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# Pride and Prejudice

Adapted for stage by

**Eric Domuret**

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# Pride and Prejudice

## Adapted for Stage by Eric Domuret

### CHARACTER BREAKDOWN

#### 13F /9M

(Less with Doubling)

**ELIZABETH BENNET** – 20s. *The second of the Bennet daughters, intelligent, lively, playful, attractive, and witty – she prides herself on her discernment of people’s characters, but comes to find that her discernment is often flawed.*

**MR. BENNET** – 40s-50s. *The loving and flippant father of the Bennet girls. Occasionally mischievous. With no male heir, his house is set to be taken over by Mr. Collins when he dies.*

**MRS. BENNET** – 40s-50s. *Often overbearing wife of Mr. Bennet. Somewhat of a hypochondriac. Her single truth in life is that every wealthy man she meets is the rightful property of one of her daughters. (May double as Mrs. Reynolds)*

**KITTY BENNET** – teens-20s. *The fourth of the Bennet girls. Kitty follows her younger sister’s bad example everywhere. (May double as Georgiana)*

**LYDIA BENNET** – teens-20s. *The youngest Bennet sister; aged 15 when the play begins. She is frivolous and headstrong. Her main activity in life is socializing, especially flirting with the officers of the militia. A great dancer. Lydia shows no regard for the moral code of her society. (May double as Georgiana)*

**MARY BENNET** – teens-20s. *The third Bennet sister. Bookish, plain, a moralizer. A serious tone to her. (May double as Georgiana)*

**JANE BENNET** – 20s. *The eldest of the Bennet sisters, and the most beautiful. Simple, good, sincere, and unpretending. She usually thinks the best of people, often to a fault. Very close with her sister Elizabeth. Falls in love with Mr. Bingley.*

**SIR WILLIAM** – 40s-60s. *Jovial; father of Charlotte Lucas. Enjoys entertaining and seeing young people enjoy themselves. (May double as Mr. Gardiner or Mr. Collins)*

**MR. GARDINER** – 30s-50s. *Simple, kind. Enjoys fishing. He and Mrs. Gardiner are instrumental in bringing about the marriage of Lydia. (May double as Sir William)*

**MRS. LONG** – 30s-50s. *The town gossip. Always has the information before everyone. (May double as Mrs. Gardiner)*

**MRS. GARDINER** – 30s-50s. *Elizabeth’s very loving Aunt. She and her husband are instrumental in bringing about the marriage of Lydia. (May double as Mrs. Long or Lady Catherine)*

**CHARLOTTE LUCAS** – 20s-30s. Elizabeth's best friend. Daughter of Sir William. Very socially aware and less passionate than Elizabeth. 27 years old which is past her prime of marriage age. She marries Mr. Collins after Elizabeth has rejected him. (May double as Mrs. Reynolds or Georgiana)

**MR. BINGLEY** – 20s-30s. Very wealthy. Has recently let Netherfield park near the Bennet home. Darcy's best friend and also his antithesis in many ways. He is kind, charming, and 'everything a young man should be'. Falls in love with Jane Bennet. (May double as Colonel Fitzwilliam)

**MR. DARCY** – 20s-30s. Wealthy friend of Mr. Bingley. Handsome, tall, intelligent. A newcomer to the village, he is ultimately Elizabeth Bennet's love interest. Owner of the renowned family estate of Pemberley in Derbyshire, and is rumored to be worth at least £10,000 a year. Darcy lacks ease and social graces, and so others frequently mistake his aloof decorum and rectitude as further proof of excessive pride.

**MISS BINGLEY** – 20s-30s. Sister of Mr. Bingley. Very conniving. She has a design to marry Mr. Darcy and becomes jealous of the growing connection between Darcy and Elizabeth. Her wealth and station in life has given her a great vanity.

**MR. COLLINS** – 20s-30s. Mr. Bennet's distant cousin, a clergyman, and the current heir presumptive to his estate of Longbourn House. He is an obsequious and pompous man who is excessively, almost religiously, devoted to his patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. (May double as Sir William or Mr. Gardiner)

**DENNY** – 20s-30s. A young attractive officer. Friend of Mr. Wickham and frequent dance partner of Kitty and Lydia. (May double as Colonel Fitzwilliam)

**GEORGE WICKHAM** – 20s-30s. Very handsome. Wickham has been acquainted with Mr. Darcy since infancy, being the son of Mr. Darcy's father's steward. An officer in the militia, he is superficially charming and rapidly forms an attachment with Elizabeth Bennet. (May double as Colonel Fitzwilliam)

**LADY CATHERINE** – 40s-60s. The overbearing aunt of Mr. Darcy. Lady Catherine is the wealthy owner of Rosings Park, has long planned to marry off her sickly daughter to Darcy, to 'unite their two great estates'. (May double as Mrs. Gardiner or Mrs. Reynolds)

**COL. FITZWILLIAM** – 20s-40s. Nephew of Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Lady Anne Darcy; Kind, charming. He is the co-guardian of Miss Georgiana Darcy, along with his cousin, Mr. Darcy. (May double as Denny or Mr. Wickham)

**GEORGIANA** – teens. Mr. Darcy's younger sister and only sibling. Georgiana is Mr. Darcy's shy younger sister, with a dowry of £30,000. When still 14, Miss Darcy almost eloped with Mr. Wickham, but was saved by her brother, whom she idolizes. (May double with Charlotte or any of the Bennet sisters except Elizabeth)

**MRS. REYNOLDS** – 50s and up. The housekeeper of Pemberley. She has great affection for Darcy and Georgiana. She is lively and kind. She has known Darcy since his infancy. (May double with all women except Elizabeth, Mrs. Gardiner, Georgiana, and Miss Bingley)

## **SETTING**

*The events of the play take place in the early 19th Century England in Hertfordshire, Derbyshire, and Kent*

This adaptation of  
**PRIDE AND PREJUDICE**  
was originally produced April, 2018 in Houston, Texas

*Pride and Prejudice* was a professional collaboration produced at The University of St. Thomas, Houston, TX with the following cast in order of appearance:

Elizabeth Bennet	Alex Guirette
Mr. Bennet	Ted Doolittle
Mrs. Bennet	Julie Fontenot
Kitty Bennet	MaryAnna Nagorski
Lydia Bennet	Bridget Groff
Mary Bennet	Olivia Tamez
Jane Bennet	Iris Lacsamana
Sir William/Mr. Gardiner	Christopher Chance
Mrs. Long/Mrs. Gardiner	Rosario Ramos
Charlotte Lucas	Anna Leigh Sargent
Mr. Bingley	Dylan Marks
Mr. Darcy	Marty Blair
Miss Bingley	Chelsea Lerner
Mr. Collins	Dylan Smail
Denny	Jairo Suarez
George Wickham	Samuel Balest
Lady Catherine	Sally Burtenshaw
Col. Fitzwilliam	Thomas Rincones
Georgiana	Allison Hall
Mrs. Reynolds	Sarah O'Connor

Director: Eric Domuret  
Choreographer: Bethany White  
Stage Manager: Alex Brokmeyer  
Scenic Design: Greg Starbird  
Lighting Design: Ashley Parra

**Pride and Prejudice**  
Adapted for Stage by Eric Domuret

**PROLOGUE**

ELIZABETH

*(To AUDIENCE)*

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

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 1**

AT RISE:                    *Longbourn; the Bennet house sitting room.*

MRS. BENNETT

Netherfield Park is let at last!

MR. BENNETT

Is it.

MRS. BENNETT

Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.

MR. BENNETT

Ah.

MRS. BENNETT

Do not you want to know who has taken it?

MR. BENNETT

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

MRS. BENNETT

Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of LARGE fortune from the north of England.

MR. BENNETT

What is his name?

MRS. BENNETT

Bingley. A SINGLE man of LARGE fortune. What a fine thing for our girls!

MR. BENNETT

How so? How can it affect them?

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bennet, how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of Mr. Bingley marrying one of them.

*KITTY and LYDIA argue outside of window.*

KITTY

Give it back! It is mine!

LYDIA

I think I shall wear it to the ball next week.

KITTY

But, I made it. I am to wear it to the ball!

LYDIA

I look better in it anyway!

KITTY

Lydia! *(Tries to grab it)*

LYDIA

Ha ha! Missed! *(Exits)*

KITTY

Mama. Tell her it is mine. LYDIA! *(Exits)*

MR. BENNETT

Is *that* his design in settling here?

MRS. BENNETT

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.

*KITTY and LYDIA enter. MARY enters reading.*

MR. BENNETT

I see no occasion for that.

MRS. BENNETT

But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley. (*JANE and ELIZABETH enter.*) Consider your daughters.

MR. BENNETT

I will send a letter to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chooses. They are all silly and ignorant like other girls; though Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh, you take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.

MR. BENNETT

You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends these twenty years.

JANE

Do you think that Mr. Bingley will like this hat, Lizzie?

MRS. BENNETT

We are not to know what Mr. Bingley likes, since we are not to visit.

*KITTY coughs.*

ELIZABETH

But you forget, mama, that we shall meet him at the assemblies.

JANE

Mrs. Long has promised to introduce Mr. Bingley.

*KITTY coughs again.*

MRS. BENNETT

I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her. (*KITTY coughs.*) Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves!

KITTY

I do not cough for my own amusement.

MR. BENNETT

Whilst Kitty is restraining herself from coughing, let us return to Mr. Bingley . . .

MRS. BENNETT

I am sick of Mr. Bingley! I wish to hear no more of him!



MR. BENNETT

Well, I am sorry to hear that. If I had known as much yesterday, I certainly would not have called on him. (*Silence*) I'm afraid we cannot escape the acquaintance now.

MRS. BENNETT

OH, MR. BENNET! Oh my dear how good it was in you! I was sure you loved your girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! And it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone yesterday and made us believe you had not.

MR. BENNETT

Now, Kitty, I dare say you may cough as much as you choose. (*Exits*)

MRS. BENNETT

What an excellent father you have, girls. I do not know how you will ever make him amends for his kindness.

*LYDIA, KITTY, JANE and ELIZABETH  
speak literally over one another.*

LYDIA/

What do you think Mr. Bingley looks like?

KITTY/

I wonder how tall he is?

JANE/

Do you think he will notice me, Lizzy?

ELIZABETH/

You will be five times as pretty as every other woman he encounters.

MRS. BENNETT

If I can but see one of you happily settled at Netherfield, and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for. And I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with each of you at the next ball!

## ACT I SCENE 2

AT RISE: *Meryton Hall; a ball in progress. There is lively music and dancing.*

SIR WILLIAM

Welcome to Meryton! Pray you, enjoy! There is enough merriment in Meryton for all!  
(*MRS. LONG enters*) Mrs. Long wonderful to see you here at our ball!

MRS. LONG

Has Mr. Bingley and his party arrived?

SIR WILLIAM

Patience, Madam. Mr. Bingley has personally assured me of his party's attendance this evening. (*MRS. BENNET enters.*) Mrs. Bennet welcome.

MRS. BENNETT

Sir William.

SIR WILLIAM

All of your daughters here. I see. Do enjoy!

MRS. LONG

Mrs. Bennet!

MRS. BENNETT

Mrs. Long!

MRS. LONG

I have heard that Mr. Bingley went to London to bring a large party of twelve ladies and seven gentlemen for our assembly.

LYDIA

Oh, drat! I heard it was six ladies and ten gentlemen.

ELIZABETH

Too many ladies for Lydia.

MRS. LONG

Whatever the number, Mr. Bingley will be here shortly I am sure.

*The music and dancing stops. BINGLEY enters with MISS BINGLEY and DARCY.*

ELIZABETH

One lady and two gentlemen. (*Beat*)

SIR WILLIAM

Mr. Bingley. You are most welcome here.

BINGLEY

The pleasure is mine. Sir William, may I introduce my sister Miss Caroline Bingley. And this is my dear friend Mr. Darcy.

SIR WILLIAM

Mr. Darcy, I do say, there are many fine young ladies here, do not hesitate to ask me for an acquaintance if you wish for a dance.

DARCY

I do not dance.

SIR WILLIAM

*(Pause)*

Well . . . of course . . . My dear Miss Bingley, my offer stands for you as well. I know everyone here.

MISS BINGLEY

*(Pause)*

Thank you.

*The music and dancing resumes.*

MRS. LONG

That is Mr. Darcy of Pemberley.

MRS. BENNETT

What a handsome man.

MRS. LONG

And so much more eligible than Mr. Bingley.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh do tell.

MRS. LONG

Ten THOUSAND a year!

MRS. BENNETT

Ten Thousand!?! Oh, what a fine thing for our daughters. (*SIR WILLIAM and BINGLEY walk towards them.*) Mrs. Long, he is approaching us. Jane, Lizzie . . . smile.

SIR WILLIAM

Mrs. Bennet. Mr. Bingley has expressed an interest in becoming acquainted with your daughters.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bingley!

BINGLEY

How do you do?

MRS. BENNETT

May I introduce to you my daughters? This is my eldest Jane. And this is Elizabeth. And over there dancing are Kitty and my youngest Lydia. And. . . Mary.

BINGLEY

How do you do?

MRS. BENNETT

Do you enjoy a country dance, Mr. Bingley?

BINGLEY

There is nothing I enjoy more, Madam.

MRS. BENNETT

And your friend? Does he dance?

BINGLEY

*(Realizing)*

Oh . . . I beg your pardon. Mrs. Bennet, this is Mr. Darcy.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Darcy, you are most welcome.

*Beat; DARCY walks away.*

BINGLEY

*(To JANE)*

Uh, Miss Bennet, may I be so bold to claim the coming dance with you . . . if you are not otherwise engaged?

