PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

A Musical Play in Two Acts
based on the novel by Jane Austen

Book and Lyrics by Deborah Morris
Music by Ann Kapp Andersen

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Pride And Prejudice
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**SPEAKING ROLES (IN THE ORDER THEY APPEAR IN THE SCRIPT)**

Mrs. Bennet – A middle-aged woman with five unmarried daughters  
Mr. Bennet – Mrs. Bennet’s husband  
Jane – The Bennet’s eldest daughter  
Elizabeth – The Bennet’s second daughter  
Mary – The Bennet’s third daughter  
Kitty – The Bennet’s fourth daughter  
Lydia – The Bennet’s youngest daughter  
Mr. Bingley – An eligible bachelor  
Mr. Darcy – His eligible friend  
Charlotte – Elizabeth’s best friend  
Perkes – Mr. Bingley’s servant  
Miss Bingley – Mr. Bingley’s sister  
Mrs. Hurst – Mr. Bingley’s sister  
Mr. Hurst – Mrs. Hurst’s husband  
Mr. Wickham – A soldier and enemy of Darcy  
Mr. Collins – A cleric related to the Bennets  
Mrs. Gardiner – Mrs. Bennet’s sister-in-law  
Lady Catherine – Mr. Darcy’s aunt  
Colonel Fitzwilliam – Mr. Darcy’s cousin  
Mr. Gardiner – Mrs. Gardiner’s husband, a brother of Mrs. Bennet  
Miss Darcy – Younger sister of Mr. Darcy  
Hill – The Bennet’s servant

**NONSPEAKING ROLES**

Miss de Bourgh – Cousin to Mr. Darcy, only child of Lady Catherine  
Dancers and chorus – From 4 to 6 couples as ball guests and villagers
LIST OF SONGS

ACT ONE

“The Marriage Song”  The Bennet Family  Act I Scene 1
“Gigue”  Orchestra  Act I Scene 2
“Love’s Spell”  Jane  Act I Scene 3
“I Do Not Wish to Know”  Charlotte & Elizabeth  Act I Scene 4
“Spiteful Banter”  The Hursts & Miss Bingley  Act I Scene 5
“As a Moth to the Flame”  Darcy  Act I Scene 7
“Sarabande”  Orchestra  Act I Scene 9
“Mr. Collin’s Proposal”  Mr. Collins & Elizabeth  Act I Scene 10
“Love’s Spell” (Reprise 1)  Jane  Act I Scene 11
“The Reckoning”  Elizabeth  Act I Scene 14
“Moth to the Flame” (Reprise)  Darcy  Act I Scene 15

ACT TWO

“Take Me to Gretna Green”  Lydia & Wickham  Act II Scene 1
“Ask Me for the Stars”  Darcy  Act II Scene 4
“Lydia’s Triumph”  Lydia  Act II Scene 7
“Love’s Spell” (Reprise 2)  Orchestra  Act II Scene 9
“Lady C’s Ultimatum”  Lady Catherine & Elizabeth  Act II Scene 10
“Ask Me for the Stars” (R.1)  Elizabeth  Act II Scene 10
“Ask Me for the Stars” (R. 2)  Elizabeth & Darcy  Act II Scene 11
“Come Drink the Cup”  The Cast  Act II – Epilogue
Act One - Scene One:

(Lights come up on stage right apron which represents the parlor of the Bennet home, Longbourn. The female Bennet family members are engaged in various leisure activities. Remnants of afternoon tea are in evidence. Enter Mr. Bennet)

Mrs. Bennet: Mr. Bennet! Netherfield Hall has been let at last. Lady Lucas has just been here, and she has told me all about it. . . . Well, don’t you want to know who has taken it?

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

Mrs. Bennet: Lady Lucas says that Netherfield is taken by a single young man from the north of England by the name of Bingley, and he is possessed of a large fortune. He came down on Monday, and was so much delighted with the place that he agreed to take it upon the spot. What a fine thing for our girls!

(Giggling from Kitty and Lydia)

Mr. Bennet: How so? How can it affect them?

Mrs. Bennet: My dear Mr. Bennet. how can you be so tiresome? A single, young man of large fortune - four or five thousand a year – must be in want of a wife. Naturally, I am thinking of his marrying one of our daughters. (More giggles from Kitty and Lydia)

Mr. Bennet: Is that his design in settling here?

Mrs. Bennet: 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 at once! Sir William and Lady Lucas have already gone on Charlotte’s account, and it will be impossible for us to visit him if you do not.

Mr. Bennet: You are overscrupulous, surely my dear. With five unmarried daughters, I daresay Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you. And I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls. Though, I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.

Elizabeth: Oh, father.

Mrs. Bennet: Mr. Bennet! I desire you will do no such thing! You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.

(Music begins for “The Marriage Song”)

Mr. Bennet: You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.

Mrs. Bennet: And yet you withhold your assistance!

“The Marriage Song”

Mrs. Bennet: I bear the burden all alone
you are no help at all.
A single man of fortune comes
And you refuse to call.

Marriage is not what I expected
Thought you’d support me all the way
No, marriage is not what I expected it to be
Feeling more lonely every day.

MR. BENNET: My wife thinks just of silly things
of fashion, balls and such.
I miss the charming girl I wed
her tenderness, her touch.

Marriage is not what I expected
Little in common with my wife.
No, marriage is not what I expected it to be.
Now all my days are filled with strife.

ELIZABETH: My father is a learned man.
My mother loves to sew;
How they came to fall in love
we truly do not know.

KITTY AND MARY: Marriage for me will be more thrilling!

LYDIA: Marriage for me must be for fun.

ELIZABETH AND JANE: And marriage is sharing all your sorrows, all your dreams,
blending two hearts to beat as one.

MRS. BENNET: (speaking) Sometimes, Mr. Bennet, I wonder if you care to see your daughters marry at all!
(singing) My dear, you’d be no use to us
should twenty suitors come

MR. BENNET: Please rest assured, if twenty come
I’ll visit every one.

MR. & MRS. BENNET: Marriage is not what I expected
when I was caught by passion’s fire.
No, marriage is not what I expected it to be!

KITTY AND MARY: I dream of finding the right suitor!

LYDIA: I want a handsome man to love me!

JANE: Someone who’s kind and understanding!

ELIZABETH: A man who’s intelligent and strong!

BENNET GIRLS: Marriage is what we all desire!

MRS. BENNET: (speaking as the music fades) Ah, you do not know what I suffer!

MR. BENNET: What is that you are doing Lizzy?

ELIZABETH: Trimming my bonnet, Father.
MR. BENNET: I hope that Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy.

MRS. BENNET: We are not to know what Mr. Bingley will like, since we are not to visit.

ELIZABETH: But you forget, Mamma, that we shall certainly meet him at the assemblies, and Lady Lucas has promised to introduce him.

MRS. BENNET: She will do no such thing. She has Charlotte to think of. And Charlotte, who you must own is rather plain, will soon be past the age of getting a husband. No, I will not depend upon Lady Lucas. . . . Don’t keep coughing so Kitty, for Heaven’s sake. Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces.

MR. BENNET: Kitty has no discretion in her coughs. She times them ill.

Kitty: I do not cough for my own amusement, Father.

LYDIA: When is the next ball to be, Lizzy?

ELIZABETH: Tomorrow fortnight.

JANE: Perhaps, Mamma, your friend, Mrs. Long will introduce us to Mr. Bingley at the ball.

MRS. BENNET: Mrs. Long is gone to London and will not return until the day before the ball. So it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself.

MR. BENNET: Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to her.


MR. BENNET: Do you consider the forms of introduction as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you there. What say you Mary? For you are a young lady of deep reflection and read great books and make extracts. . . . While Mary is adjusting her ideas, let us return to Mr. Bingley.

MRS. BENNET: I am sick of Mr. Bingley!

MR. BENNET: I am sorry to hear that. If I had known as much this morning, I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky, but as I have actually paid the visit we cannot escape the acquaintance now.

