

Mr Bingley

1

BINGLEY. *(As they watch the dancers. He has just danced with JANE.)*

Come, Darcy, I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.

DARCY. You know how I detest it unless I am particularly acquainted with my partner. Your sister is engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to me to stand up with.

BINGLEY. I would not be so fastidious as you are for a kingdom! I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life and several uncommonly pretty.

DARCY. Your partner, the eldest Miss Bennet is the only handsome girl in the room.

BINGLEY. Indeed the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters...

(EL IZABETH has risen and is talking to a young man.)

BINGLEY. Just there, whom I dare say is very agreeable. Allow me to ask my partner to introduce you.

DARCY. She is tolerable, but that is insufficient to tempt me. Pray return to Miss Bennet, you are wasting your time with me.

2

BINGLEY. My dear Miss Bennet...I say, might I venture your given name?

JANE. Indeed you might, if I might venture yours.

BINGLEY. Oh, smashing, top-of-the-hill really. My dear Jane, I wish to express how very great is my esteem for you.

JANE. I see.

BINGLEY. By heavens, esteem won't do, I must say affection I really must. Dear Miss Bennet, Jane...

(He kneels.)

If you would do me the honour of...

JANE. I will, and with a very full heart...but perhaps, before a fuller expression, you might prefer a word with my father.

BINGLEY. Your father. Well this is top-of-the-hill and no mistaking! I will speak with him, if available, this very moment. Promise me you won't move so much as a ribbon.

JANE. I will endeavour to be very, very still.