

Side #1
**Mrs. Reynolds/
Brian**

ook forward to not only braving the Bennet women with you,
but also to sharing in a large brandy.
ur friend,
zwilliam Darcy

MRS. REYNOLDS. To the shopkeeper, Lambton Village
Dear Sir, What follows is the year-end order for Pemberley Estate.
Please provide:
Fifty pound flour
Forty pound sugar
Five pound each, raisins and figs
Two pound each, walnuts and almonds
Cinnamon sticks and clove

LYDIA. And, Lizzy, will you make sure Mrs. Reynolds has loads of
those sugary biscuits with the orangey bits on hand? I adore them.

MRS. REYNOLDS. And several bags of oranges.
Merry Christmas, sir.
Kindly,

Mrs. Reynolds of Pemberley Estate

CASSIE. Mrs. Reynolds,
I humbly accept the position of housemaid at Pemberley Estate. It
will be an honor to serve you, and Mr. and Mrs. Darcy.
Cassie

*Out of Cassie's letter the lights widen as Brian enters in real
time and space to greet her. They are old friends teasing each
other.*

BRIAN. Cassie? My god, is that you? I wasn't told you'd be coming.

CASSIE. Hello then! It has not been so long since we've seen each
other, Brian. Is your eyesight failing you, or just your mind?

BRIAN. You still think you're clever.

CASSIE. And you still think you're important enough to be told
when someone is coming, but you're not.

BRIAN. I'm just a bit surprised to see you. I was expecting the new
housemaid to arrive this morning.

CASSIE. And she has. Hello again.

BRIAN. *You're* the new maid? For Christmas?

CASSIE. Mrs. Reynolds wrote that the house required extra hands
and my trial as housemaid was to begin straightaway. So here I am.
And eager to get started. Can you tell me where I could find her?

BRIAN. Of course. It'll be so wonderful to have you here.

CASSIE. Just as when we were young.

BRIAN. Except this time I won't let you win all the footraces.

CASSIE. *Let me win?* I won fairly every time and you know it.

BRIAN. I was being a gentleman by losing to you!

CASSIE. The day you're a gentleman is the day I'm the queen.

This makes Brian laugh.

BRIAN. It's good to see you Cassie. Welcome to Pemberley.

Brian takes Cassie's bag for her and escorts her in...

Scene 1

*The lower floor of the grand Pemberley Estate, home to Mr.
Fitzwilliam Darcy and his still-new wife, Mrs. Elizabeth Darcy
(née Bennet). The nobility are upstairs enjoying fine food and
company. This is downstairs, where live the engineers of this
house and all its staff, kitchens, cellars, laundry, and more.*

*Particularly we are in the common room where servants gather
and eat. The large kitchen is just offstage, a stairway leads up
to the main house, doors to the outside garden entrance, and
a hall to servants' quarters and apartments.*

Early morning. December 22nd.

START

*Brian is tinkering with something when Mrs. Reynolds enters,
in a hurry, always in a hurry, humming, always humming.*

MRS. REYNOLDS. *Brian.*

BRIAN. (*Snapping to attention, trying to hide his tinkering.*) Good
morning, Mrs. Reynolds.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Not a good one if you have so little to do that
you can sit idly by three days before Christmas.

BRIAN. I'm not idle, I'm working.

MRS. REYNOLDS. You're trying my patience. Have you been upstairs yet? The breakfast table should be laid.

BRIAN. The table is ready, because it is always ready, because I always ready it.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Look you. This house is going to fill up any moment, and I have no time for disobedience.

BRIAN. Isn't Christmas supposed to make people merry?

MRS. REYNOLDS. It's supposed to make people busy. So none of your inventions today, I don't want you distracted.

BRIAN. (*Putting away his tinkering.*) I'm not distracted. I'm just... considering...

MRS. REYNOLDS. Oh, pray tell, what is so pressing that it deserves your consideration today of all days?

BRIAN. Well, it's about—

MRS. REYNOLDS. I don't actually want to know. I want you to keep your thoughts to yourself.

BRIAN. It's nice to see Cassie again.

MRS. REYNOLDS. To yourself. I said. *To yourself.*

BRIAN. You did not tell me you were hiring her as the new maid.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Am I required to check with you now? Please forgive me. Only I thought I ran this household!

BRIAN. No, I'm glad she's here. She is a good worker, clever, fast in a footrace. I've always admired her for that.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Now, don't you start.

BRIAN. Don't start what? I'm saying I like her!

MRS. REYNOLDS. I don't like *you* liking *her* like *that*.

BRIAN. That is not what I meant.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I'll not have you proposing to her within the hour.

BRIAN. I'm not! She's a friend not a...girl.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Mmhmm. You just keep to yourself and stay out of that girl's way.

BRIAN. Honestly, I have no ideas about Cassie. She is a welcome

addition is all that I was trying to say. I will help her as she finds her way about this maze of a house and you can't tell me otherwise.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I scrubbed you in your bath as a boy, I can tell you whatever I like. Now, if you are quite through, everyone is arriving and we have much to do.

BRIAN. Yes ma'am. And Mrs. Reynolds...be merry.

Brian hurries up the stairs before Mrs. Reynolds can scold him. Mrs. Reynolds starts singing as she heads out the door to the kitchen.

END

Scene 2

Later that morning.

Mr. and Mrs. Darcy happily come down the stairs, hand in hand.

They are looking for Mrs. Reynolds but, finding the hall momentarily empty, they indulge in a moment of privacy before the house is overtaken.

DARCY. I know it is the holiday, but could we not just hide down here until after the new year?

LIZZY. We cannot and you know we cannot because I know it is *my* family you are hiding from.

DARCY. That's not true.

LIZZY. Of course it's true, but now you're quite stuck with us so it is a very good thing you love me.

DARCY. It is. And I do.

LIZZY. And it will be over soon and we shall return to our quiet lives again.

DARCY. Though it shall not be quiet for much longer, I hope. When our family grows?

LIZZY. With Jane expecting I'd hoped for a reprieve from the endless interrogations about children, but alas I fear quite the opposite.

Side #2
Mrs. Reynolds/
Lizzy

DARCY. I am eager. I won't deny it. (*Lowering his voice, whispering.*)
I wonder if we shouldn't take advantage of this momentary
lapse to—
LIZZY. *Mr. Darcy.*

DARCY. Before everyone arrives! There is a quiet spot just off the
hall here where I used to hide as a boy—

LIZZY. Good lord, what if someone should find us?

DARCY. We are heads of this house. What would they say?

