

= Pride and Prejudice (1995 TV series) =

Pride and Prejudice is a six @-@ episode 1995 British television drama , adapted by Andrew Davies from Jane Austen 's 1813 novel of the same name . Jennifer Ehle and Colin Firth starred as Elizabeth Bennet and Mr Darcy . Produced by Sue Birtwistle and directed by Simon Langton , the serial was a BBC production with additional funding from the American A & E Network . BBC1 originally broadcast the 55 @-@ minute episodes from 24 September to 29 October in 1995 . The A & E Network aired the series in double episodes on three consecutive nights beginning 14 January 1996 .

Critically acclaimed and a popular success , Pride and Prejudice was honoured with several awards , including a BAFTA Television Award for Jennifer Ehle for " Best Actress " and an Emmy for " Outstanding Individual Achievement in Costume Design for a Miniseries or a Special " . The role of Mr Darcy elevated Colin Firth to stardom . A scene showing Firth in a wet shirt was recognised as " one of the most unforgettable moments in British TV history " . The New York Times called the adaptation " a witty mix of love stories and social conniving , cleverly wrapped in the ambitions and illusions of a provincial gentry " . The series inspired author Helen Fielding to write the popular Bridget Jones novels and their screen adaptations subsequently featured Firth as Bridget 's love interest Mark Darcy .

= = Plot = =

Episode 1 ? Part One : Mr. Charles Bingley , a rich man from the north of England , settles down at Netherfield estate near Meryton village in Hertfordshire for the autumn . Mrs Bennet , unlike her husband , is excited at the prospect of marrying off one of her five daughters (Jane , Elizabeth , Mary , Kitty , and Lydia) to the newcomer . Bingley takes an immediate liking to Jane at a local country @-@ dance , while his best friend Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy , rumoured to be twice as rich , refuses to stand up with anyone including Elizabeth . Elizabeth 's poor impression of his character is confirmed at a later gathering at Lucas Lodge and she and Darcy verbally clash on the two nights she spends at Netherfield caring for the sick Jane .

Episode 2 ? Part Two : A sycophantic clergyman named Mr. William Collins visits his cousins , the Bennets . He is the entailed heir of their home and estate , Longbourn , and intends to marry one of Mr. Bennet 's daughters . This is meant , on his part , as an act of benign goodwill towards the Bennets , because Mrs. Bennet and her unwed daughters will be rendered homeless once Mr. Bennet dies and Mr. Collins inherits the estate . He therefore invites himself for a two @-@ week visit , to get to know the Bennets better and select a wife from among the daughters of the family . However , the Bennet girls judge Mr. Collins to be a rather ridiculous man , an " oddity " with many peculiarities of speech and deportment . They are nevertheless civil to him , and take him to balls and social events in Meryton . One day , while on a walk around Meryton village , they meet members of a newly arrived militia , including a Mr George Wickham . At a social event , Wickham befriends Elizabeth and tells her that Darcy , who is the son of Wickham 's late father 's employer , has denied Wickham a living (a curacy) which had been assured to him by Mr. Darcy 's father . At another social event , Darcy surprises Elizabeth with a dance offer at a ball at Netherfield , which she grudgingly but politely accepts . Mr Collins proposes to Elizabeth the next day , but she resoundingly rejects him . While Mrs Bennet disagrees about Elizabeth 's decision , her close friend Charlotte Lucas invites Mr Collins to stay at Lucas Lodge .

Episode 3 ? Part Three : Elizabeth is stunned and appalled when she learns that Charlotte Lucas has accepted a proposal from Mr Collins . When the Netherfield party departs for London in autumn , Jane stays with her modest London relatives , the Gardiners , but she soon notices that the Bingleys ignore her . After befriendng Mr Wickham , Elizabeth departs for the Collinses ' home in Kent in the spring . They live near Rosings , the estate of the formidable Lady Catherine de Bourgh , and as Lady Catherine is Darcy 's aunt , Elizabeth meets Darcy several times . Shortly after Elizabeth learns of Darcy 's direct responsibility for Jane and Bingley 's separation , Darcy unexpectedly proposes to her , expressing his ardent admiration and love despite Elizabeth 's

inferior family connections . Elizabeth flatly rejects him , noting his arrogant , disagreeable , and proud character , and his involvement in her sister 's failed romance and Mr Wickham 's misfortune .

