***Pride and Prejudice***

***Volume 1***

***Chapter 9***

***Summary in Detail:***

* The next morning, [**Mrs. Bennet**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/mrs-bennet) and the doctor Mr. Jones arrive. They decide that Jane isn't in real danger, but she'd still better stay at Netherfield.
* Everyone congregates in the breakfast parlour, and it's immediately embarrassing.
* [**Elizabeth**](https://www.shmoop.com/study-guides/literature/pride-and-prejudice/elizabeth-bennet) tries to save her mother from her own foolish talk, but Mrs. Bennet just makes a fool of herself.

***Brief Summary:***

By morning Jane is slightly better; however, Elizabeth chooses to send word to her mother to come herself to pass judgment as to whether or not Jane is fit to travel. Mrs. Bennet arrives with Catherine and Lydia soon after breakfast. After spending a short while with Jane, Mrs. Bennet pronounces her far too ill to be removed, and she and her three daughters go down to have tea with Mr. and Miss. Bingley. Elizabeth is embarrassed every time her mother opens her mouth, and is happy to see them leave. Miss. Bingley is also happy to see them leave, having been left with an abundance of new material to criticize, and she commences to do so the moment Mrs. Bennet has left and Elizabeth has returned upstairs to her sister.

It is obvious that Miss. Bingley does not think Jane a good match for her brother. England at that moment in history was a society very much divided by class, and marriages were arranged based almost solely on this system. Despite Mr. Bingley's obvious regard for Jane, others think it imprudent of him even to indulge in her company, as she is obviously a poor match for him, according to his sisters and Mr. Darcy.

### *Analysis(Ch 6-9):*

Jane and Elizabeth begin spending more time with the residents of Netherfield. Caroline Bingley and Mrs. Hurst seem fond of Jane, and the attraction between Mr. Bingley and Jane continues to grow. Meanwhile, Elizabeth finds Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst to be self-important but approves of their brother and the relationship that appears to be developing between him and Jane. As for Mr. Darcy, Elizabeth continues to view him as proud and reserved. She is unaware that his original assessment of her has changed and that he has begun to be unwillingly drawn to her. When he mentions Elizabeth's "fine eyes" to Miss Bingley, Miss Bingley jealously teases him about wanting to marry Elizabeth.

One morning, Jane receives a request from Caroline Bingley to come to Netherfield for dinner. Observing that it looks like rain, Mrs. Bennet sends Jane to Netherfield on horseback rather than in a carriage so that she will have to spend the night at Netherfield rather than ride home in the rain. The ploy works, and the next morning, the Bennets receive a note from Jane informing them that she is ill from getting soaked as she rode to Netherfield the previous day and will have to remain at Netherfield until she is better. Although Mrs. Bennet is satisfied at the thought of Jane spending more time in Mr. Bingley's home, Elizabeth is concerned and decides to walk the three miles to Netherfield to see for herself how her sister is faring. When Elizabeth reaches Netherfield, she finds Jane to be sicker than her letter implied, and Miss Bingley reluctantly invites her to stay with Jane.

Although Elizabeth spends most of her time at Netherfield with Jane, she eats dinner with the others and joins them in the drawing room later in the evening. While Elizabeth is in their company, Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst are polite to her, but when she is absent, the two women take delight in criticizing her relatives and the fact that she walked all the way to Netherfield to see Jane. Despite the ladies' disparagement of Elizabeth, Mr. Bingley and Mr. Darcy voice their approval of her.

The next day Mrs. Bennet, Kitty, and Lydia visit Netherfield to check on Jane. While they are there, Elizabeth is embarrassed by the gauche behavior of her family. Mrs. Bennet fawns over Mr. Bingley while simultaneously being blatantly rude to Mr. Darcy, while Lydia is overly forward with Mr. Bingley, reminding him that he promised to give a ball. Mr. Bingley good-naturedly agrees that he will give a ball as soon as Jane is better.

Two features that distinguish Elizabeth from other women throughout the novel are her quick wit and her energy. In these chapters, we see her display these qualities in a variety of situations, ranging from a one-on-one chat with her close friend to a neighborhood gathering to an unplanned stay with people who consider themselves to be her social superiors. In all of these instances, Elizabeth exhibits a vigor and intelligence that appeals not only to characters within Pride and Prejudice but to the readers of the novel as well.

Elizabeth's wit is evident in her dialogue, whether she is debating with Charlotte the reasons for marriage or discussing with Darcy the existence of accomplished women. Readers get a sense of her energy from her speech, as well, as she delivers opinions and retorts with precision and speed. But Austen also shows Elizabeth's energetic nature through her actions. Throughout the novel, Elizabeth enjoys physical activity, especially walking, and readers find the first evidence of this proclivity when Elizabeth easily walks the three miles from Longbourn to Netherfield to see her sick sister. The snide responses of Caroline Bingley and Mrs. Hurst to Elizabeth's action demonstrate that such behavior is not the norm among gentlewomen.