JANE

I am not engaged.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh, Jane! What an agreeable gentlemen, that Mr. Bingley!

JANE

Yes, Mama. Lizzie . . . *(Exits for her dance)*

ELIZABETH

Enjoy yourself Jane. The gentlemen are so scarce that I must sit out this dance. *(Crosses to sit)*

BINGLEY

Come, Darcy, I must have you dance. Come. I hate to see you standing about by yourself in this stupid manner. You had much better dance.

DARCY

There is not a woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to stand up with.

BINGLEY

I would not be so fastidious as you are for a kingdom!

DARCY

You will be dancing with the only handsome girl in the room.

BINGLEY

She is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But what of Miss Elizabeth Bennet. She is very pretty. I daresay very handsome.

DARCY

She is tolerable, I suppose; but not handsome enough to tempt me; Bingley I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles; you are wasting your time with me.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bingley I hope you will take the time to claim a dance with my daughters!

BINGLEY

I shall be pleased to dance with all of them, Madam.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh good! And you Mr. Darcy might I encourage you to take a turn with them?

DARCY

I rarely dance, Madam.

MRS. BENNETT

But I insist. My daughters are greatly admired in Meryton with a good number of gentlemen callers. All except my bookish daughter Mary. But I dare say with a house full of daughters I will need someone to take care of me in my later years. Come I assure you will not be disappointed.

DARCY

As I said, Madam, I rarely dance.

ELIZABETH

Come Mr. Darcy. You must dance with someone this evening. Even if you partner is only tolerable?

*Scene change dancing into Longbourn.*

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 3**

AT RISE: *Longbourn; evening, after the ball.*

MRS. BENNETT

Oh! My dear Mr. Bennet, Jane was so admired. Everybody said how well she looked; and Mr. Bingley thought her quite beautiful, and danced with her twice to start.

LYDIA

I danced one with him.

KITTY

And I one.

LYDIA

And Mary none.

*LYDIA and KITTY laugh.*

MRS. BENNETT

He then asked Charlotte Lucas, however, he did not admire her at all. Then, the fourth he danced with Miss King, and the two fifth with Maria Lucas . . .

MR. BENNETT

If he had had any compassion for me he would have sprained his ankle in the first dance . . .

MRS. BENNETT

And his sister, Mr. Bennet is a charming woman. I dare say the lace upon Ms. Bingley's gown...

MR. BENNETT

As was noticed by all . . .

*ALL exit except JANE and ELIZABETH.*

JANE

Lizzie, Mr. Bingley is just what a young man ought to be; sensible, good humoured, lively!

ELIZABETH

Well, he certainly is very agreeable, and I give you leave to like him. You have liked many a stupider person.

JANE

Lizzy!

ELIZABETH

And so, you like this man's sister too, do you?

JANE

She is a very pleasing woman when you converse with her.

ELIZABETH

Well, I do not think that I approve of her. Added to this, the vile acquaintance of Mr. Darcy.

JANE

The vile and handsome acquaintance.

ELIZABETH

He is tolerable I suppose. But, not handsome enough to tempt me.

*They laugh.*

**ACT I  
SCENE 4**

AT RISE: *Netherfield drawing room; evening, after the ball.*

BINGLEY

Darcy, I have never met with pleasanter people or prettier girls in my life.

DARCY

I found little beauty.

BINGLEY

I find it difficult to believe Darcy you found her sister Elizabeth only tolerable.

DARCY

You hope in vain, Bingley.

MISS BINGLEY

You mean to say you did not find Miss Elizabeth charming?

DARCY

I'd as soon call her mother a wit.

MISS BINGLEY

Oh, Mr. Darcy!

BINGLEY

Did you not notice, Darcy an uncommon intelligence in her eyes?

DARCY

I find hardly a good feature in Miss Elizabeth Bennet or her sisters. Miss Jane Bennet, I grant you an exception.

BINGLEY

Ah, she is the most charming creature I ever met. Darcy, I dare even you to find fault with such an angel.

DARCY

She smiles too much.

*MISS BINGLEY giggles.*

MISS BINGLEY

Well, I declare Miss Bennet to be a sweet girl, and I should not object to know more of her.

DARCY

Well, Bingley, it seems that you are authorized to think of her as you choose.

BINGLEY

Thank you. I shall.

**ACT I  
SCENE 5**

AT RISE: *Meryton; a small gathering of SIR WILLIAM. Piano playing a playful tune as LYDIA and KITTY dance with TWO YOUNG MEN.*

SIR WILLIAM

What a charming amusement for young people this is!

CHARLOTTE

Lizzie, your sister, Jane, seems to be most agreeably engaged.

ELIZABETH

It does seem evident to everyone that Mr. Bingley greatly admires her.

CHARLOTTE

And does she feel the same?



ELIZABETH

Is that in doubt to anyone?

CHARLOTTE

Remember, Lizzie, that we do not know Jane's disposition as you do. Jane had better show more affection than she is accustomed. Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance. It is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life.

ELIZABETH

*(Laughs)*

Charlotte, you know it is not sound, and you would never act in this way yourself.

SIR WILLIAM

There is nothing like dancing, Mr. Darcy. I consider it as one of the first refinements of polished societies.

DARCY

And less polished societies.

SIR WILLIAM

Sir?

DARCY

Every ruffian can dance.

SIR WILLIAM

Oh, yes . . . Quite. Uh . . . Oh my dear Miss Eliza, why are not you dancing? Mr. Darcy, you must allow me to present this young lady to you as a very desirable partner.

ELIZABETH

Indeed, Sir, I have not the least intention of dancing.

DARCY

Miss Bennet, may I request the honour of a dance?

SIR WILLIAM

You excel so much in the dance, Miss Eliza, that it is cruel to deny me the happiness of seeing you.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy is all politeness.

SIR WILLIAM

He is indeed but who would object to such a partner?

*ELIZABETH curtsies and walks away.*

SIR WILLIAM

*(Bowling)*  
Sir. *(Leaves)*

MISS BINGLEY

I can guess the subject of your reverie.

DARCY

I should imagine not.

MISS BINGLEY

You are considering how insupportable it would be to pass many evenings in this manner in such a loathsome society.

DARCY

No, my mind was more agreeably engaged.

MISS BINGLEY

Oh?

DARCY

I have been meditating on the very great pleasure, which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow.

MISS BINGLEY

And what lady had the credit of inspiring such reflections?

DARCY

Miss Elizabeth Bennet.

MISS BINGLEY

Miss Elizabeth Bennet! I am all astonishment.

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 6**

AT RISE: *Longbourn sitting room.*

LYDIA

Mama! There is a letter for Jane!

MRS. BENNETT

For Jane?! Oh! Give it here Lydia. *(Opening the letter)*

JANE

Mama . . .

ELIZABETH

Mama, the letter is for Jane.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh hush now, Lizzie.

KITTY

What does it say?

MRS. BENNETT

It is from Caroline Bingley!

LYDIA

Read it!

MRS. BENNETT

“My dear *Friend*,” Ooooh. “If you are not so compassionate as to dine today with me, I shall be in danger of hating myself for the rest of my life. Come as soon as you can on the receipt of this. My brother and the gentlemen are to dine with the officers. Yours ever, Caroline Bingley.”

LYDIA

Oh, with the officers!

JANE

Can I have the carriage, Papa?

MRS. BENNETT

No, my dear, you had better go on horseback, because it seems likely to rain; and then you must stay all night.

JANE

But, I had much rather go in the coach.

MRS. BENNETT

Jane, your father cannot spare the horses. (*Pushing JANE out the door*) They are wanted in the farm, Mr. Bennet, are not they?

MR. BENNETT

They are wanted in the farm much oftener than I can get them.

MRS. BENNETT

This was a lucky idea of mine, indeed!

*SFX: Thunder and Lightning. Scene shift to next day. It is raining.*

ELIZABETH

*(Reading; alone to AUDIENCE)*

"My dearest Lizzy, I find myself very unwell this morning, which, I suppose, is to be imputed to my getting wet through yesterday. My kind friends will not hear of my returning home till I am better. Yours, Jane."

MR. BENNETT

Well, my dear, if your daughter should die, it would be a comfort to know that it was all in pursuit of Mr. Bingley.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh rubbish! People do not die of little trifling colds.

ELIZABETH

Mama, I would like to go to see Jane.

MRS. BENNETT

Nonsense. It is still raining.

ELIZABETH

It will be clear soon. And the distance is nothing. Only three miles. I shall walk.

MRS. BENNETT

Walk?! In all this mud? How can you be so silly. You will not be fit to be seen.

ELIZABETH

I shall be very fit to see Jane which is all I want. *(Starts to exit; turns)* I am quite determined, Mother. *(Exits)*

## ACT I SCENE 7

AT RISE: *Netherfield; evening; drawing room.  
BINGLEY and MISS BINGLEY, playing  
cards.*

MISS BINGLEY

Miss Elizabeth Bennet's manners are very bad indeed. A mixture of pride and impertinence. I shall never forget her appearance this morning. She really looked almost wild. Her hair so untidy! And her petticoat; six inches deep in mud.

BINGLEY

I thought Miss Elizabeth Bennet looked remarkably well. Her petticoat quite escaped my notice.

MISS BINGLEY

You observed it, Mr. Darcy, I am sure?

DARCY

I did.

MISS BINGLEY

And I am inclined to think that you would not wish to see *your* sister make such an exhibition.

DARCY

Certainly not. (*Crosses to desk to write a letter*)

MISS BINGLEY

It seems to me to show an abominable sort of conceited independence.

BINGLEY

It shows an affection for her sister that is very pleasing.

MISS BINGLEY

I am afraid, Mr. Darcy that this adventure has rather affected your admiration of her fine eyes.

DARCY

Not at all, they were brightened by the exercise.

MISS BINGLEY

(*Pause*)

I have an excessive regard for Jane Bennet, but with such a father and mother, and such low connections, I am afraid there is no chance of it. I think I have heard that their uncle is an attorney in Meryton. And another who lives somewhere near Cheapside.

BINGLEY

If they had uncles enough to fill all Cheapside it would not make them one jot less agreeable.

DARCY

But it must lessen their chance of marrying men of any consideration in the world, Bingley, that is the point.

*ELIZABETH enters the room with a book.*

BINGLEY

Miss Bennet. How does your sister?

ELIZABETH

Still quite ill I'm afraid. She is sleeping.

BINGLEY

Miss Bennet, you may stay as long as you like till your sister is well.

ELIZABETH

I could not intrude.

BINGLEY

I insist. I shall have a coachman send for your things.

ELIZABETH

You are too kind. *(Pause)*

MISS BINGLEY

*(Setting up card game)*

Do join us Miss Bennet.

ELIZABETH

I thank you. *(Sits in a different chair and reads)*

DARCY

Do you prefer reading to cards?

MISS BINGLEY

Miss Bennet is a great reader and has no pleasure in anything else.

ELIZABETH

I deserve neither such praise nor such censure. I am not a great reader, and I have pleasure in many things.

BINGLEY

It is amazing to me, how young ladies can have patience to be so very accomplished as they all are.

MISS BINGLEY

All young ladies accomplished?!

BINGLEY

Yes, all of them, I think. They all paint tables, cover screens, and net purses. I scarcely know anyone who cannot do all this, and I am sure I never heard a young lady spoken of for the first time, without being informed that she was very accomplished.

DARCY

I cannot boast of knowing more than half a dozen, in the whole range of my acquaintance, that are really accomplished.

ELIZABETH

Then you must comprehend a great deal in your idea of an accomplished woman.

DARCY

Yes, I do comprehend a great deal in it. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and the modern languages, to deserve the word; and besides all this, she must possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions, or the word will be but half-deserved. All this she must possess. And to all this she must yet add something more substantial, in the improvement of her mind by extensive reading.

ELIZABETH

I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women. I rather wonder at your knowing any.

MISS BINGLEY

Mr. Darcy, what is it you are writing there?

DARCY

A letter to my sister.

MISS BINGLEY

Oh, dearest Georgiana! Do tell her I long to see her soon.

DARCY

I did so in my last two letters.

MISS BINGLEY

Miss Elizabeth Bennet, let me persuade you to take a turn about the room with me. I assure you it is very refreshing after remaining so long in one attitude. (*They walk.*) Would you like to join us Mr. Darcy?

DARCY

My joining would interfere with your motive.

MISS BINGLEY

Whatever do you mean? Miss Bennet do you know what he means?

ELIZABETH

Not at all.

MISS BINGLEY

Mr. Darcy what do you mean?

DARCY

You are conscious that your figures appear to the greatest advantage in walking.

MISS BINGLEY

Oh! Shocking! I never heard anything so abominable. How shall we punish him for such a speech?

ELIZABETH

Tease him. Laugh at him.

MISS BINGLEY

No, I feel he may defy us there.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at? That is an uncommon advantage, I dearly love a laugh.

DARCY

It has been the study of my life to avoid those weaknesses which often expose a strong understanding to ridicule.

ELIZABETH

Such as vanity and pride.

DARCY

Yes, vanity is a weakness indeed. But pride . . . where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will be always under good regulation. I have faults enough, but they are not, I hope, of understanding. My temper would perhaps be called . . . resentful. My good opinion once lost is lost forever.

ELIZABETH

That is a failing indeed! But, I cannot laugh at it; you are safe from me.

DARCY

There is, I believe, in every disposition a tendency to some particular evil, which not even the best education can overcome.

ELIZABETH

And your defect is a propensity to hate everybody.

DARCY

And yours is to willfully misunderstand them.



MISS BINGLEY

Do let us have a little music.

**ACT I  
SCENE 8**

AT RISE: *Longbourn sitting room.*

KITTY

Papa! Jane and Elizabeth are back!

