

# Pride and prejudice

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**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Questions 1. Jane Austen's original title for the novel was First Impressions. What role do first impressions play in Pride and Prejudice?

C1: Pride and Prejudice is, first and foremost, a novel about surmounting obstacles and achieving romantic happiness. For Elizabeth, the heroine, and Darcy, her eventual husband, the chief obstacle resides in the book's original title: First Impressions. Darcy, the proud, prickly noblewoman's nephew, must break free from his original dismissal of Elizabeth as "not handsome enough to tempt me," and from his class-based prejudice against her lack of wealth and family connections. Elizabeth's first impressions, meanwhile, catalogue Darcy as arrogant and self-satisfied; as a result, she later accepts slanderous accusations against him as true. Both Elizabeth and Darcy are forced to come to grips with their own initial mistakes. Structurally, the first half of the novel traces Darcy's progression to the point at which he is able to admit his love in spite of his prejudice. In the second half, Elizabeth's mistaken impressions are supplanted by informed realizations about Darcy's true character. Darcy's two proposals to Elizabeth chart the mature development of their relationship. He delivers the first at the mid-point of the novel, when he has realized his love for Elizabeth but has not yet escaped his prejudices against her family, and when she is still in the grip of her first, negative impression of him. The second proposal—in which Darcy humbly restates his love for her and Elizabeth, now with full knowledge of Mr. Darcy's good character, happily accepts—marks the arrival of the two characters, each finally achieving the ability to view the other through unprejudiced eyes.

C2: First impressions and separation of social classes plays a very active role in the whole theme of Pride and Prejudice. In this novel by Jane Austen, we don't only see how first impressions effect relationships, but we also how the characters in this story experience transformation through their experiences of first impressions, pride and prejudice. First impressions cause these characters' preconceived notions, based on wealth and class to activate more pride and prejudice against each other. Elizabeth Bennet's first impression of Mr. Darcy is that he is "proud, above his company, and above being pleased," (ch. 3) while Mr. Darcy's first impression of Elizabeth is that she is not handsome enough to tempt him. The fact that her and her family are not wealthy and her mother is a bit overwhelming and pushy also has an impact on Mr. Darcy's pride and prejudice toward Elizabeth. Furthermore, Elizabeth's pride and prejudice toward Mr. Darcy continues to grow stronger. She is oblivious of his admiration toward her, because she figures a man like him would never love her and she could never love a man with so much pride and conceit. With the confusion of Mr. Darcy's true character it takes her almost the entire novel to discover the truth about him: the truth about him and Wickham and his true reasoning for parting Bingley and Jane. Pride and Prejudice is a story about a man who changes into a better man and his true and upstanding character, and he blossoms into a true gentleman.

It's also about a woman who changes because her perception of this man has been clarified. Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy learn to see beyond their first impressions of each other and learn how to make things right. Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy act out of misjudgment, pride, prejudice, and lack of open communication right from the very beginning of their acquaintance.

Although they are both extremely guilty of these character flaws, Elizabeth accomplished a greater transformation because, ironically, her pride and prejudice exceeded Mr. Darcy, who was known throughout the entire first two volumes for his pride and prejudice. They are much alike in character, however, and they both undergo great transformation. The fact that Mr. Darcy is rich and of a higher class than Elizabeth seems to lead her to immediately assume his lack of interest in anything else going on around him at the balls is influenced by his wealth. " I should have judged better had I sought an introduction; but I am ill qualified to recommend myself to strangers...

I certainly have not the talent which some people possess of conversing easily with those I have never seen before. I cannot catch their tone of conversation, or appear interested in their concerns, as I often see done. " I think what Elizabeth hasn't come to know about Mr. Darcy yet, is that he isn't shallow or as snooty as she conceives. I think he just doesn't relate to the surface level conversations, about who is interested in who, and who is wealthy and who is beautiful or not, and who should marry who and dance with who, kind of talk. Early in the novel Mr. Darcy judges Elizabeth, saying that she is not handsome enough to tempt him. Mr. Darcy is not this shallow, however. Later it is described that he looks for a woman of intelligence, one who reads, writes, and basically, one who has a mind to think on her own. Elizabeth's boldness and ability to speak her opinion is what ultimately attracts him to her and when she enters a room he can't keep his eyes off her. He finds beauty in this and not in a Miss Bingley type: self minded, air headed, moneyhungry, and conceited.

