



PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

THE OFFICIAL GRAND THEATRE STUDY GUIDE

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About the Author

Author Jane Austen was born December 6 1775 in Hampshire, England. She was the seventh of eight children born to William George Austen, the rector of the Anglican parish in Steventon, Hampshire and Cassandra Leigh. Her father's side of the family made a comfortable living in the manufacturing sector but in order to supplement their own income, William George Austen also tutored and took up farming.

Little is known of Jane Austen's biography, as most of it was recorded by members of her family 50 years after her death, who were very biased about what they included and excluded. Other aspects have been pieced together from the surviving letter correspondence between her and her family, however, many letters were destroyed or have been censored by her only sister, Cassandra Elizabeth, and heirs of one of her brothers, Admiral Francis Austen.

Jane Austen was very close to her family, particularly her sister, Cassandra and brother, Henry Thomas. As a child, Jane and Cassandra were sent to Oxford where they were taught by one of their relatives, Ann Cawley. While there, they were both infected with typhus and Jane nearly died at the age of eight. In 1785, the two were sent to boarding school in Reading, Berkshire and remained there for about a year until the family could no longer afford to keep them there. Jane received the rest of her education at home from her father, older brothers and by reading the numerous books in her father's library. Her father encouraged her to write and bought her expensive paper and writing tools. In order to entertain her family, Austen began writing poems and stories and putting on plays with close friends and family.

Between 1787 and 1793, Austen bound 29 of her pieces into three notebooks, which has since been titled *Juvenilia*. As late as 1814, her niece and nephew, Anna and James, made additions and revisions to Austen's humorous *Juvenilia*, which has been compared to the television sketch comedy show, *Monty Python*.

In 1793, Austen decided to write more professional pieces, starting with *Lady Susan*. This sophisticated novella focused on a woman's quest for a suitable husband for herself and her daughter, using manipulation, abuse and betrayal along the way. Austen found love

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herself shortly after in 1795. Tom Lefroy, the nephew of one of her neighbours, had recently graduated university and was visiting his family before heading to London to train as a barrister. Austen and Lefroy quickly fell in love, but neither had money and therefore could not get married. Lefroy was sent away early to his great uncle's in Ireland who was financing his education and career. He never saw Jane again.

Elinor and Marianne was Austen's first attempt at a novel. Written in 1796, the novel was developed into *Sense and Sensibility* by 1811. Her second novel, *First Impressions*, was completed by the summer of 1797 and her family loved it so much that her father began looking for a publisher but was unsuccessful. Austen then revised *Elinor and Marianne* and started on a third novel, *Northanger Abbey*. In 1803 her brother, Henry, sold the rights to the novel to London publisher Benjamin Crosby for 10 British pounds. Crosby never published the book and eventually sold the rights back to Austen in 1816.

In 1800 her father, Rev. Austen, retired and moved the family to Bath, Somerset. Jane, unhappy about leaving her childhood home, hardly wrote at all for the next few years.

In 1801, Austen fell in love once again. All that is known about this fling was that the man died shortly after their meeting. In December 1802, Austen was visiting friends, Alethea and Catherine Bigg, when their brother, Harris Bigg-Wither, proposed to her. Bigg-Wither had known Austen since childhood and had recently graduated from Oxford University. She initially accepted his proposal, as it was good for her family, but changed her mind the following day. Although her reasoning is unknown, it has been speculated that she simply was not attracted to him, as he was said to be a plain man who hardly ever spoke, and decided that her own happiness was more important than money. Like her sister, Jane Austen never married.

In 1804, Austen started working on another novel, *The Watsons*, about a clergyman with four unmarried daughters and little money, but stopped after her father suddenly grew ill and died January 21 1805. Jane now found herself in a situation quite similar to *The Watsons* plot, as her father's death left her, her mother and

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her single sister in serious financial trouble. The three ladies lived in rentals, thanks to financial contributions from Jane's brothers Edward, James, Henry and Francis until Francis allowed them to move in with him and his wife in Southampton in 1806. They remained there until 1809 when Edward offered his cottage as permanent residence for his mother and two sisters on his estate in Chawton village. Since, the cottage has been transformed into the Jane Austen's House Museum. This gave Austen the opportunity to write again while she worked with the poor and taught local children.

