***Pride and Prejudice***

***Volume 1***

***Chapter 5***

***Summary in Detail:***

* Now we meet the Lucas family, who live close by and are close to the Bennet family.
* Elizabeth in particular is very close to[**Charlotte Lucas**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/charlotte-lucas), who is described as sensible, intelligent, in her late twenties, and unmarried. Gasp!
* The day after the ball, the two families get together to gossip.
* [**Mrs. Bennet**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/mrs-bennet) fishes for compliments about her daughters, and Charlotte obliges: she overheard that [**Mr. Bingley**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/charles-bingley)thought Jane was the prettiest young woman at the ball.
* Mr. Darcy not so much. But Jane informs the gossipers that Miss Bingley, Mr. Bingley's sister, told her that Mr. Darcy is really nice when you get to know him.
* Mrs. Bennet refuses to hear a good word said about Mr. Darcy.
* They discuss the difference between [**pride**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/themes/pride)and vanity, concluding that pride is acceptable, as it is only your opinion about yourself, whereas vanity is caring about what others think about you.
* Sounds solid.

***Brief Summary:***

The Miss. Lucases and the Miss. Bennets get together the day after the ball to talk about the outcomes of the evening's events. Mrs. Bennet brags none too subtly about Mr. Bingley's obvious affection for Jane, and Mr. Darcy's harsh comments about Elizabeth are spoken about. They come to the conclusion that Mr. Darcy is "ate up with pride," although Miss. Lucas sensibly counters that he has good reason to be proud, being handsome, from a good family, wealthy, and intelligent.

Once again, Mr. Darcy's pride is a subject of heated debate, although Elizabeth brings her own pride into this conversation, replying to Miss. Lucas's comment by stating that she "could easily forgive *his* pride, if he had not mortified *mine*." Here we begin to learn that Mr. Darcy is not the only character in the novel with excessive pride, that Elizabeth also is proud, although we do not yet know to what extent, nor how it relates to Mr. Darcy's pride.

### *Analysis: Chapters 1–4*

The residents of Hertfordshire county are excited by the news that a wealthy single gentleman named Mr. Bingley has rented Netherfield Park, a large house with extensive grounds. Mrs. Bennet urges her husband to go meet Mr. Bingley when he arrives in the neighborhood so that their five daughters may then have the opportunity to meet the gentleman and attract his interest. Skeptical of his wife's matchmaking scheme, Mr. Bennet nonetheless visits Mr. Bingley, much to the delight of Mrs. Bennet and their five daughters — Jane, Elizabeth (Lizzie), Mary, Catherine (Kitty), and Lydia.

Although Mr. Bingley returns Mr. Bennet's visit, the Bennet girls do not get the opportunity to meet him until a ball is held in the neighborhood. At the ball, Mr. Bingley is accompanied by his two sisters, his brother-in-law, and a friend, Mr. Darcy. While Mr. Bingley impresses everyone with his outgoing and likable personality, Mr. Darcy is declared to be proud, disagreeable, and cold. He especially offends Elizabeth when she overhears him refusing Bingley's suggestion that he dance with her.

After the ball, Jane and Elizabeth discuss Mr. Bingley's attentions to Jane, and Jane admits that she found him to be attractive and charming and was flattered by his admiration of her. Elizabeth comments on the difference between her temperament and Jane's, noting that Jane always looks for the good in people, a quality that sometimes blinds her to people's faults. Meanwhile, at Netherfield, Mr. Bingley, his sisters, and Mr. Darcy review the ball and the people who attended it. Although they differ in their perceptions of the ball in general, they all agree on Jane's beauty and sweet disposition.

Discussion of the ball continues when the daughters of the Bennets' neighbor, Sir William Lucas, visit. The oldest daughter, Charlotte, is Elizabeth's close friend, and commiserates with Elizabeth over Mr. Darcy's snub. Charlotte acknowledges, however, that Mr. Darcy's family and wealth give him the right to be proud. Elizabeth agrees, noting that her resentment of his proud nature stems from his wounding her own pride.

With the first sentence of the book, Austen deftly establishes the major theme and tone of Pride and Prejudice. She states: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." This sentence introduces the theme of marriage, which is central to the novel's plot, and also introduces the tone of irony, which Austen will use both verbally and structurally throughout Pride and Prejudice.

