Pride and Prejudice

Written by Kate Hamill
directed by Lisa Channer
If you have any questions or comments about this guide or Park Square Theatre’s Education Program, please contact
Mary Finnerty, Director of Education
PHONE 651.767.8494
EMAIL finnerty@parksquaretheatre.org
Contents

The Play

Meet the Characters .......................................................................................................................... 3
Plot Summary of Pride and Prejudice ........................................................................................... 6
Character Chart ............................................................................................................................. 8
Women and Marriage in Jane Austen’s England .......................................................................... 9

Activities and Resources

Pre-Play Activities: Tossing Lines ................................................................................................. 11
Movement Resource List .............................................................................................................. 13
Scenes to Read Aloud .................................................................................................................. 14
Post-Show Discussion Questions ................................................................................................. 20
Meet the Characters

**Lizzy (Elizabeth Bennet)**
Lizzy, the play’s protagonist, is the second oldest Bennet daughter. She is witty, independent, and skeptical about marriage. She prides herself on good judgment.

**Jane Bennet**
Jane is the oldest and considered to be the most beautiful Bennet daughter. She is kind, idealistic, and always tries to do the right thing. She is also reserved with her feelings, unlike her mother and Lydia.

**Mary Bennet**
Mary, the third Bennet daughter, is perceived as a social pariah, ghoulish. She is prone to strictly following the rules and sulking. She often coughs to get attention, much to the annoyance of those around her.

**Lydia Bennet**
Lydia, the youngest Bennet daughter, is full of life and energy. She tries to act older than she is but makes a fool of herself by being impulsive and not considering the consequences of her actions.

**Mrs. Bennet**
Mrs. Bennet, the mother of the Bennet girls, often seems like a silly woman, constantly embarrassing herself in company without realizing it. When Mrs. Bennet is upset, she weeps uncontrollably.

**Mr. Bennet**
Mr. Bennet, the father of the Bennet girls, finds amusement in his family, sometimes by antagonizing them. He is less concerned with social norms than his wife and often does not seem to take her seriously. Lizzy is clearly his favorite daughter.

**Mr. (Fitzwilliam) Darcy**
Mr. Darcy, one of the richest men in England, is too proper for his own good. He is awkward in most social contexts, although he prides himself on self-control and good judgment.

**Mr. Bingley**
Mr. Bingley, a friendly and lovable young man, is close friends with Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bingley makes an impressive salary and is thus a desirable bachelor.

**Miss Bingley**
Miss Bingley is Mr. Bingley’s sister and is determined to marry Mr. Darcy. She is beautiful, rich, and cultured, but considers herself to be above everyone else.

CONTINUED...
Miss (Anne) de Bourgh
Miss de Bourgh is Lady Catherine’s daughter, and although she is rich, she has been ill a long time and protects (or hides) herself under many layers of clothing. She speaks in grunts and murmurs.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh
Lady Catherine, the wealthy and aristocratic aunt of Mr. Darcy, is fixated on having him marry her daughter. Lady Catherine is stuck up and rude.

Mr. Collins
Mr. Collins, a cousin of the Bennet girls, is set to inherit the Bennet property when Mr. Bennet dies because Collins is the closest male heir. He is an obnoxious man who tries to cover his lack of intelligence with strict adherence to rules and redundant language.

Wickham
Wickham, a handsome and charming young man, is a solider who was raised with Mr. Darcy.

Charlotte Lucas
Charlotte Lucas is a practical girl who is a good friend of Lizzy’s.
About the Play

Plot Summary

Act I - Setting: Rural 19th Century England

The Bennet family learns that a nearby mansion, Netherfield, is being rented by a wealthy young man, Mr. Bingley. This is of particular interest to Mrs. Bennet, whose primary goal in life is marrying off her four daughters: Jane, Elizabeth (Lizzy), Mary, and Lydia.

At a local ball, the Bennets meet Mr. Bingley and his friend, the wealthy Mr. Darcy. The affable Mr. Bingley enjoys meeting the Bennets, while Darcy sees everyone at the party as simple and unrefined. Bingley is enamored with the beautiful Jane, but Darcy sees her as a poor match for his friend. Darcy’s skepticism is reinforced by the bad behavior of several members of the Bennet family. Mrs. Bennet gossips loudly, Mary generally bores everyone, and Lydia gets drunk.

