

Pride and Prejudice Audition Script Excerpts (pages 3 – 9)

Character Outlines (from Pride and Prejudice, Jane Kendall p.5-8)

The cast will play five Male and ten Female characters (and everyone may have a chance to play Hill)

Note: All roles are open to actors of all ethnicities, cultural backgrounds, and gender identities.

Character ages are flexible and there are opportunities for doubling and cross-casting gender and age. Yes, we will have some fun with this!

Male		Female	
Mr Bennet	middle-aged, easy-going	Mrs Bennet	middle-aged, flighty
Mr Collins	pompous young clergyman	Jane	gentle
Mr Bingley	friendly young man	Elizabeth	independent
Mr Darcy	proud young man	Mary	bookish
Mr Wickham	young officer, sly	Catherine	fretful
		Lydia	flirtatious
		Miss Bingley	haughty
Hill	maid/man servant	Lady Catherine de Bourgh	Darcy's overbearing aunt
		Lady Lucas	matter-of-fact manner
		Charlotte Lucas	plain

Mr Bennet: Middle aged

He is a man of culture and taste, whose sense of humour has helped to carry him through some twenty-five years of marriage to his frivolous and irresponsible wife. He is middle aged with greying hair and a courteous and pleasing manner. His manner of speaking varies from dry humour to elaborate sarcasm, yet he is devoted to the real interests of his family.

Mrs Bennet: Middle aged

She is frivolous, irresponsible, and an inveterate matchmaker. An eligible young man has but to glance at one of her five daughters and she is ready to announce their engagement. When thwarted in any way she takes refuge in imaginary ailments and complains piteously of her "nerves" ...It is easy to see why, twenty-five years ago, Mr Bennet found her irresistible.

Jane: Early 20's

Jane is the eldest of five girls. She has always turned so beautiful and sweet a face on the world that much of it has reflected back on her. Jane honestly believes that people are better than they are, and so is always ready to find a good excuse for any questionable act. Although docile and much under her mother's thumb, Jane is by no means lacking in spirit.

Elizabeth: Early 20's

She is a 'beauty' who also happens to have brains...a modern girl born in 1800! She is more like her father than any of her sisters, and, although she does not know it, she is his favourite. She is distressed by her mother's airs and obvious matchmaking, but loyally conceals it and attempts to cover her mother's blunders. She has a quick temper, a proud spirit, and is unaffected and sincere... Darcy cannot resist her beauty, plus the fire and spirit that are part of Elizabeth's charm.

Mary: Late teens

Mary is the plain one of the family and a book worm. Later Mary will probably outgrow her extreme priggishness. Right now, she is prepared to lecture on particularly any subject. Mary is smug and

pedantic, in direct contrast to all her sisters. She is, however, likeable. You are amused rather than annoyed by her.

Catherine: late teens

Catherine is much under the domination of her irrepressible younger sister...She has an engaging giggle when fun is in prospect, but, like her mother, she is inclined to whine when things do not please her.

Lydia: Mid-teens

Lydia is utterly frivolous and irresponsible. She thinks of nothing but parties, officers, and clothes. She is pretty, pert, and could never, imaginably, lack a partner at a dance.

Lady Lucas: Middle aged

Lady Lucas is a good friend of Mrs Bennet, though they are rivals in matchmaking, for Lady Lucas has a daughter to marry off. She has a pleasant and matter-of-fact manner. In Act 1 she has the pleased, complacent air of one who has sighted eligible masculine quarry first.

Charlotte Lucas: Mid-twenties

Charlotte is Elizabeth's special friend. Her manner is quiet and restrained and she is sweet and reasonable, though lacking somewhat in feminine charm. She does not dream of romance and is quite willing to be guided by her mother's choice.

Mr Bingley: Mid-twenties

He is the catch of the county, handsome, moderately wealthy, and with charming manners that captivate everyone who meets him. He has eyes only for Jane from the moment he sees her.

Miss Bingley: Twenties

She is very fashionably dressed. Her surface good manners scarcely conceal her contempt for provincial society. She is proud and conceited, and her chief concern is that her brother shall make a suitable match.

Mr Darcy: Mid-twenties

He is a little older than Mr Bingley and a great deal richer. He is tall, handsome, and aristocratic in appearance, but his manner is cold and stiff. He is secretly just as much attracted to Elizabeth as Mr Bingley is to Jane, but he is too intelligent not to recognise her mother's lack of taste, and so resists her as long as he can.

