

# Pride and Prejudice

## Background Info

### Author Bio

**Full Name:** Jane Austen

**Date of Birth:** 1775

**Place of Birth:** Steventon, Hampshire, England

**Date of Death:** 1817

**Brief Life Story:** Jane Austen was the seventh child of the parish rector in the town of Steventon, where she and her family resided until moving to Bath in 1801. Though her parents were members of the English gentry, they remained relatively poor. Modest to a fault about the value of her work, Jane Austen nevertheless produced some of the enduring masterpieces of English literature, including the novels *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Emma*, and *Persuasion*. Her novels were published anonymously until after her death, when her authorship became known. While it was not unheard of for women to publish under their own names in Austen's lifetime, it was still a rarity. Despite the fact that her books focus on the intricate rituals of courtship and marriage among the British middle class, Austen herself remained single throughout her life, preferring the life of a writer over that of a wife and hostess.

### Key Facts

**Full Title:** *Pride and Prejudice*

**Genre:** Novel of manners

## Plot Summary

The arrival of the wealthy **Mr. Bingley** to the estate of Netherfield Park causes a commotion in the nearby village of Longbourn. In the Bennet household, **Mrs. Bennet** is desperate to marry Bingley to one of her five daughters—**Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty**, or **Lydia**. When Bingley meets Jane at a ball, he seems immediately smitten with her. Yet Bingley's snobbish friend **Darcy** is rude to Elizabeth. Through the next few social gatherings, Jane and Bingley grow closer, while Darcy, despite himself, finds himself becoming attracted to Elizabeth's beauty and intelligence.

When Jane is caught in the rain while traveling to visit Bingley, she falls ill and must stay at Netherfield. Elizabeth comes to Netherfield to care for Jane, and though Bingley's sisters are rude and condescending to her (**Caroline Bingley** wants Darcy for herself), Darcy's attraction to her deepens. Elizabeth, however, continues to consider him a snob. Meanwhile, **Mr. Collins**, a pompous clergyman and Mr. Bennet's cousin and heir, visits the Bennets in search of a marriageable daughter. At about the same time, the Bennet sisters also meet **Wickham**, an army officer Elizabeth finds charming, and who claims Darcy wronged him in the past. Elizabeth's prejudice against Darcy hardens. Soon after, at a ball at Netherfield, Mrs. Bennet, much to Darcy's annoyance, comments that a wedding between Jane and Bingley is likely to soon take place. Collins, in the

## Characters

**Elizabeth (Eliza, Lizzy) Bennet** — The novel's heroine and the second oldest of the five Bennet sisters, Elizabeth is smart, lively, and attractive. She prides herself on her ability to analyze other people, but she is very often mistaken in her conclusions about their motivations. To her credit, though, she is eventually able to overcome her own prejudice. Elizabeth places little value on money and social position. Instead she prizes a person's independence of character and personal virtue. Although she is drawn to **Darcy**, she resists him based on her own mistaken preconceptions about him.

**Fitzwilliam Darcy** — Bingley's closest friend, the brother of **Georgiana**, and the nephew of **Lady Catherine de Bourgh**.

**Setting:** Hertfordshire, London, and Pemberley, all in England at some time during the Napoleonic Wars (1797–1815)

**Climax:** The search for Lydia and Wickham

**Protagonist:** Elizabeth Bennet

**Antagonist:** There is no single antagonist. The sins of pride and prejudice function as the main antagonizing force

**Point of View:** Third person omniscient

### Historical and Literary Context

**When Written:** 1797-1812

**Where Written:** Bath, Somerset, England

**When Published:** 1813

**Literary Period:** Classicism/Romanticism

**Related Literary Works:** Between the late 18th and early 19th centuries, English literature underwent a dramatic transition. The 18th century had seen the rise of the novel in the works of writers like Daniel Defoe (*Moll Flanders*) and Samuel Richardson (*Pamela*). These novels focused on broad social issues of morality and domestic manners. With the turn of the century and the rise of Romanticism, however, the novel began to explore human relationships with a greater degree of emotional complexity. Neither a Classicist nor a Romantic, Jane Austen is perhaps best thought of as a pioneering figure in the development of the novel, providing the bridge from the often didactic novels of an earlier era to the great works of psychological realism of the Victorian period by writer such

as George Eliot and Thomas Hardy.

**Related Historical Events:** Austen's novels are famous for the way they seem to exist in a small, self-contained universe. There are almost no references in her work to the events of the larger world. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that Austen's depiction of life in the tranquil English countryside takes place at the same time when England was fighting for its life against the threat of Napoleon, and all of Europe was embroiled in war and political chaos. No mention is ever made of the imminence of a French invasion in her novels. Napoleon was finally defeated by the British at Waterloo in 1815, two years before Austen's death.

### Extra Credit

**Pride and Silver Screen?** *Pride and Prejudice* was first adapted for movies in a 1940 production starring Greer Garson and Laurence Olivier. It was again filmed in 1995, as a mini-series for A&E Television, featuring Jennifer Ehle as Elizabeth Bennet and Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy. The most recent production stars Keira Knightley as Elizabeth and was filmed in 2005.

**First Impressions:** Austen's initial title for her manuscript was "First Impressions." Though the book was eventually published as *Pride and Prejudice*, the initial title hints at the story's concern for social appearances and the necessity of finding people's true qualities beneath the surface.

meantime, proposes to Elizabeth, who declines, angering her mother, but pleasing her father. Collins then proposes to Elizabeth's friend **Charlotte Lucas**, who accepts out of a desire for security rather than a need for love.

Bingley suddenly departs for London on business, and Caroline informs Jane by letter that not only will they not be returning, but moreover her brother is planning to wed **Georgiana**, Darcy's sister. Jane is crushed. Elizabeth is sure Darcy and Caroline are deliberately separating Bingley and Jane. The sisters' aunt and uncle, **Mr. Gardiner** and **Mrs. Gardiner**, invite Jane to London hoping that she will get over her disappointment, but after she arrives Caroline snubs her and she regrets ever marrying Bingley. Elizabeth visits Charlotte and Mr. Collins, where she encounters Collins' patron and Darcy's relative, the wealthy and formidable **Lady Catherine**. Darcy arrives and surprises Elizabeth by joining her for long intimate walks. She grows angry, however, when she learns that Darcy advised Bingley against marrying Jane. Oblivious, Darcy announces his love for her and proposes marriage. Elizabeth refuses his proposal, accusing him of ruining Jane's marriage and mistreating Wickham. In a letter Darcy explains that he intervened because he felt Jane did not truly love Bingley. Wickham, he writes, is a liar and a scoundrel. Elizabeth begins to feel she has misjudged Darcy and may have been rash in turning him down. Returning home, Elizabeth finds that **Lydia** has become

smitten with Wickham. She urges her father to intervene, but he chooses to do nothing. Elizabeth soon accompanies the Gardiners on a trip. During the trip, Elizabeth visits Pemberley, Darcy's magnificent estate. She fantasizes about being his wife there and is further impressed when he unexpectedly shows up and introduces her to his charming sister, Georgiana. Bingley also arrives and reveals that he is still in love with Jane.

Elizabeth's trip is cut short by a letter from Jane announcing that Lydia has eloped with Wickham. Fearing a scandal that will ruin all the daughters' futures, the Bennets search for Lydia in London. When Mr. Gardiner tracks them down, Wickham demands his debts be paid off in return for marrying Lydia. The Bennets assume that Gardiner gives in to the demand, since Lydia and Wickham soon return, playing the happy newlyweds. (Mrs. Bennet is happy that at least one of her daughters is married.) Elizabeth soon discovers that Darcy, not Gardiner, paid off Wickham's debts, out of love for her. Bingley and Darcy return to Netherfield and Bingley finally proposes to an overjoyed Jane. While Darcy goes to London on business, Lady Catherine visits Elizabeth, warning her not to marry Darcy. Elizabeth refuses to promise. On his return, Darcy asks Elizabeth again to marry him. This time she accepts, telling him her prejudice against him had made her blind. Darcy acknowledges that his pride made him act rudely. Both couples are married and the Bennet family rejoices in their daughters' happiness.

Darcy is very wealthy and a person of great integrity, but his extreme class-consciousness makes him appear vain and proud. He finds **Elizabeth** attractive, even ideal, but is clumsy in expressing his feelings and disdains her sometimes crass family. Elizabeth's harsh appraisal of him compels him to reassess his behavior and attitudes. Her intelligence and her disregard for mere social rank teaches him to see people more for who they are, rather than the status in to which they were born.

**Jane Bennet** — The oldest of the Bennet sisters, Jane seems almost too good to be true: beautiful, sweet-tempered, and modest. Her sole fault is that she refuses to think badly of anyone. She always looks on the bright side and is quick to defend someone

when **Elizabeth** suspects them of having shortcomings.

**Charles Bingley** — Bingley is **Darcy's** best friend and the brother of **Caroline Bingley** and **Mrs. Hurst**. Unlike Darcy, however, Bingley is down to earth. Despite his huge wealth, he is humble and modest, placing no great weight on social standing.

**George Wickham** — Wickham is an officer in the local military regiment and appears to be the very model of a gentleman. In reality, he is a liar, hypocrite, and an opportunist. He thinks nothing of ruining a young woman's reputation, and is instead much more concerned with paying off his massive gambling debts.

**Mrs. Bennet** — Mrs. Bennet is a giddy, frivolous woman whose only purpose in life seems to be gossiping and marrying off her five daughters. She lacks any awareness of her vulgar conduct and embarrasses Elizabeth and Jane to no end. Her behavior depicts what can happen to women when they lack an education and the ability to think for themselves.

**Mr. Bennet** — Though a discerning, well-educated man, Mr. Bennet has made a bad marriage and is resigned to endure it. He is a good-hearted person, but fails his family by remaining sarcastically detached: everything is a joke to him. This leads to poor judgment, as when he does not interfere between **Lydia** and **Wickham**.

**Lydia Bennet** — The youngest of the Bennet sisters, Lydia is a vain, empty-headed flirt who has never had to deal with the consequences of her actions. She is her mother's favorite.

**Catherine (Kitty) Bennet** — The second youngest of the Bennet sisters. A bit of a whiner, she tends to follow **Lydia**.

**Mary Bennet** — The middle child of the five Bennet sisters. Mary is plain looking and a recluse who enjoys lecturing others about morality, which she learns from books.

**Mr. Collins** — **Mr. Bennet's** cousin and heir to the Bennet estate (in Austen's time, only men could inherit). His patroness is **Lady Catherine**. He is a ridiculous pompous clergyman concerned only with impressing others.

**Charlotte Lucas** — A close friend of **Elizabeth's**. She weds **Mr. Collins** for security, not love, but nevertheless finds happiness in her situation.

**Sir William Lucas** — **Charlotte's** father, foolishly obsessed with rank.

**Lady Lucas** — **Charlotte's** mother.

**Mrs. Gardiner** — **Mrs. Bennet's** sister-in-law. Intelligent and caring, she is the mother that **Elizabeth** and **Jane** cannot find in Mrs. Bennet.

**Mr. Gardiner** — **Mrs. Bennet's** brother and a successful, warm-hearted, cultivated merchant.

**Caroline Bingley** — **Charles Bingley's** sister. She cares only about social status and tries to undermine **Elizabeth** because she wants **Darcy** for herself.

**Mrs. Hurst** — **Bingley's** other sister. Though married, her

views and temperament mirror her sister **Caroline's**.

**Georgiana Darcy** — **Darcy's** younger sister. Georgiana is a shy, good-spirited person whom **Elizabeth** wrongly dislikes until they meet and become friends. Georgiana has her own scandalous history with **Wickham**.

**Lady Catherine de Bourgh** — Domineering and rich, Lady Catherine meddles in everyone's affairs and cannot tolerate any breach of class rank.

**Miss de Bourgh** — **Lady Catherine's** sickly daughter. Her mother intends for **Darcy** to marry her.

**Colonel Fitzwilliam** — **Darcy's** cousin and **Georgiana's** guardian. He's a model gentleman, though as a second son he lacks any inheritance and so must seek out money through marriage.

**Mrs. Philips** — **Mrs. Bennet's** shallow silly sister. The gossip queen of Meryton.

**Colonel Forster** — The leader of **Wickham's** regiment.

**Mrs. Forster** — **Colonel Forster's** wife. She irresponsibly aids **Lydia** in her elopement with **Wickham**.

## Themes

In LitCharts, each theme gets its own corresponding color, which you can use to track where the themes occur in the work. There are two ways to track themes:

- Refer to the color-coded bars next to each plot point throughout the *Summary and Analysis* sections.
- Use the *ThemeTracker* section to get a quick overview of where the themes appear throughout the entire work.

### Pride

Pride is a constant presence in the characters' attitudes and treatment of each other, coloring their judgments and leading them to make rash mistakes. Pride blinds **Elizabeth** and **Darcy** to their true feelings about each other. Darcy's pride about his social rank makes him look down on anyone not in his immediate circle. Elizabeth, on the other hand, takes so much pride in her ability to judge others that she refuses to revise her opinion even in the face of clearly contradictory evidence. This is why she despises the good-hearted Darcy for so long, but initially admires the lying **Wickham**. Yet while *Pride and Prejudice* implies that no one is ever completely free of pride, it makes it clear that with the proper moral upbringing one may overcome it to lead a life of decency and kindness. In the end, the two lovers are able to overcome their pride by helping each other see their respective blind spots. Darcy sheds his snobbery, while Elizabeth learns not to place too much weight on her own judgments.

