Darcy doesn't make mistakes about people. Ever. So he knows that he must be right about Jane Bennet.

Darcy watched her -- or rather, he listened. He had heard people in love before, and people infatuated, and people mildly interested, and people engrossed in their own misery and regret. And this had nothing of that.

Nobody was ever sure how the blood of mage-lords and the mightiest elementalist-mages would mix. It was taught that power and character were inextricably intertwined, but the Darcys had always delighted in defying the rules -- his mother, herself a mage-lord of considerable power, had always been amazed that her unsociable son was an empath and her self-effacing daughter a necromancer. Truly there was no explaining how these things happened.

He briefly touched That Creature's feelings and suppressed a shudder, walking away before he could go on about Lady Catherine's apparently incalculable virtues.

Elizabeth he avoided, even while dancing with her. Some things were simply Not Done. The bare hint of the muddle she was in gave him a headache. Ceorlñild felt cold and rather slimy. Bingalfr's artless good cheer was a relief, until Darcy caught mixed in more of infatuation than he had ever felt from him before.

He returned to his original object. Jane Bennet. There was -- nothing. Or rather, such a mild, limited sensibility that an even greater alarm woke in his heart. Yet she liked him, he felt the vague affection. She would accept him.
Mrs Bennet flashed through his mind like a banshee's wail.

And someday, Bingálfr would discover that his wife had never loved him, that he had carelessly entered into an unequal marriage. Darcy had a duty to him, and duty must always come first.

Darcy's fingers twitched. Miss Bennet was not a fortune hunter per se-- were there no affection at all, she very probably would not accept him. It would be so easy.

And every scruple he possessed rebelled at the thought.

Besides, the weekend would come soon enough. He could follow Bingálfr into town -- and the matter would be just as easily resolved, with no shameful duplicity on his part. He shut his eyes and began counting down the hours.

Please drop by the archive and comment to let the author know if you enjoyed their work!