His mind changes about Elizabeth as he discovers the depth of her personality. Elizabeth perceives Mr. Darcy's quick wits and response to her comments as prideful, but actually I think they both challenge each other's minds and patterns of thinking in a positive way. This is so attractive about Elizabeth to Mr. Darcy. Mr. Darcy also bases his prejudice and misjudgment of Elizabeth based on her pushy, boisterous mother. Her mother turns him off from the Bennet family entirely, and foolishly he turns Mr. Bingley off from Jane as well, not only for that reason but because he didn't believe Jane felt any affection for Mr. Bingley. These were misjudgments on Mr. Darcy's behalf for Elizabeth sometimes can't even stand her own mother and Jane truly did have affection for Mr. Bingley. Mr. Darcy acted immaturely, without knowing the fullness of the situation. Later when Elizabeth confronts and reveals the truth to Mr. Darcy, he honestly feels remorse, and later fixes his mistake. In the same manner Elizabeth makes judgments also about Mr. Darcy and Wickham. Elizabeth believes Wickham's story about him and Mr. Darcy when they've only just met. Elizabeth has not begun to understand Wickham's character, yet she believes him whole heartedly without first asking Mr. Darcy about that matter.

She foolishly allows her prejudice to grow inside her against Mr. Darcy; and she even talks to her family and friends, causing distaste in their mouths as well. This is immature and prejudice in the fullest. Mr. Darcy, after several miscommunications between Elizabeth and himself finally admits his faults of pride and ignorance. He got to explain himself as well. His true character unraveled as more events took place. His maid spoke so highly of him and all

that he has done for others and especially his sister. He has never shown anger, pride, or prejudice to any of his servants. He makes things right with Elizabeth and the Jane and Bingley situation and even helps Lydia and Wickham after all that had happened. These are true advancements of his character from false first impressions to humbling himself and admitting fault. For Elizabeth, it isn't until Chapter 13, Volume 2 that she admits herself of being "blind, partial, prejudiced, and absurd. She admits she has acted despicably, by priding herself on her discernment. "Vanity, not love, has been my folly. Pleased with the preference of one, and offended by the neglect of the other, on the very beginning of our acquaintance, I have courted prepossession [pride] and ignorance, and driven reason away where either were concerned. Till this moment, I never knew myself. " In my opinion, this is the greatest moment, the pivotal point in Elizabeth's character transformation.

Elizabeth finally realizes first impression, her pride and prejudice have been false and wrong toward Mr. Darcy. Both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy could not have experienced such a character transformation as these if it weren't for their initial first impressions of each other. They grew to know one another better and deeper; they caused each other to mature and transform into a greater man and a greater woman. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy were both so stubborn about what they thought about each other for most of the novel that it caused them to see each other unclearly; luckily they overcame their false first impressions and were able to see the truth about each other and help each other grow. C3: First Impressions The original title for *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen was *First Impressions*. Even though *Pride and*

Prejudice is a well thought out title for the novel, First Impressions is what the novel really is about. The novel is based on Elizabeth and what her impressions are about the people she decided to associate herself with. Elizabeth's first impressions of Wickham and Darcy ended up being completely opposite of what she thought. First impression fits the title description better than Pride and Prejudice based on the fact the novel has everything to do with first impressions. Elizabeth's first encounter with Darcy is at the ball. She, as well as the rest of the neighborhoods first impression of Darcy is that of which, he is a rude, arrogant man who thinks he is too good to dance with any of the girls at the dance because of the mere fact he has to much pride to dance with someone beneath him.

This means more to Elizabeth because she happens to overhear the conversation Darcy has with Mr. Bingley. Darcy refused to dace with Elizabeth because she isn't as handsome as Jane. Referring to Elizabeth Darcy says, " She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humorous at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me. " Elizabeth tries to shack the comment off by proceeding to enjoy the night with disregard to the insult she has just received. She later on learns from Wickham, Darcy is exactly what she thought him out to be and worse. Wickham tells her after Darcy's father, whom he admired so greatly passed away he had no were to go because Darcy had turned his back on Wickham and left him to be what he is today, a solider. Because of her understanding of who Darcy is, Elizabeth more than happily refuses Darcy proposal for marriage. She says to Darcy," Had not my

own feelings decided against you, had they been indifferent, or had they even been favorable, do you think that my consideration would tempt me to accept the man, who has been the means of ruining, perhaps forever, the happiness of a most beloved sister"... I have every reason in the world to think ill of you? " Elizabeth finds out Darcy was not the dreadful man Wickham made him out to be.