### Prejudice

Prejudice in *Pride and Prejudice* refers to the tendency of the characters to judge one another based on preconceptions, rather than on who they really are and what they actually do. As the book's title implies, prejudice goes hand in hand with pride, often leading its heroine and hero into making wrong assumptions about motives and behavior. Austen's gentle way of mocking **Elizabeth's** and **Darcy's** biases gives the impression that such mistakes could, and indeed do, happen to anyone; that faulting someone else for prejudice is easy while recognizing

ing it in yourself is hard. Prejudice in the novel is presented as a stage in a person's moral development, something that can be overcome through reason and compassion. Austen only condemns those people who refuse to set aside their prejudices, like the class-obsessed **Lady Catherine** and the scheming social climber **Caroline**. Though *Pride and Prejudice* is a social comedy, it offers a powerful illustration of the damaging effects to people and to society that prejudice can inflict.

### Family

The family is the predominant unit of social life in *Pride and Prejudice* and forms the emotional center of the novel. Not only does it provide (or fail to provide, as in the case of **Lydia**) the Bennet daughters with their education and manners, but the social ranking of the family determines how successful they may reasonably expect to be in later life. Austen skillfully reveals how individual character is molded within the family by presenting **Jane** and **Elizabeth** as mature, intelligent adults, and **Lydia** as a hapless fool. The friction between Elizabeth and her mother on the one hand and the sympathy she shares with **Mr. Bennet** on the other illustrate the emotional spectrum that colors the family's overall character. The influence of Elizabeth's aunt and uncle shows how the family works in an extended sense, with the **Gardiners** acting as substitute parents, providing much needed emotional support at key moments of stress.

### Marriage

*Pride and Prejudice* is a love story, but its author is also concerned with pointing out the inequality that governs the relationships between men and women and how it affects women's choices and options regarding marriage. Austen portrays a world in which choices for individuals are very limited, based almost exclusively on a family's social rank and connections. To be born a woman into such a world means having even less choice about whom to marry or how to determine the shape of one's life. The way that society controls and weakens women helps to explain in part **Mrs. Bennet's** hysteria about marry-

ing off her daughters, and why such marriages must always involve practical, financial considerations. As members of the upper class, the Bennet sisters are not expected to work or make a career for themselves. Yet as women they are not allowed to inherit anything. As a result, marriage is basically their only option for attaining wealth and social standing. Yet Austen is also critical of women who marry solely for security, like **Charlotte**. The ideal for her is represented by **Elizabeth**, who refuses to trade her independence for financial comfort and in the end marries for love.

### Class

Class is the target of much of the novel's criticism of society in general. Austen makes it clear that people like **Lady Catherine**, who are overly invested in their social position, are guilty of mistreating other people. Other characters, like the suck-up **Mr. Collins** and the scheming **Caroline**, are depicted as thoroughly empty, their opinions and motivations completely defined by the dictates of the class system. To contrast them, Austen offers more positive examples in **Bingley** and the **Gardiners**. Bingley is someone from the upper class who wears his position lightly and gallantly. The Gardiners represent the honest, generous, and industrious middle class and are examples of how to be wealthy without being pretentious.

Austen does seem to respect the class system in a few ways, especially when it operates not as a dividing power in society, but as a force for virtue and decency. **Darcy** is the primary example of Austen's ideal high-class gentleman. Though originally he seems to be an arrogant and selfish snob, as the novel progresses it becomes clear that he is capable of change. Eventually, thanks to **Elizabeth's** influence and criticism, he combines his natural generosity with the integrity that he considers a crucial attribute of all upper-class people. He befriends the Gardiners and plays a key role in helping the ungrateful **Lydia** out of her crisis. The marriage of Darcy and Elizabeth shows that class restrictions, while rigid, do not determine one's character, and that love can overcome all obstacles, including class.

## Symbols

Symbols are shown in **red** text whenever they appear in the *Plot Summary* and *Summary and Analysis* sections of this LitChart.


### Houses

Throughout *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen pays particular attention to the manner and style of many of the characters' homes or estates. A small-scale home like the Bennets' is presented as a suitable, if modest, dwelling place in which to raise five

daughters. Though it's somewhat plain, it's still respectable. In contrast, larger manors like **Bingley's** at Netherfield Park, **Lady Catherine's** estate of Rosings, or **Darcy's** palatial home of Pemberley are showcases for their owner's enormous wealth and are conspicuous symbols of social prestige. Elizabeth's reaction on first seeing Pemberley and her imagining how it would be to live there illustrates that even her calm, cool sense of detachment is awed by the beauty and size of the

estate. In a way, houses and estates function as the outward signs of their owner's inward character. They carry an almost spiritual significance. Rosings may be grand, but it does not possess the tasteful elegance of Pemberley. Elizabeth's elevation from Longbourn to Pemberley marks not only a rise in her social position, but an advance in her moral growth as well.

## Summary and Analysis

The color-coded bars in *Summary and Analysis* make it easy to track the themes through the work. Each color corresponds to one of the themes explained in the *Themes* section. For instance, a bar of  indicates that all five themes apply to that part of the summary.

### Chapter 1

The narrator begins with the statement: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." Then the narrator begins the story. One day in their modest house in Longbourn, **Mrs. Bennet** shares some news with her husband, **Mr. Bennet**. A wealthy young gentleman, **Charles Bingley**, has just rented the nearby estate of Netherfield. Mrs. Bennet twitters with excitement because she wants him to meet her daughters and hopefully marry one.

**Mrs. Bennet** asks her husband to get them an introduction. **Mr. Bennet** purposely frustrates his wife by sarcastically replying that he'll write to give his consent for **Bingley** to marry any of his daughters, especially **Elizabeth**, whom he considers especially bright.

*One of the most famous lines in literature, the opening establishes the pursuit of marriage as central to the social world of the English gentry. In addition, the claim that a wealthy man must be looking for a wife shows how desperately important it was for women to marry wealthy men. In Austen's time, they had no other means of support.*



*In terms of taking an interest in their daughters' futures, Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet are polar opposites: she gets involved while he remains distant and makes jokes.*



### Chapter 2

Without telling his family, **Mr. Bennet** visits **Bingley**. Back at home, Mr. Bennet teases his family by pretending to be uninterested in Bingley's arrival, only to then reveal his visit by asking **Elizabeth** when the next ball is scheduled and promising to introduce her to Bingley beforehand.

**Mrs. Bennet** is delighted and praises her husband and his little joke. She promises all the girls that they'll get a chance to dance with **Bingley**.

*It was inappropriate for women to seek a direct introduction to men, so Mr. Bennet must initially act as the mediator. Mr. Bennet's visit shows that even he recognizes the importance of making a match.*



*An early sign of Mrs. Bennet's fickle character. She can snap from disapproval to approval.*



### Chapter 3

**Mr. Bingley** pays a return visit to **Mr. Bennet** and is subsequently invited to dinner at Longbourn. Elaborate plans are made, but Bingley breaks them because of urgent business in London. He soon returns, however, along with his sister and her husband **Mr. and Mrs. Hurst**, his youngest sister **Caroline**, and his friend **Darcy** for the upcoming ball.

The ball takes place at Meryton, where the locals gossip about the newcomers. **Darcy** is handsome but proud and aloof. **Bingley** makes friends with everyone, dancing every dance, including several with **Jane**, which makes the Bennets very happy.

**Elizabeth** overhears **Bingley** tell **Darcy** that **Jane** is the most beautiful girl he's ever seen. Bingley demands that Darcy find someone to dance with, and suggests Elizabeth. Darcy says she isn't pretty enough for him. Elizabeth overhears, and is annoyed.

Returning home, **Mrs. Bennet** regales her husband with an abundance of details. She is excited for **Jane** and convinced of **Bingley's** interest in her, and detests **Darcy** for his attitude about **Elizabeth**.

*Austen focuses on just a few families of different status—the extremely wealthy upper class (Bingley and Darcy) and the less wealthy country gentry (the Bennets)—in order to reveal the class dynamics of her society on a small scale.*



*Balls were among the few socially acceptable venues for mingling between the sexes. Here the locals make character judgments based on appearances and first impressions.*



*Initially prideful, Darcy doesn't think these country people are good enough for him. Elizabeth has pride, too: though looks aren't everything to her, Darcy's insult still stings.*



*Mrs. Bennet's attitude toward Darcy and Bingley is already fixed, showing how strong prejudices can be once formed.*



### Chapter 4

Upstairs, **Jane** and **Elizabeth** talk more openly about their admiration for **Bingley's** looks, humor, and manners. Jane is reluctant to say anything bad about Bingley's sisters, but Elizabeth is skeptical of them. She thinks they are educated and polished, but conceited.

*Elizabeth is quick to judge and is unimpressed by the higher class. On the other hand, Jane refuses to judge anyone badly, which makes her seem angelic but also naïve.*



The narrator explains **Bingley's** background: he has a respectable family; he inherited £100,000 and may be looking to buy an estate; and he's renting Netherfield in the meantime. His sisters, **Mrs. Hurst** and **Caroline**, are very happy to follow him around.

**Bingley** and **Darcy's** friendship is explained as a meeting of opposites: Bingley's easy manner and Darcy's more stringent personality. Bingley deeply respects Darcy's judgment. But their demeanors are different. Anywhere they go, Bingley is sociable and well-liked, while Darcy is always so aloof that he offends people. After the ball, Bingley was delighted with the locals (especially **Jane**) but Darcy considered them plain and uninteresting.

*£100,000 is a lot of money, making Bingley very high class. At the same time, Bingley's lack of a home reflects his immaturity and lack of confidence in his decisions.*



*Novels about marriages are frequently concerned with bringing two parties with different characteristics into harmony. Friends like Bingley and Darcy are also opposites: each has some admirable and some weak traits that the other helps to expose and resolve.*



### Chapter 5

The next morning, the Bennet women walk over to discuss the ball with their neighbors: **Sir William Lucas**, **Lady Lucas**, and **Charlotte**, who is their eldest daughter and is **Elizabeth's** close friend.

Everyone agrees that **Bingley** liked **Jane**. The conversation quickly shifts to **Darcy**. Apparently he offended everyone who tried to speak with him. **Charlotte** consoles **Elizabeth** about Darcy's insult and wishes he would have agreed to a dance, but she adds that Darcy's pride may be forgiven because of his high standing and fortune. Elizabeth responds that she could forgive his pride if he hadn't insulted her own.

**Mary** pompously lectures the group about human nature. She clarifies that pride is self-regard while vanity concerns what others think of you.

*The Lucas family can sympathize with the Bennets because their daughters will also need husbands.*



*Here Charlotte suggests that pride isn't always bad. Indeed, pride can help protect a family reputation, or can provide the motivation to help people. Charlotte also implies that sometimes men's faults have to be overlooked when you're on the hunt for a husband.*



*Mary represents a very strict by-the-book type of morality that, Austen makes clear, needs to be tempered with experience.*



### Chapter 6

**Bingley's** sisters soon start exchanging visits with **Jane** and **Elizabeth**. Elizabeth suspects they are only nice to Jane because of Bingley, whose admiration for Jane seems to grow with every meeting.

Suspecting that **Jane** is falling in love, **Elizabeth** admires her sister's composure. She privately mentions it to **Charlotte Lucas**, who warns that women who don't show their affection risk losing the objects of it. Elizabeth considers this attitude too businesslike; besides, Jane can't know her true feelings yet. Charlotte replies that happiness in marriage happens only by chance.

Meanwhile, as he spends more time with her, **Darcy** begins to notice **Elizabeth's** beauty and verve. At a party, **Sir William Lucas** tries to set up Darcy and Elizabeth to dance, but she refuses. Later, Darcy tells **Caroline** that Elizabeth has captured his admiration, though to Caroline's relief he seems to show no interest in marrying Elizabeth and gaining Mrs. Bennet as a mother-in-law.

*Social interaction among gentry had to follow precise guidelines, making it difficult to discern how people really felt. Elizabeth must read between the lines.*



*Elizabeth believes that an individual should act with dignity and follow his or her feelings. In Charlotte's view, one's dignity and emotions must come second to the pragmatic concerns of finding financial security through marriage.*



*Darcy was prejudiced against Elizabeth because of her lower social standing, but time and exposure starts to change his first impressions. This shift shows Darcy's capacity to change. Even so, he still deplors Elizabeth's family's behavior and can't imagine joining their family through marriage.*



### Chapter 7

Soon after, **Kitty** and **Lydia Bennet** are thrilled to learn that a military regiment is being stationed in Meryton. They make frequent visits to **Mrs. Phillips** to learn all they can about the officers. **Mr. Bennet** dismisses the girls as incredibly silly.

*Compared to gentlemen like Bingley and Darcy, military officers offered a slightly less but still respectable option for marrying.*



A letter arrives to **Jane** from **Caroline Bingley** inviting her to visit. **Mrs. Bennet** schemes to send Jane on horseback, even though it will rain, so that she will have to spend the night at Netherfield.

*Mrs. Bennet is so desperate to get Jane married to a wealthy man that she's willing to risk her daughter's health by denying her shelter from the storm.*



The next morning, **Jane** sends **Elizabeth** a letter explaining that she caught a bad cold in the storm. Elizabeth walks the three miles to Netherfield to care for Jane, arriving dirty and tired. Caroline later mocks Elizabeth's appearance, but **Darcy** is moved by the glow of exercise on Elizabeth's face. **Jane's** condition soon worsens and **Elizabeth** is invited to stay at Netherfield too.