To fully appreciate the humor and artistry of Austen's novel, one must first understand what irony is and how it is used in literature. In its most basic sense, irony is the use of words to express something other than, or opposite of, the literal meaning. For example, if the first sentence of the novel is read literally, it's meaning is "Everyone knows that a single rich man is looking for a wife." However, read ironically, the sentence means something other than its literal meaning: "Everyone knows that a single rich man will be pursued by women who want to be his wife." Austen also uses irony in the structure of the plot, placing her characters in situations that seem to signify one thing and are later revealed to signify something else.

***Analysis:***The narrator describes the Lucas family, who live near Longbourn. [Sir William Lucas](https://www.gradesaver.com/pride-and-prejudice/study-guide/character-list#sir-william-lucas) was once a merchant, but he has become overly proud after being knighted. His wife, Mrs. Lucas, is a close confidant of Mrs. Bennet, and their daughter Charlotte is Elizabeth's closest friend.

The day after the ball, Charlotte and Mrs. Lucas visit the Bennet ladies to share their experiences. They all voice their general admiration for Jane and share the belief that Bingley is attracted to her. They also criticize Darcy because of his pride. Mary remarks that pride is universal to human nature, and articulates the difference between pride and vanity. She comments, "Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us."

***Synopsis:***

During a social call, the Lucas family and the Bennets discuss the ball, especially the rude behavior of Mr. Darcy. Charlotte Lucas, a good friend of Elizabeth's, sympathizes with Elizabeth's annoyance at Darcy's behavior. However, she points out that Darcy's pride may be explained by his status. It might be understandable, she says, that a man who has such a large fortune exudes such pride. Elizabeth acknowledges this possibility and admits that she was hurt by Darcy's treatment.

Throughout the novel, Charlotte Lucas will represent a realist's point of view about women, men, and class. Here, she gives Darcy some latitude for his seemingly superior attitude, pointing to his status as a possible excuse. Later, we will see her capitulating to a marriage of security that also reflects her acceptance of the social structure. Her own father, Sir William Lucas, has been knighted—a great honor and, until the industrial revolution, one of the only ways for a commoner to move up in the world. Although [Austen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Pride-and-Prejudice/author/) paints Sir William Lucas as being a bit vain about his knighthood, her ridicule is gentle.

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This lesson covers the early chapters of 'Pride and Prejudice'. The great event of this segment of the novel is a social dance at Meryton. One chapter is devoted to the dance, and several to discussions of it, through which more is learned about the book's principal characters.

In Which a Ball is a Big Deal

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| portrait |
| Jane Austen |

Understanding the social significance of dances in Regency England is a big help in reading Pride and Prejudice. For members of the gentry (or middle class), balls were key events in anyone's social calendar. They could be formal or informal, small or large, held in private homes or in public assembly rooms. Such events provided an opportunity for families to socialize, to meet new people, and, crucially, for young men and women of marriageable age to flirt in a socially sanctioned way.

As the pursuit of marriage forms one of the key topics of Pride and Prejudice, dances of all kinds understandably loom large in the novel. Chapters 3-5 are devoted to a public dance in the town of Meryton, and to discussions of it. Through the way people behave at the ball, and how they talk about it afterward, Jane Austen reveals more about the personalities of some of the book's central characters.

New in the Neighborhood

The arrival of Mr. Bingley in the neighborhood sends ripples of excitement - and talk - through the early chapters of Pride and Prejudice. Representatives of all the local families go to visit him, in order to formally open their social acquaintance. In Chapter 2, we learn that Mr. Bennet was among the first of Mr. Bingley's visitors. As he and his wife have no fewer than five daughters, dependent on eventual marriage for their livelihood, this is a great event in Mrs. Bennet's eyes. Chapter 2 sees her husband teasing her, as usual, making references to Mr. Bingley without revealing that he has been to visit him.

Through family conversation, we meet (some of) the Bennet sisters, and get a sense of everyday life in the Bennet household. Austen makes use of everyday details in characterization. Lizzy is practical, reminding her irritable mother that they'll be sure to meet Mr. Bingley at the public dance in two weeks' time, whether or not their family has been introduced to him beforehand. Mary is serious-minded, but not very clever. Her father, in asking her opinion, says 'you are a young lady of deep reflection, I know, and read great books, and make extracts.' But despite all her copying out of inspirational quotes, Mary is incapable of making a sensible reply on the spot. Of the two younger sisters, in their mid-teens, Kitty is self-conscious, while Lydia is confident to a fault. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet tease and bicker in what is clearly a long-standing pattern.

