

Pride and Prejudice

Volume I

Chapter 1

1. Which central themes and narrative characteristics of the novel are introduced in the famous opening sentence of *Pride and Prejudice*?

2. Why does Mrs. Bennet state that it is impossible for her and her daughters to visit Mr. Bingley if Mr. Bennet does not visit him first?

3. Why does Mr. Bennet prefer Elizabeth over his other daughters?

4. To what extent does the statement that it was the “business of [Mrs. Bennet’s] life” to “get her daughters married” serve as a commentary on hereditary practices among England’s landowners?

Chapter 2

1. How is Austen able to portray Mrs. Bennet as a foolish and uneducated woman when she describes Mrs. Bennet's assessment of her relationship with Mrs. Long?

2. How do Mr. Bennet's comments on his wife's nerves provide a clue to his overall opinion of his wife?

Chapter 3

1. What hopes does Mrs. Bennet immediately connect with Mr. Bingley's move to Netherfield?

2. Which characteristics cause Mr. Darcy to make a favorable first impression at the ball? What does this early assessment of his character reveal about the people in Meryton?

3. What behaviors does Mr. Darcy eventually display at the ball that cause people to change their initially positive opinion of him and deem him a proud and disagreeable man?

4. What causes Elizabeth to form a negative opinion of Mr. Darcy?

5. Why does Mr. Bennet express his wish that Mr. Bingley "had sprained his ankle in the first dance"? What does the Bennets' exchange reveal about their characters and their relationship?

Chapter 4

1. What does Jane's ability to "always speak what [she] think[s]" reveal about her character as a human being?

2. What differentiates Mr. Bingley's social position from Mr. Darcy's?

3. To what extent does the behavior displayed by the Bingley sisters reflect the anxieties of the newly rich?

Chapter 5

1. What reasons does Charlotte Lucas offer for defending Mr. Darcy's pride?

2. To what extent does Mrs. Bennet's observation that Mrs. Long "does not keep a carriage and had come to the ball in a hack chaise" serve as her explanation for Mr. Darcy's refusal to talk with Mrs. Long at the ball?

Chapter 6

1. According to Charlotte Lucas, what does Jane need to do in order to secure Mr. Bingley?

2. To what extent does Elizabeth's assessment of Jane's interaction with Mr. Bingley exemplify her idea of an ideal marriage?

3. Why does Charlotte believe that "happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance"? What does her assessment reveal about her attitude toward marriage?

4. Which narrative technique is Austen employing when she describes Darcy's growing affection for Elizabeth: "he was forced to acknowledge her figure to be light and pleasing"?

5. To what extent do descriptions of Mary in chapter 6 serve as a commentary on the role and status of women in Regency England?

6. How is Miss Bingley's disgust at the "self-importance of all these people" present at Sir Lucas's ball ironic? What kind of irony is used?

7. What criticism of the female imagination does Mr. Darcy voice to Miss Bingley? What social criticism is Austen suggesting in this comment?

Chapter 7

1. Why do the Bennets worry about their daughters' financial security?

2. What does the stationing of an army regiment in Meryton add to the novel?

3. Why does Mrs. Bennet consider Jane lucky when it begins raining shortly after Jane leaves for Netherfield?

4. How does Elizabeth's arrival at Netherfield overstep the boundaries of acceptable female conduct?

Chapter 8

1. How do the Bingley sisters evaluate Elizabeth's spirit of independence? Why might they feel as they do?

2. How does Austen manage to portray the difference between Mr. Bingley's character and Mr. Darcy's character in her depiction of their conversation about the Bennet daughters and their chances of being "well settled"?

3. What is the significance of "reading" in this chapter?

4. Why do the Bingley sisters advise their brother to take Pemberley as a model when looking for an estate to purchase? What does their advice reveal about the Bingley sisters and their assessment of themselves?

5. How does Mr. Darcy respond to Miss Bingley's suggestion that Elizabeth is a woman who uses artifice and deception to make herself appear more desirable and other women appear less desirable in the company of men?