Following the party, Jane is invited to visit Mr. Bingley at his home and falls ill with a cold. Lizzy arrives to nurse her sister, and during this time she gets to know Mr. Darcy. She finds Darcy to be snobbish and prideful, with impossibly high standards of the ideal woman. Bingley, meanwhile, seems to be all the more in love with Jane.

When Jane recovers from her cold, she and Lizzy return home. Lydia is waiting for them and she introduces the handsome Mr. Wickham, a lieutenant in the army. Mr. Wickham has known Mr. Darcy since boyhood and indicates to Lizzy that Darcy robbed him of his deserved inheritance. Lizzy’s poor impression of Darcy deepens, and she grows fond of Wickham’s charm.

Shortly after, the Bennets receive a letter from their cousin Mr. Collins. Since Mr. Bennet has no sons, when he eventually passes away, their home will be inherited not by one of Mr. Bennet’s daughters but by the next oldest male relative, Mr. Collins. Collins comes for a visit; when he arrives he repels everyone he meets with his self-important and condescending attitude.

The Bennets attend another ball, and Lizzy gets the chance to talk with her friend Charlotte Lucas. Charlotte has a practical view of marriage and thinks Jane needs to secure her match to Bingley as quickly as possible. Much to everyone’s surprise, Darcy asks Lizzy to dance. The other Bennets repeat their tacky behavior from the previous ball, but Mr. Bingley still asks to visit the Bennet home the following day, hinting at a proposal.

Back at the Bennet home, there is a proposal, but not from Mr. Bingley. The dreadful Mr. Collins proposes marriage to Lizzy. She promptly rejects him, much to the disappointment of Mrs. Bennet. Mr. Bennet, meanwhile, supports Lizzy in her choice to refuse a man she doesn’t love. Mr. Collins leaves insulted, but shortly reappears with his new fiance, Lizzy’s friend Charlotte Lucas. Lizzy is bewildered by her friend’s choice.

CONTINUED...
As the act closes, a note arrives stating the Bingleys and Mr. Darcy have left Netherfield, dashing Jane’s hopes for marriage to Mr. Bingley.

Act II

As the act opens, Lizzy goes to visit Charlotte and her new husband, Mr. Collins, in Kent. Collins informs Lizzy that they have been invited to tea by Lady Catherine de Bourgh, Collins’s wealthy patroness. At tea, Lizzy meets Lady Catherine and her infirm daughter, Anne. Mr. Darcy arrives, and Lizzy learns Darcy is Lady Catherine’s nephew. According to Lady Catherine, Darcy and Anne are intended to marry one another. As the group converses, Collins reveals to Lizzy that Darcy’s poor opinion of the Bennet family is the reason Mr. Bingley did not propose to Jane.

The following day, Darcy visits Lizzy again. He confesses he is desperately in love with her despite his better instincts. Lizzy, confused and overwhelmed, provides several reasons why she won’t marry him, including his interference with Jane and Bingley’s relationship and his supposed wronging of Mr. Wickham, the lieutenant who was introduced to Lizzy in the first act. Darcy explains Wickham was denied his inheritance because Wickham attempted to seduce Darcy’s 14-year-old sister. Darcy leaves, dejected, and Lizzy begins to question her original impression of him.

Lizzy is invited to tour Mr. Darcy’s estate by Lady Catherine. She initially balks at the invitation, but Charlotte convinces her to go. While there, Lizzy receives news that her sister Lydia, only 14, has run away with Mr. Wickham. Darcy offers to escort Lizzy home, but she declines. Lydia and Wickham’s actions could be ruinous to the Bennet family’s reputation unless something is done.

Back at the Bennet home, Lizzy expresses regret for not informing her father about Wickham’s disreputable character. Unexpectedly, Lydia and Wickham return home, and to everyone’s surprise they are married. Lydia reveals Mr. Darcy convinced Mr. Wickham to marry her by offering to pay off his debts and give him an annual sum. The family’s reputation is saved.