Episode 4 ? Part Four : Darcy justifies his previous actions in a long letter to Elizabeth : he misjudged Jane 's affection for Bingley and exposes Wickham as a gambler who once attempted to elope with his young sister , Georgiana , to obtain her inheritance . Back at Longbourn , Mr Bennet allows Lydia to accompany the militia to Brighton as a personal friend of the militia colonel 's wife . Elizabeth joins the Gardiners on a sightseeing trip to Derbyshire and visits Pemberley , Darcy 's estate , during his absence . Greatly impressed by the immense scale and richness of the estate , Elizabeth listens to the housekeeper 's earnest tales of her master 's lifelong goodness , while Darcy refreshes from his unannounced journey home by taking a swim in a lake . After an unexpected and awkward encounter with Elizabeth , a damp Darcy is able to prevent the party 's premature departure with an unusual degree of friendliness and politeness .

Episode 5 ? Part Five : Elizabeth and the Gardiners receive an invitation to Pemberley , where Darcy and Elizabeth share significant glances . The next morning , Elizabeth receives two letters from Jane , discussing Lydia 's elopement with Wickham . As Elizabeth is about to return to Longbourn , Darcy walks in and offers his help , but , upon digesting the bad news , gradually appears more remote , and soon takes his leave . Elizabeth supposes she will never see him again . Mr and Mrs Bennet try to deal with the possible scandal until they receive a letter from Mr Gardiner , saying that Lydia and Wickham have been found and are not married , but will be soon under the Gardiners ' care . After Mr Bennet states his surprise at how easily the issue has been resolved , Elizabeth informs Jane about her last meeting with Darcy , including her ambivalent feelings for him .

Episode 6 ? Part Six : After Lydia carelessly mentions Darcy 's involvement in her wedding , Mrs Gardiner enlightens Elizabeth how Darcy found the errant couple and paid for all the expenses . When Bingley and Darcy return to Netherfield in the autumn , Darcy apologises to Bingley for intervening in his relationship with Jane and gives his blessing for the couple to wed . Lady Catherine de Bourgh , who has heard rumours of an engagement between Darcy and Elizabeth but wants him to marry her sickly daughter Anne , pays Elizabeth an unannounced visit . She insists that Elizabeth renounce Darcy , but Elizabeth does not rule out a future engagement . When Elizabeth thanks Darcy for his role in Lydia 's marriage , Lady Catherine 's story encourages Darcy to reconfirm his feelings for Elizabeth . Elizabeth admits the complete transformation of her feelings and agrees to an engagement , which takes her family by surprise . The series ends with a double wedding in the winter months : Jane with Bingley , and Elizabeth to Fitzwilliam Darcy .

= = Cast = =

When casting the many characters of *Pride and Prejudice* , the producer Sue Birtwistle and director Simon Langton were looking for actors with wit , charm and charisma , who could also play the Regency period . Their choices for the story 's protagonists , 20 @-@ year @-@ old Elizabeth Bennet and 28 @-@ year @-@ old Mr Darcy , determined the other actors cast . Hundreds of actresses between 15 and 28 auditioned , and those with the right presence were screen @-@ tested , performing several prepared scenes in period costumes and makeup in a television studio . Straight offers were made to several established actors .

Actress Jennifer Ehle was chosen out of half a dozen serious candidates to play Elizabeth , the second Bennet daughter , the brightest girl , and her father 's favourite . At the time in her mid @-@ 20s , Ehle had first read *Pride and Prejudice* at the age of 12 and was the only actor to be present throughout the whole filming schedule . Sue Birtwistle particularly wanted Colin Firth , a relatively unknown British actor in his mid @-@ 30s at the time , to play the wealthy and aloof Mr. Darcy . Birtwistle had worked with him on the mid @-@ 1980s comedy film *Dutch Girls* , but he repeatedly turned down her offer as he neither felt attracted to Austen 's feminine perspective nor believed himself to be right for the role . Birtwistle 's persistent coaxing and his deeper looks into the Darcy character finally convinced him to accept the role . Firth and Ehle began a romantic relationship

during the filming of the series , which only received media attention after the couple 's separation .

