



# **Pride and Prejudice**

**A novel by  
Jane Austen**

# Themes in the novel

- 1. Money and love**
- 2. Education**
- 3. Whose pride and whose prejudice?**
- 4. Austen's writing style**

# Summary (1/3)

*Pride and Prejudice* is set in rural England in the early 19th century, and it follows the [Bennet family](#), which includes five very different sisters. Mrs. Bennet is anxious to see all her daughters married, especially as the modest family estate is to be inherited by William Collins when Mr. Bennet dies. At a ball, the wealthy and newly arrived Charles Bingley takes an immediate interest in the eldest Bennet daughter, the beautiful and shy Jane.. Although Austen shows them intrigued by each other, she reverses the convention of first impressions: pride of rank and fortune and [prejudice](#) against the social inferiority of Elizabeth's family hold Darcy aloof, while Elizabeth is equally fired both by the pride of self-respect and by prejudice against Darcy's snobbery.

# Summary (2/3)

- Elizabeth encounters the charming George Wickham, a military officer. There is a mutual attraction between the two, and he informs her that Darcy has denied him his inheritance. Darcy, however, has grown increasingly fond of Elizabeth, admiring her intelligence and vitality. While visiting the now-married Charlotte, Elizabeth sees Darcy, who professes his love for her and proposes. A surprised Elizabeth refuses his offer, and, when Darcy demands an explanation, she accuses him of breaking up Jane and Bingley. Darcy subsequently writes Elizabeth a letter in which he explains that he separated the couple largely because he did not believe Jane returned Bingley's affection. He also discloses that Wickham, after squandering his inheritance, tried to marry Darcy's

# Summary (3/3)

15-year-old sister in an attempt to gain possession of her fortune. With these revelations, Elizabeth begins to see Darcy in a new light. Shortly thereafter the youngest Bennet sister, Lydia, elopes with Wickham. The news is met with great alarm by Elizabeth, since the scandalous affair—which is unlikely to end in marriage—could ruin the reputation of the other Bennet sisters. When she tells Darcy, he persuades Wickham to marry Lydia, offering him money. Despite Darcy's attempt to keep his intervention a secret, Elizabeth learns of his actions. At the encouragement of Darcy, Bingley subsequently returns, and he and Jane become engaged. Finally, Darcy proposes again to Elizabeth, who this time accepts.



## Money and love

- Jane marries Bingley for love, but Bingley is also rich.
- Darcy falls in love with Elizabeth and she cannot help but be overwhelmed by his palatial house.
- Lydia marries Wickham because she feels passionately attracted to him and does not try to apply her power of judgement in assessing Wickham.
- Charlotte does not love Mr. Collins but she feels that he can give her security.



## Education

- Love educates both Jane, Elizabeth and last but not the least Darcy.
- All of them admit that initially they had acted on the spur of the moment and had therefore fallen victims to errors of judgement.

# Whose pride and whose prejudice?

- Both Darcy and Elizabeth suffer from pride and prejudice.
- Darcy has more pride because of his rank and is, therefore, prejudiced towards Elizabeth and her family.
- Elizabeth is confident of her powers of judgement and consequently falls a victim of prejudice.



# Austen's writing style (1/2)

- **Irony** - The title of the novel contains a hidden strain of thematic irony. Jane Austen subtly introduces an inversion in the thematic foibles, 'Pride' and 'Prejudice' and the characters they belong to. It is Darcy who is supposed to have the pride and Elizabeth who is supposed to have the prejudice. But in their misunderstandings with each other, they accuse each other of excessive pride and prejudice. Many other instances of irony can be found in the novel.

# Austen's writing style (2/2)

**Humour** - Austen utilizes humour through her characters. Mrs. Bennet, with her close-mindedness and her fixation over trivial things – a new neighbour at Netherfield, prospects of marriage for her daughters (at the cost of pneumonia for one of them) – is an example of Austen poking fun at the women of her time. Austen has created a character in Mrs Bennet who we find to be increasingly annoying, and who we laugh at for her ignorance. Mr. Collins is also used for the occasional giggle, in that he is overly polite. His politeness is shown through his excessive bowing, and we see him as silly for his continuous glorification of Lady Catherine.