

Darcy POV #4

Darcy watched as the immature younger sisters of Miss Elizabeth Bennett made a spectacle of themselves, with the encouragement of their mother. Rather than wait for the soldiers to request a dance, they practically threw themselves at the young men in their redcoats. He inwardly groaned at their lack of delicate manners but was gratified to see that neither Miss Bennet nor Miss Elizabeth descended to such irreverent behavior.

Deep in such thoughts, Darcy started when Sir William Lucas cried, “What a charming amusement for young people this is, Mr. Darcy! There is nothing like dancing after all. I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished societies.”

He had not noticed his host sidle up to him and did not agree with the man. Brushing his sleeve with a hand, he replied. “Certainly, sir; and it has the advantage also of being in vogue amongst the less polished societies of the world.—Every savage can dance.”

Sir William only smiled, apparently impervious to the slight. “Your friend performs delightfully,” he continued after a pause, on seeing Bingley join the group; “and I doubt not that you are an adept in the science yourself, Mr. Darcy.”

Technically, Darcy was capable of dancing adequately to suit any partner, but since it was not a pursuit he took great pleasure in, he was not gifted in the activity as was evident to anyone who saw him.

To prove the point he commented, “You saw me dance at Meryton, I believe, sir.”

Sir William looked up at him with eager eyes and begging hands, “Yes, indeed, and received no inconsiderable pleasure from the sight. Do you often dance at St. James’s?”

Darcy wanted nothing more than to shrug off the man’s hypocritical enthusiasm. And to drop such a hint that he had been to royal balls was beyond vulgar.

“Never, sir.”

“Do you not think it would be a proper compliment to the place?”

Darcy’s desire to extract himself from the awkward conversation was extreme.

“It is a compliment which I never pay to any place if I can avoid it.”

He made to move across the room but Sir William Lucas did not take the hint.

“You have a house in town, I conclude?” he asked.

Mr. Darcy bowed.

“I had once some thoughts of fixing in town myself—for I am fond of superior society; but I did not feel quite certain that the air of London would agree with Lady Lucas.”

Sir William Lucas's nose twitched in anticipation of an answer, but Darcy was bent on escaping the obsequious man.

As Darcy fixed his gaze across the room looking for an excuse to move out of the annoying fellow's orbit, he saw Miss Elizabeth gliding towards them and his heart began to beat erratically.