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Dramatized Classic (Upper/Middle Grades)

Pride and Prejudice

An adaptation of Jane Austen's classic story
of love and respect. . .

Adapted by Olive J. Morley

Characters

ELIZABETH BENNET

JANE BENNET

MARY BENNET

KITTY BENNET

LYDIA BENNET

MRS. BENNET, their mother

MR. BENNET, their father

MAID

MR. BINGLEY

MR. DARCY

LADY CATHERINE DE BOURGH

SCENE 1

TIME: *Early nineteenth century.*

SETTING: *The Bennet parlor in rural England. Sofa is up center and chairs, small tables, etc., are placed around stage. Window is left; exit right. Cabinet upstage holds small bottle.*

AT RISE: *JANE and ELIZABETH are sitting on sofa. JANE is doing embroidery; ELIZABETH is sketching. MARY sits apart, reading.*

JANE (*Gently, leaning over ELIZABETH's shoulder*): That's good, Lizzie. (*Looks carefully at sketch*) Why, it's Sir William Lucas to the very life!

ELIZABETH (*Laughing*): Yes, Jane, it's Sir William breathing the air on his estate, where he has retired to think with pleasure on his own importance!

JANE (*Scolding*): Lizzie! Do you ever cease from laughing at people?

ELIZABETH: I hope I never ridicule what is wise and good, but follies and nonsense do divert me, and I laugh at them whenever I can.

MARY (*Primly*): An unbridled sense of humor can sometimes lead to great trouble. (*Shrill laughter and talking are heard offstage.*)

JANE: Lydia and Kitty are here at last! What can have kept them so long at Aunt Philips's? (*KITTY and LYDIA enter, excitedly.*)

LYDIA: You will never guess what news we have! The Devonshire regiment is stationed in Meryton!

ELIZABETH (*Bored*): What, all that excitement over a few soldiers?

LYDIA: You can turn up your nose if you like, Lizzie. There'll be all the more partners at the Assembly Balls for Kitty and me! We've met and spoken with half a dozen already! There was a charming Mr. Wickham.

JANE (*Shocked*): But, Lydia, Kitty! Surely you don't mean you have spoken to these gentlemen without a proper introduction!

KITTY: Oh, Aunt Philips introduced us to Wickham.

LYDIA: He's simply delightful! So dashing! (*Rambles on*) And he introduced us to the whole group. And they're coming to the next Assembly. I've never been so complimented in my life and if it goes on like this, I do believe Kitty and I will be married before any of you three!

ELIZABETH (*With sarcasm*): That would be a triumph, indeed!

LYDIA (*Not noticing the sarcasm*): Yes, wouldn't it! And you can't think what Mr. Wickham said to me, Kitty. (*She whispers. They giggle loudly. MRS. BENNET enters left, in a great flurry.*)

MRS. BENNET: Girls, girls, what do you think! Netherfield Park is to be taken on a lease, by a gentleman called Mr. Bingley, with an income of five thousand pounds a year!

JANE: How very pleasant to have a new neighbor! And a rich one!

MARY: And a gentleman!

KITTY: Is he married, Mama?

MRS. BENNET: Of course not! What would be the point of my being so interested if he were already settled? Just think of it, girls—five thousand a year, Netherfield, and unmarried! I feel quite unnerved at the thought of it!

Bring me my smelling salts, Jane. (*She sinks into chair. JANE quickly fetches bottle from cabinet. ELIZABETH fans her mother. MARY returns to her book.*)

JANE (*Administering salts*): Dear Mama, how sweetly solicitous you are for our welfare.

MRS. BENNET: I've good reason to be, with five daughters, and your father required by law to leave his estate to that odious clergyman, Mr. Collins. And all of you without husbands!

ELIZABETH (*Smiling*): But, Mama, we are all still reasonably young. There is surely no need for any of us to consider spinsterhood as permanent yet!

JANE: Do not be anxious on our account, Mama.

MRS. BENNET: But it behooves me to be anxious! Go to your father, Jane, and tell him that he must call on Mr. Bingley immediately.