*While Elizabeth displays great loyalty to her sister, her appearance strikes Bingley's sisters as undignified. Darcy might have thought the same thing before, but now his view of Elizabeth is influenced by his growing feelings for her.*



## Chapter 8

During the conversation at dinner, **Elizabeth** accepts, but sees through, the empty concern that **Mrs. Hurst** and **Caroline** show for Jane. Still, she is grateful to **Bingley** for his sincere interest in **Jane**.

*Elizabeth continues to value character over class. She seems to have good intuition about people's true character.*



When **Elizabeth** returns upstairs, **Mrs. Hurst** and **Caroline** criticize her looks, manners, and judgment. Mrs. Hurst says she does really like **Jane**, but that her family situation—having few connections and no money—will block her hopes of making a good match. **Darcy** agrees.

*The high class women show their prejudice. Though Mrs. Hurst speaks as if in sympathy with Jane, she's deviously trying to ruin the chances of either Bennet sister by mentioning their "family situation."*



**Elizabeth** returns downstairs in the evening, choosing to look through some books instead of joining in cards. **Caroline**, who has been absorbed with **Darcy**, asks him about his estate, Pemberley, and about his sister, who she deems a very accomplished woman. **Darcy** says he knows few women who are really accomplished. **Elizabeth** asks his definition of the term and, stunned by the long list of qualifications, expresses witty surprise that Darcy could know anyone who with all of those characteristics.

*By choosing books over the social fluff of cards, Elizabeth shows her inner substance. Plus she has the common sense to recognize the foolishness of society's unreasonable ideals about women. And she has the courage to say so in company. These characteristics distinguish her more than useless accomplishments would.*



When **Elizabeth** leaves again, **Caroline** accuses her of using mean tactics to raise her own status.

*Ironic, because that's actually what Caroline is doing. Caroline wants Darcy, and puts down others to elevate herself in his eyes.*



## Chapter 9

**Elizabeth** sends home a note requesting that her mother come and visit **Jane**. **Mrs. Bennet** arrives with Lydia and, not wishing Jane to leave **Bingley's** company, declares that Jane seems worse than ever.

*Mrs. Bennet continues her ridiculous and manipulative campaign to "win" Bingley for Jane.*



In conversation, **Mrs. Bennet**, seeking to raise **Jane's** status, tries to impress **Bingley** about her family and their situation in the country. **Darcy** suggests that one finds more variety of character in town than in the country, but Mrs. Bennet loudly objects. Everyone is surprised. Elizabeth is mortified and tries her best to fill the awkward silence.

*By talking up the Bennets' status, Mrs. Bennet actually degrades it by seeming crass, foolishly proud, and clearly not of the best class or character. If you're high class, you don't need to tell others about it—they just know.*



**Lydia** jumps in to remind **Bingley** of his promise to give a ball at Netherfield. Bingley says he hasn't forgotten but will wait until **Jane** recovers.

*Lydia's insistence is impolite. Bingley, with his better breeding, turns it into a compliment to Jane.*



## Chapter 10

The next day, **Elizabeth** joins the evening party in the drawing room. **Caroline** looks on as **Darcy** tries to write a letter. Trying to flatter him, she offers empty compliments about his writing, but only manages to interrupt him.

*Whenever a character in P&P tries to scheme their way to social advantage, they invariably end up with the opposite result.*



**Elizabeth** and **Darcy** get into an argument about **Bingley's** character. Darcy says that people should always follow their convictions. Elizabeth counters that sometimes regard for others must modify one's conduct. But **Bingley**, hating conflict, stops them.

*Darcy reiterates his pride in his own beliefs. Elizabeth pridefully believes that she considers other people's views, but events will show that she really just follows her own prejudices.*



As **Bingley's** sisters sing at the piano, **Elizabeth** notices that she seems to fascinate **Darcy**. He asks her to dance and she playfully refuses. Still, Darcy is bewitched: he thinks that if it wasn't for her lowly connections, he might fall in love.

*Elizabeth attracts Darcy by standing up to him. Yet class and pride are so important for Darcy that attraction alone won't suffice.*



**Caroline** is increasingly jealous. The next day, she takes **Darcy** on a walk to tease him about marrying **Elizabeth** and about the awful family he would join.

*Caroline tries to exploit Darcy's pride in the integrity of his family to protect her chances with him.*



## Chapter 11

That evening, **Jane** is well enough to join the group. **Bingley** dotes on her and talks to no one else. **Caroline**, watching **Darcy** read, pretends to be absorbed in reading a book. But she's soon bored and suggests to **Elizabeth** that they walk around the room together. This gets Darcy's attention.

*Conversation, books, walks: these are the few tools of seduction in Austen's world. Caroline has to work to get Darcy's attention. But by doing what comes natural to her, Elizabeth gets it anyway.*



**Caroline** invites **Darcy** to join them, but he says he doesn't want to interfere: they must either be sharing secrets or showing off—in which case he's happy to watch.

*Sexual attraction in the novel are expressed only in little comments like these. But it's definitely there.*



**Elizabeth** advises Caroline that the best response is to laugh at what is ridiculous, which leads to a discussion of the aspects of Darcy's character that might be ridiculed. **Darcy** claims that his main fault is that "my good opinion once lost is lost forever." When Elizabeth retorts that it is difficult to laugh at a "propensity to hate every body," Darcy says that if his defect is holding grudges, Elizabeth's is misunderstanding people.

*Darcy incorrectly identifies his own flaw, which is the immense pride he takes in himself and his social standing. But he correctly diagnoses Elizabeth's: she believes so fully in her own ability to see to the heart of things that she becomes subject to her prejudices and blinds herself to the truth.*



## Chapter 12

**Elizabeth** and **Jane** write to **Mrs. Bennet** to send their carriage to take them home. Mrs. Bennet, still scheming to have them stay, replies that it isn't available. So Elizabeth and Jane have to borrow **Bingley's** carriage instead.

*Mrs. Bennet's schemes to get Jane married to Bingley force her daughters to be beggars, making the Bennet family as a whole look bad.*



**Darcy** is relieved: he is starting to worry that his attraction to **Elizabeth** might show, so he remains distant for the short remainder of her stay.

*Darcy has not overcome his prejudice against the Bennet's low connections.*



Though **Mrs. Bennet** is disappointed that Jane and Elizabeth didn't stay, **Mr. Bennet** is glad to have them back. He had missed their conversation amid **Kitty** and **Lydia's** infatuation with anything related to the regiment.

*Mr. Bennet wants to ignore his younger daughters' interest in the regiment, to remain detached from anything that strikes him as ridiculous. This will come back to haunt him.*



## Chapter 13

The next morning, **Mr. Bennet** reveals to his family that they will have a surprise guest: **Mr. Collins**, the relative who will inherit Mr. Bennet's estate. The news upsets **Mrs. Bennet** because Mr. Collins can legally kick Mrs. Bennet and her daughters out of the house when Mr. Bennet dies. But the tone of reconciliation in Mr. Collins' letter consoles her.

*Collins is Mr. Bennet's heir because women weren't allowed to inherit. This explains Mrs. Bennet's obsession about getting her daughters married. It was the only way to ensure their financial security, and her own if her husband died before she did.*



The letter explains that **Mr. Collins** is now a parish rector and enjoys the patronage of **Lady Catherine De Bourgh**—whose wealth and generosity Mr. Collins tirelessly compliments. He now seeks to make peace in the family by some unspecified plan.

*Mr. Collins gets ahead in the world not through his own virtues, but by sucking up to the rich and by his almost arbitrary future inheritance of the Bennet's property.*



When **Mr. Collins** arrives, he is heavy, pompous, and dull. His conversation is weighted with overwrought compliments and vague hints about making amends to the Bennet daughters.

*Austen makes Mr. Collins a ridiculous comic figure, in the process mocking all suck-ups.*



## Chapter 14

After dinner, **Mr. Bennet** gets **Mr. Collins** talking about his favorite subjects: his benefactress, **Lady Catherine De Bourgh**; her lavish estate, Rosings; and the invalid daughter who will inherit it all. Mr. Bennet sits back to enjoy the absurdity of Mr. Collins's hollow praise and self-importance.

*Although a clergyman, Mr. Collins is obsessed with the worldly glories of wealth and rank. Mr. Collins himself seems to have no center. He lives only to please Lady De Bourgh.*



**Mr. Bennet** invites **Mr. Collins** to read to the ladies. Offered a novel, Mr. Collins flinches in disgust and chooses instead a book of sermons. **Lydia**, refusing to listen to this, interrupts with bits of news about **Colonel Forster**. **Mr. Collins** seems insulted, but accepts the family's apologies and joins **Mr. Bennet** in a game of backgammon.

*Austen uses Mr. Collins's distaste for novels to poke fun at the then-common prejudice against the immorality of novels. But Mr. Collins' readiness to play a board game instead of reading the scripture shows his shallow commitment to the gospel.*



## Chapter 15

**Mr. Collins** has come to Longbourn with a plan to marry one of the Bennet sisters. He believes that doing so will atone for the injustice of his taking over their inheritance. He privately tells **Mrs. Bennet** his intentions, and she redirects his target from **Jane**, whom she hopes will marry **Bingley**, to **Elizabeth**. Mr. Collins obligingly agrees to shift his focus.

*Mr. Collins' plan falls far short of providing the Bennet girls with any kind of self-determination. In addition, though he poses as a man of convictions, his love interest can change in the blink of an eye.*



**Mr. Collins** joins the Bennet sisters in a walk to Meryton. There, everyone's attention is captured by a striking and unfamiliar young man: **Mr. Wickham**, who just accepted a post in the regiment. Wickham's conversation is friendly and lively.

*Wickham is a master of first impressions. As such, he tests Elizabeth's belief that she can see through lies and falseness to uncover the truth in things.*



Just then, **Bingley** and **Darcy** come up the street and stop to chat. When Darcy and **Wickham** see each other, each man recoils in shock. **Elizabeth** wonders how they know each other. **Mr. Collins** and the Bennet sisters then go to visit **Mrs. Philips** who invites them to dinner the next night. The girls convince her to invite **Wickham** too.

*Austen creates tension here: the details Elizabeth most wants to know are the one she can't ask about, out of politeness. At this point, Elizabeth seems to like Wickham in part because he causes Darcy discomfort.*



## Chapter 16

At dinner the next evening, **Elizabeth** is fascinated by **Wickham's** pleasant demeanor. The two of them easily fall into conversation and Wickham soon asks about **Darcy**. Elizabeth says he is widely disliked for his pride. Wickham withholds an opinion out of respect for Darcy's father, who Wickham reveals was his godfather and dear friend.

*On the surface, Wickham is pleasant and well-mannered. Elizabeth will remember later that while Wickham says he withholds an opinion on Darcy, he soon goes ahead and gives one. But Elizabeth is under his spell and does not notice now.*



**Wickham** explains that he was the son of one of Darcy's father's employees, and that he and **Darcy** grew up together. Darcy's father died and left Wickham money to pursue a career in the ministry, but Darcy, who was jealous of his father's love for Wickham, found a loophole and refused to give Wickham the money. **Elizabeth** is shocked and appalled.

*With close relations to her own siblings and a keen sense of justice, Elizabeth is predisposed to believe Wickham's story. The story also fits perfectly with her own existing prejudices about Darcy.*



**Elizabeth** asks about Darcy's sister, **Georgiana**. **Wickham** says that she is an accomplished young woman living in London but that she is, like her brother, distastefully proud.

*This is a lie, but Wickham is on a roll. He's trying to separate himself from his former victim and degrade her, too.*



**Wickham**, hearing **Mr. Collins** go on about **Lady Catherine**, informs **Elizabeth** that Lady Catherine is actually **Darcy's** aunt. He adds that Lady Catherine apparently hopes to marry Darcy to her daughter.

*Such an arranged marriage would have been no surprise to Elizabeth. Lady Catherine seems to share Darcy's pride in their extreme high class status.*



## Chapter 17

The next day, **Elizabeth** tells **Jane** what she learned. Jane cannot believe that Darcy could be so blameworthy and that there must be other parts to the story. But Elizabeth believes **Wickham**, saying "there was truth in his looks." She wonders how **Bingley** could actually be **Darcy's** friend.

*Elizabeth dismisses Jane for only seeing the good in people. Yet at the same time, Elizabeth bases her own preference for Wickham entirely on his looks and on her own pride in her ability to read people.*



**Bingley** and his sisters visit Longbourn with an invitation to a ball at Netherfield. **Lydia** and **Kitty** are overjoyed. **Jane** is excited to see Bingley, while **Elizabeth** looks forward to dancing with Wickham, though Mr. Collins requests that she give him the first two dances, which she must do out of politeness.

*Dancing is the closest thing to intimate physical contact allowed between unmarried people. It's a thrill.*



## Chapter 18

Arriving at the ball at Netherfield, **Elizabeth** is disappointed to realize that **Wickham** is not at the party. Elizabeth blames **Darcy** for Wickham's absence. She endures two dreadful dances with **Mr. Collins**.

*Because Elizabeth is set in her own prejudice, she interprets everything against Darcy and blames him for everything.*



**Darcy** then asks **Elizabeth** for a dance. Caught by surprise, she accepts. Their conversation is short and abrupt. Darcy is uncomfortable when she brings up **Wickham**.

*Darcy's dance invite shows his growing feelings for Elizabeth. But now Elizabeth's prejudice against him is in full effect.*



Afterwards, **Caroline** approaches **Elizabeth** about **Wickham**. He wasn't wronged by **Darcy**, she says. On the contrary, Wickham treated Darcy terribly and now Darcy has nothing to do with him. **Jane**, who has been speaking to **Bingley**, tells **Elizabeth** the same story: the fault, whatever it is, was **Wickham's**. But Elizabeth refuses to believe it.

