

# PROUD MARY AND PREJUDICED LYDIA

---

A short comedy by  
Rex McGregor

This script is for evaluation only. It may not be printed, photocopied or distributed digitally under any circumstances. Possession of this file does not grant the right to perform this play or any portion of it, or to use it for classroom study.

[www.youthplays.com](http://www.youthplays.com)  
[info@youthplays.com](mailto:info@youthplays.com)  
424-703-5315

*Proud Mary and Prejudiced Lydia* © 2016 Rex McGregor  
All rights reserved. ISBN 978-1-62088-693-9.

**Caution:** This play is fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America, Canada, the British Commonwealth and all other countries of the copyright union and is subject to royalty for all performances including but not limited to professional, amateur, charity and classroom whether admission is charged or presented free of charge.

**Reservation of Rights:** This play is the property of the author and all rights for its use are strictly reserved and must be licensed by the author's representative, YouthPLAYS. This prohibition of unauthorized professional and amateur stage presentations extends also to motion pictures, recitation, lecturing, public reading, radio broadcasting, television, video and the rights of adaptation or translation into non-English languages.

**Performance Licensing and Royalty Payments:** Amateur and stock performance rights are administered exclusively by YouthPLAYS. No amateur, stock or educational theatre groups or individuals may perform this play without securing authorization and royalty arrangements in advance from YouthPLAYS. Required royalty fees for performing this play are available online at [www.YouthPLAYS.com](http://www.YouthPLAYS.com). Royalty fees are subject to change without notice. Required royalties must be paid each time this play is performed and may not be transferred to any other performance entity. All licensing requests and inquiries should be addressed to YouthPLAYS.

**Author Credit:** All groups or individuals receiving permission to produce this play must give the author(s) credit in any and all advertisements and publicity relating to the production of this play. The author's billing must appear directly below the title on a separate line with no other accompanying written matter. The name of the author(s) must be at least 50% as large as the title of the play. No person or entity may receive larger or more prominent credit than that which is given to the author(s) and the name of the author(s) may not be abbreviated or otherwise altered from the form in which it appears in this Play.

**Publisher Attribution:** All programs, advertisements, flyers or other printed material must include the following notice:

*Produced by special arrangement with YouthPLAYS ([www.youthplays.com](http://www.youthplays.com)).*

**Prohibition of Unauthorized Copying:** Any unauthorized copying of this book or excerpts from this book, whether by photocopying, scanning, video recording or any other means, is strictly prohibited by law. This book may only be copied by licensed productions with the purchase of a photocopy license, or with explicit permission from YouthPLAYS.

**Trade Marks, Public Figures & Musical Works:** This play may contain references to brand names or public figures. All references are intended only as parody or other legal means of expression. This play may also contain suggestions for the performance of a musical work (either in part or in whole). YouthPLAYS has not obtained performing rights of these works unless explicitly noted. The direction of such works is only a playwright's suggestion, and the play producer should obtain such permissions on their own. The website for the U.S. copyright office is <http://www.copyright.gov>.

## COPYRIGHT RULES TO REMEMBER

1. To produce this play, you must receive prior written permission from YouthPLAYS and pay the required royalty.
2. You must pay a royalty each time the play is performed in the presence of audience members outside of the cast and crew. Royalties are due whether or not admission is charged, whether or not the play is presented for profit, for charity or for educational purposes, or whether or not anyone associated with the production is being paid.
3. No changes, including cuts or additions, are permitted to the script without written prior permission from YouthPLAYS.
4. Do not copy this book or any part of it without written permission from YouthPLAYS.
5. Credit to the author and YouthPLAYS is required on all programs and other promotional items associated with this play's performance.

When you pay royalties, you are recognizing the hard work that went into creating the play and making a statement that a play is something of value. We think this is important, and we hope that everyone will do the right thing, thus allowing playwrights to generate income and continue to create wonderful new works for the stage.

Plays are owned by the playwrights who wrote them. Violating a playwright's copyright is a very serious matter and violates both United States and international copyright law. Infringement is punishable by actual damages and attorneys' fees, statutory damages of up to \$150,000 per incident, and even possible criminal sanctions. **Infringement is theft. Don't do it.**

Have a question about copyright? Please contact us by email at [info@youthplays.com](mailto:info@youthplays.com) or by phone at 424-703-5315. When in doubt, please ask.