Chapter 9

1. What is Elizabeth's assessment of Mr. Bingley's character, by her own admission in his presence?

2. To what extent can Mrs. Bennet's explanation of "good breeding" be considered to be an insult to Mr. Darcy?

3. What does Elizabeth's response to Darcy about poetry's being the "food of love" suggest about her romantic notions?

Chapter 10

1. What does Mr. Darcy criticize in Mr. Bingley's character?

2. Why does Elizabeth object to Mr. Darcy's critical view of Mr. Bingley? What is she criticizing in Darcy?

3. What is the "desirable event" Miss Bingley is sarcastically referring to when she speaks to Mr. Darcy?

4. What can be inferred about Miss Bingley's attitude toward Mr. Darcy from her sarcastic allusions to a potential marital union between Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth?

Chapter 11

1. What does Miss Bingley's attempt at reading indicate about her character? How sincere is she in her attempt?

2. Why does Miss Bingley ask Elizabeth to walk around the room with her?

3. Why does Mr. Darcy not consider pride to be a negative characteristic?

4. What negative characteristic does Mr. Darcy possess, according to his own assessment? Why is this admission significant?

5. How does Elizabeth interpret Mr. Darcy's self-admitted character flaw? How does her assessment relate to the theme of pride and prejudice in the novel overall?

Chapter 12

1. Why does Mr. Darcy resolve not to talk to Elizabeth if at all possible on the day before her departure from Netherfield?

2. Why is Mr. Bennet glad to have Jane and Elizabeth home again?

Chapter 13

1. Who exactly is Mr. Collins? What does his presence in the story represent?

2. Why is Mrs. Bennet at first hesitant to receive Mr. Collins into her home?

3. How does Mrs. Bennet's statement that "there is no knowing how estates will go when once they come to be entailed" serve as a testament to her naïve character?

4. What is suggested by Mr. Collins's assurance that he came "prepared to admire" the Bennet daughters?

Chapter 14

1. What does Mr. Collins's opinion of Lady Catherine de Bourgh reveal about his character and his attitude toward wealth and social status?

2. What does Mr. Collins's taste in books reveal about his attitude toward female education?

Chapter 15

1. How does Mr. Collins evaluate his decision to marry one of the Bennet daughters?

2. Why does Mr. Collins change his mind and not ask Jane to marry him?

3. What does Austen reveal about Mrs. Phillips when she writes that Mrs. Phillips "was quite awed by such an excess of good breeding" when she meets Mr. Collins?

4. What is surprising about the encounter between Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham, and what might it foreshadow?

Chapter 16

1. In the developing intrigue concerning Wickham, Darcy and Elizabeth, with whom does Elizabeth immediately side? Why?

2. What evidence does Elizabeth hear that contradicts Wickham's evaluation of Darcy?

3. Why is Elizabeth certain that Miss Bingley's romantic intentions with regard to Mr. Darcy are in vain?

Chapter 17

1. Why is Jane not inclined to condemn Mr. Darcy when she hears about his past conduct toward Mr. Wickham from Elizabeth?

2. Why does Elizabeth begin to suspect that Mr. Collins has chosen her as his future wife?

Chapter 18

1. Why is Elizabeth disappointed when she arrives at the Netherfield ball? How does her disappointment influence her attitude toward Mr. Darcy?

2. What is ironic about Elizabeth's warning Mr. Darcy not to form hasty resentments?

3. What does Elizabeth mean when she criticizes Miss Bingley for her judgment of Wickham: "his guilt and his descent appear by your account to be the same"?

4. Besides what she tells Mr. Collins, what underlying reason is there for her not wanting Mr. Collins to introduce himself to Mr. Darcy?

5. What does Collins himself suggest in his response to Elizabeth?

6. How does Mrs. Bennet contribute to Elizabeth's social humiliation?

Chapter 19

1. What does Mr. Collins's marriage proposal establish about his character?

2. How do the reasons Mr. Collins offers for wanting to marry Elizabeth indicate that he would have married any of the Bennet daughters?

3. What do we learn from Mr. Collins's reaction to Elizabeth's rejection?

Chapter 20

1. Explain the several reason that lie behind Mr. Bennet's reaction to Mr. Collins's proposal and Elizabeth's rejection.

Chapter 21

1. What impression does the reader get from the tone and content of Miss Bingley's letter?

2. List the several events that have occurred to precipitate the Bingleys' and Darcy's sudden departure.

Chapter 22

1. What does Mr. Collins's sudden engagement to Charlotte establish?

2. Compare Charlotte's attitude toward marriage with Elizabeth's. What does Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins foreshadow?