Mr Collins: Mid-twenties to mid-thirties

He is a clergyman, pompous and pedantic, with absurdly formal manners. Yet, he is extremely servile whenever to be so is to his advantage. He pays ridiculous court to Elizabeth, but when he fears she may not help his "career", he does not lose a moment in consoling himself elsewhere.

Mr Wickham: Mid-twenties

He is a handsome, young officer, and cuts a dashing figure in his smart uniform. He has undeniable charm of manner but is untrustworthy and insincere.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh:

She is the dowager type, expensively dressed, formidable, and superior in manner. When she walks she sweeps; when she sits, it is as if she took her place on a throne. Quite obviously, she expects everyone to scurry at her least command. She hardly knows how to meet it when Elizabeth dares to defy her...but she finally sweeps regally from the room without bidding her good-bye.

Hill: This part is extremely flexible.

Hill is a quiet, unobtrusive, and efficient servant.

Mr Bennet is standing by the fireplace lighting his pipe.

Mr Bennet: Is your mother any better this morning?

Eliz: Very little. She declares over and over again that her heart is broken.

Mr Bennet: I blame myself for this. But I could find no trace of Lydia or Wickham in London.

Eliz: *(Sitting in an armchair doing her needlework)* You mustn't be too severe on yourself Papa.

Mr Bennet: No Lizzy, for once in my life let me feel that I have been to blame. I should have taken your advice and never let Lydia go to Brighton.

Eliz: It's too late for that now.

(Catherine comes in)

Catherine: Jane has persuaded Mama to come downstairs for a little while.

Eliz: Is she dressing?

Catherine: Yes – although she declares she is too weak to stand.

Mr Bennet: Your mother knows how to give such elegance to misfortune. Next time I may do the same – perhaps when Kitty runs away.

Catherine: *(peevishly, sitting)* I'm not going to run away Papa. If I should go to Brighton, I would behave better than Lydia.

Mr Bennet: *(crossing to her)* You go to Brighton! No, Kitty. I have at least learned to be cautious, and you will feel the effects of it.

(Catherine takes out her handkerchief and begins to dab her eyes)

Mr Bennet: *(patting her on the shoulder)* Well, well, do not make yourself unhappy. If you are a good girl for the next ten years, I may take you to the theatre at the end of them.

(Catherine bursts into tears and runs out)

Jane: *(off)* Now, Mama, don't hurry.

(Mr Bennet glances off then makes a hurried exit. Mrs Bennet and Jane enter, Mrs Bennet looks as stricken as possible and leans heavily on Jane.)

Mrs Bennet: *(walking slowly to the sofa)* What a dreadful state I am in. Such tremblings, such flutterings all over me!

(Jane hovers near her, adjusting pillows. Mary enters)

Eliz: You must think of something else, Mama.

Mrs Bennet: *(feeling the afflicted area)* Such spasms in my side – such beatings in my heart – that I can get no rest night or day.

Mary: Kitty is in tears.

Eliz: *(dryly)* We shall all float away if there are any more tears shed.

Mary: *(sitting)* This is a most unfortunate affair and will probably be much talked of.

Mrs Bennet: *(wailing)* Oh, Lydia, Lydia!

Mary: *(oratorically)* We must stem the tide of malice and pour into the wounded bosoms of each the balm of sisterly consolation.

(This makes Mrs Bennet sob anew)

Jane: *(comforting her)* Now, Mama.

Mary: Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we must not shrink from the useful lesson that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable.

(Mrs Bennet sobs loudly. Eliz rises and takes Mary by the shoulders and propels her off)

Eliz: You had better get some fresh air.

(Mrs Bennet rises. Eliz quickly takes the tea cup from her)

Mrs Bennet: All this excitement has been too much for my poor strength!
(Eliz takes Mrs Bennet's arm)

Jane: I'm sorry to distress you, Mama, but I will not allow myself to be forced upon Mr Bingley again. If he wants my society, let him seek it.

Eliz: *(to Mrs Bennet)* Shall I help you to your room?

Mrs Bennet: *(whimpering)* Don't bother. I must bear all my sufferings – *alone*.
(Mrs Bennet walks slowly out)

Jane: Lizzy, I assure you the news does not affect me with either pleasure or pain.

Eliz: I'm sorry that he comes at all.

