

Relationships in pride and prejudice

[Life, Relationships](#)



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Austin writes about four relationships and shows the differences between their foundations; some have good foundations and others are doomed to crumble and produce unhappy lives. These four relationships between Jane and Bentley, Lydia and Wickham, Charlotte and Mr. Collins, and Elizabeth and Darcy are different, but taken together provide a general guide to any relationship. First impressions are a very important part of the relationship and can influence, for better or worse, the rest of the relationship.

First impressions can be affected by many things including preconceived prejudices, appearances, and social status. Austin believes that first impressions are very important. This is seen by Diana Francis, author of "An Overview of pride and Prejudice", who says, " Austin began Pride and Prejudice in 1796 under the title First Impressions. Her family found the novel entertaining and continued to reread it for at least two years.... She again began revision work on First Impressions, though she was forced to retitle it as the name had already been used by another novelist. Austin finally published it in 1813 under the title Pride and Prejudice. She came back to this concept much later, it seems, because she thought that this book could be a very influential book and needed to be written. This book is important because it shows the difference between good and bad foundations. It does this without directly saying what to do and what not to do like in the conduct books. In order to examine the foundation of the four key relationships, Austin must begin with each couple's first impressions.

The author first shows the characters of Jane Bennett and Charles Bentley whose first impressions are based on an attraction to character. While they are both physically attracted to each other, they also see that the other one

has a virtuous character. Ms. Jane Bennett is the eldest and most beautiful aught of a middle class family. She also has a sweet disposition, is fairly well educated, and is not silly and mindless like some of her other sisters. Charles Bentley is a wealthy man who has just moved into the neighborhood.

He is a good-looking man, he is very kind and polite, and well rounded. Bernard J. Paris, a professor at Michigan State University, describes their relationship: "The Jane-Bentley relationship may be more passionately intense, but it is presented as a happy accident. Fortunately for themselves, Jane and Bentley are what they appear to be" (100). Paris believes that it is an accident that Bentley moved to Interfiled, near to Jane, it is an accident that they were both attracted to one another's looks, and it is an accident that they were attracted to one another's personalities.

Even though they do have a sweet love story, this could have happened to anyone really, and this is why Paris says their relationship is an accident. That is why they are not the main relationship of the book, because they are just average. Bentleys affection for Jane is shown when he goes out of his way to dance with her more than he dances with the other girls. He even describes her as "the most beautiful return have ever beheld!" (Austin 18). The reader can see that Jane likes Bentley just as much when the Bennett return home from the Emerson Assembly and the girls talk about how much they enjoyed themselves.

Jane says about Bentley, "He is just what a young man ought to be, sensible, good humored, lively; and I never saw such happy manners! So much ease, with such perfect good breeding!" (Austin 24). Bentley and Jane seem to

have a good, innocent relationship. The two show all the signs that they are willing to get to know each other on a deeper level and build a foundation so that their relationship will grow and flourish. The next couple that Austin discusses is Lydia Bennett and George Hickman, who are both very shallow. Their first impressions are based on physical attraction.

Neither of them attempts to know one another deeper, which presents a problem and foreshadows the complications in their relationship. Lydia is one of the youngest Bennett daughters, around the age of fifteen, who is enthralled with any man in a uniform. She goes into town whenever she hears word of officers coming. She is one of the silliest Bennett girls, and this leads to her irresponsibility. She is " a young girl fascinated by the uniforms of he militia regiment and flattered by the attention and attractiveness Of Hickman, [and she] is easy prey for the disreputable young soldier' (Attachment 12).

Paris notes about her upbringing, " Mr.. Bennett has power when he chooses to use it, but in general he has abandoned his paternal responsibility. His daughters are allowed to be idle and frivolous if they wish. Little effort is made either to form their characters or correct their manners" (101) The reader can infer that if the Bennett daughters, especially Lydia, had been raised better, Lydia would have made better choices in choosing a love interest. If Lydia had been raised to not be so silly and careless, she could have made better life choices.