*Mrs. Reynolds enters consulting her ledger of the entire
house's business.*

MRS. REYNOLDS. I would say that there are twenty-three bed-
rooms upstairs and every one of them is preferable to a hallway.

LIZZY. Oh my goodness.

*Lizzy is mortified, disentangling herself from Mr. Darcy,
who is amused.*

DARCY. How are you this morning Mrs. Reynolds?

MRS. REYNOLDS. I am busy and have a few things to go over
with Mrs. Darcy, if you have quite finished what you were doing?

DARCY. Well *now* I certainly have. (*With affection.*) Mrs. Darcy.
(*With glare.*) Mrs. Reynolds.

He exits.

LIZZY. My apologies, Mrs. Reynolds. We were attempting to find
one last moment of privacy before the family arrives today. How
can I help?

MRS. REYNOLDS. A few details for your approval, ma'am. First,
we'll put Mr. and Mrs. Bingley in the largest guest bedroom when
they arrive this afternoon.

LIZZY. She'll be grateful for the space I imagine.

MRS. REYNOLDS. In her condition I worry she might have trouble
finding a single comfortable surface in the entire house, but we will
do our best for her.

LIZZY. Of course you will and thank you. It would have never
occurred to me.

MRS. REYNOLDS. One day it will, ma'am.

LIZZY. Oh, not you too!

MRS. REYNOLDS. I am not saying a word, ma'am.

LIZZY. No one will say anything directly and yet the air is positively
thick with opinion.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Now now. This house has been in want of a
crowd for a very long time. For so many years, Christmas was such
a quiet affair with just Mr. Darcy and Georgiana, and I don't mind
saying that I prefer how much livelier you have made Pemberley
these past two years. So much more like a home again.

LIZZY. If anyone makes this place a home it is you, Mrs. Reynolds.
Though it pleases me to hear you say as much. All of you native to
Pemberley are so...orderly while my family is so...well, not.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Speaking of which: Now that your sister,
Mrs. Wickham, will be joining us for Christmas dinner, I took the
liberty of seating her as far from your mother, Mrs. Bennet, as
possible. Keeps the noise down I find.

LIZZY. They do amplify each other, do they not?

MRS. REYNOLDS. I would never say as much to anyone but you.
And just to be certain, we are *not* expecting...Mr. Wickham for the
holiday?

LIZZY. Mr. Wickham? No. Absolutely not. Mr. Darcy has made it
perfectly clear that he is not and will not be allowed at Pemberley.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Only I have heard Mrs. Wickham speak of him
so often.

LIZZY. Lydia has no shame and no knowledge of the extremes to
which Mr. Darcy went to save her reputation after she ran off with
that man. In some ways I regret the role we played in sealing Lydia's
fate.

MRS. REYNOLDS. No, ma'am you mustn't think that. You saved her.

LIZZY. Forcing Wickham to marry her? What sort of life did we
sentence her to?

MRS. REYNOLDS. Say no such thing, ma'am. She'd be ruined if
not for you both.

LIZZY. Yes, and most of the time I am able to pretend Mr. Wickham
does not exist, and then Lydia arrives and speaks incessantly of him

LYDIA. Do you mean Mr. Darcy? Does he think I am silly? What did he say?

LIZZY. Please just stop for a moment to think before you say and do the things you say and do.

LYDIA. You and Father always speak as though I am suffering from...*myself*.

LIZZY. For this holiday, all I ask is that you exercise some restraint. Be considerate of your volume at dinner, don't go wandering the house demanding extra work from the staff, and please cease your flirting with Mr. de Bourgh.

LYDIA. What will I do to entertain myself then? I can't tease Mary, I can't speak with the one handsome gentleman here.

LIZZY. You are married!

LYDIA. Oh, stop scolding me Lizzy!

LIZZY. *Lydia, really*. A married woman should not behave in such a manner.

LYDIA. Perhaps *your* marriage prevents you from making new friends but mine does not.

LIZZY. What does that mean?

LYDIA. It means my husband adores me, and allows me freedom. Did I show you the bracelet my adoring husband has given me?

LIZZY. Five times at least.

LYDIA. It's a little bird.

LIZZY. I know it's a little bird. I do not care about the little bird.

LYDIA. The little bird is free to fly where it likes, and so am I and isn't that lovely?

LIZZY. I would not say lovely I would say reckless.

LYDIA. Oh now I know you still resent that I married before you—

LIZZY. I certainly do not—

LYDIA. —that you did not approve of our elopement—

LIZZY. I certainly did not—

LYDIA. —but enough time has passed that I wish you could see how gloriously romantic it all was. How it was meant to be!

LIZZY. (*Biting her tongue just a little bit.*) Mmhmm.

LYDIA. And that I am so, so, so so so so happy.

LIZZY. (*Sighs.*) Then I am happy too. Now, let us see if we can attend to the tear in your dress.

LYDIA. Yes, I was at the most gorgeous ball and it was caught as I made my way to the floor. I danced every dance, you know. Every one!

LIZZY. (*Not wonderful.*) Wonderful.

END

enters the now empty hall. He is oddly at home in this room, having spent so much time here as a boy. He sneaks a biscuit.

Mrs. Reynolds comes in with a tray—busy busy, singing singing.

DARCY. Good day, Mrs. Reynolds.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Back again when you've got a full house up there not to mention a tree in the library!

DARCY. It is apparently a popular German custom...

MRS. REYNOLDS. In all my years at Pemberley. And you, sneaking down here for biscuits whenever you like.

DARCY. What good is being head of the house if you can't do that?

MRS. REYNOLDS. I shall never know.

DARCY. Oh now, you are as much head of this house as I am.

MRS. REYNOLDS. And when I am not in the middle of ten things I'll tell you how ridiculous that sounds.

Cassie enters, and starts, seeing Mr. Darcy. She tries to back out of the room quietly, but he sees her.

DARCY. Hello.

CASSIE. Sir. My Lord. Mr. Darcy.

She is flustered and curtsies multiple times, not knowing exactly how to address him.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Good lord, child. Call him "sir" and get on with it. (*To Mr. Darcy.*) This is Cassie. She's only just started yesterday.

Side #4
Darcy/
Mrs. Reynolds

Cassie hustles out before she can get in trouble.

ff you go, Brian.

RIAN. Yes ma'am. Good day sir.

START day.

(DARCY.) *...exits. Mrs. Reynolds makes to follow when...*

Mrs. Reynolds, might I have a moment of your time to discuss the gifts for the staff for Boxing Day.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I'm sure anything will be appreciated, sir.

