



## **About the Musical**

*“If I decide to pick up my pen –  
If I revisit it, what happens then?”*

– “Choices,” sung by Jane Austen

In *Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, A Musical Play*, we see Jane Austen as she revisits her rejected first novel, *First Impressions*, and overcomes all obstacles to transform it into her masterpiece, *Pride & Prejudice*.

What writers Lindsay Warren Baker and Amanda Jacobs have accomplished is not just a powerful, musical retelling of a classic love story. They show us, through the journey of the author herself, what it took Austen – what it takes anyone – to create a masterpiece.

Audiences see Elizabeth & Darcy’s story come to life with fresh eyes, as they are caught up in Austen’s creative process and her interaction with the characters she created.

There have been countless theatrical adaptations of Jane Austen’s most famous novel, including a 1959 Broadway musical version called *First Impressions* that starred Polly Bergen, Farley Granger and Hermione Gingold.

What sets ***Jane Austen’s Pride and Prejudice, A Musical Play*** apart is the way it intertwines and illuminates two compelling love stories: Austen’s romantic novel and the author’s own passion for her work.

### **Our Synopsis**

Early one morning in Hampshire, England in the year 1812, Jane Austen enters a room in Chawton Cottage. She is agitated, having found an old rejection letter of her manuscript of *First Impressions*, and questions whether or not her story should be given a second chance (CHOICES). As she re-reads her work, the novel’s characters come to life in her imagination.

(more)

*(Synopsis, pg. 2)*

In her story, a wealthy young man named Charles Bingley has recently arrived in the neighborhood and has become enamored with Jane Bennet, the eldest of five sisters (ISN'T SHE WONDERFUL?). Mr. Bingley is accompanied by his snobby best friend, Fitzwilliam Darcy, who is even wealthier. Mr. Darcy rejects everything about the country neighborhood, including Elizabeth Bennet, the second eldest Bennet sister.

Elizabeth is offended by Mr. Darcy, but excited for her sister, Jane. Elizabeth questions Austen about the nature of love and romance, and what she wants in a potential partner (WHEN I FALL IN LOVE).

Jane Bennet receives an invitation to visit Mr. Bingley's home from his sister, Caroline (MY DEAREST JANE). While she is there, Jane becomes ill and Elizabeth arrives to care for her. Over the next four days, Darcy becomes increasingly intrigued with Elizabeth, while Caroline becomes increasingly annoyed (DARCY MUSES).

When the Bennet sisters return home, they learn that their pompous cousin, Mr. Collins, is to visit the family (I AIM TO PLEASE). Mr. Collins will inherit the Bennet estate, which creates tremendous pressure for all five daughters to marry well. As the author, Austen has encouraged Mr. Collins to pursue Elizabeth. But with the introduction of a handsome officer, George Wickham (MEETING MR. WICKHAM), Elizabeth's attention is engaged elsewhere. When she hears about a dark history between Wickham and Darcy (WICKHAM'S DREAM), her prejudice against Mr. Darcy increases.

Austen questions her plot choices and examines the interactions between all of the growing romantic relationships (THE NETHERFIELD BALL). Following an embarrassing evening, the Bingleys and Mr. Darcy leave the neighborhood (MY DEAREST JANE #2) and Elizabeth receives a proposal of marriage from Mr. Collins (MY REASONS FOR MARRYING). Elizabeth's mother, Mrs. Bennet, is mortified by Elizabeth's defiant refusal (MY POOR NERVES).

Austen compares marriages of love versus convenience (NOT ROMANTIC) and has Elizabeth's best friend, Charlotte Lucas, marry Mr. Collins. Jane Bennet is informed that Mr. Bingley is not returning (MY DEAREST JANE #3) and Elizabeth is invited to visit the newlyweds, Charlotte and Mr. Collins.

During this visit, Elizabeth meets Mr. Collins' condescending patroness, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is also Mr. Darcy's aunt. Mr. Darcy comes to visit and Charlotte and Austen observe his attention to Elizabeth (HE MUST BE IN LOVE WITH YOU).

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(Synopsis, pg. 3)

When Elizabeth learns that Mr. Darcy has separated her sister, Jane, from Mr. Bingley, Austen seizes the opportunity to create a more dramatic scenario. In her imagination, she allows Mr. Darcy to propose to Elizabeth, not realizing how much she hates him (THE PROPOSAL/REFUSAL). Austen is excited about the dramatic potential, but the reality of her daily life interrupts the review of her work at the end of Act One.

Act Two opens with Austen looking at her revision of Darcy's proposal and Elizabeth's refusal. The added drama to the story line has created a writer's block, and she struggles to find a solution (TAKE A WALK). The answer comes when she decides to have Mr. Darcy explain himself (DARCYS LETTER), and Elizabeth is humbled when she learns the truth (HAD I BEEN IN LOVE).

With the story working again, Austen continues her review. Elizabeth returns home as the soldiers are leaving her neighborhood, and her youngest sister, Lydia, receives an invitation from them (I CAN'T RESIST A REDCOAT).

Elizabeth is invited to journey north with her uncle and aunt and they visit Mr. Darcy's home. While she's there, Elizabeth realizes that she was mistaken about Mr. Darcy (THE PORTRAIT SONG). Unexpectedly, Mr. Darcy appears, and their romance begins.

Austen divides them with the news that Lydia has run away with Mr. Wickham. Elizabeth realizes that she is in love with Mr. Darcy, but fears the scandal has destroyed her chances with him. Little does she know that Mr. Darcy will make things right (TO LONDON). Elizabeth returns home, where Mrs. Bennet is distraught (MY POOR NERVES REPRISE).

Letters are exchanged, which contain news of Lydia's marriage to Mr. Wickham. Austen informs Elizabeth that it was Mr. Darcy's doing, and Austen reflects on the miraculous, unselfish nature of love (ROMANTIC).

As a result, Bingley returns and proposes to Jane Bennet (I THINK YOU'RE WONDERFUL). Mr. Darcy's aunt, Lady Catherine, is now disturbed by rumors of a possible engagement between her nephew and Elizabeth, and she unexpectedly appears in order to confront Elizabeth with her objections (MISS BENNET).

Elizabeth denies the engagement, but will not promise to reject Mr. Darcy if he proposes. Thwarted, Lady Catherine tries to extract the same promise from Mr. Darcy but fails. Darcy is left with the hope that Elizabeth will give him a second chance and begs Austen for another opportunity (FINE EYES).

Resolved, Austen gives her hero and heroine a second chance. She brings them together and decides that her story is also worth a second chance at publication (FINALE), and that her story will be: *Pride and Prejudice*.