Benjamin Whitrow and BAFTA @-@ nominated Alison Steadman were cast to play Mr and Mrs Bennet , Elizabeth 's distinguished but financially imprudent and occasionally self @-@ indulgent parents . Steadman was offered the role without auditions or screen tests . Elizabeth 's four sisters , whose ages ranged between 15 and 22 , were cast to look dissimilar from each other . Susannah Harker portrayed Elizabeth 's beautiful older sister Jane , who desires to only see good in others . Lucy Briers , Polly Maberly , and Julia Sawalha played Elizabeth 's younger sisters ? the plain Mary , the good @-@ natured but flighty and susceptible Kitty , and frivolous and headstrong Lydia . Being 10 years older than 15 @-@ year @-@ old Lydia , Julia Sawalha , of Absolutely Fabulous fame , had enough acting experience to get the role without screen tests . Joanna David and Tim Wylton appeared as the Gardiners , Elizabeth 's maternal aunt and uncle . David Bamber played the sycophantic clergyman , Mr Collins , a cousin of Mr Bennet . Lucy Scott portrayed Elizabeth 's best friend and Mr Collins 's wife , Charlotte Lucas , and David Bark @-@ Jones portrayed Lt. Denny .

The producers found Crispin Bonham @-@ Carter to have the best physical contrast to Firth 's Darcy and gave him his first major television role as the good @-@ natured and wealthy Mr Charles Bingley . Bonham @-@ Carter had originally auditioned for the part of Mr George Wickham , a handsome militia lieutenant whose charm conceals his licentiousness and greed , but Adrian Lukis was cast instead . Anna Chancellor , of Four Weddings and a Funeral fame , played Mr Bingley 's sister Caroline Bingley . (Chancellor is also Jane Austen 's niece by eight generations .) Mr Bingley 's other sister and his brother @-@ in @-@ law were played by Lucy Robinson (Louisa Hurst) and Rupert Vansittart (Mr Hurst) . Casting the role of Darcy 's young sister , Georgiana , proved hard as the producers were looking for a young actress who appeared innocent , proud and yet shy , had class and could also play the piano . After auditioning over 70 actresses , Simon Langton suggested Emilia Fox , the real @-@ life daughter of Joanna David (Mrs Gardiner) , for the part . Barbara Leigh @-@ Hunt was cast as Darcy 's meddling aunt , Lady Catherine de Bourgh , without auditions or screen tests .

= = Production = =

= = = Conception and adaptation = = =

Jane Austen 's novel *Pride and Prejudice* had already been the subject of numerous television and film adaptations , including BBC television versions in 1938 , 1952 , 1958 , 1967 and 1980 . In the autumn of 1986 , after watching a preview of Austen 's *Northanger Abbey* , Sue Birtwistle and Andrew Davies agreed to adapt *Pride and Prejudice* , one of their favourite books , for television . Birtwistle in particular felt that a new adaptation on film would serve the drama better than the previous videotaped *Pride and Prejudice* television adaptations , which looked too " undernourished " and " unpoetic " . The needs of TV scheduling forced Davies to change his original plan of a five @-@ episode adaptation to six . Birtwistle and Davies then offered the first three scripts to ITV in late 1986 to build on the guaranteed BBC audience , but the recent TV adaptation led to a delay . When ITV announced its renewed interest in 1993 , Michael Wearing of the BBC commissioned the final scripts with co @-@ funding from the American A & E Network . Director Simon Langton and the art department joined pre @-@ production in January and February 1994 .

Although Birtwistle and Davies wished to remain true to the tone and spirit of the novel , they wanted to produce " a fresh , lively story about real people " , not an " old studio @-@ bound BBC drama that was shown in the Sunday teatime slot " . Emphasising sex and money as the themes of the story , Davies shifted the focus from Elizabeth to Elizabeth and Darcy and foreshadowed Darcy 's role in the narrative resolution . To portray the characters as real human beings , Davies added short backstage scenes such as the Bennet girls dressing up to advertise themselves in the marriage market . New scenes where men pursue their hobbies with their peers departed from Jane Austen 's focus on women . The biggest technical difficulty proved to be adapting the long letters in the second half of the story . Davies employed techniques such as voice @-@ overs , flashbacks ,

and having the characters read the letters to themselves and to each other . Davies added some dialogue to clarify events from the novel to a modern audience but left much of the novel 's dialogue intact .

