – Mr. Bingley, his two sisters, the husband of the eldest, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was good-looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant look, and easy, unaffected manners. His sisters were fine women. His brother-in-law merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien, and the report of his having **ten thousand a year.**⁹ The gentlemen declared him to be a real man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and **he was looked at**¹⁰ with great admiration for about half the evening. But his manners made his popularity go down. He was very proud and he was above his company.

⁷ **to be fond of dancing** – любить танцы

⁸ **I shall have nothing to wish for** – мне бы тогда было больше нечего желать

⁹ **ten thousand a year** – десять тысяч годового дохода

¹⁰ **he was looked at** – на него смотрели



Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the people in the room; he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, and was angry that the ball closed so early. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Miss Bingley, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room. His **character was decided**.¹¹ He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet.

Elizabeth Bennet was sitting by the wall. Mr. Darcy was standing near enough for her to hear a conversation between him and Mr. Bingley, who came from the dance for a few minutes, to force his friend to join it.

“Come, Darcy,” said he, “Dance! I hate to see you standing here in this stupid manner.”

“I certainly shall not. There is no woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to dance with.”

“Oh,” cried Mr. Bingley, “**Upon my honour**,¹² I never met so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening.”

¹¹ **character was decided** – характер все осудили

¹² **upon my honour** – клянусь честью

“*You* are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room,” said Mr. Darcy, looking at the eldest Miss Bennet.

“Yes, she is the most beautiful person I ever met! But there is one of her sisters sitting just behind you, who is very pretty, and very agreeable.”

“Which do you mean?” and turning round he looked for a moment at Elizabeth. He withdrew his eyes and coldly said: “She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to bother *me*. My friend, you are just wasting your time with me.”

Mr. Bingley followed his advice. Mr. Darcy walked out; and Elizabeth did not have cordial feelings toward him.

But in general the evening went pleasantly to the whole family. Mrs. Bennet was very glad. Mr. Bingley had danced with her eldest daughter twice. Jane was happy, too. **Elizabeth felt Jane’s pleasure.**¹³ Catherine and Lydia had been lucky enough never to be without partners. They returned, therefore, in good spirits to Longbourn, the village where they lived.

“Oh! my dear Mr. Bennet,” said Mrs. Bennet as she entered the room, “we have had a most delightful evening, a most excellent ball. I wish you had been there. Everybody said how well Jane looked; and Mr. Bingley danced with her twice! Only think of *that*, my dear; he actually danced with her twice! and she was the only creature in the room that he asked a second time. He is so excessively handsome! And his sisters are charming women. I never in my life saw anything more elegant than their dresses.”

Then she told about the shocking rudeness of Mr. Darcy.

“But I can assure you,” she added, “that Lizzy did not lose much; for he is a most disagreeable, horrid man. He walked here, and he walked there, I quite detest this man.”

¹³ **Elizabeth felt Jane’s pleasure.** – Элизабет радовалась за Джейн.

Chapter 4

When Jane and Elizabeth were alone, Jane expressed to her sister just how very much she admired Mr. Bingley.

“He is just what a young man ought to be,” said she, “sensible, good-humoured, lively; and I’ve never seen such happy manners!”

“He is also handsome,” replied Elizabeth, “His character is thereby complete.”

“I was very much surprised when he asked me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a compliment.”

“Did not you? What could be more natural than his asking you again? He noticed that you were the prettiest girl in the room. Well, he certainly is very agreeable. **You have liked many a stupider person.**¹⁴”

“Dear Lizzy!”

“Oh! you like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a person in your life.”

“I always speak what I think.”

“I know; and it is *that* which makes the wonder. With *your* good sense, to be so honestly blind to the follies and nonsense of others! And so you like Mr. Bingley’s sisters, too, do you? Their manners are not equal to his.”

“Certainly not – at first. But they are very pleasing women when you talk to them. Miss Bingley wants to live with her brother, and keep his house.”

Elizabeth listened in silence. Mr. Bingley’s sisters were in fact very fine ladies; they were rather handsome, had been educated in one of the first private seminaries in town, had a fortune of twenty thousand pounds, and thought well of themselves, and meanly of others. They were of a respectable family in the north of England.

Mr. Bingley inherited property to the amount of nearly a hundred thousand pounds from his father. Between him and Darcy there was a very steady friendship, in spite of great opposition of character. Darcy liked the easiness, openness, and ductility of his temper. In understanding, Darcy was the superior. Bingley was not stupid, but Darcy was cleverer.

The manner in which they spoke of the assembly was sufficiently characteristic. Bingley had never met with more pleasant people or prettier girls in his life; everybody had been most kind and attentive to him; there had been no formality, no stiffness; he had soon felt acquainted with all everybody. And, **as to Miss Bennet**,¹⁵ he could not imagine an angel more beautiful. Darcy, on the contrary, had seen a collection of people in whom there was little beauty and no fashion, for none of whom he had felt the smallest interest, and from none received either attention or pleasure. Miss Bennet was pretty, but she smiled too much.

¹⁴ **You have liked many a stupider person.** – Тебе не раз нравился кое-кто и поглупее.

¹⁵ **as to Miss Bennet** – что касается мисс Беннет

Chapter 5

Within a short walk of Longbourn lived a family with whom the Bennets were particularly intimate. Lady Lucas was a very good kind of woman, not too clever to be a valuable neighbour to Mrs. Bennet. Her eldest daughter, a sensible, intelligent young woman, about twenty-seven, was Elizabeth's best friend.

Miss Lucas and Miss Bennet met to talk about the ball, it was absolutely necessary.

"*You* began the evening well, Charlotte," said Mrs. Bennet to Miss Lucas. "*You* were Mr. Bingley's first choice."

"Yes; but he seemed to like his second better."

"Oh! you mean Jane, I suppose, because he danced with her twice."

"But Darcy!" said Charlotte. "He is terrible."

"Miss Bingley told me," said Jane, "that he never speaks much, unless among his intimate acquaintances. With *them* he is agreeable."

"I wish he had danced with Eliza," said Miss Lucas.

"Another time, Lizzy," said her mother, "I would not dance with *him*, if I were you."

"I believe, ma'am, I may promise you *never* to dance with him."

"His pride," said Miss Lucas, "does not offend *me* so much as pride often does, because there is an excuse for it. We cannot wonder that a young man, with family, fortune, everything, should think highly of himself. He has a *right* to be proud."

"Pride," observed Mary, "is a very common failing, I believe. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us."

"If I were as rich as Mr. Darcy," cried a young Lucas, who came with his sisters, "I should not care how proud I was. I would keep **a pack of dogs**,¹⁶ and drink a bottle of wine a day."