*Elizabeth now has evidence, from various sources, that it was Wickham, not Darcy, in the wrong. But Elizabeth pridefully chooses to go with her prejudices against Darcy and for Wickham.*



The rest of the evening is a disaster. **Mr. Collins** rudely introduces himself to **Darcy** and later pontificates to the whole assembly. Darcy overhears **Mrs. Bennet** talking about **Jane** and **Bingley** like they're already married. **Mary** insists on playing the piano, and does so awfully. And Mrs. Bennet conspires to be the last to leave. Realizing that her family's reputation is falling lower than ever, **Elizabeth** is mortified.

*Elizabeth and Jane have a social grace that their family members sorely lack. If Darcy's major concern about Elizabeth was her family, the Bennets do everything to prove that his prejudice against them is accurate.*



## Chapter 19

The next morning, **Mr. Collins** asks for a private meeting with **Elizabeth**. The rest of the family scrambles out of the room. When they are alone, **Mr. Collins** explains in detail his two main reasons for seeking marriage: all clergymen should marry, and **Lady Catherine** told him to do it. He details his income and stresses his future wife's association with Lady Catherine.

*Mr. Collins wants to marry because of outside pressures. As he explains his reason for marrying, it becomes clear that his wife will be merely an ornament in the "respectable" life he's creating for himself.*



**Elizabeth** interrupts to decline, but **Mr. Collins** responds that women will typically reject an offer two or three times. He goes on to say that Elizabeth should accept him because she's not likely ever to get a better offer. Elizabeth insists that she's serious, that she and Mr. Collins could not make each other happy. He doesn't understand. In exasperation, she leaves the room.

*Mr. Collins makes a valid point: based on her family and situation, Elizabeth isn't likely to get a better offer. By declining his offer, she is giving up her family's best hope to hold on to their home. Even so, Elizabeth believes too strongly in love to agree to marry a man whom she doesn't even like.*



## Chapter 20

**Mrs. Bennet** rushes in to congratulate **Mr. Collins** but is shocked to hear that **Elizabeth** refused him. She runs to **Mr. Bennet** and demands that he convince his daughter to accept.

*Although women could refuse a proposal, they were not expected to. Elizabeth shows her dedication to her happiness.*



**Mr. Bennet** calmly calls in **Elizabeth** and, relishing the moment, tells her: "Your mother will never see you again if you do *not* marry **Mr. Collins**, and I will never see you again if you do."

*Mr. Bennet deeply respects his daughter's intelligence. They share an ability to perceive the absurdity in the world.*



Outraged, **Mrs. Bennet** tries to find support from anyone else: **Jane**, who keeps out of it, and then **Charlotte Lucas**, who has just arrived to visit. But it's too late. **Mr. Collins** soon explains to Mrs. Bennet that, though he's not insulted, he has changed his mind about wanting to marry Elizabeth.

*In contrast, Mrs. Bennet doesn't really care about Elizabeth's happiness. She treats her daughters like chess pieces in a match-making game. Only marriage matters to her.*



## Chapter 21

**Mr. Collins** prolongs his stay, acting coldly to **Elizabeth** and transferring his attention to **Charlotte Lucas**.

*Mr. Collins wastes no time in changing the object of his shallow affection yet again.*



One morning, the Bennet sisters walk to Meryton and meet **Wickham** who confirms to **Elizabeth** that he was avoiding **Darcy** at the ball. He walks them home and Elizabeth introduces him to her parents.

*Since she's interested in Wickham, Elizabeth believes everything he says. An introduction to her parents is significant: it sets the stage for courtship.*



A letter from **Caroline Bingley** arrives for **Jane**, who reads it in distress. Upstairs, Jane shares the contents of the letter with **Elizabeth**. Everyone at Netherfield has left for London, not to return for at least six months, if ever. Caroline ends the letter by saying that she will be delighted to see **Georgiana Darcy** again, who she hopes will become **Bingley's** wife. **Jane** is despondent and refuses to believe that, as **Elizabeth** explains, **Caroline** is trying to break her and Bingley up while also gaining better footing with **Darcy** for herself. Elizabeth does manage to convince Jane that she shouldn't doubt **Bingley's** affections.

*Elizabeth can read between the lines to discern what's really going on. Caroline wants to prevent Jane from going any further with her brother because she does not want her own family associated with the Bennets for two reasons: she disdains them; and she believes that by marrying her brother to Georgiana she will improve her own chances with Georgiana's brother, Darcy.*



## Chapter 22

**Charlotte Lucas** has been attentive and encouraging to **Mr. Collins**. One morning he sneaks out to her house and delivers a long-winded marriage proposal. Aware of his shortcomings but wanting stability in her future, Charlotte accepts. Her parents, seeing her fortunes rise so quickly, are thrilled.

*Charlotte contrasts with Elizabeth in putting her future financial security before love. She knows that marriage is her only option to guard against a hard life.*



**Charlotte** privately tells **Elizabeth** that she's engaged, and that all she wants is a comfortable home. Elizabeth is stunned but wishes Charlotte happiness. Afterwards, Elizabeth is disappointed that her friend is humiliating herself, having "sacrificed every better feeling to worldly advantage."

*Elizabeth thinks she could never marry just for financial advantage. But the reasons to marry are complicated. Even Elizabeth will later have a strong attraction to Darcy's magnificent estate.*



## Chapter 23

**Sir William Lucas** arrives to share his happy news. **Mrs. Bennet** and **Lydia** rudely exclaim that they cannot believe it, but **Elizabeth** intervenes to congratulate him on the match.

*Lydia and Mrs. Bennet are ignorant of social graces. Elizabeth constantly has to set the example for her family.*



**Mrs. Bennet** fumes for days. She is angry with **Elizabeth**, the Lucases, and **Charlotte**, who will someday displace them at Longbourn. Her mood worsens when **Mr. Collins** returns to make wedding arrangements.

*Mrs. Bennet is so angry because Elizabeth's rejection of Collins eliminates her only guarantee that she would be able to stay in her house if Mr. Bennet should die.*



Meanwhile, **Jane** and **Elizabeth** start to worry because **Bingley** has not written. Jane writes to **Caroline**. Elizabeth believes in Bingley truly cares for Jane, but fears that his sisters, **Darcy**, and London will prove stronger than his love for Jane.

*Elizabeth senses that Bingley is not completely confident and might be swayed by the prejudices of others.*



## Chapter 24

**Caroline** writes back: **Bingley** will certainly be gone for awhile and everyone is delighted with **Darcy's** sister, **Georgiana**. **Jane** tries to put on a brave face, telling **Elizabeth** that Bingley has not wronged her and refusing to believe that Caroline has ulterior motives.

*Jane again insists on seeing only the bright side, denying even her own hurt feelings. It's the opposite of prejudice, but it makes her just as blind as the prejudiced Elizabeth.*



**Elizabeth** is disgusted that **Bingley** could be so weak as to let his sisters and friend determine his affections. She cites him and **Charlotte** as examples of human inconsistency. But **Jane** tells Elizabeth she judges them too harshly.

*Elizabeth complains that Bingley can't direct his own true feelings. This is ironic since Elizabeth's affections and prejudices are being guided by Wickham's suave lies.*



**Wickham** occasionally visits and his pleasant company helps to dispel the gloom. **Mr. Bennet** encourages **Elizabeth** in her pursuit of Wickham.

*Mr. Bennet continually fails to understand what will be good for his daughters.*



## Chapter 25

**Mr. Collins** leaves again and **Mrs. Bennet's** brother and wife, **Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner**, arrive for a visit. Mr. Gardiner is a tradesman in London. Mrs. Gardiner is intelligent and extremely well-liked by **Jane** and **Elizabeth**.

*The Gardiners represent the established middle class. They are a "lowly" family connection that might hurt the Bennet sisters' prospects of marrying well.*



After listening sympathetically to **Mrs. Bennet's** outpouring of complaints, **Mrs. Gardiner** speaks with **Elizabeth** about **Jane's** situation. Elizabeth confirms that Jane was very much in love and swears that **Bingley's** departure was no accident.

*Mrs. Gardiner takes the place of Mrs. Bennet in soothing and restoring the family. She represents a stronger, sympathetic, and more sensible mother figure for the girls.*



**Mrs. Gardiner** proposes that **Jane** come stay with them in London to help her recovery. While Mrs. Gardiner promises that Jane and **Bingley** are not likely to meet, **Elizabeth** secretly hopes that Jane's presence nearby will rekindle Bingley's affections.

*Because of their class, the Gardiners live in a very different part of town and travel in different social circles than Bingley and his family and friends.*



## Chapter 26

Having noticed the warmth between **Elizabeth** and **Wickham**, **Mrs. Gardiner** cautions Elizabeth about making an unpromising match, warning that Wickham has no fortune. Elizabeth can only promise that she won't rush into anything.

*Mrs. Gardiner recognizes the hard reality of needing to marry into a secure situation. Elizabeth is not convinced, and still is focused mainly on finding love.*



**Mr. Collins** returns for his marriage to **Charlotte**. Before they leave, Charlotte makes **Elizabeth** agree to come visit. Once she is gone, Charlotte writes to Elizabeth frequently about her excellent situation with Mr. Collins, but Elizabeth has her doubts.

*Elizabeth thinks that anyone who gives up the hope of love in exchange for stability (particularly with a fool like Collins) can't be anything but miserable.*



**Jane** travels with the Gardiners to London and writes a letter to Elizabeth. She says that she wrote to **Caroline** but received no reply, and then visited Caroline but was coldly received. Now four weeks have passed and Jane has heard nothing from **Bingley**, and when Caroline finally paid her a return visit she was again exceedingly cold.

*Caroline knows that Jane and Bingley, if they saw each other, would rekindle the spark. So while being careful to conform to the niceties of high class social interaction, she at the same time does everything she can to discourage and denigrate Jane.*



Around the same time, **Wickham's** interest shifts from **Elizabeth** to a young woman who recently inherited £10,000. Elizabeth finds she isn't affected much by losing Wickham's attention. She realizes she was never in love with him and wishes him well.

*A double standard: Elizabeth judged Charlotte harshly for marrying for money, but excuses Wickham for seeking a fortune in marriage.*



## Chapter 27

**Sir William Lucas**, his youngest daughter, and **Elizabeth** go to visit **Charlotte**, stopping along the way in London to check up on **Jane**. Speaking privately with Elizabeth, **Mrs. Gardiner** confirms that Jane feels dejected, but she thinks that Jane has finally given up the illusion of **Caroline's** friendship.

*All the major characters in the novel grow and change: after her experiences in London, Jane starts to admit that people can have cruel and deceitful intentions.*



**Mrs. Gardiner** also consoles **Elizabeth** about losing **Wickham**. She considers his shift in attention to a suddenly-rich woman to be quite self-serving. But Elizabeth defends Wickham, reminding her aunt that she had once advised Elizabeth to think about money when marrying. **Mrs. Gardiner** later invites **Elizabeth** to join her and Mr. Gardiner on a summer tour of Derbyshire and the Lake Country. Elizabeth is delighted to accept.

*Apparently it's okay—even necessary—to marry for money, but not okay to make it obvious. Elizabeth points out the contradiction in what is considered socially acceptable behavior.*



## Chapter 28

**Elizabeth**, **Sir William Lucas**, and his daughter arrive at the parsonage home of **Mr. Collins** and **Charlotte**. Mr. Collins soon gives them a tour, taking pains to show off every architectural feature, garden view, and piece of furniture in the house.

*A parsonage home is the home given to a parish clergyman. But for a clergyman, Mr. Collins is obsessed with rank and riches. He seems to have things only in order to show them off.*



If **Charlotte** is embarrassed by her husband, she hides it well. She takes **Elizabeth** on a tour of her neatly arranged home and Elizabeth realizes that Charlotte has made herself a comfortable life here.

*Elizabeth realizes that while Charlotte's choice may mean that she doesn't have love, she has found contentment.*



The next day, the arrival of a carriage at Rosings containing the young and sickly **Miss De Bourgh** causes a great commotion. Everyone is invited to dinner at Rosings. **Elizabeth** smirks that the sickly Miss De Bourgh will make the perfect wife for **Darcy**.

*Miss De Bourgh is the exact opposite of Elizabeth. She has all the class and wealth, but none of Elizabeth's beauty or intelligence.*



## Chapter 29

**Mr. Collins** gloats as they prepare for the dinner. He condescendingly tells **Elizabeth** not to worry that her best dress is simple, because **Lady Catherine** "likes to have the distinction of rank preserved."

*Class rank is not about personal substance: it is all about the outward and arbitrary.*



At Rosings, they meet the haughty **Lady Catherine**, whose conversation consists entirely of commands and strong opinions. **Mr. Collins** and Sir William Lucas suck up to her, agreeing with everything she says. **Miss De Bourgh** is uncommunicative and dull.

*Lady Catherine has more pride than anyone in the book. She is also friendless and can only interact by commanding people.*



After lecturing **Charlotte** about how to run her household, **Lady Catherine** asks **Elizabeth** a series of invasive questions about her family, property, and upbringing. She disapproves of the Bennets' choices—educating their own daughters, failing to provide musical training—and is astonished that Elizabeth answers so pointedly, offering her own opinions to counter Lady Catherine's.

*Lady Catherine, like Darcy, believes in a set of "accomplishments" for women. In contrast, Elizabeth is self-made and proud of having determined her own character.*



## Chapter 30

Completely satisfied with his daughter's situation, **Sir William Lucas** soon departs. **Elizabeth** and **Charlotte** pass the time in her drawing room, conveniently separated from **Mr. Collins**'s room. Their dinners at Rosings continue. **Lady Catherine** also visits them at the parsonage, though seemingly only to dispense advice about everything she notices.