## CAST OF CHARACTERS

MARY BENNET, sanctimonious teenage girl.

LYDIA BENNET, lively teenage girl.

KITTY (CATHERINE) BENNET, sensitive teenage girl.

Note: Lydia is the tallest sister.

## SETTING

The park at Longbourn in Hertfordshire, England.

## TIME

Late 18<sup>th</sup> or early 19<sup>th</sup> Century.

## COSTUME SUGGESTION

Mary wears old-fashioned knee-breeches and stockings. Lydia wears modern long pants. With a foot in each camp, Kitty wears calf-length pants.

## NOTE

The Bechdel test asks whether a work of fiction features at least two women who talk to each other about something other than a man. *Proud Mary and Prejudiced Lydia* goes even further. It never mentions any males at all.

---

*(The park at Longbourn in Hertfordshire, England. MARY strolls in, reading a book. She wears spectacles.)*

*(LYDIA enters. She is shortsighted. When she sees Mary, she giggles.)*

**LYDIA:** Typical Mary. Turning up to a duel with your nose stuck in a book.

*(Mary keeps her back to Lydia.)*

**MARY:** If you wish to communicate with me, Lydia, please abide by the protocol. Speak to your second. Your second will notify my second. And my second will convey the message to me.

**LYDIA:** Who did you pick for second?

**MARY:** Ask your second.

**LYDIA:** I mean, you're not exactly awash with friends, are you?

**MARY:** I approached Charlotte Lucas. Unfortunately, pistols bring on her palpitations.

**LYDIA:** So who did you get? One of the scullery maids? Or a laundress?

**MARY:** All communication must pass through the correct channels.

*(Mary focuses on her book. Lydia sighs.)*

**LYDIA:** I wish they'd hurry up.

**MARY:** Those who lack patience shall never partake of the kingdom of heaven.

**LYDIA:** Put a cake in it, Mary!

**MARY:** Yet they may suffer fiery pain far sooner than they expect.

**LYDIA:** Tosh! We both know you're not going to shoot your own sister.

**MARY:** The Commandment says "Thou shalt not kill." But there's no prohibition against a flesh wound.

**LYDIA:** You wouldn't dare risk hitting a vital organ.

**MARY:** I've been practicing my aim. On thieving crows. I'm an excellent shot.

**LYDIA:** You can't be serious about this.

**MARY:** Have you ever known me to jest?

*(Pause, as Lydia starts to worry.)*

**LYDIA:** All right. I apologize.

**MARY:** Too late.

**LYDIA:** I swear I'll never poke fun at your piano playing again.

**MARY:** You won't be doing any poking with your arm in a sling.

**LYDIA:** Please forgive me, Mary. I can't help having taste.

**MARY:** You may rest assured I'm not "ham-fisted" when my finger's on the trigger. By the way, do you have a preference? Left side or right?

**LYDIA:** Is this a dream? Am I sleepwalking?

**MARY:** I hope not. You need to stand still. I take no responsibility for a moving target.

*(KITTY enters, carrying a box of dueling pistols.)*

**LYDIA:** There you are, Kitty! Mary refuses to accept my apology. Will you speak to her?

**KITTY:** I'll try.

---

**MARY:** You may address me freely, Catherine. It's your privilege as my second.

**LYDIA:** Your second? Kitty's *my* second!

**KITTY:** I've agreed to do double duty.

**LYDIA:** What?

**KITTY:** She was desperate. With Jane and Lizzy in London, it was either me or Mamma.

**MARY:** Mamma would be hopeless. A second needs to be discreet.

**KITTY:** And diplomatic.

**LYDIA:** How about loyal?

**MARY:** I consulted the code. There's nothing to prevent a second from serving both parties.

**KITTY:** And it will cut the communication time in half.

**LYDIA:** Well, tell yourself to talk some sense into her!

**KITTY:** She's right, Mary. You've made your point.

**MARY:** I'm not here to make a point. I'm here to make a little hole in her deltoid muscle.

**LYDIA:** I don't even know where that is.

**MARY:** You will in a minute.

**KITTY:** Mary. I've played along so far. But this whole thing is too dangerous.

**MARY:** I'm a highly skilled markswoman. There's no chance of any permanent damage.

**KITTY:** Isn't there? I saw those birds you shot. Limping around.

**MARY:** I maimed them on purpose. As a moral example to the

rest of the flock.