Austen was very secretive about her writing, often hiding her manuscripts and working behind closed doors. Only her immediate family knew of her talent as she had published her novels anonymously. In addition to the repression of females, the Napoleonic Wars that occurred between 1800 and 1815 throughout Europe led to censorship of literature, which is presumably the reason Austen chose to remain anonymous. Thanks to Henry, *Sense and Sensibility* was anonymously published by Thomas Egerton, in October 1811 to good reviews and sold out by mid 1813. *First Impressions* was published in early 1813 with its new title, *Pride and Prejudice*, and was successful enough to warrant a second release by the fall. This provided Austen with some financial stability for the first time since her father's death and friends and relatives began to speculate that Jane was the author of the two novels after all. *Mansfield Park* was published in 1814 and despite poor reviews, sold out in six months and made more money than her previous novels had. Austen switched to a better known publisher, John Murray, and successfully released *Emma* in 1815. A second edition of *Mansfield Park* followed shortly after, but did not sell well and offset the profits from *Emma*.

The Austen family was once again in financial trouble when Henry's bank failed in March 1816 and he could no longer support his mother and sisters. Around the same time, Jane Austen began to grow ill. She ignored her health problems and continued working on her next novel, *The Elliots* (which was later renamed *Persuasion*), which was finished in August 1816. She started on *The Brothers* (also known as *Sanditon*) and completed 12 chapters before she was confined to bed in April 1817. In May, she moved

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to Winchester where she could receive better treatment, but died on July 18 at the age of 41 from Addison's disease.

In December 1817, Cassandra and Henry encouraged John Murray to publish *Persuasions* and *Northanger Abbey* as a set which included a biographical note that identified Jane Austen as the author for the first time.

Austen's novels remained unpublished for over a decade until Richard Bentley purchased the copyrights in 1832 and published them in five illustrated volumes. In October 1833, he published the first collected edition of Jane Austen which has remained in print ever since. Her stories, which often critiqued woman's dependence on marriage to bring financial stability, have since become widely accepted and studied, making her one of the most widely read writers and spurring over 100 prequels, sequels and adaptations for print, the stage and the screen.

Adapted by

James Maxwell was born on March 23 1929 in Worcester, Massachusetts, but spent most of his life living in the United Kingdom. He worked as an actor, director, artistic director and playwright. After graduating from Yale, he moved to England with the dream of becoming an actor and was accepted into the Old Vic Theatre School in Bristol.

Over the years, Maxwell toured with the Broadway musical, *Kiss Me Kate* and acted onstage in various theatres throughout England including the Old Vic , Piccolo Theatre and the University Theatre in Manchester. By 1974, he had become the artistic director at Manchester Cathedral where he also performed.

In 1976, Maxwell was one of the founders of the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, England along with other artistic directors, Michael Elliott, Casper Wrede, Richard Negri and Braham Murray. He had met Wrede and Negri while attending the Old Vic Theatre School and had remained in touch with them over the years. As an actor, Maxwell had numerous minor roles on television and performed with the Royal Exchange in plays such as *The Rivals*, *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* and *Long Day's Journey into Night*. He appeared alongside Sean Connery in the 1975 film, *Ransom*. He

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also wrote several stage adaptations for the theatre including *Pride and Prejudice* and *Great Expectations*.

Maxwell died in London, England on August 18 1995, leaving behind his wife, Avril Elgar and their two sons. It is rumored that his ghost still haunts the Royal Exchange Theatre which was featured in an episode of the television show "Most Haunted".

Alan Stanford was born in England in 1949 and then moved to Ireland in 1969 where he has lived since. There he became one of Ireland's leading actors and directors and now has over 30 years experience in the industry. He began his directing career at the Project Arts Centre in Dublin, Ireland in the early 1970's with shows by Shakespeare, Shaw, Brecht and Graham Greene.

As an actor, Stanford has been very successful with his portrayals of Pozzo in *Waiting for Godot* and Hamm in *Endgame* which he has performed on tour throughout Canada, England, the United States and Australia. He has been nominated for several Harveys Theatre Awards for Best Actor for his roles in *Uncle Vanya*, *Pygmalion* and *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, and won the award for *Amadeus*, where he played Salieri. He has also had several small roles on television including *Law and Order* and *The Tudors*.