¹⁶ **a pack of dogs** – свора собак

Chapter 6

The ladies of Longbourn soon visited Netherfield. The visit was soon returned. Miss Bennet's pleasing manners made good impressions; and though the mother **was found to be intolerable**,¹⁷ **and the younger sisters not worth speaking to**,¹⁸ the two eldest were very nice and well-behaved. By Jane, this attention was received with the greatest pleasure, but could not like them.

Occupied in observing Mr. Bingley's attentions to her sister, Elizabeth was far from suspecting that she was herself becoming an object of some interest in the eyes of his friend. Mr. Darcy was caught by her playfulness. But Elizabeth did not know anything. To her he was only the man who **had not thought her handsome enough to dance with**.¹⁹

He began to wish to know more of her. Once at Sir William Lucas's a large party was assembled.

Sir William began: "What a charming amusement for young people the balls are, Mr. Darcy! There is nothing like dancing after all."

"Certainly, sir; every savage can dance."

Sir William only smiled. "Your friend performs delightfully," he continued after a pause; "Do you often dance?"

"Never, sir."

He paused in hopes of an answer; and Elizabeth at that instant moved towards them. Sir William called out to her:

"My dear Miss Eliza, why are you not dancing? Mr. Darcy, you must allow me to present this young lady to you as a very desirable partner. You cannot refuse to dance, I am sure when so much beauty is before you." And, taking her hand, he gave it to Mr. Darcy. But Elizabeth instantly drew back, and said to Sir William:

"Indeed, sir, I have not the least intention of dancing."

Mr. Darcy requested to be allowed the honour of her hand, but in vain. Elizabeth was determined.

"You dance so well, Miss Eliza, that it is cruel to deny me the happiness of seeing you."

"**Mr. Darcy is all politeness**,²⁰" said Elizabeth, smiling. She looked archly, and turned away.

¹⁷ **was found to be intolerable** – была признана невыносимой

¹⁸ **and the younger sisters not worth speaking to** – а о младших сестрах не стоило и говорить

¹⁹ **had not thought her handsome enough to dance with** – не считал ее достаточно красивой, чтобы с ней танцевать

²⁰ **Mr. Darcy is all politeness**. – Мистер Дарси – сама любезность.

Chapter 7

Mr. Bennet's property consisted almost entirely in an estate of two thousand a year, which, unfortunately for his daughters, **was entailed, in default of heirs male, on a distant relation.**²¹

The village of Longbourn was only one mile from Meryton; a most convenient distance for the young ladies, who were usually going three or four times a week, to pay their duty to their aunt. The two youngest of the family, Catherine and Lydia, went there very often. Meryton was the headquarters for the officers.

Young sisters could talk of nothing but officers; and Mr. Bingley's large fortune was worthless in their eyes when opposed to the officer's coat.

After listening one morning to their talking, Mr. Bennet observed:

"You must be two of the silliest girls in the country. I have suspected it some time, but I am now convinced."

Catherine was disconcerted, and made no answer; but Lydia, with perfect indifference, continued to express her admiration of Captain Carter, who was going the next morning to London.

"My dear Mrs. Bennet, you must not expect such girls to have the sense of their father and mother," said Mr. Bennet.

"When they get to our age, I dare say they will not think about officers any more. I remember the time when I liked a red coat myself very well – and, indeed, if a smart young colonel, with five or six thousand a year, should want one of my girls I shall not say "no" to him."

Suddenly a letter for Miss Bennet arrived; it came from Netherfield, and the servant waited for an answer. Mrs. Bennet's eyes sparkled with pleasure,

"Well, Jane, who is it from? What is it about? What does he say? Well, Jane, make haste and tell us; make haste, my love."

"It is from Miss Bingley," said Jane, and then read it aloud.

"MY DEAR FRIEND, —

"If you are not so kind to dine today with Louisa and me, we will hate each other, because a whole day between two women can never end without a quarrel. Come as soon as you can. My brother and the gentlemen will dine with the officers.

Yours,

"Caroline Bingley"

"With the officers!" cried Lydia.

"Dining out," said Mrs. Bennet, "that is very unlucky."

"Can I have the carriage?" said Jane.

"No, my dear, **you had better go on horseback,**²² because it seems likely to rain; and then you must stay all night."

So Jane was therefore obliged to go on horseback, and her mother attended her to the door. Soon it rained hard. Her sisters were worried about her, but her mother was delighted. The rain continued the whole evening; Jane certainly could not come back.

"This was a lucky idea of mine, indeed!" said Mrs. Bennet. But the next morning a servant from Netherfield brought the following note for Elizabeth:

"My dearest Lizzy, —

²¹ **was entailed, in default of heirs male on a distant relation** – должно было перейти – при отсутствии наследника мужского пола – к дальнему родственнику

²² **you had better go on horseback** – тебе лучше поехать верхом

“I find myself very unwell this morning, which, I suppose, is due to my getting wet through yesterday. My kind friends invited me to stay here. The doctor will come in a while, so do not worry. I have a sore throat and headache.

– Your Jane.”

“Well, my dear,” said Mr. Bennet, when Elizabeth had read the note aloud, “if your daughter should die, it would be a comfort to know that it was all in pursuit of Mr. Bingley.”

“Oh! I am not afraid, people do not die of colds. **She will be taken good care of.**²³ As long as she stays there, it is all very well. I would go and see her if I could have the carriage.”

Elizabeth decided to go with her, but she could not ride the horse, so she decided to walk. She declared her resolution.

“How can you be so silly,” cried her mother, “in all this dirt!”

“But I shall see Jane – that is all I want. The distance is nothing when one has a motive; only three miles. I shall be back by dinner.”

Elizabeth’s appearance made a great surprise. She was walking three miles so early, in such dirty weather. It was incredible to everybody. She was received, however, very politely by them; and in their brother’s manners there was something better than politeness; there was good humour and kindness. Mr. Darcy said very little, he was thinking of her beauty.

²³ **She will be taken good care of.** – О ней хорошо позаботятся.



Miss Bennet was not well enough to leave her room. Elizabeth was glad to see her immediately.

When breakfast was over Mr. Bingley's sisters came; and Elizabeth began to like them, when she saw how much affection they showed for Jane. The doctor came, and examined his patient. He that she had caught a violent cold; advised her to return to bed. The advice was followed readily. Elizabeth did not quit her room for a moment.

Chapter 8

At five o'clock the two ladies retired to dress, and at half-past six Elizabeth was called to dinner.

