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I chose to rewrite the Netherfield Ball scene from *Pride and Prejudice* because of how important it is to the plot. For the first time in the book, we see Darcy finally acting on his feelings towards Elizabeth; to me, it's one of the most important points in their relationship because it shows him putting himself out there and her trying to get to know him better (despite going about it the wrong way). I also love this scene because of the 2005 version of the movie with Kiera Knightley. The scene in the movie is shot so beautifully and so romantically, it shows how much of a turning point it is to their relationship. When everyone fades away and it's just the two of them dancing, it shows how much they mean to each other, no matter how badly they might not want that.

Part of the idea of setting it in modern times came from reading *Eligible* by Curtis Settinfield this semester, but for the most part, I think it had to do with the idea of people writing what they know. I know what it's like to be an English major at UGA and it's something I could see Elizabeth doing, just as I could see Wickham being pretentious and Bingley being Mr. UGA. All of the younger characters in *Pride and Prejudice* seem to fit a certain stereotype that you would find on a college campus and I thought it would be a lot of fun to explore that.

I wanted to keep the main part of the story as close as to Austen's version as possible, but change and expand it and tie it into the movie and *Eligible* in a way to make it work in modern day and not have it feel like I just took a scene, updated the language, and turned it in.

It was 9:30 on a Friday night and what was Liz Bennet doing? Homework. Or, at least, she was trying to, but was finding it very hard to concentrate with her roommate, Charlotte, talking nonstop about God only knows what. Liz tried to be a good roommate and listen to her, but when the conversation was, once again, about how Charlotte was going to die old and alone because she'd never had a boyfriend, she grew bored and turned back to William Wordsworth.

“Liz, are you even listening to me?” Charlotte demanded.

“Oh yes, Charlotte, I know all about how you're going to die a spinster, despite only being nineteen years old.” She replied, amused.

“Yes, and that's exactly why you need to get dressed so we can go to this party and I can finally meet someone.” Liz could only groan in response. “Oh, come on, Lizzy, why don't you want to go?”

“Is the only reason you want to go to meet boys? Because we can do that anywhere, it doesn't have to be at Charlie Bingley's birthday party! He only invited us to be nice to Jane, and let's put it where it is, she probably doesn't want us there.”

“Oh, please, of course she does! You're her best friend and I'm your best friend, so of course she does. Who else is she going to read into Charlie's every move with? You just don't want to go because Will Darcy was mean to you.”

“Will Darcy has nothing to do with it, I just have better things to do with my time, like study for Dr. Eberle's test on Monday so that way I can graduate and get a life. But even if he did, who can blame me for not wanting to spend my Friday night with the world's most arrogant, smug, self-righteous, rude, wanna-be frat boy there is?” She was getting heated at the very thought of it.

Charlotte could only laugh. “Well, even so, chances are you won’t even see him. Lord knows Charlie probably invited hundreds of people...like maybe your hot TA?” She asked, slyly.

Liz’s heart skipped a beat at the thought. From day one of the semester, she was interested in him, even though he was about to graduate and go on a three-year long expedition in Madagascar for his doctoral research. She started going to office hours every week just to talk to him, although anthropology was probably her easiest class. She knew he had to like her back, and the thought of seeing him at Charlie’s was enough to make her decide to put off studying until tomorrow and get dressed. Why hadn’t she thought of it earlier? Of course he would be there, Charlie knows him and Charlie’s so nice he probably invited everyone he knows. Oh, the thought of seeing George Wickham outside of class! It was almost too much for Liz, and it certainly overcame any thoughts she had about Will and the possibility of seeing him tonight. She wore her best outfit and the two were off, all thoughts of Will Darcy and William Wordsworth left in their dorm.

By the time they arrived, it was already 10:00 and the party was in full swing. Loud music was pumping through the air, it smelled like sweat and alcohol, and people were already very drunk. As quickly as the resolve to come to the party had hit Liz, it left as she looked around. George Wickham was far too sophisticated for this; he probably found drinking red wine and discussing ancient civilizations far superior to a party that looked like it was out of a bad movie. Immediately after thinking it, Liz decided that she, too, thought that was far superior to where she was now, and longed to be wherever he was. Not to mention, the last time she went to

office hours, they talked solely of their mutual dislike of Will! It really cemented her opinion on both parties; George was far superior when looking at the two.

Almost immediately upon stepping through the door, Colin—had he been waiting at the door for them?—came and asked Liz to dance. Colin was the son of an old family friend of her father's and so the two had grown up together; to Liz, he was like an annoying, extremely awkward, little brother, but she had lately suspected he had developed a bit of a crush on her. She tried to decline, saying she needed to find Jane and couldn't possibly leave Charlotte to fend for herself, but he simply wouldn't take no for an answer.

It had to have been the worst four minutes of her life. The song was some loud, fast rap song, yet Colin kept trying to take her in his arms and slow dance with her. She couldn't even tell what was the worst part about it! The awkward attempt at grinding on her? The trying to sweep her off her feet while a rapper yelled about hoes in the club? The fact that he only came up to her chest? It seriously had to be the lowest point in her life. As soon as the song was over, she ran off saying something about needing a drink (which wasn't an entire lie).