The patterns of local life are seen more fully at the much-anticipated ball. Here, Austen mocks both the snobbishness of the wealthy Bingley sisters and the pettiness of Meryton society. What sets this ball apart from others is, of course, the presence of Mr. Bingley. Anticipatory gossip reports 'that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a number of ladies; but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing, that instead of twelve, he had brought only six... And when the party entered the assembly room, it consisted of only five altogether.'

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| standing about in a stupid manner |
| She is tolerable... |

At the ball itself, Jane is much admired by Mr. Bingley (they dance two dances together) and Mr. Darcy delivers one of the most famous insults in literature. Bingley notices that his friend's participation in the evening is limited to wandering morosely around the room, and encourages him to dance with Lizzy, rather than 'standing about in this stupid manner.' Darcy's reply is: 'She is tolerable; but not handsome enough to tempt me.' Ouch! Lizzy is understandably miffed, but characteristically laughs over the incident among her friends.

Character and Conversation

The conclusion of the third chapter, and Chapters 4-5, are devoted to gossip about the ball, in which Austen's sly observations are often tongue-in-cheek. Mrs. Bennet can barely be restrained by her husband from recounting every detail of the dance. She is also indignant on Lizzy's behalf, making the sniffy remark that Mr. Darcy 'walked here, and he walked there, fancying himself so very great!' She's not wrong.

Jane and Lizzy, once alone, exchange affectionate late-night confidences. Jane speaks for the first time, and reveals herself to be a total sweetheart. She's quite taken with Mr. Bingley, and Lizzy gives her sisterly seal of approval: 'He is certainly very agreeable, and I give you leave to like him. You have liked many a stupider person.' Bingley, in the other late-night conversation of Chapter 4, is shown to be likewise attracted to Jane. Darcy says that she's pretty, but smiles too much (typical Darcy,) and Bingley's sisters say she seems sweet so Bingley feels 'authorized... to think of her as he chose.' This dependence of his on the judgment of others will be important throughout the novel.

In Chapter 5, the Bennets receive a visit from Lady Lucas and her daughters. As Austen dryly remarks, their morning-after discussion of any ball was 'absolutely necessary.' While Mrs. Bennet and Lady Lucas are subtly (or not so subtly) evaluating the impressions their marriageable daughters have made on the rich and single Mr. Bingley, the daughters have more relaxed conversation among themselves. Lizzy and her friend Charlotte Lucas are much more laid-back about Mr. Darcy's put-down than their mothers. Lizzy wryly observes, 'I could easily forgive his pride, if he had not mortified mine.' Mary then chimes in to offer a definition of pride: 'Pride relates more to our opinion of ourselves, vanity to what we would have others think of us.' Both pride and vanity will shape the remaining events of the book.

Lesson Summary

Chapters 2-5 of Pride and Prejudice introduce us to most of the novel's main characters. Jane Austen's gift for wry - and hilarious - social criticism is also on display, both in the description of the Meryton ball, and of conversations after it. The minute analysis of the ball by different groups after the event reveals much about characters and their relationships to each other, and about differences in social class. Bingley and Jane, both good-natured to a fault, are instantly attracted to each other. Lizzy is insulted by the supercilious Mr. Darcy, but, typically for her, laughs it off.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

The next morning, the Bennet women walk over to discuss the ball with their neighbors: [Sir William Lucas](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters), [Lady Lucas](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters), and [Charlotte](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters), who is their eldest daughter and is [Elizabeth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/elizabeth-eliza-lizzy-bennet)'s close friend.

***Analysis Part 1:***

The Lucas family can sympathize with the Bennets because their daughters will also need husbands.

***Summary Part 2:***Everyone agrees that [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) liked [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet). The conversation quickly shifts to [Darcy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/fitzwilliam-darcy). Apparently he offended everyone who tried to speak with him. [Charlotte](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) consoles [Elizabeth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/elizabeth-eliza-lizzy-bennet) about Darcy's insult and wishes he would have agreed to a dance, but she adds that Darcy's pride may be forgiven because of his high standing and fortune. Elizabeth responds that she could forgive his pride if he hadn't insulted her own.

***Analysis Part 2:***

Here Charlotte suggests that pride isn't always bad. Indeed, pride can help protect a family reputation, or can provide the motivation to help people. Charlotte also implies that sometimes men's faults have to be overlooked when you're on the hunt for a husband.

***Summary Part 3:***[Mary](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) pompously lectures the group about human nature. She clarifies that pride is self-regard while vanity concerns what others think of you.

***Analysis Part 3:***Mary represents a very strict by-the-book type of morality that, Austen makes clear, needs to be tempered with experience.