

SIDE 1

DARCY. Indeed. A Christmas he shall enjoy...here.

LIZZY. Here? What do you mean, "here"?

DARCY. As he has no family to speak of and has not been to Rosings for years, I have made an offer for Lord de Bourgh to join us. Here. Tomorrow.

Thank you.

LIZZY. Mr. Darcy, today it is you who surprise me. Well, the entire family is gathering, why not add one more. I'll let you keep your lord if you grant me my beautiful tree. Are we agreed?

DARCY. Indeed we are, my dear. *(Trying to sound honest.)* And, you know, I rather...like your tree.

LIZZY. You perjure yourself. But I thank you.

*A commotion from the main hall.*

Oh! That must be Jane! I care not a whit about anything as long as my sister is arrived safely and enormously. Happy Christmas, Mr. Darcy.

DARCY. Happy Christmas, my darling.

*They kiss just as the commotion brings in Charles and Jane Bingley. Jane is quite pregnant.*

*Mary Bennet trails behind them.*

JANE. Lizzy, dear!

LIZZY. My Jane is here at last! Happy Christmas to you!

JANE. My darling sister. Happy Christmas!

LIZZY. Look at you! You're radiant.

JANE. I'm as large as a cottage.

LIZZY. And exactly as a cottage, you are warm, full of life, and lit from within.

JANE. I've missed you so much, darling Lizzy.

BINGLEY. Darcy, my friend. How are you?

DARCY. Quite well, Bingley, and I do hope your trip was easy.

BINGLEY. Easy enough for winter.

LIZZY. Certainly easier than it was for our dear Jane. Was it horribly uncomfortable?

JANE. Not horribly. But I am quite relieved to be on solid ground.

DARCY. Sit. Please sit.

MARY. You should elevate your legs as well. I have read that it encourages circulation and will make you vastly more comfortable.

JANE. Thank you, Mary.

LIZZY. Oh Mary, I have yet to even look at you in all the fuss over Jane. Do forgive me, sister. And welcome. Happy Christmas.

MARY. Thank you, Lizzy, though to be perfectly accurate, Christmas is still three days away. You look lovely.

DARCY. Doesn't she? Welcome Mary.

MARY. Mr. Darcy. The estate is as fine as ever.

DARCY. I hope you will all treat it as your home while you are here.

JANE. How kind, Mr. Darcy, thank you.

MARY. Yes thank you—oh! The library.

LIZZY. It took her all of two minutes to find the books. And I'm surprised it took that long.

BINGLEY. Mary was quite the help in the carriage. The bumpier the road the more she distracted us with a summary of whatever it was she had just read.

MARY. *(Taking out her copy of Lamarck, which is ever at the ready.)* Lamarck's *Zoological Philosophy*. It is a captivating survey of the natural inclination for animals to change because of their environments—

LIZZY. Which we can discuss at length later tonight, I'm sure, once everyone has had time to settle in.

MARY. Yes, but—

JANE. After dinner perhaps, Mary.

MARY. That would be suitable, but Lizzy I wonder—

LIZZY. You're always wondering, Mary, what is it now?!

MARY. Why do you have a tree growing in your drawing room?

JANE. Oh! She does, doesn't she?

BINGLEY. I thought it best not to say anything, but I did find it somewhat unusual.

JANE. Whatever is it doing here, Lizzy?



LIZZY. As we decorate on Christmas Eve we shall include this marvelous creature. We'll put a skirt around the base, and deck it in ribbons and jewels.

MARY. Is it going to a ball?

*Darcy thinks this is funny.*

LIZZY. No. We shall gather round it and celebrate Christmas together because this is a Christmas tree.

MARY. And here I did not know trees celebrated.

LIZZY. Well Jane and I shall enjoy the beauty of this tree by ourselves. And the rest of you shall not be invited.

BINGLEY. I do hope I shall merit an invitation. I can think of nothing more perfect than sitting with two charming ladies and a fir tree.

JANE. Mr. Bingley.

LIZZY. How lovely.

MARY. It is a spruce.

BINGLEY. All the same to me!

DARCY. Come, Bingley! I have recently discovered the location of our reserve brandy.

*Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley exit together.*

LIZZY. Mary, you have a brilliant capacity to pour the chill of accuracy on every gesture of goodwill.

MARY. It's obviously not a fir tree, look at the needles. It's a dedicated and uncompromising spruce.

LIZZY. You made your point but missed your tact.

JANE. Now, Lizzy, I appreciate Mary's consummate...correctness.

MARY. Thank you. I know of no other way to approach facts.

LIZZY. Humor, Mary. Levity. Facts are part of life, but life is seasoned with joy and courtesy. And in this regard you have always lived under-spiced.

MARY. I am not "under-spiced."

LIZZY. Salt doesn't count. Now was I mistaken in my impression that Lydia was to travel with you?

JANE. She did not.

MARY. Thank goodness.

JANE. But she'll arrive from Bath on her own tomorrow.

LIZZY. And where will Mr. Wickham be celebrating the holiday? I regret it for Lydia's sake, but Mr. Darcy remains resolute that man will never cross the threshold here at Pemberley after his past behavior, despite the fact that he is now family.

JANE. Mr. Wickham is staying in Bath for the holidays.

MARY. And let us all hope that Lydia leaves her ceaseless whining with her conspicuously absent husband.

JANE. Mary.

MARY. Is it not true? Every single letter from her is flooded with such obvious prattle; it could only be hiding the fact that Wickham is her husband in title only and not in heart.

JANE. Mary, that's enough. We're all of us nothing but horrible gossips.

MARY. You do not want facts or gossip. I am at a loss.

LIZZY. Besides, what do you know of heart, Mary? Have your books on botany illuminated the romantic schemes of plants?

MARY. I would rather marry an interesting plant than an idiot man.

JANE. Now, now.

MARY. Not that anyone expects me to marry anyway. An unmarried old maid is the popular presumption, is it not?

LIZZY. Only because you do not want to marry.

MARY. Because I long for a life other than merely being someone's wife and helpmate.

JANE. That is not my experience of marriage.

MARY. You and Lizzy are mistresses of grand estates with husbands of wit and charm. You make marriage and men look easy. I shall never find a husband who understands me, certainly not at Longbourn.

LIZZY. Careful, Mary. Such thoughts may betray you one day.

JANE. I think we can find something more pleasant to discuss than this, don't you agree? Mother and Father will arrive on Christmas Day with Kitty and we shall be a complete set.