***Pride and Prejudice***

***Volume 1***

***Chapter 3***

***Brief Summary:***

Nothing can draw a satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley out of their father, but the description given by their neighbor, Lady Lucas is favorable, including young, handsome, agreeable, and to top it all off, Mr. Bingley intended to attend the next assembly with a large group of friends from London. Mrs. Bennet is ecstatic, even more so when Mr. Bingley returns Mr. Bennet's visit a few days later. Mr. Bingley has come hoping to catch a glimpse of the lovely Bennet sisters, as he has heard much around town about their beauty and various other attributes. Alas, he sees only Mr. Bennet, although the girls catch sight of him from a top window as he departs. Mrs. Bennet sends an invitation following Mr. Bingley's visit, and already has the meal courses planned when a response comes with the upsetting news that Mr. Bingley would be leaving the following day. She is most upset, but comforted by the fact that he has gone to London to bring a large party of friends up for the assemblies.

Every one of his guests is, at first glance, delightful. Bingley himself lives up to the rumors that have been circulating of his good looks and easy manners. His sisters are all well bred, and his brother in law a gentleman. However, it is his friend Mr. Darcy who creates the biggest sensation upon his arrival. He is dark and handsome, and with an annual income of ten thousand pounds a year. The consensus among the single ladies is that Mr. Darcy is a much finer catch than Mr. Bingley is, until his poor manners make him fall out of favor rapidly with his throng of new admirers. He dances only two dances the entire evening, and while Mr. Bingley works the room with ease, chatting and dancing with almost everyone in attendance, Mr. Darcy makes a fast enemy of the Bennets, when Elizabeth overhears a conversation between he and Mr. Bingley. Mr. Bingley is urging him to dance, and when he suggests Elizabeth, Mr. Darcy replies curtly, "She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me; and I am in no humour at present to give consequence to young ladies who are slighted by other men."

Elizabeth, with her typical buoyant humor, feels momentarily stung, but tells and retells the story to her friends and family, her lively, playful disposition delighting in such a ridiculous and morose man.

Elizabeth's sister Jane fares far better than her sister does throughout the evening. She dances twice with Mr. Bingley, and earns the admiration of his sisters. Jane is gratified by the attention she receives from him, in her own quiet way, but Elizabeth feels her excitement.

In chapter 3, we are acquainted with a key character in the novel, Mr. Darcy. He is at first admired by everyone for his good looks and handsome income, but is soon dismissed as being excessively proud, even to the point of bad mannered. It is Mr. Darcy's pride, as it meets and does battle with Elizabeth Bennet's pride, that is a main theme of the novel, and the reason for its prominent position in the book's title.

***Analysis:***Mr. Bingley returns Mr. Bennet's visit a few days later, but the women do not meet him at that point. Mrs. Bennet's only information about Bingley comes from her neighbor, [Mrs. Lucas](https://www.gradesaver.com/pride-and-prejudice/study-guide/character-list#mrs-lucas). After hearing about him, Mrs. Bennet becomes convinced that she will be able to snatch Bingley for one of her daughters. She invites Bingley to dinner. Unfortunately, he is forced to decline because of his commitment to fetch a party from London to attend a ball he is throwing at nearby Meryton.

On the night of the Meryton ball, the Bennet ladies finally meet Mr. Bingley, his sisters (Caroline and [Mrs. Hurst](https://www.gradesaver.com/pride-and-prejudice/study-guide/character-list#mrs-hurst)), and [Mr. Darcy](https://www.gradesaver.com/pride-and-prejudice/study-guide/character-list#mr-darcy), his friend from London. The Bennet girls quickly judge Mr. Darcy to be "the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world" because of his reserve and his unwillingness to dance with anyone outside of his own party. At one point, Bingley encourages Darcy to dance with Elizabeth, who is not dancing either, but he refuses. Elizabeth overhears Darcy describe her as "tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me." She is understandably outraged, and the encounter solidifies her ill opinion of him.

