

# Audition Monologues for *Pride & Prejudice*

A play adapted from Jane Austen's novel

By Janet Munsil

## CHARACTERS:

ELIZABETH (LIZZIE) BENNET

JANE BENNET

MARY BENNET

KITTY BENNET

LYDIA BENNET

MRS BENNET

MR BENNET

MRS GARDINER

MR GARDINER

MR DARCY

CHARLES BINGLEY

CAROLINE BINGLEY

CHARLOTTE LUCAS

MR COLLINS

GEORGE WICKHAM

LADY CATHERINE DE BOURGH

LADY ANNE DE BOURGH

MRS REYNOLDS

GEORGIANA DARCY

## FEMALE CHARACTERS

**ELIZABETH BENNET** (*character age: 20*) *Confident in her opinions (to a fault), passionate about life and loves her family fiercely. Sees herself as an equal to all and doesn't back down when pushed by those who challenge her.*

Sir, I appreciate the struggle you have been through, and I am very sorry to have caused you pain. Believe me, it was unconsciously done. I'm sure that the feelings which, as you've told me, have hindered your regard, will help you in overcoming it.

I might inquire why, with so evident a design of insulting me, you chose to tell me that you liked me against your better judgement. If I was uncivil, that was some excuse – But I have other reasons, you know I have! Do you think that anything might tempt me to accept the man who has ruined, perhaps forever, the happiness of a most beloved sister?

From the moment I met you, your arrogance and conceit, your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, made me realize that you were the last man in the world I could ever be prevailed upon to marry.

**Jane Bennet** (*Character age: 22*) *Sweet and trusting, she is considered the most beautiful of the 5 daughters and hopes hang on her to marry well. She has a close bond with Lizzie. She is reserved and humble.*

(*Jane has just received a letter*) I hardly know what to think. You read it, Lizzie. From Miss Bingley...They have all left Netherfield for London today. The Bingleys, Mr. Darcy—without any intention of returning! She says Mr.Bingley is anxious to see Darcy's sister, Georgiana, and that she expects that they shall soon be engaged. What do you think, Lizzie? Is it not clear enough? Caroline is perfectly convinced of her brother's indifference to me. I must have mistaken his affection. It will not last long. He will be forgot, and everything will be as it was before. Let us talk of him no more. Please. No more. That chapter is quite closed.

**Mary Bennet (character age: 18) 3rd oldest daughter, bookish, introverted, pious, self-righteous**

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 other sex

**Lydia Bennet (character age: 15) Indulged by her mother, lacking in propriety, a shameless flirt, oblivious to the consequences of her behavior**

Lizzy! Lizzy, have you admired my ring? Don't you envy me? Oh, I never gave you an account of my wedding, I believe. (*Sees Elizabeth's disdain*) La! You are so strange! But I must tell you how it went off. We were married at St. Clement's, and it was settled that we should all be there by eleven o'clock. But then Uncle was called away on some business and I was certain we would be late! But then, I recollected afterwards, if he had been prevented going, the wedding need not be put off, for Mr. Darcy might have done as well...But gracious me! I quite forgot! I ought not to have said a word about it. I promised! What will Wickham say? Do not tell him or he will be angry—it was to be such a secret!

**Lady Catherine De Bourgh (character age: 60-75) tight-fisted, suspicious, cranky, her superior character is deeply rooted in her status and wealth**

A report of the most alarming nature has reached me. I was told that not only was your sister on the point of being most advantageously married, but that you would in all likelihood be soon afterwards united with my own nephew, Mr. Darcy. Though I know this to be a scandalous falsehood, I set out at once so that it might be universally contradicted. Miss Bennet, I insist on being satisfied. Has my nephew made you an offer of marriage?

**Mrs. Bennet (character age: 45-60) bit of a hypochondriac, often insensitive with her girls, overly dramatic, a terrible gossip, preoccupied with marrying her daughters off**

If I had been able to carry my point of going to Brighton with all my family, this would not have happened—but I was over-ruled as I always am. And now here's Mr Bennet gone away, and I know he will fight Wickham, 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 if your Uncle Gardiner cannot force Wickham to marry Lydia, we shall be ruined! What a dreadful state I am in. Such tremblings, such flutterings, all over me, such spasms in my side, and pains in my head, and beatings in my heart!

**Mrs. Gardiner (character age: 40-55) Mrs. Bennet's sister and gossip partner, but much more discreet, wise, and socially aware. Favors Jane and especially Lizzie and can see their personal worth**

Mr Darcy made his own inquiries, found out where your sister and Mr Wickham were in hiding. He tried to convince Lydia to come away with him, but she would not, and he found Wickham had no intention of marrying her. Mr Darcy felt it was his duty to step forward and remedy an evil he himself had brought about—that he had not made Wickham's worthlessness known because he felt it beneath his dignity to lay his private actions open to the world.