Lizzy realizes that she has misjudged Mr. Darcy and that he is indeed an honorable man. Her prejudice toward him blinded her from seeing his true character. Lady Catherine suddenly arrives and she reveals to Lizzy she has heard about Darcy’s marriage proposal. This threatens her lifelong plan of having Darcy marry her daughter. She insults Lizzy, disparages her family, and then attempts to make Lizzy swear to never marry Darcy. Lizzy refuses.

Mr. Darcy arrives with Mr. Bingley. Mr. Bingley and Jane go for a walk to rekindle their relationship. Lizzy apologizes to Darcy for misunderstanding him. In the final moments of the play, Lizzy and Darcy realize their love for one another and dance.
Note: Chart is organized in descending order by layers of social class.

Key:
- Related (will be further specified how if unclear)
- Married
- Crushes
- Friends

Social/Financial Standing

Aunt

Lady Catherine de Bourgh

Mr. (Fitzwilliam) Darcy

Miss Anne de Bourgh

Mr. Bingley

Miss Bingley

Mrs. Bennet

Mr. Bennet

Jane Bennet

Elizabeth (Lizzy) Bennet

Mary Bennet

Lydia Bennet

Wickham

Uncle

Mr. Collins

Charlotte Lucas

By Sarah Stein
Eden Prairie High School
“It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.” The opening line of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* reveals the novel's focus on marriage.

In today's world, Austen's obsession with marriage can seem strange. Marriage is no longer a requirement in order to have a stable or successful life. However, in early 19th century England, marriage was essential for women to have social and economic security. With rare exception, women could not control their finances, own property, or have a career. Their legal rights were controlled by their fathers, and later, their husbands. For families on the cusp of financial disaster, women literally had to marry in order to ensure they had a roof over their heads. Marrying for love was a luxury.

At the beginning of the story, we find the Bennet sisters all “out” in society, meaning all of them are available to be married. Normally, the younger Bennet sisters would not enter society until the older sisters were married. The fact that all of the girls are “out” points to the economic peril their family faces. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet need to get their daughters married off, and unless all of the girls “marry well,” their family risks an uncertain future.

We also discover that because Mr. Bennet doesn’t have a son, the Bennets’ home and wealth will not be inherited by one of his daughters when he dies. It will instead go to the next oldest male relative. This is because of the law of *primogeniture* in English society at the time. Under the law of primogeniture, property is passed to eldest son or male relative through the generations.

As a result, the Bennet estate will go to a cousin, Mr. Collins, whom Elizabeth is pressured to marry to keep the house in the family. (Yes, marrying a cousin was okay during that time.) Elizabeth refuses because Mr. Collins is, frankly, awful. A condescending fool, Mr. Collins's personality illustrates the challenging choices women faced when it came to securing their futures. Elizabeth could either marry Collins and live with a terrible husband, or refuse and face financial and social uncertainty. She chooses the latter.

Elizabeth’s friend, Charlotte Lucas, makes the opposite choice. After Elizabeth rejects Mr. Collins, Charlotte marries him. She faces few prospects for marriage, so she is willing to make it work with Collins to ensure a stable, respectable life. Charlotte’s choice is portrayed as an unfortunate but understandable and responsible decision.

At the end of the story, Elizabeth marries Mr. Darcy for love, and he also happens to be rich. This marriage represents a rare opportunity of being able to choose a spouse for more than economic stability or social standing. Elizabeth and Darcy have genuine affection for one another and overcome the social expectations of others in order to be together.
Austen’s portrayal of marriage in the novel serves as a criticism of the society in which she lived. *Pride and Prejudice* illustrates how social and legal constraints limited women’s ability to lead self-determined lives and how marriage should be about more than money.

**Discussion Questions**

1. How has society’s view of marriage changed since Austen wrote *Pride and Prejudice*? How has it stayed the same?
2. Do you think people make choices about their relationships based on social class or money? Why or why not?
3. What do you think of Charlotte’s choice to marry Mr. Collins?
4. Elizabeth gets to marry for love, and Mr. Darcy also happens to be wealthy. What does it say about the story when Elizabeth ends up with a rich husband?

