***Pride and Prejudice***

***Volume 1***

***Chapter 2***

***Brief Summary:***

In keeping with his general perverse penchant for torturing his wife, Mr. Bennet does not tell her that he intends to visit Mr. Bingley, the new tenant of Netherfield Park, and she does not know of his visit until after he has made it. When he does reveal to them that he has made Mr. Bingley's acquaintance, it is done casually, in mockery of the eagerness of his wife and daughters. The evening after his morning visit, he comments to his second daughter, Elizabeth, that he hopes Mr. Bingley will appreciate the hat she is trimming. Resentfully, Mrs. Bennet replies that they have no way of knowing what Mr. Bingley liked. Elizabeth reminds her mother that they will meet him at the next assemblies, although Mrs. Bennet stubbornly refuses that anything good will come of it, as she had hoped to be the one to be able to introduce Mr. Bingley around to her friends at the assemblies, and now it seems it would be the other way around. Mr. Bennet sighs that if she will not introduce Mr. Bingley to her friend Mrs. Long, he would have to do it himself. Mrs. Bennet scolds her husband severely for speaking such nonsense, and declares herself sick of hearing about Mr. Bingley, to which Mr. Bennet in turn scolds her for not having told him that she was sick of Mr. Bingley before went to the trouble of paying him a visit. We are introduced to some of the characteristics of Elizabeth, Mary and Lydia. Elizabeth, Mr. Bennet's evident favorite and the second oldest daughter, seems to be the only daughter thus far with much intelligence. Mary seems to wish fervently to be intellectual, and spends her time reading, thinking and making extracts, but when called upon to say something sensible, she can think of nothing to say. Lydia seems preliminarily to be arrogant, outspoken and self-indulgent.

***Analysis:***The news that a wealthy young gentleman named [Charles Bingley](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pride/character/jane-bennet-and-charles-bingley/) has rented the manor known as Netherfield Park causes a great stir in the neighboring village of Longbourn, especially in the Bennet household. The Bennets have five unmarried daughters, and [Mrs. Bennet](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pride/character/mrs-bennet/), a foolish and fussy gossip, is the sort who agrees with the novel’s opening words: “It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife.” She sees Bingley’s arrival as an opportunity for one of the girls to obtain a wealthy spouse, and she, therefore, insists that her husband call on the new arrival immediately. [Mr. Bennet](https://www.sparknotes.com/lit/pride/character/mr-bennet/) torments his family by pretending to have no interest in doing so, but he eventually meets with Mr. Bingley without their knowing. When he reveals to Mrs. Bennet and his daughters that he has made their new neighbor’s acquaintance, they are overjoyed and excited.

***Summary in Detail:***

* [Mr. Bennet](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/mr-bennet) is one of the first men in the area to visit [Mr. Bingley](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/charles-bingley), but he does it behind his wife's back and teases his wife and daughters before letting the cat out of the bag.
* The news sends all the women into a tizzy. (That's the technical word for it.) When will Mr. Bingley return the visit? Should they ask him to dinner? What would they serve at dinner? Will he like their hats?

***Synopsis:***

* Mr. Bennet visits Mr. Bingley without telling his family and only mentions it nonchalantly a few days later. He had always intended to visit, but kept refusing in order to irk Mrs. Bennet. After his revelation, Mr. Bennet continues to annoy his wife - and their younger daughters, too - by refusing to answer any of their questions about the mysterious Bingley.
* ***Critical Study:***[Mr. Bennet](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Pride-and-Prejudice/character-analysis/#Mr._Bennet) teases his family but ultimately reveals that he has indeed already called on their new neighbor. Mrs. Bennet and her daughters engage in some light bantering about which of the sisters will be Bingley's favorite. Mrs. Bennet begins excitedly plotting Mr. Bingley's future visits to Longbourn.
* The conversation between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet confirms that he enjoys being an irritant, pretending he hasn't visited Mr. Bingley when he has. This chapter, like the last one, also reflects the importance Mrs. Bennet places on following the rules of etiquette. Now that [Mr. Bennet](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Pride-and-Prejudice/character-analysis/#Mr._Bennet) has introduced himself to Mr. Bingley, the daughters are one step closer to an introduction as well—a key step in Mrs. Bennet's master plan to marry one of her daughters to him.

***Summary and Analysis Part by Part***

***Summary Part 1:***

Without telling his family, [Mr. Bennet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/mr-bennet) visits [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters). Back at home, Mr. Bennet teases his family by pretending to be uninterested in Bingley's arrival, only to then reveal his visit by asking [Elizabeth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/elizabeth-eliza-lizzy-bennet) when the next ball is scheduled and promising to introduce her to Bingley beforehand.

***Analysis Part 1:***

It was inappropriate for women to seek a direct introduction to men, so Mr. Bennet must initially act as the mediator. Mr. Bennet's visit shows that even he recognizes the importance of making a match.

***Summary Part 2:***[Mrs. Bennet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/mrs-bennet) is delighted and praises her husband and his little joke. She promises all the girls that they'll get a chance to dance with [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters).

***Analysis Part 2:***

An early sign of Mrs. Bennet's fickle character. She can snap from disapproval to approval.