MRS. BENNETT

Oh, would they have stayed longer.

MR. BENNETT

I am sure your daughter's ill health would have continued to give Netherfield much pleasure.

*JANE and ELIZABETH enter.*

MRS. BENNETT

Jane you look well recovered.

JANE

Yes, thank you, Mother.

MRS. BENNETT

Would you have lasted a week there. But no matter.

MR. BENNETT

Hello Jane, Lizzie. The evening conversation had lost all its sense by your absence.

ELIZABETH

*(Laughing)*

Thank you, Papa.

MR. BENNETT

Well, now that all have returned I hope Mrs. Bennet, that you have ordered a good dinner today, because I have reason to expect an addition to our family party.

MRS. BENNETT

Who do you mean, my dear? I hope it is not Charlotte Lucas, Lizzie.

MR. BENNETT

The person of whom I speak is a gentleman and a stranger.

MRS. BENNETT

It is Mr. Bingley, I am sure. Oh, Jane you sly thing!

MR. BENNETT

It is not Mr. Bingley. It is my cousin, Mr. Collins, who, since I have no sons to inherit my estate, may turn you all out of this house when I am dead.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Collins! Oh! Pray do not talk of that odious man. Oh if only we had a son.

MR. BENNETT

If you will listen to his letter that I received a month ago, you may perhaps be a little softened by his manner of expressing himself.

MRS. BENNETT

I am sure I shall not.

MR. BENNETT

*(Reads)*

“Dear Sir,” *(MRS. BENNETT groans.)* “The disagreement subsisting between yourself and my late honoured father always gave me much uneasiness, and since I have had the misfortune to lose him . . .”

MRS. BENNETT

Misfortune.

LYDIA

Misfortune.

MR. BENNETT

“I have frequently wished to heal the breach . . .” There, Mrs. Bennet. “My mind however is now made up on the subject, for having received ordination at Easter, I have been so fortunate as to be distinguished by the patronage of the Right Honourable Lady Catherine de Bourgh. As a clergyman I feel it my duty to promote and establish the blessing of peace. . .” so on and so forth . . . “Your well-wisher and friend, William Collins.” At four o'clock, therefore, we may expect this peacemaking gentleman.

MARY

In point of composition the letter does not seem defective. The idea of the olive-branch perhaps is not wholly new, yet I think it is well expressed.

ELIZABETH

There is something very pompous in his style. Can he be a sensible man, Papa?

MR. BENNETT

No, my dear; I think not. I have great hopes of finding him quite the reverse.

MRS. BENNETT

Four o'clock! But, Mr. Bennet that is any minute! (*Knock.*) Oh, Mr. Bennet you vex me so! What shall we do . . .

*MR. COLLINS enters.*

MR. BENNETT

Mr. Collins! You are most welcome here! And right on time.

COLLINS

I flatter myself, Mr. Bennet, on studying societal standards of punctuality, by being neither presumptuously early nor inconsiderately late. A clergyman must avoid the appearance of either.

MRS. BENNETT

We have received your gracious letter and I must answer that you are very kind, sir, concerning our estate here at Longbourn.

COLLINS

I am very sensible, madam, of the hardship to my fair cousins. And I have heard much of their beauty, which I now see is confirmed. But I can assure the young ladies that I come prepared to admire them.

MR. BENNETT

Mr. Collins, you seem very fortunate in your patroness.

COLLINS

Ah yes. Lady Catherine de Bourgh! She resides at Rosings Park. I have never in my life witnessed such behaviour in a person of rank – such affability, such condescension!

MR. BENNETT

It is a pity that great ladies in general are not more like her. Don't you agree, Lizzie? Does she live near you?

COLLINS

The garden in which stands my humble abode is separated only by a lane.

MR. BENNETT

Only a lane? Imagine that, Lizzie. I think you said she was a widow, sir? Has she any family?

COLLINS

She has one only daughter, the heiress of Rosings, and of very extensive property.

MR. BENNETT

Oh, extensive, Lizzie! And what sort of young lady is she?

COLLINS

She is a most charming young lady indeed. She is unfortunately of a sickly constitution, which unhappily prevents her being in town; you may imagine that I am happy on every occasion to offer those little delicate compliments which are always acceptable to ladies.  
(*Looking at JANE*)

MR. BENNETT

Well, I'm satisfied. Are you satisfied, Lizzie? Mr. Collins we shall dine promptly at seven. The servants will show you to your room. All right girls, be off with you.

*JANE and ELIZABETH exit.*

LYDIA

Mama, may Kitty and I walk to Meryton in the morning to call on the officers?

MRS. BENNETT

Of course my dear, of course.

MARY

You shall not find me so inclined to join you.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh leave your books for a day Mary and join them.

LYDIA

Ugh.

*ALL but COLLINS and MRS. BENNETT exit.*

COLLINS

Mrs. Bennet. I am inclined to inform you at the behest of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, that being settled in my profession, with a stable income and a most fortunate patroness, I have made it my intent to soon marry. And being as I am to inherit your humble lodgings here at Longbourn, I hope to marry from amongst your daughters.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh Mr. Collins, no one is more well deserving. However, I feel it incumbent on me to tell you that my eldest, Jane, is likely to be very soon engaged.

COLLINS

Oh.

MRS. BENNETT

As to my younger daughters I do not know of any prepossession.

ELIZABETH

*(Entering)*

Mama, Mrs. Long is asking for you. *(Exits)*

MRS. BENNETT

Of course. Elizabeth there is the next oldest.

COLLINS

Ah! *Elizabeth.*

*ELIZABETH exits.*

**ACT I  
SCENE 9**

AT RISE: *Meryton High Street; morning.*

LYDIA

Kitty make haste; it's Denny. DENNY!

*DENNY and A GENTLEMAN begin to approach them*

KITTY

Who is that with him?

LYDIA

He is very handsome. Especially in his regimentals. Or nothing at all.

*KITTY and LYDIA laugh.*

ELIZABETH

Lydia for God's sake.

JANE

He is handsome, Lizzie.

DENNY

Ladies, may I introduce to you, Mr. Wickham.

MR. WICKHAM

Mr. Denny, are these the Bennet sisters of which you have spoke so oft?

DENNY

The same. Miss Jane Bennet, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, Miss Catherine Bennet, Miss Mary, and of course . . . Lydia.

MR. WICKHAM

Then I am truly honoured.

DENNY

Good old Wickham here is the newest member of our regiment.

ELIZABETH

So, you are stationed here in Meryton?

*BINGLEY and DARCY enter.*

MR. WICKHAM

Happily, yes mam.

BINGLEY

*(To JANE)*

Miss Bennet! We were just coming to enquire after your health. How do you do?

JANE

Very well, sir. Thank you.

BINGLEY

This is a happy coincidence, Darcy do you agree?

*WICKHAM turns to DARCY. There is an awkward silence. WICKHAM nods. DARCY pauses then walks away.*

BINGLEY

A pleasure again. Please excuse me, ladies. *(Goes to DARCY)*

DENNY

Ladies, join me? *(Exits with KITTY and LYDIA)*

JANE

Their greeting appeared very cold.

ELIZABETH

Yes, Jane. *(Smiling)* Very cold indeed.

*BINGLEY gives a quick glance to WICKHAM.*

BINGLEY

*(To Jane)*

Ms. Bennet. Would you care to join me for a walk?

JANE

Yes thank you, Mr. Bingley.

MR. WICKHAM

*(Tipping his hat)*

Miss Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

*(Stopping him)*

Mr. Wickham! How long will you be in Meryton?

MR. WICKHAM

At least through the winter. Perhaps longer.

ELIZABETH

Well, I hope it is the latter.

MR. WICKHAM

Miss Elizabeth . . . you have an acquaintance with Mr. Darcy?

ELIZABETH

*(Pause)*

Yes. I have known him for about a month.

MR. WICKHAM

I have known him all my life. We were children together.

ELIZABETH

Oh?

MR. WICKHAM

You may be surprised at such an assertion, after seeing the very cold manner of our meeting just now.

ELIZABETH

I confess I did.

MR. WICKHAM

Are you much acquainted with Mr. Darcy?

ELIZABETH

As much as I ever wish to be, I have spent four days in the same house with him, and I think him very disagreeable.

MR. WICKHAM

I believe there are not many who share your opinion.

ELIZABETH

But, he is not at all liked in Hertfordshire. Everybody is disgusted with his pride.

MR. WICKHAM

Well, I cannot pretend to be sorry.

ELIZABETH

I hope his being present will not affect your plans of remaining here?

MR. WICKHAM

It is not for me to be driven away by Mr. Darcy. If he wishes to avoid seeing me, *he* must go. Perhaps, Miss Bennet, I should clarify the reasons for this discomfort: His father, Miss Bennet, the late Mr. Darcy, was one of the best men that ever breathed. He was my Godfather and excessively attached to me. But his son's behaviour to me has been scandalous. The church ought to have been my profession; I was brought up for the church, and I should at this time have been in possession of a most valuable living. I very much desired to be a clergyman. The late Mr. Darcy bequeathed me three thousand pounds to begin a life. He meant to provide for me amply; but upon his death, his son, Mr. Darcy . . . gave my fortunes elsewhere.

ELIZABETH

Good heavens!

MR. WICKHAM

Yes. I can recall nothing worse. Mr. Darcy has reduced me to my present state of poverty. I believe he was jealous of his father's attachment to me. But the fact is, that we are very different sort of men and he hates me.

ELIZABETH

Stole your fortunes? He deserves to be publicly disgraced.

MR. WICKHAM

Some time or other he will be, but not be by me. Till I can forget his father, I can never defy or expose him.

ELIZABETH

I knew him to be proud, but I never expected this.



MR. WICKHAM

He maneuvers well in society.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Wickham, I heard him speak of a sister. What sort of a girl is Miss Darcy?

MR. WICKHAM

*(Pause)*

I . . . wish I could call her amiable. But she is too much like her brother. Very, very proud. She is sixteen. About your sister, Lydia's age I believe.

ELIZABETH

Lydia is fifteen.

MR. WICKHAM

Ah.

ELIZABETH

I am astonished!

MR. WICKHAM

But, I believe he will not be much longer for our society.

ELIZABETH

How do you mean?

MR. WICKHAM

It is believed that he is betrothed to the daughter of his Aunt. Lady Catherine de Bourgh. She and Darcy will unite the two estates.

ELIZABETH

The 'sickly' daughter of Lady Catherine?

MR. WICKHAM

You know her then?

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy betrothed? Poor Miss Bingley.

MR. WICKHAM

Bingley? That was Mr. Bingley with whom you were speaking earlier?

ELIZABETH

Do you know him?

MR. WICKHAM

I have never seen Mr. Bingley till today, but I am well disposed to like him. He has given a general invitation to the officers for the ball next week at Netherfield!

ACT I  
SCENE 10

AT RISE:                    *Netherfield ball, evening. A very grand affair with music and dancing.*

MRS. BENNETT

Netherfield is quite grand; do you not think Mr. Collins?

COLLINS

Indeed, Mrs. Bennet! The art in this hall could almost be compared to one of the lesser halls at Rosings of my patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh!

MRS. BENNETT

How do you get on, Mr. Collins, with the matter that we have been discussing?

COLLINS

Quite well, Mrs. Bennet. I have entreated my cousin Elizabeth to my first two dances this evening.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh splendid! *(Drinking a whole glass of wine)*

ELIZABETH

*(To CHARLOTTE)*

To think, Charlotte, that I shall have to endure two dances with that man. I should have hoped to have spent my dances with Mr. Wickham.

DENNY

Miss Bennet. I have been asked to convey to you Mr. Wickham's apologies. He has been obliged to go to town on business yesterday and could not attend this evening. Though, I do not imagine his business would have called him away just now, if he had not wished to avoid a certain gentleman here.

LYDIA

Come on, Denny!

ELIZABETH

Of course. Mr. Darcy again is intruding on my contentment.

CHARLOTTE

I am sure you can endure Mr. Wickham's absence for one evening, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH

But, I shall not be able to endure that hateful man hovering about me.

DARCY

Miss Bennet. (*ELIZABETH turns*) If you are not otherwise engaged, may I request the honour of the next dance?

ELIZABETH

Well . . . I . . . I am . . . Yes, thank you. (*DARCY bows; leaves.*) Insufferable man. Why could I not give a reason to reject him?

CHARLOTTE

I dare say you will find him very agreeable.

ELIZABETH

Do not wish me such an evil.

CHARLOTTE

Do not to be a simpleton. Do not allow your fancy for Wickham to make you appear unpleasant in the eyes of a man of ten times his consequence.

*A new song begins. DARCY comes to claim ELIZABETH and their dance begins.*

ELIZABETH

This is a charming dance is it not? (*Pause*) It is your turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy.

DARCY

Do you talk by rule then, while you are dancing?

ELIZABETH

Sometimes. (*Pause*)

DARCY

Do you often walk to Meryton?

ELIZABETH

Yes. When you met us there the other day, we had just been forming a new acquaintance.

DARCY

Mr. Wickham is blessed with such happy manners as may ensure his making friends; whether he may be equally capable of keeping them, is less certain.

ELIZABETH

He has been so unlucky as to lose your friendship, and in a manner which he is likely to suffer from all his life. *(Pause)* I remember hearing you once say, Mr. Darcy, that your resentment once created was impeccable. You are very cautious, I suppose, as to its being created.

DARCY

I am.

ELIZABETH

And never allow yourself to be blinded by prejudice?

DARCY

May I ask to what these questions tend?

ELIZABETH

Your character. I am trying to make it out.

DARCY

And what is your success?

