

## Darcy POV II

Miss Bingley sucked in her cheeks while narrowing her shrewd eyes as the door closed behind Miss Bennet. "Eliza Bennet, is one of those young ladies who seek to recommend themselves to the other sex by undervaluing their own; and with many men, I daresay, it succeeds; but, in my opinion, it is a paltry device, a very mean art."

"Undoubtedly," replied Darcy, to whom this remark was chiefly addressed, "there is meanness in *all* the arts which ladies sometimes condescend to employ for captivation. Whatever bears affinity to cunning is despicable." Her own conduct fell within this category but he doubted that she would see herself in the slight. However, a slight shift of the shoulders told him that Miss Bingley was not so entirely satisfied with this reply as to continue the subject and he inwardly rejoiced. He was frankly tired of her jockeying.

He leaned back and played with the ring that sat on his little finger, imagining the tender sisterly scene in the bedroom above.

Within minutes, however, Darcy was as agitated as ever as Miss Elizabeth rejoined them, her complexion flushed with anxiety, her hand gripping the door handle.

"I am afraid my sister is worse and will be unable to make the journey home this evening."

Bingley jumped out of his seat. "Great heavens! Then, I shall send for the doctor immediately!"

"Country doctors won't know what to do!" cried Mrs. Hurst, flapping her arms. "Better send an express to town for a Harley Street physician."

Darcy's could not drag his eyes from the picture of anguish still clinging to the door.

"There is no need for such action as that," Elizabeth Bennett declared, addressing Bingley, "but I shall not refuse your kind offer to fetch Mr. Jones the local doctor, in the morning, if there is no improvement."

Bingley began to pace. "I should much rather send for him now."

"But it is so late," replied Miss Elizabeth, which showed a charitable consideration for the local doctor which pleased Darcy immensely.

Caroline Bingley joined her brother as he walked back and forth. "I feel awful that we are down here in such comfort while Miss Bennett suffers so above stairs."

"It is almost more than I can bare to know she is so wretched," he agreed.

"I feel quite miserable in sisterly empathy," continued Mrs. Hurst. "I suggest that to distract ourselves, we sing duets."

Bingley continued to shake his head and stare at the ceiling as his sisters played and sang, and after calling his housekeeper, gave her detailed instructions for Miss Jane Bennett's particular care.