

CHAPTER 11

THE TRUTH ABOUT DARCY

Mr Bennet wrote to Mr Gardiner that he agreed to all of Wickham's conditions. It was now certain that Lydia and Wickham would soon be married in London. Jane and Elizabeth went to tell their mother the news. Mrs Bennet was so happy. She didn't care that they had to pay Wickham to marry her daughter. She forgot that Lydia and Wickham had lived together before marriage and that this was a dishonour for the family.

"Finally, one of my daughters is getting married," she exclaimed, happily. "My dream in life is to see *all* of you married. This is a wonderful beginning."

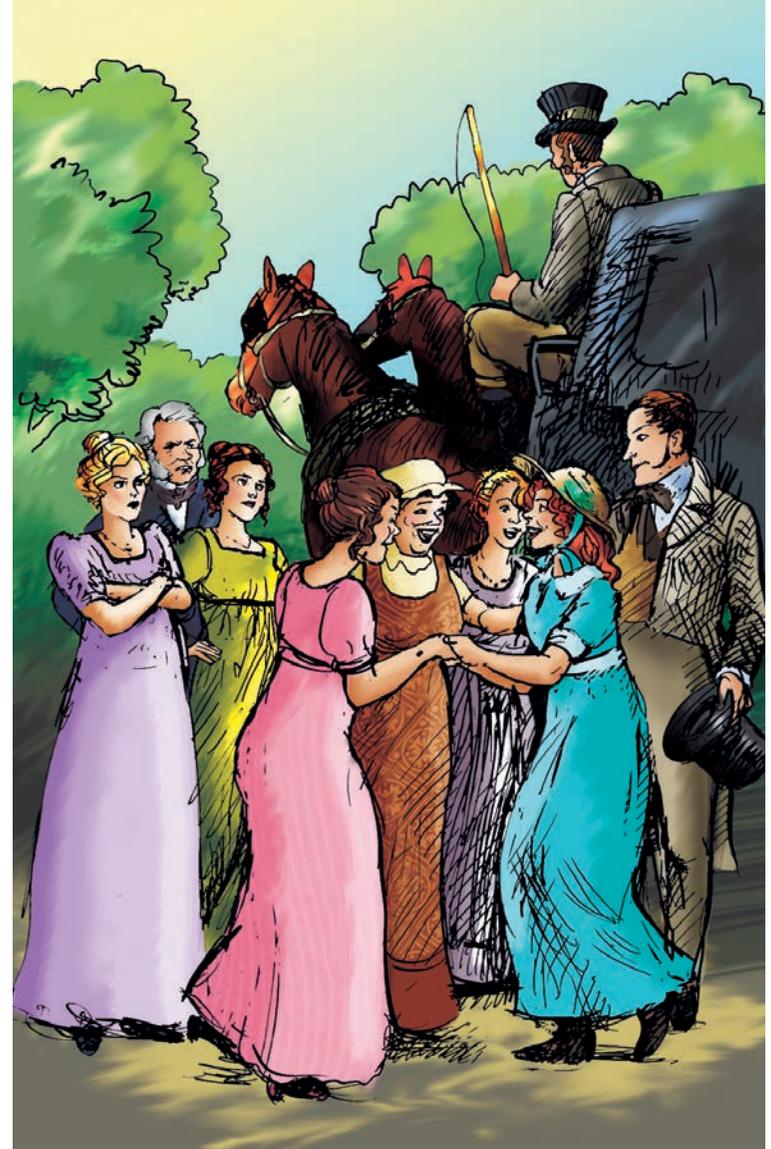
Then a letter arrived from Mr Gardiner. In it, he explained that Wickham would not go back to his old regiment. Someone had offered him a different army job. He and Lydia would live in the north, far from the Bennets' house. On their way to their new home, the young couple wanted to visit Lydia's family. At first, Mr Bennet didn't agree. "Wickham and Lydia behaved very badly and I don't want to see them," he said, angrily. But Mrs Bennet begged him to let them visit. Jane and Elizabeth were sorry for Lydia and finally convinced their father to agree to the visit.

"Lydia must feel horrible," Jane said to Elizabeth, when they were alone. "She has caused so much trouble for herself, and for the family."

"I don't understand why Wickham wants to come," Elizabeth said. "Isn't he embarrassed to see the family after his terrible behaviour? How can he ask for money to marry Lydia?"

But, when the young couple arrived, it was clear that Lydia didn't feel bad about her situation at all. She was as noisy and wild as always. She talked all the time and didn't notice that her father and her two older sisters were very quiet. Wickham was, as usual, charming and also acted as if nothing had happened.

The next morning, Lydia sat with Elizabeth. "I haven't told you about my wedding yet," she said. "You weren't in the room



Lydia was as noisy and wild as always.