DARCY. Yes, well, Mrs. Darcy found my ideas wanting. Too... practical or some such thing.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Practical is appropriate for the staff: dress cloth for the maids, tools for the men. Very generous. Although...

She pauses, decides to go there.

It's not really my place to say, but... Your father would sometimes offer more. There are some gifts that only someone in a position such as yourself can provide. The gift of opportunity. There is Brian, for example. And his—

DARCY. Inventions. Yes.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Yes. They drive me mad but even I know that he has a mind.

DARCY. Brian is an excellent footman.

MRS. REYNOLDS. And with some guidance, who knows what more he could do. When your father saw potential in some of the children of the household on more than one occasion he provided means for advancement.

Darcy rises to leave.

DARCY. Thank you for your thoughts, Mrs. Reynolds. I'll return upstairs.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Yes sir and I do hope you'll consider what an opportunity could mean for Brian. He's a good boy.

DARCY. *(Becomes defensive and cold.)* Everyone said the same of young Wickham. After the opportunity that my father provided him was so abused, I am of no mind to repeat that particular mistake.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Brian is not Wickham.

DARCY. Wickham wasn't Wickham when he was a boy, and yet his behavior has come to plague us all and I'll thank you to judge him as harshly as I do.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I do judge him.

DARCY. First the corruption of my father's generosity, then the near corruption of my sister to get his greedy hands on her fortune. And the mess he nearly made of poor Lydia's reputation until I forced his hand. You have always held a softness in your heart for him and it has made you blind.

MRS. REYNOLDS. That's not true, sir.

DARCY. You could never see him for what he was, *never*.

MRS. REYNOLDS. *(Exploding at him.)* I saw that his life was harder than yours, much harder, every day it was harder. Always in your shadow, watching you enjoy every opportunity while he drifted, wanting the life you had and it turning him desperate. I don't approve of his actions but I do understand where they came from.

Pause. Darcy is pissed. His silence betrays this. Lydia enters.

LYDIA. Oh hello! I was looking for my dress? There was a maid mending it and...sorry. Did I interrupt?

MRS. REYNOLDS. I apologize, sir. If there is anything else I can do—

DARCY. No. That will be all.

Mr. Darcy leaves.

END

LYDIA. *(To herself.)* Mr. Darcy can be a bit finicky, can he not? Are you all right Mrs. Reynolds?

MRS. REYNOLDS. *(Flustered by that interaction.)* Perfectly fine, thank you for asking, dear. *(Getting it together.)* Now, what can I do for you?

LYDIA. My dress?

MRS. REYNOLDS. Your dress. Of course. I'll inquire with Cassie and send it up straightaway.

LYDIA. Actually, I'm happy to wait. Down here.

MRS. REYNOLDS. *(Taken aback.)* Down here?

Side #5
Cassie/Brian

START

CASSIE. Now, if you'll let me return to my reading, without further comment, I'd be grateful.

BRIAN. Just don't let Mrs. Reynolds catch you reading on the job.

CASSIE. I would never.

BRIAN. She's hard on you because she sees your potential. But I told Mrs. Reynolds how perfect you are.

CASSIE. You did *what*?

BRIAN. For the job I mean.

CASSIE. Are you mad! Do not praise me in front of Mrs. Reynolds. She'll think *you* think I need your help. And I don't!

BRIAN. No, that's not it, only I know how hard it is for you; I lost my parents too.

CASSIE. Your parents worked at Pemberley, you had a home here when they died.

BRIAN. I know, but I'm saying I understand—

CASSIE. You don't. I wish to earn my place here on my own. I'm not here for charity.

BRIAN. I'm only trying to look out for you. You might want to find someone with a good job, someone to take care of you.

CASSIE. I did not come here looking for someone to take care of me. I don't need that and I don't *want it*.

BRIAN. What is it you want, then?

CASSIE. I want books and tea and time to enjoy them. I want my own room and my own bed. I want to live without worry, for once in my life, with security that lasts beyond an odd job for a week. I want to start every day knowing I have tasks ahead and end every day knowing I did a good job.

BRIAN. That sounds like a wife to me.

Cassie is aghast at this thoughtless comment.

CASSIE. I've just got the job I've always dreamed of and a chance to take care of myself. I won't give that up, not for a husband or anyone else.

BRIAN. But you were the one talking of romance and love!

CASSIE. Love is about knowing another person and letting them

be exactly who they are. If you can't understand that, you either do not listen, or *you do not care*.

BRIAN. Cassie, wait—

CASSIE. Perhaps you should borrow this after all. You are clearly in need of instruction.

She shoves the book at him and starts to storm out.

BRIAN. Cassie.

He's hurt, limping, bloody lip, jacket torn.

END

My god!

WICKHAM. Help me.

CASSIE. *Good lord*. Who is that?

WICKHAM. *Help me*.

BRIAN. What do you think you're doing coming in here?

WICKHAM. I need to sit, I need water—no. Ale is better.

BRIAN. You are not getting ale, sir. You are getting out of here now.

WICKHAM. Does she still keep it in the cellar there? Of course she does.

BRIAN. You are already drunk and you're not staying here. Get out and get gone man.

CASSIE. You know this man?

WICKHAM. Brian and I have known each other since he was a boy, miss, and if he would recall that, he might be more inclined to help me.

BRIAN. You cannot be here.

CASSIE. Brian, he's hurt.

BRIAN. Cassie, he's drunk. Back outside.

Mrs. Reynolds hurries on.

MRS. REYNOLDS. What on earth is going on?

WICKHAM. Good evening.

BRIAN. He just showed up, Mrs. Reynolds, he just barged in.

WICKHAM. I did, but to my credit I have just weathered a brawl so I might not be thinking straight as an arrow.

Side #6
**Mrs. Reynolds/
Wickham**

BRIAN. I told him to go.

WICKHAM. You cannot turn me away.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Yes I can.

WICKHAM. But you won't. Because you're a better person than most. Because you taught me to read, to fasten my shoes. You know me better than anyone, Mrs. Reynolds.

MRS. REYNOLDS. That I do, George Wickham.

A beat for Mrs. Reynolds to decide...

(To Brian.) Fetch some water.

Blackout.

Scene 5

Late that night.

*Wickham is seated in a fresh shirt examining his wounds.
Mrs. Reynolds brings him some hot tea and begins tending
to cuts on his face.*

START

MRS. REYNOLDS. How many times have we sat together at this very table, my tending to your cuts and bruises?

WICKHAM. A few.

MRS. REYNOLDS. *Quite a few. Sit still.*

He winces at his wound but then smiles to her.