Interestingly, the characteristics that set Elizabeth apart from other women in the novel are the very qualities that appeal to Darcy. He first notices that her face is "rendered uncommonly intelligent by the beautiful expression of her dark eyes." As he listens to her conversations, he is obviously intrigued by her ability to express herself and tells her that she speaks "with great energy." Darcy is also drawn to Elizabeth's "light and pleasing" figure and the "easy playfulness" of her manners. When she walks to Netherfield, Darcy feels "admiration of the brilliancy which exercise had given her complexion."

Elizabeth's appeal for Darcy becomes even more apparent in the scene in which Darcy, Miss Bingley, and Elizabeth discuss the requirements of an accomplished woman. Miss Bingley has already demonstrated her own hopes of being the future Mrs. Darcy in her comments to him and her flirtatious behavior. In this scene, however, Austen gives a direct contrast between Miss Bingley and Elizabeth as they simultaneously interact with Darcy. While Miss Bingley agrees with everything Darcy says, Elizabeth counters his statements with her opposing opinions. When Elizabeth leaves and Miss Bingley begins to criticize her remarks as attempts to attract men, Darcy reveals his own intelligent wit by subtly reproaching Miss Bingley for her hypocrisy.

Miss Bingley's behavior toward Darcy makes the reader recall the first sentence of the novel: "It is a truth universally acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune, must be in want of a wife." Austen has shown how desperately the mothers of Hertfordshire county have thrown their daughters at Bingley, and made clear that Darcy is much wealthier than Bingley. The only thing saving him from matchmaking schemes is his reserved, proud demeanor. However, his demeanor does not put off Caroline Bingley, and it is probable that he receives similar fawning treatment from a great number of aristocratic women. Consequently for Darcy, Elizabeth's forthrightness and apparent dislike of him are probably refreshing qualities in a woman. If Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst are examples of the women Darcy is used to dealing with, Elizabeth's spirited manner must be a welcome change, as is the fact that she is not pursuing him and his fortune.

A little knowledge of nineteenth-century society helps modern readers to understand some of Austen's ironic social commentary in this section. Miss Bingley and Mrs. Hurst take great delight in ridiculing Jane and Elizabeth's relatives who are pseudogentry, or professionals who do not own land, such as their Uncle Philips who is an attorney. Members of the landowning gentry, such as Darcy, or the soon-to-be-landowning gentry, such as Bingley, would consider those who earn their money through trade (a profession) to be socially inferior. Elizabeth's father is among the landed gentry, but her mother comes from a trade family. Consequently, Jane's and Elizabeth's standing in the eyes of elitists like the Bingley sisters is diminished due to their mother's family connections. However, their criticism of the Bennets is ironic, because Austen notes early on that "their brother's fortune and their own had been acquired by trade." In other words, the Bingleys' inherited fortune originates from the very circumstances that they now scorn.

Glossary

Vingt-un a card game, similar to the American card game of twenty-one.

Commerce a card game which was a predecessor of poker.

archly in an arch manner; pertly and mischievously.

complacency quiet satisfaction; contentment.

when am I to wish you joy? "I wish you joy" or "I wish you happy" was the way people in early nineteenth-century Britain congratulated someone on becoming engaged to be married.

entailed to limit the inheritance of property to a specific line or class of heirs.

milliner a person who designs, makes, trims, or sells women's hats.

tête-à-tête a private or intimate conversation between two people.

prognostic a forecast; prediction.

stile a step or set of steps used in climbing over a fence or wall.

apothecary [Old-fashioned] a pharmacist or druggist: apothecaries formerly also prescribed drugs.

draughts medicine.

retire to go aay, retrat, or withdraw.

at five o'clock the two ladies retired to dress It was the custom to change into more formal clothes for dinner.

ragout a highly seasoned stew of meat and vegetables.

countenance calm control; composure.

nonsensical unintelligible, foolish, silly, or absurd.

petticoat a skirt, now especially an underskirt often trimmed at the hemline as with lace or ruffles, worn by women and girls.

not doing its office not performing its function or characteristic action.