On the other hand, the Bennet girls find Mr. Bingley to be entirely amiable. He dances the first dance with [Charlotte](https://www.gradesaver.com/pride-and-prejudice/study-guide/character-list#charlotte) Lucas, the Bennets's neighbor and Elizabeth's best friend, but he seems to be most interested in Jane, with whom he dances twice and talks frequently. Upon returning home, Mrs. Bennet attempts to describe the ball to Mr. Bennet, but he is indifferent to the news and becomes quickly irritated with everything his wife says.

***Summary in Detail:***

* Although the [women](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/themes/women-and-femininity)of the house badger [Mr. Bennet](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/mr-bennet) for more info, Mr. Bennet isn't giving it up easily.
* Instead, the Bennet ladies get the deets from their neighbor, [Lady Lucas](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/charlotte-lucas), who reports that Mr. Bingley is handsome, easygoing, and loves dancing. Jackpot!
* In accord with the societal norms of the day, Mr. Bingley returns Mr. Bennet's visit. The two men sit in the library for about ten minutes, which sounds *super* fun (not), but we do learn that Mr. Bingley has heard that the girls are pretty.
* With all the niceties out of the way, Mrs. Bennet can finally invite Mr. Bingley to dinner. Bummer! He's going to be out of town.
* This sends Mrs. Bennet into a flurry of: Why is he going into town? Will he always be traveling? Why doesn't he want to stay at Netherfield?
* It's cool: Lady Lucas tells Mrs. Bennet that Mr. Bingley is going to London to bring back lots of guests for the upcoming public ball.
* And by "lots" we mean four: his two sisters (one of whom is married), his brother-in-law, and a young man.
* Ooh, a young man.
* First, though, we have to get a description of Mr. Bingley and company.
* [Mr. Bingley](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/charles-bingley)is good looking and easygoing.
* His sisters are fashionable snobs.
* The brother-in-law is named Mr. Hurst, and he's a gentleman, which is apparently all there is to know about that.
* But the young man is way more interesting:[he's rich. *Really* rich.](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/themes/wealth)
* Ooh, what a good-looking, nice, wonderful man, everyone says.
* A little while later, everyone's all, "Ooh, what a jerk!"
* So what happened?
* Well, it turns out that [Mr. Darcy](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/fitzwilliam-darcy) (the guy) considers himself better than everyone else at the ball.
* In all fairness, he's out in the boonies of England, which makes him the equivalent of a Manhattan socialite at a square dance.
* Although Mr. Bingley is also, figuratively speaking, a Manhattan socialite at a rural square dance, and he delves right into the party. He talks to everyone, dances all night, and is bummed that the ball ends early. Solution: He'll throw his own ball!
* Meanwhile, the locals can't stand Mr. Darcy. He dances only twice (once with each of Mr. Bingley's sisters), doesn't talk to anyone, and stalks around the drawing room, disapproving of everything.
* Since there aren't enough guys to go around, [Elizabeth](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/elizabeth-bennet) has to sit out two of the dances. As she's sitting down and minding her own business, she overhears a conversation between Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy.
* The conversation goes something like this:
* Mr. Bingley: Hey, Darcy, there are some really gorgeous girls here. Why don't you go dance with some of them?
* Mr. Darcy: Bingley, you're dancing with the only good-looking girl here, i.e. Elizabeth's older sister Jane.
* Untrue! says Bingley. Jane's sister (Elizabeth) is available and also good-looking.
* Mr. Darcy looks at Elizabeth and gives her the old once-over; he then turns to Mr. Bingley and delivers one of literature's most famous put-downs: "[She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me.](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/themes/pride)"
* Elizabeth just laughs it off and tells the story to all her friends.
* Aside from that little incident, the entire Bennet family has a great time at the ball—except for Mr. Bennet, who never goes to balls.
* At home, Mrs. Bennet immediately launches into a play-by-play of Mr. Bingley's movements and all his dance partners, until Mr. Bennet finally begs her to be quiet. Ladies' fashion isn't of much interest to him either. But Mr. Darcy's rudeness is something *everyone* can agree on.