WICKHAM. Thank you, Mrs. Reynolds. I have missed you.

MRS. REYNOLDS. And I you, my dear.

WICKHAM. You have always helped me when I needed it, always understood me.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I've certainly tried, George, but you do make it difficult sometimes. You know very well you are not welcome at Pemberley, why in heaven's name would you think you could come here at Christmas, and bleeding no less?

WICKHAM. I had to come here. I was attacked.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Who attacked you, and why?

WICKHAM. That remains...unclear.

MRS. REYNOLDS. It looks fairly clear that he wanted to harm you, or at the very least embarrass you.

WICKHAM. He did *not* embarrass me, and the harm he did was (*Wincing again.*) minor. I was in the village inn, and suddenly this "gentleman" comes to me shouting some nonsense about his sister and lands his fist squarely in my side! I was caught completely unawares, which is the only reason it is not *his* wounds now being tended to.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I see. What did you do to his sister?

WICKHAM. I do not know his sister! Obviously, he meant to throttle some other person. I barely got out of there with my life.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Ah. So. What did you do to his sister?

WICKHAM. Nothing. I swear I have no idea which one his sister is.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Which one?

WICKHAM. Which person, whatever person. I am innocent.

Mrs. Reynolds reacts to this.

I was simply making my way near enough to find my beloved when I was robbed!

MRS. REYNOLDS. Robbed or attacked?

WICKHAM. Both! Yes! I'm desperate. You must help me. Lydia belongs with me. I am determined to make a new start. My wife is here, I want her back.

MRS. REYNOLDS. You are in no state to see her right now, and in the dead of night no less. You know very well what will happen if Mr. Darcy finds out you're here.

WICKHAM. It is not right that I'm down with the servants and she's up there.

Wickham rises to go upstairs. She stops him.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Down with the servants, indeed. I daresay no one is good enough for you anymore, are they?

WICKHAM. I do not mean anything against you, of course. It is just Darcy—always Darcy—the obstacle to my every happiness. He cannot keep me from my wife. It is not right.

END

Side #7
Wickham/Brian

He rises again, she blocks him again.

MRS. REYNOLDS. He is not keeping you from her, I am. You stay here at my great generosity and if you make a fuss and tempt this house I will be generous no more.

WICKHAM. I only want to speak to her, Mrs. Reynolds. Please. Let me speak with my wife.

Beat.

MRS. REYNOLDS. You'll collect yourself and we will discuss it in the morning.

WICKHAM. Thank you.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Until then, *stay below stairs.*

Wickham nods. Cassie enters.

This is Cassie. Cassie will take your clothes to the laundry.

CASSIE. Yes ma'am.

WICKHAM. Might I request a little lavender in the rinse?

CASSIE. Yessir.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Don't waste the herb, Cassie.

CASSIE. Yes ma'am.

Cassie hurries off with the clothes as Brian comes in with others. He tries to get Cassie's attention, but she stalks by him. Brian hands Wickham the clothes. There is noticeable tension between them.

BRIAN. These might fit you. It is likely to get cold tonight.

WICKHAM. Thank you, friend. And I do not blame you for your reception, the state I was in. Had our positions been reversed, I would have barred you from your own home as well.

BRIAN. This is not your home. It is my job to protect this estate and the people in it.

WICKHAM. Of course it is! Standing guard for the Pemberley reputation! I understand. And I forgive you.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I must have missed the part where he *asked* for your forgiveness. Now Brian's going to watch over you while I get on with running the estate. I have plenty to do besides making you tea.

WICKHAM. Watch over me? Am I a prisoner now?

MRS. REYNOLDS. No. A prisoner cannot leave. But you can and should, before anyone else knows you're here.

WICKHAM. Brian.

START

BRIAN. Mr. Wickham.

WICKHAM. So I am Mr. Wickham now. We were once friends.

BRIAN. Perhaps as children.

WICKHAM. Then why not tell me what has been happening at Pemberley since I've been gone.

BRIAN. Below stairs is always the same.

WICKHAM. You have found a place here, working hard to keep the estate as fine as ever.

BRIAN. I am happy to do the work that is asked of me.

WICKHAM. Good. I would only worry that a smart man like you will be wasting his talents, his dreams, toiling away for another man's prosperity and never his own.

BRIAN. You may keep your worry. I only ask that you stay put and not make trouble.

WICKHAM. I am content to stay down here. Especially if that maid comes around again. She is very pretty.

BRIAN. She is none of your concern.

WICKHAM. (*Seeing Brian's reaction to his mention of Cassie.*) I may be able to give you some advice on how to win her.

BRIAN. I have no interest in winning her.

WICKHAM. Why ever not? She's...here.

BRIAN. *She's none of your concern.* Besides, your reputation with women is not the kind I want.

WICKHAM. Reputation is just another word for experience! I know women, my friend. Regardless of station—maid or great lady—they all want the same thing: to feel beautiful and to believe they are free. Your role as a man is to flatter their sense of vanity and present them with the guise of liberty, all whilst aiming them toward exactly what you want.

END

Side #8

Wickham/Lizzy

LIZZY. Then you must show it to me, at once!

Mrs. Reynolds hands over Wickham's letter. Lizzy reads.

How came this letter to be in your possession?

MRS. REYNOLDS. Cassie found it while emptying Mr. Wickham's pockets. She should not have read it, but when she did she immediately came to me.

LIZZY. She was right to do so. Do you believe the contents of this letter could be true?

MRS. REYNOLDS. I do not know why one would put such things in writing were they not true.

LIZZY. (*Reading.*) To Mr. George Wickham. Sir, you must instantly realize why I write to you—

MRS. REYNOLDS. Trust me, ma'am, it is worse read aloud.

LIZZY. It's scandalous! It's absolutely...

A thought pops into Mrs. Darcy's mind.

Oh my. What if...oh my.

MRS. REYNOLDS. What now?

LIZZY. Perhaps...nothing. But perhaps... Mrs. Reynolds, I must go to the village first thing tomorrow morning. This letter could mean...everything. I must find this man, immediately.

MRS. REYNOLDS. On Christmas Eve morning? At the very least, take Brian with you.

LIZZY. If you can spare him. In the meantime, Mr. Wickham must not be discovered. Lydia cannot know he is here and for all that is holy, neither can Mr. Darcy. May I rely on you?

MRS. REYNOLDS. I am, as always, at your service.

LIZZY. Thank you, and thank Cassie, too. She did right by coming to you.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Let us reserve our praise until we see how this ends.