ELIZABETH

I do not get on it at all. I hear such different accounts of you as puzzle me exceedingly.  
*(Dance ends)*

DARCY

I wish, Miss Bennet, that you were not to sketch my character at the present moment, as there is reason to fear that the performance would reflect no credit on either.

ELIZABETH

But if I do not take your likeness now, I may never have another opportunity.

DARCY

I would by no means suspend any pleasure of yours.

*They bow; DARCY exits.*

MISS BINGLEY

Miss Elizabeth, I hear you are quite delighted with George Wickham! Let me recommend you, however, as a friend, not to give implicit confidence to all his assertions; for as to Mr. Darcy's using him ill, it is perfectly false; George Wickham has treated Mr. Darcy, in a most infamous manner.

ELIZABETH

How so?

MISS BINGLEY

I do not know the particulars, but I know very well that Mr. Darcy is not in the least to blame. I pity you, Miss Elizabeth, for this discovery of your favorite's guilt; but really, considering his descent one could not expect much better.

ELIZABETH

His guilt and his descent appear by your account to be the same, for I have heard you accuse him of nothing particular.

MISS BINGLEY

I beg your pardon. Excuse my interference. It was kindly meant.

ELIZABETH

Insolent girl!

COLLINS

Miss Elizabeth, I have found out, by a singular accident, that there is now in the room a near relation of my patroness. Mr. Darcy. *I shall introduce myself.*

ELIZABETH

Mr. Collins, no! You need to be introduced by someone.

COLLINS

No indeed, watch how I shall make an acquaintance.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy will take it as an insult. Mr. Collins!

COLLINS

Mr. Darcy! (*Room is silent*) I happened to overhear that you are the nephew of my patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh. I am most thankful that the discovery is made in time for me to pay my respects to you.

DARCY

Consider them paid, sir. (*Walks away*)

*COLLINS exits.*

MRS. BENNETT

(*Having had too much to drink*)

Mrs. Long, I do know that Jane will be soon married to Mr. Bingley. He is such a charming young man. And so rich. It is such a promising thing for my younger daughters, as Jane's marrying so greatly must throw them in the way of other rich men.

ELIZABETH

Mother, Mr. Darcy is listening to you.

MRS. BENNETT

What is Mr. Darcy to me, pray, that I should be afraid of him?

*MRS. BENNETT exits. DARCY moves again. MARY BENNETT begins performing a very boring church hymn. During this LYDIA and DENNY are playing a very childish game of chase with KITTY that nearly runs into DARCY. DENNY falls on top of LYDIA. ELIZABETH motions to MR. BENNETT to stop MARY.*

DENNY

Why, Miss Lydia, are you falling for me?

MR. BENNETT

*(Interrupting MARY)*

That will do extremely well, child. You have delighted us long enough. Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit.

*DARCY exits.*

ELIZABETH

Dear God.

**ACT I  
SCENE 11**

AT RISE: *Longbourn; the following morning.*

COLLINS

May I hope, Madam, for your interest with your fair daughter Elizabeth, when I solicit for the honour of a private audience?

MRS. BENNETT

Oh dear! Yes certainly. I am sure Lizzy will be very happy. *(LIZZIE enters with KITTY. Sees MR. COLLINS and turns to walk away.)* Lizzie! Lizzie! Come here child! I am sure she can have no objection.

ELIZABETH

Yes?

MRS. BENNETT

Elizabeth, Mr. Collins would like a word with you. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs.

ELIZABETH

Mama, Kitty need not go . . .

MRS. BENNETT

Nonsense, Lizzy. I desire you will stay where you are.

ELIZABETH

But Mama . . .

MRS. BENNETT

Lizzy, I insist upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins!

*MRS. BENNET and KITTY leave;  
silence.*

COLLINS

Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, that your modesty adds to your other perfections. You can hardly doubt the purport of my discourse.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Collins . . .

COLLINS

*(Stopping her)*

Almost as soon as I entered the house I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I am run away with by my feelings on this subject, perhaps it will be advisable for me to state my reasons for marrying. My reasons for marrying are, first, that I think it a right thing for every clergyman to set the example of matrimony in his parish. Secondly, that I am convinced it will add very greatly to my happiness; and thirdly – oh no. I should have mentioned that first . . . um . . . it is the particular advice and recommendation of my noble patroness Lady Catherine de Bourgh. “Mr. Collins,” said she, “you must marry. Choose properly, choose a gentlewoman for my sake; and for your own, let her be an active, useful sort of person, not brought up high, but able to make a small income go a good way.” And now nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Collins . . .

COLLINS

On the matter of your small dowry, I shall be uniformly silent; and you may assure yourself that no ungenerous reproach shall ever pass my lips when we are married.

ELIZABETH

*(Interrupting.)*

You are too hasty, Sir! You forget that I have made no answer. Let me do it now. I thank you, and I am very sensible of the honour of your proposals, but it is impossible for me to accept them.

COLLINS

*(Pause)*

I have by no means lost hope. It is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept.

ELIZABETH

Upon my word, Sir, your hope is rather an extraordinary one after my declaration. I am perfectly serious in my refusal.

COLLINS

But, dearest cousin, my situation in life, my connections with the family of De Bourgh, and my relationship to your own, are circumstances highly in my favour; I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me . . .

ELIZABETH

Mr. Collins. I thank you again and again for the honour you have done me in your proposals, but to accept them is absolutely impossible. My feelings in every respect forbid it. Can I speak plainer?

COLLINS

You are uniformly charming! *(ELIZABETH leaves. He continues alone.)* And I am persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will not fail of being acceptable. *(Silence; realizes he is rejected)* Yes. *(Begins to exit)*

MRS. BENNETT

*(From within)*

WHAT!! *(Enters)* Mr. Collins! Mr. Collins.

COLLINS

Thank you, Madam. I know when I am unwelcome. After pondering the matter I may wish to reconsider your daughters hand in marriage. *(Leaves)*

MRS. BENNETT

But, Mr. Collins! Mr. Collins! OH! MR. BENNET! MR. BENNET!

MR. BENNETT

*(Enters)*

What is the cause of this yelling? Has someone ravaged the house?



MRS. BENNETT

Oh! Mr. Bennet, you are wanted immediately; we are all in an uproar. You must make Lizzy marry Mr. Collins, for she vows she will not have him, and if you do not make haste he will change his mind and not have her.

MR. BENNETT

I have not the pleasure of understanding you. Of what are you talking?

MRS. BENNETT

Of Mr. Collins and Lizzy. Lizzy declares she will not have Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins begins to say that he will not have Lizzy.

MR. BENNETT

And what am I to do on the occasion? It seems a hopeless business.

MRS. BENNETT

Speak to Lizzy! Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him!

MR. BENNETT

Let her be called in.

MRS. BENNETT

LIZZIE! LIZZIE!

*ELIZABETH enters.*

MR. BENNETT

Come here, child. I understand that Mr. Collins has made you an offer of marriage. Is it true?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

MR. BENNETT

Very well; and this offer of marriage you have refused?

ELIZABETH

I have.

MR. BENNETT

Very well. We now come to the point. Your mother insists upon your accepting it. Is not it so, Mrs. Bennet?

MRS. BENNETT

Yes. Or I will never see her again.

MR. BENNETT

Well . . . an unhappy alternative is before you, Elizabeth. From this day you must be a stranger to one of your parents. Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins . . . and I will never see you again if you do. (*Pause*)

MRS. BENNETT

OH MR. BENNET!

ACT I  
SCENE 12

AT RISE: *Longbourn; days later.*

MARY

Pride! Vanity and pride are different things, though the words are often used synonymously. A person may be proud without being vain. Pride relates more to our opinion of *ourselves*, vanity to what we would have others think of us.

JANE

Thank you for your concern, Mary.

ELIZABETH

Jane! A letter has arrived for you.

MARY

I speak of course of my observance of the behaviour of the men and women at the Netherfield ball last week.

JANE

Mr. Bingley?

ELIZABETH

I know not.

MARY

I shall leave you to the trifles of secular interests. (*Exits*)

JANE

(*Opens letter*)

I have not heard from him for days. (*Reading*) It is from Caroline Bingley. (*Reads in silence*)

ELIZABETH

Jane, what is it?

JANE

The whole party have left Netherfield by this time, and are on their way to town . . . without any intention of coming back again.

ELIZABETH

What?

JANE

I will read it to you ‘When Charles gets to town he will be in no hurry to leave it again.’ It is evident by this that he comes back no more this winter.

ELIZABETH

Jane, it is only evident that Miss Bingley does not mean he should.

JANE

*(Reading)*

‘Mr. Darcy is impatient to see his sister. The affection she inspires in me gives us the hope of her being hereafter *our* sister.’ It appears that Miss Bingley is perfectly convinced of her brother's indifference to me. Can there be any other opinion on the subject?

ELIZABETH

Yes, there can! Miss Bingley sees that her brother is in love with you, and wants him to marry Miss Darcy.

CHARLOTTE

*(Entering)*

Hello, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH

Oh Charlotte!

CHARLOTTE

Might I speak to you alone, Lizzie?

ELIZABETH

Jane . . .

JANE

I will be fine, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH

Jane.

JANE

Please, Lizzie. *(Exits)*

ELIZABETH

Oh, Charlotte, if I could tell you the day I have . . .

CHARLOTTE

I am engaged, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH

Engaged? To be married?

CHARLOTTE

Is there another kind?

ELIZABETH

To whom?

CHARLOTTE

To Mr. Collins, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH

*(Pause)*

Mr. Collins?

CHARLOTTE

Yes.

ELIZABETH

But, Charlotte . . . Mr. Collins? Impossible!

CHARLOTTE

Impossible, because so lately Mr. Collins was wishing to marry you?

ELIZABETH

Well . . . no . . . but . . .

CHARLOTTE

You think it impossible that Mr. Collins should be able to procure any woman's good opinion, because he was not so happy as to succeed with you?

ELIZABETH

Charlotte . . .

CHARLOTTE

I knew you would be upset.

ELIZABETH

Charlotte please . . .

CHARLOTTE

I AM TWENTY SEVEN YEARS OLD! I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state. *(Pause)* I see what you are feeling. But, when you have had time to think it all over, I hope you will be satisfied with what I have done. I am not like you, Lizzie. *(Exits)*

MARY

*(Reentering)*

Pride is a very common failing, I believe. By all that I have ever read, I am convinced that it is very common indeed.

ACT I  
SCENE 13

AT RISE: *During the following, the scene changes to Rosings.*

ELIZABETH

*(To AUDIENCE)*

With no greater events than these did January and February pass away. It is now March. Mr. Collins and my dear friend Charlotte were married and settled in Huntsford for four months. Other than this the only event worth note is that Jane went with my aunt and uncle to London with hopes of seeing Mr. Bingley. But, alas, as I surmised, she was only met with a cold greeting from Caroline Bingley. But, I am most eager to see Charlotte again where, which I am most curious to make the acquaintance of the notorious Lady Catherine de Bourgh here at Rosings!

*Rosings. ELIZABETH, MR. COLLINS, CHARLOTTE, LADY CATHERINE, assembled in a grand sitting room.*

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet?

ELIZABETH

Lady Catherine.

LADY CATHERINE

Do you play and sing?

ELIZABETH

A little.

LADY CATHERINE

Then some time or other we must hear you. Our instrument is a capital one, probably superior to anything you have played. Do your sisters play and sing?

ELIZABETH

One of them does.

LADY CATHERINE

Only one? That is very strange. Has your governess left you?

ELIZABETH

We never had any governess.

LADY CATHERINE

No governess! How was that possible? Five daughters brought up at home without a governess! Your mother must have been quite a slave to your education.

ELIZABETH

*(Smiling)*

I assure your Ladyship that has not been the case.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet, if I had known your mother, I should have advised her most strenuously to engage a governess.

COLLINS

Your Ladyship is most attentive to the needs of those around . . .

LADY CATHERINE

Mrs. Collins, did I tell you of Lady Metcalfe's calling yesterday to thank me? She finds their new governess a treasure. 'Lady Catherine,' said she, 'you have given me a treasure.'

COLLINS

Indeed, Madam. Your kindness had brightened the household of Lady Metcalfe with the most— .

LADY CATHERINE

Are any of your younger sisters out, Miss Bennet?

ELIZABETH

Yes, Ma'am, all.

LADY CATHERINE

All! What, all five out at once? The younger ones out before the elder are married! Your younger sisters must be very young?

ELIZABETH

Yes, my youngest is not sixteen. But really, Ma'am, I think it would be very hard upon younger sisters that they should not have their share of society and amusement because the elder may not have the means or inclination to marry early.

LADY CATHERINE

Upon my word, Miss Bennet! You give your opinion very decidedly for so young a person! Pray, what is your age?

ELIZABETH

With three younger sisters grown up, your Ladyship can hardly expect me to own it.

LADY CATHERINE

*(Gasping, then regaining her composure)*

You cannot be more than twenty, I am sure, therefore you need not conceal your age.

ELIZABETH

I am not one and twenty.

*COLONEL FITZWILLIAM enters.*

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

My Dear Aunt!

LADY CATHERINE

Ah, nephew. Your tardiness is unbecoming.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Begging your pardon Lady Catherine.

LADY CATHERINE

Will your cousin grace us with his presence?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Yes, Mum. He is . . . *(DARCY enters.)* here he is.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy?

LADY CATHERINE

I hear you are acquainted with my nephew, Miss Bennet.

ELIZABETH

Yes.

CHARLOTTE

He has not been here these four months. Not till the news of your visit, Lizzy.

DARCY

Miss Bennet (*Bowing*) I trust your family is in good health.

ELIZABETH

Yes, Mr. Darcy. In fact my eldest sister Jane has been in town these three months. Have you never happened to see her there?