***Synopsis:***

Mrs. Bennet continues to plot how to introduce her daughters to Mr. Bingley. When the young man does call on [Mr. Bennet](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Pride-and-Prejudice/character-analysis/#Mr._Bennet), the sisters glimpse him from a window but do not actually meet him. Bingley declines to stay for dinner that night. Mrs. Lucas, a neighbor of the Bennets, reports that Bingley is on his way to London but will be present at a ball that will soon take place in the neighborhood.

Mr. Bingley attends the Meryton ball with his unmarried sister, Caroline Bingley, as well as with his married sister and her husband, Mr. and Mrs. Hurst. A friend of his, Mr. Darcy, accompanies him. The charming Mr. Bingley makes an immediate good impression on the Bennets. He seeks out Jane and dances with her twice. In contrast, Mr. Darcy seems aloof and disagreeable. Bingley encourages his friend to dance because male partners are in short supply at the ball. When Bingley urges him to dance with Elizabeth in particular, she overhears Darcy describe her as "tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me." Mr. and Mrs. Bennet discuss Darcy's rudeness and proceed to solidify their negative impression of him.

The ball at Meryton brings together for the first time some of the key couples that readers will follow through the course of the novel. Elizabeth and Darcy have their first encounter, and their first impressions establish one of the main threads of the plot. Readers will note Darcy's snobbery as he speaks insultingly of the guests in general and Elizabeth in particular. She is immediately prejudiced against Darcy, both for his superior attitude and aloofness.

[Charles Bingley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Pride-and-Prejudice/character-analysis/#Charles_Bingley) and [Jane Bennet](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Pride-and-Prejudice/character-analysis/#Jane_Bennet)'s first encounter is much more pleasant. However, as the plot unfolds, they will have misunderstandings paralleling those between Elizabeth and Darcy.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Mr. Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) pays a return visit to [Mr. Bennet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/mr-bennet) and is subsequently invited to dinner at Longbourn. Elaborate plans are made, but Bingley breaks them because of urgent business in London. He soon returns, however, along with his sister [Mrs. Hurst](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) and her husband, his youngest sister [Caroline](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters), and his friend [Darcy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/fitzwilliam-darcy) for the upcoming ball.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Austen focuses on just a few families of different status—the extremely wealthy upper class (Bingley and Darcy) and the less wealthy country gentry (the Bennets)—in order to reveal the class dynamics of her society on a small scale.

***Summary Part 2:***The ball takes place at Meryton, where the locals gossip about the newcomers. [Darcy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/fitzwilliam-darcy) is handsome but proud and aloof. [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) makes friends with everyone, dancing every dance, including several with [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet), which makes the Bennets very happy.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Balls were among the few socially acceptable venues for mingling between the sexes. Here the locals make character judgments based on appearances and first impressions.

***Summary Part 3:***[Elizabeth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/elizabeth-eliza-lizzy-bennet) overhears [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) tell [Darcy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/fitzwilliam-darcy) that [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet) is the most beautiful girl he's ever seen. Bingley demands that Darcy find someone to dance with, and suggests Elizabeth. Darcy says she isn't pretty enough for him. Elizabeth overhears, and is annoyed.

***Analysis Part 3:***Initially prideful, Darcy doesn't think these country people are good enough for him. Elizabeth has pride, too: though looks aren't everything to her, Darcy's insult still stings.

***Summary Part 4:***Returning home, [Mrs. Bennet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/mrs-bennet) regales her husband with an abundance of details. She is excited for [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet) and convinced of [Bingley's](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) interest in her, and detests [Darcy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/fitzwilliam-darcy) for his attitude about [Elizabeth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/elizabeth-eliza-lizzy-bennet).

***Analysis Part 4:***Mrs. Bennet's attitude toward Darcy and Bingley is already fixed, showing how strong prejudices can be once formed.