*Charlotte's contentment in marriage is based on being as separate from Mr. Collins as possible. Lady Catherine believes so strongly in her high-class superiority that she thinks nothing of telling "lower class" people what to do.*



**Lady Catherine** has arranged a visit from her nephews: **Darcy** (her favorite) and **Colonel Fitzwilliam**, his cousin. Upon their arrival, **Mr. Collins** brings them home for a visit. **Darcy** meets **Elizabeth** with his usual reserve. Conversation is sparse. Darcy seems uncomfortable when Elizabeth asks if he ever sees **Jane** in London, but the moment passes.

*Lady Catherine wants nothing but the best for Darcy, which of course means her own high-class daughter. Elizabeth's prejudice toward Darcy for breaking up Jane and Bingley remains, and Darcy's reaction shows her attack is on target.*



## Chapter 31

**Elizabeth** and **Colonel Fitzwilliam** get along very well. During one visit to Rosings, he asks Elizabeth to play the piano. **Darcy** leaves his aunt to watch, and Elizabeth playfully accuses him of spreading her poor musical reputation. Colonel Fitzwilliam asks Elizabeth about Darcy's reputation. She relates how Darcy hardly danced at the Meryton ball, even though some ladies wanted partners.

*Colonel Fitzwilliam seems at first like another potential love interest for Elizabeth. While Elizabeth lacks the musical accomplishments to recommend her to Lady Catherine, her conversation is sharp and witty, highlighting her independence of spirit.*



**Darcy** tries to excuse his behavior at the ball by saying that he lacks the conversational warmth to introduce himself to strangers. **Elizabeth** counters with an analogy: if she practiced piano, she might become a tolerable musician. Darcy smiles and says that neither of them performs for strangers.

*Here Darcy is trying to apologize to Elizabeth. He suggests that they share underlying similarities. He has gotten past his pride and can now perceive their fundamental compatibility.*



**Lady Catherine** demands to be included in the conversation, and praises her daughter's musical potential—if only she were healthy. **Elizabeth** notices that **Darcy** is totally uninterested in **Miss De Bourgh**.

*Lady Catherine sees quality where it isn't there in her daughter. Pride and class prejudice make her blind.*



## Chapter 32

The next morning, **Elizabeth** is surprised by a visit from **Darcy**. Conversation is awkward, and they struggle to avoid awkward silences. **Elizabeth** asks **Darcy** about suddenly departing Netherfield. Darcy suggests that **Bingley** is not likely to return there because of his connections in London. After Darcy leaves, **Charlotte** tells **Elizabeth** that the only explanation for **Darcy's** odd behavior in calling on her is that he must be in love with her. Elizabeth finds this idea hard to believe.

*Elizabeth's barbed questions show that she blames Darcy for steering Bingley away from Jane. That Darcy doesn't quite understand her question implies that she may not be entirely right. In Charlotte's observation, Elizabeth is once again presented with evidence that she doesn't believe because of her prejudice against Darcy.*



Darcy and **Colonel Fitzwilliam** continue their visits, but Darcy is unreadable and Charlotte comes to think that maybe it's Fitzwilliam who loves Elizabeth.

*Yet Darcy is an intensely private person, which makes him hard to read.*



## Chapter 33

When she goes on walks in the countryside near Rosings, **Elizabeth** keeps running into **Darcy** by chance. During one meeting, he questions her about **Charlotte's** happiness and about her own feelings for the neighborhood, Elizabeth suspects that he may actually be trying to set her up with **Colonel Fitzwilliam**.

*Darcy tries to figure out if Elizabeth will accept him and move to Pemberley, which is nearby Rosings. But her prejudice against him leads Elizabeth to an entirely different interpretation.*



On another day, **Elizabeth** meets **Colonel Fitzwilliam** on a walk. As they talk, he tells her that as a younger son, he has concerns that **Darcy** does not have: for instance, about having to marry for money. Elizabeth blushes.

*Unlike Wickham, Colonel Fitzwilliam is a good man. But just like Wickham, Fitzwilliam must take into account financial concerns when thinking about marriage.*



During the same conversation, **Colonel Fitzwilliam** relates a story about how **Darcy** intervened before one of his friends made an "imprudent marriage." **Elizabeth** realizes that Fitzwilliam is unknowingly referencing a story about Bingley and Jane, and is appalled to realize that Darcy ruined **Jane's** chances with **Bingley**. Darcy, she thinks, must have selfishly wanted Bingley to marry **Georgiana** instead.

*Predisposed to think of Darcy as prideful, Elizabeth's opinion of him only gets worse when she hears the story. She can't imagine that Darcy may have had legitimate concerns about Jane or the Bennets and sincerely wanted to protect his friend.*



## Chapter 34

One day, while Charlotte and Mr. Collins go to visit Rosings, **Elizabeth** stays behind. The doorbell rings: expecting **Colonel Fitzwilliam**, Elizabeth is surprised to find **Mr. Darcy**.

*In Austen's time, it would be awkward and often inappropriate for an unmarried man and woman to be alone together.*



Her surprise becomes shock when he passionately confesses his love for her and asks her to marry him. **Darcy** then explains how his affection outgrew his concerns about Elizabeth and her family's inferiority. **Elizabeth** grows angry, and firmly refuses his offer of marriage.

*It's not very romantic to reassure someone that you're no longer bothered by their inferiority. Darcy may love Elizabeth, but he's still prideful, and Elizabeth responds harshly.*



**Darcy** is astonished and demands an explanation. **Elizabeth** blasts him for insulting her, for ruining **Jane's** happiness forever, and for robbing **Wickham** of his chances in life.

*Elizabeth unleashes the full force of her prejudice against Darcy, finally letting him see what she truly thinks of him.*



**Darcy** stands by his decision to break up **Bingley** and **Jane**. He is sarcastic about **Wickham's** misfortunes. And he tells **Elizabeth** that he was only being honest about his complicated feelings for her.

*Darcy, his pride insulted, responds with the same lack of composure. Although he isn't smooth, he is at least honest.*



**Elizabeth** assures **Darcy** that he's the last man she would ever marry. Darcy leaves angrily and Elizabeth breaks down crying, though she soon regains her confidence that she was correct to reject Darcy.

*Elizabeth's rejection of Darcy is the climax of her prejudice against him. Yet her crying indicates that she still may have deeper feelings for him.*



## Chapter 35

The next day, **Elizabeth** takes a walk. She finds **Darcy** waiting for her. He gives her a letter of explanation. In the letter, **Darcy** answers **Elizabeth's** charges of misconduct toward **Jane** and **Wickham**. He knew that **Bingley** was in love with Jane, but he detected no affection on her part and, given that, thought it unwise for Bingley to become attached to Elizabeth's family, with its improprieties and lack of wealth. In London, he joined with **Caroline** in convincing Bingley to give up the attachment. Darcy also confesses, with regret, to keeping Bingley from finding out that Jane was in London, too.

*In Chapter 6, Charlotte warned Elizabeth that Jane needed to show her affections for Bingley. It turns out she was right, and that Darcy interpreted Jane's reserve as a lack of love for Bingley. In conjunction with the Bennets' tastelessness at the ball, he believed that the marriage was not in Bingley's interest. However, he does not admit he crossed the line by lying to Bingley.*



Regarding **Wickham**, **Darcy** says that after Darcy's father died, Wickham resigned his opportunity with the church in exchange for money for law school. Rather than using the money to attend law school, though, he spent it on partying. When the money ran out, he asked Darcy for more money, and was furious when Darcy refused.

*Wickham turns out to be a classic example of a corrupt, directionless opportunist. In this case, Darcy's pride meant that he refused to meet Wickham's demands. In other words, he wouldn't let Wickham use him.*



Years passed. **Wickham** saw an opportunity with **Darcy's** sister **Georgiana**, who was both rich and, at age 15, naïve. Wickham charmed her into eloping with him, but Darcy discovered their plans and sent Wickham away. To protect his sister's reputation, Darcy has kept everything a secret. He refers **Elizabeth** to **Colonel Fitzwilliam** to confirm the story.

*Wickham tried to seduce and marry Georgiana merely for her money. Darcy keeps it secret because even Georgiana's willingness to run off with Wickham could ruin her reputation and wreck her own chance at a good marriage.*



## Chapter 36

**Elizabeth** is stunned. At first, she doesn't believe any of this information because she thinks that **Darcy's** tone in the letter seems unrepentant and haughty. But, upon rereading the letter, she starts to see things in a different light. Elizabeth realizes **Wickham** was inconsistent and that his history was never verified. She realizes that Wickham tricked her.

*At first, Elizabeth misreads the letter just as she has misread Darcy. But then she realizes that her prejudice caused her to misread Wickham without challenging his flimsy story or motives, as she always had done with Darcy.*



**Elizabeth** is utterly ashamed. She had considered herself to be a discerning judge of character, but now she sees that she was blind and prejudiced. Until this moment, she thinks, she never really knew herself.

*Elizabeth realizes her errors and faults, and begins to rebuild her character. She doesn't realize it yet, but Darcy is undergoing a similar process.*



**Elizabeth** also rereads the part of the letter about **Jane**, and realizes that she can't blame **Darcy** for intervening: Jane was reserved, as **Charlotte** had pointed out; and she must admit that the other Bennets were terribly crass.

*Everything looks different when prejudices are removed. But at least Elizabeth has the strength to face and accept her failures.*



On returning to the parsonage house, **Elizabeth** learns that **Darcy** and **Colonel Fitzwilliam** had both visited to say good-bye.

*Elizabeth thinks she'll never see Darcy again because she had so wrongly insulted him.*



## Chapter 37

**Darcy** and **Colonel Fitzwilliam** leave the next morning. **Lady Catherine**, now bored, requests to see **Mr. Collins**, **Charlotte**, and **Elizabeth** again. Lady Catherine supposes that Elizabeth is melancholy for having to leave Rosings herself, but Elizabeth declines the invitation to stay any longer. So Lady Catherine shows her how to pack.

*Lady Catherine thinks that because she is so high class she has the right to instruct other people about even the most insignificant things, such as how to pack. Her intrusions on such petty matters make her seem ridiculous.*



**Elizabeth** keeps thinking about **Darcy's** letter. She decides that she respects Darcy but hopes never to see him again.

*Elizabeth is too ashamed of herself to want to see Darcy again.*



## Chapter 38

The next day, **Mr. Collins** delivers to **Elizabeth** his earnest and solemn farewell. He wishes Elizabeth the same kind of perfect happiness in marriage that he has found with **Charlotte**. Though Elizabeth knows that Mr. Collins assessment of his marriage is totally wrong, she must admit that Charlotte does appear to be content.

*Mr. Collins's delusion is ludicrous: Charlotte's contentment is based on avoiding him. Elizabeth's recognition that Charlotte has found comfort, despite her earlier belief that Charlotte would be miserable, shows Elizabeth's growth.*



**Elizabeth** arrives in London to visit with the Gardiners before returning to Longbourn with **Jane**. Though desperate to share her news about Darcy, she is apprehensive that the news about Bingley will hurt Jane. She decides to wait until they get home.

*Elizabeth is not immune to feeling flattered that someone of Darcy's stature would propose to her.*



## Chapter 39

On their way to Longbourn, **Elizabeth** and **Jane** are met by **Kitty** and **Lydia**, who talk constantly about the soldiers. **Lydia** tells them the regiment will soon leave for Brighton, and that she hopes to convince their parents to take everyone there for the summer. Lydia adds, with delight, that the girl **Wickham** was pursuing has left town, leaving Wickham available.

*Lydia is completely blind to the reality of Wickham's situation. Like Elizabeth, she doesn't care about marrying for money. But she also doesn't seem to care about marrying for love. She just seems to be "boy crazy."*



When they arrive home, **Mr. Bennet** is glad to see **Elizabeth** and **Jane**. **Mrs. Bennet** wants to hear about the latest fashions, and **Kitty** and **Lydia** want to walk to Meryton to see the officers. To avoid seeing Wickham, Elizabeth chooses not to accompany them.

*A portrait of the Bennet family's different interests. Elizabeth's desire to avoid Wickham highlights her own embarrassment for being wrong about him.*



## Chapter 40

Later, **Elizabeth** tells **Jane** how **Darcy** proposed to her and also shares the part of Darcy's letter about **Wickham**. Elizabeth says that she can hardly believe how Darcy got all the goodness while Wickham got all the appearance of it.

*Elizabeth now realizes the immense challenge involved in trying to know people beyond their appearances.*



**Elizabeth** asks for **Jane's** advice: should they publicize **Wickham's** faults? They agree not to, for the sake of **Darcy** and his sister. Besides, no one would believe that Darcy is actually the good guy. Anyway, they agree, he will soon leave along the regiment with no harm done.

*In a social world that so values reputations, Jane and Elizabeth make the same choice that Darcy did to keep quiet about Wickham. It's ironic that their silence about past scandal will only create more scandal in the future.*



## Chapter 41

As the regiment prepares to depart Meryton, **Lydia** receives an invitation from the wife of **Colonel Foster** to come with the regiment to Brighton. **Elizabeth** secretly asks **Mr. Bennet** to stop **Lydia** from going. Elizabeth urges him to realize how Lydia's flirty foolishness will hurt the family. But **Mr. Bennet** wants a quiet house and thinks Lydia must make her own mistakes. And besides, **Colonel Forster** will look after her.