DARCY

*(Pause)*

No. I have not been so fortunate . . . Miss Bennet, may I present to you my cousin, Colonel Fitzwilliam.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

My dear, Miss Bennet. It is a pleasure to meet you. Mr. Darcy has told me much about you.

ELIZABETH

Then I am afraid you have a very ill view of me.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Oh quite the contrary. He has nothing but praise for you.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet, while I prepare for dinner you must play us a piece on the piano.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Yes, Miss Bennet, you must entertain us with a piece.

ELIZABETH

Dear Colonel, I am afraid you will be disappointed.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Indeed, I shall not. Please.

COLLINS

Mr. Darcy, so wonderful to make your acquaintance here in Rosings. Lady Catherine is most kind for allowing us to be in your company . . .

LADY CATHERINE

Play, Miss Bennet. (*Exits*)

ELIZABETH

Here you are, Colonel. (*Begins to play simple tune*)



COLLINS

I was saying to her Ladyship the other day what affability she shows in her relations to those around her, especially to her neighbors. Why in my humble lodgings in Huntsford. .  
(*CHARLOTTE escorts MR. COLLINS off.*) Charlotte!

ELIZABETH

(*Stillness while she plays*)

You mean to frighten me, Mr. Darcy? But, my courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me.

DARCY

I know you find great enjoyment in professing opinions which are not your own.

ELIZABETH

(*To COLONEL*)

Your cousin is provoking me to retaliate. Such things may come out, Mr. Darcy, as will shock your relations to hear.

DARCY

(*Smiling*)

I am not afraid of you.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Pray let me hear, Miss Bennet!

ELIZABETH

The first time of my ever seeing him in Hertfordshire was at a ball. Where he danced no dances though gentlemen were scarce; and, more than one young lady was sitting down in want of a partner.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

My word, Darcy!

DARCY

I should have judged better. But I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers.

ELIZABETH

Why do you think this is, Colonel?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

I would love to hear.

DARCY

I have not the talent . . . which some people possess . . . of conversing easily with strangers.

ELIZABETH

My fingers do not move over this instrument in a masterly manner. But then I have always supposed it to be my own fault . . . because I would not take the trouble of practicing.

DARCY

*(Smiling)*

You are perfectly right. *(LADY CATHERINE enters.)* Neither of us performs to strangers.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet would not play at all amiss, if she practiced more. I would have been a delightful performer, had I taken the time to learn. *(ELIZABETH looks to DARCY.)* Nephew, I require your presence for dinner preparations. Come. The both of you continue your leisure till I return.

*DARCY exits. ELIZABETH plays again.*

ELIZABETH

I do not know anybody who seems more to enjoy the power of doing what he likes than Mr. Darcy.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

He likes to have his own way very well.

ELIZABETH

I wonder why he does not bring his sister when he travels as she is under his sole care.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Not *sole* care. I am joined with him in the guardianship of Miss Darcy.

ELIZABETH

Are you? And pray what sort of guardians do you make? Does your charge give you much trouble?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Why do you suppose Miss Darcy likely to give us any uneasiness?

ELIZABETH

She is a very great favourite with a lady of my acquaintance, Miss Bingley. Do you know her?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

I know her a little. Her brother is a pleasant gentleman-like man. He is a great friend of Darcy's.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy is uncommonly kind to Mr. Bingley.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Indeed! I have reason to think Bingley very much indebted to him. Darcy has congratulated himself on having lately saved Mr. Bingley from a most imprudent marriage.

ELIZABETH

*(Stops playing)*

Did Mr. Darcy give you his reasons for this interference?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

I understood that there were some very strong objections against the lady.

ELIZABETH

But . . . what right did Mr. Darcy have to direct in what manner his friend was to be happy?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

I do not know. It is supposed that there was not much affection in her case. He only told me what I have now told you . . . *(ELIZABETH stands stumbling.)* Miss Bennet, are you alright?

ELIZABETH

I suddenly do not feel well. *(CHARLOTTE enters.)* Perhaps I should have a rest.

CHARLOTTE

Dear Lizzie . . .

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM

Let me help you.

ELIZABETH

No, thank you. Charlotte can walk me back. Colonel it was a pleasure speaking to you. Will you give my apologies to Lady Catherine for my abrupt leave?

COLLINS

*(Entering)*

Dearest Charlotte, what are you doing?

CHARLOTTE

Elizabeth does not feel well, I am taking her home.

COLLINS

But, Charlotte! Lady Catherine will be most displeased at her leaving so suddenly. I—

CHARLOTTE

Mr. Collins! You and Lady Catherine will do very well without her! Excuse us.

*ALL exit.*

**ACT I**  
**SCENE 14**

AT RISE:                    *Huntsford; next morning, MR. COLLINS' house. ELIZABETH reclining.*

JANE

*(Narrating letter)*

Dearest Lizzy, I have spoken with Caroline Bingley again. She was most cold. She informed me that Mr. Bingley was in town and could not see me, and furthermore he may be looking to sell his lodgings at Netherfield never more to return. I must now conclude that Mr. Bingley no longer has any affection for me.

ELIZABETH

Oh Jane.

DARCY

*(Entering abruptly)*

Miss Bennet, I trust you are in good health.

ELIZABETH

Much better.

*DARCY paces, sits, stands, paces again and finally stops.*

DARCY

In vain have I struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and . . . love you. *(Pause)* I realize your family connections and society are inferior to my own. Those obstacles which judgment has always opposed me to inclination toward you are quite against my will and my reason. But I cannot change who I am. The strength of my attachment which, in spite of all my endeavours, I have found impossible to conquer; and I hope that it would now be rewarded by the acceptance of my hand, and your consent to marry me.

ELIZABETH

*(Long pause)*

In such cases as this, it is, I believe, the established mode to express a sense of gratitude. But I cannot. I have never desired your good opinion and you have certainly bestowed yours most unwillingly. I am sorry to have occasioned pain to anyone. It has been most unconsciously done, however, and I hope will be of short duration.

DARCY

*(Pause)*

And this is all the reply which I am to expect? I might, perhaps, enquire why, with so little endeavour at civility, I am thus rejected.

ELIZABETH

I might as well enquire why, with so evident a design of insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character? How is that for civility? Do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man, who has been the means of ruining the happiness of a most beloved sister? Can you deny that you have done it?

DARCY

I have no wish of denying it. Your sister was indifferent to him. I did everything in my power to separate my friend from your sister and I rejoice in my success. Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself.

ELIZABETH

But, Mr. Darcy, long before this, my opinion of you was decided. Your character was unfolded in the recital which I received many months ago from Mr. Wickham. On this subject, what have you to say?

DARCY

You take an eager interest in that gentleman's concerns.

ELIZABETH

Who that knows what his misfortunes have been, can help feeling an interest in him?

DARCY

His misfortunes! Yes, his misfortunes have been great indeed!

ELIZABETH

*(Interrupting)*

YOU have reduced him to his present state of poverty. YOU have withheld the advantages, which you must know to have been designed for him.

DARCY

And this is your opinion of me? My faults, according to this calculation, are heavy indeed. But perhaps, these offences might have been overlooked, had not your pride been hurt by my honest confession of the scruples that had long prevented my forming any serious design. But disguise of every sort is my abhorrence. Nor am I ashamed of the feelings I related; they were natural and just! Could you expect me to rejoice in the inferiority of your connections whose condition in life is so decidedly beneath my own?

ELIZABETH

You are mistaken. You have simply spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you, had you behaved in a more gentleman-like manner. I had not known you a month before I felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever marry.

DARCY

You have said quite enough, madam. I perfectly comprehend your feelings, and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been. Forgive me for having taken up so much of your time. (*Exits*)

ELIZABETH

What a tumult of my mind. His pride. His abominable pride!

**INTERMISSION**

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 1**

AT RISE: *Longbourn; exterior.*

MR. BENNETT

Lizzie! A letter for you! Come in soon, I must speak with you!

ELIZABETH

*(Reading)*

“My dear, Miss Bennet.” It is from Mr. Darcy. Hateful man. “Will you do me the honour of reading this letter?”

DARCY

“Be not alarmed, Madam. It does not contain any repetition of those sentiments which were recently so disgusting to you. I must be allowed to respond to the offences you laid to my charge. I had not been long in Hertfordshire, before I saw that Bingley preferred your eldest sister to any other young woman. I believed your sister indifferent.

ELIZABETH

How could you? Who doubted this? . . . Wait . . .

*CHARLOTTE enters. ELIZABETH thinks back.*

CHARLOTTE

Remember, Lizzie, that we do not know Jane’s disposition as you do.

ELIZABETH

Oh.

*ELIZABETH, while reading, begins to envision the people and events which DARCY describes in his letter. DARCY narrates while moving in and out of these visions. A scene forms while DARCY narrates his letter.*

DARCY

“But there were other causes of repugnance. The situation of your mother’s family, though objectionable, was nothing in comparison of that total want of propriety so frequently, betrayed by herself . . .”

MRS. BENNETT

It is such a promising thing for my younger daughters, as Jane’s marrying so greatly must throw them in the way of other rich men!

DARCY

“ . . . by your younger sisters . . .

*LYDIA and KITTY are playing a very childish game of chase with KITTY that nearly runs into DARCY*

DARCY, *Continued*

. . . and occasionally even by your father.”

MR. BENNETT

*(Enters with MARY)*

Let the other young ladies have time to exhibit!

ELIZABETH

Oh dear.

DARCY

“To convince Mr. Bingley, of your sister’s indifference was not difficult. On this subject I have nothing more to say.”

ELIZABETH

Of course not.

*ALL exit as ELIZABETH continues to read.*

DARCY

“Now, to the charge against Mr. Wickham.”

ELIZABETH

Oh this I need to hear.

DARCY

“My late father supported Mr. Wickham at school, hoping the church would be his profession. My father intended to provide for him in it. As for myself, it is many years since I first began to think of him in a very different manner. I was witness to Mr. Wickham’s idleness and vice for many years. There was also a legacy of three thousand pounds.”

MR. WICKHAM

Darcy, I do not wish to be a clergyman. I have the intention to study the law.

DARCY

“I wished rather than believed him to be sincere; but the business was soon settled.”



MR. WICKHAM

Thank you! I am much obliged.

DARCY

“Shortly after, he came to me having squandered the three thousand in gambling and . . . other vices.”

MR. WICKHAM

Darcy my circumstances are exceedingly bad. I am now absolutely resolved on being ordained, if you would present me to the living in question.

DARCY

“You will hardly blame me for refusing him.”

ELIZABETH

This must be false!

DARCY

“I must now mention a circumstance which I would wish to forget. My sister, (*GEORGIANA enters*) was left to the guardianship of my cousin Colonel Fitzwilliam, and myself. While she was away at school (*MR. WICKHAM enters; Kisses her hand.*) Mr. Wickham recommended himself to Georgiana. She was persuaded to believe herself in love, and to consent to an elopement. She was then but fourteen.

ELIZABETH

This cannot be!

DARCY

Mr. Wickham's chief object was unquestionably my sister's fortune, which is thirty thousand pounds; but I cannot help supposing that the hope of revenging himself on me was a strong inducement. After I refused him the dowry, he quickly gave up the pursuit of my sister. (*MR. WICKHAM exits. GEORGIANA, distraught, exits opposite.*) This, madam, is a faithful narrative of every event in which we have been concerned together. For the truth of everything here related, I can appeal to the testimony of Colonel Fitzwilliam. I will only add, God bless you, Fitzwilliam. Mr. Darcy.”

*DARCY exits.*

ELIZABETH

*(Pause)*

Can this be true? I have always prided myself on my discernment! Till this moment, I never knew myself.

LYDIA

Mama! Mama!

MRS. BENNETT

Yes, dear what is it!

KITTY

It is not fair, Mama!

LYDIA

I have received this letter from Mrs. Forster!

MRS. BENNETT

Oh, my Mrs. Forster! What does it say?

LYDIA

The officers are leaving for Brighton!

MRS. BENNETT

Oh, I remember when Colonel Millar's regiment went away. I cried for two days. I thought it should have broke my heart.

KITTY

I am sure I shall break mine.

LYDIA

Colonel Forster's wife has invited me to stay with them in Brighton! They leave on Friday!

MRS. BENNETT

Invited you personally? My dear Lydia! OOOOH! What an honour to be singled out!

KITTY

It's not fair! Why should I not be invited? For I am two years older than Lydia!

MRS. BENNETT

We shall have to get you some new clothes!

LYDIA

May I have a new evening bonnet, Mama?

MRS. BENNETT

Of course you shall my dear!

KITTY

Mama!

MR. BENNETT

*(Entering)*

Lizzie!

ELIZABETH

Father, I must advise you not to let Lydia go to Brighton.

MR. BENNETT

Why is this?

ELIZABETH

Papa, you must know all the improprieties of Lydia's general behaviour. The probability of her being yet more imprudent at Brighton, where the temptations must be greater than at home.

MR. BENNETT

My dear, Lydia will never be easy till she has exposed herself in some public place or other.

ELIZABETH

If you were aware of the very great disadvantage to us all, which has befallen other young women, which has already arisen from the public notice of Lydia's unguarded manner . . .

MR. BENNETT

What, has she frightened away some of your lovers?

ELIZABETH

*(Looks at letter)*

No. But, our family's respectability in the world will be affected by Lydia's wild character. I must speak plainly, if you will not take the trouble of checking her she will be the most determined flirt that ever made her family ridiculous.

MR. BENNETT

The officers in Brighton will find women better worth their notice. Let us hope that Lydia's being there may teach her of her own insignificance. Now, we have a surprise for you. Your aunt and uncle are here to take you on a trip.

*MR. GARDINER and MRS. GARDINER enter.*

ELIZABETH

When?

MR. BENNETT

Now.