Jane: I can hardly bear to hear him perpetually talked about. Mama means well, but she does not know – *(Her voice breaks, and then she turns away)* – no one can know –
(Eliz puts her arm around her)

Eliz: I wish I could see some happiness - for both of us.

Jane: *(surprised)* Why Lizzy, what is wrong?

Eliz: I find I can not get him out of my mind even for a minute.

Jane: Mr Darcy?

Eliz: He no longer cares for me and I don't know if I love or hate him more!

Jane: *(puts her arm around her shoulder)* Oh, Lizzy! How unfortunate we all seem to be!

UNIT 3	Lydia	Mr Wickham	Jane	Elizabeth	Catherine	Mary
	Mr Bennet	Mrs Bennet				

(Lydia bursts in followed by Mr Wickham. Neither now nor later does either of them show any embarrassment)

Lydia: *(loudly)* Jane! Lizzy! Congratulate me! I'm married!
(Jane and Eliz look at her in amazement)

Jane: Lydia! I – Oh, Lydia! *(She rushes to Lydia and embraces her)*

Mr Wickham: *(perfectly at ease)* Allow me to present Mrs Wickham. *(He bows)*

Lydia: *(calling)* Mama – Papa, everyone, come quick! Here I am!

Jane: We didn't know – Papa went to London, but –

Lydia: La! It was not to be expected he would find us.

(Mrs Bennet, Mr Bennet, Catherine and Mary rush in. Mr Bennet moves to an armchair. The others crowd around Lydia)

Lydia: *(embracing Mrs Bennet)* I'm married, Mama!

Mr Wickham: *(bowing)* Your dutiful son-in-law, madam. *(He bows to Mr Bennet)* And yours, sir.
(Mr Bennet looks hard at him but says nothing)

Mrs Bennet: My dear, dear Lydia! Married at sixteen. *(She takes Lydia by both hands and looks at her with pride and admiration)* And dear Wickham, too. *(She beams at Mr Wickham)*

Lydia: We were married just a short time ago.

Mrs Bennet: *(pulling Lydia down beside her)* Your wedding clothes – I must see to them directly. *(She turns to Mr Bennet)* My dear, you must decide at once just how much you will give her.

Lydia: Good gracious! When I went away I had no more idea of being married before I came back again! Though I thought it would be good fun if I was.

Mr Bennet: *(coldly)* I am glad *you* find pleasure in the situation. *(He speaks ominously to Mr Wickham)* Wickham, I would like a word with you.

Mr Wickham: Yes, sir.
(Mr Bennet goes out. Mr Wickham bows and follows him)

Lydia: *(gayly)* Do the people hereabouts know I am married?

Catherine: How can they when we ourselves have just found out?

Lydia: I was afraid they might not. We passed Lady Lucas' carriage, and I was determined she should know it. So I took off my glove and let my hand rest on the side of our carriage *(she poses with her left hand suspended)* – so that she might see my ring.

Jane: Lydia - you didn't!

Lydia: Then I bowed and smiled like anything. *(She bows and smiles to show them)*

Eliz: Oh, how could you!

Catherine: *(gazing at it)* Your bonnet is the prettiest I have ever seen.

Mary: *(severely)* The colour is far to gay.

Lydia: La! I must tell you about my wedding!

Jane: I hope it passed off well.

Lydia: My aunt and uncle and I went together to the church, and Mr Wickham and Mr Darcy met us there.

Eliz: *(in amazement)* Mr Darcy! *(She rises)*

Lydia: Oh, yes. He was the one who found us. La! Was I surprised when he walked in!

Jane: *Mr Darcy* found you?

Lydia: Gracious me, he warned me not to say a word about it. But there! The cat is out of the bag – so I may as well go on.

Eliz: What else did Mr Darcy do?

Lydia: *(airily)* Oh, he settled dear Wickham's debts here and there – a few thousand pounds or so.

Eliz: *(appalled)* Oh!

Lydia: Then very kindly settled a thousand pounds on me and purchased a commission for my dear Wickham in Newcastle. But you must all come to visit me and I will arrange balls for you. *(She hurries off)* I shall ask Mama at once.

Unit 4	Miss Bingley	Mr Bingley	Darcy
---------------	---------------------	-------------------	--------------

Miss Bingley: Jane Bennet is really a very sweet girl.

Mr Bingley: She is all of that.

Miss Bingley: I wish with all my heart that she were well settled. But with such a mother, and such low connections, I'm afraid there is no chance of that.