MRS. BENNET: Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last! And it is such a good joke too, that you should have gone this morning but never said a word about it until now. What an excellent father you have, girls.

MR. BENNET: Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you choose

(Lights out)

ACT ONE - SCENE TWO:

(Lights come up center stage to reveal a ballroom with a chamber orchestra. Charlotte Lucas and the female members of the Bennet family are among the milling guests. The orchestra is warming up their instruments.)
Mrs. Bennet: The dancing is shortly to begin, and there is yet no sign of the elusive Mr. Bingley. I wonder if he comes at all? I was quite distressed when he refused my invitation to dine with us on Tuesday.

Jane: I am sure he will be here Mamma. Do you not recollect that Mr. Bingley went up to town to collect a party of acquaintances for the ball?

Mrs. Bennet: A party? What sort of party?

Lydia: Oh, it is to be a large party of twelve ladies and seven gentlemen.

Mary: I have heard it reported that he arrived yesterday with a party of six, five sisters and a cousin.

Mrs. Bennet: How unfortunate!

Elizabeth: All our questions as to the size and nature of the party will shortly be answered. For I am much mistaken if that is not Mr. Bingley just arrived.

Mrs. Bennet: What luck! They are but a party of five, and three of them gentlemen.

Lydia: I shall discover who they are. (Leaves the group)

Kitty: None of the gentlemen are as handsome as the regimental officers.

Jane: Mr. Bingley’s manners appear easy and unaffected.

Elizabeth: I wonder if Lydia will discover who the tall gentleman is with him. He is much handsomer than Mr. Bingley.

Lydia: (Returning breathless) The two ladies are Mr. Bingley’s sisters. The shorter gentleman is his brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst. And the tall, noble-looking man is a Mr. Darcy. They say he has ten thousand a year and an estate in Derbyshire.

Mrs. Bennet: Ten thousand a year!

Elizabeth: He may have more money than Mr. Bingley, but let us see if he will dance with the local young ladies.

Jane: As for me, I would sooner have an amiable partner than a rich one.

(Couples take their places for the dance, including the Bennet girls as music for the “Gigue” begins. Mr. Bingley leads Jane out onto the floor. Mr. Darcy stands at the side observing. Elizabeth, who is without a partner, sits in the only available chair. At the end of the first dance Mr. Bingley approaches Darcy. Music continues to play softly in the background.)

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

Mr. Darcy: At such an assembly as this it would be insupportable. Your sisters are engaged, and there is not another woman in the room whom it would not be a punishment to stand up with.
MR. BINGLEY: Darcy! Upon my honor, I never met with so many pleasant girls in my life as I have this evening. And there are several of them uncommonly pretty.

MR. DARCY: You are dancing with the only handsome girl in the room.

MR. BINGLEY: Oh, she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld! But there is one of her sisters sitting down just behind you, who is very pretty, and I dare say very agreeable.

MR. DARCY: Which do you mean? (He turns to make eye contact with Elizabeth and then turns back) She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.

(Elizabeth rises, staring at Darcy. He turns toward her as though he feels her gaze. The music and lights fade and a spot is left briefly on Darcy and Elizabeth before the stage goes black)

**ACT ONE - SCENE THREE:**

(The female Bennet family members enter the parlor to find Mr. Bennet dozing in a chair. A servant follows them in, collects bonnets and cloaks and exits. Kitty, Mary and Lydia follow after kissing their father and saying goodnight. Elizabeth and Jane remain.)

MRS. BENNET: Oh! My dear Mr. Bennet. We have had a most excellent ball. Jane was so admired! Mr. Bingley thought her quite beautiful, and danced with her twice! He has such agreeable manners and is so excessively handsome! His sisters are also very fine. Why, I never in all my life saw anything more elegant than their dresses. I daresay the lace upon Mrs. Hurst’s gown . . .

MR. BENNET: Stop! I refuse to hear any description of finery!

MRS. BENNET: Oh, my dear, Mr. Bingley’s friend Mr. Darcy, is quite an odious, horrible man. And he insulted our Lizzy. Said she was not handsome enough to dance with! So high and conceited that there was no enduring him! He walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so great! Not handsome enough to dance with! I only wish you had been there, my dear, to have given him one of your set downs. I quite detest the man! (Exit Mr. and Mrs. Bennet on her last line)

ELIZABETH: Well . . .?

JANE: Oh Lizzy, Mr. Bingley is just what a young man ought to be, sensible, good-humored, lively. And I never saw such happy manners! So much ease, and with such perfect good breeding!

(Music begins to rise in the background)

I was very much flattered by his asking me to dance a second time. I did not expect such a compliment.

ELIZABETH: Did you not? I did for you.

“LOVE’S SPELL”
JANE: (singing) When he held out his hand and I lifted my eyes
Then I paused at the warmth in his glance
As I trembled inside at the power of his touch
I abandoned myself to the dance.

Love’s spell then captured me,
It took me by surprise.
Love’s spell enraptured me,
I saw it in his eyes.

ELIZABETH: (Spoken) Well, he was very handsome, which a young man ought to be if he possibly can.

JANE: (Singing) It was more than good looks that enchanted my heart
As he led me out on to the floor.
Though we’d only just met something whispered within
“You’ve danced with him this way before.”

Love’s spell then captured me,
It took me by surprise.
Love’s spell enraptured me,
I saw it in his eyes.

ELIZABETH: (Spoken) Why then, his character is thereby complete, and I give you leave to like him. You have liked many a stupider person.

JANE: (Spoken) Oh, Lizzy!
(Singing) Though my heart seems to say that he may be the one
I know only the future will tell
If my feelings are real on this magical night
Or tis only the lure of love’s spell.

Love’s spell has captured me,
It takes me by surprise.
Love’s spell enraptures me,
I’ve found it in his eyes.

ELIZABETH: Mr. Bingley is a very fine gentleman to be sure, Jane. But you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general! I never heard you speak ill of a human being in my life.

JANE: But I always speak what I think.

ELIZABETH: That is the wonder. And so you liked this man’s sisters too, did you?

JANE: Not at first. But they are pleasing women when you converse with them. Miss Bingley is to live with her brother and keep his house. She has invited me to tea on Monday.

ELIZABETH: I wonder if Mr. Bingley will be there?

(Lights out)

ACT ONE - SCENE FOUR:
ELIZABETH: You know, Charlotte, it is only a fortnight since Jane and Mr. Bingley first met at the Meryton assembly, and she already admires him very much. I am glad that Jane’s general cheerfulness protects her from the suspicions of the world.

CHARLOTTE: Ah, Eliza, Jane’s calm manner may prove to be a disadvantage. In nine cases out of ten a woman had better show more affection than she feels. Mr. Bingley may never do more than like Jane if she does not encourage him.

ELIZABETH: But she does encourage him . . . as much as her nature will allow. If I can sense her regard for him, he must also.

CHARLOTTE: Perhaps, but Jane should make the most of every moment. When she is sure of him, there will be time enough for falling in love.

ELIZABETH: If I were determined to get a rich husband, I dare say I should adopt your plan. But Jane cannot act by design. And as yet she cannot even be certain of his character.

CHARLOTTE: 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: You make me laugh, Charlotte. But it is not sound! You know it is not. And you would never behave in such a manner yourself!

CHARLOTTE: Would I not?

(Music begins playing) “I DO NOT WISH TO KNOW!”

ELIZABETH: If a man picks his teeth, or his face, or his feet?

CHARLOTTE: I do not wish to know!

ELIZABETH: Should he burp or he snore, be an absolute bore?

CHARLOTTE: I do not wish to know!

ELIZABETH: If he walks in his sleep or he bleats like a sheep?

CHARLOTTE: I do not wish to know!

ELIZABETH: If he’s rude to his friends, or has breath which offends?

CHARLOTTE: Surely, I do not need to know!

ELIZABETH: Charlotte, you cannot, must not mean it! How could one live with such a man?

CHARLOTTE: Every man has his little weakness, better know as little as one can!

ELIZABETH: If he drinks to excess or knows not how to dress?

