



Pride and Prejudice

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Jane Austen

Pride and Prejudice Jane Austen

Mr and Mrs Bennet live with their five daughters. Jane, the eldest daughter, falls in love with Charles Bingley, a rich bachelor who takes a house nearby with his two sisters and friend, Fitzwilliam Darcy. Darcy is attracted to the second daughter, Elizabeth, but a bad account of him is given to Elizabeth. He and Bingley's effect the separation of Bingley and Jane. William Collins, cousin to the sisters and as only male, heir to the Bennet estate, proposes to Elizabeth but is rejected. Darcy proposes to Elizabeth but she refuses. When Elizabeth travels north she is invited with friends to Darcy's place in Berbyshire, and thinking Darcy is absent she goes. However, he is there and she is surprised by his much-improved manners. She hears news that her sister Lydia has eloped with Wickham, an unprincipled adventurer. With Darcy's help the fugitives are found. The attachment between Bingley and Jane is renewed and leads to an engagement. In spite of the insolent intervention of Lady Catherine, Darcy and Elizabeth become engaged.

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272 pages

Extrait

Chapter II It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters. "My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?" Mr. Bennet replied that he had not. "But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it." Mr. Bennet made no answer. "Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently. "You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it." This was invitation enough. "Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week." "What is his name?" "Bingley." "Is he married or single?"

"Oh! single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!" "How so? how can it affect them?" "My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them." "Is that his design in settling here?" "Design! nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he may fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes." "I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better, for as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party." "My dear, you flatter me. I certainly have had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be any thing extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty." "In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of." "But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood." "It is more than I engage for, I assure you." "But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general you know they visit no new comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not." "You are over scrupulous surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chuses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy." "I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving her the preference." "They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters." "Mr Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves." "You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least." "Ah! you do not know what I suffer." "But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood." "It will be no use to us, if twenty such should come since you will not visit them." "Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty, I will visit them all."

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

The wit of Jane Austen has for partner the perfection of her taste. --Virginia Woolf

This is the flowering of the English novel. It is witty and wise; there is not a single flaw in this book, or a single moment that you do not relish --Colm Tóibín

I read all of Jane Austen's novels very early on and learnt to love her economy of style and precision. She still seems to me the finest writer in the English language. *Pride and Prejudice* always bears another reading, and I think in many ways it is a perfect rendition of the novel form. --Philippa Gregory *Présentation de l'éditeur*

The Penguin English Library Edition of *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen 'No sooner had he made it clear to himself and his friends that she had hardly a good feature in her face, than he began to find it was rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes ...' When Elizabeth Bennet first meets eligible bachelor Fitzwilliam Darcy, she thinks him arrogant and conceited; he is indifferent to her good looks and lively mind. When she later discovers that Darcy has involved himself in the troubled relationship between his friend Bingley and her beloved sister Jane, she is determined to dislike him more than ever. In the sparkling comedy of manners that follows, Jane Austen shows the folly of judging by first impressions and superbly evokes the friendships, gossip and snobberies of provincial middle-class life. The Penguin English Library - 100 editions of the best fiction in English, from the eighteenth century and the very first novels to the beginning of the First World War.

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