At the Gate Theatre in Dublin, Stanford has directed many shows including *Great Expectations*, *A Christmas Carol* and *The Picture of Dorian Grey*. For the Gate Theatre, he has adapted many works including *Oliver Twist* in 2000, *Jane Eyre* in 2003 and Charles Dickens' *The Old Curiosity Shop* in 2008. He also re-adapted James Maxwell's 1991 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* in 2002 for the Gate Theatre stage.

Stanford was a founder of the Second Age Theatre Company in Dublin, which opened in 1989 without any public funding, where he has served as Artistic Director since 2000. He has directed numerous Shakespeare works for the theatre including *As You Like It*, *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet* and has performed in a few productions as well. In 2006, Stanford was elected to serve a five year term with the Arts Council of Ireland, which he graciously accepted. In addition to serving this term, Stanford continues to work as Artistic Director at the Second Age Theatre Company.

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About the Book

Pride and Prejudice was written by Jane Austen between 1796 and 1797 under the working title, *First Impressions*. After being rejected from publishers, Austen made significant revisions to the satirical novel between 1811 and 1812 including changing its title. After her first novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, was successfully published, Austen sold the rights to *Pride and Prejudice* for £110 (or \$6 500 U.S.) to Thomas Egerton. Egerton published the novel in three volumes in January 1813. Although it did not receive a lot of attention from critics, the first edition quickly sold out, prompting a second release in November of that year and a third release in 1817. It was also translated and released in French in 1813, and later published in Danish, German and Swedish. It wasn't released in the United States until 1832 under the title *Elizabeth Bennet or Pride and Prejudice*.

The few critics that did review the novel praised Austen's ability to create vivid characters, but scrutinized the fact that she did not explore the lower class. They also spent a significant amount of time focusing on the novel's title. This may, however, be futile as it is speculated that the title was changed from *First Impressions* to *Pride and Prejudice* for commercial reasons only. In order to create continuity and connect *Pride and Prejudice* with *Sense and Sensibility*, it was logical to use a similar title. Also, after the completion of *First Impressions*, two other novels were released with that title, one by Margaret Holford and another by Horace Smith.

The world that Austen creates in *Pride and Prejudice* significantly focuses on gender roles, social etiquette and class division. Young women must be chaperoned while attending social functions and while in the company of men. Men hardly work at all and are entitled to inheritance. Women do not have formal occupations, are responsible for running the household and receive dowries from their fathers when they marry. Austen does however suggest that the Bennets have more freedom than those of the higher class, such as Mr. Darcy. For example, Mr. Bennet allows Elizabeth to choose her own husband, while Mr. Darcy defies his family by choosing Elizabeth over Miss Anne de Bourgh. It was rare to find middle or working class characters as the focus of a novel at the time, as aristocratic and wealthy characters were customarily the protagonists. Since majority of Austen's readers belonged to the

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middle class, it a wise decision to place the Bennets in this class as well. In fact, many of her readers believed that her novels were real and not fiction, claiming they knew or had met many of the characters. By using this approach, Austen helped launch a movement that lead to an increase of working class characters appearing in fiction.

Pride and Prejudice was written nearly 200 years ago, yet remains popular in today's society. It was named runner-up to *The Lord of the Rings* in a 2003 poll conducted by the BBC for "UK's Best-Loved Book". In 2008 an Australian survey named *Pride and Prejudice* number one of the 101 best books ever written. It has inspired many adaptations including novels, films, television mini-series, stage versions and a Broadway musical. In March of 2009, Quirk Books released a science fiction adaptation integrating zombies and cannibalism into Austen's original work entitled *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies*.

About the Play

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* has been adapted numerous times for the stage and screen. In 1995, *Pride and Prejudice* was adapted into a six-part miniseries on BBC starring Colin Firth as Mr. Darcy. In October 2008 an adapted musical version debuted at the Eastman Theatre in Rochester, NY with the possibility of moving to Broadway. There have also been two motion pictures produced, one in 1940 starring Laurence Olivier as Mr. Darcy and another in 2005 starring Keira Knightly as Elizabeth Bennet, who received an Academy Award nomination for her portrayal. The story also influenced a Bollywood film, *Bride and Prejudice* in 2004 and the *Bridget Jones's Diary* novels and movies by Helen Fielding. For the stage, there are countless numbers of adaptations available and new ones being written every year.

In February 1991, The Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester, England held the world premiere of James Maxwell's adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. Maxwell also directed the production in which his wife, Avril Elgar played Mrs. Bennet. The three-hour long production was successful and toured throughout the U.K. that summer.