A Georgian Era cartoon mocking ‘old maids.’ From the Lewis Walpole Library
Pre-Play Activity: Tossing Lines

Objective:
To familiarize students with *Pride and Prejudice* by speaking lines from the play. This activity helps students form questions, gain insight, and build excitement for seeing these lines spoken in the production. **This activity serves the students best if completed before they attend the play.**

Time allotted:
20-30 minutes

Materials:
Tennis ball or hackey sack
Slips of paper, cut from Tossing Lines Resource on the next page (2 sets if necessary)

Procedure:
Cut and distribute the slips of paper (see Tossing Lines Resource) to student volunteers. Give students a few minutes, or overnight if appropriate, to memorize or prepare a dramatic reading of their line with no memorization. Have the students form a circle and give one student the ball. After students speak a line, they toss the ball to another student who speaks their assigned line. Students toss the ball throughout the circle until all lines have been heard a few times. Encourage students to speak lines with varying emotions, seeking out the best way to perform the lines.

Optional:
Re-assign lines within the group to other students in the classroom and continue for another round.

Freewriting/Discussion:
After lines have been tossed and in preparation for discussion, allow students five minutes to freewrite their ideas and questions about the content of the play. The following questions may be used to guide freewrite and/or discussion.

1. What can you tell about the setting and time period of this play?
2. What do the lines tell you about who the characters might be and the relationships between them?
3. What might be the central conflict? Which lines support your ideas?
4. Can you predict which themes may be portrayed in this production based on the lines you’ve heard?

**To the teacher:**
*Cut these apart and distribute to students.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>It would be a punishment to dance with any lady here.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vanity and pride are different. A person may be proud without being vain.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>You were robbed of your inheritance by Mr. Darcy?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>It is my experience that one invariably finds oneself doing the very things one swore &quot;never&quot; to do.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>And my good opinion once lost—is lost forever.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your defect is, I'm afraid, a propensity to hate everybody.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Your mother will never see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins - and I will never see you again if you do.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>And we, just a ruined old widow and her dried-up SPINSTER daughters, may well weep over lost chances!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>How many times must I tell you—tell EVERYONE—that I shall NEVER marry!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I have never desired your good opinion!</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>For one false step condemns a person—a female person—to ruin; one slip pollutes her forever.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Is it any wonder with a father so absent, and a mother so focused on conquest, that a silly child would become easy prey?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>So a man had to be paid to marry you.</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>I swore that I would never again be part of these games. Sir, if you can secure my daughter's consent, you have mine.</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
To The Teacher: Following is a list of movements to be used for the second activity in each of the Scenes to Read Aloud.

Directions: Before reading the scenes, divide students into groups of 3 or 4. Invite one group to stand at the front of the room and act out a few of the movements. (Divide the movements so that each group has a chance to “perform.”) Repeat the list if necessary. The purpose is to allow the students an opportunity to practice the movement before the scenes are read.

1. Turn away from the other actor.
2. Take the other actor’s face in your hands.
3. Move toward each other quickly or slowly.
4. Raise a fist and shake it.
5. Stand with feet spread, hands on hips.
6. Cover your face with your hands.
7. Shrug your shoulders.
8. Throw your hands up in the air.
10. Put your hand up to your chin.
11. Point at the other actor.
12. Touch the other actor on the arm or shoulder.
13. Move away quickly or slowly.
14. Cross your arms in front of your chest.
15. Stand with your hands behind your back.
16. Wring your hands.
17. Stand very tall and straight.
18. Cower and fidget.

By Cheryl Hornstein
Educational Consultant
To the Teacher: Prepare the students for reading the scene by having them read the character descriptions.

Activity One: Read, Discuss
Choose five students to read the scene aloud from their seats, then discuss.

