

MRS. BENNET

Sir, you quite misunderstand me. Lizzy is only headstrong in matters such as *these*. In everything else she is as good-natured a girl as ever lived.

*MR. BENNET enters from the library, holding his accounts book. MRS. BENNET goes to him.*

*COLLINS slips out.*

MRS. BENNET

Mr. Bennet, we are in uproar! You must make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him!

MR. BENNET

I have not the pleasure of understanding you.

MRS. BENNET

Mr Collins - (*Finds him gone*) Where has he gone? (*Calling*) Elizabeth Bennet, your father wishes to see you!! (*to MR BENNET*) And now Mr. Collins has begun to say that he will not have Lizzy!

MR. BENNET

And, pray, what am I to do on the occasion?

MRS. BENNET

Insist upon Lizzy marrying Mr Collins!

*ELIZABETH enters.*

MR. BENNET

Come here, child. (*She does*) I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?

ELIZABETH

Yes, father.

MR. BENNET

Very well. And this offer you have refused?

ELIZABETH

I have, sir.

MR. BENNET

Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is it not so, Mrs. Bennet?

MRS. BENNET

Yes, or I will never see her again.

MR. BENNET

Child, an unhappy alternative is before you. 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

Oh, Mr. Bennet!

MR. BENNET

I shall be at my desk while you ponder your decision.

*MR. BENNET returns to the library.*

*JANE enters.*

MRS. BENNET

I tell you, Lizzy, if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way I do not know who is to maintain you after your father is deceased.

*COLLINS enters with a valise.*

MRS. BENNET

Oh, Mr. Collins!

MR. COLLINS

Madam - upon reflection, I feel certain pangs of doubt as to my felicity should my fair cousin choose to honor me with her hand. You will not, I hope, consider me as showing any disrespect to your fine family if I withdraw any pretensions to her favor?

MRS. BENNET

Are you leaving us, Mr. Collins?

MR. COLLINS

Not at all. My visit was to be until Saturday and to Saturday I mean to stay. (*Referring to the valise*) I am solicited to dine with Sir William and Lady Lucas and I am transporting to Miss Charlotte Lucas the complete set of