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Play Synopsis

In 2002, Maxwell's version of *Pride and Prejudice* was adapted by Alan Stanford for The Gate Theatre in Dublin, Ireland. Alan also directed this production which received mixed reviews from the media. Some critics felt the characters were exaggerated stock types and that Justine Mitchell's portrayal of Elizabeth Bennet, who was used as a narrator between scene changes, failed to explore the social commentary Austen had intended. Others, felt that the script allowed for the actors to explore their character's idiosyncrasies, including Mitchell who beautifully captured the vulnerability and intelligence of Elizabeth.

Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, the proud parents of five young daughters, live comfortably, but are far from being rich. Because of this, Mrs. Bennet is determined to find rich husbands for her girls and consequently sends them to a ball with the intention of meeting Mr. Bingley, a wealthy new bachelor in Hertfordshire. He and Jane Bennet, the oldest and most attractive of the sisters, seem to immediately hit it off. Unfortunately the same cannot be said for his friend, Mr. Darcy, and the second oldest Bennet daughter, Elizabeth. The two initially cannot stand one another, yet they continuously cross paths and find themselves preoccupied by each other.

Setting: England in the early 1800s, primarily in Hertfordshire county (Netherfield Park, Longbourn, Lucas Lodge and Meryton), Derbyshire (Pemberley), Kent (Rosings and Hunsford) and London.

ACT I

The story begins with an excited Mrs. Bennet telling her husband, Mr. Bennet, about the arrival of a young, rich bachelor, Mr. Charles Bingley, to Hertfordshire who will be staying at nearby Netherfield Park. She is positive that if Mr. Bingley was to be introduced to her five single daughters he will want to marry one of them. Worried that their neighbours, Sir William and Lady Lucas, will arrange for Mr. Bingley to marry their single daughter, Charlotte, Mrs. Bennet insists to Mr. Bennet that he invite Mr. Bingley over at once. Elizabeth, their second oldest daughter, tells her mother of their chance to meet the bachelor as the upcoming assembly ball but Mrs. Bennet fears that the hostess, Mrs. Long, will not introduce the girls as she has two single nieces of her own. Mr.

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Bennet quickly informs the ladies that he has already extended an invitation to Mr. Bingley, but that he is in London picking up friends to accompany him to the ball.

Mrs. Bennet, positive that Jane, their eldest daughter, will be perfect for Mr. Bingley, pushes the girls to run off and finish working on their gowns for the ball.

At the ball, it seems Mr. Bingley has taken an immediate liking to Jane. His sister, Miss Caroline Bingley, is impressed with Jane's manners and nice smile. Jane and Mr. Bingley dance together to Mrs. Bennet's delight while Mr. Bingley notices that his friend, Mr. Darcy has not been dancing with anyone. Mr. Darcy explains to Mr. Bingley that he has been dancing with Jane, the prettiest girl at the ball, all night and when it is suggested that he dance with Elizabeth, Jane's sister, Mr. Darcy refuses. Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte, over hears this conversation and informs Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy called her "tolerable". Elizabeth feels that Mr. Darcy has too much pride and insists that she would never dance with him if should ask anyway. Sir William interrupts, unaware of the situation and suggests to Mr. Darcy that he dances with Elizabeth. Mr. Darcy agrees this time, but Elizabeth remains true to her word and declines. Jane rushes over to Elizabeth saying she is not feeling well and the two go outside for some fresh air. Miss Bingley is not impressed with most of the people at the ball, but Mr. Darcy is suddenly intrigued by Elizabeth's intelligence and outspokenness. Miss Bingley makes fun of Mr. Darcy's new love interest, specifically of his future mother-in-law, Mrs. Bennet, who is busy trying to convince Mr. Bingley to stay in town longer. Elizabeth and Jane return and Mr. Bingley asks Jane to dance yet again.

Charlotte concerned that Mr. Bingley will not notice Jane's interest in him as she is such an agreeable woman, expresses her thoughts to Elizabeth.

Jane while in Netherfield Park visiting the Bingley's catches a cold. Elizabeth is sent to help tend to her sister and while there, is reunited once again with the prideful Mr. Darcy. Yet again the two begin to bicker as they disagree about what constitutes an accomplished lady. Once Jane has recovered, she and Elizabeth return home to Longbourn.