CHARLOTTE: I do not wish to know!
ELIZABETH: Should he gamble or swear, wear a false piece of hair?

CHARLOTTE: I do not wish to know!

ELIZABETH: If he stays out all night and is eager to fight?

CHARLOTTE: I do not wish to know!

ELIZABETH: If he’s lived a wild life or has more than one wife?

CHARLOTTE: (spoken) Perhaps that is something I should know! But in general . . . (Singing) Surely, I do not need to know!

What can it profit any young woman knowing her future partner’s flaws?

ELIZABETH: And should you marry someone frightful? Is there nothing that would give you pause? And should he scratch?

CHARLOTTE: He would still be a catch!

ELIZABETH: And should he flirt?

CHARLOTTE: I refuse to be hurt!

ELIZABETH: If he is lazy?

CHARLOTTE: Tis better than crazy!

ELIZABETH: What if he’s stupid?

CHARLOTTE: It will not stop Cupid!

ELIZABETH: If he’s too well fed?

CHARLOTTE: I will still share his bed!

ELIZABETH: If he’s too hairy?

CHARLOTTE: I’ll still wish to marry! (spoken) In short my dear Eliza, you see,

CHARLOTTE AND ELIZABETH:
When the goal is in sight
One should never take flight
At the sign of a weakness or so!

If to wed is your aim
Then you must play the game, of

I do not wish to know!

(Music fades as Elizabeth and Charlotte collapse in each other’s arms laughing.)

CHARLOTTE: Well, Jane will have another chance with Mr. Bingley. Has she not been invited to Netherfield Hall to dine?
ELIZABETH: She has. Only Bingley will not be there. The men are dining in Meryton with the officers. However, Mother has insisted that Jane go on horseback in hopes that it will rain - as it seems likely to do - and then she may be asked to spend the night.

CHARLOTTE: And what of you Eliza? Mr. Darcy is paying you quite a bit of attention as of late.

ELIZABETH: Mr. Darcy! The man who makes himself so disagreeable! Wherever I go he draws near, says nothing, but remains in earshot of whatever I am saying. What can he mean, Charlotte, by listening to my conversations?

CHARLOTTE: That is a question I dare you to ask Mr. Darcy yourself when next you meet.

ELIZABETH: Do you think that I dare not? Well then, if I do not begin to be impertinent myself, I shall soon grow afraid of him!

(Elizabeth and Charlotte exit giggling as the lights fade)

ACT ONE - SCENE FIVE:

(Lights come up on center stage - the sitting room at Netherfield Hall. Mr. Bingley, Miss Bingley, Mr. and Mrs. Hurst and Mr. Darcy sit around a table playing cards. A servant, Perkes, enters stage right and approaches Mr. Bingley.)

MR. BINGLEY: Yes, Perkes. What is it?

PERKES: A young lady is here, sir. She says that her name is Miss Elizabeth Bennet, and she wishes to see her sister.

MR. BINGLEY: Then, by all means, show her in!

PERKES: Begging your pardon, sir. The young lady says that she does not wish to intrude, especially since she has just walked here from Longbourn and has mud upon her shoes. She requests that she be allowed to go directly up to see Miss Jane Bennet.

MR. BINGLEY: Nonsense! Show her in at once, Perkes.

PERKES: Very good, sir.

MR. BINGLEY: We are not afraid of a little mud, are we?

(Perkes enters stage right followed by a somewhat disheveled Elizabeth. The gentlemen rise as she enters the room.)

MR. BINGLEY: Miss Elizabeth Bennet! I am very glad to see you.

ELIZABETH: Pardon my intrusion Mr. Bingley, Miss Bingley. I have been unable to rest since I received Jane’s note two days ago saying that she had been taken ill. I do so wish to see her for myself.

MR. BINGLEY: And I am certain that your sister will be very happy to see you as well.
MISS BINGLEY: You shall be taken to her directly. But will you not have some refreshment first? The doctor has just left her, and she is resting now.

ELIZABETH: The doctor?

MISS BINGLEY: He says that she has developed a fever and must be kept quiet.

MR. BINGLEY: Naturally, we will not think of moving her to Longbourn until she is completely recovered. And you are most welcome to remain with your sister, should you so desire.

ELIZABETH: I do appreciate your kindness.

MISS BINGLEY: Then we must send for your clothes, Miss Elizabeth. Now, will you take some refreshment? You must be tired after such a walk.

ELIZABETH: Thank you, no. I should like to see Jane as soon as possible.

MISS BINGLEY: Very well.

ELIZABETH: You are most kind.

MR. BINGLEY: It is truly our pleasure, Miss Elizabeth.

PERKES: If you will follow me, Miss Bennet.

(Elizabeth and Perkes exit stage right. Music begins for “Spiteful Banter”)

MISS BINGLEY: To come here uninvited. Her manners are very bad, indeed!

MRS. HURST: A mixture of pride and impertinence.

“Spiteful Banter”

MR. HURST: (singing) Scampering about the countryside!

MRS. HURST: Her sister has a cold!

MR. HURST: She walked three miles in the mud?

MRS. HURST: She’s really rather bold!

MISS BINGLEY: And what of her appearance! She looked so blowsy too.

MRS. HURST: She did, indeed, dear Caroline! It’s not what ladies do!

ALL THREE: Shocking! Shocking! That’s all we have to say. Miss Bennet appeared scandalous today!

MISS BINGLEY: I hope you saw her petticoat.

MRS. HURST: Six inches deep in grime.

MR. HURST: I’ve heard about these country girls. They do it all the time.

MISS BINGLEY: Her uncle is a lawyer of lower London fame.
MR. HURST: He lives and works in Cheapside!

MRS. HURST: What a name!

ALL THREE: Shocking! Shocking! That’s all we have to say. Miss Bennet appeared scandalous today! It’s really rather shocking! That’s all we have to say. Miss Bennet appeared scandalous today!

(Miss Bingley and Mr. and Mrs. Hurst laugh heartily)

MR. BINGLEY: I thought Miss Elizabeth Bennet looked remarkably well. And if the Bennet girls had uncles enough to fill all of Cheapside, it would not make them one jot less agreeable!

MR. DARCY: True. But it must lessen their chance of marrying men of any consequence in the world.

(Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst give each other a very pointed look as the lights fade)

**ACT ONE - SCENE SIX:**

(Lights come up on stage left apron to reveal a guest bedroom at Netherfield Hall. Jane is propped up in bed and Elizabeth attends her.)

ELIZABETH: Jane, dearest, you have missed several important developments in the past few days.

JANE: Do tell me.

ELIZABETH: Well, our cousin, Mr. Collins - the clergyman - is come for a visit. He is the one, you know, who will inherit Longbourn when Papa dies, as Papa has no male heir.

JANE: Oh. And what does Mr. Collins want?

ELIZABETH: Apparently he wishes to familiarize himself with his future estate.

JANE: And how does Mama receive him?

ELIZABETH: She did not receive him well at first. She proclaimed him to be a monster. But for now Mr. Collins remains and hints at a further interest.

JANE: And what is that?

ELIZABETH: Mr. Collins has expressed a great interest in admiring his fair Bennet cousins “whose beauty and fame have been widely reported.”

JANE: Oh, no.

ELIZABETH: Oh, yes. Mama likes him well enough now that he means to marry one of us. But you, dear Jane, are safe. Mama has informed Mr. Collins that you have already developed a preference for your Mr. Bingley, and he for you. And although Mr. Collins
seems determined to pay his addresses to me, I too have met someone - who at first glance - seems rather promising.

JANE: Who can it be? You cannot mean Mr. Darcy?

ELIZABETH: Mr. Darcy! He is the last man I should find interesting. No, there is a new officer assigned to the regiment in town. His name is Mr. Wickham, and he is possessed of both pleasing address and countenance. And what more could one expect in a future partner?

JANE: Oh Lizzy! Have you had private conversation with him?

ELIZABETH: Yes, at Aunt Phillips’ dinner party last night. You will meet him at the next assembly ball. And I am sure that you will like him too.