Jane was not better. The sisters, on hearing this, repeated three or four times how much they were grieved, how shocking it was to have a bad cold, and how they disliked being ill themselves.

When dinner was over, she returned directly to Jane, and Miss Bingley began to abuse Elizabeth as soon as she was out of the room. Her manners were considered very bad indeed, a mixture of pride and impertinence; **she had no conversation**,²⁴ no style, no beauty.

"She has nothing, in short, to recommend her. Of course, she is an excellent walker. I shall never forget her appearance this morning."

"Why did *she* come here, because her sister had a cold? Her hair, so untidy!"

"I thought Miss Elizabeth Bennet looked remarkably well, Louisa," said Bingley; "when she came into the room this morning."

"To walk three miles, or four miles, or five miles, above her ankles in dirt, and alone, quite alone! What could she mean by it?"

A short pause followed this speech, and the sisters began again:

"I like Miss Jane Bennet very much, she is really a very sweet girl. But with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance for her in the life."

To this speech Bingley made no answer.

Jane was still very poorly, and Elizabeth would not quit her at all, till late in the evening. On entering the drawing-room she found the whole party playing cards, and was immediately invited to join them. But she declined it, and said she would read a book instead.

"Do you prefer reading to cards? That is very strange."

"Miss Eliza Bennet," said Miss Bingley, "despises cards. She is a great reader."

"Not at all, I am *not* a great reader," cried Elizabeth; "and I have pleasure in many things."

Elizabeth walked towards the table where a few books were lying. "I am astonished," said Miss Bingley, "that my father has such a small collection of books. What a delightful library you have, Mr. Darcy!"

"It is good," he replied, "I am always buying books."

"It is amazing to me," said Bingley, "how young ladies can have patience to be so educated as they all are."

"All young ladies educated! My dear Charles, what do you mean?"

"Yes, all of them, I think. They all paint pictures, and net purses. I scarcely know anyone who cannot do all this."

"I am very far from agreeing with you in your estimation of ladies in general," said Darcy, "I cannot name five women, that are really educated."

"Nor I, I am sure," said Miss Bingley.

"Then," observed Elizabeth, "in your opinion, who is an educated woman?"

"Oh! No one can be really educated who does not know necessary things. A woman must know music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess **a certain something in her air**²⁵ and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions."

"All this she must possess," added Darcy, "and the most important thing, she must read a lot."

The conversation was over, and Elizabeth soon afterwards left the room.

²⁴ **she had no conversation** – у нее не было вкуса

²⁵ **a certain something in her air** – определенное своеобразие во внешности

“Elizabeth Bennet,” said Miss Bingley, when the door was closed, “is one of those young ladies who try recommend themselves to the men; and with many men it succeeds.”

Elizabeth joined them again only to say that her sister was worse, and that she could not leave her. Bingley was quite uncomfortable; his sisters declared that they were miserable.

Chapter 9

Elizabeth passed the night in her sister's room. Suddenly Mrs. Bennet, accompanied by her two youngest girls, came to Netherfield soon after the family breakfast.

If she found Jane in a danger, Mrs. Bennet would have been very miserable. But she was satisfied that her illness was not dangerous. She would not listen, therefore, to her daughter's proposal of coming home. After sitting a little while with Jane, the mother and three daughters came into the breakfast parlour. Bingley met them with hopes that Mrs. Bennet had not found Miss Bennet worse than she expected.

"Indeed I have, sir," was her answer. "She is too ill to be moved. We must use your kindness a little longer. You have a sweet room here, Mr. Bingley. I do not know a place in the country that is equal to Netherfield. You will not think of quitting it in a hurry."

"Whatever I do is done in a hurry," replied he; "But at present, however, **I consider myself as quite fixed here.**²⁶"

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

"You begin to comprehend me, do you?" cried he.

"Oh! yes – I understand you perfectly."

"Lizzy," cried her mother, "remember where you are, and do not continue in the wild manner that you use at home."

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

"The country," said Darcy, "can in general supply a few subjects for such a study."

"Yes, indeed," cried Mrs. Bennet, offended by his manner of mentioning a country neighbourhood. "I cannot see that London has any great advantage over the country, except the shops and public places. The country is far more pleasant, is it not, Mr. Bingley?"

"When I am in the country," he replied, "I never wish to leave it; and when I am in town it is the same. They have each their advantages."

"That is because you have the right disposition. But that gentleman," looking at Darcy, "seemed to think the country was nothing at all."

"Indeed, Mamma, you are mistaken," said Elizabeth, blushing for her mother. "You quite mistook Mr. Darcy. He only meant that there was not such a variety of people to be met with in the country as in the town."

"Certainly, my dear, but we dine with twenty-four families."

Elizabeth asked her mother if Charlotte Lucas had been at Longbourn.

"Yes, she came yesterday with her father. What an agreeable man Sir William is, Mr. Bingley, is not he? He has always something to say to everybody."

"Did Charlotte dine with you?"

"No, she went home. The Lucases are a very good sort of girls, I assure you. It is a pity they are not handsome! Not that I think Charlotte so *very* plain – she is our friend."

"She seems a very pleasant young woman."

"Oh! dear, yes; but you must agree she is very plain. Lady Lucas herself has often said so, and envied **me Jane's beauty.**²⁷ I do not like to boast of my own child, but to be sure, Jane – one does not often see anybody better looking. It is what everybody says. When she was only fifteen, there was a man so much in love with her that my sister-in-law was sure he would make her an

²⁶ **I consider myself as quite fixed here.** – Мне кажется, что я устроился здесь основательно.

²⁷ **envied me Jane's beauty** – завидовала красоте моей Джейн

offer. But, however, he did not. Perhaps he thought she was too young. However, **he wrote some verses on her**,²⁸ and very pretty they were.”

“I wonder,” said Elizabeth impatiently, “who first discovered the poetry was driving away love!”

“I always thought that the poetry was the *food* of love,” said Darcy.

“Maybe. Everything nourishes what is strong already. But if it is weak, one good sonnet will kill it.”

Darcy only smiled; Mrs. Bennet began to thank Mr. Bingley for his kindness to Jane, with an apology for troubling him also with Lizzy. Mr. Bingley was very civil in his answer, and forced his younger sister to be civil also, and say what the occasion required.

Lydia was a stout girl of fifteen, with a fine complexion and good-humoured countenance; a favourite with her mother, whose affection had brought her into public at an early age. She had a sort of natural self-consequence. She reminded Mr. Bingley about the ball that he promised to organise. And she added, that it would be the most shameful thing in the world if he did not keep his promise. His answer was delightful to their mother’s ear:

“I am perfectly ready, I assure you, to keep my promise, when your sister is recovered. But you would not wish to dance when she is ill.”