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Mr. Bennet informs his wife and daughters that he has invited his cousin and the beneficiary of the estate, Mr. William Collins, to visit. Mrs. Bennet is upset that if Mr. Bennet dies, she and her daughters will be left with nothing and that a virtual stranger will inherit everything when suddenly Kitty and Lydia, the youngest two daughters, announce Mr. Bingley's arrival. Mr. Bingley explains that he has come to check in on Jane. He invites Jane and Elizabeth to join him as well as Miss Bingley and Mr. Darcy to go for a walk. While waiting outside Miss Bingley is making fun of Mr. Darcy for not going into the house to see Elizabeth, his love. Kitty and Lydia pester Mr. Bingley into holding a ball. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy bicker again; Elizabeth accusing him of hating everyone while he accuses her of misunderstanding everyone. While on their walk they run into Mr. Wickham, an officer, who is staying in town. Mr. Darcy and he seem to know each other and it is clear that Mr. Darcy does not like Mr. Wickham. Later that day, Mr. Wickham explains to Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy's father was his godfather and dear friend. When Mr. Wickham's father died, Mr. Darcy's father took him in and raised him like a son. Unfortunately, Mr. Darcy's father liked Mr. Wickham better than his own son and Mr. Darcy became very jealous. When Mr. Darcy's father died, Mr. Wickham was accused of extravagance and imprudence by Mr. Darcy and was not given his proper inheritance. Elizabeth furious with Mr. Darcy is surprised that a nice man like Mr. Bingley could be such good friends with an awful person like Mr. Darcy.

Mr. Collins has arrived at the Bennets in Longbourn and brags to the family about his acquaintance with Lady Catherine de Bourgh, a very wealthy yet bossy noblewoman. The girls are distracted by the upcoming ball and Mr. Collins informs them that he loves to dance and plans to attend the ball as well. While Mrs. Bennet is giving him a tour of their house, she informs him that Jane is likely to be engaged soon. Mr. Collins asks about the next oldest daughter, Elizabeth, and learns she is unattached.

At Mr. Bingley's ball, Mr. Wickham and Elizabeth dance together. He informs her that Lady Catherine de Bourgh is Mr. Darcy's aunt and that Mr. Darcy is supposed to marry her daughter, Miss Ann de Bourgh. Captain Carter interrupts the couple and whispers something in Mr. Wickham's ear. The two gentlemen quickly leave. Mr. Darcy asks Elizabeth to dance and once again, she declines.

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They are awkwardly chatting when Kitty interrupts to announce that Mr. Wickham has been called away on Colonel's business. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth continue to talk and the subject briefly changes to Mr. Wickham. They are interrupted again by Kitty who informs Elizabeth that Mary, the middle daughter, is going to sing for everyone. Mr. Collins hears that Lady Catherine de Bourgh's nephew is at the ball and introduces himself to Mr. Darcy. Mrs. Bennet is bragging about Jane and Mr. Bingley to Sir William when Mr. Collins asks Elizabeth to dance.

The next morning, Mr. Collins requests to speak with Elizabeth. He proposes to Elizabeth but she declines his offer. Mr. Collins only thinks that she is playing hard to get until she assures him she is not. Elizabeth leaves and Mrs. Bennet enters to find Mr. Collins in disbelief at Elizabeth's refusal. Mrs. Bennet insists that Mr. Bennet convince Elizabeth to accept. Mr. Collins second guesses his proposal to Elizabeth and leaves to visit the Lucas's. Mrs. Bennet threatens to disown Elizabeth if she doesn't accept Mr. Collins offer when suddenly they are interrupted by Jane who is visibly upset. She has received a note from Miss Bingley informing her that they have left for London and won't be returning for some time, without a word from Mr. Bingley. Elizabeth blames Miss Bingley and Mr. Darcy for keeping Jane and Mr. Bingley apart while Jane disagrees saying that if Mr. Bingley really cared for her, his sister and Mr. Darcy's influence wouldn't matter.

Charlotte arrives and announces to Elizabeth that she will be marrying Mr. Collins. She asks Elizabeth to visit her in Hunsford and Elizabeth agrees. Mrs. Bennet learns of the new arrangement and is upset that Charlotte will inherit their possessions.