Cheapside street and district of London; in the Middle Ages it was a marketplace.

vulgar of, characteristic of, belonging to, or common to the great mass of people in general; common.

vulgar relations Here, the Bingley sisters are making fun of Jane's relatives, who work for a living.

repaired to her room went or betook herself to her room.

loo a card game that was played for money.

playing high betting large amounts of money.

piano-forte piano.

mean ignoble; base; small-minded; petty.

solaced lessened or allayed (grief or sorrow).

temper frame of mind; disposition; mood.

prospect the view obtained from any particular point; outlook.

suffered allowed; permitted; tolerated.

mince pies pies with a filling of mincemeat.

efficacy power to produce effects or intended results; effectiveness.

tax to impose a burden on; put a strain on.

the youngest should tax Mr. Bingley Here, Lydia is placing on Mr. Bingley the obligation of giving a ball.

brought her into public at an early age introduced her formally into society at an early age. Lydia has had her "coming out" early.

***Critical Analysis:***Elizabeth asks that her mother be summoned to visit Jane, and Bingley complies. When Mrs. Bennet arrives, she is pleased to see that Jane will eventually recover but still ill enough to remain at Netherfield (and in proximity to Mr. Bingley). Mrs. Bennet lacks subtlety and her intentions become quite clear to everyone at Netherfield. She is also openly rude to [Mr. Darcy](https://www.gradesaver.com/pride-and-prejudice/study-guide/character-list#mr-darcy). Elizabeth is embarrassed by her mother's behavior and pleased when Mrs. Bennet departs.

***Critical Study:***As Jane's health has not improved, Mrs. Bennet decides to check on her. She, Kitty, and Lydia make the trip to Netherfield. During the visit, Elizabeth is embarrassed by her family's behavior. Mrs. Bennet chatters incessantly, and Lydia boldly asks Bingley when he intends to host a ball. Mr. Bingley is polite about this query and answers that once Jane is well, he will.

Here, the interaction of the Bingleys and the Bennets provides an opportunity for closer observation of the two families. Elizabeth converses with Darcy as an intellectual equal, but Mrs. Bennet overdoes things with strong opinions and her naked attempts to promote Jane over Charlotte Lucas. Lydia is rude. Elizabeth is embarrassed by her family's behavior, but Caroline Bingley does herself no favors either, revealing her snobbishness at every turn. These developments allow Darcy to see Elizabeth more clearly. As Caroline Bingley continues to harp on her own status and express disdain for others, whether based on appearance or fortune, Elizabeth's intelligence and grace come into focus.

***Notes(Ch6-9):***This lesson covers chapters 6-9 of 'Pride and Prejudice,' in which the acquaintance between the Bennet family and the household at Netherfield deepens, and the courtship of Bingley and Jane progresses... sort of.

Pride & Prejudice 6-9: Money Matters

In chapters 6-9 of Pride and Prejudice, all of the main characters have already been introduced to the reader and to each other. Here, Austen gives a bit more background on the Bennet family, revealing their shaky financial circumstances and their undistinguished relations. These affect both the upbringing of the Bennet sisters and how the more fashionable Bingleys act towards them. (As Austen points out, there's some irony in this, as Bingley's own father made his fortune from trade, rather than inheriting it from his ancestors.) Austen also shows Bingley's household from the inside for the first time, allowing readers to learn more about the characters of those in it.

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| party |
| The members of the Netherfield household |

Love and Marriage?

Chapter 6 is devoted to the book's themes of love and its relationship (if any) to the pursuit of marriage. As Bingley and his sisters get to know the families of the neighborhood better, his attachment to Jane is becoming increasingly obvious. Jane is also 'in a way to be very much in love,' but this is less obvious, due to the fact that she is super-nice to everyone all the time.

Lizzy thinks Jane's attitude is a good thing, as it protects her sister's reputation. It would be all too easy for Jane to be accused of throwing herself at (rich! handsome! single!) Mr. Bingley if she were overeager. Lizzy's friend Charlotte is less optimistic, wisely noting that few people 'have heart enough to be really in love without encouragement.' Through the friends' conversation, Austen makes clear that Charlotte thinks of marriage primarily as a social relationship, while Lizzy thinks of it primarily as an emotional one.

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| awkward conversation |
| Lizzy declines to dance |

Meanwhile, surprisingly, Mr. Darcy begins to find himself attracted to Lizzy, despite her lack of social polish and conventional beauty. He is actively distressed by this. (Mr. Darcy is bad at feelings.) He decides to prepare to have an actual conversation with her by listening to her conversations with other people. (Mr. Darcy is also bad at social interactions.)

With the intervention of Sir William Lucas, Mr. Darcy and Lizzy actually do have a conversation, but Lizzy declines Sir William's suggestion that she and Mr. Darcy should dance together. Mr. Darcy broods about how stupid the party is, but also about how nice Lizzy's eyes are. Caroline Bingley, flirting with him, is taken aback to discover this, but concludes that he could never be seriously attracted to someone with such embarrassing relations.

The Best-Laid Plans...