**LYDIA:** Spare us your sermons!

**MARY:** Gladly. Let's begin. Choose your pistol.

**KITTY:** Mary!

**MARY:** It's her right as the person challenged.

**LYDIA:** Oh. So we can't proceed until I choose? Wonderful. I choose not to choose at all.

**MARY:** You're obliged to. As a matter of honor.

**LYDIA:** Fiddlesticks.

**KITTY:** Let's all go home. No one can force you to fight.

**MARY:** Society can. If she backs out, she'll earn the reputation of a coward.

**KITTY:** You never spread malicious gossip.

**MARY:** I won't have to. Charlotte Lucas knows about the duel. If Lydia emerges unscathed, Charlotte will guess why. The talk will be all over Hertfordshire by next Sunday. Imagine the tittle-tattle at church.

**LYDIA:** Oh no!

**KITTY:** You can always block your ears.

**LYDIA:** But not the shame in my cheeks. Open the box, Kitty.

**KITTY:** Are you sure?

**LYDIA:** What's a moment's pain compared to public humiliation? Let me have my pistol.

**KITTY:** If you insist.

*(Kitty opens the box, displaying two bananas laid out like dueling pistols. The actors treat the bananas like real guns. Kitty takes a banana and holds it clumsily.)*

---

**MARY:** I knew she'd see reason.

*(Mary takes a banana and holds it expertly.)*

**KITTY:** You're barbaric.

**MARY:** On the contrary. I shall provide Christian nursing care the moment I draw blood.

**LYDIA:** Blood!

**MARY:** I'll use my handkerchief to stop the flow.

**LYDIA:** Flow!

**KITTY:** All over your new blouse.

**MARY:** She can bare her shoulder beforehand if she's worried about her blouse.

**LYDIA:** I'm not worried about my flipping blouse!

**MARY:** Good. This experience is already curbing your vanity.

**LYDIA:** Can you at least go for the lower part of my shoulder? So the scar won't show in a ball gown.

**MARY:** I spoke too soon.

**KITTY:** You have no idea how vain she is. Her distance eyesight is fading, but she won't consider spectacles.

**LYDIA:** Kitty! Don't blab my secrets!

**KITTY:** I'm appealing to Mary's sense of fair play.

**MARY:** You mean she can't see properly?

**KITTY:** Beyond a few yards everything's a blur.

**MARY:** I've noticed her squinting. I thought that was a snooty affectation.

**LYDIA:** I don't need to affect affectation. I'm naturally affected.

**KITTY:** With your moral superiority, Mary, surely you'll spurn a physical advantage.

**MARY:** Let's reduce the twenty paces to ten.

**KITTY:** You'd still be a blur.

**MARY:** If we stand any closer, there's a chance her bullet might hit me.

**LYDIA:** Really? How exciting!

**KITTY:** Mary. I suggest you remove your spectacles. For the sake of equality.

**MARY:** Very well, Catherine. Justice is often depicted as blind.

*(Mary takes off her spectacles and puts them away.)*

**LYDIA:** As a bat in your case. I feel perfectly safe now.

**MARY:** I'll still wing you. Relying on instinct.

**LYDIA:** Would that be the same instinct you rely on when you play the piano?

**KITTY:** Lydia! This is what started everything. Your prejudice against the untalented.

**MARY:** I beg your pardon!

**KITTY:** Sorry. Poor choice of word.

**MARY:** You've hurt my pride, Catherine. I demand satisfaction. Pistols or swords?

**KITTY:** Oh, for heaven's sake!

**LYDIA:** Don't fret. If I have any luck, she won't survive.

**MARY:** Let's deal with you first, Lydia. Come on. Back to back.

*(Mary and Lydia stand back to back with bananas raised.)*

**LYDIA:** I may be the youngest. But I'm the tallest.

---

**MARY:** Ten paces. Turn. And fire at will.

**LYDIA:** Eight paces.

**MARY:** Nine.

**LYDIA:** Agreed.

**KITTY:** Are you both mad? You could kill each other!

**MARY:** I no longer care.

**LYDIA:** Neither do I.

**MARY:** Count aloud, Catherine. So she doesn't cheat.

**KITTY:** I want no part of this.

**MARY:** A second must honor her commitment.

**LYDIA:** Or I'll challenge you too, Kitty.

**KITTY:** Have it your way. I warn you of dire consequences, though.

Want to read the entire script? Order a perusal copy today!