JANE: You could not like anyone who is not wonderful. Oh Lizzy, I am so glad that you are to stay with me! I must confess that I have dreaded spending another night here alone.

ELIZABETH: Well, I am also glad that I am to stay, for your sake, Jane, dear. Do you know, Mr. Bingley’s genuine concern for your well being has quite raised him in my estimation. Although I could tell that Miss Bingley was none too happy about extending such an invitation. If she were a more amiable person I should feel sorry for her.

JANE: Why is that?

ELIZABETH: Caroline Bingley’s conversation is designed only to make her appear pleasing to Mr. Darcy. But, however much she angles, he does not take the bait.

JANE: Poor Caroline!

ELIZABETH: Fear not! She has not given up on him. Indeed, I look forward with anticipation to this evening, when I shall once again observe Miss Bingley’s dogged pursuit of the exalted Mr. Darcy.

(Lights fade)

**ACT ONE - SCENE SEVEN:**

(The sitting room at Netherfield Hall. Mr. Darcy is at a desk writing letters. Mr. and Miss Bingley and Mr. and Mrs. Hurst sit at a table playing cards.)

(Elizabeth enters stage right.)

MISS BINGLEY: Ah, there you are, Miss Eliza. Will you not join us at cards?

ELIZABETH: Thank you, no. While Jane sleeps, I will amuse myself with a book.

MR. HURST: Do you prefer reading to cards?

MISS BINGLEY: Miss Eliza Bennet despises cards. She 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.
MR. BINGLEY: In nursing your sister, I am sure you have pleasure. Please make use of my library, Miss Elizabeth. I only wish my collection were larger.

ELIZABETH: I assure you, sir, these shall do very well for me.

MISS BINGLEY: What a delightful library you have at Pemberley, Mr. Darcy. Charles, when you build your house, I advise you to take Pemberley for a model.

MR. BINGLEY: Upon my word, Caroline, It would be more possible to get Pemberley by purchase than by imitation!

MR. HURST: What is the point of our playing cards, if neither of you are going to pay attention to the play?

MISS BINGLEY: You are right. I am weary of cards. (to Mr. Darcy) How many letters you must have occasion to write in the course of a year! You always write such charming, long letters. My brother Charles leaves out half his words and blots the rest. . . Miss Eliza Bennet, let me persuade you to join me in taking a turn about the room. I assure you it is very refreshing after sitting so long in one attitude.

ELIZABETH: Very well.

MISS BINGLEY: Mr. Darcy, will you not join us?

MR. DARCY: Thank you, no. You can have only two motives for choosing to take a turn about the room. And my joining you would interfere with either of them.

MISS BINGLEY: What could he mean by such a statement? Miss Eliza, can you comprehend such a man?

ELIZABETH: Not at all. But depend upon it. He means to be severe on us. And our surest way of disappointing him will be to ask nothing about it.

MISS BINGLEY: But, I am dying to know his meaning.

MR. DARCY: Very well. You either choose this method of passing the evening because you are in each other’s confidence and have secret affairs to discuss, or because you are conscious that your figures appear to the greatest advantage in walking. If the first, I should be completely in your way. And, if the second, I can admire you much better as I sit by the fire.

MISS BINGLEY: Oh! I never heard anything so abominable! How shall we punish him for such a speech?

ELIZABETH: We can all punish and plague one another. Tease him. Laugh at him. You must know how it is to be done.

MISS BINGLEY: But upon my honor I do not. Tease calmness of temper and presence of mind? No, no. I feel he may defy us there. Mr. Darcy may hug himself.

ELIZABETH: Ah. Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at. That is an uncommon advantage. And uncommon I hope it will continue. For I love to laugh at follies and nonsense, whims and inconsistencies, vanity and pride . . .
MR. DARCY: Vanity is a weakness, indeed, but pride . . . Where there is a real superiority of mind, pride will always be under good regulation. But, I have faults enough, Miss Bennet, my temper I dare not vouch for. And my good opinion once lost, is lost forever.

ELIZABETH: Implacable resentment is a failing indeed! But you have chosen your fault well. I really cannot laugh at it. You are safe from me.

MR. DARCY: There is, I believe in every disposition, a tendency to some particular evil.

ELIZABETH: And yours is the propensity to hate everybody.

MR. DARCY: And yours is willfully to misunderstand them.

(Darcy stands. Darcy and Elizabeth look deeply into each other’s eyes during an uncomfortably long silence.)

ELIZABETH: Now, I am a little tired and shall bid you all good night.

MR. BINGLEY: Pray give my compliments to your sister, Miss Eliza. I look forward to her speedy recovery and plan to give a ball here at Netherfield just as soon as she is well enough to attend.

ELIZABETH: Thank you, Mr. Bingley! I am certain that Jane shall anticipate such a ball with pleasure. (Exit stage right)

MISS BINGLEY: Well, I for one cannot pretend to regret that we shall soon see the last of Miss Eliza Bennet!

MR. DARCY: I must beg you to excuse me as well. I require solitude and fresh air.

(Darcy exits onto the stage left apron. The center stage lights fade as the lights come up on the stage left apron which represents a garden at Netherfield. The music reflects his agitated state.)

“AS A MOTH TO THE FLAME”

MR. DARCY: Damn her impudence! Damn her gall! Why must she exist at all?

(singing) Too high to be a mistress, too low to be my wife
And yet she’s playing havoc with my life!

(speaking) To the devil with you, Miss Elizabeth Bennet! And damn this power you have over me! It is against all reason - this attraction! And yet . . .

As a moth to the flame
I am drawn by your light
It’s peril to give in
Though I’ve no will to fight.
Is there nothing that will ease this constant pain,
Or must I burn like a moth in the flame?

All that I believe in, all I thought I knew
Whispers that I dare not be unwise.
Then my world is shaken, when you come into my view
And I’m captured by the fire in your eyes.

As a moth to the flame
As a bee to the flower
All my reason resists
Yet I’m still in your power.

Do I struggle ever onward in vain?
Or must I burn like a moth in the flame?

All that I believe in, all I thought I knew
Whispers that I dare not be unwise.
Then my world is shaken, when you come into my view
And I’m captured by the fire in your eyes.

As a moth to the flame
Is consumed by the light
I am heedless of pain
Choosing wrong over right.

I am drawn toward your magic again
As I burn like a moth in the flame.

(Lights out)

**ACT ONE - SCENE EIGHT:**

(Lights come up on stage left apron which is a garden at Longbourn.)

MR. WICKHAM: I am glad that we have had this opportunity for private conversation. I did want you to understand my reasons for not attending the Bingley ball tomorrow night. To be in the same room, the same party with Mr. Darcy for so many hours together would be more than I can bear.

ELIZABETH: I do understand. Mr. Wickham. And I regret the pain which you have suffered.

MR. WICKHAM: The most acute pain I feel at the present, Miss Eliza, is that I shall not have the pleasure of dancing every dance with you tomorrow evening.

ELIZABETH: I wish that were true. But, you sir, have been abominably used. It is impossible to comprehend it.

MR. WICKHAM: Then let us think of other things. I must go up to London. But I shall return soon, and I trust that there shall be many more balls in our future. . . . Ah, here comes your sister. Farewell for the present, my dear Miss Eliza.

(Jane enters as Wickham exits)

JANE: You are right, Lizzy. Your Mr. Wickham does seem very gallant, and he is quite handsome. But I naturally prefer Mr. Bingley to any other man of my acquaintance.

ELIZABETH: Oh, Jane. Mr. Wickham has just told me something most shocking!
JANE: Lizzy, whatever has brought you to such a state?

ELIZABETH: Mr. Wickham confided in me how scandalously he has been used by Mr. Darcy. They grew up together on the Darcy estate where Mr. Wickham’s father was the Darcy steward. When old Mr. Darcy died, the present Mr. Darcy robbed Mr. Wickham of his inheritance, reducing him to poverty.

JANE: How distressing! One does not know what to think.

ELIZABETH: I beg your pardon. One knows exactly what to think!