LIZZY. Until the morning, Mrs. Reynolds. I wish you a good night.

Lizzy turns to leave, runs straight into Wickham, who stumbles slightly before regaining whatever small composure he can muster.

START

WICKHAM. Elizabeth! Good evening.

LIZZY. Mr. Wickham, you're here.

MRS. REYNOLDS. He is here, and he will not be so informal to the lady of this house, regardless of our surroundings.

WICKHAM. Excuse me, Mrs. Darcy. I did not mean to offend. How wonderful to see you again.

LIZZY. Would I could say the same of you; you look as though you have run into some misfortune.

WICKHAM. This? It is but a scratch, a badge of honor for those who must contend with the sufferings of lesser men.

LIZZY. Honor, you say? And what was the substance of this honorable disagreement?

WICKHAM. Honestly I cannot recall.

LIZZY. Mr. Darcy has an excellent memory. (*Pointedly.*) It is a trait we share.

MRS. REYNOLDS. As it is very late, I'd suggest we all return to bed.

WICKHAM. I am yours to command, Mrs. Reynolds. Mrs. Darcy, a good evening.

He starts to leave.

LIZZY. Mr. Wickham.

He stops.

You are my sister's husband and it is only to protect her that I do not disclose your whereabouts to my husband and the rest of this house. I will not have you upset the holiday.

WICKHAM. (*Talking about the past as well as the present.*) It was never my intention to upset you, Mrs. Darcy.

A slight moment between them as Wickham leaves **END**

MRS. REYNOLDS. I am sorry, ma'am.

LIZZY. That man! I must to bed, if I am to be off early in the morning.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Good night to you, ma'am.

Lizzy leaves. Then returns instantly.

LIZZY. I'm a fool to think I'll have any sleep after this. Might I trouble you for more of those delicious biscuits?

Side #9
Cassie/Wickham

MRS. REYNOLDS. Of course ma'am.

Mrs. Reynolds hands her a tin of biscuits and Lizzy leaves with them. She sits alone for a moment before Brian peers around the corner and enters.

BRIAN. Did Mrs. Darcy say I'm to the village tomorrow with her?

MRS. REYNOLDS. You know full well what she said, I heard you listening.

BRIAN. How do you *hear* someone *listening*? That doesn't make sense.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Don't question me.

BRIAN. I cannot believe I used to think Wickham so fine a man.

MRS. REYNOLDS. Take care how you judge others, Brian. At any moment, you might catch a man at either his best or at his worst. Be ready to depart with Mrs. Darcy first thing in the morning. Good night.

She dismisses Brian, and is left alone with her thoughts.

Scene 7

The next day, morning, December 24th. It is quiet in the servants' hall until Mr. Wickham shuffles in, searching for his letter, clearly sore and deeply hungover.

Cassie enters with a dress to mend, speaking very loudly to annoy Wickham.

START

CASSIE. Good morning, sir, how is your headache?!

WICKHAM. (*Wincing at the noise.*) Better, thank you.

CASSIE. Very good, sir.

She slams something down on the table nearby, making him wince again.

WICKHAM. Cassie, is it?

CASSIE. The same name I had yesterday.

WICKHAM. I have a rather urgent request of you. I have misplaced a letter. It was in my pocket and I am wondering if you came across it when you took my things for washing last night. I must recover it.

CASSIE. A letter? I don't recall a letter.

WICKHAM. You didn't see it? A letter? Addressed to me.

CASSIE. I do know how letters work. And no, I have not seen it.

WICKHAM. I would be grateful if you would alert me immediately should you find it. It is correspondence of the utmost importance.

CASSIE. Certainly, sir.

WICKHAM. Thank you, and please call me George. I am the son of a steward, I know life downstairs. And I feel we are friends, now that we have agreed to help each other.

CASSIE. Have we?

WICKHAM. Well, perhaps after you find my letter I can help you in return.

Brian starts to enter the hall, but stops, listening.

CASSIE. And how would you help me?

WICKHAM. (*Sizing her up.*) You're new, aren't you. I can tell. New and not yet recognized for your entire worth.

CASSIE. That is none of your business, sir.

WICKHAM. (*Continuing to read her like a book.*) You are a village girl, spent your whole life looking to this grand house as the height of importance. Admiring this fine estate, and all the people in it.

CASSIE. You assume to know quite a lot about someone you've only just met.

WICKHAM. You're clever, strong, you can take care of yourself. And like me I bet you thought this place would provide everything you could dream of if you could truly belong here. But let me tell you, it will not, and people like us will never truly belong in a place like this. Now I know there is a world beyond Pemberley. I could show you things far better than this.

CASSIE. And why would you do that for me?

WICKHAM. Because friends do favors for each other. We are so alike, you and I. We could be each other's friend in this world... If you could peek your head into Mrs. Reynolds' sitting room and check her desk for my letter? My dear—

END

Wickham gets close to touch her shoulder or back or flips a

Side #10
Lydia/Cassie

ribbon on her dress just enough for Brian to see and instantly flinch, turning and hurrying away betrayed and shocked.

He leaves too fast, not in time to hear Cassie, as her head snaps up, a look of rage. She is inches from Wickham's face.

CASSIE. *Not. Your. Dear.*

My friendship, my confidence and my favor is only given to those who are of better stuff than you.

WICKHAM. Find me that letter, girl. And watch your tongue around your betters.

CASSIE. Oh... I do.

Mr. Wickham takes his now throbbing headache and exits.

Cassie is shaking she is so mad. Also worried she has just yelled at someone above her station and she might be fired. She takes deep breaths.

Just get the man some tea! Make sure he doesn't leave the hall! How hard can that be? Two days! You cannot last two days before—

START

LYDIA. Oh! I'm sorry! I didn't mean to interrupt. But you don't seem to be speaking to an actual person.

Lydia looks around, as if she might have missed something.

Cassie quickly checks to make sure Mr. Wickham has completely gone and stands, fumbling with the dress she was mending.

CASSIE. I was just mending your dress, Mrs. Wickham. I am nearly done in fact.

LYDIA. Oh, well, that's lovely! I wondered if that split in the lace could even be fixed.

CASSIE. Just took a steady hand. Shall I bring it up to you when I've finished.

LYDIA. I'd honestly rather wait. It is intolerable upstairs.

CASSIE. Is it?

Lydia nibbles on biscuits as Cassie sews.

LYDIA. And it is nice to talk to...a friend. May I call you a friend?

CASSIE. Of course ma'am.

