# Gay Pride and No Prejudice: a queer love story for the ages



A new play by David Kerby-Kendall based on Jane Austen's romantic comedy of manners Pride and Prejudice is heading for London this autumn.

Set against the backdrop of the early 19th century, "Gay Pride and No Prejudice" (Risking Everything For Forbidden Love) presents a poignant and often humorous tale of three individuals navigating the tumultuous waters of love and acceptance. In a time when societal norms were rigidly enforced by a select few, this story delves into themes of queer identity, gender equality, and the fight for personal freedom.

The protagonists, Darcy and Bingley, share a bond that has grown from innocent childhood camaraderie into a deeper, more complex love. However, as they transition into adulthood in 1812, they find themselves shackled by society's stringent prohibitions against same-sex relationships. For Darcy, the risk of declaring his love for Bingley carries the potential for profound rejection and ostracism. Will the self-righteous few, who have co-opted the authority of both divine and democratic judgement, strip him of his place in society?

Bingley, caught in the web of societal expectations, endeavours to conform by courting Jane Bennet, a woman embodying the epitome of 19th century femininity and decorum. Yet, it is Jane’s spirited sister, Lizzie Bennet, who truly shakes things up. Lizzie’s outspoken views on gender equality challenge the status quo—she envisions a future where perhaps a woman could even become Prime Minister, and spouses would be on equal footing regardless of gender norms.

Darcy, initially misunderstood by Lizzie due to his pride and considerable wealth, gradually reveals himself as an ally to her feminist causes. Their evolving relationship underscores the story’s exploration of breaking down prejudices and forming genuine connections.

Meanwhile, Bingley grapples with making an impossible decision. Torn between the superficial happiness associated with an orthodox union with Jane and the authentic love he feels for Darcy, Bingley's inner conflict embodies the era’s oppressive social mores. It is his journey towards self-realisation and courage that ultimately takes centre stage in this compelling narrative.

"Gay Pride and No Prejudice" not only re-imagines a classic tale with LGBTQ themes but also shines a light on the timeless struggles for acceptance and equality. In doing so, it resonates with contemporary audiences while honouring the enduring human spirit's quest for love and freedom.

\*\*\*Gay Pride and No Prejudice is on from 8 October to 2 November at Union Theatre, London SE1 \*\*\*