Playwright Margot Melcon recently revealed that Christmas at Pemberley will be a trilogy! She and Lauren Gunderson are currently working on the final installment, which will feature the heretofore unseen sister Kitty (Catherine Bennet) and Darcy’s younger sister, Georgiana.

How did you and Lauren decide on the new story? How did writing this one compare to writing the first?

We had such fun writing Miss Bennet, and audiences seemed to respond to continuing the story of these beloved Pride and Prejudice characters as much as we did. Miss Bennet gives a little bit of insight into what has become of Lydia two years into her marriage to George Wickham, but Lauren and I both thought there was more story there. Lydia is such a sparkly and charming character, and she ended the novel sort of stuck in this terrible situation. We wanted to see if we could do better for her.

Since The Wickhams is set over the same few days at Christmas as Miss Bennet, writing this one was a little tricky in that we had to layer the action of what was happening upstairs in the world of Miss Bennet with what was happening downstairs in the servants’ hall in the world of The Wickhams. We wanted to make sure that when Lydia or Lizzy or Darcy came downstairs, how they were feeling and what they were talking about was informed by what was happening upstairs.

How is The Wickhams experience different from Miss Bennet?

With Miss Bennet, we had a little more freedom to realize Mary’s fate; Jane Austen didn’t give us much about Mary, but we get quite a bit about Lydia’s marriage and the backstory of George Wickham and his life growing up at Pemberley. Jane Austen didn’t spend a lot of time on the lives of the servants of these grand houses, but they are as much a family as those upstairs. Diving into that family, and what it would feel like for George Wickham to return to the house where he was raised, was a lot of fun, as was exploring that tension between the privilege of upstairs and the hard work of downstairs.

Is there anything you think audiences might not realize about Mrs. Wickham?

That marriage isn’t necessarily the only option for a happy ending. Miss Bennet is a love story, for sure, but it’s also about being yourself, and being accepted exactly for who you are by the people who love you. I think The Wickhams is also about self-discovery and acceptance, and about being able to lean on those around you who truly love you to become exactly who you’re meant to be.