Lydia problems stem from the lack of good role models she had in her life. Her mother, whom she takes after, is also a very silly and frivolous woman,

and her father does nothing to control his wife or his other daughters. Lieutenant Hickman is a lieutenant in the army, who is stationed at Emerson and is good-looking. This makes him irresistible to Lydia, but she really knows nothing about his character or background. Austin uses Lydia's fascination with soldiers to comment on how women in her era were often impressed by men in uniform.

Daniel Pool, writer of *What Jane Austin Ate and Charles Dickens Knew*, states, "It is thus almost invariably the cavalry who really set feminine pulses racing in the nineteenth-century English fiction" (11). Hickman prides himself as being a dishonest and distrustful person from a very young age. He uses his words, charm, and good looks to try to make wealthy girls fall in love with him so he can use their money to pay off his innumerable debts.

He, at first, started to talk to Elizabeth but stopped pursuing her when he found a girl with more money whom he could try to woo. When that fails, Hickman then tries and succeeds in misleading Lydia. He lies to Elizabeth about his true character. He also lies about his relationship with Dared and the time he tried to elope with Dairy's sister, Georgian, for her money. The lie that Hickman told builds up the prejudice that Elizabeth has toward Dared in the first place. In turn, this starts the relationship of Elizabeth and Dared off badly.

Lydia's immaturity and Hacksaw's dishonorable character suggest that this relationship is not a good one and will not prosper. Charlotte Lacuna's and Mr. Collinson's first impressions are based on social debility and security. They are both looking for social and monetary comfort and stability in

married life. They find that in each other. It is not a marriage that Austin promotes because it is not based on love. Charlotte Lucas lives near the Bennett and is a close friend of Elizabeth.

Her family, like the Bennett, is not extremely wealthy and is in fact a little poorer than the Bennett. Charlotte is not very well educated, does not have a lot of money, and is not the prettiest girl. She realizes this and forms her view of marriage accordingly. She knows her circumstance and has set her standards for arraign very low so that they can be met or maybe exceeded easily. She had often talked to Elizabeth of her marriage expectations, stating, " Happiness in marriage is entirely a matter of chance .. It is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life" (Austin 40). Charlotte did not really expect love in marriage; she just wanted to be married because she needed the security it offered. She was nearing the age when she would be too old to be considered an eligible lady. Mr.. Collins is the distant and eccentric cousin of the Bennett who comes to sit and hopefully to find a wife. He is the clergyman of a parish on the estate of Lady Catherine De Burgh, and it is assumed he is not the first son in his family.

Debra Attachment, the Vice President for Academic Affairs at New Mexico State University, tells us that the first son of the family would receive most of the inheritance, and " If he were a younger son, his family influence and financial support would generally provide him with either a lesser estate or with training for a profession (generally the church, the law, or the military) together with money or influence enough to obtain a professional position

once his training was complete" (4). He is described by Mrs.. Bennett as an odious man, and he annoys the whole family except for Mr..

Bennett who finds joy in laughing at his overcompensation of everything. Since the Bennett did not produce a male heir, Mr.. Collins will receive their estate when Mr.. Bennett passes because of a strict settlement on Longhorn. Because of this, the Bennett daughters will not inherit the estate which makes Mrs.. Bennett very upset. The reader can first see the flaws in Mr.. Collins when he comes to Longhorn. He picks out a wife in Jane, but when he finds out she already is pock for, he quickly changes to Elizabeth. Austin explains, " Mr..

Collins had only to change from Jane to Elizabeth -? and it was soon done - done while Mrs.. Bennett was stirring the fire. Elizabeth, equally next to Jane in birth and beauty, succeeded her of course" (Austin 132). We see that he does not really want to find love in anyone; He just wants to acquire a wife to look acceptable to society while trying to benefit from the entailment that will leave the Bennett daughters without a home. Since Elizabeth refuses his proposal, he moves on and finds Charlotte Lucas who is also looking for a convenient arraignment.