**Charlotte Lucas (character age: late 20's) Elizabeth's best friend and neighbor. Pragmatic and observant, never prone to emotional reactivity.**

Mr Collins has asked for my hand and I have accepted him. Why should you be surprised? Because he did not succeed with you? I am not romantic, you know; I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most married people can boast. I have never felt for any man to a great degree, certainly not to the degree that one reads of in books. But I cannot wait much longer for an opportunity. An acceptance based on a clear head is at least equal to one made by a foolish heart.

**Caroline Bingley (character age: mid to late 20's) Seems to have underlying designs on Darcy, she is manipulating, snobbish, and extremely prideful.**

What can Miss Eliza Bennet mean by scampering about the country, three miles or four miles, or five miles, or whatever it is! And alone! And her petticoat; I hope you saw her petticoat, six inches deep in mud. I could hardly keep my countenance. You observed it, Mr Darcy, I am sure. It seems clear that Miss Eliza has neither beauty, or accomplishments, nor charm...(Lizzie enters) She has nothing, in short, to recommend her, but being an excellent walker. Oh! There you are, Miss Bennet. You're such a church mouse.

## MALE CHARACTERS

**Mr Fitzwilliam Darcy (character age: 28) Proud, misunderstood, emotionally stifled, experiences the most change of any character in the storyline**

In vain I have 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. I have I have done all that I can to conquer this powerful feeling I have. It goes against every scruple of rational thought and common sense, your family being as it is, without connection, the appalling behavior of your sisters—your mother! But I assure you I am content to suffer all this and the judgement of my own family and friends if you will do me the honour of becoming my wife.

**Mr Bennet** (character age: 50-65) Doting father to Lizzie—shares an intellectual bond with her and loves to provoke the absurdity of others. He is the opposite of Mrs. Bennet in many ways although he deals with conflict by avoiding it.

(Do both monologues)

- 1) That is very thoughtful of you, Mr Collins. I warmly welcome you to Longbourn as my guest, and when I am dead, which, I fear, may not be for several years, I hope that you will welcome the occasional appearance of my ghost in the library.
- 2) [*Context: speaking to his daughter, Kitty, after Lydia has run off with an officer during a visit to Brighton*] What—you go to Brighton? I would not trust you so near it as East Bourne for fifty pounds! No, Kitty, I have at last learnt to be cautious, and you shall feel it. No officers will be allowed to pass through the village. Balls will be strictly prohibited. And you are never to stir out of doors till you can prove that you have spent 10 minutes of every day in a rational

manner. (*Kitty cries*).... Well, well, do not make yourself unhappy. If you are a good girl, we will revisit the matter in ten years.

**Mr Collins** (*character age: late 20's-late 30's*) *Cringey and absurd. Pompous without justification. His connection with Lady Catherine and deference to her is at the center of his life. Oblivious to how annoying he is to others*

Being as I am, to inherit this estate after the death of your honoured father—who, however, may live many years longer—I have resolved to choose a wife from among his daughters. And it is the express wish of my Patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, that I return home with a bride as soon as possible. Now, fair cousin, nothing remains for me but to assure you in the most animated language of the violence of my affection. (*Lizzie begins her protest*) Believe me, my dear Cousin Elizabeth, that your reticence, so far from doing you any disservice, can only be added to your long list of commendable qualities. I am aware that it is usual with young ladies to reject the addresses of the man whom they secretly mean to accept, when he first applies for their favour.

**George Wickham** (*character age: mid 20's*) *Although the audience discovers how devious and manipulating his character is, he presents himself in the play as charming and amiable, sincere and humble. We should believe he is the victim in the relationship with Darcy*

I am not afraid of him. He has already done his worst to injure me, yet, here I am. But he is a very rich and powerful man, and he has a violent temper. I only feared that Darcy might try to somehow manipulate you, in order to wound me. He is not above such behavior. You see, Darcy and I grew up together under the same roof at his family estate of Pemberley, which my father managed. Darcy's father was very attached to me, and left me a generous legacy in his will, which Darcy chose to give elsewhere. I suppose if the father had liked me less, the son might have liked me more.

**Mr Charles Bingley** (*character age: mid to late 20's*) *Optimistic, cheery, enamored with Jane. Easily swayed by family and friends. Genuine.*

(*Speaking to Elizabeth*) Mr. Darcy? Disapproved? I never would have got up the courage to ask for Jane's hand if not for Darcy. He is the one to be congratulated. (*Sees Elizabeth's disbelief*) I know he was against the match at first. The day we saw you at Pemberley we had it out, a real fisticuffs. Was very angry. Then he told me how wrong he had been, and that he was sorry. And I forgave him, and that's about it really!

## OTHER CHARACTERS

**Mr Gardiner** (*character age: 50-65*)—The girls' uncle, Mrs Bennet's brother-in-law

**Mrs Reynolds** (*character age: 45-65*)—Housekeeper of Pemberley

**Miss Kitty Bennet** (*character age: 17*)—4th of the Bennet daughters

**Miss Georgiana Darcy** (*character age: 16*)—Mr Darcy's younger sister

**Lady Anne DeBourgh** (*character age: mid 20's*)—Lady Catherine's sickly daughter

**Assorted servants**