JANE: I cannot believe Mr. Darcy to be so lacking in common humanity, or Mr. Bingley would not be his intimate friend!

(Enter Mr. Collins)

ELIZABETH: Mr. Collins!

MR. COLLINS: Ah, there you are, Miss Elizabeth. Miss Jane. I wondered where you had got to, Miss Elizabeth. Do you not anticipate with pleasure the ball tomorrow? In my position, I am often expected to add consequence to such social assemblies. Your mother, Miss Elizabeth, has assured me that we shall be expected to dance the first two dances together.

ELIZABETH: Mr. Collins, I hardly think that is necessary.

MR. COLLINS: Ah, but it is, Miss Elizabeth. You see, my chief objective tomorrow evening shall be to recommend myself to you. You shall lack nothing by way of attention. Indeed, I assure you that I intend to remain by your side for the entire evening.

(Lights out)

ACT ONE - SCENE NINE:

(Lights come up on center stage ballroom at Netherfield.)

CHARLOTTE: So, you are to dance the next set with Mr. Darcy.

ELIZABETH: He took me by surprise, Charlotte. Mr. Collins’ dancing proved so humiliating, and my release from him such ecstasy, that I agreed to Mr. Darcy’s request before I knew what I was about.

CHARLOTTE: You will find him very agreeable.

ELIZABETH: Heaven forbid! To find a man agreeable whom one is determined to hate! Do not wish me such an evil!

CHARLOTTE: Don’t be a simpleton, Lizzy. Do not allow your fancy for Wickham to make you appear unpleasant in the eyes of a man ten times his superior.

ELIZABETH: Attention to Mr. Darcy is injury to Wickham. And I am determined not to speak with him. Unless . . . speaking should prove more irritating to him than silence.
(The music for the “Sarabande” begins.)

MR. DARCY: Miss Eliza, this is our dance, I believe.

(Darcy and Elizabeth join the other couples in the dance. The other couples freeze in silhouette and shadow as Darcy and Elizabeth dance in spotlight.)

ELIZABETH: It is a pleasant enough dance. . . . 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.

MR. DARCY: I shall say whatever you wish me to say.

ELIZABETH: Very well. That reply will do for the present. Perhaps by and by I may observe that private balls are much pleasanter than public ones. But now we may be silent.

MR. DARCY: Do you talk by rule, then, while you are dancing?

ELIZABETH: Sometimes. One must speak a little, you know. But, for the advantage of some, conversation ought to be arranged so that they have the trouble of saying as little as possible.

MR. DARCY: Are you consulting your own feelings, or do you imagine you are gratifying mine?

ELIZABETH: Both. For I have seen a great similarity in the turn of our minds. We are each unwilling to speak unless we expect to say something that will amaze the whole room.

MR. DARCY: This does not resemble your character, I am sure. How near it may be to mine, I cannot pretend to say. . . . Do you and your sisters often walk to Meryton?

ELIZABETH: Yes. When you met us there the other day, we had just been speaking with an amiable new acquaintance, a Mr. Wickham.

MR. DARCY: Mr. Wickham is blessed with such happy manners that ensure his making friends. Whether he may be capable of keeping them is less certain.

ELIZABETH: He has been unlucky in losing your friendship, Mr. Darcy, and in a manner which he is likely to suffer from all his life.

(The dance ends. Mr. Darcy escorts Elizabeth to Mrs. Bennet who is in loud conversation with Charlotte Lucas.)

MRS. BENNET: And you know, Charlotte, Mr. Bingley is so rich. Jane’s marrying him will be such a promising thing for the younger girls. I may give the care of the girls to Jane who shall find wealthy husbands for them all.

CHARLOTTE: I must congratulate you, Mrs. Bennet.

MRS. BENNET: And I am sure that you will one day find someone too, Charlotte.

ELIZABETH: Mamma, Mr. Darcy is still in earshot.

MRS. BENNET: What is Mr. Darcy to me, pray, that I should be afraid of him?
ELIZABETH: For heaven’s sake, Mamma, what advantage is there in offending Mr. Bingley’s particular friend?

(Lydia and Kitty rush in. Mrs. Bennet turns back to her conversation with Charlotte.)

LYDIA: You are not dancing, Lizzy? Then hold my lace for me. It has come out again and I have no time to stop and fix it!

ELIZABETH: You must take the time to do so, Lydia.

LYDIA: You know Captain Denney. He is so impatient to dance with me. And I can deny him nothing! (Kitty and Lydia giggle)

KITTY: And Lieutenant Phipps is waiting for me in the garden. (Exit Lydia and Kitty)

ELIZABETH: Mamma, Lydia and Kitty . . .

MRS. BENNET: Not now, Lizzy! Mary is about to play and sing for the company. She has learnt a new song — “The Wandering Shepherdess” just for the occasion!

(Mr. Collins speaks loudly to no one in particular,)

MR. COLLINS: We cannot be justified in devoting too much of our time to music. The rector of a parish has much to do. He must make such agreement for tithes as may be beneficial to himself. He must write his own sermons, and must render his dwelling as comfortable as possible. He should also have attentive and conciliatory manners towards his patron and anybody connected with the family. My patroness, is Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is the aunt of Mr. Darcy. (He bows in the direction of Mr. Darcy.)

MRS. BENNET: (Rather loudly) Of course, Mr. Collins is our cousin. A remarkably clever, good kind of young man.

CHARLOTTE: Indeed.

MRS. BENNET: He is very well connected, you know. And, of course, Mr. Collins is to be Elizabeth’s.

(Reactions from Elizabeth, Darcy and Mr. Collins as the lights and music fade)

ACT ONE - SCENE TEN:

(Lights come up on the parlor at Longbourn. Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth and Kitty are sewing. Enter Mr. Collins.)

MR. COLLINS: (bowing to Mrs. Bennet) May I hope, madam, for the honor of a private audience with your fair daughter Elizabeth in the course of the morning?

MRS. BENNET: Of course, Mr. Collins! I am sure Lizzy can have no objection. Come, Kitty, I want you upstairs.

ELIZABETH: Do not go, Mamma. I beg you will not go. Mr. Collins can have nothing to say to me that anybody need not hear. I shall go away myself.

MRS. BENNET: Nonsense Lizzy I insist upon your staying and hearing Mr. Collins. (Exit)
MR. COLLINS: My dear Elizabeth, almost as soon as I entered this house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life.

(Music begins in the background as Mr. Collins continues)

But before I am run away with by my feelings, perhaps it would be advisable for me to state my reasons for coming into Hertfordshire with the design of selecting a wife - as I certainly did.

MR. COLLINS’ PROPOSAL SONG

MR. COLLINS: (Singing) When a man seeks a wife as his partner in life
‘tis a solemn and a sobering decision.
And a man such as I with connections so high
must choose only with the uttermost precision.
Lady Catherine has promised that all shall be well
if I choose a gentlewoman who is not brought up too high.

(Speaking) “An active, useful sort of person, Mr. Collins,” she said.
One who is able to make a small income go a long way.

(Singing) So with qualms very few - just the odd one or two -
I proclaim the woman that I choose is . . .

ELIZABETH: (Singing) Mr. Collins! Mr. Collins! I must beg you go no further.
Please consider what you say.

Mr. Collins! It is certain, that the two of us should never suit
In any single way!
I refuse to believe that your interest is real
Though you tell me that you want me by your side.
Mr. Collins! I assure you! I could never, ever, ever be your bride!

MR. COLLINS: (Speaking) Ah! You seek to try my steadfastness. You shall not find me wanting there, Miss Elizabeth.

(Singing) Though you tremble and cry and pretend to be shy
You are only imitating current fashion.
All the elegant girls with their silks and their pearls
Use this naughty trick to raise a suitor’s passion.
The suspense thus created shall one day bear fruit
When your parents grant their blessing to the union of us two.
So with qualms very few - just the odd one or two -
I proclaim the woman that I choose is . . .