The idea of a pragmatic marriage seems harsh to society now, but in the Regency time period this was accepted. People did not usually marry for love; instead, they married for money. " Marriage in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England was as much (sometimes more) a matter of property as of love or companionship" (Attachment 38). Austin does not like this kind of marriage. She lifts up relationships based on love throughout her

novels. This relationship does not seem like it will prosper because of the fact that the people know nothing about each other and have nothing in common.

The first impressions between Elizabeth Bennett and Fatalism Dared are obstructed by their pride and prejudice, so it blocks their attraction at first. They are both very proud people, and it initially hurts their relationship. Elizabeth Bennett the second oldest Bennett daughter, is strong-willed and very vocal in what she believes. She is also very beautiful and the favorite daughter of Mr.. Bennett because she is the most like him. She is a very prideful person, and she develops prejudices against people without knowing them fully. Fatalism Dared, the good friend of Mr..

Charles Bentley, is a very misunderstood character. He is a handsome and wealthy man. He comes off as a very cold and arrogant man to people who do not know him. Dared explains his behavior: Unfortunately an only son, (for many years an only child) I was spoilt by my parents, who though good themselves, (my father particularly, all that was benevolent and amiable,) allowed, encouraged, almost taught me to be selfish and overbearing, to care for none beyond my own family circle, to think meanly of all the rest of the world, to wish at least to think meanly Of their sense and worth compared with my own. Austin 672) He was raised to be cold to the outside, but on the inside he is a kind ND gracious person; Elizabeth realizes this when he talks to the people closest to him. It takes Elizabeth months to realize his true character, and she regrets her first impressions very much. Dared comes from a very rich family that belongs to the highest class.

Because of this, he seems justified in the society for thinking of himself as higher than other people at times. When Dared arrives at the Emerson Assembly, he feels superior to the other people there and, because of this, only dances with Bentleys sisters, whom he considers to be his equal.

When Dared is questioned about Elizabeth by Bentley, he distantly says, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humor at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men" (Austin 18). Elizabeth, inadvertently, hears this and, because of this comment, begins to dislike him. She also believes things about Dared that she has been told by Hickman which makes her like Dared less. In order for their relationship to work, they will have to put aside their pride and prejudices and focus on getting to know one another, which they will continue to do throughout the next months.

Paris believes hat their relationship will work because " it is based upon a real understanding of themselves and each Other and upon a proper combination of values" (100). This gives hope since Paris believes that they will prosper, even though they will have to go through trials. First impressions not only lay a foundation, but they provide insight into what the reader can expect. This foundation that is built helps the couple when they encounter misunderstandings of many kinds. Misunderstandings test the foundations of each relationship.

Misunderstandings are one of the most important things in the development of a relationship. Austin takes these same four relationships through initial misunderstandings in order to continue to build their foundations. From

these misunderstandings, each relationship is tested and tried to see if it will last. One sees the importance of a good foundation, which is established in first impressions, and continued on as the relationship progresses. Jane and Bentley, although they seem like a perfect couple, still have their troubles.

Their misunderstandings are filled with heart-break and communication issues. When they had both developed feelings for each other, Bentleys friends start to try to influence him, to distance himself from Jane because they are not socially equal. Bentleys sister, Caroline, does not like Cane's family because they are not from the upper class, and they are not well mannered. Another one of Bentleys friend, Mr.. Dared, explains that he tried to break up their relationship because he did not feel that Jane liked Bentley as much as he liked her.

Dared did not want his friend to get hurt. He was also fearful of the fact attachment was trying to marry Bentley so she could have his money. Dared later realizes that this is not the case and that her feelings for Bentley are true and honorable. Caroline Bentley sends a misleading letter to Jane telling her that Bentley and his friends will be returning to London for the winter. She implies that Bentley will woo Darers sister, Georgian, which crushes Jane. Caroline also insinuates in this letter that Jane should suppress her feelings for Bentley. She is described by David M.