ELIZABETH

Now?

MR. BENNETT

Yes! Your luggage is packed! Enjoy and do not trouble yourself with Lydia. *(Exits)*

MRS. GARDINER

Pemberley!

ELIZABETH

Pemberley?

MRS. GARDINER

We are taking you on a trip to Pemberley, the home of Mr. Darcy. Yes. Pemberley and the whole of Derbyshire.

MR. GARDINER

Good fishing.

MRS. GARDINER

I grew up near Pemberley. And I believe your Mr. Wickham passed his youth there.

ELIZABETH

What a happy surprise. But, I need not see Pemberley. I do tire of large houses.

MRS. GARDINER

If it were merely a large house richly furnished, I should not care about it myself; but the grounds are delightful.

ELIZABETH

You know I would be contented with the country . . .

MRS. GARDINER

No, objections. For I know you shall be delighted with Pemberley.

ELIZABETH

Indeed I shall.

MR. GARDINER

Off we go.

ELIZABETH

To Pemberley then!

*KITTY enters.*

KITTY

Pemberley? Lizzie is going to Pemberley? Papa! Papa!

MR. BENNETT

What is this shouting? Are the French at the door?

KITTY

Lydia is to Brighton and Lizzie to Pemberley? (*MARY enters, crossing the stage with a book.*) What about me? Mary do you think it is fair?

MARY

Far be it from me, my dear sister, to depreciate such pleasures! But I confess they would have no charms for me—I should infinitely prefer a book. (*Exits*)

KITTY

Papa! It is not fair! When is my time?!!

MR. BENNETT

Not soon enough.

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 2**

AT RISE: *Main Hall in Pemberley; July.*

MRS. GARDINER

Pemberley, Lizzie! How do you like it?

ELIZABETH

It is very elegant. Beautiful. I confess, I like it very much indeed.

MRS. GARDINER

I knew you would.

ELIZABETH

Is Mr. Darcy in?

MRS. GARDINER

Let me see if I can locate the housekeeper. (*Exits with MR. GARDINER*)

ELIZABETH

And to think, of this place I might have been mistress.

*The GARDINERS return with  
MRS. REYNOLDS.*

MRS. REYNOLDS

(*Entering*)

You are most welcome, my lady. Will you allow me to show you around?

ELIZABETH

That would be . . . nice.

MRS. REYNOLDS

Now, that is a portrait of my master, Mr. Darcy. And very like him.

MR. GARDINER

Is Mr. Darcy about the house?

MRS. REYNOLDS

I am afraid not, but we expect him tomorrow.

ELIZABETH

Oh, thank God! I mean that I know Mr. Darcy would not wish to be troubled by my being here.

MRS. REYNOLDS

Oh! Does that young lady know Mr. Darcy?

ELIZABETH

A little.

MRS. REYNOLDS

A fine young man. And do not you think him a very handsome gentleman, ma'am?

ELIZABETH

*(Referencing a portrait of WICKHAM)*

And that portrait?

MRS. REYNOLDS

George Wickham. The son of my late master's steward, who had been brought up by him at his own expense. He is now gone into the army, but I am afraid he has turned out very wild. Very wild.

MRS. GARDINER

Oh.

MR. GARDINER

Is your master much at Pemberley?

MRS. REYNOLDS

Not so much as I could wish, sir.

MR. GARDINER

If your master would marry, you might see more of him.

MRS. REYNOLDS

Yes, sir; but I do not know who is good enough for him.

ELIZABETH

It is very much to his credit that you should think so.

MRS. REYNOLDS

I say no more than the truth, and everybody will say that knows him. I have never known a cross word from him in my life. If I were to go through the world, I could not meet with a better man. But I have always observed, that they who are good-natured when children, are good-natured when they grow up; and he was always the sweetest-tempered, most generous-hearted boy in the world.

MRS. GARDINER

This fine account of him is not quite consistent with his behaviour to our poor friend.

ELIZABETH

Perhaps we might be deceived.

MRS. GARDINER

That is not very likely.

MRS. REYNOLDS

And that is the greatest credit to the house. My master's sister. Miss Darcy!

MRS. GARDINER

And is Miss Darcy as handsome as her brother?

MRS. REYNOLDS

Oh! Yes—the handsomest young lady that ever was seen; and so accomplished!—She plays and sings all day long. Mr. Darcy has of late fitted up a pretty parlor with more elegance and lightness than the apartments below. He did this all just to give pleasure to Miss Darcy.

ELIZABETH

He is certainly a good brother.

MRS. REYNOLDS

And this is always the way with him. Whatever can give his sister any pleasure is sure to be done in a moment. There is nothing he would not do for her.

MRS. GARDINER

Could we trouble you to see it?

MRS. REYNOLDS

Of course my lady.

*They exit. ELIZABETH looks at the painting of GEORGIANA. Then to WICKHAM. Then to DARCY's portrait. DARCY enters.*

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy!

DARCY

Ms. Bennet! . . . You are . . . I trust . . . You are well?

ELIZABETH

Yes. I am.

DARCY

And your sisters. Your family they are well?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

DARCY

Good . . . Miss Bennet . . . *(Exits)*

MRS. GARDINER

*(Enters)*

Lizzie, are you coming?

ELIZABETH

We are leaving.

MRS. GARDINER

What do you mean?

ELIZABETH

Call the horses.

MRS. GARDINER

Are you ill?

*MR. GARDINER enters followed by MRS REYNOLDS. During the following MRS. REYNOLDS observes the commotion. She crosses to the next room where DARCY exited.*



MR. GARDINER

What's the trouble?

ELIZABETH

It's time to go now.

MRS. GARDINER

I'm confused dear.

MR. GARDINER

What's the trouble?

ELIZABETH

We have overstayed our welcome, and I really must insist.

MR. GARDINER

Oh tosh we just arrived!

MRS. GARDINER

But, my dear there's something wrong.

ELIZABETH

I insist we leave at once.

MRS. REYNOLDS

*(Entering)*

Mr. Darcy has returned! And a day early! He is happy to receive you. He only needs a moment to make himself presentable after his journey.

DARCY

*(Enters)*

Forgive me for being brisk in my arrival. Ms. Bennet you are most welcome here.

ELIZABETH

I thank you. May I introduce my aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner.

DARCY

It is a pleasure to make your acquaintance. Mr. Gardiner, do you enjoy fishing?

MR. GARDINER

Indeed I do!

DARCY

There is a thriving river nearby that is well stocked.

MR. GARDINER

So I've heard.

DARCY

The invitation is open to fish here any time. I would be happy to supply you with the tackle as well if you like.

MR. GARDINER

I like very much indeed.

DARCY

Might you all be persuaded to have a tour? I would be delighted if you would allow me to show you around the grounds.

MRS. GARDINER

That would be most agreeable.

DARCY

Mrs. Reynolds would you be so kind as to show our guests to the garden?

MRS. REYNOLDS

Of course.

*MRS. REYNOLDS, MR. GARDINER, and MRS. GARDINER exit.*

DARCY

Ms. Bennet. *(Pause)*

ELIZABETH & DARCY, *Speaking at the same time*

ELIZABETH

Mrs. Reynolds informed us...

DARCY

Are you staying at Lambton?

---

ELIZABETH

I'm sorry, please.

DARCY

You are staying in Lambton?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

DARCY

At the inn?

ELIZABETH

Yes.

DARCY

How do you find it?

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy . . . I did not know . . . Your housekeeper assured us you would not be returning till tomorrow.

DARCY

I had planned so.

ELIZABETH

I would have never intruded. Had I known you would be returning . . .

DARCY

Ms. Bennet.

ELIZABETH

I know you must be terribly . . .

DARCY

How do you like Pemberley, Ms. Bennet?

ELIZABETH

Pemberley?

DARCY

Is it to your liking?

ELIZABETH

It . . . My aunt and uncle like it very much.

DARCY

And you?

ELIZABETH

I like it very much, indeed.

DARCY

The rest of my party is arriving momentarily.

ELIZABETH

Oh. Why did you not arrive with them?

DARCY

I rode ahead.

ELIZABETH

For what purpose?

DARCY

Leisure.

ELIZABETH

Who will be joining us?

DARCY

Mr. Bingley and Miss Caroline Bingley. Also, someone who greatly desires to make your acquaintance. My sister, Georgiana. I wonder if I may introduce you when she arrives? I also hope you would do me the honor in joining us here tomorrow. Your Aunt and Uncle are most welcome of course.

ELIZABETH

Thank you. Yes.

DARCY

Splendid. I shall come by with a carriage tomorrow.

BINGLEY

Miss Bennet! Mrs. Reynolds told us you were here! What a pleasant surprise! How do you do!

ELIZABETH

Well, Mr. Bingley, thank you.

BINGLEY

I trust your family is well.

ELIZABETH

All well, yes.

BINGLEY

And you sister?

ELIZABETH

Which one, sir?

BINGLEY

Jane. How does she?

ELIZABETH

Fine. It has been a while since you have seen each other.

BINGLEY

It is above eight months. We have not met since the 26th of November, when we were all dancing together at Netherfield.

ELIZABETH

That is quite a memory Mr. Bingley.

*GEORGIANA enters.*

DARCY

Miss Bennet, would you do me the great honor of introducing my sister. Miss Georgiana Darcy.

ELIZABETH

Miss Darcy.

GEORGIANA

Miss Bennet.

ELIZABETH

I have very much enjoyed your home.

GEORGIANA

Thank you.

ELIZABETH

You must be quite content here.

GEORGIANA

Yes.

ELIZABETH

I should think I gave quite an unpleasant shock to your brother when he found me here unexpectedly.

GEORGIANA

Unpleasant? No not at all! Oh he has nothing but praise for you. He has spoken of you in such high terms that I confess I have been most anxious to meet you. I do not know who is more excited at the surprise of you being here, myself or my brother!

ELIZABETH

Well . . .

GEORGIANA

Oh, forgive me. I spoke too boldly.

ELIZABETH

No Ms. Darcy, I share your excitement at meeting you.

MISS BINGLEY

*(Entering)*

Miss Elizabeth Bennet! How unexpected!

ELIZABETH

Miss Bingley.

MISS BINGLEY

Your complexion is a bit darker than I last remember. It must be on account of working outdoors on your father's estate.

DARCY

Georgiana, I have something for you. Would all of you . . .

MISS BINGLEY

Pray, Miss Eliza, are not the Militia removed from Meryton? They must be a great loss to your family.

BINGLEY

Shall we?

MISS BINGLEY

It must be a great loss to you, Miss Bennet, having Mr. Wickham no longer able to visit.

*GEORGIANA pulls away at the mention of this name.*

DARCY

Georgiana . . .

ELIZABETH

Miss Darcy! Your brother was telling me of the parlor.

GEORGIANA

Excuse me?

ELIZABETH

The parlor! You seem confused. I only ask because I do believe your brother has something waiting there for you. Might I intrude upon you to show me?

GEORGIANA

Yes. Um. . . Something waiting?

DARCY

Yes. A surprise.

ELIZABETH

Oh I hope I have not ruined it.

DARCY

Not at all.

GEORGIANA

Oh. Of course then. Yes. Of course! Follow me. (*Exits*)

DARCY

Miss Bennet. Thank you.

*ELIZABETH and DARCY exit.*

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 3**

AT RISE: *Lambton Inn; the following day.*

MRS. GARDINER

Mr. Gardiner, are you ready?

MR. GARDINER

Yes, dear, but these just arrived. (*Handing her letters*) They are all from Longbourn.

MRS. GARDINER

And all for Lizzie. Oh she will be pleased to hear from home. (*Calling*) Lizzie!

ELIZABETH

I am sorry Aunt. I am ready.

MRS. GARDINER

Lizzie, these have arrived for you. I know you have been waiting to hear from your sister.

ELIZABETH

Now I know why they are delayed. She wrote the address very ill.

MRS. GARDINER

I suggest you stay here and enjoy them while your Uncle and I go for a walk. I will tell the servant to send Mr. Darcy up if he arrives before we return.

ELIZABETH

Thank you, Aunt.

MRS. GARDINER

We will return within the hour. (*Exits*)

ELIZABETH

(*Opening*)

Goodness Jane. What caused such an unsteady hand? (*Reading*)

JANE

My dearest Elizabeth, All is well here. Sir William had a small party last week which was most pleasant. We have had such unusually temperate gatherings since you and Lydia have left town. Tell Aunt and Uncle that our nieces and nephews have been most delightful during their . . . (*ELIZABETH turns the page.*) Since writing the above, dearest Lizzy, something has occurred of a most unexpected and serious nature; be assured that we are all well. What I have to say relates to poor Lydia. An express came at twelve last night, from Colonel Forster, to inform us that she was gone off to Scotland with one of his officers; to own the truth, with Wickham!

ELIZABETH

What!?

JANE

So imprudent a match on both sides! But I am willing to hope the best. He must know our father can give her nothing. Our poor mother is sadly grieved. Father bears it better. I must conclude, for I cannot be long from our poor mother.

ELIZABETH

No, no, no.

*ELIZABETH opens the next letter.*

JANE

Dearest Lizzy, I have bad news for you. Imprudent as the marriage between Mr. Wickham and our poor Lydia would be, we are now anxious to be assured it has taken place. Colonel Forster came yesterday. Something was dropped by Denny expressing his belief that Wickham never intended to marry Lydia at all. Father and Mother believe the worst. As the first shock is over, shall I own that I long for your return? Papa is going to London with Colonel Forster instantly, to try to discover her.



ELIZABETH

Oh! Where, where is my uncle?

*There is a knock. DARCY appears.*

DARCY

Miss Bennet. The servant said I could . . .