1. From what you have read in this scene, explain how each character feels about Jane Bennet and being in the country.

2. Do you think any of the characters are being unfair in their opinions?

3. What is the reaction of Darcy and the Bingleys when Lizzy arrives?

4. What does Miss Bingley mean when she says “I do agree with you, Darcy, that one does want to only mix with the best.”

Activity Two: Read, On Your Feet
Review the Movement Resource Page. Choose five different students and read the scene again. Place Darcy seated with Miss Bingley nearby, maybe leaning over him. Place Bingley near the “entrance” looking off towards where Jane is. Have the servant enter to announce Lizzy’s entrance. When Lizzy enters, Miss Bingley moves away from Darcy. Follow the stage directions included in the scene and use gestures of your own and from the Movement Resource List to help define the relationships of the characters and their views of each other.

1. How does adding movement to the scene add (or subtract) from the meaning of the scene?

2. How do each of the characters show how they feel about the arrival of Lizzy?

3. What do each of the characters consider to be the “best” society?

4. When Lizzy says “then you needn't fear for your carpets” what is she really trying to say?

Setting the Scene
Jane has taken ill while visiting Mr Bingley at his country home. Bingley, Darcy and Bingley’s sister are talking about Jane’s characteristics. Darcy and Miss Bingley are trying to paint Jane in an unflattering way. Lizzy arrives having just walked three miles in the rain to come to her sister’s aid.

SCENE 5: Netherfield Park
It’s all too perfect. Mr. Darcy, Miss Bingley, and Bingley all strike perfect poses in the living room; Darcy writes. Miss Bingley tries to look picturesque in front of him. Bingley looks offstage, bouncing a ball.
BINGLEY: Do you think Miss Bennet might need more tea?

MISS BINGLEY: You just had some sent up, Charles. Do you want to drown the poor girl?

BINGLEY: *(he bounces the ball)* I just hate to think of her in bed, alone. *(he drops the ball, scrambles after it. They both look at him)* That is. She is a lovely creature, isn't she?

DARCY: - she smiles too much. *(he demonstrates with a grimace)*

MISS BINGLEY: Jane Bennet is perfectly ... inoffensive.

BINGLEY: I think her rather perfect, period. *(bounce, bounce, bounce)*

DARCY: You are too apt to admire people in general, Bingley. *(he eyes the bouncing ball)* You never see a fault in anybody. *(bounce, bounce, bounce)* All the world is agreeable in your eyes, and I never heard you speak ill of a human being in your life. *(he grabs the ball)*

BINGLEY: Perhaps you are too inclined to see flaws, Darcy.

DARCY: If we do not address imperfections in all frankness, we never shall correct them. *(he holds the ball; is Bingley going to get it back?)*

MISS BINGLEY: Yes, Charles - there is great virtue in being particular!

BINGLEY: - I cannot stand in resistance to both of you at once; but you must concede that Miss Jane Bennet is ... amiable, at the least?

DARCY: Meh.

MISS BINGLEY: Meh

*(Bingley revels in the half-victory for a moment. Darcy feints the ball - "go get it" - and throws it. Bingley scampers after, gets confused by various pieces of furniture.)*

MISS BINGLEY: I do agree with you, Darcy, that one does want to only mix with the best. *(she touches his chest)* After all, without a little clear-eyed judgment, what shocking company we should keep!

The doorbell rings, ding ding ding - just then, Lizzy enters. She is very wet; dirty and muddy. They all stare. Darcy has never seen a woman in that state before - soaked. Bingley tosses the ball back to Darcy - he drops it.

SERVANT: Miss Elizabeth Bennet, sir.

LIZZY: *(rather breathlessly and cheerfully)* Mr. Bingley! *(Lizzy picks up the ball.)*

MR. BINGLEY: Miss Bennet!

LIZZY: Miss Bingley. *(finally turning; the elephant in the room)* Mr. Darcy.
Mr. Darcy stiffly bows.

LIZZY: Is this your ball?

She throws it HARD at him, preferably aiming at his crotch; Darcy barely catches it, and retreats to his writing desk. Miss Bingley recovers her powers of speech.

MISS BINGLEY: Miss Bennet! Have you suffered some sort of . . .accident?

LIZZY: No? I am here to call upon my sister.

MISS BINGLEY: Your clothes.

