A Laughing Matter

by Elizabeth (anghraine)

Summary

A Bennet engagement does not meet with universal approval.

“Are you out of your senses, to be offering for this girl? Do you have any idea what you are doing to our family - to your estate, your children? How could you be so - so - ”

James Bennet laughed, easily meeting his mother’s furious gaze. “I believe, madam, that you mean foolish, though careless or selfish might do in a pinch.”

“This is not a laughing matter, James,” Mrs Bennet snapped, hiding her smile behind a handkerchief. “Even you must see that.”

“Forgive me, ma’am, but everything is a laughing matter.”

“Nonsense! Has she any fortune?”

Bennet threw himself onto her most comfortable chair. “Why, yes. Four thousand pounds.”

“Respectable,” his mother allowed, then started. “How could I say such a thing? Your insanity must be catching. Ten thousand pounds could not recompense for - for the ignominy of acknowledging as my daughter a - a - ” her voice dropped - “a Muggle.”

“No doubt that would require twenty thousand at least,” he agreed. “Shall you be able to attend the wedding? Jenny and I are determined to be married by Michaelmas.”

Mrs Bennet scowled, then gave him on of her penetrating looks. “If the child is not magical,” she said, “I will do everything in my power to break the marriage. And your neck. James, are you laughing at me?”

“Only at myself,” said Bennet.
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