JANE AUSTEN

Children's Stories

Pride and Prejudice



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Jane Austen: Pride and Prejudice

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Pride and Prejudice



Chapter 1

Mrs Bennet was in a very good mood. She had just discovered that a rich man called Mr Bingley had rented the largest house in her neighbourhood.

‘Why should that be such good news for us?’ asked Mr Bennet. He



was trying to read his newspaper and growing tired of his wife's excitement.

'Oh, Mr Bennet!' cried Mrs Bennet. 'Because a single man of good fortune must want a wife! And we have *five* daughters!'

Mr Bennet cleared his throat. 'I see,' he said, smiling at his second eldest daughter, Lizzy.

The Bennets lived in a house called Longbourn. It was not the largest, nor the smallest house in the village. Mr Bennet was calm and well respected. Mrs Bennet was lively and had one goal in life: to see her daughters married.

Jane



Jane was the eldest and prettiest daughter. She was also sweet and kind-hearted. Jane always saw the best in people.



Elizabeth

Lizzy was her father's favourite for her cleverness and quick humour. Lizzy loved to go for walks and spend time with Jane.



Mary

Bookish and serious, Mary spent most of her time practising the piano and reading.

Catherine



Kitty was happy and friendly. She loved nothing more than gossiping with Lydia – although they occasionally argued too.

Lydia

Lydia was the youngest daughter and Mrs Bennet's favourite. Mrs Bennet



forgave Lydia's silliness, perhaps because Lydia reminded her so much of herself.

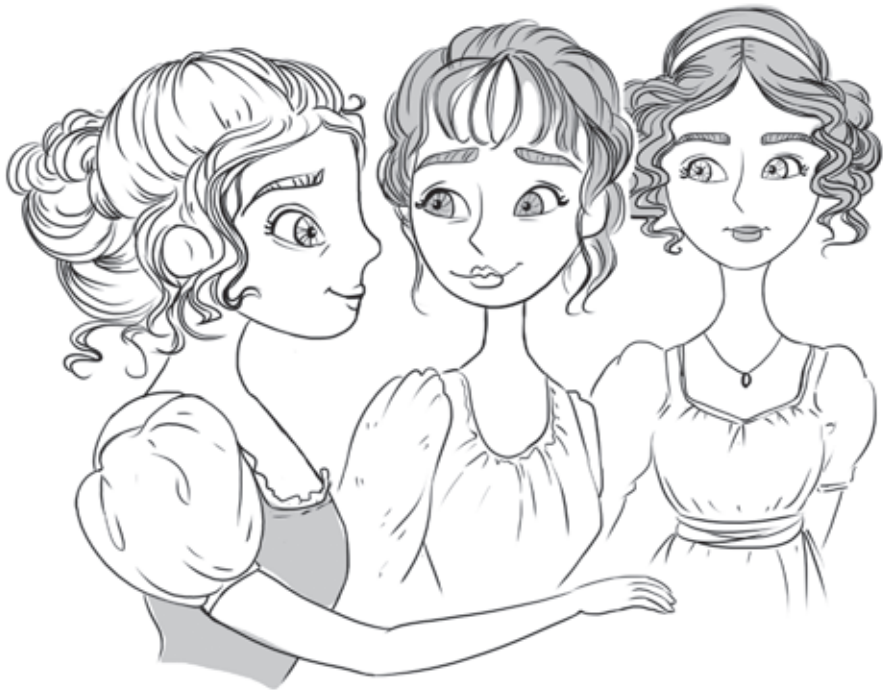
The Bennet family did not have to wait long to meet Mr Bingley. They were at a dance in Meryton when the man himself arrived. He brought with him another gentleman and a lady.

'The famous Mr Bingley!' said Lizzy to her best friend, Charlotte Lucas. 'Who are the people with him?'

Charlotte, who lived near Lizzy with

her father Sir William, replied: 'The lady is Mr Bingley's sister. The gentleman is Mr Darcy. He is Bingley's best friend and owns a lot of land in Derbyshire.'

Lizzy stared at Mr Darcy. He looked displeased with everyone and everything in the room. Mr Bingley, on the other hand, could not have looked happier. He walked over to them.



'May I introduce Mr Bingley,' said Sir William. 'This is Miss Jane Bennet and Miss Elizabeth Bennet.'

'It is so nice to meet you,' replied Mr Bingley with a large smile on his face. 'Miss Bennet, would you care to dance with me?'

Jane blushed and accepted.



Chapter 2

Jane danced two dances with Mr Bingley. Lizzy watched her happily. Her eyes sometimes drifted to Mr Bingley's friend. Mr Darcy was handsome, but his expression was miserable. He had not danced once.



'Come now, Darcy!' said Mr Bingley, when his dance with Jane had come to an end. 'Why won't you dance?'

Lizzy could not help listening in, curious what Mr Darcy would say.

'*You* have been dancing with the only acceptable partner in the room,' he replied.



Mr Bingley grinned. ‘Darcy, she is the most beautiful creature I ever beheld!’

Lizzy smiled to herself.

‘Look,’ continued Mr Bingley. ‘There’s her sister, Elizabeth. She’s very pretty too.’

Lizzy froze and stared straight ahead. She did not want to give away that she had been listening.

‘She is tolerable, I suppose,’ Darcy said. ‘But not pretty enough to tempt me.’

Mr Bingley sighed and walked back to Jane.

Mr Darcy’s words hurt. Being called “tolerable” was not a compliment.

However, Lizzy wasn’t the sort of person to be down for long. She soon stood up and walked past Mr Darcy, smiling at him as she went. She found Charlotte and retold the story to her, complete with an excellent impression of Mr Darcy’s proud voice.



Chapter 3

The dance at Meryton confirmed three things to the Bennets:

1. Mr Bingley was wonderful and had excellent taste. He danced four dances with Jane, after all.

2. Mr Darcy may be even richer than his friend, but he had none of his friendliness and charm.

3. Mr Bingley's sister was far more pleased with herself than anything or anyone in Meryton.

The following night, Sir William Lucas invited Mr Bingley and his friends to dinner and dancing at Lucas Lodge. The Bennets were also invited. Lizzy and Charlotte watched as Mr Bingley and Jane danced together again.





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