JANE: But would it not seem that we were pushing ourselves?

MRS. BENNET: Nonsense. It is your father's duty as a neighbor to call, and if we don't push ourselves, Lady Lucas will be there before us. I know her, the designing woman! She has her daughter Charlotte still on her hands at twenty-seven. There is not a moment to lose. (*Reluctantly JANE exits.*)

MARY: Think of it!

LYDIA: Unmarried!

KITTY: And five thousand a year!

ELIZABETH: But Mr. Bingley might not be attracted to any of us, and in any case, he cannot marry us all!

MRS. BENNET: If he marries one of you, I'd be quite satisfied. And as to not

being attractive to him, why you know perfectly well a sensible girl can marry whom she chooses.

ELIZABETH: But we might not like him.

MRS. BENNET: It would be your duty to like a man with an income that size. You are being selfish, Lizzie. *(Pauses)* What is taking Jane so long? *(Calls)* Jane! Jane! *(JANE enters.)* Well, tell us. When is your father going to call on Mr. Bingley?

JANE: My father says that he sees no occasion for calling, but that you may go, and take us all.

MRS. BENNET *(In disbelief):* I go? But that is impossible! What reason did he give?

JANE *(Puzzled):* I think he must have been joking, really. He sent this strange message: "You can all go by yourselves if you like, and I will send him a few lines to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever of my daughters he chooses, though I must throw in a good word for my Lizzie!" *(ELIZABETH bursts out laughing.)*

MRS. BENNET *(Indignantly):* Then he will not call. Oh, have you ever heard of such a thing? That fate could have sent me such a husband as Mr. Bennet! Here, I have been planning and striving to introduce you to gentlemen of prospects, and the moment one comes into the neighborhood, he will not call. It's too vexatious.

KITTY and LYDIA *(Ad lib):* Then we shan't even meet him! And any one of us might have lived at Netherfield Park! *(Etc.)*

MRS. BENNET: I will go myself and talk your father into reason. *(She rises and bustles to door, then stops midway.)* Elizabeth, you can always get round

your father. Do, do, my love! Tell him you particularly wish to meet Mr. Bingley.

ELIZABETH: Indeed, Mama, I do not, but I will go if you wish. *(ELIZABETH exits left. MRS. BENNET paces, fanning herself.)*

MRS. BENNET *(Tearfully):* Always in his library reading. I declare, such selfishness passes all bounds! *(She bursts into loud sobs. JANE, KITTY, LYDIA, and MARY gather round, comforting her. ELIZABETH appears at doorway.)*

ELIZABETH *(Coming downstage):* Indeed, there is no need for this grief, dear mother. *(MR. BENNET enters behind ELIZABETH.)*

MR. BENNET: Indeed not, Mrs. Bennet. Your concern is certainly unnecessary, since I called on Mr. Bingley yesterday.

MRS. BENNET *(Recovering; wildly excited):* You called on him?

LYDIA: Yesterday?

KITTY: Really called, Papa?

MARY: On Mr. Bingley? *(To each question MR. BENNET nods, smiling.)*

MRS. BENNET: Heaven be praised! Dear, dear Mr. Bennet. *(To girls)* Girls, whoever had such a husband. Have not I always told you how unselfish your father is?

LYDIA *(Excitedly):* Tell us, Papa, what is Mr. Bingley like?

MR. BENNET: Lydia, my dear, Mr. Bingley is a thoroughly likable, up-standing young man, and I dare say, he will be very glad to see you all. Now that this confusion seems to be sufficiently cleared up, I will return to the library. *(Exits)*

MRS. BENNET (*Overjoyed*): Dear Mr. Bennet—always planning for your welfare! (*To JANE*) Jane, we must arrange a dinner party. (*Sound of horses' hooves is heard offstage. BENNETS look questioningly at one another.*)

ELIZABETH: Who could that be? (*They rush to window.*)

MRS. BENNET: It must be Mr. Bingley!

MARY (*Looking out window*): And who is that with him?

ELIZABETH: Papa said that he has a friend from Derbyshire staying with him, a very tall man with a proud bearing. Mr. Darcy, I think he is called.

