

Chapter 17

As the regiment prepares to depart Meryton, Lydia receives an invitation from the wife of Colonel Forster to come with the regiment to Brighton. Elizabeth secretly asks Mr. Bennet to stop Lydia from going. Elizabeth urges him to realize how Lydia's foolishness will hurt the family. But Mr. Bennet wants a quiet house and thinks Lydia must make her own mistakes. And besides, Colonel Forster will look after her. Elizabeth is motivated by having lost Bingley and Darcy to the Bennet's foolishness. She urges Mr. Bennet to act like the father he's never been. But Mr. Bennet sits back and passes the job to someone else.

In the days following, Elizabeth encounters Wickham. He blushes when she asks if he knows Colonel Fitzwilliam. When Wickham asks how Darcy is doing, Elizabeth responds that she understands Darcy better now. Wickham gets the point, and they part.

Chapter 18

Elizabeth reflects on her disappointment regarding her parents' marriage. After Mr. Bennet realized he married a foolish woman, he sought comfort in his library and in making fun of Mrs. Bennet. Though Elizabeth hates to admit it, Mr. Bennet has failed as a responsible father.

Elizabeth leaves on her summer holiday with Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. They tour Derbyshire, which takes them near Pemberley. Mrs. Gardiner suggests they visit the estate. Elizabeth agrees to go only when she learns that Darcy will not be there. At Pemberley, Elizabeth admires the estate's beauty. The house is lavish but tasteful, and Elizabeth imagines what it would have been like to be mistress of the place as Darcy's wife. Elizabeth and Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner are escorted around the rooms by a housekeeper who praises Mr. Darcy as a kind and generous man. As they walk, Darcy suddenly appears—he came home a day earlier than scheduled. Elizabeth is stunned and embarrassed, but Darcy is extremely polite to them all. Darcy says he is expecting guests the next day: Bingley and his sisters, and Georgiana. He asks Elizabeth if he can introduce his sister to her. Elizabeth accepts. The Gardiners, having heard so many negative things about Darcy, leave with an entirely different opinion of him.

Chapter 19

The next day, Elizabeth and the Gardiners are again surprised when Darcy shows up with Georgiana and Bingley for a visit. The Gardiners note Darcy's eagerness and realize he must be in love. By bringing his sister to meet Elizabeth and the Gardiners, Darcy shows he sees them as equals. He has overcome his pride.

Georgiana turns out to be shy rather than proud. Bingley, meanwhile, is delighted to see Elizabeth, and asks questions that lead Elizabeth to suspect he might still love Jane. Elizabeth is amazed at the change in Darcy. His pride has turned into tenderness. If he was embarrassed by Elizabeth's relations before, Darcy shows nothing but good will toward the Gardiners. Above all, Elizabeth feels incredibly grateful that Darcy has forgiven her harsh rejection, and now treats her with respect.

The next morning, Elizabeth and Mrs. Gardiner visit the women at Pemberley. Caroline Bingley and Mrs. Hurst do not seem pleased to see Elizabeth. When Darcy arrives, Caroline tries to embarrass Elizabeth by bringing up her connection with Wickham. The plan backfires: the name of Wickham mortifies Georgiana, and only Elizabeth's cool handling of the question saves the situation. After Elizabeth leaves, Caroline mocks Elizabeth's looks, but Darcy says he ranks her among the most beautiful women he knows.

Chapter 20

Elizabeth receives two awful letters from Jane. These letters explain how Lydia has run off with Wickham and that Colonel Forster learned that Wickham had no plans to marry Lydia at all, and that the two of them were now in London. The colonel and Mr. Bennet have gone there to search; Mrs. Bennet is a nervous wreck. Jane asks Elizabeth to come home immediately; she also requests that Mr. Gardiner help Mr. Bennet in London.

Elizabeth meets Darcy as she is running out the door and tells him the story. Elizabeth blames herself for not revealing Wickham's character to everyone, which would have prevented this. Looking serious, Darcy wishes he could offer help, and leaves. Elizabeth worries that this new disgrace to her family will put a

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final end to the possibility of a relationship with Darcy. Soon, Elizabeth and the Gardiners make their way to Longbourn.

Chapter 21

At Longbourn, Mrs. Bennet is frantic with nervousness. She tells Mr. Gardiner to make Lydia and Wickham marry when they are found—and to make Lydia consult with her about finding the best wedding dress.

Chapter 22

A letter arrives from Mr. Collins. He offers condolences, but most of the letter highlights how he thinks Lydia's behaviour will ruin the other Bennet girls' chances at marriage. More time passes, but all attempts to find Wickham and Lydia fail, and Mr. Bennet returns home. He asks Elizabeth not to talk with him about Lydia, saying that he brought this on and only he should suffer.

Chapter 23

Two days later, a letter arrives from Mr. Gardiner: Lydia and Wickham have been found! They are not yet married, but will be, provided that Mr. Bennet pay Wickham a small amount every year. Mr. Bennet says he strongly suspects that Mr. Gardiner has already paid Wickham much more. The Bennets all agree that Lydia and Wickham must marry, but Jane and Elizabeth wonder how they can ever repay Mr. Gardiner. Jane and Elizabeth share the news with Mrs. Bennet. She is overjoyed. Mrs. Bennet rushes out to make the news about her daughter's marriage public.