Eight months later, Elizabeth is in Hunsford visiting Mrs. Charlotte Collins. They are invited to Rosings to visit Lady Catherine de Bourgh and Elizabeth is introduced to Miss Ann de Bourgh, Lady Catherine's daughter, who is very sickly looking. Lady Catherine asks Elizabeth about her family when Mr. Darcy and his cousin, Mr. Fitzwilliam, arrive. The guests leave to play cards while Elizabeth chats with Mr. Fitzwilliam and Mr. Darcy.

Later on, Elizabeth decides to take a walk throughout Rosings and runs into Mr. Darcy who joins her. They speak briefly about the Bingley's leaving Netherfield so abruptly back in June. Mr.

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Fitzwilliam informs Elizabeth that Mr. Darcy keeps postponing their departure and goes on to tell her about how Mr. Darcy saved his friend, Mr. Bingley, from marriage, of course not knowing that the marriage was supposed to be to Jane. Elizabeth fakes a headache upon hearing this and decides to leave Hunsford that day.

Charlotte is helping Elizabeth pack, when they are interrupted by Mr. Darcy. When she tells him she is leaving that day, he confesses his love for her and proposes, insulting her family in the meantime. Elizabeth refuses and Mr. Darcy asks to know why. She tells him that she knows about his meddling in Mr. Bingley and Jane's relationship and how she is disgusted with how he treated Mr. Wickham so poorly. He realizes that he has hurt her pride but she insists that she would refuse his proposal regardless of what he had said. Mr. Darcy tries to explain telling Elizabeth that Mr. Bingley had been in love many times before, but never quite like he was with Jane. Mr. Darcy felt that Jane was indifferent about Mr. Bingley and thought that he deserved better. The behavior of Mrs. Bennet and the youngest two girls had also been a matter of concern. As for Mr. Wickham, Mr. Darcy explains, he had wanted money instead of the recommendation of a valuable living in the church. Mr. Darcy had given him what he had asked for until two years later when Mr. Wickham, who was now in debt, had changed his mind and wanted to be ordained after all. Mr. Darcy refused to recommend him. Several weeks later, Mr. Darcy's sister, who was only 15 at the time and possessed a share of the family fortune, confessed that she was in love and about to elope with Mr. Wickham. Mr. Wickham then disappeared leaving his younger sister heartbroken. Mr. Darcy had not seen him again until he appeared at Longbourn.

Lydia arrives to take Elizabeth home and tells her that Mr. Wickham, who had been courting Betty King, is now available again. Elizabeth realizes how prejudice she had been toward Mr. Darcy.

ACT II

Back at home, Elizabeth tells Jane the truth about Mr. Wickham but not about Mr. Bingley. Lydia is preparing to go to Brighton where she has been invited to visit Colonel Forster's wife. Kitty is upset that the regiment is leaving and that she was not invited to go to Brighton as well. Mrs. Bennet suggests they all go to Brighton

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but Mr. Bennet disagrees. Elizabeth tells her father that she is concerned about Lydia, who is only 16, being unsupervised and tempted by all the officers in Brighton but Mr. Bennet thinks that it will be a good experience for Lydia to learn her own insignificance. Mr. Wickham comes to say goodbye to Elizabeth before he leaves for Brighton.

Elizabeth has joined her Aunt and Uncle Gardiner on their trip throughout Derbyshire. Initially, she wasn't going to go as they would be stopping by Pemberley, Mr. Darcy's residence, on their way, but was reassured he wouldn't be home and so decided to go. At Pemberley, Elizabeth imagines what it would have been like to be the lady of the house but is distracted by a picture of Mr. Darcy. She stares at it for a while when suddenly Mr. Darcy appears. They are both surprised to see each other, but Mr. Darcy invites Elizabeth and her family to join him for dinner. Elizabeth is impressed by how polite he still is towards her and attempts to sort out her feelings for him, wondering if there is any hope he would propose again.

Once home again Mr. Bennet shows Elizabeth his new fishing pole from Mr. Bingley. Mr. Bennet explains that it came with a letter inviting him to go fishing with Mr. Bingley when he returns to Netherfield. Mr. Bennet is not sure whether to share this secret with Jane but finds out that Mrs. Bennet and Jane already know of Bingley's return. Mrs. Bennet plans to invite him over for dinner and although Jane is upset she says she will be on her best behaviour.