ELIZABETH

I beg your pardon, but I must leave you. I must find Mr. Gardiner this moment, on business that cannot be delayed; I have not an instant to lose.

DARCY

Good God! What is the matter? I will not detain you a minute; but let me, or let the servant go after Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner.

ELIZABETH

No I can . . .

DARCY

You are not well enough; you cannot go yourself. (*Calling to servant*) You there! Go fetch Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. They are . . . ?

ELIZABETH

I am unsure.

DARCY

Check the High Street. (*To ELIZABETH*) Is there nothing you could take to give you present relief? A glass of wine; shall I get you one? You are very ill.

ELIZABETH

No, I thank you. I am only distressed by some dreadful news which I have just received from Longbourn.

DARCY

Allow me to help in any way I can.

ELIZABETH

I have just had a letter from Jane. It cannot be concealed from anyone. My younger sister, Lydia, has left all her friends—has eloped; has thrown herself into the power of—of Mr. Wickham. *You* know him too well to doubt the rest. She has no money, no connections, nothing that can tempt him to—she is lost forever. (*Pause*) When I consider, that I might have prevented it! I, who knew what he was. But it is all—all too late now.

DARCY

I am grieved indeed. Grieved—shocked. But is it certain—absolutely certain?

ELIZABETH

Oh, yes!

DARCY

And what has been done, what has been attempted, to recover her?

ELIZABETH

My father is gone to London. But nothing can be done. It is every way horrible! When *my* eyes were opened to his real character—Wretched, wretched mistake!

DARCY

I am afraid you have been long desiring my absence, nor have I anything to plead in excuse of my stay, but real, though unavailing concern. This unfortunate affair will, I fear, prevent my sister's having the pleasure of seeing you at Pemberley today.

ELIZABETH

Oh, yes. Be so kind as to apologize for us to Miss Darcy. Say that urgent business calls us home immediately. Conceal the unhappy truth as long as it is possible, I know it cannot be long.

DARCY

You may be assured of my secrecy. I wish a happy conclusion for you. I leave my compliments for your Aunt and Uncle.

*DARCY crosses to exit. Stops. Turns to give one last look. Exits.*

ELIZABETH

Goodbye, Mr. Darcy.

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 4**

AT RISE: *Longbourn. Sitting Room.*

MRS. BENNET

Poor dear Lydia had nobody to take care of her. She is not the kind of girl to do such a thing if she had been well looked after. Poor dear child! And now here's Mr. Bennet gone away, and I know he will fight Wickham, wherever he meets him and then he will be killed, and what is to become of us all? The Collinses will turn us out before he is cold in his grave. And when your uncle gets to town, he must find them out, wherever they may be; and if they are not married already, make them marry. Oh what a dreadful state I am in. I have such tremblings, such flutterings, all over me. And Lydia must not give any directions about her clothes till she has seen me, for she does not know which are the best warehouses. Oh!

JANE

Lizzie, thank goodness you have returned.

ELIZABETH

How is it here?

JANE

Mama is distraught. Papa went in search for Lydia.

ELIZABETH

Yes, Uncle left us to go meet him, but I am surprised he has not yet returned.

JANE

A letter arrived this morning from Uncle by express. We have not yet opened it.

ELIZABETH

Should we not open it?

JANE

I feel it may contain information for his eyes only.

MARY

This is a most unfortunate affair, and will probably be much talked of. But we must stem the tide of malice, and pour into the wounded bosoms of each other the balm of sisterly consolation.

JANE

Lydia wrote Mrs. Forester a note before she ran away. Colonel Forester brought it to us.  
(*Hands letter to ELIZABETH*)

ELIZABETH

(*Reads*)

My Dear Harriet,

ELIZABETH/LYDIA

(*Overlapping with LYDIA's voice*)

You will laugh when you know where I am gone, and I cannot help laughing myself at your surprise tomorrow morning, as soon as I am missed.

LYDIA

I am going to Gretna Green, and if you cannot guess with whom, I shall think you a simpleton, for there is but one man in the world I love. I should never be happy without him. You need not send them word at Longbourn of my going, if you do not like it, for it will make the surprise the greater, when I write to them and sign my name 'Lydia Wickham.'

ELIZABETH

Oh! Thoughtless, thoughtless Lydia!

MARY

Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson: that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable; that one false step involves her in endless ruin; that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behaviour towards the undeserving of the other sex. (*Exits*)

ELIZABETH

My poor father! How he must have felt it!

JANE

He could not speak a word for full ten minutes. Mother was taken ill immediately, and the whole house is in such confusion!

KITTY

Papa has arrived!

JANE

Oh, wonderful!

ELIZABETH

There is sure to be good news.

KITTY

Lydia is not with him.

*MR. BENNETT enters.*

ELIZABETH

Oh Papa, what you must have suffered.

MR. BENNETT

Say nothing of that. It has been my own doing, and I ought to feel it.

ELIZABETH

You must not be too severe upon yourself.

MR. BENNETT

No, Lizzy, let me once in my life feel how much I have been to blame. I am not afraid of being overpowered by the impression. It will pass away soon enough.

ELIZABETH

Do you suppose them to be in London?

MR. BENNETT

Yes, where else can they be so well concealed?

KITTY

And Lydia used to want to go to London.

MR. BENNETT

She is happy then. And her residence there will probably be of some duration. Lizzy, I bear you no ill-will for being justified in your advice to me last May, which, considering the event, shows some greatness of mind. From now on I will sit in my library, and give as much trouble as I can; or, perhaps, I may defer it till Kitty runs away.

KITTY

I am not going to run away, papa. If I should ever go to Brighton, I would behave better than Lydia.

MR. BENNETT

You go to Brighton! I would not trust you so near it as Eastbourne for fifty pounds! No, Kitty, I have at last learnt to be cautious, and you will feel the effects of it. No officer is ever to enter into my house again, or even to pass through the village. Balls will be absolutely prohibited, unless you stand up with one of your sisters. And you are never to stir out of doors till you can prove that you have spent ten minutes of every day in a rational manner. (*KITTY cries.*) Well, well do not make yourself unhappy. If you are a good girl for the next ten years, I will take you to a review at the end of them.

*KITTY exits, crying.*

JANE

Papa, a letter arrived this morning from Uncle.

MR. BENNETT

Well, and what news does it bring—good or bad?

ELIZABETH

We have not opened it.

MR. BENNETT

Perhaps you would like to read it.

*ELIZABETH grabs letter.*

MR. BENNETT

Read it aloud, for I hardly know myself what it is about.

ELIZABETH

*(Reading)*

“My Dear Brother, At last I am able to send you some tidings of my niece. Soon after you left me on Saturday, I was fortunate enough to find out in what part of London they were. The particulars I reserve till we meet; it is enough to know they are discovered. I have seen them both—“

JANE

Then it is as I always hoped they are married!

ELIZABETH

“They are not married, nor can I find there was any intention of being so; but if you are willing to perform the engagements which I have ventured to make on your side, I hope it will not be long before they are. All that is required of you is, to assure to your daughter, by settlement, her equal share of the five thousand pounds secured among your children; and, moreover, to enter into an engagement of allowing her, one hundred pounds per annum and in addition, the payment of Mr. Wickham’s debts. These are conditions which, considering everything, I had no hesitation in complying with. Stay quiet at Longbourn, and depend on my diligence and care. We have judged it best that my niece should be married from this house. She comes to us today. “

ELIZABETH

The terms, I suppose, must be complied with.

MR. BENNETT

I am only ashamed of his asking so little.

ELIZABETH

And they must marry.

MR. BENNETT

Yes, yes, they must marry. But there are two things that I want very much to know; one is, how much money your uncle has laid down to bring it about; and the other, how am I ever to pay him.

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 5**

AT RISE:                    *Longbourn. Exterior.*

LYDIA

Well, mamma what do you think of my husband? Is not he a charming man? I am sure my sisters must all envy me. They must all go to Brighton. That is the place to get husbands. What a pity it is, mamma, we did not all go.

MRS. BENNETT

Very true. But my dear Lydia, I don't at all like your going such a way off. Must it be so?

LYDIA

Oh, lord! Yes—there is nothing in that. I shall like it of all things. You and papa, and my sisters, must come down and see us. We shall be at Newcastle all the winter, and I dare say there will be some balls, and I will take care to get good partners for them all.

MRS. BENNETT

I should like it beyond anything!

LYDIA

And then when you go away, you may leave one or two of my sisters behind you; and I dare say I shall get husbands for them before the winter is over.

ELIZABETH

I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands.

MRS. BENNETT

Lydia, let me go fetch the carriage. We shall go to Mrs. Long and her two housemaids and show them your ring.

LYDIA

Mama, we must be leaving.

MRS. BENNETT

Nonsense, it will only take a moment.

LYDIA

Lizzy, I never gave you an account of my wedding, I believe. You were not by, when I told mamma and the others all about it. Are not you curious to hear how it was managed?

ELIZABETH

Not really.

LYDIA

Ha! You are so strange! We were married at St. Clement's. My uncle and aunt and I were to go together. So just as the carriage came to the door, my uncle was called away upon business. I was so frightened for he was to give me away. But, I was told that if he had been prevented going, the wedding need not be put off, for Mr. Darcy might have done as well. However, I did not hear above one word in ten, for I was thinking, you may suppose, of my dear . . .

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy!

LYDIA

Oh, yes!—Mr. Darcy was to come there with Wickham, you know. Oh! I quite forgot! I ought not to have said a word about it. I promised them so faithfully! What will Wickham say? It was to be such a secret!

ELIZABETH

But, what was Mr. Darcy doing . . .

LYDIA

If it was to be secret I should not say another word on the subject. You must seek no further. Right, Lizzie? But, if you did, I should certainly tell you all, and then Wickham would be angry. Ha! I should get my things. (*Exits*)

MR. WICKHAM

I am afraid I interrupt your solitary ramble, my dear sister?

ELIZABETH

You certainly do.

MR. WICKHAM

I should be sorry indeed, if it were unwelcome. We were always good friends. Sister.

ELIZABETH

True.

MR. WICKHAM

And so, my dear sister, I find, from our uncle and aunt, that you have actually seen Pemberley.

ELIZABETH

Yes!

MR. WICKHAM

I almost envy you the pleasure. And you saw the old housekeeper, I suppose? Poor Reynolds, she was always very fond of me. But of course she did not mention my name to you.

ELIZABETH

She did.

MR. WICKHAM

And what did she say?

ELIZABETH

She was afraid you had—not turned out well.



MR. WICKHAM

Yes. I was surprised to see Darcy in town last month. We passed each other several times. I wonder what he can be doing there.

ELIZABETH

As do I, Mr. Wickham.

MR. WICKHAM

And did you . . . when you were there . . . did you see . . .

ELIZABETH

I met Georgiana

MR. WICKHAM

Ah. And do you like her?

ELIZABETH

Very much.

MR. WICKHAM

When I last saw her, she was not very promising. I am very glad you liked her. I hope she will turn out well.

ELIZABETH

I dare say she will; she has got over the most trying age. Fourteen?

MR. WICKHAM

Did you go by the village of Kempton?

ELIZABETH

No.

MR. WICKHAM

I mention it, because it is the living which I ought to have had in the church.

ELIZABETH

Really?

MR. WICKHAM

I should have liked making sermons.

ELIZABETH

Indeed.

MR. WICKHAM

I see you question that. And it is not wholly without foundation. You may remember what I told you on that point, when first we talked of it . . .

ELIZABETH

Mr. Wickham! We are brother and sister, now. Do not let us quarrel about the past.

*THE FAMILY enters.*

MRS. BENNETT

Oh! My dear Lydia must you leave now? When shall we meet again?

LYDIA

Oh, lord! I don't know. Not these two or three years, perhaps.

MRS. BENNETT

Write to me very often, my dear.

LYDIA

You know married women have never much time for writing. My sisters may write to me. They will have nothing else to do.

MR. WICKHAM

Sad adieus my dearest family. But fate ordains that dearest friends must part.

MRS. BENNETT

Oh Mr. Wickham, be sure my daughter writes.

MR. WICKHAM

Oh Mother. As contraries are known by contraries, so is the delight of presence best known by the torments of absence.

LYDIA

Isn't my husband so well spoken, Mama? Aren't you my dear?

MR. WICKHAM

Yes, Lydia.

MR. BENNETT

Yes, yes. Very well, be off with you.

MR. WICKHAM

And so, my family, man's feelings are always purest and most glowing in the hour of meeting and of farewell. Therefore, adieu.

*JANE, KITTY and MARY exit.*

MR. BENNETT

He is as fine a fellow as ever I saw I suppose. He simpers, and smirks, and makes love to us all.

MRS. BENNETT

I think that there is nothing so bad as parting with one's friends. One seems so forlorn without them.

MR. BENNETT

This is the consequence, you see, Madam, of marrying a daughter.

MRS. BENNETT

It is no such thing! Lydia does not leave me because she is married, but only because her husband's regiment happens to be so far off. If that had been nearer, she would not have gone so soon.

*MR. AND MRS. BENNETT exit.*

*ELIZABETH gathers paper and pen and begins a letter.*

ELIZABETH

*(Writing)*

Dear Aunt You may readily comprehend what my curiosity must be to know how Mr. Darcy, a person unconnected with any of us, should have been amongst you at such a time as Lydia's wedding to Mr. Wickham. Pray write instantly, and let me understand it. And my dear aunt, if you do not tell me in an honourable manner, I shall certainly be reduced to tricks and stratagems to find it out.