*Elizabeth is motivated by having lost Bingley and Darcy to the Bennet's foolishness. She urges Mr. Bennet to act like the father he's never been. But Mr. Bennet sits back and passes the job to someone else.*



In the days following, **Elizabeth** encounters **Wickham** at a social event. He blushes when she asks if he knows **Colonel Fitzwilliam**. When Wickham asks how **Darcy** is doing, Elizabeth responds that she understands Darcy better now. Wickham gets the point, and they part.

*Elizabeth cannot be directly insulting to Wickham, but she lets him know that she knows about his sketchy past. She also admits to realizing and respecting why Darcy is the kind of man he is.*



## Chapter 42

**Elizabeth** reflects on her disappointment regarding her parents' marriage. After **Mr. Bennet** realized he married a foolish woman, he sought comfort in his library and in making fun of **Mrs. Bennet**. Though Elizabeth hates to admit it, Mr. Bennet has failed as a respectful spouse and responsible father.

*Elizabeth shares certain traits with her father, especially humor and intelligence, but she knows these won't suffice. She'll add a sense of responsibility and compassion to them.*



In July, **Elizabeth** leaves on her summer holiday with **Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner**. They tour Derbyshire, which takes them near Pemberley. Mrs. Gardiner suggests they visit the estate. **Elizabeth** consents to go only when she learns that Darcy will not be there.

*Elizabeth's hesitation about visiting Pemberley reflects her new concern for Darcy. She does not want her presence to embarrass him.*



## Chapter 43

At Pemberley, **Elizabeth** admires the estate's beauty. The house is lavish but tasteful, and Elizabeth imagines what it would have been like to be mistress of the place as **Darcy's** wife.

*Rosings is showy, but Pemberley is tasteful. Pemberley and the high life it represents make Elizabeth fantasize about marriage.*



**Elizabeth** and **Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner** are escorted around the rooms by a housekeeper who praises **Mr. Darcy** as a kind and generous man: good to his servants, his tenants, and especially his sister.

*Darcy is Austen's ideal upper class man, balancing power and compassion, community involvement and dedication to family.*



**Elizabeth** notices a portrait of **Darcy**. As she stares at it, the housekeeper asks if she thinks Darcy is handsome. Elizabeth says yes.

*Pemberley makes Elizabeth see Darcy differently.*



As they walk, **Darcy** suddenly appears—he came home a day earlier than scheduled. **Elizabeth** is stunned and embarrassed, but Darcy is extremely polite to them all. He impresses **Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner** with his courtesy, offering to take Mr. Gardiner fishing in his streams. Elizabeth silently wonders if he might still love her.

*Elizabeth feels like a stalker who just got caught. But Darcy steps in and smooths out the awkward situation—a social skill Elizabeth herself possesses. Pemberley brings out an entirely different side of Darcy.*



**Darcy** says he is expecting guests the next day: **Bingley** and his sisters, and **Georgiana**. He asks **Elizabeth** if he can introduce his sister to her. Elizabeth accepts. The **Gardiners**, having heard so many negative things about Darcy, leave with an entirely revised opinion of him.

*It is now clear that Darcy is still interested in Elizabeth; she's getting a second chance. Darcy's bad reputation had prejudiced the Gardiners, but here his real character shines.*



## Chapter 44

The next day, **Elizabeth** and the **Gardiners** are again surprised when **Darcy** shows up with **Georgiana** and **Bingley** for a visit. The Gardiners note Darcy's eagerness and realize he must be in love.

*By bringing his sister to meet Elizabeth and the Gardiners, Darcy shows he sees them as equals. He has overcome his pride.*



**Georgiana** turns out to be shy rather than proud. **Bingley**, meanwhile, is delighted to see Elizabeth, and asks questions that lead Elizabeth to suspect he might still love **Jane**. Darcy and Georgiana invite Elizabeth and the Gardiners to Pemberley for dinner the next evening.

*Elizabeth learns much more from her extended personal encounters than she ever did from reports, rumors, and her own snap judgments based on prejudice.*



**Elizabeth** is amazed at the change in **Darcy**. His pride has turned into tenderness. If he was embarrassed by Elizabeth's relations before, Darcy shows nothing but good will toward the **Gardiners**. Above all, Elizabeth feels incredibly grateful that Darcy has forgiven her misjudgments and harsh rejection, and now treats her with affectionate respect.

*Darcy's attitude toward the Gardiners—an example of Elizabeth's "lowly" connections—indicates how Darcy has grown. In his marriage proposal, he said he could overlook them. Now, he wants to engage them as friends.*



## Chapter 45

The next morning, **Mr. Gardiner** joins **Bingley** and **Darcy** to fish, and **Elizabeth** and **Mrs. Gardiner** visit the women at Pemberley. **Caroline Bingley** and **Mrs. Hurst** do not seem pleased to see **Elizabeth**.

*Darcy's growth is highlighted by the Bingley women's lack of growth—they still look down on Elizabeth.*



When **Darcy** arrives, **Caroline** tries to embarrass **Elizabeth** by bringing up her connection with **Wickham**. The plan backfires: the name of Wickham mortifies **Georgiana**, and only Elizabeth's cool handling of the question saves the situation. After Elizabeth leaves, Caroline mocks Elizabeth's looks, but Darcy says he ranks her among the most beautiful women he knows.

*Caroline knows that she can't compete with Elizabeth on substance, so she once again tries to drive a wedge between them by exploiting Darcy's pride. But this effort only reveals her selfish, nasty character. Like Mrs. Bennet's schemes, Caroline's backfire because they are motivated by selfishness.*



## Chapter 46

At her inn, **Elizabeth** receives two awful letters from **Jane**. The first contains the shocking news that **Lydia** had run off with **Wickham** to get married in Scotland. The second letter has much worse news: that Colonel Forster learned that Wickham had no plans to marry Lydia at all, and that the two of them were now in London. The colonel and **Mr. Bennet** have gone there to search; **Mrs. Bennet** is a nervous wreck. Jane asks Elizabeth to come home immediately; she also requests that **Mr. Gardiner** help Mr. Bennet in London.

*While Lydia's running off to marry without permission is a scandal, the major threat is to Lydia herself: society placed a huge importance on a woman's chastity before marriage. An unmarried couple living together for any length of time was considered immoral. Lydia's reputation would be ruined and would taint the rest of her family's reputation as well.*



**Elizabeth** meets **Darcy** as she is running out the door and tells him the story. Elizabeth blames herself for not revealing **Wickham's** character to everyone, which would have prevented this.

*Because of pride, Elizabeth and Darcy both tried to take the moral high ground with Wickham.*



Looking serious, Darcy wishes he could offer help, and leaves. **Elizabeth** worries that this new disgrace to her family will put a final end to her rekindled relationship with **Darcy**. Soon, Elizabeth and the **Gardiners** are on the road for Longbourn.

*Elizabeth mistakenly interprets Darcy's seriousness as an attempt to distance himself from her. She knows that if Lydia brought shame to the Bennets, Darcy would not marry into her family.*



## Chapter 47

In the carriage, **Mr. Gardiner** wonders if **Jane** might be right in hoping for the best: **Wickham** knows **Lydia** has no money and stands to lose his reputation with his regiment, so what else could he be after but marriage? **Elizabeth** assures them that Wickham is an awful person, capable of anything.

*Elizabeth knows from Darcy's story that Wickham has no morals and is therefore capable of anything. Only marrying him can save Lydia's reputation, and that of her entire family.*



At Longbourn, **Mrs. Bennet** is holed up in her room, frantic with nervousness, and blames Colonel Foster for not watching over Lydia. She tells **Mr. Gardiner** to make **Lydia** and **Wickham** marry when they are found—and to make Lydia consult her about finding the best deals on wedding dresses.

*Mrs. Bennet always tries to keep herself in the right, so she blames Colonel Foster rather than herself. And she's just as superficial and frivolous as ever: how can she worry about dresses at a time like this?*



**Elizabeth** and **Jane** dissect the situation. They are relieved that apparently **Lydia** did think she was getting married, which they can tell from a note she left for **Mrs. Forster** signed "Lydia Wickham."

*If Lydia had not intended to marry, and was just after a sexual fling, she would be seen an indecent "fallen woman."*



## Chapter 48

Longbourn buzzes with the news. It comes out that **Wickham** accrued serious debts in Meryton as well as gambling debts at Brighton.

*Everyone was duped by Wickham's genial manners and handsome appearance.*



**Mr. Bennet** and **Mr. Gardiner** search hotels in London to no avail. Mr. Gardiner suggests that **Elizabeth** ask for help from anyone related to **Wickham**.

*Mr. Gardiner implies that Elizabeth should ask Darcy for help, but she is too embarrassed.*



A letter arrives from **Mr. Collins**. He offers condolences, but spends most of the letter underlining how **Lydia's** heinous offense will ruin the other Bennet girls' chances at marriage. Mr. Collins adds that **Lady Catherine** agrees with him.

*Lydia's actions are an extreme breach of rank and polite behavior, both of which are extremely important to Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine.*



More time passes, but all attempts to find **Wickham** and **Lydia** fail, and **Mr. Bennet** returns home. He asks **Elizabeth** not to talk with him about **Lydia**, saying that he brought this on and only he should suffer.

*Mr. Bennet realizes his fault in the matter, but tries to remain isolated from his family. He doesn't realize that everyone will suffer, not just him.*



## Chapter 49

Two days later, a letter arrives from **Mr. Gardiner**: **Lydia** and **Wickham** have been found! They are not yet married, but will be, provided that Mr. Bennet pay Wickham a small amount every year.

*Wickham is basically ransoming Lydia. If marriage is always partly a financial deal, Wickham has taken it to an extreme.*



**Mr. Bennet** says he strongly suspects that **Mr. Gardiner** has already paid **Wickham** much more. Wickham would be a fool to take less for **Lydia**, he says. The Bennets all agree that **Lydia** and **Wickham** must marry, but **Jane** and **Elizabeth** wonder how they can ever repay Mr. Gardiner.

*Mr. Bennet has no choice. Since Lydia and Wickham are already living together, Lydia's reputation is already tarnished. Marriage to Wickham will salvage enough of it to save the other Bennet girls from the stain.*



**Jane** and **Elizabeth** share the news with **Mrs. Bennet**, who is overjoyed, instantly forgetting **Lydia's** disgrace. Asked about repaying **Mr. Gardiner**, Mrs. Bennet dismisses the debt, saying that as an uncle he should pay. Mrs. Bennet rushes out to make the news about her daughter's marriage public.

*The last part of the novel concerns gratitude, and Mrs. Bennet is despicably ungrateful. With her fake physical ailments, gossipy pride, and willingness to overlook Lydia's recklessness, which almost took down the entire family, Mrs. Bennet is at her shallowest.*



## Chapter 50

As **Mrs. Bennet** makes plans for **Lydia's** wedding, **Elizabeth** regrets having told **Darcy** about the scandal. She expects him to distance himself from her now that **Wickham** will be joining the Bennet family. Elizabeth realizes that she and **Darcy** would have been perfect together, each capable of improving the other.

*Lydia and Wickham reinforce each other's bad qualities. Elizabeth and Darcy, on the other hand, would have complemented each other. Elizabeth's realization of this shows that she has really changed.*



**Mr. Gardiner** sends a letter saying that **Wickham** has changed regiments to one in Northern England and that **Lydia** hopes they can visit Longbourn on their way. **Elizabeth** and **Jane** convince **Mr. Bennet**, who wants nothing to do with **Lydia** or **Wickham**, to let the new couple come visit.

*Refusing to allow Lydia and Wickham to visit would only advertise the scandal surrounding their marriage. Once again, Elizabeth and Jane must intervene to ensure that their parents act in a socially respectable way.*



## Chapter 51

**Lydia** and **Wickham** arrive at Longbourn. Lydia is giddy over her marriage, mocking her older sisters for failing to get married before she did. Wickham acts as if he did nothing wrong.

*Lydia is as shallow and senseless as Mrs. Bennet. Wickham is just as crass, in his own way.*



Yet during their ten-day visit, **Elizabeth** observes that **Wickham** doesn't entirely return **Lydia's** infatuation. She figures he ran away from creditors in Brighton and, preferring companionship, took Lydia along.

*This is a marriage founded not on love, but on opportunity and poor decisions. Since divorces were very uncommon, the relationship will only sour.*



While gloating about the details of her wedding, **Lydia** reveals to **Elizabeth** that **Darcy** attended the ceremony. **Lydia** quickly apologizes: it was supposed to be a secret. **Elizabeth** burns with curiosity and writes to **Mrs. Gardiner** for more details.

*Darcy is the absolute last person Elizabeth would expect to be at Wickham's wedding. To be polite, Elizabeth can't directly ask about it, furthering the mystery.*



## Chapter 52

**Mrs. Gardiner** sends a long reply detailing how **Darcy** went to London, tracked down **Wickham** and stopped him from abandoning **Lydia** and escaping to Europe, and then negotiated a deal with **Wickham** and presented it to **Mr. Gardiner**. **Darcy** would pay and **Mr. Gardiner** would take all the credit. **Mr. Gardiner** resisted, but **Darcy** was firm, arguing that it was his silence about **Wickham's** character that set all of these problems in motion. **Mrs. Gardiner** writes that she suspects that **Darcy** had another motivation, however.

*Wickham is ready to abandon Lydia. Darcy realizes that this would wreck the Bennets' reputation and totally prevent any future association he could have with them. As Mrs. Gardiner realizes, Darcy bribes Wickham in order to preserve Elizabeth's reputation, not Lydia's. He then refuses the credit out of pride and respect for Elizabeth.*



Before **Wickham** leaves, **Elizabeth** encounters him on a walk. She reiterates that she knows his story but, resigned to be his sister-in-law, requests that they not argue about the past.