Lydia has been in Brighton for two months and has not been in touch with her family at all. Mr. Bennet finds a letter from her and discovers that Kitty has been keeping secret from the family for three days. Mr. Bennet already aware of the news in the letter from Colonel Forster reads that Lydia has fallen in love with Mr. Wickham and will soon to be wed. Elizabeth is skeptical that Mr. Wickham will actually marry Lydia as neither of them have any money and believes that Lydia is more interested in getting married than she is in Mr. Wickham. Mr. Bennet is furious with Kitty for keeping this a secret and forbids her from attending any future balls. Mr. Bingley arrives with Mr. Darcy and Jane bursts into tears, blaming it on poor Lydia who has no one to help her. Mrs. Bennet blames herself for not going to Brighton with Lydia and is worried that Mr. Bennet

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will duel with Mr. Wickham and be killed. Mr. Bennet says he will go to London tomorrow to meet their Uncle Gardiner and try to stop the wedding.

Mr. Bennet returns from London and blames himself for not listening to Elizabeth's warning. He explains that Lydia and Mr. Wickham have been married and that their Uncle Gardiner took care of everything. He is curious about how much Uncle Gardiner had to pay Mr. Wickham and worried about how he will repay him. Mr. Bingley is hunting on their property and Jane wants to leave before seeing him, but is too late. The two talk about their past and how he suddenly left thinking that he may have preferred something else, but realizes he was wrong to leave. The two walk off together. Elizabeth is about to leave as well when Mr. Darcy appears looking for Mr. Bingley. He asks about Lydia and leaves. Elizabeth thinks she is crazy to believe he would still love her.

Lydia and Mr. Wickham stop by Longbourn to visit on their way to Newcastle and Elizabeth is able to confirm Mr. Darcy's side of the story with Mr. Wickham. Jane enters to tell Mr. Bennet that Mr. Bingley is in the library waiting for him. She explains to her sisters that he had left because he thought she was indifferent to him. Lydia tells Elizabeth and Jane about her wedding and lets it slide that Mr. Darcy was there. Jane reveals that she and Mr. Bingley are engaged.

Lady Catherine arrives in a tizzy to speak with Elizabeth as she has heard rumours of proposal and engagement between Elizabeth and her nephew, Mr. Darcy. Elizabeth won't give her a straight answer which only makes Lady Catherine more frustrated, but eventually says that she is not engaged to Mr. Darcy. Mr. Bennet enters, celebrating the engagement between Jane and Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy stops in to congratulate the couple as well. Mrs. Bennet still does not like Mr. Darcy and insists that Elizabeth keeps him away from Jane and Mr. Bingley. Alone with Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth thanks him for helping Lydia and he explains that he did it for her. She tells Mr. Darcy of his aunt's visit and finds out that she interrogated Mr. Darcy about the rumored engagement as well. Mr. Darcy proclaims his love for Elizabeth yet again and Elizabeth confesses that she in fact loves him in return. Mr. Darcy exits to ask for Mr. Bennet's blessings to marry Elizabeth while Elizabeth tries to tell her mother about her new engagement. Mrs. Bennet

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too busy complaining doesn't listen to Elizabeth and when she finally hears what Elizabeth is saying Mrs. Bennet has a change of heart about Mr. Darcy, which probably had to do with his large pocket book. Mr. Bennet confirms with Elizabeth that she wants to marry Mr. Darcy and happily gives his consent. Elizabeth tells her father that Mr. Darcy was the one that saved Lydia and paid off Mr. Wickham's debts. Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth are left playfully teasing each other about their past and how they fell in love.

Characters

Mr. Bennet: The quiet father of five daughters, who provides a comfortable living for his family, but is not wealthy. He is eager to find husbands for his daughters, but also wants them to be happy.

Mrs. Bennet: The mother of the Bennet girls who is rather foolish but determined to find rich husbands for her daughters in order to climb the social ladder, often embarrassing them in the process.

Jane Bennet: The eldest of the Bennet girls who is very pretty and has a heart of gold, but is naive. She doesn't easily show her emotions, which causes Mr. Bingley to question her sincerity.

Elizabeth (Lizzy) Bennet: The protagonist and narrator. She is outspoken, witty and strong-willed. She doesn't care about marrying for money and is holding out for love, which she eventually finds with Mr. Darcy.

Mary Bennet: The middle child of the Bennet family who is vain and often attempts to prove her worth by showing off in public. She is a bookworm who prefers to spend her time learning than finding a husband.