LYDIA. Oh good. I have need of one. I don't know why but the holiday seems to make everyone just a little bit more so than they already are. And how it all makes me long for my dear Wickham. Without my dear husband, especially at Christmas—well, nothing makes you feel more lonely than being in a room filled with people.

CASSIE. I am very sorry to hear that ma'am.

LYDIA. I should be used to it by now. My husband is so often away on business, you see. But oh, when he is home and we are together, that is what makes all the rest worth it.

CASSIE. Are you sure?

LYDIA. Sure of what?

CASSIE. That the rest is worth it?

LYDIA. Of course it is. Consider the alternative—no man at all!

CASSIE. That does not sound so bad to me.

LYDIA. You sound just like Lizzy! Or, rather, how Lizzy used to sound before she said yes to Mr. Darcy. Do you know Mr. Collins?

CASSIE. No.

LYDIA. Good for you. He's got the charm of a housefly but he's too big to swat. She said no to his proposal, thank goodness. Did you know my sister even said no to Mr. Darcy himself once.

CASSIE. I cannot imagine anyone saying no to Mr. Darcy.

LYDIA. Well she did. She turned him down insisting that she'd rather be alone than with a man she did not care for.

CASSIE. As I said, no man at all does not sound so bad.

LYDIA. Oh come now. I think you must be fretting over a particular man or else you would not say such a thing. Who is he? What can he offer? How tall is he in riding boots?

CASSIE. All men are the same. A man sees only what he wishes to in a woman—someone to take care of him, there to do his bidding, one who is already a servant so why not a servant for him? They assume that marriage is all a woman could ever want.

LYDIA. It is all I ever wanted. Is it not what you want?

CASSIE. I want my own life. It is more precious than anything a man could ever offer me.

Side #11
Wickham/Lydia

ACT TWO

Scene 1

Christmas morning. Dawn.

Lydia sneaks downstairs and Wickham sneaks out of his room. They embrace.

START

WICKHAM. My darling.

LYDIA. Finally!

WICKHAM. At last.

LYDIA. Together!

WICKHAM. At last!

LYDIA. Oh my dear husband. You've been here this whole time?

WICKHAM. And fighting every minute to see you. They wouldn't let me see you.

LYDIA. I knew you'd come for me.

WICKHAM. Of course I would. I always do.

LYDIA. It's so hard when you're away, George. Sometimes I think you've forgotten me.

WICKHAM. How could I? My perfect little—

LYDIA. ...bird.

WICKHAM. bird!

She pulls away from him. Toying with her bracelet.

LYDIA. George this is not what I want for us. Meeting in secret, kept apart, always unsure of where we stand, always waiting! You have been gone so long.

WICKHAM. I know and I am sorry. You know that I leave you only because I must. It is for you I work so hard and travel so far. For us.

LYDIA. For us.

WICKHAM. It's always for us. To make a better fortune. You know this.

LYDIA. I do but... None of my sisters' husbands leave them so long and so often, better fortune or no.

WICKHAM. Your sisters and their husbands do not understand us. But it is they who are wrong. We are alone in this life. It is you and I together against the world. That's why I came here to find you. Fought my way through attackers and rogues—

LYDIA. Attackers?

WICKHAM. And rogues to be by your side, knowing full well that I would be turned away, but nonetheless I came.

LYDIA. But why, George? Why are you turned away from this house? Why do they keep us apart at every turn?

WICKHAM. All you need to know is that I am here, despite the constant hostility I have weathered since my arrival. Spend another Christmas without my beloved? Unthinkable. I'm lost without you.

LYDIA. It does not always feel that way, George. It feels—

WICKHAM. I know how it feels—

LYDIA. No, George, you don't. When you are away you have friends and engagements while I am alone, with no one to talk to and nothing to do. We have no money, the shops won't give me credit, we cannot entertain, and even if we could I haven't had a dress made since we wed, we must move house so often it is exhausting. I hate it! I had to travel alone, George. I was afraid and spent more money than I should have.

WICKHAM. How much did you spend?

LYDIA. All that I had.

WICKHAM. How much did you have? Lydia, we need that money.

LYDIA. I had no choice! Don't be cross with me. Father will give me more. And Lizzy too.

WICKHAM. Did they give you this bracelet too?

LYDIA. This? It is a cheap token I have been pretending is a gift from my adoring husband.

WICKHAM. Please don't be angry, darling. I have plans for us. Great plans.

LYDIA. What plans?

Side #12
Darcy/
Wickham

DARCY. If you were a gentleman you would go and never come back here again.

WICKHAM. I will stay where I am until I have what is mine.

DARCY. *Nothing here is yours.*

WICKHAM. I *am* a part of this family, Darcy.

DARCY. Yes I know. It was something I rather *insisted* upon.

WICKHAM. And never cease to remind me of, at every turn.

DARCY. Because you never change! You would have abandoned poor Lydia with nothing but a ruined reputation until I paid you to marry. I all but walked you down the aisle myself.

WICKHAM. To control me, once again.

DARCY. To legitimize you both. I gave you decency and here you come to take further advantage.

WICKHAM. Of course I have to take advantage! When was I ever given advantage in this world?

DARCY. Why must you always be given? Why can you never earn?

WICKHAM. How dare you speak of earning anything? You had everything handed to you. You watched me wither in your shadow and did nothing.

DARCY. I trusted you! My father trusted you! That is everything!

WICKHAM. I loved your father. But in the end, I was no better off than I would have been as any other son of a steward. Educated well but always just out of reach from the finest society, the most beautiful women, the wealth and riches that I would never attain. Your father's generosity brought me nothing but disappointment.

DARCY. Because you used my father. You betrayed him and I would not let you do that to me nor to my sister.

WICKHAM. How is your dear sister? Will she be joining us for Christmas?

DARCY. *(Full brother rage at her very mention.)* She will never spend a moment in the same room as you ever again. If you are not gone before she arrives I will add to your list of injuries and it will be my pleasure.

Fierce full pause.

WICKHAM. All my life, I have lived under your scrutiny. All my life you have been there, impeding me, waiting for me to fail. But now, I plan to go where the influence of Fitzwilliam Darcy means nothing and I will live free of you.

DARCY. And where is that?

WICKHAM. Abroad. As soon as the new year turns.

DARCY. Abroad.

WICKHAM. Indeed.

DARCY. Make no mistake, in any country, in any language, you will be seen as you are, recognized as a liar and a cheat. You can run away like a child, but like a child you will not get far on your own.

WICKHAM. I will not be on my own. Lydia will be coming as she is my most beloved wife. Thanks to you. I certainly wouldn't have married that silly girl any other way. But now she *is* lawfully mine, as is her meager fortune, as is her entire future.

