

LIZZY

(Mary Shock) Oh! Mary.

MARY

You're back.

Lizzy opens her arms to hug her. Instead, Mary moves to the piano.

MARY

She locked me in a closet.

LIZZY

(She -?)

MARY

Lydia. When she ran off with Wickham. I was there at least an hour. But I am recovering nicely.

Pause.

MARY

What, Jane? I am not sad Lydia is gone! She's always running off and leaving me behind - like you two. Like everyone; I am never wanted in your games, am I?

She coughs and flounces down at the piano.

Besides - *(assuming her academic voice, as she did about PRIDE)* shocking as the event is, we may draw from it a useful lesson about PERFECTION.

LIZZY

Perfection?

MARY

Purity. Flawlessness. An ideal that we must fulfill. For one false step condemns a person - a female person - to ruin; one slip pollutes her forever. We also learn from poor stupid Lydia that loss of virtue is irretrievable; that reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that a lady can never be too irreproachable in her behaviour.
PERFECTION.

She plays the piano. Mr. Bennet enters - he is broken down, wrecked. It's a shock.