ELIZABETH: Mr. Collins! Mr. Collins! Though I recognize the honor
You are doing me this day.
Mr. Collins! Please believe me! I would never give an answer
That would lead a man astray.
When the time has arrived, and my father’s life is through
You may gladly take possession of this house.
Mr. Collins! I implore you! I can never, ever, ever be your spouse!

MR. COLLINS: (spoken) But Miss Elizabeth . . .!
ELIZABETH: (spoken) Mr. Collins! (singing) I shall never...

MR. COLLINS: (spoken) Never?

ELIZABETH: (singing) Ever!

MR. COLLINS: (spoken desperately) Ever?!

ELIZABETH: (singing) Ever . . . be your wife!! (spoken) Really, Mr. Collins, I do not know how to express my refusal in such a way that will convince you of its being real!

MR. COLLINS: Dear cousin, it is by no means certain that another offer of marriage may ever be made to you. Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your manifold attractions. I am therefore persuaded that when sanctioned by the express authority of both your excellent parents, my proposals will be acceptable.

ELIZABETH: Good day, Mr. Collins. (Exit stage right)

MRS. BENNET: (Entering quickly) May I assume that congratulations are in order, Mr. Collins?

MR. COLLINS: I trust that we shall have every reason to rejoice in future, Mrs. Bennet. Your daughter Elizabeth’s bashful modesty renders her initial refusal admirable.

MRS. BENNET: Refusal!

MR. COLLINS: Ah, but I am by no means discouraged. She has meant only to encourage me by her protestations - as is the custom with elegant females.

MRS. BENNET: Oh, no, not Lizzy. Lizzy is a very headstrong, foolish girl, and does not know her own interest. But depend upon it, she shall be brought to reason!

MR. COLLINS: Pardon me, madam, but if she really is headstrong and foolish, she would not be a desirable wife for a man in my situation.

MRS. BENNET: Sir, you quite misunderstand me! Lizzy is only headstrong in matters such as these. If you will excuse me Mr. Collins, I shall send directly for Mr. Bennet and we shall very soon settle it with her, I am sure!

MR. COLLINS: As you think best, Mrs. Bennet. (Exit stage right as a servant enters.)

HILL: You rang for me madam?

MRS. BENNET: Yes, Hill. Send Miss Elizabeth and Mr. Bennet to me immediately! I require their attendance at once.

HILL: Yes, madam.

(Enter Mr. Bennet)

MR. BENNET: What has occurred that I should be summoned thus from my library?
MRS. BENNET: Oh, Mr. Bennet, we are all in an uproar! You must come and 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. BENNET: And what am I to do on the occasion? It seems a hopeless business.

(Enter Elizabeth)

MRS. BENNET: Here she is. Tell her that you insist upon her marrying him.

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

ELIZABETH: It is, sir.

MR. BENNET: Very well. And this offer of marriage - you have refused?

ELIZABETH: I have, sir.

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

MRS. BENNET: Yes! Or I will never see her again!

MR. BENNET: 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. (Mr. Bennet bows to both ladies and exits)

MRS. BENNET: There you stand, looking as unconcerned as may be. But I tell you what, Miss Lizzy, if you take it into your head to go on refusing every offer of marriage in this way, you will never get a husband at all - and so I warn you. I have done with you from this very day. I said that I should never speak to you again, and you will find me as good as my word.

(Enter Mr. Collins)

MR. COLLINS: My dear madam, you will not, I hope, consider me as showing any disrespect to your family by withdrawing my pretensions to your daughter’s favor. I have certainly meant well through the whole affair. And if my manner has been at all reprehensible, I here beg leave to apologize.

(Exit Mr. Collins. Lights out.)

**ACT ONE - SCENE ELEVEN:**

(Lights come up on Elizabeth writing a letter at a table in the stage right drawing room. Her prerecorded voice through the sound system reveals her thoughts as she writes.)

ELIZABETH’S RECORDED VOICE: Dear Aunt Gardiner, I await your approaching visit with eager anticipation. Things here at Longbourn are in somewhat of an uproar. You have heard, of course, of my refusing Mr. Collins. At first Mamma was in hopes of his transferring his affection to Mary who might have been prevailed upon to accept him.
However, much to our surprise, he promptly paid his addresses to my friend, Charlotte Lucas, and they are to be married within the fortnight.

ELIZABETH: Oh, Charlotte! What have you done?

ELIZABETH’S RECORDED VOICE: Mother has taken the news quite hard. And to add to her distress, the Bingley party made a hasty departure for London soon after the ball at Netherfield. Mother cannot understand why they have gone. I fear that I know only too well the reason. The ball at Netherfield was mortifying! It exposed our family most dreadfully! Lydia and Kitty flirted outrageously and Mother was overheard . . .

(Jane enters looking quite pale)

ELIZABETH: Whatever is the matter, Jane?

JANE: I have received a letter from Miss Bingley in London. Hope is over, entirely over. Caroline Bingley predicts that they shall soon be announcing the engagement of her brother and Mr. Darcy’s sister, Georgianna.

ELIZABETH: I cannot believe Mr. Bingley to be so inconstant or so weak minded,

JANE: Pray do not think that he is to blame. It was nothing more than my own vanity that deceived me into believing that he admired me. I fear women often fancy admiration means more than it does.

ELIZABETH: And men do all in their power to ensure that they do! The more I see of the world, Jane, the more I am dissatisfied with it. First there is Charlotte’s unfortunate choice of a husband. And now this sad business with Mr. Bingley.

JANE: My dear Lizzy, do not give way to such feelings. They will ruin your happiness. (music begins playing in the background) My pain cannot last long. Mr. Bingley will live in my memory as the most amiable man of my acquaintance, but that is all. I have this comfort, that my error has harmed no one but myself.

ELIZABETH: My dear Jane! You are too good. I feel as if I had never done you justice or loved you as you deserve.

LOVE’S SPELL - REPRISE

(singing) Though my heart seemed to say that he felt the same way It is clear that my heart spoke a lie Though it causes me pain, it was only a dream And this beautiful dream must now die.

Love’s spell had captured me It took me by surprise. Love’s spell enraptured me. I dreamed it in his eyes.

(Elizabeth and Jane embrace as the lights fall)

ACT ONE - SCENE TWELVE:
(Lights come up on Mrs. Bennet, Elizabeth, Kitty and Mrs. Gardiner stage right in the drawing room. Mrs. Bennet is supervising Elizabeth’s pinning lace to Kitty’s skirt.)

MRS. BENNET: Oh sister! I have had so much to bear! I do not blame Jane for she would have got Mr. Bingley if she could. But Lizzy! Oh sister! She might now have been Mr. Collin’s wife, had not it been for her perverseness. It makes me very nervous and poorly to be so thwarted in my own family. . . . A little higher on the right, I think, Lizzy. . . . However, your coming just at this time is the greatest of comforts, and I am very glad to hear what you have to tell us of long sleeves. . . . Lizzy, that will do for the present. . . . Come, Kitty, we shall finish the stitching later. I must lie down and calm my poor nerves.

MRS. GARDINER: Yes, do try to rest, Sister.

(EXIT Mrs. Bennet and Kitty)

ELIZABETH: Aunt Gardiner, I am so glad that Jane is to go back with you. It will do her good to meet new people. As for my mother, you have seen how she struggles with the loss of two eligible suitors for her daughters.

MRS. GARDINER: After what you wrote to me of him, I do not regret the loss of your Mr. Collins, Elizabeth. However, I am sorry that Jane’s match went off. But these things happen. A young man easily falls in love with a pretty girl for a few weeks, and when accident separates them, just as easily forgets her.

ELIZABETH: I do not believe that Jane suffers by accident. He was so violently in love with her but a few days before.

MRS. GARDINER: Pray, how violent was Mr. Bingley’s love?

ELIZABETH: He had grown quite inattentive to other people and wholly engrossed by her. Could there be finer symptoms? Is not general incivility the very essence of love?