MRS. BENNET (*Eagerly*): Not Mr. Darcy of Pemberley! Girls, we are made! Why, he has ten thousand a year!

MARY, KITTY, and LYDIA (*Craning necks eagerly to look out window; ad lib*): Ten thousand! My goodness! Let me see him! (*Etc.*)

ELIZABETH (*Disdainfully*): If he had double ten thousand, I should not fancy such an arrogant-looking man.

MRS. BENNET (*Scolding*): Don't be ridiculous, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH: But, Mama, Papa told me that he was eaten up with pride of family. He had a haughty, disdainful manner, and would scarcely speak to him.

MRS. BENNET: All I can say is, Lizzie, if you give way to so much prejudice, you'll never get a husband.

KITTY (*Pushing LYDIA aside*): Don't push so, Lydia. Let me see.

JANE (*Restraining her*): Kitty, don't pull the curtain. They may see us watching.

MRS. BENNET: Girls, do you realize they will be here any moment? There, they are dismounting. Kitty, go instantly and do your hair. You, Mary, go and change into something prettier. Lydia, pick up those bonnets and go tidy yourself. (*All scramble to pick up needlework, settle cushions, etc. Finally MRS. BENNET, MARY, KITTY, and LYDIA bustle out in a flurry.*)

JANE (*Looking again through window*): Do you like the looks of him, Lizzie?

ELIZABETH: Who? Mr. Bingley? He has an easy, well-bred carriage. Yes, I think I shall like him.

JANE: And Mr. Darcy?

ELIZABETH: I wish he were not so proud.

JANE: They are being shown in. (*She turns from window.*) Lizzie, is my hair tidy? (*Smooths hair with her hands*)

ELIZABETH: Jane, you are blushing! I shall begin to think that Mama's hopes may be realized!

JANE (*Embarrassed*): Lizzie! Why, I have not even met him! And you looked with some interest at Mr. Darcy!

ELIZABETH: He looks very intelligent, and is certainly handsome. I might have looked with interest at him, if he were not so proud. (*Deliberately and clearly*) I do not like proud men. (*MAID opens door wide, and enters.*)

MAID (*Announcing*): Mr. Bingley! Mr. Darcy! (*ELIZABETH and JANE turn toward door, and curtsy deeply as curtain falls.*)

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SCENE 2

TIME: A few weeks later.

SETTING: An Assembly Ball. Scene may be played before curtain.

BEFORE RISE: *Dance music is heard. JANE and MR. BINGLEY enter, start to cross stage, stop center.*

MR. BINGLEY: Miss Bennet, I am delighted that I have come to make Netherfield Park my home. (*Gazes at her; meaningfully*) I never expected to find such beauty here in the country.

JANE (*Embarrassed*): Why, Mr. Bingley, I dare say all our lives will be enriched by your presence here. (*They continue left and exit. After a moment, ELIZABETH and MR. DARCY enter right, talking.*)

ELIZABETH (*Archly*): It is your turn to say something now, Mr. Darcy. I talked about the dance, and you ought to make some kind of remark on the size of the room or the number of couples.

DARCY: Do you talk by rule only, at balls such as this, Miss Elizabeth?

ELIZABETH: Sometimes. One must speak a little, you know. It would look odd to be entirely silent for half an hour together, and yet for the advantage of some, conversation ought to be so arranged that they may say as little as possible.

DARCY: Are you consulting your own feelings in the present case, or do you imagine that you are gratifying mine?

ELIZABETH: Both, for I have noticed a great similarity in the turn of our minds. We are both of an unsocial, taciturn disposition, unwilling to speak, unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room. But I shouldn't compare us. Perhaps you just do not enjoy the company of ladies.

DARCY (*Haughtily*): Miss Elizabeth, in the whole range of my acquaintance, I cannot boast of half a dozen ladies who are really accomplished.

ELIZABETH: Then, Mr. Darcy, you must expect a great deal in your idea of an accomplished woman.

