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INTRODUCTION



In the Ignatius Critical Editions: Pride and Prejudice, read the Introduction, pp. ix–xxi, marking the text in key places, and then answer the following questions in your Literature Notebook.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Did Jane Austen ever marry? How does her understanding of marriage affect the framework of *Pride and Prejudice*?
2. What was one of Austen's earliest critiques of the novel *Pride and Prejudice*? With whom did she share this?
3. What type of life do Austen's books suggest is the most ideal?
4. Why is *Pride and Prejudice* a compelling story to men?
5. Who plays an important role in the transformation and shaping of Elizabeth? How do we know Elizabeth has been influenced by this person?
6. To whom will Elizabeth eventually owe her happiness in life? What was Jane Austen's conception of marriage and humanity?
7. Is *Pride and Prejudice* a story about love at first sight?
8. What is Mr. Bennet's concern regarding Elizabeth? Use a direct quote to support your answer.
9. What are some accounts of beauty and ways of thinking that we encounter when we read Jane Austen?
10. What can we gain from Jane Austen today?

BASIC FEATURES & BACKGROUND

Characters

1. **Elizabeth Bennet** – Optimistic, bright-spirited, and witty. Elizabeth is the second eldest Bennet daughter. She maintains the highest standards of propriety, which sets her apart from the other members of her family. A fair amount of pride and prejudice causes her to misperceive Mr. Darcy's initial manners towards her and others as arrogant and rude.
2. **Fitzwilliam Darcy** – Stately, handsome, and wealthy. Darcy has a haughty and superior nature that alienates him from others, especially Elizabeth. Darcy is at times awkward and cold, yet he always maintains civility and formal politeness. His demeanor is never inviting. Enamored with Elizabeth, he assumes she will reciprocate his feelings.
3. **Jane Bennet** – The eldest Bennet daughter and closest confidante and friend to Elizabeth. Jane is beautiful and benevolent. She equals Elizabeth in propriety and social formality. Her temperament, however, is more placid and composed, and mistaken for indifference in regards to her feelings towards Bingley.
4. **Charles Bingley** – Good natured, handsome, and wealthy. A friend of Mr. Darcy, Bingley takes up residence at Netherfield. The key distinction between Bingley and Darcy lies in Bingley's affable and sociable manners. Bingley is greatly admired by all, especially Jane, who becomes the object of his affection. Another aspect of Bingley is that he is impressionable and too easily influenced by his sisters and Darcy.
5. **Mr. Bennet** – The father of the Bennet girls and the favored parent of Elizabeth. Mr. Bennet is intelligent and rife with perceptive sarcasm regarding the foolishness of his wife and younger daughters. This sarcasm replaces any true paternal involvement with his daughters, and his neglect is evident and distressing to both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. His silence and disengagement is as frustrating as Mrs. Bennet's loud and overbearing ways.
6. **Mrs. Bennet** – The mother of the Bennet girls. Mrs. Bennet is loud and indifferent to most rules of social decorum. Her intentions are mostly good at heart, and her main objective is the marriage of her daughters. Her brazenness causes frequent embarrassment for Elizabeth and mortification for Darcy.
7. **Lydia Bennet** – The youngest Bennet daughter. Fatuous, flirtatious, and indulged by Mrs. Bennet, Lydia desires frivolity and soldiers in red coats.
8. **George Wickham** – Handsome and superficially charming, Wickham captures the attention of many ladies, including Elizabeth. A lifelong acquaintance of Darcy, he is sly and scandalous.
9. **Mr. Collins** – The cousin who will inherit Longbourn. Collins is effusive with his apologies, his thankfulness, and his devotion of Lady Catherine.
10. **Mary Bennet** – The third-born Bennet daughter, Mary is plain and disappears behind her contrived, bookish quips.
11. **Catherine Bennet** – The fourth-born Bennet daughter, Catherine is the flirtatious cohort of her sister Lydia, and never seems to leave her side.
12. **Lady Catherine de Bourgh** – The wealthy aunt of Darcy with the inherited title of "Lady." Lady Catherine is a bully, often abusing her entitled right of appropriate condescension. She intimidates most of those in her circle.