MRS. GARDINER: Poor Jane! With her disposition, she may not get over it immediately. You would have laughed yourself out of it sooner. And now, Elizabeth, regarding Mr. Wickham. You are too sensible to fall in love merely because you are warned against it. Therefore, I shall speak openly. Do not involve yourself in an affection which the want of fortune would make so very imprudent.

ELIZABETH: My dear aunt, this is being serious, indeed!

MRS. GARDINER: Yes, and I hope that you will also be serious. I have nothing to say against the young man. But you must not let your fancy run away with you. You have sense, and we all expect you to use it.

ELIZABETH: Well then. I will take care of myself, and of Mr. Wickham too. He shall not be in love with me, if I can prevent it.

MRS. GARDINER: Elizabeth, you are not being serious now.

ELIZABETH: I do not mean to tease you, Aunt. Mr. Wickham’s regiment is to be transferred to Brighton. And unless I visit Lydia there, he shall easily forget me.
MRS. GARDINER: Visit Lydia in Brighton? Surely, Lydia is not to go to Brighton as well!

ELIZABETH: Mrs. Forster, the colonel’s wife, has asked Lydia to accompany her when they go. I have begged Father not to allow it. You know how imprudent Lydia is. If you must worry about one of us, Lydia should be your object.

MRS. GARDINER: You are right there, Elizabeth. However, I shall hope for a happy report when you join Mr. Gardiner and me on our tour of Derbyshire this summer. But I understand that you will first visit your friend Charlotte at her home in Kent.

ELIZABETH: Yes, I do wish to see Charlotte again, although I am not sure if I can say the same about our cousin, Mr. Collins. Will he be resentful and sullen, do you think? Or will he play the gracious host and wish to show me all the many advantages I have passed up by my refusing him? I shall tell you all when next we meet, dear aunt.

(Lights out.)

**ACT ONE - SCENE THIRTEEN:**

(Lights come up on Elizabeth and Charlotte on the stage left apron which represents the sitting room at the Collins’ parsonage)

CHARLOTTE: I do hope you enjoy your stay with us, Eliza. For my part, I know that I shall treasure every moment you are here.

ELIZABETH: Dear Charlotte! What more could I ask for than to have such a kind friend.

CHARLOTTE: I am sure there is something you wish for. I was sorry to hear, for your sake, that the regiment had gone to Brighton. Have you had any news of Wickham?

ELIZABETH: No, nor do I wish to. After the regiment left for Brighton we discovered that, at the same time he was making himself agreeable to me, he was planning to marry the wealthy Miss King. That is until her parents discovered the plot and put a stop to it. But have no fear. I could never have been much in love with him, or I should detest his very name and wish him all manner of evil.

CHARLOTTE: I wonder who is receiving the benefit of his manifold charms now?

(Enter Mr. Collins in a state of great agitation)

MR COLLINS: I congratulate you on your good fortune, Miss Elizabeth!

CHARLOTTE: Whatever do you mean, Mr. Collins?

MR COLLINS: It is the greatest of honors! Who could have imagined that we would receive an invitation to dine at Rosings with Lady Catherine de Bourgh immediately upon your arrival? Do not make yourself uneasy, my dear cousin, about your apparel. Lady Catherine likes to have the distinction of rank preserved. Now ladies, we must be waiting on the step at seven, when one of her ladyship’s carriages shall arrive for us. (Exit)
ELIZABETH: Oh Charlotte! From the manner in which Mr. Collins entered the room, I expected at least that the pigs were got into the garden, and here it is nothing but an invitation to dine.

CHARLOTTE: I promise you, Eliza, that the dinner shall be excellent, even if the company may not be entirely to your liking.

ELIZABETH: What do you mean, Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE: Well, Lady Catherine is a lady of decided opinions which she expresses most freely.

ELIZABETH: Ah, you mean to say that she is officious and interfering?

CHARLOTTE: You may find her so. But she is a very respectable and sensible woman indeed!

ELIZABETH: And the daughter? The one that rumor has fated to be Mr. Darcy’s future bride?

CHARLOTTE: Ah, Miss Anne de Bourgh is a tiny thing - thin and of delicate health and disposition.

ELIZABETH: You mean that she is sickly and cross. I am eager to meet this Miss de Bourgh, Charlotte! I think she will do very well for Mr. Darcy. She will make him a very proper wife.

(Lights Out)
ACT ONE - SCENE FOURTEEN:

(Lights come up on center stage to reveal a large and ornate salon at Rosings. Preparations for serving after-dinner coffee are underway. Lady Catherine and Anne de Bourgh, Mr. and Mrs. Collins, Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam are all present.)

MR COLLINS: May I say once again the excellence of your ladyship’s table is unsurpassed throughout all of England! And, of course, the excellence of the food is matched only by the exquisite furnishings and grounds of Rosings. There can be no more refined surroundings than these - though one should search far and wide.

LADY CATHARINE: You are correct, Mr. Collins. The estate is renowned for its grandeur, and Anne, as my only child, shall inherit all. I understand, Miss Bennet, that your family estate is under an entailment. I am glad for your sake Mr. Collins. However, in general I am against entailing estates from the female line. Do you play and sing, Miss Bennet?

ELIZABETH: A little.

LADY CATHARINE: Oh, then we shall be happy to hear you. Do your sisters play and sing?

ELIZABETH: One of them does.

LADY CATHARINE: You ought all to have learned! How does your sister Georgiana get on with playing the pianoforte, Darcy?

MR. DARCY: She is becoming quite proficient, Aunt.

LADY CATHARINE: Pray, tell her from me that she cannot expect to excel if she does not practice a great deal.

MR. DARCY: I assure you, madam, that she practices very constantly.

LADY CATHARINE: When next I write to her, I shall charge her not to neglect it on any account. Music is of all things my delight! If I had ever learnt, I should have been a great proficient. And so would Anne, if her health had allowed her to apply. Miss Bennet, you will never play really well unless you practice more. You may come to Rosings and play on the pianoforte in the governess’s room. You will be in nobody’s way in that part of the house. Darcy! Conduct Miss Bennet to the pianoforte where she may play for us. Our instrument is a capital one.

(Darcy and Elizabeth proceed downstage to the pianoforte. Lady Catherine continues quiet conversation with the others in the background)

ELIZABETH: I did not know you were to be at Rosings, Mr. Darcy. I was much surprised to find you here tonight.

MR. DARCY: I was surprised to find you here as well, Miss Eliza.

ELIZABETH: How suddenly you all quitted Netherfield last November, Mr. Darcy! Are we to understand that Mr. Bingley has not much idea of ever returning?

MR. DARCY: I should not be surprised if Bingley were to give up Netherfield as soon as any eligible purchase offers.
Colonel Fitzwilliam joins them

Colonel Fitzwilliam: I am eager to have the pleasure of hearing you play, Miss Bennet.

Elizabeth: And so you shall, Colonel Fitzwilliam.

Lady Catherine: What is it you all are saying? Miss Bennet! We are waiting for you to play.

(She plays softly. Lady Catherine turns to look, but then returns directly to her conversation. Darcy, however, comes closer - bending over her as if preparing to turn the pages of her music.)

Elizabeth: (Speaking to Fitzwilliam) I know that Mr. Darcy means to frighten me by coming in all this state to hear me. But I will not be alarmed, though his sister does play so well, and Miss de Bourgh would if she could. My courage always rises with every attempt to intimidate me.

Mr. Darcy: You can not really believe me to entertain any design of alarming you. But I know that you occasionally find great enjoyment in professing opinions which are not your own.

Elizabeth: Alas, Colonel Fitzwilliam! Your cousin will give you a very pretty notion of me and teach you not to believe a word I say. Indeed, Mr. Darcy, it is very ungenerous of you to mention all that you knew to my disadvantage in Hertfordshire. And very dangerous as well. For it is provoking me to retaliate.

Mr. Darcy: I am not afraid of you.

Colonel Fitzwilliam: Pray let me hear what you have to accuse him of! I should like to know how he behaves among strangers.