DARCY: Yes, Miss Elizabeth, I do. A woman must have a thorough knowledge of music, singing, drawing, dancing, and all the modern languages to deserve the word "accomplished." She must also possess a certain something in her air and manner of walking, the tone of her voice, her address and expressions.

ELIZABETH (*Amused*): I am no longer surprised at your knowing only six accomplished women, Mr. Darcy. I rather wonder now at your knowing any. I must say, I don't have in my character the vanity and pride that you do.

DARCY: Ah, vanity is a weakness, indeed. But, pride—where there is real superiority of mind, pride will always be a good regulation. (*Pauses*) Miss Elizabeth, as I have pride in my intellectual powers, so too do I have pride in my feelings for you.

ELIZABETH (*Puzzled*): Your feelings for me, Mr. Darcy? Whatever do you mean?

DARCY (*With difficulty*): In vain have I struggled to keep them restrained, but I can no longer. (*Pauses*) Miss Elizabeth, you must allow me to tell you how ardently I love you.

ELIZABETH (*Astonished*): Mr. Darcy!

DARCY: You are surprised. Yes, I confess, so am I. I realize that there will be obstacles—such a marriage would be beneath me. I have considered your background fully, and I am aware of much that is lacking. But I love you. I wish to marry you in spite of this.

ELIZABETH (*With irritation*): Mr. Darcy, in cases such as this the usual custom

is to express gratitude for the sentiments avowed. If I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot. From the very beginning of my acquaintance with you, your manners impressed me with the fullest belief of your arrogance, your conceit, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others. Mr. Darcy, you are the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed upon to marry.

DARCY (*Taken aback*): I perfectly comprehend your feelings, madam, and have now only to be ashamed of what my own have been. (*Abruptly*) Forgive me for taking up so much of your time, and accept my best wishes for your health and happiness. Good day. (*ELIZABETH watches as he exits left. Then she exits right.*)

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SCENE 3

TIME: *Some months later.*

SETTING: *Same as Scene 1. Small bottle is on table.*

AT RISE: *MRS. BENNET is lying on sofa. JANE and MARY are fanning her. ELIZABETH stands by window, alternately looking out and pacing.*

ELIZABETH: If only we knew something! If Papa would only write to say where he is, if there has been any sign of them!

MRS. BENNET: It's just like your father not to write. He has no consideration for my nerves—none.

JANE (*Gently*): Mama dear, he was distracted with grief and anxiety, like you, when he heard of Lydia's elopement with Mr. Wickham. His silence means there is no news.

MARY: Has Mr. Wickham any prospects at all?

MRS. BENNET: You know Mr. Wickham

has no prospects—a penniless ne'er-do-well.

ELIZABETH: And a thousand pounds in debt!

MRS. BENNET (*Moaning*): Oh, my poor Lydia! What is to be done?

ELIZABETH (*Hopelessly*): Nothing can be done. Unless Father discovers their whereabouts in time.

MRS. BENNET: My darling Lydia! Eloping to Gretna Green, with no family standing by and no proper clothes for her wedding! No money. Oh, my poor baby!

ELIZABETH (*Sharply*): Lydia is far from a baby, Mama, and she has been selfish and thoughtless to us all by running off like this.

MARY (*Primly*): Alas, yes! But we may draw from the event this useful lesson—that one false step from a female involves her in endless ruin.

ELIZABETH: Oh, Mary, how can you moralize at such a moment! (*Paces again*) Kitty should have told us what she knew.

MRS. BENNET: Kitty may know more. (*Sitting up abruptly and calling*) Kitty! Kitty! Come here this minute! (*KITTY enters sulkily, holding a book.*)

KITTY: What is it, Mama? (*Looks around*) How you all take on so! I wish I were with Lydia. We'd be having fun.

MRS. BENNET: Kitty, put down that novel, you heartless girl! How could you know of this and say nothing?

KITTY: Lydia said I wasn't to tell.