Sheppard, author of The Annotated Pride and Prejudice, as unable to think badly of anyone, and this can be to her disadvantage. In this case, Cane's refusal to see the bad in people hurts her because she believes the best in Caroline Bentley, even when Elizabeth tries to warn her. Paris says, "Jane is

insecure about her own worth and acceptability and needs to approve of everyone lest they disapprove of her... . If she likes others, they will like her.... To maintain her picture of the world, she denies, rationalizes, and distorts" (1 1 1). Dared is seen to be looking out for his friend's best interests.

Caroline Benignly on the other hand, seems to only be vindictive and jealous when she tries to separate Bentley and Jane because she does not like the Bennett family. Dared tells Bentley about his concern about Cane's true feelings for him. Bentley listens to these concerns, but in the end he knows that Jane does love IM. Because Of this, he fights to make this relationship work against the wishes of his best friend. Bentley is very cautious to always listen to Dairy's advice and sometimes a little too much. Paris says, "Bangle's chief trait is his readiness to be led by others.

It gives him [Bentley] a feeling of security to have his actions directed by Dared' (1 1 1-112). In this case, Bentley is very reliant on his friend, but as a grown man he needs to be able to make his own decision and not care about what others think. This is especially true when it comes to the woman he will spend the rest of his life with. He finally realizes his after he leaves Netherfield and breaks Cane's heart. He then goes against the wishes of his sister and has to prove to Dared that he and Jane really do love each other. When Bentley comes to this conclusion, Jane has to choose to forgive him.

Even though Bentley broke her heart when he left Interfiled, Jane still forgives him because she feels that their love is true and will last Their misunderstanding tests the foundation of their relationship and makes it

stronger. Lydia and Hacksaw's misunderstandings relate directly to their personalities because they are both characterized by lies and immaturity. Hickman convinces Lydia to run away with him, and Lydia goes along with it because she thinks that Hickman is going to marry her. But in fact, he has no plan to do so. Their elopement alone was a huge disgrace.

This is seen when Mr.. Bennett says, " For what do we live, but to make sport for our neighbors and laugh at them in our turn? " (Austin 662). He is using sarcasm to say that this is a dishonor to their family and hurts their family status. Everyone knows that Hickman did not plan to marry her, and that was one of the biggest disgraces. Austin reveals the severity of their situation: it would have en more for the advantage of conversation, had Miss Lydia Bennett come upon the town" (Austin 560). To be " upon the town" means to become a prostitute, so this is a very harsh comment (Sheppard 561).

They are finally discovered, and Hickman is paid by Dared to marry Lydia. This shows Darers good character to Elizabeth and removes some of the prejudices she has against him. The marriage helps the Bennett family tremendously because it would have ruined their family reputation if Hickman had just left Lydia after they had run off together. This is seen when even Attachment explains why Dairy's actions are so helpful: ". NY scandal committed by one member of a family implicated all - and could literally destroy the chances of the unmarried women in the family to find respectable mates.

Thus, Lydia Bennett running off with Mr.. Hickman presents a danger not only to her own reputation and her own future but to those of her sisters as well" (3). This marriage is a very sad one because there is only physical attraction. There is a weak foundation in their relationship, so it can be guessed that they will both lead miserable lives together. Austin points out that " Hacksaw's affection for Lydia, was just what Elizabeth had expected to find it; tot equal to Lydia for him" (Austin 574). This suggests that they will not have a good relationship because Lydia likes Hickman more than he likes her.

They will have to work very hard in order to make this relationship work. This is not seen as a good relationship in the eyes of Jane Austin. Charlotte Lacuna's and Mr.. Collision's misunderstandings stem from the shallow foundation that they have. Their relationship is based on security and comfort in life, so they do not have any physical or character attraction to each other. Their married life is strained, and this is seen from the very ginning, when Collins proposes and asks about the date of their wedding.