Liz grabbed Charlotte's arm and quickly made a beeline for the drinks. She hated punch, but needed something to help her forget what just happened to her. Without meaning to, she chugged the whole thing before she could even say a word. She needed more or else the thought would never go away. She took a second drink and when she came back up for air almost spit all of it out onto Will Darcy, who came up without her even realizing it. He asked her to dance and without even realizing what she was saying, she agreed.

He seemed as shocked as she did and quickly walked away. She looked over at Charlotte, eyes wide and immediately blurted, "did I really just agree to dance with him?"

"I think you did," Charlotte responded, sounding both shocked and amused.

“*Why* did I just yes?” Liz asked to no one in particular as she downed the remaining contents of her cup and started on a third. “Honestly, Charlotte, which do you think will be worse? Colin or Will?”

“Oh, stop. He’s not the devil and you know it. For all we know, you could come out of there having completely forgotten George Wickham and be in love with Will Darcy.”

“I can’t think of anything worse. If that happens, kill me.”

Charlotte rolled her eyes. “I think he’s waiting for you.” Liz finished her third cup in twenty minutes, and to no one’s surprise but her own, the alcohol finally hit her. Liz rushed outside, hoping fresh air would save her from tasting those three cups of punch again and Charlotte watched as Will quickly followed her out. She decided to give the two a few minutes before going to check on Liz.

“How do you feel?” Will asked Liz once he found her in the backyard.

“Like I’m going to throw up all over you if I just stand here thinking about it.”

He hid a smile. “Why don’t we go for a walk? Maybe that’ll help.”

Privately, Liz could think of nothing worse than going anywhere with him, for any reason, but she did have to admit that it was nice of him to come check on her, so she agreed. They walked for a few minutes in total silence, which she was fine with, until she realized that it would be worse for him if she forced him to talk. She made some comment on the weather and he murmured an agreement and they fell back into silence. She was growing more annoyed by the second. “You can’t just ask someone to go for a walk with you and then not say anything, you know. *I* said something about the weather and now it’s *your* turn to say something. You can talk about the party or your classes or anything, really. You just have to say *something*.”

“Well, in that case, the party has been a lot of fun. Charlie has always felt the need to throw himself elaborate, giant parties, something I enjoy only for his sake. I have to say, you seem like you’ve been enjoying yourself and have especially been enjoying the punch.” She ignored his comment and they continued on, once again in silence.

She finally broke it. “You and I are very similar in that we don’t like to say anything unless we have some amazing joke or story to tell to impress everyone else.”

“Whether or not that’s true of either of us, I can’t say, but I guess that’s how you see it for both of us.” He paused and they walked on. “You said I could talk about classes, so how are yours going?”

“Oh, well I’m in anthropology with Dr. Tucker. I actually think you might know my TA? A Mr. George Wickham? I go to his office hours every week and I just think he’s one of the smartest people I’ve ever met.” She immediately saw him grow tense at the name and every word after; she stopped herself from saying anything more.

“I do know him. We had quite a few classes together in our first couple years at UGA. All of our professors, like you, find him to be very smart and very charming, indeed.”

“But you don’t, I take it.”

Before he could respond, they were interrupted by some drunk kid from the party running down the street, yelling something about “Lambda Phi forever!” They both stopped and laughed as they watched him go, and Liz realized how much better the fresh air—and maybe his company?—had made her feel. When she realized this, she decided not to push him on the Wickham subject any further and talked instead of her other classes. When she mentioned she was an English major, he immediately asked her what her favorite books are.

“Please don’t make me talk about books right now,” she begged. “I talk about books all the time and I just need a break. I can’t talk about them when there’s a raging party going on not too far away!”

“You’re always focused on what’s happening around you, aren’t you?” He asked.

“I guess so,” she responded, but honestly her mind had drifted away from their conversation. When she came back, she asked, “I remember you saying once that it’s very hard for you to forgive and forget once someone does something to you; if that’s the case, does it take a lot for you to get to that point with someone?”

“Yes, of course.”

“And do you ever act because of prejudice towards someone?”

“I try not to.” He sounded like he was unsure where the conversation was going.

“It’s very important for someone who doesn’t forgive to not act rashly towards others.”

“Where is all this coming from?”

“I’m just trying to get a read on you. I hear a lot of different, competing stories about you and I just want to find out what’s true for myself.”

“I can’t say I’m surprised that you’ve been hearing different things about me, and I can only guess where—or rather who—you’ve been hearing them from. But as to your making a decision about me, I have to say you can’t possibly judge someone based off one conversation and stories you’ve heard about them. You have to get to know a person before you do that.”

They were nearing the house again, which meant they were nearing the end of their conversation, as well. “I just don’t know that I’ll have another conversation like this with you,” she responded.

“Do what you want then,” he said coldly.

As they went back inside the house, they parted angrily. Although, as they headed off in different directions, his anger towards her softened and grew more towards someone else.