Chapter 23

1. How does Mr. Bennet respond to the news of Charlotte's engagement to Mr. Collins?

2. How does Elizabeth evaluate Mr. Bingley's continued absence from Netherfield?

Volume II

Chapter I

1. How does Mr. Bingley's absence from Netherfield and his almost certain rejection of Jane emphasize the importance of adhering to the rules of social decorum for a young woman?

2. Given Bingley's absence, contrast Jane's behavior regarding her attachment with Mrs. Bennet's.

3. How does Mr. Bingley's absence affect Elizabeth's attitude toward the dangers of first impressions? Why is this ironic?

4. What goal does Elizabeth believe the Bingley sisters are pursuing by setting up their brother with Georgiana Darcy?

Chapter 2

1. How does Mrs. Gardiner evaluate Mr. Bingley's love? Why does she have a different view from Elizabeth and Jane?

2. Why does Elizabeth consider it implausible that Jane will see Mr. Bingley in London?

Chapter 3

1. What does Mrs. Gardiner's advice to Elizabeth about marrying Wickham suggest about her attitude toward marriage?

2. What finally convinces Jane that Miss Bingley does not regard her as a friend, as she had thought for so long?

3. What causes Mr. Wickham lose his interest in Elizabeth?

Chapter 4

1. Structurally, how does Elizabeth's visit with her aunt, uncle, and sister fit into the narrative?

2. What event is set up for the future?

Chapter 5

1. What is Austen's intention when she writes about Mr. Collins that "Elizabeth was prepared to see him in his glory"?

2. What does Elizabeth's assessment of Charlotte's happiness suggest about Charlotte's marriage?

3. Why does Elizabeth believe that Miss de Bourgh will make "a very proper wife" for Mr. Darcy? What does her attitude reveal about her opinion of Darcy?

Chapter 6

1. Considering Elizabeth's initial impression of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, what similarities exist between her and Mr. Darcy?

2. Why is Lady Catherine de Bourgh rich even though her husband has died?

3. What is the significance of the Bennet girls' lack of a governess?

4. What does Lady Catherine criticize about Elizabeth's character? Why are these criticisms significant?

Chapter 7

1. What degree of importance does Lady Catherine enjoy within her parish? Given what we know of Lady Catherine, what does this "importance" probably amount to?

Chapter 8

1. Why do Charlotte and Mr. Collins not receive an invitation to dine at Rosings after Mr. Darcy and Colonel Fitzwilliam arrive even though it had been their habit to dine there at least twice a week?

2. What is the tone of Elizabeth and Darcy's conversation at Rosings?

Chapter 9

1. What social gaffe has Darcy committed in visiting the Parsonage? What might this suggest?

2. What reason does Elizabeth give to explain to Mr. Darcy that Mr. Collins should consider himself lucky to have Charlotte as his wife?

3. What is the significance of Darcy and Elizabeth's discussion of travel and the distance to Longbourne?

4. What image of Mr. Darcy's attitude toward Elizabeth is Austen establishing when she writes, "he certainly looked at her a great deal, but the expression of that look was disputable. It was an earnest, steadfast gaze, but she often doubted whether there were much admiration in it, and sometimes it seemed nothing but absence of mind."

Chapter 10

1. What does Elizabeth learn about Darcy's role in Jane's heartbreak? How does this affect her opinion of Darcy?

2. According to Elizabeth, what reasons motivated Mr. Darcy to discourage the match between Mr. Bingley and Jane?

Chapter 11

1. How is Mr. Darcy's marriage proposal consistent with his established character?

2. How is Mr. Darcy's marriage proposal not consistent with his established character?

3. What reasons does Elizabeth give for rejecting Darcy's proposal?

Chapter 12

1. How do Mr. Darcy's reasons for keeping Jane and Mr. Bingley apart illustrate a key similarity between his character and Elizabeth's character?