In essence of her new understanding for Darcy, Elizabeth begins to ease up on Darcy by not being as harsh and cruel to him as she previously had been. She finds out from her aunt, Darcy was the man who spared her family shame, to their name by paying off Wickham to marry Lydia. For this Elizabeth is truly grateful and thanks Darcy for what good he has done for her family. Elizabeth says to Darcy,. "... I can no longer help thanking you for your unexampled kindness to my poor sister. Ever since I have known it, I have been most anxious to acknowledge to you how grateful I feel it. Were it known the rest of my family, I should not have merely my gratitude to express. " Elizabeth begins to love Darcy for what he really is. Wickham is first introduced to Elizabeth when Lydia proposes the idea of going to Meryton with all of her sister except Mary because she refuses to play along. Elizabeth thinks very highly of Wickham. She believes he is a victim in Darcy's plan to ruin Wickham's life. Wickham makes it seem to Elizabeth the only reason he became an officer was because Darcy ruined his only chances of a life in the Church. Wickham proceed to tell Elizabeth about Darcy's horrible manners, by telling her," A military life is not what I intended for, but circumstances have not made it eligible. The church ought to have been my profession-I was brought up for the church, and I should at times been in



possession of a most valuable living, had it pleased the gentlemen we were speaking of now. " With this new Knowledge of Darcy's wrong doings to Wickham, Elizabeth began to despise Darcy more than she had and feels sorry for what Darcy had done to Wickham. Elizabeth learns to find out what Wickham really stands for when she finds out the truth through Darcy's letter.

Wickham was a man of greed and couldn't be trusted. He resigned from the churches to practice law with the thousand pounds Darcy most generously provided him, in the intention Darcy would succeed. When Darcy heard from Wickham nearly three years later he refused to grant Wickham the money he intended to receive a second time from Darcy. He goes on by asking Elizabeth not to blame him for his refusal to Wickham grant, " You will hardly blame me for refusing to comply with this intreaty, or for resisting every repetition of it . " Her impression of Wickham changes entirely after reading the letter. Her impression of Wickham is now that of which she once thought of Darcy. Knowing of Wickham's ways Elizabeth begged of her father to deny Lydia of accompanying Colonel Millar's wife in Brighton. Soon enough Elizabeth received a letter from Jane announcing what she had feared all along about Lydia's departure to Brighton. Jane writes," An express came... from Colonel Forster, to inform us that she had gone off to Scotland with one of his officers; to own the truth, with Wickham! " Knowledge of this incident only proved to Elizabeth, Wickham's true colors. In this occasion Elizabeth's first impression of Wickham was completely wrong, and only to find out Darcy was the victim all along. First Impressions, better fits the description of the novel. Elizabeth's first impressions of Darcy and Wickham were

completely opposite of what she first believed them to be. The novel is based on Elizabeth's first impression of the two gentlemen.

Elizabeth's knowledge of the truth is what the whole novel is based on. For that reason Jane Austen's previous title of, *First Impressions* should have been kept instead of what is now *Pride and Prejudice*.

2. Analyze how Austen depicts Mr. Bennet. Is he a positive or negative figure? Mr. Bennet's chief characteristics are an ironic detachment and a sharp, cutting wit. The distance that he creates between himself and the absurdity around him often endears him to the reader and parallels the amused detachment with which Austen treats ridiculous characters such as Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine. To associate the author's point of view with that of Mr. Bennet, however, is to ignore his ultimate failure as a father and husband. He is endlessly witty, but his distance from the events around him makes him an ineffective parent. Detached humor may prove useful for handling the Mr. Collinses of the world, but it is helpless against the depredations of the villainous (but likable) Wickham.

When the crisis of Lydia's elopement strikes, Mr. Bennet proves unable to handle the situation. Darcy, decent and energetic, and the Gardiners, whose intelligence, perceptiveness, and resourcefulness make them the strongest adult force in the novel, must step in. He is a likable, entertaining character, but he never manages to earn the respect of the reader.