MRS. BENNET: You wicked girl, not to tell your parents! (*Sitting up*) Oh, that I had not such a husband, such chil-

dren. Here's Jane deserted in her prime by that fellow Bingley, when I had all but ordered the wines for the engagement party. And now Lydia runs off with a penniless soldier and disgraces the whole family. This will be all over the neighborhood, and it will give that conceited Mr. Darcy even more cause to look down his nose at us. (*She lies back.*)

ELIZABETH: Mr. Darcy—yes. (*Goes to window; sighs*) He certainly will have cause now to consider our family beneath contempt. And I have always suspected that he persuaded Mr. Bingley to leave here to keep him from you, Jane.

JANE: Do not let that worry you, Lizzie.

ELIZABETH (*Facing JANE*): The trouble with Mr. Darcy is that he is all arrogance and pride, and his possessions and inheritance have given him a sense of his own importance far exceeding its worth. (*Looks out window*)

MRS. BENNET: It's just as well you don't admire him, Lizzie, now that all this has happened.

ELIZABETH (*Suddenly excited*): Why, there is a carriage coming up the drive, with a lady in it! Who can it be? (*JANE, KITTY, and MARY join her.*) Lady Catherine de Bourgh! Mr. Darcy's aunt! What can bring her here?

MRS. BENNET (*Starting up*): Good gracious me! Girls, girls, come and set this sofa to rights. Mary, take away those medicines. Jane, help me with my hair. Quick, a hairpin. Kitty, tidy up that corner. (*They run around doing her bidding.*) Dear me! Of all times for Lady Catherine to call! (*MAID enters.*)

MAID (*Announcing*): Lady Catherine de Bourgh. (*BENNETS spring to atten-*

tion, and curtsy deeply. MAID exits. LADY CATHERINE enters, looks about haughtily. BENNETS make deeper curtsies. Only ELIZABETH seems less obsequious.)

ELIZABETH (*Going forward to greet LADY CATHERINE*): Good morning, Lady Catherine. We are pleased to see you in Hertfordshire.

LADY CATHERINE (*Distantly*): Good morning. (*Disdainfully*) You have a very small park here.

MRS. BENNET: It is nothing in comparison to yours, my lady, I dare say.

LADY CATHERINE: This must be a most inconvenient sitting room for summer evenings; the windows are full west.

MRS. BENNET: Oh, we never sit here after dinner. Would your ladyship like some refreshment?

LADY CATHERINE: Thank you, no. Miss Bennet (*Looking at ELIZABETH*), I should like a word with you alone.

MRS. BENNET: Oh, certainly, your ladyship. Lizzie will be charmed to entertain you. Come, girls. (*She exits with KITTY, JANE, and MARY.*)

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

ELIZABETH: Indeed, you are mistaken, madam. I cannot account for the honor of seeing you here. (*Gestures to sofa*) Please sit down. (*They sit.*)

LADY CATHERINE (*Angrily*): Miss Bennet, a report of a most alarming nature reached me two days ago. I was told that not only was your sister Jane on the point of being advantageously married (*ELIZABETH gasps*), but that

you, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, would, in all likelihood, be soon afterwards united with my nephew, Mr. Darcy! Though I know it must be a scandalous falsehood, I instantly resolved on setting off for this place, that I might make my sentiments known to you.

ELIZABETH (*Coyly*): If you believed it impossible to be true, I wonder you took the trouble of coming so far. What was your ladyship's purpose?

LADY CATHERINE: To insist on having the report of your engagement to Mr. Darcy universally contradicted at once!

ELIZABETH: Your coming to see me will be rather a confirmation of it, if, indeed, such a report is in existence.

LADY CATHERINE: What! Do you then pretend to be ignorant that it has been spread abroad?

ELIZABETH: I never heard that it was.

LADY CATHERINE (*Haughtily*): Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?

ELIZABETH: Your ladyship has declared it impossible.

LADY CATHERINE: Miss Bennet, I have not been accustomed to such impudence. I am almost his nearest relation and am entitled to know all his dearest concerns.

ELIZABETH (*Tartly*): But you are not entitled to know mine.

LADY CATHERINE: Let me be rightly understood. This match, to which you have the presumption to aspire, can never take place. No, never. Mr. Darcy is engaged to my daughter. (*Rising triumphantly*) Now, what have you to say?

