

*Whimsical chime music plays.*

ELIZABETH

*(Narrating, with an echo)*

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single person in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a spouse. However little known the feelings or views of such a person may be on their first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well-fixed in the minds of the surrounding families that they are considered the rightful property of some one or other of their children.

MRS. BENNET

My dear Mr. Bennet, have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?

MR. BENNET

I have not.

MRS. BENNET

But it is!

*Half a beat.*

MRS. BENNET

Do you not wish to know who has taken it?

MR. BENNET

*You* want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.

MRS. BENNET

Why, my dear, you must know: Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England. He came down Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately, that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week.

MR. BENNET

What is his name?

MRS. BENNET

Bingley.

MR. BENNET

Is he married or single?

MRS. BENNET

*(With a laugh)*

Single, my dear, to be sure. A single man of large fortune, four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our children!

MR. BENNET  
How so? How can it affect them?

MRS. BENNET  
*(With a scoff)*  
My dear Mr. Bennet, how can you be so tiresome? You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them!

MR. BENNET  
Is that his design in settling here?

MRS. BENNET  
*(With a scoff)*  
Design! Nonsense. How can you talk so? But, it *is* very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore, you must visit him as soon as he comes.

MR. BENNET  
I see no occasion for that. You and the children may go. Or, you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party.

*MRS. BENNET lets out a long, flattered laugh.*

MRS. BENNET  
My dear, you flatter me. But my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighborhood.

MR. BENNET  
It is more than I engage for, I assure you.

MRS. BENNET  
*(A howl)*  
Oh, you do not know what I suffer!