



Pride and Prejudice

by Jane Austen, 1813

WORK AND AUTHOR

Pride and Prejudice:

1. Written in 1797 and published in 1813.
2. A romantic novel about the business of getting married.
3. A comedy about young women who are going through the process of choosing a husband.

Jane Austen:

1. Wrote all six of her novels before she was 22.
2. Was not credited with authorship until after her death.
3. One of the first English authors to write about life as it is.
4. Wrote about middle-class problems, but provided a splendid variety of characters.

THEME AND CONTENTS

1. Set in England, this work deals with the quest of young women to find husbands.
2. It focuses on:
 - Love.
 - Marriage.
 - Social standing.
 - Economic security.

MAIN CHARACTERS

1. Elizabeth Bennet, the sensible sister who doesn't compromise her values.
2. Jane Bennet, Elizabeth's proper but simple older sister.
3. Darcy, the upper-class man Elizabeth eventually marries.
4. Bingley, Jane's eventual husband.
5. Mrs. Bennet, the girls' mother who cares only about marrying them off, not about their happiness.
6. Mr. Collins, a cousin who will inherit the Bennet estate because the Bennets have no sons.
7. Lydia, a younger Bennet sister.
8. Charlotte Lucas, who marries Mr. Collins.
9. Wickham, who runs away with and then marries Lydia Bennet.

STORY

1. Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley come to Meryton.
2. Darcy insults Elizabeth, even though he is attracted to her.
3. Jane falls for Bingley.
4. Darcy becomes more interested in Elizabeth.
5. Mr. Collins comes to visit and is attracted to Elizabeth, who turns down a proposal of marriage.

6. Collins marries Charlotte Lucas.
7. Bingley's sisters and Darcy convince Bingley that Jane doesn't love him.
8. Elizabeth rejects a proposal from Darcy because of his arrogance.
9. Darcy writes Elizabeth to tell her he was wrong about Jane and Bingley, and Elizabeth realizes she was wrong about Darcy.
10. Lydia runs off with Wickham, who is paid by Darcy to marry her.
11. Darcy marries Elizabeth, and Bingley marries Jane. Both couples are happy.

LASTING IMPACT

1. Austen defines pride as "an unrealistic exaggeration of one's importance" and prejudice as "judging someone before you know the facts."
2. The happy marriages in *Pride and Prejudice* are based on love, not status, convenience, or financial gain. Darcy and Elizabeth truly love each other, as do Bingley and Jane. But Wickham only marries Lydia because of financial considerations, and the marriage soon breaks apart. The same is true for Charlotte and Collins, whose marriage is far from a loving one.
3. Austen also takes a strong stand against mothers who push their daughters into any marriage that comes along.