ELIZABETH (*Coolly, rising*): Only this: If he is so, you can have no reason to suppose he will make an offer to me. (*LADY CATHERINE is taken aback a moment.*) But if he does, I shall certainly not be kept from accepting by knowing that his aunt wishes him to marry Miss de Bourgh. If I am his choice, why may I not accept him?

LADY CATHERINE (*Hotly*): Because honor, decorum, prudence, nay, interest, forbid it. Yes, Miss Bennet, interest. For do not expect to be noticed by his family and friends. You will be censured, slighted, despised. (*Triumphantly*) Your name will never even be mentioned by any of us!

ELIZABETH (*Sarcastically*): These are heavy misfortunes. But the wife of Mr. Darcy must have such extraordinary sources of happiness attached to her situation that she could, on the whole, have no cause to complain.

LADY CATHERINE (*Angrily*): Obstinate, headstrong girl! If you were sensible of your own good, you would not wish to quit your own sphere.

ELIZABETH: In marrying your nephew, I should not quit that sphere. He is a gentleman; I am a gentleman's daughter. So far we are equal.

LADY CATHERINE (*Leaning forward and speaking sharply*): Who was your mother? Who are your uncles and aunts?

ELIZABETH: If Mr. Darcy does not object to them, they can be of no concern to you.

LADY CATHERINE: Tell me once and for all, are you engaged to him?

ELIZABETH (*After a short pause*): I am not. (*LADY CATHERINE smiles, well pleased.*)

LADY CATHERINE: And will you promise me never to enter into such an engagement?

ELIZABETH: I will make no such promise.

LADY CATHERINE: You are, then, resolved to have him?

ELIZABETH: I have said no such thing. I shall act for my own happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me.

LADY CATHERINE: Do not imagine, Miss Bennet, that your ambition will ever be gratified. (*Starts toward door, then turns*) I am most seriously displeased! (*She exits. ELIZABETH stares after her. She sits, as JANE enters.*)

JANE: Lizzie, what did she want?

ELIZABETH (*Stunned*): She came to tell me that Mr. Darcy wants to marry me, and she is trying to prevent it.

JANE (*Astonished*): Mr. Darcy—marry you? But is it true?

ELIZABETH: It is, oh, it is! (*Excited*) I didn't know he still loved me, and she has been so kind as to tell me.

JANE: *Still* loves you! Lizzie, Lizzie, do explain!

ELIZABETH: Mr. Darcy offered once to marry me, and I refused him.

JANE (*Shocked*): Lizzie! But why did you refuse?

ELIZABETH: He made no secret that he despised my family. I could not accept him, knowing this. But I did not think he still cared. And now, in spite of all this disgrace with Lydia, it is obvious that he does! And Mr. Bingley loves you—intends to marry you!

JANE (*Overjoyed*): If only it is true!

ELIZABETH: That is the glorious, wonderful thing. It must be true, or she would not have come all this way to try to prevent it! (*MRS. BENNET enters.*)

MRS. BENNET: Upon my word, what an odd manner her ladyship has. I suppose she had nothing important to say to you, Lizzie?

ELIZABETH (*With a smile*): No—nothing important! (*Noisy sounds of excitement are heard offstage. MARY, KITTY, and LYDIA enter.*)

JANE and ELIZABETH (*Together*): Lydia!

MRS. BENNET: Oh, my darling child! I thought you were lost forever! (*She embraces LYDIA, who is immediately surrounded by others.*) To think of it! I have you back, and I thought you had run away with Wickham and had one of those disgraceful Gretna Green marriages with none of us there!

LYDIA: But I *am* married to Wickham, Mama! Look! (*Proudly displays wedding ring*) But it was in a London church with Papa and Mr. Darcy there.

ALL: Mr. Darcy?

LYDIA: Oh, dear, now I've let the cat out of the bag, and Wickham said I wasn't to tell, for Darcy would be furious if Lizzie ever knew.

MRS. BENNET: Lizzie?

JANE: Knew what? Lydia, you must explain.