Lydia declared herself satisfied. “Oh! yes – it would be much better to wait till Jane was well, and by that time most likely Captain Carter would be at Meryton again.”

Mrs. Bennet and her daughters then left, and Elizabeth returned instantly to Jane.

²⁸ **he wrote some verses on her** – он посвятил ей стихи

Chapter 10

Mrs. Hurst and Miss Bingley had spent some hours of the morning with Jane, who continued, though slowly, to recover; and in the evening Elizabeth joined their party in the drawing-room. Mr. Darcy was writing, and Miss Bingley, seated near him. Mr. Hurst and Mr. Bingley were playing cards, and Mrs. Hurst was observing their game.

Elizabeth took up some needlework, and was sufficiently amused looking what happened between Darcy and his companion.

“How delighted Miss Darcy will be to receive such a letter!”

He made no answer.

“You write uncommonly fast.”

“You are mistaken. I write rather slowly.”

“Please tell your sister that I want to see her.”

“I have already told her, **by your desire**.²⁹”

“I am afraid you do not like your pen. Let me mend it for you. I mend pens remarkably well.”

“Thank you – but I always mend myself.”

“Tell your sister I am delighted to hear her playing the harp. Do you always write such charming long letters to her, Mr. Darcy?”

“They are generally long; but whether always charming **it is not for me to determine**.³⁰”

“It is a rule with me, that a person who can write a long letter with ease, cannot write badly.”

“My style of writing is very different from yours. And what do you think, dear Elizabeth?”

“I think,” said Elizabeth, “Mr. Darcy must finish his letter.”

Mr. Darcy took her advice, and did finish his letter.

When that business was over, he offered young ladies to play some music.

Mrs. Hurst sang with her sister, and while they were thus employed, Elizabeth noticed, how frequently Mr. Darcy’s eyes were fixed on her. She hardly knew how to suppose that she could be an object of admiration to such a great man; and yet that he should look at her because he disliked her, was still more strange. She could only imagine, however, at last that she drew his attention because there was something wrong with her, according to his ideas of right, than in any other person present.

After playing some Italian songs, Mr. Darcy, coming to Elizabeth, said to her:

“Do not you feel like dancing, Miss Bennet?”

She smiled, but made no answer. He repeated the question, with some surprise at her silence.

“Oh!” said she, “I heard you before, but I could not immediately decide what to say in reply. You wanted me, I know, to say ‘Yes,’ that you might have the pleasure of despising my taste. But I say ‘no’, I do not want to dance at all – and now despise me if you dare.”

“Indeed I do not dare.”

Elizabeth was amazed at his gallantry; but there was a mixture of sweetness. Darcy had never been so bewitched by any woman as he was by her.

Miss Bingley saw, or suspected enough to be jealous; and her great anxiety for the recovery of her dear friend Jane was sincere.

²⁹ **by your desire** – по вашему желанию

³⁰ **it is not for me to determine** – не мне судить

Chapter 11

When the ladies removed after dinner, Elizabeth ran up to her sister, and seeing her well attended her into the drawing-room, where she was welcomed by her two friends with pleasure. And Elizabeth had never seen them so agreeable as they were during the hour which passed before the gentlemen appeared. They could describe an entertainment with accuracy, relate an anecdote with humour, and laugh at their acquaintance with spirit.

But when the gentlemen entered, Jane was no longer the first object; Miss Bingley's eyes were instantly turned toward Darcy. He addressed himself to Miss Bennet, with a polite congratulation. Elizabeth, in the opposite corner, saw it all with great delight.

When tea was over, Mr. Hurst reminded his sister-in-law of the card-table – but in vain. Mr. Darcy did not want to play cards. Mr. Hurst had therefore nothing to do, but to stretch himself on one of the sofas and go to sleep. Darcy took up a book; Miss Bingley did the same.

Miss Bingley yawned and said, “How pleasant it is to spend an evening in this way! I declare after all there is no enjoyment like reading! When I have a house of my own, I shall be miserable if I have not an excellent library.”

No one made any reply. She then yawned again, threw aside her book. Her brother was talking to Miss Bennet about the ball, so she turned suddenly towards him and said:

“Charles, are you really serious about a dance at Netherfield? I think there is somebody among us to whom a ball would be rather a punishment than a pleasure.”

“If you mean Darcy,” cried her brother, “he may go to bed, if he chooses, before it begins – but as for the ball, it is quite a settled thing.”

“I should like balls infinitely better,” she replied, “**if they were carried on**³¹ in a different manner.” Turning to Elizabeth, she said:

“Miss Eliza Bennet, let me persuade you to follow my example, and **take a turn about the room**.³²”

Elizabeth was surprised, but agreed to it immediately. Mr. Darcy looked up. He was invited to join their party, but he declined it.

“You have secret affairs to discuss,” said he, “or you know well that your figures appear better in walking. If the first, I would stand in your way, and if the second, I can admire you much better as I sit by the fire.”

“Oh! shocking!” cried Miss Bingley. “I never heard anything so abominable. How shall we punish him for such a speech?”

“Nothing so easy,” said Elizabeth. “Tease him – laugh at him.”

“But tease calmness of manner and presence of mind! No, no.”

“Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at!” cried Elizabeth. “I dearly love a laugh.”

“Miss Bingley,” said he, “has given me more credit than can be. The wisest and the best of men may be rendered ridiculous by a person whose first object in life is a joke.”

“Certainly,” replied Elizabeth – “there are such people, but I hope I am not one of *them*. I hope I never ridicule what is wise and good. Follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, *do* divert me, and I laugh at them whenever I can. Such as vanity and pride.”

“Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride – where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation.”

Elizabeth turned away to hide a smile.

³¹ **if they were carried on** – если бы они проводились

³² **take a turn about the room** – немного пройтись по комнате

“Your examination of Mr. Darcy is over, I presume,” said Miss Bingley; “and what is the result?”

“I am perfectly convinced by it that Mr. Darcy has no defect.”

“No,” said Darcy, “I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper would perhaps be called resentful. My good opinion once lost, is lost forever.”

“*That* is a failing indeed!” cried Elizabeth.

“Do let us have a little music,” cried Miss Bingley, tired of a conversation in which she had no share.

The pianoforte was opened; and Darcy was not sorry for it. He began to feel the danger of paying Elizabeth too much attention.