*During this letter, the scene shifts to the sitting room in Longbourn.*

MRS. GARDINER

"My Dear Niece, On the very day of my coming home, Mr. Darcy came to tell Mr. Gardiner that he had found out where your sister and Mr. Wickham were. Mr. Darcy's motive professed was his conviction of its being owing to himself that Wickham's worthlessness had not been so well known as to make it impossible for any young woman of character to love or confide in him. Mr. Darcy generously imputed the whole to his own mistaken pride, and confessed that he had before thought it beneath him to lay his private actions open to the world. Mr. Darcy called it, therefore, his duty to step forward, and endeavour to remedy an evil which had been brought on by himself. Mr. Wickham's debts are to be paid, amounting to considerably more than a thousand pounds, another thousand in addition to her own settled upon her, and his commission purchased; all paid by Mr. Darcy. Mr. Darcy attended the wedding. Dearest niece, I know your objections to Mr. Darcy, but will you be very angry with me if I take this opportunity of saying how much I like him. Yours, very sincerely, Mrs. Gardiner."

ELIZABETH

Dear God! We owe the restoration of Lydia, her character . . . everything . . . to Mr. Darcy.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bennet! Jane! Have you heard?

MR. BENNETT

That would be my wife.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bingley has returned to Netherfield!

MR. BENNETT

Oh dear.

MRS. BENNETT

As soon as ever Mr. Bingley comes, my dear you will wait on him of course.

MR. BENNETT

If he wants our society, let him seek it. He knows where we live.

JANE

I know you are looking at me Lizzy.

ELIZABETH

I wish I could say anything to comfort you. . .

JANE

I shall be happy when his stay at Netherfield is over!

KITTY

*(Looking out of the window)*

Mama, look!

MRS. BENNETT

Oh what is it Kitty?

KITTY

Outside at our door!

MRS. BENNETT

Oh, hang it all Kitty, is Mrs. Long . . .

KITTY

It's Mr. Bingley!

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bingley?

KITTY

There is a gentleman with him, mamma. Who can it be?

MRS. BENNETT

Some acquaintance or other, my dear, I suppose; I am sure I do not know.

KITTY

Oh! That's Mr. what's-his-name. That tall, proud man.

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy!

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Darcy. Well, any friend of Mr. Bingley's will always be welcome here, to be sure. Though I hate the sight of him.

ELIZABETH

What could Mr. Darcy possibly want here . . . ?

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Bingley! Oh my dear Mr. Bingley do come in! It has been a long time since you went away.

BINGLEY

Too long, Madam.

MRS. BENNETT

Mr. Darcy. (*DARCY bows.*)

BINGLEY

Mrs. Bennet I was . . .

MRS. BENNETT

I began to be afraid you would never come back again, Mr. Bingley. (*Sits BINGLEY down*) A great many changes have happened in the neighbourhood, since you went away. You may have heard, my youngest is recently married.

BINGLEY

I did, Madam. Congratulations?

MRS. BENNETT

Do you mean to make any stay in the country at present?

BINGLEY

A few weeks, I believe.

MRS. BENNETT

When you have killed all your own birds, Mr. Bingley, I beg you will come here, and shoot as many as you please on Mr. Bennet's manor . . . Your friend is welcome as well.

BINGLEY

*(Standing)*

Mrs. Bennet. Is your husband here at present?

MRS. BENNETT

My husband? Mr. Bennet?

BINGLEY

Yes. He.

MRS. BENNETT

I believe he is in his study. *(Realizing)* Oh. Oh! Oh of course! Let me take you to him!

*MRS. BENNET, BINGLEY, DARCY exit.*

JANE

Why, if he came only to be silent, grave, and indifferent, did he come at all?

ELIZABETH

Oh yes, very indifferent. Take care, Jane.

KITTY

Mary, come here!

*MARY and KITTY listen at the door.*

JANE

My dear Lizzy, you cannot think me so weak, as to be in danger now?

ELIZABETH

I think you are in very great danger of making him as much in love with you as ever.

JANE

Why should you wish to persuade me that I feel more than I acknowledge?

MARY

I cannot hear.

KITTY

Let's go outside and look in the window! *(They exit.)*

JANE

Kitty!

ELIZABETH

If you persist in indifference, do not make me your confidante.

JANE

Lizzie, stop it! Do not raise my hopes only to have them dashed again. I cannot bear the heartbreak a second time!

ELIZABETH

Fine. We shall appear indifferent together. The men shan't come and part us, I am determined. We want none of them; do we?

MRS. BENNETT

*(Entering)*

Jane! Make haste! Make haste! Get your shawl, dear!

JANE

What?

*BINGLEY, MR. BENNET and DARCY  
enter.*

MR. BENNETT

Jane, dear.

BINGLEY

Miss Bennet. May I invite you to take a walk in the garden with me?

ELIZABETH

Indifferent indeed.

JANE

I . . . I . . . Thank you; I would like that very much indeed. *(Exiting with BINGLEY)*

MR. BENNETT

*(To MRS. BENNET)*

Come along.

*They exit.*

DARCY

Miss Bennet. *(Starts to exit)*

BINGLEY

*(Calling)*  
Alone, Darcy!

*DARCY stays. DARCY and ELIZABETH  
are alone together.*

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy. *(Long pause)* Is your sister at Pemberley still?

DARCY

Yes. She is. *(Pause)*

ELIZABETH

How long will she be there?

DARCY

She will remain there till Christmas.

ELIZABETH

And quite alone? Have all her friends left her? Because I would be happy . . .

DARCY

Mrs. Reynolds is with her. The others have been gone on to Scarborough, these three weeks.

ELIZABETH

Ah. *(Pause)* Mr. Darcy . . . did you . . . were you . . . would you like some tea?

DARCY

Tea?

ELIZABETH

Or coffee? Yes. It is no trouble.

DARCY

You are very kind, but no.

ELIZABETH

I can call a servant.

DARCY

You must not trouble yourself.



ELIZABETH

It really is no trouble.

DARCY

I am not certain how long Mr. Bingley will be.

ELIZABETH

Of course. Well, it was worth trying. Even after a first refusal. *(Beat)*

DARCY

Miss Bennet . . .

ELIZABETH

Mr. Darcy, I . . .

KITTY

Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bingley is asking for you.

DARCY

*(Beat)*

Miss Bennet. *(Exits)*

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 6**

AT RISE: *During the following, the scene transitions to Longbourn exterior. ALL CHARACTERS slightly overlapping.*

JANE

Oh Lizzie!

MRS. BENNETT

Mrs. Long

MRS. LONG

Mrs. Bennet

KITTY

Please Please

MARY

I should like . . .

In the paper  
SIR WILLIAM

You have heard?  
MRS. BENNETT

Could we please . . .  
KITTY

Dear Jane is to be  
SIR WILLIAM

I have pleasure in thinking  
MR. BENNETT

I shall tell  
MRS. LONG

You shall not  
MRS. BENNETT

His library.  
MARY

Jane  
KITTY

Jane  
ELIZABETH

Yes, Jane.  
MR. BENNETT

It is mine to tell.  
MRS. BENNETT

Married!  
SIR WILLIAM

Married!  
ELIZABETH

Married.  
MR. BENNETT

MRS. LONG

Married!

MRS. BENNETT

Bingley!

JANE

I'm the most fortunate creature that ever existed!

MARY

May I please?

KITTY

Every year.

MR. BENNETT

She'll be happily settled.

MRS. BENNETT

Five Thousand a year!

MR. BENNETT

We are happy.

JANE

Why aren't all so happy?

MARY

The Library.

KITTY

A few balls, if you would, every winter?

MRS. LONG

I'm delighted.

MR. BENNETT

What a thing for my daughter!

JANE

If there were . . .

ELIZABETH

Now Jane.

JANE

such another man for you!

ELIZABETH

If I have very good luck, I may meet with another Mr. Collins in time.

MRS. LONG

All of Meryton knows!

*All exit except ELIZABETH.*

LADY CATHERINE

*(Entering)*

Miss Bennet! *(Silence)* I hope you are well.

ELIZABETH

Lady Catherine!

*There is silence again.*

LADY CATHERINE

That lady at the door I suppose was your mother.

ELIZABETH

Yes I believe so.

LADY CATHERINE

And the two young women with her I suppose were your sisters.

ELIZABETH

Yes, madam

LADY CATHERINE

Your mother informed me her eldest is somewhere about the grounds, walking with a young man who, will soon become a part of your family.

ELIZABETH

To what do I owe the pleasure of you visiting?

LADY CATHERINE

You can be at no loss, Miss Bennet, to understand the reason of my journey hither. Your own heart, your own conscience, must tell you why I come.

ELIZABETH

Indeed, you are mistaken, Madam. I have not been at all able to account for the honour of seeing you here.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet, you ought to know, that I am not to be trifled with! But however insincere you may choose to be, you shall not find me so. My character has ever been celebrated for its sincerity and frankness, and in a cause of such moment as this, I shall certainly not depart from it. A report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only your sister was on the point of being most advantageously married, but that you, that Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united to my nephew, my own nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I know it must be a scandalous falsehood, though I would not injure him so much as to suppose the truth of it possible, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.

ELIZABETH

If you believed it impossible to be true, I wonder why you took the trouble of coming so far.

LADY CATHERINE

At once to insist upon having such a report universally contradicted.

ELIZABETH

Your coming to here, will be rather a confirmation of it; if, indeed, such a report is in existence.

LADY CATHERINE

This is not to be borne. Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has he, has my nephew, made you an offer of marriage?

ELIZABETH

Your ladyship has declared it to be impossible.

LADY CATHERINE

It ought to be so; it must be so, while he retains the use of his reason. But your arts and allurements may, in a moment of infatuation, have made him forget what he owes to himself and to all his family. You may have drawn him in.

ELIZABETH

If I have, I shall be the last person to confess it.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet, do you know who I am? I have not been accustomed to such language as this. I am almost the nearest relation he has in the world, and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns.

ELIZABETH

But you are not entitled to know mine; nor will such behaviour as this, ever induce me to be explicit.

LADY CATHERINE

Let me be rightly understood. This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place. Never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to my daughter. Now what have you to say?

ELIZABETH

Only this; that if he is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me.

LADY CATHERINE

The engagement between them is of a peculiar kind. From their infancy, they have been intended for each other. It was the favourite wish of his mother, as well as of hers. While in their cradles, we planned the union: and now, at the moment when the wishes of both sisters would be accomplished in their marriage, to be prevented by a young woman of inferior birth, of no importance in the world, and wholly unallied to the family! Do you pay no regard to the wishes of his friends? Are you lost to every feeling of propriety and delicacy? Have you not heard me say that from his earliest hours he was destined for my daughter?

ELIZABETH

Yes, and I had heard it before. But what is that to me? You did as much as you could in planning the marriage. Its completion depended on others. If Mr. Darcy is neither by honour nor inclination confined to his cousin, why is not he to make another choice? And if I am that choice, why may not I accept him?

LADY CATHERINE

Because honour, decorum, prudence, nay, interest, forbid it. You will be censured, slighted, and despised, by everyone connected with him. Your alliance will be a disgrace; your name will never even be mentioned by any of us.

ELIZABETH

These are heavy misfortunes, but the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness necessarily attached to her situation, that she could, upon the whole, have no cause to complain.

LADY CATHERINE

Obstinate, headstrong girl! I am ashamed of you! Is this your gratitude for my attentions to you last spring? Is nothing due to me on that score? I have not been in the habit of brooking disappointment.

ELIZABETH

That will make your ladyship's situation at present more pitiable; but it will have no effect on me . . .

LADY CATHERINE

I will not be interrupted. My daughter and my nephew are formed for each other. And what is to divide them? The upstart pretensions of a young woman without family, connections, or fortune. Is this to be endured! If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit the sphere in which you have been brought up.

ELIZABETH

In marrying your nephew, I should not consider myself as quitting that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter; so far we are equal.

LADY CATHERINE

But who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts? Do not imagine me ignorant of their condition.

ELIZABETH

Whatever my connections may be, if your nephew does not object to them, they can be nothing to you.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet enough! Tell me once and for all, are you engaged to him?

ELIZABETH

*(Pause)*

I am not.

LADY CATHERINE

And will you promise me, never to enter into such an engagement?

ELIZABETH

I will make no promise of the kind.

LADY CATHERINE

Miss Bennet I shall not go away till you have given me the assurance I require.

ELIZABETH

And I certainly never shall give it. I must beg, therefore, to be importuned no farther on the subject. *(Starts to leave)*

LADY CATHERINE

I am by no means done. Not so hasty, if you please! I am no stranger to the particulars of your youngest sister's infamous elopement. I know it all; that the young man's marrying her was a patched-up business, at the expense of your father and uncle. And is such a girl to be my nephew's sister? Is her husband, is the son of his late father's steward, to be his brother? Heaven and earth!—of what are you thinking? Are the shades of Pemberley to be thus polluted . . .?

ELIZABETH

You can now have nothing further to say. You have insulted me in every possible method. I must beg to return to the house.

LADY CATHERINE

Unfeeling, selfish girl! Do you not consider that a connection with you must disgrace him in the eyes of everybody?

ELIZABETH

I have nothing further to say.

LADY CATHERINE

You are then resolved to have him?

ELIZABETH

I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, constitute my happiness, without reference to you.

LADY CATHERINE

Very well. I shall now know how to act. (*ELIZABETH exits*) I take no leave of you, Miss Bennet. I send no compliments to your mother. You deserve no such attention. I am most seriously displeased! (*Exits*)

**ACT II**  
**SCENE 7**

AT RISE:                    *Longbourn exterior; days later.*

MR. BENNETT

Lizzy, I have received a letter this morning that has astonished me exceedingly. As it principally concerns yourself, you ought to know its contents. This letter is from Mr. Collins.

ELIZABETH

From Mr. Collins! And what can he have to say?

**This is Not the End of the Play**  
**Ending Intentionally Omitted for Security Purposes**