LYDIA: Well, we were going to Gretna Green, but Wickham has tons of debts and couldn't afford the coach fare. So we went to his old lodgings—to think it out—and Mr. Darcy turned up. He'd searched high and low for us, he said. He settled Wickham's debts and gave

him some money, to be settled on me—about a thousand pounds, I believe—and arranged the wedding and let Papa know. It was all lovely, and great fun, and only spoiled by Mr. Darcy looking so grave, the stodgy man.

ELIZABETH (*Gravely*): Lydia, you don't seem to realize quite how much you owe to Mr. Darcy.

LYDIA: Oh, don't look so serious, Lizzie! You're as bad as he is.

MRS. BENNET (*Embracing her*): My darling child! To think I've my youngest daughter married, and only sixteen, too!

LYDIA: Oh, I must show the servants my wedding ring! (*She links arms with KITTY and MARY and they exit.*)

MRS. BENNET: Heavens! I must begin a search for suitable lodgings for Lydia! (*As she exits*) So much to do! I shall go distracted! (*Exits. JANE and ELIZABETH look at each other, and laugh.*)

JANE: Mama is overjoyed. I dare say she may faint from excitement, so I'd better follow her around with smelling salts! (*They laugh.*)

ELIZABETH: I don't understand why Mr. Darcy has done this for us.

JANE (*Tenderly taking ELIZABETH's hands*): Because he loves you, Lizzie dear. (*JANE exits. ELIZABETH looks wistfully out window. MAID enters and stands at door.*)

MAID: Miss Bennet, Mr. Darcy is here to see you. (*She exits. DARCY enters.*)

ELIZABETH (*Surprised; curtsying*): Why, Mr. Darcy!

DARCY: Miss Elizabeth, it is good to see you again.

ELIZABETH: It is good to see you. (*Impulsively*) Mr. Darcy, ever since I found out about your unexampled kindness to my poor sister, I have been most anxious to tell you how grateful I feel. Let me thank you again and again, in the name of my family.

DARCY: If you will thank me, let it be for yourself alone. I shall not attempt to deny that the wish of giving you happiness led me on. (*Hesitates*) Elizabeth, my—my feelings and wishes about you are unchanged. But one word from you will silence me on this subject forever.

ELIZABETH: Mr. Darcy, my feelings have undergone a change.

DARCY (*Eagerly*): Then it is true! Just as I came up the drive, I saw my aunt, Lady Catherine, and she told me what had passed between you. I knew enough of your disposition to be certain that if you had absolutely, irrevocably decided against me, you would have acknowledged it to Lady Catherine frankly and openly.

ELIZABETH (*Laughing*): Yes, you know that after abusing you so abominably to your face, I certainly have no scruple in abusing you to all your relations.

DARCY: What did you say of me that I did not deserve? You called me proud, I believe. And so I was. But you, my dear Elizabeth, have humbled me. I hope I have proved that to you.

ELIZABETH: And I, dear Darcy, was prejudiced. But no longer. (*They gaze at each other.*)

DARCY: Then what I have hoped for all these months has come true. I shall go right in and speak to your father. The sooner I am your husband, the better. (*DARCY and ELIZABETH hold hands and start to exit as curtain closes.*)

THE END

PRODUCTION NOTES
Pride and Prejudice

CHARACTERS: 8 female; 3 male.

PLAYING TIME: 35 minutes.

COSTUMES: Early 19th century English. Kitty, Lydia, and Mrs. Bennet wear fussy, frivolous clothes. Elizabeth and Jane are more tastefully dressed. Mary's clothes are staid. In Scene 2, Jane and Elizabeth wear ball gowns, jewelry. Lydia wears wedding ring in Scene 3.

PROPERTIES: Embroidery, sketch book and pencil, books, fan.

SETTING: Scenes 1 and 3: The Bennet parlor, in rural England, furnished in the style of the period. Sofa is up center, and other chairs, small tables, etc., are placed around room. Window is left; exit is right. Cabinet upstage holds small bottle (smelling salts). Scene 2, Assembly Ball, may be played before curtain.

LIGHTING: No special effects.

SOUND: Horses' hooves and dance music, as indicated.