

**From the full length play:  
*Pride and Prejudice*  
Adapted from Jane Austen by Tracy Wells**

ELIZABETH BENNET, *high spirited intelligent; female*

MARILLA CUTHBERT, *her doting aunt; female*

AT RISE: Drawing room of the Bennet home. ELIZABETH and MRS. GARDNER are drinking tea.

MRS. GARDNER

That is disappointing. It had seemed to have been a desirable match. But these things happen so often! A young man, such as Mr. Bingley, falls so easily in love with a pretty girl for a few weeks and when chance separates them, forgets her in an instant.

ELIZABETH

I believe there was more to it than that. For Mr. Bingley to be so violently in love with Jane one moment and then gone the next is quite inconceivable!

MRS. GARDNER

This term “violently in love” is one used by many young, people, but is a term that does not hold any weight to it. Pray tell, how “violently in love” was Mr. Bingley?

ELIZABETH

I have never seen a more promising match. He was growing entirely inattentive to other people and seemed completely engrossed by Jane. At his own ball, he offended quite a few young ladies by refusing to dance with anyone but Jane.

MRS. GARDNER

Yes, well, our Jane is a special, sensitive type of girl. If it had happened to you Lizzy, you surely would have laughed it off.

(thinks)

And what of you, Lizzy? Are there any romantic prospects in your future?

ELIZABETH

There is one young man who has expressed interest in me, and whom I am interested in.

MRS. GARDNER

What is his name?

ELIZABETH

Mr. George Wickham. He is an officer in the militia.

MRS. GARDNER  
(Visibly upset)

I know of Mr. Wickham.

ELIZABETH  
You do! Oh dear aunt, tell me what you know of him.

MRS. GARDNER  
You are too sensible to fall in love only because you're warned against it, so I will speak plainly. I would be on your guard with him as he has no fortune and is of questionable moral integrity.

ELIZABETH  
That is quite an accusation. Do you have proof to back up such a statement?

MRS. GARDNER  
I do, indeed. There is news that he has recently expressed interest in a Miss King.

ELIZABETH  
We have no commitment to one another. He is free to express interest in whomever he chooses.

MRS. GARDNER  
It is not simply that he expresses interest in another woman, but in the nature of his interest. You see, Miss King was quite poor. It wasn't until her father died, leaving her a large sum of money, that Mr. Wickham began to express interest in her. There is something that does not feel right about it. You have good sense and we all expect you to use it. Do not disappoint your father.

ELIZABETH  
(Annoyed)  
Well then, you need not be alarmed in any way. I will do everything I can to make sure that neither Mr. Wickham nor I fall in love with each other.

MRS. GARDNER  
Now, Lizzy, please be serious.

ELIZABETH  
I'm sorry, let me try again. At the present time I am not in love with Mr. Wickham, but he is beyond all comparison, the most agreeable man I have ever met. That being said, I hold my father's opinion in the highest regard and no man shall ever make me damage his notion of me.

MRS. GARDNER  
I'm sorry if I have disappointed you.

ELIZABETH  
You did not. I respect your opinion greatly. Now let's talk no more of Mr. Wickham as my only concern is for Jane. It would be a better for us to make sure she's ready for London.

MRS. GARDNER

Yes, and you have a visit to Hunsford to prepare for.

ELIZABETH

I suppose that is true as well. But first, let's hurry to Jane. If we don't get to her soon, mama will have driven her completely mad!

(End of scene.)