Chapter 12

In consequence of an agreement between the sisters, Elizabeth wrote the next morning to their mother, to beg that the carriage might be sent for them in the course of the day. But Mrs. Bennet, calculated on her daughters remaining at Netherfield till the following Tuesday. Mrs. Bennet told them that they could not possibly have the carriage before Tuesday; and in her postscript it was added, that if Mr. Bingley and his sister pressed them to stay longer, **she could spare them very well.**³³

Miss Bingley was very sorry that she had proposed the delay, for her jealousy and dislike of one sister much exceeded her affection for the other.

The master of the house heard with real sorrow that they were going to leave so soon, and tried to persuade Miss Bennet that it would not be safe for her – that she was not enough recovered; but Jane was firm.

To Mr. Darcy it was welcome intelligence – Elizabeth had been at Netherfield long enough. She attracted him more than he liked – and Miss Bingley was uncivil to *her*.

On Sunday, after morning service, the separation, so agreeable to almost all, took place. Miss Bingley's civility to Elizabeth increased at last very rapidly, as well as her affection for Jane; and when they parted, she even shook hands with the former.

They were not welcomed home very cordially by their mother. Mrs. Bennet wondered at their coming. But their father, though very laconic in his expressions of pleasure, was really glad to see them; he had felt their importance in the family circle.

They found Mary, as usual, deep in the study of human nature. Catherine and Lydia had information for them of a different sort. Several of the officers had dined lately with their uncle, and Colonel Forster was going to be married.

³³ **she could spare them very well** – она смогла бы без них прекрасно обойтись

Chapter 13

"I hope, my dear," said Mr. Bennet to his wife, as they were at breakfast the next morning, "that you have ordered a good dinner today, because I expect an addition to our family party."

"Who do you mean, my dear? I know of nobody that is coming."

"The person of whom I speak is a gentleman, and a stranger."

Mrs. Bennet's eyes sparkled. "A gentleman and a stranger! It is Mr. Bingley, I am sure! Well, I am sure I shall be extremely glad to see Mr. Bingley. But – good Lord! how unlucky! There is not a bit of fish today."

"It is *not* Mr. Bingley," said her husband; "it is a person whom I never saw in my life."

This roused a general astonishment.

"About a month ago I received this letter; and about a fortnight ago I answered it. It is from my cousin, Mr. Collins, who, when I am dead, may turn you all out of this house as soon as he pleases."

"Oh! my dear," cried his wife, "I cannot hear that. Please do not talk of that odious man. Your estate should be entailed away from your own children!"

"Nothing can prevent Mr. Collins from the inheriting Longbourn," said Mr. Bennet, "but you must listen to his letter."

"No, I am sure I shall not; and I think it is very impertinent of him to write to you at all, and very hypocritical. I hate such false friends."

"This is his letter:

"Dear Sir, —

"The disagreement between yourself and my father always gave me much uneasiness. I have been so fortunate to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh, widow of Sir Lewis de Bourgh. As a clergyman, moreover, I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace in all families within the reach of my influence. I would be very much obliged to meet your nice daughters as well. If you have no objection to receive me into your house, I will be glad to visit you and your family, Monday, November 18th, by four o'clock. I remain, dear sir, with respectful compliments to your lady and daughters, your well-wisher and friend,
William Collins."

"At four o'clock, therefore, we may expect this peace-making gentleman," said Mr. Bennet, as he folded up the letter. "He seems to be a most conscientious and polite young man, upon my word."

"There is some sense in what he says about the girls. If he wants to make them any amends, I shall not be the person to discourage him."

"There is something very pompous in his style, I think," said Elizabeth. "Could he be a sensible man, sir?"

"No, my dear, I think not. There is a mixture of servility and self-importance in his letter, which promises well. I am impatient to see him."

To Catherine and Lydia, neither the letter nor its writer were in any degree interesting. As for their mother, she was preparing to see Mr. Collins with a degree of composure which astonished her husband and daughters.

Mr. Collins was punctual to his time, and was received with great politeness by the whole family. He was a tall, heavy-looking young man of twenty-five.

Chapter 14

During dinner, Mr. Bennet did not speak at all; but when the servants were gone, he thought to start a conversation with his guest. He mentioned Lady Catherine de Bourgh. Mr. Bennet could not have chosen better. Mr. Collins was eloquent in her praise. She had asked him twice to dine together, and had sent for him only the Saturday before, to make up her **pool of quadrille in the evening**.³⁴ Lady Catherine was reckoned proud by many people he knew, but *he* had never seen anything but affability in her. She had always spoken to him as she would to any other gentleman. She had even advised him to marry as soon as he could; and had once paid him a visit in his humble house.

“That is all very proper and civil, I am sure,” said Mrs. Bennet, “and I dare say she is a very agreeable woman. It is a pity that great ladies in general are not more like her. Does she live near you, sir?”

“The garden in which stands my humble abode is separated only by a lane from Rosings Park, **her ladyship’s residence**.³⁵”

“I think you said she was a widow, sir? Has she any family?”

“She has only one daughter, the heiress of Rosings, and of very extensive property.”

“Ah!” said Mrs. Bennet, shaking her head, “then she is happier than many girls. And what sort of young lady is she? Is she handsome?”

“She is a most charming young lady indeed. Lady Catherine herself says that Miss de Bourgh is very beautiful. But she is unfortunately of a sickly constitution.”

Mr. Bennet’s expectations were fully answered. His cousin was as stupid as he had hoped, and he listened to him with the keenest enjoyment.

By teatime Mr. Bennet was glad to take his guest into the drawing-room, and, when tea was over, glad to invite him to read aloud to the ladies. Mr. Collins readily agreed, and a book was brought; but when he saw it, begging pardon, he protested. He said that he never read novels. Kitty stared at him, and Lydia exclaimed. Other books were brought, and he chose **Fordyce’s Sermons**.³⁶ Lydia gaped as he opened the volume, and before he had, with very monotonous solemnity, read three pages, she interrupted him with:

“Do you know, mamma, that my uncle Phillips talks of Richard? I shall walk to Meryton tomorrow to hear more about it.”

Mr. Collins, much offended, laid aside his book, and said:

“I have often observed how little young ladies are interested by books of serious topics, though written for their benefit. It amazes me. But I will no longer importune my young cousin.”

Then turning to Mr. Bennet, he offered himself as his antagonist at backgammon. Mrs. Bennet and her daughters apologised most civilly for Lydia’s interruption, and promised that it should not occur again, if he would resume his book. But Mr. Collins seated himself at another table with Mr. Bennet, and prepared for backgammon.