2. How does Darcy portray Wickham in his letter?

Chapter 13

1. Describe the various epiphanies Mr. Darcy's letter begins to awaken in Elizabeth:

A. How does Darcy's letter motivate Elizabeth to begin to evaluate her own character?

B. How does Darcy's letter affect Elizabeth's assessment of her own family?

Chapter 14

1. How do Elizabeth's feelings toward Mr. Darcy change after he leaves Rosings Park?

Chapter 15

1. What is ironic about Mr. Collins's discussion with Elizabeth about the happiness of his marriage?

2. Why does Elizabeth hesitate to tell Jane about Mr. Darcy's proposal and letter while both are in London?

Chapter 16

1. What surprise awaits Jane and Elizabeth at the Inn where they are waiting for Mr. Bennet's coach to convey them to Longbourn?

2. How does the news Elizabeth receives of Mr. Wickham solidify her opinion she formed after reading Mr. Darcy's letter?

3. What is further suggested by Miss King's suddenly leaving town?

4. Why is Elizabeth concerned when she hears her parents discussing plans to send the daughters to Brighton?

Chapter 17

1. Why does Jane particularly pity Mr. Darcy when she hears that Elizabeth rejected his marriage proposal?

2. Why do Elizabeth and Jane decide not to share the information about Mr. Wickham's infamous character with others in Meryton?

3. What does Jane's reaction to Elizabeth's news about Mr. Wickham reveal about her character's strengths and flaws?

4. What aspects of Mr. Darcy's letter does Elizabeth not reveal to Jane?

Chapter 18

1. What is clearly foreshadowed by the Bennets' plans to allow Lydia to go to Brighton despite Elizabeth's objections?

2. What does Mr. Bennet's allowing Lydia to go to Brighton establish about his character?

3. What tone characterizes the conversation between Elizabeth and Mr. Wickham on the day before his departure?

Chapter 19

1. Of what aspect of Mr. Bennet's behavior as a husband does Elizabeth most disapprove?

2. What rhetorical device does Austen employ when she has the narrator observe of Kitty: "by the following Christmas, she might be so tolerably reasonable as not to mention an officer above once a day, unless by some cruel and malicious arrangement at the war-office, another regiment should be quartered in Meryton"?

3. Why is Elizabeth hesitant when she learns that she will not accompany the Gardiners to the Great Lakes but to Derbyshire instead? What does this change of plans foreshadow?

Volume III

Chapter 1

1. What does Elizabeth's initial reaction to Pemberley reveal about the significance of property, particularly for women, in the world of *Pride and Prejudice*?

2. Why is Elizabeth so touched by the account Mr. Darcy's housekeeper gives of her master?

3. Why is Elizabeth shocked and uncomfortable when she unexpectedly meets Mr. Darcy at Pemberley?

4. What can readers infer from Mr. Darcy's second encounter with the Gardiners and Elizabeth in the gardens of Pemberley?

5. Why is Elizabeth pleased when Mr. Darcy enters into a conversation with the Gardiners?

6. What particularly delights Elizabeth when she learns that Georgiana Darcy would like to make her acquaintance?

Chapter 2

1. Structurally, what is occurring in these chapters? What, then, was Darcy's proposal in Volume II, chapter 11?

2. What conclusion do the Gardiners draw about Mr. Darcy when he brings his sister to meet Elizabeth? Why do they draw that conclusion?

3. Aside from mutual affection, what evidence is there that Elizabeth and Darcy might be suited for one another?

4. How does the behavior of the Gardiners after Mr. Darcy, his sister, and Mr. Bingley leave differ from the typical behavior of Elizabeth's other relatives?

Chapter 3

1. Why does Miss Bingley criticize Elizabeth's tan?

2. How does Mr. Darcy come to admit that he was once a victim of first impressions and premature judgment?

Chapter 4

1. What is so shocking about Lydia's elopement?

2. Why does Elizabeth blame herself for Lydia's indiscreet behavior and loss of reputation?

3. What consequences does Elizabeth expect she will suffer as a result of Lydia's disgrace?

Chapter 5

1. In what way is Elizabeth's assessment of Lydia's behavior an implicit criticism of Mr. Bennet?

2. How can Mrs. Bennet feel distressed about Lydia's disappearance even though she wholeheartedly supported Lydia's decision to go to Brighton and her daughter's excessive fascination with the regiment?