*Elizabeth will be neither fooled by Wickham nor overly prejudiced against him. She shows compassion in accepting Wickham into the family.*



## Chapter 53

Soon after **Wickham** and **Lydia** leave, **Mrs. Bennet** hears rumors that **Bingley** is returning to Netherfield. **Mr. Bennet** refuses to visit him, however.

*Mr. Bennet's pride won't let him visit a man who hurt his daughter, even though avoiding Bingley is impolite.*



Not long after, however, **Bingley** and **Darcy** visit the Bennets. Mrs. Bennet gives a warm welcome to **Bingley** and almost none to **Darcy**. She then goes on to speak glowingly about **Lydia's** marriage to **Wickham**, much to **Elizabeth's** mortification.

*Mrs. Bennet fails to welcome the person to whom she should be most grateful, Darcy. She commits another social blunder by openly discussing Lydia's disgrace.*



**Darcy** is not so congenial as he was at Pemberley, and **Elizabeth** doubts he has returned for her. **Bingley**, however, warms up to **Jane** as the initial awkwardness subsides. **Mrs. Bennet** reminds **Bingley** about having left the neighborhood so suddenly, and reinvites **Bingley** and **Darcy** to dinner.

*Outside his Pemberley comfort zone, Darcy is a different person. Elizabeth worries that her mother continues to offend him. As expected, Bingley and Jane rediscover their affection when they're together.*



## Chapter 54

At the dinner party, **Bingley** decides to take the seat next to **Jane**—just as he used to. Watching them, **Elizabeth** is sure that **Bingley** will soon propose.

*Bingley has come full circle and finally trusts his own decisions and emotions.*



**Darcy**, however, sits at the far end of the table from **Elizabeth**, next to **Mrs. Bennet**, and barely speaks to **Elizabeth**. Afterwards, she feels silly for thinking she had another chance with **Darcy** after already rejecting him once.

*Unlike Jane with Bingley, Elizabeth has no chance to express herself to Darcy in person. Elizabeth's inner tumult makes her a richly developed character. She is constantly reevaluating things.*



## Chapter 55

**Bingley** visits again, this time alone. **Mrs. Bennet**, expecting a proposal, awkwardly clears everyone but **Jane** from the room. Nothing happens. The next morning, **Bingley** returns to shoot with **Mr. Bennet**. When **Bingley** comes inside, **Mrs. Bennet** again empties the room. **Elizabeth** returns from writing a letter and sees **Bingley** and **Jane** together by the fireside: he has just proposed marriage.

*The first non-proposal builds suspense. The second provides the payoff. In keeping with Jane's modesty, Austen does not describe the proposal scene.*



Overjoyed, **Jane** goes upstairs to tell her mother. **Bingley** and **Elizabeth** greet each other as brother and sister. **Elizabeth** knows that **Bingley** and **Jane's** mutual understanding will make them very happy.

*Bingley and Jane's marriage, unlike Lydia's, will have a solid foundation of respect and mutual admiration.*



**Bingley** tells **Jane** that he didn't know she was in London, but—to **Elizabeth's** relief—he leaves **Darcy** out of it. **Jane** realizes that **Caroline** and **Mrs. Hurst** had worked against her, but hopes they can repair some version of friendship.

*Bingley is honest and discrete—qualities that Elizabeth shares. Jane has matured to accept the malice in the world and uses her compassion to deal with it.*



## Chapter 56

About a week later, **Lady Catherine De Bourgh** makes a surprise visit to Longbourn. She says almost nothing to **Mrs. Bennet**, coolly inspecting the rooms and property, then asks **Elizabeth** to take a walk.

*Lady Catherine's first instinct is to measure the Bennets' class rank by their property.*



**Lady Catherine** gets to the point: she knows of **Jane's** engagement; she also knows that **Elizabeth** has tricked her nephew, **Darcy**, into proposing as well. Elizabeth denies having done any such thing. Lady Catherine demands that she promise never to accept a proposal from Darcy. Elizabeth unconditionally refuses.

*Lady Catherine's interrogation of Elizabeth is very rude. She feels her power exempts her from common decency, and she can't believe that Darcy would choose Elizabeth. So, she thinks he must have been tricked.*



**Lady Catherine** is shocked at Elizabeth's nerve. She says that **Darcy** was always intended for her daughter, **Miss De Bourgh**. And that Darcy's connection to the Bennets would bring shame, dishonor, and alienation from his family. **Elizabeth**, deeply insulted, denies that Lady Catherine's arguments have relevance for either herself or Darcy: they will make their own choices. Lady Catherine drives away furious.

*Elizabeth boldly asserts her freedom of mind and freedom from the class concerns of Lady Catherine. In doing so, Elizabeth suggests that individuals can define themselves regardless of class or social prejudices.*



## Chapter 57

The next morning, **Mr. Bennet** calls in **Elizabeth** to congratulate her on her upcoming engagement. Elizabeth is stunned. Mr. Bennet shares with her a letter from **Mr. Collins** in which he cautions Elizabeth not to go forward with an engagement to Darcy against **Lady Catherine's** wishes.

*The exact opposite of Elizabeth, Mr. Collins has no independent will to act outside of Lady Collins' stuffy social approval.*



**Mr. Bennet** thinks the rumor about **Elizabeth** and **Darcy** is hilarious because he is certain that Elizabeth hates Darcy and that Darcy is indifferent to her. Elizabeth fakes a laugh to hide her deep embarrassment about her father's misjudgment. But a small part of her worries that her father might be right and that she has overestimated Darcy's interest.

*Mr. Bennet exemplifies how first impressions and prejudices can be so enduring. Elizabeth and Darcy have each changed profoundly, and the Bennets owe Darcy everything. But all of these changes are under the surface, so Mr. Bennet can't see them. In fact, even Elizabeth isn't entirely sure what's going on in Darcy's heart.*



## Chapter 58

Only days later, **Darcy** comes to Longbourn with **Bingley**. They all go for a walk and **Elizabeth** and Darcy soon find themselves alone. Elizabeth cannot contain her gratitude any longer for all that Darcy suffered and sacrificed for **Lydia**. Darcy tells Elizabeth that he did everything for her.

*Elizabeth has to be a little impolite in ignoring Darcy's request that Mr. Gardiner take the credit. But by breaking the rules, Elizabeth allows for their climactic emotional exchange.*



**Darcy** says his feelings for her have not changed since his rejected proposal, and asks about her feelings. **Elizabeth** confesses that her feelings have significantly changed. Darcy is overwhelmed with happiness.

*While there is no explicit marriage proposal from Darcy yet, everything hinges on Elizabeth's growth as a character and ability to overcome her prejudice...*



**Darcy** explains that he started to hope after **Lady Catherine** informed him about **Elizabeth's** stubborn refusal to follow her commands.

*Selfish plans based on class prejudice all backfire in this novel.*



**Darcy** regrets his first proposal to **Elizabeth**. He's been prideful since childhood and presumed that she would accept. He thanks Elizabeth for teaching him a lesson about humility. Elizabeth apologizes for treating him so roughly.

*Just as Elizabeth was humbled after she learned the truth about Darcy, so Darcy learned humility in realizing that his pride injured her and prevented his own happiness.*



**Darcy** explains that he told **Bingley** the truth about **Jane** and advised him to return to Netherfield. Bingley was angry about being deceived while Jane was in London, but he has forgiven Darcy.

*Darcy does penance for his blatantly wrong decision to lie and must ask forgiveness: another example that Darcy has relinquished his pride.*



## Chapter 59

That night, **Elizabeth** tells **Jane** everything. Jane thinks Elizabeth is joking. After all, doesn't Elizabeth hate Darcy? Elizabeth explains how her affections gradually changed, and Jane is absolutely delighted.

*Even the closest person to Elizabeth doesn't know her feelings, which shows how closely people guarded their emotions.*



**Mrs. Bennet** is annoyed when **Darcy** returns the next day with **Bingley**. She apologizes to **Elizabeth** for the inconvenience of having to go on long walks with him.

*Mrs. Bennet here provides some comic irony with her misplaced prejudice against Darcy. She should be encouraging him.*



Later **Darcy** visits **Mr. Bennet** in private to ask his consent to marry Elizabeth. Mr. Bennet calls in **Elizabeth**. He's stunned at the proposal, and wonders why Elizabeth would marry a man she hates. Elizabeth explains everything, and Mr. Bennet happily gives his blessing.

*Like the rest of his family, Mr. Bennet needs Elizabeth to interpret Darcy. This serves as a metaphor for how Elizabeth helps Darcy identify and correct his own flaws, bringing out his best attributes.*



**Elizabeth** tells her mother the news that night. After a moment of shock, **Mrs. Bennet** joyfully stutters that Elizabeth will be genteel and rich—even richer than **Jane!** Elizabeth fears that her mother will continue to embarrass **Darcy**, but Mrs. Bennet, because she's intimidated, treats him with uncharacteristic respect.

*Mrs. Bennet never changes. She measures her daughters' successes by the size of their husbands' bank accounts. She doesn't recognize that Jane and Elizabeth have chosen their husbands for better reasons.*



## Chapter 60

**Elizabeth** asks **Darcy** how he ever fell in love with her. He points to her liveliness of mind, but, like Elizabeth, he can't put his finger on when it happened.

*Elizabeth and Darcy change gradually, through careful reflection and self-improvement. This gives their marriage a solidity that Lydia's lacks.*



**Elizabeth** writes to tell **Mrs. Gardiner** of her engagement, as does **Darcy** to **Lady Catherine**. **Mr. Bennet** writes to **Mr. Collins** who, along with **Charlotte**, soon return to town to congratulate the couple and steer clear of a furious **Lady Catherine**. **Georgiana Darcy** writes to Elizabeth of her happiness at having such a sister. **Caroline Bingley** writes empty congratulations to Jane. Jane sees through her shallow sentiments, but replies with a nicer letter than Caroline deserves.

*The web of letters sent indicates how Elizabeth and Darcy's marriage affects everyone. The fact that the two most shallow and class-conscious characters—Lady Catherine and Caroline—disapprove of the marriage makes it seem like a true union of equals based on respect, love, and commitment.*



**Elizabeth** tries to insulate **Darcy** from the foolishness of **Mr. Collins**, **Sir William Lucas**, and **Mrs. Philips**, but Darcy tolerates them pretty well. Elizabeth looks forward to hosting her close family at Pemberley.

*Darcy's pride is tempered by his new humility. Elizabeth looks forward to sharing the new wealth she has gained.*



## Chapter 61

A year later, **Jane** and **Bingley** move into an estate near **Elizabeth** and **Darcy** at Pemberley. **Mrs. Bennet**, extremely proud, visits them often. **Mr. Bennet** misses Elizabeth and visits frequently, too. **Kitty** improves in character from spending time with her two older sisters. **Mary** lives with her parents.

*Elizabeth fulfills her daydreams about Pemberley and, as Darcy had hoped, eased her attachment to Longbourn. Jane and Elizabeth were always the moral center of the family, and now they are rewarded.*



**Lydia** writes to **Elizabeth** with congratulations and asks if **Darcy** could pitch in some money for them. Elizabeth is annoyed, but sends them the money from her own savings. Lydia sometimes visits Pemberley, though always without Wickham, whose affection for her has waned.

*Lydia is as opportunistic and shameless as ever. She married a useless man and spends beyond her means. Elizabeth respects Darcy's pride, so she only uses her own savings.*



Even though **Caroline Bingley** is disappointed by **Darcy's** marriage, she tries to make nice with **Elizabeth**. **Georgiana** and Elizabeth get along wonderfully, just as Darcy had hoped. **Lady Catherine** abuses Darcy in a letter, but Elizabeth eventually encourages him to make amends. Lady Catherine eventually accepts the marriage and occasionally visits. Elizabeth and Darcy remain on close terms with **Mr.** and **Mrs. Gardiner**, grateful for the Gardiner's role in bringing them together.

*Marriage plots are about compromise. Elizabeth and Darcy influence each other. Their marriage also softens Lady Catherine's prejudices and Caroline's disappointment. The friendship between the upper-class Darcy and Elizabeth and the middle class Gardiners shows that virtue and affection can overcome class prejudice.*



## Important Quotes

### Chapter 1 Quotes

It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.

### Chapter 3 Quotes

His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again.

### Chapter 4 Quotes

Oh! you are a great deal too apt, you know, to like people in general. You never see a fault in anybody. All the world are good and agreeable in your eyes. I never heard you speak ill of a human being in your life. — *Elizabeth*

### Chapter 7 Quotes

Darcy had at first scarcely allowed her to be pretty ... But no sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she hardly had a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes ... he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing; and in spite of his asserting that her manners were not those of the fashionable world, he was caught by their easy playfulness.

### Chapter 15 Quotes

Having now a good house and a very sufficient income, [Mr. Collins] intended to marry ... he meant to choose one of the daughters, if he found them as handsome and amiable as they were represented by common report. This was his plan of amends—of atonement—for inheriting their father's estate; and he thought it an excellent one, full of eligibility and suitableness, and excessively generous and disinterested on his own part.

### Chapter 16 Quotes

when Mr. Wickham walked into the room, Elizabeth felt that she had neither been seeing him before, nor thinking of him since, with the smallest degree of unreasonable admiration. The officers of the —shire were in general a very creditable, gentlemanlike set, and the best of them were of the present party; but Mr. Wickham was as far beyond them all in person, countenance, air, and walk.