³⁴ **pool of quadrille in the evening** – вечерняя игра в кадриль

³⁵ **her ladyship’s residence** – резиденция ее светлости

³⁶ **Fordyce’s Sermons** – «Проповеди Фордайса»

Chapter 15

Mr. Collins was not a sensible man. The greatest part of his life he spent under the guidance of an illiterate and miserly father. A fortunate chance had recommended him to Lady Catherine de Bourgh. And the respect which he felt for her high rank, and his veneration for her as his patroness, made him altogether a mixture of pride and obsequiousness, self-importance and humility.

Having now a good house and a very sufficient income, he intended to marry. So he meant to choose one of the daughters, if he found them as handsome and amiable. This was his plan for inheriting their father's estate; and he thought it an excellent one.

His plan did not vary. Miss Bennet's lovely face confirmed his views. The next morning, however, he was interested in Jane very much. But Mrs. Bennet said that Jane was likely to be very soon engaged.

Mr. Collins had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth – and it was soon done.

Lydia's intention of walking to Meryton was not forgotten; every sister except Mary agreed to go with her; and Mr. Collins was to attend them, at the request of Mr. Bennet, who was most anxious to get rid of him.

Time passed till they entered Meryton. The eyes of the younger girls were wandering up in the street in quest of the officers.

The attention of every lady was soon caught by a young man, whom they had never seen before, of most gentlemanlike appearance, walking with another officer on the other side of the way. The officer was Mr. Denny. Mr. Denny addressed them directly, and entreated permission to introduce his friend, Mr. Wickham, who had returned with him the day before from town. His appearance **was greatly in his favour**;³⁷ he had all the best part of beauty, a fine countenance, and a good figure. Suddenly they heard the sound of horses, and they saw Darcy and Bingley riding down the street. The two gentlemen came directly towards the girls. Mr. Darcy noticed the stranger, and Elizabeth was wondered as both changed colour, one looked white, the other red. Mr. Wickham, after a few moments, touched his hat. What could be the meaning of it? It was impossible to imagine.

In another minute, Mr. Bingley rode on with his friend.

Mr. Denny and Mr. Wickham walked with the young ladies to the door of Mr. Phillip's house, and then made their bows.

³⁷ **was greatly in his favour** – вполне располагала в его пользу

Chapter 16

The next day Elizabeth decided to ask Mr. Wickham about Mr. Darcy. They were at Mr. Phillip's house. Mr. Wickham did not play at whist, and with ready delight was he received at the other table between Elizabeth and Lydia. Elizabeth was very willing to hear the history of his acquaintance with Mr. Darcy. Her curiosity was unexpectedly relieved. Mr. Wickham began the story. He inquired how far Netherfield was from Meryton; and, after receiving her answer, asked in a hesitating manner how long Mr. Darcy had been staying there.

"About a month," said Elizabeth; and then added, "He is a man of very large property in Derbyshire, I believe."

"Yes," replied Mr. Wickham; "his estate there is a noble one. I have been connected with his family from my infancy."

Elizabeth was very surprised.

"You may well be surprised, Miss Bennet, after seeing, as you probably might, the very cold manner of our meeting yesterday. Are you much acquainted with Mr. Darcy?"

"As much as I ever wish to be," cried Elizabeth very warmly. "I have spent four days in the same house with him, and I think him very disagreeable."

"I have no right to give *my* opinion," said Wickham, "I have known him too long and too well to be a fair judge. It is impossible for *me* to be impartial. Here you are in your own family."

"**Upon my word**,³⁸ he is not at all liked in Hertfordshire. Everybody is disgusted with his pride."

"The world is blinded by his money, or frightened by his high and imposing manners," Wickham shook his head. "We are not friends, and it always gives me pain to meet him, but I have no reason for avoiding. His father, Mr. Darcy, was one of the best men that I ever met, and the truest friend I ever had. But his son disappointed the hopes and disgraced the memory of his father."

Elizabeth found the interest of the subject increase, and listened with all her heart.

"I am a disappointed man. I *must* have employment and society. A military life is not what I was intended for. The church *ought* to have been my profession – I was brought up for the church."

"Indeed!"

"Yes – old Mr. Darcy wanted to give me **the best living**³⁹ in his gift. He was my godfather, and excessively attached to me. But the living was given to somebody else."

"Good heavens!" cried Elizabeth; "but how could *that* be? How could his will be disregarded?"

"Yes, unfortunately his son decided to change Mr. Darcy's last will. I have a warm, unguarded temper, and I may have spoken my opinion *of* him, and *to* him, too freely. I can recall nothing worse. But the fact is, that we are very different sort of men, and that he hates me."

"This is quite shocking! He deserves to be publicly disgraced."

"Some time or other he *will* be – but it shall not be by *me*. Till I can forget his father, I can never defy or expose *him*."

Elizabeth honoured him for such feelings, and thought him handsomer than ever.

"But what," said she, after a pause, "can have been his motive? What can have induced him to behave so cruelly?"

"A thorough, determined dislike of me – a dislike which I cannot understand, maybe his jealousy. Had Mr. Darcy liked me less, his son might have treated me better. But his father's attachment to me irritated him, I believe."

³⁸ **upon my word** – честное слово

³⁹ **the best living** – лучший приход

“I had not thought so very ill of him.”

Elizabeth exclaimed, “To treat in such a manner the godson, the friend, the favourite of his father! Who had been his companion from childhood!”

“We were born in the same parish; the greatest part of our youth was passed together; inmates of the same house, sharing the same amusements, objects of the same parental care. *My* father was most highly esteemed by Mr. Darcy, a most intimate, confidential friend. Before my father’s death, Mr. Darcy gave him a voluntary **promise of providing for me**.⁴⁰”

“How strange!” cried Elizabeth. “How abominable!”

“It *is* wonderful,” replied Wickham, “for almost all his actions may be traced to pride; and pride had often been his best friend.”

“Can such abominable pride as his have ever done him good?”

“Yes. It has often led him to be liberal and generous, to give his money freely, to display hospitality. Family pride, and *filial* pride – for he is very proud of what his father was.”

“What sort of girl is Miss Darcy?”

He shook his head. “I wish I could call her amiable. It gives me pain to speak ill of a Darcy. But she is too much like her brother – very, very proud. As a child, she was affectionate and pleasing, and extremely fond of me; and I have devoted hours and hours to her amusement. But she is nothing to me now. She is a handsome girl, about fifteen or sixteen. Since her father’s death, her home has been London, where a lady lives with her.”

“I am astonished at his intimacy with Mr. Bingley!” said Elizabeth. “How can Mr. Bingley, who is, I really believe, truly amiable, be in friendship with such a man? How can they suit each other? Do you know Mr. Bingley?”