LIZZY: I came on foot! (Pause.) ... it is only three miles.

MISS BINGLEY: Three muddy miles.

Lizzy realizes she is dripping.

LIZZY: - Ah! It is still raining a bit -

Darcy is approaching Lizzy. Lizzy is discomfited; it’s tense.

LIZZY: and I took a bit of, um, a, tumble –

Without a word, he puts the blank paper he was writing on beneath her feet - catching her drips.

LIZZY: Oh. (she is mortified; Darcy retreats) –

Awkward Pause

LIZZY: How is Jane?

BINGLEY: She will not come down, Miss Bennet.

LIZZY: Will you take me to her? (to Miss Bingley) Then you needn't fear for your carpets.
Pre-Play Activity
Scenes to Read Aloud 2:
Game or Conquest

To the Teacher: Prepare the students for reading the scene by having them read the character descriptions.

Setting the Scene
In this scene Lizzy and Darcy meet at the ball and attempt to have a conversation. Each of them is defensive in their own way.

Activity One: Read, Discuss
Give each student a copy of the scene. Break students into groups of four. Choose two students in each group to read the scene aloud from their seats, and two students to observe. Then answer the following questions.

1. From reading this scene, what do you know about how Darcy and Lizzy feel about each other?
2. What might be Darcy’s reason for talking to Lizzy? Why does Lizzy want to talk to him?
3. What is the conflict in the scene?
4. The characters disagree their approach to life. Which character makes the most sense to you? Why do you agree with him or her?

Activity Two: On Your Feet, Discuss
Combine the groups of four into groups of eight. You may choose new actors or keep the ones from the previous groups. Start the scene with the actors on their feet facing each other. Observers can use the Movement Resource List to suggest movements that help show when the characters are in conflict, and when they are not.

1. How does your understanding of the scene change with the added movement?
2. How can movement be used to help clarify characters’ relationships to each other?
3. How does adding movement make the conflict stronger?

Activity Three: Bring the Class Together
After reading the scenes in groups, bring the class back together and discuss the following questions.

1. What do you think the characters are trying to talk about? What do you think they are trying to avoid talking about?
2. Give examples of lines in the scene that might be humorous. Give examples of lines that might be hurtful.
3. Does the scene feel more like a conversation or a duel? Explain why.

CONTINUED...
SCENE 9: Bingley’s Ball
Lizzy and Darcy are dancing. Mary is playing piano—badly.

LIZZY: Behold the painful exertions of a lady attempting to be thought "accomplished."

DARCY: You are ... joking.

LIZZY: I must start out by being impertinent, Mr. Darcy, or I will be afraid of you.

He still doesn't laugh, she does, ruefully.

DARCY: Is something amusing, Miss Bennet?


DARCY: You are laughing at me?

LIZZY: At myself, sir!

DARCY: What about you is so amusing?

LIZZY: Where to begin? My flaws and follies and inconsistencies. (Mary hits a bad note) The whole range of life which is out of my control, really. One cannot always cry over it, so I laugh whenever I can.

DARCY: How interesting.

LIZZY: I suppose you never laugh at yourself, Mr. Darcy.

DARCY: It is the study of my life to avoid those weaknesses which expose character to ridicule.

LIZZY: Such as vanity and pride?

DARCY: Vanity is indeed a weakness. But pride - where there is real superiority of mind, pride may be justified. (she smiles) You ARE laughing at me.

LIZZY: Only because the contrast between us is so extreme. I am fundamentally flawed and thus hopelessly unserious - but you have such perfect understanding that you seem to possess no defects whatsoever.

DARCY: ... Miss Bennet, I think you do not mean that

LIZZY: I talk a lot of nonsense. 
(beat) Can you concede that others may laugh to see us standing up together?

DARCY: Why?

LIZZY: Because it is such an unlikely pairing.

DARCY: If I thought it laughable, I never should have asked you....Miss Bennet. I am also ... not perfect.

CONTINUED...
LIZZY: No?

DARCY: I have some faults.

LIZZY: Pray tell.

They dance for a moment in silence.