Silence.

DARCY. I will not allow you to take her.

WICKHAM. You do not have to allow anything. My wife. My life.

DARCY. There are no words for how...despicable a man you are.

WICKHAM. The word you struggle to find is *practical*. I will get what I want.

DARCY. That you will not.

WICKHAM. I have so far. Except your sister. I shall always think of her as the dove that got away.

Wickham has officially crossed the line.

Darcy hauls off and hits him, beautifully, in the face.

He exits, leaving Wickham on the floor. Mrs. Reynolds enters.

MRS. REYNOLDS. You just cannot stop getting hit, can you?

Mrs. Reynolds helps Wickham offstage.

Lydia emerges having heard it all. She is shocked, like ice water down her back. Everything about her husband's debauchery is confirmed.

Her love is a lie.

At first she seems lost, helpless, scared at this news.

END

Side #13 Brian/Cassie

Then rage overcomes her in an instant and she grabs whatever is nearby and throws it on the ground.

As soon as the thing hits or shatters she changes to sheepishness and tries to clean it up rapidly and quietly.

Cassie runs in having heard the noise. Cassie sees the mess and starts helping Lydia clean. They clean together. In silent acknowledgement of what's happened.

Perhaps they share a glance and a supportive smile. Mrs. Reynolds returns, stands in the doorway, observing this moment. Lights dim.

Scene 2

It is later that morning. The household is very busy preparing for Christmas Day dinner and the ebb and flow of houseguests, but for a moment the hall is quiet as Cassie distractedly busies herself with a task.

START

Brian enters, carrying all of Anne de Bourgh's belongings.

BRIAN. Cassie.

CASSIE. No.

BRIAN. Please Cassie, please listen to me.

CASSIE. Listen to what? What could you possibly say?

BRIAN. I am trying to apologize, trying to say I'm sorry.

CASSIE. Would you please put down Miss de Bourgh's luggage. You'll ruin it.

BRIAN. It's not my fault she arrives late, then decides to leave early, and then decides to stay again.

CASSIE. Don't touch it. I have packed and unpacked her so many times the past two days, I know how it all goes together.

BRIAN. Let me help. I can help.

CASSIE. No. You. Can't.

Cassie turns to go.

BRIAN. Please. I told you I'm sorry, I will say it a hundred times.

CASSIE. And still it will not be enough to repair what you have done. I have to leave.

BRIAN. Miss de Bourgh can wait a few moments for her bonnets.

CASSIE. *Leave Pemberley, Brian.*

BRIAN. Leave Pemberley?

CASSIE. The way Mrs. Reynolds looked at me. The embarrassment of it, the accusation.

BRIAN. I meant that look for Wickham, not you!

CASSIE. It doesn't matter. When those kinds of accusations are made it is always the women who are blamed first. I shall leave before I'm asked to. I have lost everything thanks to you.

BRIAN. That has not happened.

CASSIE. It has happened! You do what you like without regard for whom you hurt, *just like Wickham.*

Brian certainly had never considered himself like Wickham...

BRIAN. I just... I don't know why it made me so angry, to think you would be drawn in by him, to think he could earn your trust.

CASSIE. You saw Wickham trying to lure me into his confidence, but did you see me deny him? Did you bother to ask me what happened? No. You think you know everything, Brian. You never account for others, you never ask, and you never listen. When you care for someone, Brian, you listen.

BRIAN. I am listening now.

CASSIE. It is too late for that. I am telling Mrs. Reynolds I will leave after dinner tonight.

BRIAN. I want to fix this. Tell me how.

CASSIE. I am not one of your little inventions that can be so easily fixed.

BRIAN. Please, don't go. Cassie.

CASSIE. It is too late.

And with that, she is out.

Brian is a flustered mess and heads out the back door.

Lizzy enters pulling Mr. Darcy down the stairs.

END

LIZZY. Because we should not speak of this upstairs.

DARCY. Good lord, why not?

LIZZY. Go. Keep going.

DARCY. Do not push me!

LIZZY. Go!

DARCY. I will not until you tell me where you were yesterday morning—Christmas Eve! We have family upstairs, a ne'er-do-well downstairs, puddings with *raisins*. What have you been doing that was so urgent?

LIZZY. I was in the village.

DARCY. Wickham is absconding abroad with your sister, and you're to the village!

LIZZY. Excuse me—who is absconding with whom?

DARCY. He and Lydia are off as soon as the new year arrives.

LIZZY. What? No. No, he will not take her. *Again*.

DARCY. He's free to do what he likes with his own wife.

LIZZY. Which is why I intend to free her from that distinction as soon as I can.

DARCY. Free her from *what* distinction?

LIZZY. The distinction of being Wickham's wife.

That got his attention.

DARCY. Divorce is what you intend to pursue? Divorce?!

LIZZY. Exactly! Lydia can finally regain her freedom, you can finally escape this tie to a man you despise, and we could finally repair the great mistake of forcing their marriage in the first place.

DARCY. Darling. Your spirit is admirable but your strategy is flawed. It's simply unheard of: a woman gaining a divorce on her own?

LIZZY. It's not unheard of. I know of...*one*.

DARCY. It is impossible to initiate, difficult to prove cause for, and to find a judge who would be sympathetic to a woman—

LIZZY. I have information that will make you reconsider everything. This letter was found in Wickham's pocket. (*Handing him the letter.*)

DARCY. (*Reading.*) To Mr. George Wickham. Sir, you must instantly

realize why I write to you on behalf of my sister whom you know intimately, which has resulted in a most unfortunate situation for her. I anticipate your immediate reply with your promise of marriage as we expect the arrival of the child in the early spring. With haste, Mr. Charles Worthing.

Pause.

No.

LIZZY. Yes.

DARCY. No.

LIZZY. I'm not sure why this is a shock to anyone. This is what brought me to the village on Christmas Eve morning, to find this Charles Worthing, who told me everything.

Mr. Worthing's sister, who is the unfortunate subject of this letter, swears the child is Wickham's, and that he made her promises. Mr. Worthing went to Bath to confront Wickham, only to learn that our dear brother was, in fact, already married. He pursued Wickham here to attain satisfaction for his sister, finding him at the inn and causing his injuries.

On reading the letter, I thought to contact Wickham's former commanding officer who, in a lengthy response I received just this morning, corroborated the young lady's account in detail and reported that Wickham's reputation had been further blackened by a multitude of debts and lies stemming from his extravagant lifestyle. Wickham came to Pemberley presumably to recover Lydia and flee to where these scandals could not reach him. I suspect taking Lydia has less to do with her companionship than it does with obtaining necessary funds from our father to support his escape.