In Chapter 7, Jane accepts an invitation to dinner from Mr. Bingley's sisters, with unexpectedly complex results. Since the Bennets only have one set of horses that they use both for farming and for drawing their carriage, Jane is obliged to ride over to Netherfield. Caught in the rain, she's then obliged to stay overnight by the bad weather... and develops a bad cold. She sends a note home telling the family not to worry. Mrs. Bennet doesn't, saying 'People do not die of little trifling colds!' Lizzy, however, immediately sets out to visit her sister. She is, of course, obliged to walk; her appearance at Netherfield, predictably muddy, scandalizes Mr. Bingley's sisters. Mr. Bingley himself is touched by her concern for Jane, which he shares. Mr. Darcy, as usual, is as silent as possible.

Jane and Lizzy's visit at Netherfield sheds further light on the characters of everyone there. Bingley's sisters are revealed to be essentially self-centered; for all their professed affection for Jane, they're perfectly ready to mock her family behind her back. Moreover, although they visit Jane's sickroom, they don't really let her distress interfere with their own pleasures. (Everyone who has experienced high school probably knows at least one person like this.) Bingley, although forbidden by the rules of respectability from actually seeing Jane, is far more genuinely concerned for her.

The time that Lizzy spends socializing with the Netherfield household reveals much about social norms, as well as personalities. Bingley is irrepressibly good-humored; in his opinion, all young ladies are accomplished - 'they all paint tables, cover screens, and net purses.' Mr. Darcy disapproves of this low standard, viewing true accomplishment as being related to manner, skill, and intellect, far more than various forms of embroidery. Caroline, still flirting, hastens to agree with him; Lizzy tells him he's being a bit harsh. Darcy's seriousness and high standards are shown to have a good side, too: he takes care of his younger sister's education, and is dedicated to preserving and improving his inheritance.

An Embarrassment of Non-Riches

In Chapter 9, Mrs. Bennet comes to Netherfield to check on Jane. This is predictably awkward. Jane is found to be recovering nicely, but is not ready to be moved; Mrs. Bennet is delighted by both of these things. She also proceeds to mortify Lizzy by her conversation with Bingley, in which she praises Jane's character - 'I often tell my other girls they are nothing to her' - and his estate in an embarrassingly transparent manner. In her defense of their provincial society, she reveals herself to be clueless, as well as vulgar.

Bingley's sisters don't hide their contempt of Mrs. Bennet; Mr. Darcy hides his for politeness' sake, while Bingley hides his for Jane's. After Lydia, the youngest of the Bennet sisters, extracts a promise from Bingley that he'll host a ball as soon as possible, all the Bennets except Lizzy and Jane leave... finally.

Lesson Summary

Chapters 6-9 of Pride and Prejudice deepen the readers' knowledge of everyone's character, and of the social world of the novel. Marriage is shown to be both an emotional bond and a relationship with profound social implications. This complicates the shy courtship of Jane and Bingley, who are both adorable. The Bennets' undistinguished connections - and particularly the embarrassing vulgarity of Mrs. Bennet - hamper the prospects for their unmarried daughters to gain the security that marriage would provide. In time spent with the Netherfield household, Lizzy shows herself to be consistently frank as well as intelligent. While Mr. Darcy is proud, he lacks the pettiness of the Bingley sisters. Also, he may be attracted to Lizzy, but he doesn't have to like it.

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

***Summary Part 1:***

[Elizabeth](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/elizabeth-eliza-lizzy-bennet) sends home a note requesting that her mother come and visit [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet). [Mrs. Bennet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/mrs-bennet) arrives with Lydia and, not wishing Jane to leave [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters)'s company, declares that Jane seems worse than ever.

***Analysis Part 1:***

Mrs. Bennet continues her ridiculous and manipulative campaign to "win" Bingley for Jane.

***Summary Part 2:***In conversation, [Mrs. Bennet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/mrs-bennet), seeking to raise [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet)'s status, tries to impress [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) about her family and their situation in the country. [Darcy](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/fitzwilliam-darcy) suggests that one finds more variety of character in town than in the country, but Mrs. Bennet loudly objects. Everyone is surprised. Elizabeth is mortified and tries her best to fill the awkward silence.

***Analysis Part 2:***

By talking up the Bennets' status, Mrs. Bennet actually degrades it by seeming crass, foolishly proud, and clearly not of the best class or character. If you're high class, you don't need to tell others about it—they just know.

***Summary Part 3:***[Lydia](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) jumps in to remind [Bingley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters) of his promise to give a ball at Netherfield. Bingley says he hasn't forgotten but will wait until [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/pride-and-prejudice/characters/jane-bennet) recovers.

***Analysis Part 3:***Lydia's insistence is impolite. Bingley, with his better breeding, turns it into a compliment to Jane.