“Not at all.”

“He is a sweet-tempered, amiable, charming man. He cannot know what Mr. Darcy is.”

“Probably not; but Mr. Darcy can please where he chooses. His pride never deserts him; but with the rich he is liberal-minded, just, sincere, rational, honourable, and perhaps agreeable. By the way, you know of course that Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lady Anne Darcy were sisters; consequently that she is aunt to the present Mr. Darcy?”

“No, indeed, I did not. I knew nothing at all of Lady Catherine’s connections. I never heard of her existence till the day before yesterday.”

“Her daughter, Miss de Bourgh, **will have a very large fortune**,⁴¹ and they say that she and her cousin will unite the two estates.”

This information made Elizabeth smile, as she thought of poor Miss Bingley.

“Mr. Collins,” said she, “speaks highly both of Lady Catherine and her daughter.”

“I have not seen her for many years,” replied Wickham; “but I very well remember that I never liked her, and that her manners were dictatorial and insolent.”

Elizabeth smiled. Mr. Wickham’s manners recommended him to everybody. Whatever he said, was said well; and whatever he did, done gracefully. Elizabeth could think of nothing but of Mr. Wickham, and of what he had told her, all the way home.

⁴⁰ **promise of providing for me** – обещание обеспечить мое будущее

⁴¹ **will have a very large fortune** – получит огромное состояние

Chapter 17

Elizabeth related to Jane the next day what had passed between Mr. Wickham and herself. Jane listened with astonishment and concern; she did not know how to believe that Mr. Darcy could be so unworthy of Mr. Bingley's regard.

The two young ladies were thinking about the long-expected ball at Netherfield, which was fixed for the following Tuesday. They were delighted to see their dear friend again. To the rest of the family they paid little attention; avoiding Mrs. Bennet as much as possible, saying not much to Elizabeth, and nothing at all to the others.

The prospect of the Netherfield ball was extremely agreeable to every female of the family. Mrs. Bennet was particularly flattered by receiving the invitation from Mr. Bingley himself. Jane pictured to herself a happy evening in the society of her two friends, and Elizabeth thought with pleasure of dancing with Mr. Wickham.

Elizabeth was in a very good mood. And though she did not often speak to Mr. Collins, she could not help asking him whether he intended to accept Mr. Bingley's invitation.

"I do not think, I assure you," said he, "that a ball of this kind, given by a young man of character, to respectable people, can have any evil tendency. And I take this opportunity of inviting you, Miss Elizabeth, for the two first dances."

Elizabeth accepted Mr. Collins's proposal with as good a grace as she could.

Chapter 18

Till Elizabeth entered the drawing-room at Netherfield, and looked in vain for Mr. Wickham, a doubt of his coming had never occurred to her. But his friend Denny, to whom Lydia eagerly applied, said that Wickham had been obliged to go to town on business the day before.

But Elizabeth was not made for ill-humour; and though her hopes were destroyed for the evening, she could not be sad long. The first two dances, however, brought her a sense of distress; they were dances of mortification. Mr. Collins was awkward and solemn. The moment of her release from him was ecstasy.

She danced next with an officer, and heard that **he was universally liked**.⁴² When those dances were over, she returned to Charlotte Lucas. Suddenly Mr. Darcy invited her to dance. Without knowing what she did, she accepted him.

They stood for some time without speaking a word. She made some slight observation on the dance. He replied, and was again silent. After a pause of some minutes, she addressed him a second time with: – “It is *your* turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy. I talked about the dance, and *you* ought to make some sort of remark on the size of the room, or the number of couples.”

He smiled, and assured her that whatever she wished him to say should be said.

“Very well. Perhaps I may observe that private balls are much pleasanter than public ones. But *now* we may be silent.”

“Do you talk while you are dancing?”

“Sometimes. One must speak a little, you know.”

They were again silent till they had gone down the dance, when he asked her if she and her sisters did not very often walk to Meryton. She answered ‘yes’, and, unable to resist the temptation, added, “When you met us there the other day, we had just met a new acquaintance.”

The effect was immediate. Darcy said, “Mr. Wickham has so happy manners that he makes friends easily.”

“**He has been so unlucky as to lose**⁴³ *your* friendship,” replied Elizabeth with emphasis.

Darcy made no answer.

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

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

“I am sorry you think so; but 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 – does it?” said he, with a look of doubt.

“Yes, always,” she replied, without knowing what she said.

She said no more, and they went down the other dance and parted in silence; and on each side dissatisfied.

Miss Bingley came towards her:

“Miss Eliza, I hear you are quite delighted with George Wickham! Your sister has been talking to me about him, and asking me a thousand questions. I find that the young man quite forgot to tell you that he was the son of old Wickham, the late Mr. Darcy’s **steward**.⁴⁴ Let me recommend you, however, as a friend, not to believe him much; **for as to Mr. Darcy’s using him ill**,⁴⁵ it is perfectly false; for, on the contrary, he has always been remarkably kind to him, though George Wickham has treated Mr. Darcy in a most infamous manner.”

⁴² **he was universally liked** – он пользовался всеобщей симпатией

⁴³ **he has been so unlucky as to lose** – он имел несчастье потерять

⁴⁴ **steward** – дворецкий

⁴⁵ **for as to Mr. Darcy’s using him ill** – о плохом обращении с ним мистера Дарси

"You are much mistaken," said Elizabeth to herself, "if you expect to influence me by such a paltry attack as this. I see nothing in it but your own wilful ignorance and the malice of Mr. Darcy."

Elizabeth came to Jane.

"I want to know," said she, "what you have learnt about Mr. Wickham."

"I have nothing satisfactory to tell you," replied Jane, "Mr. Bingley does not know the whole of his history, and is quite ignorant of the circumstances which have principally offended Mr. Darcy. And he is perfectly convinced that Mr. Wickham has deserved much less attention from Mr. Darcy than he has received. And I am sorry to say that Mr. Wickham is not a respectable young man. I am afraid he has been very imprudent, and has deserved to lose Mr. Darcy's regard."

"Mr. Bingley does not know Mr. Wickham himself?"

"No; he never saw him till the other morning at Meryton."

"This opinion then is what he has received from Mr. Darcy. I am satisfied. But what does he say of the living?"

"He does not exactly recollect the circumstances, though he has heard them from Mr. Darcy more than once, but he believes that it was left to him *conditionally* only."

"I have not a doubt of Mr. Bingley's sincerity," said Elizabeth warmly; "**but you must excuse my not being convinced by assurances only.**"⁴⁶

Mr. Collins came up to them, and told her with great exultation that he had just been so fortunate.