Mr Bingley: *(staunchly)* If she had no connections, I would not think one jot less of her.

Mr Darcy: Nevertheless, how can she expect to marry a man of any consideration in the world?

Miss Brinley: You are right Mr Darcy. Jane was quite a success at our ball, but – *(she pauses and looks sharply at Darcy)* – I observed that Elizabeth Bennet was not very much of an attraction to you.

Mr Darcy: Why do you say that?

Miss Bingley: You made no effort to dance with her.

Mr Darcy: *(stiffly)* I detest dancing.

(There is a pause. Mr Darcy turns away and stares out front)

Miss Bingley: Why so thoughtful, Mr Darcy?

Mr Darcy: No reason at all.

Miss Bingley: This must be serious!

Mr Darcy: I was thinking of the very great pleasure which a pair of fine eyes in the face of a pretty woman can bestow.

Miss Bingley: *(flirtatiously)* Oh, Mr Darcy! What lady has the credit of inspiring such reflections?

Mr Darcy: *(as if hating to admit it)* Miss Elizabeth Bennet.

Miss Bingley: I am astonished! When am I to wish you joy?

Mr Darcy: A lady's imagination is very wonderous: it jumps from admiration to love and from love to matrimony in a moment.

Miss Bingley: *(with a laugh)* You will have a charming mother-in-law.

Mr Collins: *(moving slowly towards her with a silly smirk on his face)* Believe me, my dear Miss Elizabeth, your modesty adds to your perfections. You would have been less amiable in my eyes had there *not* been this little – unwillingness.

Elizabeth: *(eyeing him warily as he advances towards her)* Oh! *(She deftly sweeps past him)*

Mr Collins: *(following her)* Allow me to assure you that I have your respected mother's permission for this address.

Elizabeth: *(faintly)* You have? *(She sees nothing else to do but sit, so she does, resignedly, on one end of the settee)*

Mr Collins: *(sliding close to her)* Almost as soon as I entered the house, I singled you out as the companion of my future life. But before I let my feelings run away with me, I will state my reasons for coming here to select a wife.

(Elizabeth looks at him, rather startled, as her moves a little closer to her)

Mr Collins: First, I think it is the right thing for a clergyman to set the example of matrimony in his parish. *(He moves a little closer, much to Elizabeth's consternation)* Secondly, it will add greatly to my happiness. And thirdly, that it is the particular advice and recommendation of my patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who twice has condescended to give me her opinion – *unasked*...And now, nothing remains for me but to prove to you the violence of my affection.

(Elizabeth has listened to his recital, first with alarm, then with amusement. Mr Collins, on the last line, slips from the settee to one knee in front of her, and awkwardly tries to take Elizabeth's hand)

Elizabeth: *(rising)* You are too hasty. I thank you for your generous offer – but I must decline it.

Mr Collins: *(trying to take her in his arms)* My dear Elizabeth! It is your wish to increase my love by suspense, such as most elegant females do. I beg of you. Hold me off no longer. Confess your love for me.

(There is a painful silence. Elizabeth watches him in puzzled surprise. Mr Darcy abruptly crosses to Elizabeth)

Mr Darcy: *(agitatedly)* I have struggled in vain. It will not do. My feelings won't be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you.

Eliz: *(astonished)* Mr Darcy.

Mr Darcy: My attachment is so strong that in spite of all my endeavours, I find it impossible to conquer my feelings for you.

Eliz: *(in mingled resentment and surprise)* You mean you have tried *not* to love me, Mr Darcy?

Mr Darcy: I realise that there is a great difference in our connections, and that there are great disadvantages in marrying into such a family as yours, but none the less I hope you will accept my hand!

Eliz: *(angrily)* How dare you speak of my family in that way?

Mr Darcy: It is because I love you, Miss Elizabeth, that I dare speak at all – that I dare to offend the society of which I am a part.

Eliz: You are insufferable, Mr Darcy, to speak of love and offense in the same breath.

Mr Darcy: *(angrily, but with forced calmness)* And this is all the reply which I may expect?

Eliz: Do you think I would marry any man who likes me against his will and against his reason? You are the last man in the world whom I could be prevailed upon to marry!

Mr Darcy: Then forgive me for taking up so much of your time and accept my best wishes for your happiness.

(Mr Darcy bows stiffly and goes out. Elizabeth stands looking after him for a moment. Then she sinks down on the settee and buries her face in her arms.)