### Chapter 19 Quotes

Your portion is unhappily so small that it will in all likelihood undo the effects of your loveliness and amiable qualifications. As I must therefore conclude that you are not serious in your rejection of me, I shall choose to attribute it to your wish of increasing my love by suspense, according to the usual practice of elegant females. — *Mr. Collins*

### Chapter 22 Quotes

Mr. Collins, to be sure, was neither sensible nor agreeable; his society was irksome, and his attachment to her must be imaginary. But still he would be her husband. Without thinking highly either of men or matrimony, marriage had always been her object; it was the only provision for well-educated young women of small fortune, and however uncertain of giving happiness, must be their pleasantest preservative from want.

### Chapter 29 Quotes

Her air was not conciliating, nor was her manner of receiving them such as to make her visitors forget their inferior rank. She was not rendered formidable by silence; but whatever she said was spoken in so authoritative a tone, as marked her self-importance

### Chapter 33 Quotes

If his own vanity, however, did not mislead him, *he* was the cause, his pride and caprice were the cause, of all that Jane had suffered, and still continued to suffer. He had ruined for a while every hope of happiness for the most affectionate, generous heart in the world; and no one could say how lasting an evil he might have inflicted.

### Chapter 34 Quotes

"In vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you." ... He spoke well; but there were feelings besides those of the heart to be detailed; and he was not more eloquent on the subject of tenderness than of pride. His sense of her inferiority—of its being a degradation—of the family obstacles which had always opposed to inclination, were dwelt on with a warmth which seemed due to the consequence he was wounding

### Chapter 36 Quotes

I, who have prided myself on my discernment!—I, who have valued myself on my abilities! who have often disdained the generous candour of my sister, and gratified my vanity in useless or blameable mistrust.—How humiliating is this discovery!—Yet, how just a humiliation! ... Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession and ignorance, and driven reason away, where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. — *Elizabeth*

### Chapter 40 Quotes

There certainly was some great mismanagement in the education of those two young men. One has got all the goodness, and the other all the appearance of it. — *Elizabeth*

### Chapter 41 Quotes

Our importance, our respectability in the world must be affected by the wild volatility, the assurance and disdain of all restraint which mark Lydia's character. Excuse me—for I must speak plainly. If you, my dear father, will not take the trouble of checking her exuberant spirits, and of teaching her that her present pursuits are not to be the business of her life, she will soon be beyond the reach of amendment. — *Elizabeth*

### Chapter 43 Quotes

Elizabeth was delighted. She had never seen a place for which nature had done more, or where natural beauty had been so little counteracted by an awkward taste. They were all of them warm in their admiration; and at that moment she felt that to be mistress of Pemberley might be something!

### Chapter 44 Quotes

When she saw him thus seeking the acquaintance and court- ing the good opinion of people with whom any intercourse a few months ago would have been a disgrace—when she saw him thus civil, not only to herself, but to the very relations whom he had openly disdained ... the difference, the change was so great, and struck so forcibly on her mind, that she could hardly restrain her astonishment from being visible.

### Chapter 47 Quotes

Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it this useful lesson: that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable; that one false step involves her in endless ruin; that her reputation is no less brittle than it is beautiful; and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behaviour towards the undeserving of the other sex. — *Mary Bennet*

### Chapter 48 Quotes

The death of your daughter would have been a blessing in comparison of this ... They agree with me in apprehending that this false step in one daughter will be injurious to the fortunes of all the others; for who, as Lady Catherine herself condescendingly says, will connect themselves with such a family? — *Mr. Collins*

### Chapter 49 Quotes

it is all very right; who should do it but her own uncle? If he had not had a family of his own, I and my children must have had all his money, you know; and it is the first time we have ever had anything from him, except a few presents. Well! I am so happy! In a short time I shall have a daughter married. Mrs. Wickham! How well it sounds! — *Mrs. Bennet*

### Chapter 52 Quotes

They owed the restoration of Lydia, her character, every thing, to him. Oh! how heartily did she grieve over every ungracious sensation she had ever encouraged, every saucy speech she had ever directed towards him. For herself she was humbled; but she was proud of him. Proud that in a cause of compassion and honour, he had been able to get the better of himself.

### Chapter 55 Quotes

in spite of his being a lover, Elizabeth really believed all his expectations of felicity to be rationally founded, because they had for basis the excellent understanding, and super-excellent disposition of Jane, and a general similarity of feeling and taste between her and himself.

### Chapter 56 Quotes

I have said no such thing. I am only resolved to act in that manner, which will, in my own opinion, constitute my happiness, without reference to you, or to any person so wholly unconnected with me. — *Elizabeth*

### Chapter 57 Quotes

*That* is what makes it amusing. Had they fixed on any other man it would have been nothing; but *his* perfect indifference, and *your* pointed dislike, make it so delightfully absurd! — *Mr. Bennet*

### Chapter 58 Quotes

What do I not owe you! You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you, I was properly humbled. I came to you without a doubt of my reception. You showed me how insufficient were all my pretensions to please a woman worthy of being pleased. — *Darcy*

### Chapter 59 Quotes

I know that you could be neither happy nor respectable, unless you truly esteemed your husband; unless you looked up to him as a superior. Your lively talents would place you in the greatest danger in an unequal marriage ... My child, let me not have the grief of seeing *you* unable to respect your partner in life. — *Mr. Bennet*

### Chapter 60 Quotes

The fact is, that you were sick of civility, of deference, of officious attention. You were disgusted with the women who were always speaking, and looking, and thinking for *your* approbation alone. I roused, and interested you, because I was so unlike *them*. — *Elizabeth*

## ThemeTracker™













The LitCharts ThemeTracker is a mini-version of the entire LitChart. The ThemeTracker provides a quick timeline-style rundown of all the important plot points and allows you to track the themes throughout the work at a glance.

Themes	Chapter	
	Back-story	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– <b>Darcy</b> and <b>Wickham</b> grow up together at Pemberley. Wickham wastes his inheritance. <b>Wickham</b> seduces and tries to elope with <b>Darcy's</b> sister, <b>Georgiana</b>, but Darcy catches them.</li> <li>– <b>Mr.</b> and <b>Mrs. Bennet</b> have five daughters; but with no sons, their estate will be inherited by a distant male relative, <b>Mr. Collins</b>. Their daughters must hope to make good marriages.</li> </ul>
	1	– A rich young man, <b>Charles Bingley</b> , rents the estate of Netherfield near the Bennets.
	2	– <b>Mr. Bennet</b> visits <b>Bingley</b> to arrange an introduction between their families.
	3	– At a ball in Meryton, <b>Bingley</b> is attracted to <b>Jane Bennet</b> . <b>Darcy</b> snubs <b>Elizabeth</b> and insults her beauty.
	4	– <b>Elizabeth</b> and <b>Jane</b> discuss <b>Bingley's</b> family and his friendship with <b>Darcy</b> .
	5	– <b>Charlotte Lucas</b> worries that <b>Jane</b> hasn't shown her affection for <b>Bingley</b> .
	6	– <b>Darcy</b> gradually starts to notice <b>Elizabeth's</b> beauty and intellectual verve.
	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– A military regiment is stationed in Meryton. <b>Catherine</b> and <b>Lydia Bennet</b> are thrilled.</li> <li>– <b>Jane</b> is invited to Netherfield. <b>Mrs. Bennet</b> insists she ride through the rain and Jane catches a serious cold. <b>Elizabeth</b> walks three miles to be with her.</li> </ul>
	8	– <b>Caroline Bingley</b> and <b>Mrs. Hurst</b> try to wreck <b>Darcy</b> and <b>Bingley's</b> opinions of the Bennet sisters.
	9	– <b>Mrs. Bennet</b> visits <b>Jane</b> and behaves crassly to <b>Bingley</b> and <b>Darcy</b> .
	10	– At Netherfield, <b>Darcy</b> becomes bewitched with <b>Elizabeth's</b> beauty.
	11	– <b>Jane's</b> health improves. <b>Caroline Bingley</b> schemes to get <b>Darcy's</b> attention.
	12	– <b>Elizabeth</b> and <b>Jane</b> return home from Netherfield.
	13	– The Bennet's pompous relative, <b>Mr. Collins</b> , arrives to stay for a visit.
	14	– <b>Mr. Collins</b> praises his patroness, <b>Lady Catherine De Bourgh</b> , and her estate, Rosings.
	15	– In town, the Bennet sisters meet <b>Mr. Wickham</b> . <b>Bingley</b> and <b>Darcy</b> approach to say hello, but when Darcy and Wickham see each other, they both recoil in shock.
	16	– <b>Wickham</b> tells <b>Elizabeth</b> how <b>Darcy</b> had ruined his chances in life.
	17	– <b>Bingley</b> and his sisters invite the Bennets to a ball at Netherfield.
	18	– At the ball, <b>Elizabeth</b> and <b>Darcy</b> have an awkward dance. Darcy watches as Elizabeth's family commits a series of embarrassing social errors.
	19	– <b>Mr. Collins</b> proposes marriage to <b>Elizabeth</b> ; she refuses.
	20	– <b>Mrs. Bennet</b> tries to change <b>Elizabeth's</b> mind while <b>Mr. Bennet</b> insists that she not marry <b>Mr. Collins</b> .
	21	– <b>Bingley's</b> group abruptly leaves Netherfield for London.
	22	– <b>Mr. Collins</b> proposes to <b>Charlotte Lucas</b> . <b>Elizabeth</b> is shocked that her friend has sacrificed love for financial security.

### Theme Key

- Pride
- Prejudice
- Family
- Marriage
- Class

-  **23** – Elizabeth and Jane worry that Bingley has not yet written them any letters.
-  **24** – Caroline writes that Bingley will hopefully marry Georgiana Darcy.
-  **25** – Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner arrive at Longbourn for a visit.
-  **26** – Wickham gives up on Elizabeth for a girl who recently inherited a lot of money.  
– Jane goes to stay with the Gardiners in London. She is snubbed by Caroline.
-  **27** – Elizabeth stops in London to see Jane. She tells Mrs. Gardiner she is not sad about Wickham.
-  **28** – Elizabeth visits Charlotte and Mr. Collins and sees the sickly Miss De Bourgh.
-  **29** – At Rosings, Elizabeth meets Lady Catherine who interrogates her about her upbringing.
-  **30** – Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam arrive at Rosings to visit Lady Catherine.
-  **31** – Elizabeth and Darcy converse at Rosings.
-  **32** – Charlotte notices Darcy's attentions to Elizabeth and supposes that he's in love.
-  **33** – Colonel Fitzwilliam reveals that Darcy intervened to stop Bingley from proposing to Jane.
-  **34** – Darcy proposes marriage to Elizabeth but insults her background. Elizabeth angrily refuses, accusing him of ruining Jane's and Wickham's lives.
-  **35** – Darcy gives Elizabeth a letter explaining his real history with Wickham and his reasons for breaking up Bingley and Jane.
-  **36** – Elizabeth realizes Darcy is right and feels terribly ashamed of herself and her family.
-  **37** – Elizabeth prepares to leave Rosings. She hopes never to see Darcy again.
-  **38** – Sad to leave Charlotte with Mr. Collins, Elizabeth leaves for London.
-  **39** – Lydia and Catherine Bennet surprise Elizabeth and Jane on their way home.
-  **40** – Back at Longbourn, Elizabeth tells Jane about Wickham's history but they agree not to publicly expose him.
-  **41** – Lydia is invited to Brighton to stay with the departing regiment. Elizabeth asks Mr. Bennet to stop Lydia, but he will not.
-  **42** – Elizabeth reflects on Mr. Bennet's failures as a spouse and a father.
-  **43** – Elizabeth vacations with the Gardiners. They visit Pemberley and she imagines being Darcy's wife. Darcy shows up unexpectedly, but is extremely courteous to them all.
-  **44** – Darcy brings his sister Georgiana to meet Elizabeth. Bingley comes too, and Elizabeth suspects he still loves Jane.
-  **45** – Caroline tries to embarrass Elizabeth about Wickham, but she only manages to offend Georgiana and Darcy.
-  **46** – Elizabeth receives news that Lydia has eloped with Wickham.
-  **47** – Mrs. Bennet sends Mr. Gardiner to find Wickham and make him marry Lydia.
-  **48** – Mr. Collins writes that Lydia will ruin the reputations of all the Bennet girls.
-  **49** – Mr. Gardiner writes that Lydia and Wickham have been found. Mr. Bennet need only pay some money for them to marry.

-  50 – Mrs. Bennet is inappropriately delighted that Lydia will be married.
-  51 – Lydia and Wickham visit Longbourn. Lydia reveals to Elizabeth that Darcy was at her wedding.
-  52 – Mrs. Gardiner writes to Elizabeth about how Darcy found Lydia and Wickham and paid for everything himself.
-  53 – Bingley and Darcy return to town. While Bingley warms up to Jane, Darcy remains cold and distant.
-  54 – The Bennets host a dinner, but Elizabeth and Darcy have no opportunities to speak.
-  55 – Bingley proposes marriage to Jane.
-  56 – Lady Catherine visits Elizabeth and demands she never marry Darcy. Insulted, Elizabeth refuses to promise anything.
-  57 – To Elizabeth's dismay, Mr. Bennet jokes with her about marrying Darcy.
-  58 – On a walk, Darcy expresses his deep feelings for Elizabeth and she returns them. She apologizes for her rudeness to him, but Darcy says he needed the lesson in humility.
-  59 – Elizabeth tells her family that she's engaged to Darcy. Everyone is shocked at first, then overjoyed.
-  60 – Darcy informs Lady Catherine. Georgiana is thrilled to have Elizabeth as a sister.
-  61 – After the weddings, Jane and Bingley move to an estate near Pemberley. Elizabeth and Georgiana become great friends.