❁ VOLUME I ❁

Central Quote:

—

PRE-GRAMMAR | Preparation

*Prepare to think about the novel and its Central One Idea
by drawing upon your prior knowledge, experience, or interests.*

1. a. List five good manners you have been taught and five bad manners you have been cautioned against. These might pertain to conversations, behavior at meals, treatment of others, behavior at church, behavior in certain public places, hygiene, hosting a social event, etc.

- b. Why are rules of decorum important for society? How do they reveal the character of a person?

2. Recall a time when you formed an opinion about someone's character because of a negative first impression. Or, relate an instance when you formed an opinion about someone as a result of another person's misjudgment of him or her. Did your opinion change after you explored the truth about the person's character, or after you got to know him or her?

❖ Chapters I-II (1-2) ❖

GRAMMAR | Presentation

Discover essential facts, elements, and features of the novel through the Reading Notes, Words to Be Defined, and Comprehension Questions.

READING NOTES

1. **"A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year."** (p. 4) – Mr. Bingley's inherited income from his father is 100,000 pounds, and he probably has other investments that generate an annual income of 4-5,000 pounds. Moreover, Mr. Darcy's annual income is 10,000 pounds. During the Regency Era, the annual expenses of a very great house averaged around 5-6,000 pounds per year. Yet even with an income of 1,000 pounds a year, a family could afford several female servants, a coachman, a footman, a couple carriages, and a pair of horses. During this period, there were less than 400 families whose annual income was 10,000 or more pounds.
2. **Netherfield Park** – the large country estate leased to Mr. Bingley
3. **establishment** (p. 4) – a place of residence; its furnishings and grounds
4. **quickness** (p. 5) – intelligence; quick-wittedness

WORDS TO BE DEFINED

Definitions Bank

a period of two weeks

irritating, provoking

uproar, as from a crowd

showing a strict regard for
what is proper; meticulous

to do something one considers
beneath one's dignity

whim; impulsive change of
mind or behavior

1. You are over **scrupulous** surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you, *adj.* (p. 4)

2. You take delight in **vexing** me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves. *v.* (p. 5)

3. Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour, reserve, and **caprice**, *n.* (p. 5)

4. Mrs. Bennet **deign**(ed) not to make any reply; but unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters. *v.* (p. 6)

5. When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?
To-morrow **fortnight**. *n.* (p. 6)

6. though when the first **tumult** of joy was over, she began to declare that it was what she had expected all the while, *n.* (p. 7)



Read Chapters I-II, marking the text in key places according to the method taught in "How to Mark a Book."

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Give four reasons why Mrs. Bennet is excited about Netherfield being taken.

2. List five characteristics of Mrs. Bennet revealed in Chapter I.

3. What is Mr. Bennet's reason for giving his daughter Lizzy (Elizabeth) preference over the others?

4. What is Mrs. Bennet's sole purpose in life?

5. *I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her.* (p. 6)

Explain the presence of irony in Mrs. Bennet's statement.

6. What did Mr. Bennet do that put the household into a "tumult of joy"?

LOGIC | Dialectic

Reason with the facts, elements, and features of the novel; sort, arrange, compare, and connect ideas – and begin to uncover and determine the Central One Idea.

Discussion of the Socratic Questions may include note-taking in the Literature Notebook, or they may be answered in written form in the Literature Notebook.

SOCRATIC DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

May be verbally discussed or answered in written form in your Literature Notebook.

1. *It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.* (p. 1)

This famous, yet somewhat ambiguous opening line could be perceived as an example of **irony**. Using examples from the scenes that follow in Chapter I, explain how Austen uses this playful line to portray a deeper, contradictory reality.

2. *"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such a way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."*

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least." (p. 5)

Explain Mr. Bennet's use of witty sarcasm.