Chapter 6

1. What does the change of Wickham's reputation in Meryton reveal about the community fabric?

2. What does Mr. Collins's advice suggest about the importance of social respectability?

3. How convincing is Mr. Bennet's resolution to be a stricter father?

Chapter 7

1. Why does Mr. Bennet believe that his brother, Mr. Gardiner, paid money to convince Mr. Wickham that he must marry Lydia?

2. How is Mrs. Bennet's reaction to Mr. Gardiner's letter a reflection on her foolish nature and her inability to learn from her mistakes?

3. Is Mrs. Bennet a static or a dynamic character?

Chapter 8

1. Do Mr. Bennet's reflections at the beginning of this chapter show him to be a dynamic character? Why or why not?

2. What do the following lines reveal about the concept of community in the town of Meryton: "To be sure it would have been more for the advantage of conversation, had Miss Lydia Bennet come upon the town; or, as the happiest alternative, been secluded from the world, in some distant farm house"?

3. How does Mrs. Bennet further reinforce that she has not grown or changed as a result of recent events?

4. Why does Elizabeth wish that she had never told Mr. Darcy about Lydia's elopement?

Chapter 9

1. How repentant is Lydia for the inconvenience she has caused her family?

2. What does Elizabeth reveal about herself when she says to Lydia, "I do not particularly like your way of getting husbands"?

3. What is suggested by the revelation that Darcy was present at Lydia and Wickham's wedding? What previous clues support this suggestion?

Chapter 10

1. What motivations does Mr. Darcy have for attempting to find Mr. Wickham and Lydia in London?

2. What function do Lydia and Wickham play in Austen's gentle social commentary? What social theme do they help to illustrate?

Chapter 11

1. Why does Jane feel uneasy when she hears that Mr. Bingley is returning to Netherfield?

2. How is Elizabeth ambivalent about Mr. Darcy's returning with Mr. Bingley?

3. Why does Elizabeth wish never to "see either one or the other again" when Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley are visiting Longbourn?

Chapter 12

1. What does Austen reveal about Elizabeth when she writes that Elizabeth looked at Mr. Darcy with a "triumphant sensation" as soon as Mr. Bingley takes a seat next to Jane?

2. Why is Elizabeth so eager to talk to Mr. Darcy after dinner when the guests gather in the drawing room?

Chapter 13

1. What does Jane mean when she says she is "the happiest creature in the world"?

2. What is Elizabeth's chief reason for believing that the marriage between Jane and Mr. Bingley will be a happy one?

3. What does Jane's attitude toward Miss Bingley reveal about her development as a character?

Chapter 14

1. What tone characterizes Lady Catherine de Bourgh's attitude and behavior when she visits Longbourn?

2. What rumor motivates Lady Catherine's visit at Longbourn?

3. What tone characterizes Elizabeth's response to Lady Catherine's accusations?

4. What, according to Lady Catherine, determines whether or not two people are "formed for each other"?

Chapter 15

1. Who is responsible for starting the rumor about Mr. Darcy's imminent proposal?

2. Why does Elizabeth resent her father's sense of irony and sarcasm when he shares Mr. Collins' letter with her?

Chapter 16

1. How does Mr. Darcy react when Elizabeth thanks him for the good he has done for Lydia and her entire family?

2. To what extent did Lady Catherine's visit motivate Mr. Darcy to propose to Elizabeth again?

3. What does Mr. Darcy admit he has learned from Elizabeth?

4. What does Elizabeth learn about Mr. Darcy's attitude toward Jane and Mr. Bingley?

Chapter 17

1. How does Jane react to the news of Elizabeth's engagement? What does her reaction reveal about her attitude toward her sister?

2. What, again, does news of Elizabeth's engagement emphasize about Mrs. Bennet's character?

Chapter 18

1. Who among her relatives are the only ones Elizabeth will gladly welcome to Pemberley?

Chapter 19

1. What evidence of reconciliation does Austen present at the end of her novel?

2. What lesson about marriage does Austen convey when she writes about the deteriorating relationship between Lydia and Mr. Wickham?
