

# Marriage in pride and prejudice

[Family](#), [Marriage](#)



Misery In today's world, 50 percent of marriages end in divorce. Although the other 50 percent of marriages don't end in divorce, not all those marriages are considered an ideal marriage. The concept of an ideal marriage has changed as time has progressed. An ideal marriage in our time is a marriage based on love and family. Most societies have always had the same perspective of an ideal marriage during their time periods. However, in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, the author defies the view of the ideal marriage of her society by giving her own perspective on an ideal marriage.

In the time period of *Pride and Prejudice*, society viewed ideal marriage as one based on financial stability and social equality. Although Jane Austen's view of an ideal marriage includes financial and social stability, love was a major factor as well. In the novel, Jane Austen writes about suitable marriages and unsuitable marriages. Although the marriages based on wealth and social class seem suitable through society's eyes, Jane Austen suggests those marriages to be unsuitable because of their lack of love and happiness.

In the novel, many of the marriages reflect society's view of marriage as a business affair and these marriages are quite unsuitable. Although Mr. and Mrs. Bennet have been married for 23 years, there is no mutual affection between them. Mr. Bennet married Mrs. Bennet because he was "captivated by [her] youth and beauty... he married a woman whose weak understanding and illiberal mind had very early in their marriage put an end to all real affection for her" (202). Mr. Bennet practically never communicates with his wife and when he does, he teases her for his own enjoyment.

Their marriage was solely based on physical attraction which has now faded away. Both of these characters were mismatched in personality and in social class. However, this couple isn't the only unsuitable marriage through Austen's eyes. Mr. Collins and Charlotte are a couple that exhibits everything Jane Austen is against, which is a marriage solely based on financial and social security. Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas married each other just for their own personal gain. When Mr. Collins proposed, "Miss Lucas, accepted him solely from the pure and disinterested desire of an establishment" (106).

Charlotte was 27 and single, her future didn't look great so marrying Mr. Collins was the best thing that could have happened. She is now set "considering Mr. Collins' character, connection and situation in life, [she was] convinced that [her] chance of happiness with him [was] as fair as most can boast on entering the marriage state" (109). Mr. and Mrs. Collins aren't really a couple based on love and happiness which is what Jane Austen considered suitable. She marries a man who is richer and socially higher than her. Although Mr. and Mrs.

Collins' marriage was considered ideal by society, Jane Austen thought it to be unsuitable. Jane Austen's ideal marriage is a marriage based on love and happiness but also the aspects of society's ideal marriage which includes financial and social stability. Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet and Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy all exhibit the qualities of marriage that are considered suitable by Jane Austen. Mr. Bingley is an extremely wealthy modest man who never judges anyone and Jane is a quiet gentle woman who never thinks badly of anyone.

Both these characters are matched perfectly and are one of the rare couples in the novel who genuinely love each other though their love seems very superficial. Although Jane and Mr. Bingley exhibit an ideal marriage, their love has no depth. Mr. Bingley doesn't seem to care about marrying a woman based on her social class or wealth. He believes love is more important than the match of social class in a marriage. This is seen when Mr. Darcy convinces Mr. Bingley that Jane doesn't actually love him and Bingley abandons Jane.

Since love matters he doesn't want to be with someone who doesn't love him back. However, they had an instant connection: "it was generally evident whenever they met he did admire her; and to her it was equally evident that Jane was yielding to the preference which she had begun to entertain for him from the first, and was in a way to be very much in love"(16). They are both in love, both happy, and are both financially secure, exhibiting an ideal marriage for Jane Austen. However there was a couple that was more ideal through Jane Austen's eyes.

Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth Bennet epitomize the ideal marriage for Jane Austen. At first, Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth disliked each other and had no initial attraction towards one another. However, as the novel progresses, their attraction for each other grows and soon they fall in love. Elizabeth isn't a woman who doesn't want to marry just for financial security or to be higher within the social class. Her view of marriage is different than her friends; Elizabeth "had always felt that Charlotte's opinion of matrimony was not exactly like her own, but she could not have supposed it possible that when called into action, she would have sacrificed every better feeling to worldly

advantage” (110). Charlotte represents society’s view of marriage in her time period which regarded marriage as a business affair. However, Elizabeth is one of the few characters to believe that marriage is based on love. Mr. Darcy is the wealthiest man in the novel and with that kind of wealth, he could marry anyone.

However, he chooses Elizabeth who is part of a lower class than him proving that he wants to marry Elizabeth because he is in love with her. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are both physically attractive, intelligent, and they both love each other dearly. They are the ideal couple in Jane Austen’s eyes. Jane Austen suggests the marriages that are based on social class and wealth to be unsuitable although they seem ideal through society’s eyes. Austen believed that a suitable marriage had to include love and happiness on top of financial security and social class.

However, through society’s eyes “ happiness in marriage [was] entirely a matter of chance” (18). Although in today’s world there are arranged marriages based on social class and wealth, most people in today’s society believe marriage to be based on a foundation of love which links back to Austen’s belief of marriage. Although Jane believed that a suitable marriage had to include love, financial security and physical attraction, today’s society believes a suitable marriage can be solely based on love for one another.