

The significance of walks in relationship development.

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Many say that walks bring out emotions that are otherwise unfelt. In *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen creates walks to portray characters' emotions and revelations. When looking into Darcy and Elizabeth's relationship, walks serve as important venues. When Elizabeth trudges in mud and dirt to Netherfield, on the famous muddy walk, she sparks Darcy's curiosity and affection. Three walks following the muddy skirt walk are vital for the buildup of Darcy and Elizabeth's affection. Austen invents these three walks, which follow Darcy's proposal, to stage the different steps in Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship. On these three walks Elizabeth is able to admit to her past prejudices, see and understand Darcy's character, and finally share with Darcy her feelings towards him.

The walk where Elizabeth receives Darcy's letter of explanation and apology marks an important disclosure of Elizabeth's character. Darcy's letter contains his intentions of separating Jane and Mr. Bingley, as well as the full story of himself and Mr. Wickham. After receiving the letter, Elizabeth becomes curious. She finds herself "studying every sentence: and her feelings towards its writer were at times widely different"(140). Elizabeth is quick to realize that she was too quick in judging Mr. Darcy's character. She states after reading the letter that she was "ashamed of herself. -Of Darcy could she think, without feeling that she had been blind, partial, prejudiced, absurd"(137). Ultimately, Elizabeth discovers that she is susceptible to error. Once she is able to accept her past mistake, Elizabeth begins to develop a subconscious love for Darcy. Elizabeth states "His attachment excited gratitude, his general character respect"(140). Darcy's letter forces Elizabeth to break from the prejudices that once prevented her from seeing Darcy's

positive characteristics. This process results in Elizabeth's new level of maturity. Once Elizabeth's mistaken prejudice surfaces, she is able to move past it and see Darcy in a new light.

Elizabeth's stay at Pemberley allows Austen to develop a scene in which Elizabeth is able to see Darcy's physical and emotional characteristics. Austen creates the second walk at Pemberley to give new evidence of Darcy's ability to charm others, especially Elizabeth. After receiving Darcy's letter of explanation and apology, Elizabeth describes her emotions as too complicated for her liking. From that moment on "they walked on in silence; each of them deep in thought. Elizabeth was not comfortable"(167).

However, during this walk, Elizabeth is able to move past her embarrassment and experience Darcy's charm. After Darcy speaks eloquently to Elizabeth's aunt and uncle, Elizabeth is "Amazed at the alteration in his manner since they last parted, and every sentence that he uttered was increasing her embarrassment"(163). For the first time in her life, Elizabeth does not know how to respond. Because of her confused emotions towards Darcy, Elizabeth is "the most uncomfortable in her life"(163). Although she is incapable of articulating her feelings directly to Darcy, Elizabeth begins to adjust her previous prejudices. Elizabeth admits to what she perceives as Darcy's changed behavior when she says "Why is he so altered? From what can it proceed? It cannot be for me, it cannot be for my sake that his manners are thus softened"(166). Once Elizabeth becomes aware of Darcy's changing behavior, she begins to understand the Darcy that she had once failed to perceive. Elizabeth observes him keenly and begins to see Darcy's ever so

attractive physical features: “ there is something pleasing about his mouth when he speaks. And there is something of dignity in his countenance, that would not give one an unfavorable idea of his heart”(167). Austen has cunningly created this walk in order to allow Elizabeth to discard her past prejudices of Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth’s new sensitivity towards Darcy’s attractive character allows her to fall deeply in love with him.

Austen introduces a third walk, at Longbourn, in order to solidify the continuing feelings Darcy has towards Elizabeth, as well as Elizabeth’s new feelings towards Darcy. Elizabeth is “ secretly forming a desperate resolution”(238). Elizabeth’s resolution is the possibility Darcy might propose once again. Elizabeth learns, while on this walk, that the way to Darcy’s heart is through civility. Elizabeth says to Mr. Darcy with a certain politeness, “ Mr. Darcy, I am a very selfish creature; and, for the sake of giving relief to my own feelings, care not how much I may be wounding your’s. I can no longer help thank you for unexampled kindness to my poor sister”(238). Following Elizabeth’s praise, Darcy, for the first time, admits his genuine love and affection towards Elizabeth: “ Much as I respect them, I believe, I thought only of you”(239). The sight and sound of Elizabeth, following his statement of love, gives Darcy a sign that “ her sentiments had undergone so material a change, since the period to which he alluded”(239). After Darcy observes Elizabeth’s transformed character, Elizabeth confirms Darcy’s speculation: “ the feelings of the person who wrote, and the person who received it, are now so widely different from what they were then, that every unpleasant circumstance attending it, ought to be forgotten”(240). By the

end of their walk at Longbourn, both Elizabeth and Darcy are able to see past their first impressions and look at each other with a new and positive perspective. Finally, the reader is able to see the two characters' loyal emotions towards each other. Austen skillfully creates this walk in order to bring to surface the emotions Darcy and Elizabeth had once kept to themselves.

Walks, in *Pride and Prejudice*, serve as places for love to develop as well as places where the reader can see directly into the minds of different characters. Throughout *Pride and Prejudice* the reader is constantly unable to be certain of characters' emotions since Austen employs a narrative that merely skirts along the emotions of her characters. Because of these walks, the reader can move past Austen's narration and directly into the developing minds of both Elizabeth and Darcy.