Austin notes, Miss Lucas, who accepted him solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment, cared not how soon that establishment were gained" (Austin 228). Sheppard explains, " There is irony in this use of the term [disinterested] since it often connotes lack of concern with one's monetary interest, and Charlotte desire here centers around her own material benefit" (229). Charlotte situation is sad and ironic. She realizes this herself but knows there is nothing she can do about it since it stems from a lack of money, beauty, and youth.

The irony in their relationship is that even though Charlotte wants a comfortable life, she cannot have that with Mr.. Collins because he is so hard to tolerate. She spends most of her time avoiding him. Sheppard says, Charlotte clearly appreciates this reality; she also knows that, given her age and lack of either fortune or good looks, Mr.. Collins may be her last chance. With him, she will enjoy a comfortable income and home, the power of managing a household, and a much higher social position than she would have as a single woman. 231) Mr.. Collins' only mission in life is to please his patron, Lady Catherine De Burgh- Lady Catherine had suggested to him that he should find a good wife, and because he would eventually inherit the Bennett estate, he thought it a good idea to marry one of Mr.. Bonnet's daughters. After Elizabeth rejected him, he turned to Charlotte, who was willing to marry him because she also just wanted to be married in order to be comfortable. Charlotte would be comfortable because he made a decent amount of money, and Mr..

Collins would be comfortable because he would please Lady Catherine. They would both be settled in society even though their comfort would come at a price. Their happiness is squandered. However, they both have their hobbies that keep them occupied. When Mr.. Collins was not doing clergy duties, Charlotte encouraged him to work in the garden as much as possible, and Charlotte stayed inside taking care of the household. This marriage is a very dull marriage, and it is not seen as a marriage that Austin likes because there is no love.

Elizabeth and Dares relationship begins with many troublesome misunderstandings that in the end shape them into the best couple. Stuart M. Tape, author of " Elizabethan and Dairy's Mutual Mortification and Renewal", says, " Each has changed because each has worked a change on the other. The happiness is deserved by a process of mortification begun early and ended late" (69). Even though they do have trials they turn themselves, individually, into better people, and their relationship is strengthened as well. This is where the theme of Pride and Prejudice mainly comes in.

Attachment characterizes their misunderstandings: " Obstacles to their marrying include differences in wealth and social position, the behavior of members of their respective families, and their own proud and prejudiced views of themselves and each other . (2). The fact that Elizabeth prejudgets people, in this case, hurts her because her presumptions about Dared are wrong, even though they are understandable at the time. John Lubber, the author of Jane Austin states, " Elizabeth is eventually proven very wrong in her hasty judgment of him, but there is considerable justification for her error. (46). The presumptions Elizabeth has are understandable. Because of Dairy's upbringing he comes off as cold and distant. Elizabeth also assumes that Hickman is a noble man and believes the lies he tells about Dared, which leads her to make more rash judgments against Dared. Dared, at first, does not like Elizabeth, but after a couple of encounters with her, he begins to develop feelings toward her. Although he has these feelings he " sees the connection as unsuitable to the dignity of his family" (Paris 104).

Because of their difference in class, he feels that it would not be a good match from society's standpoint. Dared puts these feelings off for as long as he can before giving in. Paris says, " He is so much in love, however, that he decides to make a social sacrifice for the sake of personal satisfaction" (105). However, Elizabeth is offended when Dared proposes to her because the proposal is given in a way that is not flattering to her. He then writes her a letter addressing her prejudices toward him. Alistair M.

Ductwork, author of " Social Moderation and the Middle Way", says, " There, in his letter to her following her rejection of his proposal, Elizabeth begins to see Dairy's character in a different " light" and to recognize how badly she misjudged him from a too easy acceptance of Hacksaw's partial view and a too hasty response to externals -every charm of air and address. "' (46). Elizabeth has not found out his true character yet. After being rejected by Elizabeth, Dared writes and delivers a letter explaining the accusations she has about him.