Catherine (Kitty) Bennet: The second youngest, who is giddy, boy-crazy and wants to be center of attention.

Lydia Bennet: The youngest, most foolish and impulsive Bennet daughter who's determination to get married brings shame to the family. She is very social and often uses people to get what she wants.

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Sir William Lucas: A former businessman who retired upon being knighted by the king, leaving his children financially unstable.

Charlotte Lucas: The eldest daughter of Sir William Lucas. She is a practical thinking friend of Elizabeth and is interested in marrying for financial security and not love.

Mr. Charles Bingley: A young, wealthy gentleman who moves to Hertfordshire. He falls in love with Jane, but is convinced to leave her due to her indifference towards him and her family's low social standing.

Miss Caroline Bingley: Mr. Bingley's judgmental sister who often speaks about others behind their backs. She helps convince her brother not to marry Jane.

Mr. Darcy: A very wealthy and seemingly arrogant man from Derbyshire who is good friends with Mr. Bingley. He falls in love with Elizabeth despite their initial mutual dislike for each other.

Mr. George Wickham: A low-ranking military officer who lies about his past in order to impress women. He seems distinguished and sincere, but is actually dishonest and determined to marry for money and status.

Mr. Collins: The nearest male heir of Mr. Bennet who will inherit Mr. Bennet's property upon his death, much to the dismay of Mrs. Bennet. He is determined to improve his social status and marries Charlotte Lucas.

Lady Catherine de Bourgh: Mr. Darcy's wealthy, overbearing aunt who is very controlling, especially of Mr. Darcy's relationship with Elizabeth.

Miss Anne de Bourgh: The daughter of Lady Catherine, who is intended to marry Mr. Darcy.

Mr. Fitzwilliam: Mr. Darcy's courteous and very well-spoken cousin who is in his early 30s.

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Uncle Gardiner: The uncle of the Bennet girls, who invites Elizabeth to join him on his travels and later helps get the family out of trouble.

Colonel Carter: A military man who Lydia is interested in.

Mr. Denny: An officer and friend of Mr. Wickham.

Colonel Forester: A sensible man who invites Lydia to stay in Brighton with him and his wife, who has befriended Lydia.

Miss Jenkinson: A companion to Lady Catherine.

Something Interesting...

1. In 1996 Helen Fielding wrote the novel *Bridget Jones's Diary* that she loosely based on *Pride and Prejudice*. She included a character, Mark Darcy, who was inspired by Colin Firth's portrayal of Mr. Darcy in the BBC six part miniseries. When *Bridget Jones's Diary* was made into a movie in 2001, Colin Firth was cast as the character of Mark Darcy who he inspired.

Questions & Activities

1. *Pride and Prejudice* was originally titled *First Impressions*. Explain why this title would have also been appropriate?
2. Research the fashion in the early 19th century. Compare the fashion with fashion today. List the similarities and differences. Are there any modern day fashion designers who may have been influenced by fashion in the 19th century?
3. In the story Elizabeth and her father have a very close relationship with one another. Compare their relationship to other characters in literature.
4. Write a short story about what happens next for the characters based on information from the play and novel.

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5. There are many influences on Elizabeth throughout the play. List both the positive and negative influences that are presented.
6. Write a review of the play. Explain what you liked and what you would change if you were the director. Some things to consider when reviewing are the costumes, set, plot, music and the actors.
7. Set the play in modern times. How would Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy's relationship have been different? How is dating/courtship different now from the early 19th century?
8. Senior high school students – Watch the 2001 movie *Bridget Jones's Diary*. Compare and contrast the movie with the play. What are the similarities and differences? (Please note that *Bridget Jones's Diary* is rated R and may not be appropriate for all students. This is left up to the teacher's discretion.)
9. Postal service was rapidly increasing in speed and regularity in Jane Austen's England and letter writing was a major part of her life and the lives of her characters. Write some undiscovered letters in the voice of her characters from *Pride and Prejudice*. For example Lady Catherine to Mr. Darcy or Mr. Bingley to Jane.
10. People often judge others on their appearance or their first impression of a person. Both Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth judged each other before actually knowing one another. Why do you think people make assumptions on a person based on first impressions? Have you ever been in a situation where you have judged someone without knowing them? Once you got to know them did you change your opinion of the person? Explain.

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