

ACT TWO

Scene 1

December 24th, morning. The room is now fully decorated for Christmas with holly and ivy over every door and table. The tree looks beautiful with candles and paper ornaments and ribbons.

It is snowing outside.

Lights rise on Mary at the piano. She is thinking of Arthur. She is angry, embarrassed, and deeply disappointed. But mainly just mad.

Arthur enters, desperate to explain to her.

ARTHUR. Miss Bennet, may I please have a moment to explain.

MARY. No I think not, Mr. de Bourgh. I think I heard enough last night.

Mary glares and throws her copy of Lamarck at his feet and exits.

ARTHUR. (*Calling after her.*) Please Miss Bennet, I'd like to explain. I can explain.

He picks up her book, frustrated and—

Mary storms back in, grabs her book from him. Then takes his book and throws it on the ground instead.

Miss Bennet this is all a terrible misunderstanding—

MARY. I understand you have a fiancée, is that true?

ARTHUR. Well. Yes it seems so but—

MARY. Then there is nothing left to say. Not to me. Not ever. I would have rather stayed invisible than have been made a fool, Mr. de Bourgh.

ARTHUR. Miss Bennet, please—

MARY. (*So mad.*) *Mr. de Bourgh.* Do you recall my advice about surviving a bear attack?

ARTHUR. Yes?

MARY. You would be wise to *use it.*

He does. He raises his hands and backs slowly away from her.

She exits.

Arthur is at a loss. Anne enters, talking authoritatively and without pause.

ANNE. My goodness Arthur, there you are! I am shocked at how easy it is to get lost in this house. And the rooms—they are somewhat more open than I remember; there is a brightness I find unappealing, do you not agree?

He doesn't respond.

Arthur. Arthur!

ARTHUR. (*Lost in thought.*) Sorry? Yes. What?

ANNE. Brightness. Also, the drawing room furniture is not so fine as what we have at Rosings. It has been remarked on that the style of the furnishings at Rosings is unparalleled. I would never say it myself, but who am I to disagree. Mr. Collins—have you met our Mr. Collins yet?

ARTHUR. No, not—

ANNE. He said just the other day that one of my mother's most enduring legacies would be her handsome style. Also her willingness to give freely of her opinion and advice, a trait he suggests lives on in me.

ARTHUR. Does it?

ANNE. It does. You'll be relieved to know there is scarcely a thing that will need doing at Rosings after you arrive, save for the wedding preparations and making room for some of your things. I cannot imagine you have much, perhaps a dusty book or two, which we can easily tuck out of sight.

ARTHUR. Out of sight?

ANNE. We are to be married, Arthur. I will tell you what is of

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