When she reads this letter, she begins to take back her prejudices because she begins to see his true character. At this point their relationship starts to turn for the better, and there is hope because their foundation is beginning to mend itself. Their misunderstanding is the most profound, but their reconciliation matches it. Society greatly influences the relationships in Pride and Prejudice. In the Regency time period, marriage was a central topic. In each of the four relationships, Austin reveals how society reacts by showing the response of the people around the relationships.

When this is shown, one can see the conflict between the couples and the Regency society. But, where there is no disagreement with society, Austin shows how her view of marriage differs from the accepted view. Society in the nineteenth century is described by Attachment: This society was highly stratified: aristocrats tended to socialize with other aristocrats; the gentry (generally considered to be upper middle class by today's standards) socialized with other gentry; transported socialized with transported, the working poor with the working poor, and the poverty-stricken with other nonworking poor ... He class system in England at the beginning of the nineteenth century, though rigid in theory, in fact had considerable room for mobility (3). The ability to change classes is very helpful for a person and their descendants because they will not be forever confined to one class. This is helpful for the Bennett daughters because they can easily move up in life by marrying men with more money. Student's works are characterized by her satirical language.

This can be seen in the first line of the book: " It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife" (2). Dorothy Van Ghent, the author of On Pride and Prejudice, states, This is the first sentence of the book. What we read in it is its opposite - a single woman must be in want of a man with a good fortune - and at once we are inducted into the Austin language and the energy -? . That arises from the compression between a barbaric subsurface marital warfare and a surface of polite manners and civilized conventions. 20 - 21) It can be seen that, in the society that the Bennett daughters were raised in, they were aware of their family financial mishaps. Because of this, the idea

that they would have to array into money in order to be happy in life was pounded into their heads by their mother. Mrs.. Bennett is reflecting society by believing that the happiness of her daughters could only come from their marrying into money. But Austin proposes that money, in a relationship, is not necessary, but that love must be present for happiness.

Cane's and Bentleys relationship agrees with Student's view of marriage because their relationship is based on true love and attraction, even though they are from different classes of society. However, it is not in direct disagreement with society. Their relationship is more impractical in the eyes of society because they married for true love and attraction. Society, at this time, feels that love is good but marriage should be based on status and comfort in life. They believe that if a person finds these things in a spouse and happen to be attracted to this person that it is sheer luck.

The reason that society really likes this relationship is because Jane is moving up in classes and marrying into money. Even though Bentley is marrying someone who does not have much money, it does not affect Bentley like it does Jane because she is solely dependent on Bentley. We see that society likes this relationship through the character of Cane's other. Before Jane and Bentley have announced their feelings, she brags to everyone about how they are going to get married and how much money Bentley brings in a year. We also see Mr..

Bonnet's reaction to their relationship, as it is in contrast to his wife's. He is glad attachment has found love in Bentley and that she will be taken care of but says, " I have not a doubt of your doing very well together. Your tempers

are by no means unlike. You are each of you so complying that nothing will ever be resolved on; so easy, that every servant will cheat you; and so generous, that you will always exceed your income" (Austin 632). This means that they will continually be taken advantage of, which is seen to be true when Lydia and Hickman come to stay with them.

One can assure that Lydia and Hickman will overstay their welcome and use them not only because of their bad character but because Jane and Bentley are compliant and always seek the approval of others. Lydia and Hacksaw's relationship does not agree with society or Austin. Austin views this relationship as selfish and superficial. They think only of themselves when they run off and disgrace the Bennett family. Society definitely does not like the idea of Lydia and Hickman just running off cause society wants them to be married.

It is good that Lydia and Hickman get married, but, at the same time, it is not. They have no money except for the bride money that Hickman received from Dared and the little money he makes a year from the military. Because they do not have much money, they will have to be very cautious with their money, which does not seem likely with these two.