

# The business of her life

Business



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

“ A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!” So declares Mrs. Bennett, a mother of five daughters, about a newcomer to the region named Mr. Bingley.

In my experience, mothers mean well, but sometimes they can be a bit overwhelming when it comes to their daughters finding happiness in love. Mrs. Bennett is no exception. Neither is my mother. My mother is rather similar to Mrs.

Bennett in *Pride and Prejudice*. First of all, they are both matchmakers. Mrs. Bennett’s sole purpose in life is to marry off her daughters. This is stated at the very end of the first chapter: “ Her mind was less difficult to develop .

. . The business of her life was to get her daughters married. . . .

” (Volume I, Chapter 1). A little later, she expresses no opposition to a rich officer wanting to marry one of them. ” ‘ . . . And if a smart young colonel, with five or six thousand [pounds] a year, should want one of my girls, I shall not say nay to him.

. . .’”(Volume I, Chapter 7). Along those lines, she schemes to get all five daughters married well. She presses her husband to visit rich Mr.

Bingley, so that she and her daughters could meet him. Most notably, upon her oldest asking if she can take the carriage to Mr. Bingley’s house to eat with his sister, she replies, “ No, my dear, you had better go on horseback, because it seems likely to rain; and then you must stay all night.” (Volume I, Chapter 7). Consequently, Jane gets sick and has to stay there nearly a week.

Predictably, Mrs. Bennett takes delight in this. Also, she presses Elizabeth to accept Mr. Collins' proposal, Although I am the only daughter in my family, sometimes it feels my mom has the same object as Mrs. Bennett.

When dining out, if the cashier just happens to be a teenaged male, my mom will push me to be around them. " Why don't you go up and get us some more napkins." " I'll take the tray and find us a seat while you get the drinks." Then, if she perceives any sign of interest, she will tease me about it. And she wonders why I don't want to tell her who I like. Like many females, both my mother and Mrs.

Bennett are highly emotional. Mrs. Bennett frequently complains of her nerves to get attention. " Unable to contain herself," early in the book, she says to one of the younger daughters, " Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces.

" (Volume I, Chapter 7). She is also easily excited, and upset. When one of the girls runs away with her lover, Mr. Wickham, she " receives [the rest of the family] exactly as might be expected; with tears and lamentations of regret, invectives against the villainous conduct of Wickham, and complaints of her own suffering and ill usage; blaming every body but the person to whose ill judging indulgence the errors of her daughter must be principally owing." (Volume III, Chapter 5). Likewise, she and daughters can be very flighty.

Mr. Bennett says, " From all that I can collect by your manner of talking, you must be two of the silliest girls in the country. I have suspected it some time, but I am now convinced." (Volume I, Chapter 7). Mrs.

Bennett reproaches him for this, which may say something about the degree of her own silliness, as well as the fact that " the mother was found to be intolerable" by Mr Bingley's two sisters. In fact, when Elizabeth rejects Mr. Darcy's proposal because he separated Bingley and her sister Jane, he cites the " total want of propriety so frequently, so almost uniformly betrayed by [the mother], by [the] three younger sisters, and occasionally even [the] father" as a reason for doing so (Volume II, Chapter 12). I can certainly relate to the lack of propriety shown by my own mother. When on a college visit, a time where one wants to make a good impression, she asked about pranks. In fact, pranking is one of her favorite things to talk about.

Like Mrs. Bennett's complaints of nerves, this is absurd. Like most mothers, Mrs. Bennett cares for her daughters. Her desire to see them well married grows out of that affection, although as previously noted, she can carry it too far.

" My dear, dear Lydia!" she exclaims on receiving news that Lydia will soon be married. " I shall see her again! - She will be married at sixteen!" (Volume III, Chapter 7) One of her chief complaints is that Mr. Bennett's estate is " entailed in default of heirs male," (Volume I, Chapter 7) or in other words, when Mr. Bennett dies, his property will go to a male cousin instead of his own family, because they do not have any sons. Mrs.

Bennett does not appear to quite understand the concept, since Jane and Elizabeth have tried to explain it to her multiple times, but she doesn't listen and vehemently points out its injustice (Volume I, Chapter 13). She also oversympathizes with Jane when Bingley leaves the region without a word. I am sure my mother would do the same for me, and I must keep in mind that it comes from her love for me. In conclusion, there are several similarities between Mrs. Bennett and my mother. First, they are both trying to find eligible mates for their daughters.

Second, they are highly emotional. And finally, they both care for their offspring. In these ways, Mrs. Bennett and my mom are much the same.