Elizabeth: You shall hear, then. The first time of my ever seeing Mr. Darcy was at a ball. And what do you think he did? He refused to dance although gentlemen were scarce and more than one young lady was in want of a partner. Mr. Darcy, you cannot deny the fact!

Mr. Darcy: I had not at that time the honor of knowing any lady in the assembly beyond the two ladies in my own party.

Elizabeth: True. And nobody can ever be introduced in a ballroom.

Mr. Darcy: I certainly have not the talent, which some people possess, of conversing easily with those I have never seen before.

Elizabeth: Ah! My fingers do not move over this instrument in the masterly manner which I see so many women’s do. But then, I have always supposed it to be my own fault because I would not take the trouble of practicing. (The song ends.)

Mr. Darcy: You are right. Perhaps we are neither of us willing to perform for strangers.

(Darcy gazes meaningfully into Elizabeth’s eyes.)
LADY CATHERINE:  Darcy!  Come here Darcy!  What is it you are talking of?

MR. DARCY:  Of practicing, madam.

(Darcy joins Lady Catherine’s group.)

LADY CATHERINE:  Miss Bennet would not play amiss if she practiced more, although her taste is not equal to Anne’s.  Continue playing, Miss Bennet.  (She returns to her group conversation.)

ELIZABETH:  Do you leave Kent on Saturday, Colonel?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  Yes, if Darcy does not put it off.  I am at his disposal.

ELIZABETH:  Mr. Darcy takes great pleasure in his power of choice, I imagine.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  He likes to have his own way very well.  But so do we all. It is only that he has better means of having it than many others because he is rich.  I speak feelingly!  I am a younger son, you know.

ELIZABETH:  So, Mr. Darcy brought you down to Kent with him for the sake of having somebody at his disposal.  (She begins playing softly.) I wonder that he does not marry to secure a lasting convenience of that kind.  But, perhaps, his sister does as well for the present.  He may do what he likes with her.

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  No. That is an advantage which he must divide with me.  I am joined in the guardianship of Miss Darcy.

ELIZABETH:  She is a great favorite with Miss Bingley.  Do you know Miss Bingley, Colonel Fitzwilliam?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  A little. Her brother is a very pleasant gentleman - a great friend of Darcy and much indebted to him.

ELIZABETH:  In what manner indebted?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  In truth, I only suppose that Bingley is the man that was meant.  On our journey down here Darcy merely congratulated himself on having lately saved a friend from a most imprudent marriage.  I understood that there were some very strong objections against the lady.

ELIZABETH:  (stops playing) What right does Mr. Darcy have to decide on the propriety of his friend’s inclination or in what manner his friend is to be happy!

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  Is all well with you, Miss Bennet? You appear . . . in some distress.

ELIZABETH:  (Rising from the pianoforte)  I feel the headache coming on.  Colonel Fitzwilliam, could I prevail upon you to accompany me to the parsonage?

COLONEL FITZWILLIAM:  Of course, Miss Bennet! I shall make your excuses for you and get your cloak at once.

(The lights dim on the others on the stage and a spotlight centers on Elizabeth )
ELIZABETH: So, it was all Mr. Darcy! His pride and his caprice were the cause of all the torment my poor darling Jane has suffered these last months! He is at the root of every evil that has come into her life! “There were some very strong objections against the lady.” To Jane, herself, there could be no possibility of objection. My poor, poor Jane! What kind of monster could wound such loveliness and goodness!

“THE RECKONING”
I cannot understand why you broke her gentle heart
Tho’ your pride and your arrogance I knew
Should a chance come my way, I will do what I may
To ensure the one who suffers will be you!

You have wealth, you have power, but from this very hour
I predict it brings you nothing but regret.
For you’ve used your advantage for nothing but ill
And that’s something that I never shall forget.

To be poor is a blessing if riches bring pain
When you stand before the judgment bar there’s nothing you’ll have gained
I rejoice in that day, when at last you will pay
And the devil’s own reckoning is due

Give the devil his due! (Lights go out)

ACT ONE - SCENE FIFTEEN:
(Lights come up on the stage left sitting room in the Collin’s house. Elizabeth is sitting alone reading through Jane’s letters.)

ELIZABETH: These letters from Jane contain no actual complaint. And yet, there is nothing of her former cheerfulness - her former self. Though she does not communicate her suffering in words, it is all there. I long to go to her.

(A servant enters followed by Mr. Darcy.)

SERVANT: Mr. Darcy is here to see you, ma’am. (Servant exits.)

MR. DARCY: I wished to inquire if you were feeling better. When you were taken ill so suddenly last night . . .

ELIZABETH: Thank you, Mr. Darcy. I am quite well.

(An uncomfortable silence ensues.)

MR. 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!

(Another uncomfortable silence)

MR. DARCY: I had thought that removing myself from your presence these past months would have been sufficient to overcome my admiration. But it has not. Despite all my endeavors, my feelings upon seeing you last night were stronger than before . . . Your family, your inferior station, the humiliation which I may be required to endure for allowing inclination to overcome judgment. None of these things matter to me any more. I will
accept any degradation in the solace that I will now be rewarded by your acceptance of my hand in marriage.

ELIZABETH: I believe it is usual in such cases to express gratitude for the feelings avowed, however unequally they may be returned. And if I could feel gratitude, I would now thank you. But I cannot. I have never desired your good opinion, and you have certainly bestowed it most unwillingly. I am sorry to have given anyone pain, and I hope it will be of short duration.

(Another uncomfortable silence)

MR. DARCY: And this is all the reply which I am to have the honor of expecting! I might, perhaps, wish to be informed why, with so little endeavor at civility, I am thus rejected.

ELIZABETH: I might as well inquire why, with so evident a design of offending and insulting me, you chose to tell me that you like me against your will, against your reason, and even against your character? Was not this some excuse for incivility! If I was uncivil. But I have other provocations. You know I have. Do you think that any consideration would tempt me to accept the man who has been the means of ruining, perhaps for ever, the happiness of a most beloved sister? I have every reason in the world to think ill of you.

MR. DARCY: I have no wish to deny that I did everything in my power to separate my friend from your sister. Towards him I have been kinder than towards myself.

ELIZABETH: But it is not merely this affair on which my dislike is founded. Long before it had taken place your character was unfolded to me by Mr. Wickham.

MR. DARCY: You take an eager interest in that gentleman!

ELIZABETH: Who can help feeling an interest in him, knowing what his misfortunes have been?

MR. DARCY: His misfortunes! Yes, his misfortunes have been great, indeed.

ELIZABETH: You have reduced him to his present poverty. And yet you can treat the mention of his misfortunes with contempt and ridicule!

MR. DARCY: So this is your opinion of me! I thank you for explaining it so fully. My faults, according to this calculation, are heavy indeed! But, perhaps these bitter accusations might have been suppressed had I concealed my struggles and flattered you. But I abhor disguise of every sort. Could you expect me to rejoice in the prospect of relations whose condition is so decidedly inferior?

ELIZABETH: You are mistaken, Mr. Darcy. The mode of your declaration only spared me the concern which I might have felt in refusing you had you behaved in a more gentlemanlike manner. From the first moment we met - your manners, your arrogance, and your selfish disdain of the feelings of others, formed such a dislike that I quickly felt that you were the last man in the world whom I could ever be prevailed upon to marry!

MR. 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.
(Darcy exits. The lights slowly fade on Elizabeth and come up on stage right - a garden area at the Collins’ parsonage. Music begins playing. Darcy enters in agitation.)

“As A Moth To The Flame“ - Reprise

As a moth to the flame, I surrendered my will.  
I persisted through pain, seeing nought but the thrill.  
Though my heart warned there was nothing to gain  
I was bewitched as a moth in the flame.

All that I believed in, all I thought I knew  
Whispered that I dare not be unwise  
Then my world was shattered when you came into my view  
I was blinded by the fire in your eyes.

As a moth to the flame, drawn by warmth, drawn by fire  
All my fear of the pain was o’ercome by desire.  
But the love I felt was only in vain  
For it burned as a moth in the flame.

(Lights out)

End Act One

To read the rest, please purchase the script.