"I have found out," said he, "by a singular accident, that there is now in the room a near relation of my patroness. How wonderfully these sort of things occur!"

"You are not going to introduce yourself to Mr. Darcy!"

"Indeed I am. I believe him to be Lady Catherine's *nephew*."

Elizabeth tried hard to dissuade him from such a scheme. But Mr. Collins was determined. And with a low bow he left her to attack Mr. Darcy. Mr. Collins then returned to Elizabeth.

"Mr. Darcy," said he, "seemed much pleased with the attention. He answered me with the utmost civility. I am much pleased with him."

When they sat down to supper, Mrs. Bennet was speaking about Jane's marrying. Her mother would talk of her views in the most intelligible tone. Elizabeth blushed and blushed again with shame and vexation.

At length, however, Mrs. Bennet had no more to say; and Elizabeth now began to revive. But the rest of the evening brought her little amusement. She was teased by Mr. Collins, who continued to talk to her all the time. In vain did she entreat him to talk to somebody else, and offer to introduce him to any young lady in the room.

Mrs. Bennet was perfectly satisfied, and quitted the house under the delightful persuasion that she should undoubtedly see her daughter settled at Netherfield in the course of three or four months. Of having another daughter married to Mr. Collins, she thought with equal certainty.

⁴⁶ **but you must excuse my not being convinced by assurances only** – но ты должна извинить меня, если я не удовлетворюсь общими фразами

Chapter 19

The next day Mr. Collins **made his declaration in form**.⁴⁷ On finding Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, and one of the younger girls together, soon after breakfast, he addressed the mother in these words:

“May I hope, madam, can I have a private audience with your fair daughter Elizabeth this morning?”

Before Elizabeth had time for anything but a blush of surprise, Mrs. Bennet answered instantly, “Oh dear! – yes – certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy – I am sure she can have no objection. Come, Kitty.” And, gathering her work together, she was hastening away, when Elizabeth called out:

“Dear madam, do not go. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins must excuse me. He can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I am going away myself.”

“No, no, nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you to stay where you are.” And she added: “Lizzy, I *insist* upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins.”

Elizabeth sat down again and tried to conceal. Mrs. Bennet and Kitty walked off, and as soon as they were gone, Mr. Collins began.

“Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty rather adds to your other perfections. Allow me to assure you, that I have your respected mother’s permission for this address. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse. Almost as soon as I entered the house, I thought about you as the companion of my future life. But perhaps it would be better to state my reasons for marrying. My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman in easy circumstances (like myself) to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced that it will make my life happier; and thirdly – which perhaps I ought to have mentioned earlier, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of the very noble lady whom I have the honour of calling patroness. She said, ‘Mr. Collins, you must marry. A clergyman like you must marry. Choose properly, this is my advice. Find such a woman as soon as you can, bring her here, and I will visit her.’ Allow me, by the way, to observe, my fair cousin, that my views were directed towards Longbourn instead of my own neighbourhood, where I can assure you there are many amiable young women. But the fact is, that I will inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father (who, however, may live many years longer). And I decided to choose a wife from among his daughters. This has been my motive, my fair cousin. To money I am perfectly indifferent, and shall make no demand of that nature on your father. **On that head**,⁴⁸ therefore, I shall be silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.”

It was absolutely necessary to interrupt him now.

“You are too hasty, sir,” cried Elizabeth. “You forget that I have made no answer. Accept my thanks for the compliment you are paying me. I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but I must decline them.”

“Are you serious?” asked Mr. Collins, with a formal wave of the hand.

“Upon my word, sir,” cried Elizabeth, “I am perfectly serious in my refusal. You could not make *me* happy, and I am convinced that I am the last woman in the world who could make you so. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible.”

⁴⁷ **made his declaration in form** – сделал формальное предложение

⁴⁸ **on that head** – по этому поводу

Chapter 20

When Elizabeth opened the door, Mrs. Bennet entered the breakfast-room, and congratulated both him and herself in warm terms on the happy prospect or their nearer connection. Mr. Collins related the details of their interview.

“Mr. Collins,” said Mrs. Bennet, “I will speak to Lizzy about it directly. She is a very headstrong, foolish girl, and does not know her own interest but I will *make* her know it.”

“Pardon me for interrupting you, madam,” cried Mr. Collins; “but if she is really headstrong and foolish, I am not sure that she could be a very desirable wife to a man in my situation, who naturally looks for happiness in the marriage state.”

“Sir, you quite misunderstand me,” said Mrs. Bennet. “Lizzy is only headstrong in such matters as these. In everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived. I will go directly to Mr. Bennet, and we shall very soon settle it with her, I am sure.”

She would not give him time to reply, but hurrying instantly to her husband. “Oh! Mr. Bennet, you must come and make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins.”

Mr. Bennet raised his eyes from his book as she entered, and fixed them on her face with a calm unconcern.

“Of what are you talking?” said he, when she had finished her speech.

“Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy. Lizzy declares she will not marry Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not marry Lizzy.”

“And what am I to do on the occasion? It seems a hopeless business.”

“Speak to Lizzy about it yourself. Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him.”

“Call her. She shall hear my opinion.”

Mrs. Bennet rang the bell, and Miss Elizabeth was called to the library.

“Come here, child,” cried her father as she appeared. “I have sent for you **on an affair of importance**.⁴⁹ I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?” Elizabeth replied that it was. “Very well – and this offer of marriage you have refused?”

“I have, sir.”

“Very well. Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is it not so, Mrs. Bennet?”

“Yes, or I will never see her again.”

“An unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry Mr. Collins, and I will never see you again if you *do*.”

Mrs. Bennet was excessively disappointed.

“What do you mean, Mr. Bennet, in talking this way? You promised me to *insist* upon her marrying him.”

“My dear,” replied her husband, “please, allow me to say what I think.”

While the family were in this confusion, Charlotte Lucas came in. She was met in the vestibule by Lydia, who cried in a half whisper, “I am glad you are come, for there is such fun here! What do you think has happened this morning? Mr. Collins has made an offer to Lizzy, and she will not marry him.”

Charlotte hardly had time to answer, before they were joined by Kitty, who came to tell the same news.

“Aye, there she comes,” said Mrs. Bennet, “I tell you, Miss Lizzy – if you take it into your head – I do not know who will maintain you when your father is dead. I shall not be able to keep you – and so I warn you. I have no pleasure in talking to undutiful children.”

⁴⁹ **on an affair of importance** – ради важного дела

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.

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