3. Discuss the importance of dialogue to character development in the novel. All of Austen's many characters come alive through dialogue, as the

narrative voice in Austen's work is secondary to the voices of the characters. Long, unwieldy speeches are rare, as are detailed physical descriptions. In their place, the reader hears the crackle of quick, witty conversation. True nature reveals itself in the way the characters speak: Mr. Bennet's emotional detachment comes across in his dry wit, while Mrs. Bennet's hysterical excess drips from every sentence she utters. Austen's dialogue often serves to reveal the worst aspects of her characters—Miss Bingley's spiteful, snobbish attitudes are readily apparent in her words, and Mr. Collins's long-winded speeches (and occasional letters, which are a kind of secondary dialogue) carry with them a tone-deaf pomposity that defines his character perfectly. Dialogue can also conceal bad character traits: Wickham, for instance, hides his rogue's heart beneath the patter of pleasant, witty banter, and he manages to take Elizabeth in with his smooth tongue (although his good looks help as well). Ultimately, though, good conversational ability and general goodness of personality seem to go hand in hand. It is no accident that Darcy and Elizabeth are the best conversationalists in the book: *Pride and Prejudice* is the story of their love, and for the reader, that love unfolds through the words they share.

4. Discuss Charlotte and Bingley Charlotte is 27, which is much older than the Bennett daughters. Because of this she sees marriage with a totally different perspective. Charlotte feels the urgency stronger to become married, more for practicality than for love. She tells Elizabeth she is not a romantic as she is, but is more concerned with "establishment and a comfortable home." Charlotte believes it is safe to marry Mr. Collins because of his clergyman position, connections, and inheritance of Longbourn. In my

opinion, these are not the most important reasons for marriage, although they are fair to Mr. Collins. It seems Mr. Collins isn't looking for love either, since he did inquire about marrying Jane and actually proposed to Elizabeth. Mr. Collins is looking for a companion and wife to occupy his home and help him to set an appropriate example of marriage to his congregation as he says. This is a fair engagement for they both have alternate motives of marriage: love not being the core foundation. One of the pros of this kind of marriage is that both do state that each other will make themselves happy, probably because their own personal needs will be met. They come to the marriage with expectation that can easily be fulfilled. Charlotte and Mr. Collins can be certain of companionship and loyalty to one another, as they both portray that this opportunity of marriage is scarce. One of the cons of this marriage would be the lack of a love and passion for one another based solely on each other's personalities, common interests, physical attraction, ability to make each other happy even without wealth and connections. These are the things that were most important to me when choosing the man I wanted and did marry. Particularly amongst my group of friends, these are the most important aspects of relationship: common interests, real love, and common moral and religious beliefs, and so on. This isn't always the case, but definitely times have changed since this book was written.

5. Elizabeth The heroine of *Pride and Prejudice*, Miss Elizabeth Bennet, is one of classical fiction's most celebrated and loved characters. Austen's assessment that Elizabeth was 'as delightful a creature to have ever appeared in print' seems even today to be shared by a great many members of the reading public.

Important Quotations Explained 1. It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife. This is the first sentence of *Pride and Prejudice* and stands as one of the most famous first lines in literature. Even as it briskly introduces the arrival of Mr. Bingley at Netherfield—the event that sets the novel in motion—this sentence also offers a miniature sketch of the entire plot, which concerns itself with the pursuit of “single men in possession of a good fortune” by various female characters. The preoccupation with socially advantageous marriage in nineteenth-century English society manifests itself here, for in claiming that a single man “must be in want of a wife,” the narrator reveals that the reverse is also true: a single woman, whose socially prescribed options are quite limited, is in (perhaps desperate) want of a husband.

2. “Which do you mean? and turning round, he looked for a moment at Elizabeth, till catching her eye, he withdrew his own and coldly said, “She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men. You had better return to your partner and enjoy her smiles, for you are wasting your time with me.”

These words describe Darcy’s reaction at the Meryton ball in Chapter 3 to Bingley’s suggestion that he dance with Elizabeth. Darcy, who sees the people of Meryton as his social inferiors, haughtily refuses to condescend to dancing with someone “not handsome enough” for him. Moreover, he does so within range of Elizabeth, thereby establishing a reputation among the entire community for pride and bad manners. His sense of social superiority,

artfully exposed in this passing comment, later proves his chief difficulty in admitting his love for Elizabeth. The rudeness with which Darcy treats Elizabeth creates a negative impression of him in her mind, one that will linger for nearly half of the novel, until the underlying nobility of his character is gradually revealed to her.