Pause.

Don't you see? Wickham can be proved to be a scoundrel! He will finally pay for a lifetime of deceit, and Lydia can be free of him. We all can.

DARCY. You are a masterwork.

LIZZY. I know.

END

Off they go! Mrs. Reynolds enters, having heard their conversation and the threat to Wickham's safety. She considers, and exits quickly.

Side #15
**Lydia/Darcy/
Wickham/Lizzy**

Lydia, talk to me.
WICKHAM. There are some conversations that are best kept between me and my brother and his wife. We are trying to decide where to go on our honeymoon and what to do together.
LYDIA. What?
LYDIA. Paris, we already said Paris, are we not going to Paris?
WICKHAM. Of course we are.
LIZZY. Absolutely not!
LYDIA. Lizzy, I... I know it seems impulsive. But perhaps a trip is just what we need.
LIZZY. Lydia, he is deceiving you!
WICKHAM. You accuse me, based on what information?
DARCY. Based on decades of knowing your true character.
LIZZY. Based on a recent conversation I had with a Mr. Charles Worthing.
LYDIA. Who is Charles Worthing?
WICKHAM. Darling—
LIZZY. *(To Wickham.)* I held my tongue once before about your behavior and have lived to regret it. I will not do it again.
WICKHAM. Don't listen to this darling—
LIZZY. Mr. Worthing confided to me how you were run out of Bath, chased by creditors. You must go abroad because you are so heavily in debt there is no place in England left to go. Shall I spare Lydia from knowing the rest?
LYDIA. What does everyone seem to know that I don't? Lizzy, please stop discussing my business as though it were yours to manage.
WICKHAM. Exactly! Do you see now, my love, how they conspire against us?
LIZZY. We are not conspiring, we are trying to help you, sister.
LYDIA. I will not let you protect me from the truth anymore.
WICKHAM. The truth is that I am the only one who loves you and understands you and wants to take you away from this place immediately.

DARCY. Do not even think of it.
WICKHAM. Lydia.
LIZZY. Lydia, come to me.
WICKHAM. Lydia now.
LYDIA. Will all of you never cease giving me orders! This is my life and I'll have a say in it! *(Turns to Darcy, maturing in an instant.)* Mr. Darcy, I trust that you will tell me the truth. Sir.
DARCY. *(Deciding.)* There is a woman. She is with child.
WICKHAM. Lydia—
LYDIA. A woman?
LIZZY. There is also a letter. Which proves the child is his.
Wickham's face falls as Lizzy pulls out the letter, handing it to Lydia to read. Before she can read it, Wickham grabs the letter.
WICKHAM. That letter proves nothing except a young woman is determined to spread shameful lies because of her own immodest behavior.
Cassie steals the letter back and hands it to Lydia.
DARCY. The letter led us to her brother, Mr. Worthing, whose right and left fist you recall from the inn the other night. We also received a letter from members of your regiment confirming you had been seen with the girl and had boasted of your conquest. There is evidence to obtain a hearing before a judge to dissolve this marriage that never should have been.
LYDIA. *(Somewhat sharply.)* Mr. Darcy, while I thank you and Lizzy for your concern, please do me the courtesy of allowing me to decide what will become of my marriage. *(Turning to Wickham.)* Is this true, George?
WICKHAM. I told you these people will do anything to discredit me.
LYDIA. Is this true, George?
WICKHAM. Of course it's not true! And I will not stand here and be interrogated by a *silly girl*. Either you believe your own husband or—

LYDIA. Go.

Lydia stares him down. For once in her life, she is in complete control of the room. She has made her choice.

You may go.

Beat. Wickham knows when he's losing. He salvages what's left of his dignity.

WICKHAM. Yes I think I will. And I shall finally be free of you all for good.

DARCY. I would not exactly say free, Wickham. Officers have been alerted to your location by Mr. Worthing.

WICKHAM. Officers?

DARCY. If they are not coming for you already, they will be soon.

LIZZY. It seems once we started asking, it took very little to find... how many is it darling?

DARCY. Nearly a dozen.

LIZZY. Yes, nearly a dozen who will swear you owe thousands of pounds—gaming, debts, schemes. It would seem that while adultery is enough to free Lydia from this marriage, it is not enough to send you to jail. Being a confirmed cheat, however, is.

DARCY. I hear the jails in England are all full up, but ships are leaving for the convict colony in Australia every day. You did say you wanted to go abroad, did you not?

WICKHAM. Darcy. This is excessive. What would your father say?

DARCY. He believed in justice as much as he believed in generosity. He would say good riddance.

WICKHAM. Lydia, darling, please.

LYDIA. It is clear I have never been your darling, darling. And I am not the silly girl you ran off with.

WICKHAM. No, you'll be a divorced woman at eighteen. You will be notorious.

LYDIA. Hadn't you heard George, notorious is very in fashion these days. Now get out of my sister's house.

END

Lydia stands firm. Lizzy joins her sister and takes her hand in allegiance. Wickham turns to Mrs. Reynolds.

WICKHAM. Mrs. Reynolds—

MRS. REYNOLDS. No more, George. You will come here no more. I'll walk you out.

WICKHAM. Mrs. Reynolds.

MRS. REYNOLDS. I. Will walk. You out.

Wickham's entire demeanor changes. He is utterly alone, having lost the two people he thought would never turn their backs on him.

Mrs. Reynolds moves to take Wickham out the back door. Just as he is at the threshold, Lydia calls to him.

LYDIA. George.

With great poise she hands him the purse.

Merry Christmas.

Then, she turns her back on him. As does Mrs. Reynolds. Left with nothing Wickham takes the purse and walks out. Mrs. Reynolds stands at the threshold and watches him go. The room is suddenly brighter. Lydia turns to Lizzy, grabs her into a hug. Lizzy comforts her, holds her. Sisterhood.

LIZZY. Well done, sister.

LYDIA. I can't believe it.

LIZZY. Believe, my dear.

Lydia turns and hugs Darcy—which is way more than he is prepared for.

LYDIA. Thank you. For all that you did. For all you have done.

Darcy pats her back, giving Lizzy the "How do I stop this?" look.

DARCY. It was my great pleasure... sister.

LYDIA. Oh my! What will become of that poor woman?

DARCY. There is no need for her to suffer for his actions. I will write to Mr. Worthing after the new year to make arrangements for his sister.

LYDIA. I am relieved.