LIZZY: Come, sir; do play fairly.

DARCY: Perhaps my temper is a little too unyielding for the liking of the world.

LIZZY: Ah.

DARCY: I cannot forget - laugh at the follies at others.

LIZZY: Oh.

DARCY: And my good opinion once lost - is lost forever.

LIZZY: You have chosen your flaws well - for they are truly very serious.

DARCY: There is perhaps a particular evil in every character.

LIZZY: May I sum up yours, Mr. Darcy? (The dance stops) Your defect is, I'm afraid, a propensity to hate everybody. (he starts a little)

DARCY: And yours is willfully to misunderstand them.
The Play and Production

1. Which themes of the play does the opening game of Blindman’s Bluff foreshadow?

2. How are the play’s portrayals of Mary Bennet and Miss de Bourgh similar? Is the treatment of the women comedic or cruel?

3. The play got rid of a fifth sister from the book, Kitty Bennet. Why do you think the playwright made the choice to cut Kitty and what sort of a character do you think a fifth sister would be?

4. Bingley is portrayed as dog-like. Do you find this portrayal to be charming or repellant?

5. Early in the play, Lizzy drips water on the Bingley’s carpet, and later on, Darcy drips water on the Collins’ carpets. What do you think the playwright’s purpose was in having parallel scenes where the main characters drip water on somebody else’s carpets? What might dripping water symbolize?

6. What do the bells in the play symbolize? How did the bells change your understanding of the play?

7. How did the costumes, props, sets, and lighting transport you into Jane Austen’s time? Is there anything you would have changed about the way the production looked?

Society

8. Mr. Darcy says, “I do not have the talent of conversing naturally with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone, or appear interested in their concerns. I cannot easily say polite things which I know are not true, or be otherwise...” Do you think this suggests Mr. Darcy might have social anxiety? Why or why not?

9. Both Lizzy and Darcy remark about the ball in Scene 3: “I hate this kind of event.” What does this line tell the viewer about the protagonists’ personalities? How does it help tie Lizzy and Darcy together?
10. What does this story say about the ways people misjudge each other? When was a time you assumed something about a person in your life and later found out you were wrong?

Love and Marriage

11. Lizzy says, “I know myself, Jane. I shall never marry. For (looking off towards her parents) the state is fundamentally flawed, as far as I can see. It is all... too much.”

12. Why does the playwright specify that Lizzy is looking at her parents when she says this?

13. What actions or dialogue from the play make you think Mr. and Mrs. Bennett do or do not like each other? What are some pros and cons of their marriage?

14. What do you think would be some general pros and cons of marriage in Austen’s time?

15. What are some pros and cons of marriage in modern day?

16. Lizzy shows her disgust with the practice of marrying for money in this quote: “Yes, Mamma, yes - who cares if Mr. Bingley is amiable or decent or even BREATHING, all that matters is that we’ll win! 5,000 a year, if only Jane can ENSNARE him!”

17. Do you think money still plays a role today in whether or not couples get together?

18. Consider adult and teenage couples you know...are they generally from the same or different social or economic classes?

19. Do couples you know have similar jobs or ambitions?

20. What are some examples of couples from vastly different social or economic classes you can think of? How successful are their relationships?

CONTINUED...
21. Mr. Darcy first rambles about bells when he comes to tell to Lizzy he likes her. Explain how this action of Mr. Darcy reflects or doesn’t reflect real life romantic interactions?

22. Mr. Collins says, “Ladies always reject a gentleman's first advances! One must woo - court - WIN over and over before attaining blushing surrender! I shall Play This Game- and confess that your humility is most captivating-charming-AROUSING!” Why did this game of playing “hard to get” become a tool for aspiring lovers? Do people still do this today? Why is it still around? What does it say about gender roles?

23. What do you think of Mr. Darcy paying off Mr. Wickham to get him to marry Lydia? Do you think he did the right thing? Why or why not?
THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS!

Educational Programs at Park Square Theatre are Funded in Part by:


*This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through a Minnesota State Arts Board Operating Support grant, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund, and a grant from the Wells Fargo Foundation Minnesota.