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# PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

by Jane Austen



UNABRIDGED WITH GLOSSARY AND NOTES

# PRIDE AND PREJUDICE



Jane Austen



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# PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

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# Notes

## What is a literary classic and why are these classic works important to the world?

A literary classic is a work of the highest excellence that has something important to say about life and/or the human condition and says it with great artistry. A classic, through its enduring presence, has withstood the test of time and is not bound by time, place, or customs. It speaks to us today as forcefully as it spoke to people one hundred or more years ago, and as forcefully as it will speak to people of future generations. For this reason, a classic is said to have universality.

Jane Austen was born December 16, 1775, in Hampshire, England. The seventh child of eight, and the second of two girls, Jane was extremely close to her older sister Cassandra. Due to their father's standing as the local clergyman, the girls enjoyed a lifestyle similar to many of Jane's heroines. The family was not rich, but they lived comfortably and associated with some members of the landed gentry.

Austen's only education outside of her family consisted of a short-lived residence with the sister of an uncle and then a yearlong stay at a boarding school. She was, however, schooled at home, well read in the classics, and familiar with the authors of the eighteenth century.

None of Austen's novels was originally published under her real name, and the title page of *Pride and Prejudice* reads simply "by the author of *Sense and Sensibility*." *Pride and Prejudice* was originally titled *First Impressions* but was not published under that name. It first appeared in 1813, about fifteen years after it was written. Austen wrote five other major novels: *Sense and Sensibility*, *Mansfield Park*, *Emma*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey*. Today, she is recognized as a gifted writer whose ability to develop memorable characters is unsurpassed.

Jane Austen died of an unknown illness (either Addison's disease, a hormonal disorder, or tuberculosis) on July 18, 1817, at the age of 41.

# Pointers

## READING POINTERS

### Reading Pointers for Sharper Insights

To better appreciate *Pride and Prejudice*, the reader should consider some of the themes and motifs that run through the book:

1. All characters, even minor ones, are susceptible to both pride and prejudice, and these two traits greatly influence the development of the plot.
  - A. The most obvious examples of **pride** are the main characters, Darcy and Elizabeth. In Chapter III, for example, Darcy is “discovered to be proud.” It is **pride** that makes Darcy refuse to dance with Elizabeth and later motivates Elizabeth’s refusal of Darcy’s first marriage proposal. It is also **pride** that convinces Mr. Collins that Elizabeth will certainly accept his marriage proposal, and it is misplaced **pride** that blinds Mrs. Bennet and Lydia to the girl’s faults and the circumstances of her marriage.
  - B. Class **prejudice** plays a large part as well, such as Lady Catherine’s disgust at the possible marriage between Elizabeth and Darcy. It is, likewise, class **prejudice** that motivates Caroline Bingley and Darcy to discourage Bingley’s attachment to Jane.
  - C. Personal **prejudices** affect the plot as well:
    - Elizabeth’s **prejudice** against Darcy based on her perception of his pride and her trust in Wickham’s reports of him
    - Mr. Bennet and Elizabeth’s **prejudice** against Mr. Collins for his supercilious nature
    - Darcy and the Bingley sisters’ initial **prejudice** against the Bennets based on the behavior of Mrs. Bennet and the three younger daughters and the Bennets’ lower social standing
2. Both pride and prejudice allow money and status to interfere with personal relationships and the desires of the heart.



# C H A P T E R I

**I**T IS A TRUTH universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighborhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” said his lady to him one day, “have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?”

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

“But it is,” returned she, “for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it.”

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

“Do you not want to know who has taken it?” cried his wife, impatiently.

“You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it.”

This was invitation enough.

“Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise-and-four<sup>†</sup> to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas,<sup>†</sup> and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week.”

“What is his name?”

“Bingley.”

<sup>†</sup>Terms marked in the text with (†) can be looked up in the Glossary for additional information.



“Is he married or single?”

“Oh, single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune—four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!”

“How so? How can it affect them?”

“My dear Mr. Bennet,” replied his wife, “how can you be so tiresome? You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them.”

“Is that his design in settling here?”

“Design? nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes.”

“I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better; for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley may like you the best of the party.”

“My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be anything extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown-up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty.”

“In such cases a woman has not often much beauty to think of.”

“But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighborhood.”

“It is more than I engage for, I assure you.”

“But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them! Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account; for in general, you know, they visit no new-comers. Indeed, you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not.”

“You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying whichever he chooses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy.”

“I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good-humored as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference.”

“They have none of them much to recommend them,” replied he. “They are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters.”

“Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves.”

“You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least.”

“Ah, you do not know what I suffer!”

“But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighborhood.”

“It will be no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them.”

“Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty I will visit them all.”

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick tarts, sarcastic humor, reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three-and-twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. Her mind was less difficult to develop. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

## Vocabulary and Glossary

### Chapter I

caprice – an inclination to change one’s mind impulsively; a whim

‡chaise-and-four – a carriage (*chaise*) drawn by four horses

let – leased; rented

†Michaelmas – the feast day of the archangel Michael held on September 29<sup>th</sup>

scrupulous – careful

vexing – bothering, annoying

### Chapter II

circumspection – careful thought

deigned – thought appropriate to one’s dignity

discretion – forethought

extracts – excerpts from literature

fortnight – two weeks

raptures – extreme joys

### Chapter III

amiable – friendly, pleasant

cordial – warm, friendly

countenance – the face, facial feature, expression

deferred – put off until later; postponed

disconcerted – bothered; worried

disposition – personality; nature

fastidious – picky; careful

†Hertfordshire – a county in southern England

mien – demeanor

surmises – guesses

### Chapter IV

apt – able; qualified

candor – openness

censuring – condemning

disposed – inclined

ductility – flexibility, give

pound – the basic unit of British currency, comprised of 100 pence

unassailed – not attacked

### Chapter V

supercilious – overly proud

### Chapter VI

ascertain – to determine

capital – splendid; nearly perfect