

CHARLOTTE

WHO is Mr. Wickham, Lizzy?

LIZZY

.. he's only a lieutenant.

But if you can overlook that, he seems... rather perfect.

CHARLOTTE

This from the lady who has sworn to remain unmarried forever! Praytell where is this paragon?

LIZZY

Do not read out the bannes, Charlotte, just because I wish for a dance partner less objectionable than Mr. Collins. Besides - I do not spy Wickham in this assembly.

CHARLOTTE

(Beat.) Jane is fortunate in her admirer!

LIZZY

Speaking of perfection!

CHARLOTTE

Does she like him?

LIZZY

Can't you see?

CHARLOTTE

She seems too composed to be in love.

LIZZY

How forward can she be, without being accused of -

Lydia runs across at this moment.

LYDIA

COLONEL FOSTER! CAN I TOUCH YOUR MUSKET?!!!!

LIZZY

- vulgarity?

CHARLOTTE

She'll catch him if she just breaks the rules a bit.

LIZZY

Must it always always be “catching” and gaming and strategy? Perhaps she wishes to *know* him before she makes a - a - display of her affection!

CHARLOTTE

How much can we ever know of anybody? She should hurry up and get him to the altar - she has the rest of her life to fall in love!

LIZZY

Charlotte, you never would act that way yourself!

CHARLOTTE

It is my experience that one invariably finds oneself doing the very things one swore “never” to do. Speaking - of - which:

She turns her fully only to find Mr. Darcy, standing there, most uncomfortably.

STOP

DARCY

Miss Bennet. I wondered if you felt an inclination to dance.

LIZZY

--- With...?

DARCY

With.... (*this is the most obvious answer ever*) me.

LIZZY

(*She stands there in total gobsmacked silence until Charlotte smacks her arm and restarts her brain.*) ... but you HATE to dance!

Over his shoulder, she sees Mr. Collins coming.

DARCY

If you are previously engaged -

Mr. Collins is very close indeed.

LIZZY

No, no- yes - let us go, fine, go, go go!

He leads her off as Charlotte mouths “10,000 a year!” at her. Mr. Collins just misses Lizzy.