== = Filming == =

Director of photography John Kenway used Super 16mm film , which has a slightly smaller widescreen aspect ratio than 16 : 9 , but the series was originally broadcast 4 : 3 pan and scan .

The budget of about £ 1 million per episode (totalling US \$ 9 @. @ 6 million) allowed 20 shooting weeks of five days to film six 55 @-@ minute episodes . Production aimed for 10 @. @ 5 @-@ hour shooting days plus time for costume and make @-@ up . Two weeks before filming began , about 70 of the cast and crew gathered for the script read @-@ through , followed by rehearsals , lessons for dancing , horse @-@ riding , fencing , and other skills that needed to be ready ahead of the actual filming . Filming took place between June 1994 and 1 November 1994 to reflect the changing seasons in the plot , followed by post @-@ production until mid @-@ May 1995 . Scenes in the same place were grouped in the filming schedule .

Twenty @-@ four locations , most of them owned by the National Trust , and eight studio sets were used for filming . Reflecting the wealth differences between the main characters , the filming location for Longbourn showed the comfortable family house of the Bennet family , whereas Darcy 's Pemberley needed to look like the " most beautiful place " , showing good taste and the history of the aristocracy . The first location that the producers agreed on was Lacock in Wiltshire to represent the village of Meryton . Luckington Court nearby served as the interior and exterior of Longbourn . Lyme Hall in Cheshire was chosen as Pemberley but management problems forced production to film Pemberley 's interiors at Sudbury Hall in Sudbury , Derbyshire .

The producers found Belton House in Grantham , Lincolnshire the best match for Rosings , Lady Catherine de Bourgh 's estate , which needed to appear " over @-@ the @-@ top " to reflect her disagreeableness . Old Rectory at Teigh in Rutland was chosen as Hunsford parsonage , Mr Collins 's modest home . Edgcote House in south @-@ west Northamptonshire served as the interior and exterior of Bingley 's Netherfield , along with Bocket Hall in Welwyn Garden City , Hertfordshire as the Netherfield ballroom . The London streets were filmed in Lord Leycester Hospital in Warwick , Warwickshire . Wickham 's and Georgiana 's planned elopement in Ramsgate was filmed in the English seaside resort Weston @-@ super @-@ Mare in Somerset .

== = Costumes and make @-@ up == =

Because *Pride and Prejudice* was a period drama , the design required more research than contemporary films . The personality and wealth of the characters were reflected in their costumes ; the wealthy Bingley sisters were never shown in print dresses and they wore big feathers in their hair . As the BBC 's stock of early 19th century costumes was limited , costume designer Dinah Collin designed most of the costumes , visiting museums for inspiration while trying to make the clothes attractive to a modern audience (although some costumes , mostly worn by extras , were re @-@ used from earlier BBC productions or hired) . Elizabeth 's clothes had earthy tones and were fitted to allow easy and natural movements in line with the character 's activity and liveliness . In contrast , Collin chose pale or creamy white colours for the clothes of the other Bennet girls to highlight their innocence and simplicity and richer colours for Bingley 's sisters and Lady Catherine de Bourgh . Colin Firth participated in the wardrobe decisions and wanted his character to wear darker colours , leaving the warmer colours for Bingley .

The producers imagined Darcy to be dark despite no such references in the novel and asked Firth to dye black his light @-@ brown hair , eyebrows and lashes ; they instructed all male actors to let their hair grow before filming and shave off their moustaches . Three brunette wigs were made to cover Ehle 's short , blonde hair and one wig for Alison Steadman (Mrs. Bennet) because of her thick , heavy hair . Susannah Harker 's (Jane) hair was slightly lightened to contrast with Elizabeth 's and was arranged in a classic Greek style to highlight the character 's beauty . Mary 's plainness

was achieved by painting spots on Lucy Briers 's face ; her hair was greased to suggest an unwashed appearance and was arranged to emphasise the actress 's protruding ears . As Kitty and Lydia were too young and wild to have their hair done by the maids , the actresses ' hair was not changed much . Makeup artist Caroline Noble had always considered Mr. Collins a sweaty character with a moist upper lip ; she also greased David Bamber 's hair and gave him a low parting to suggest baldness .

= = Music and choreography = = =

Carl Davis had been writing scores for BBC adaptations of classic novels since the mid @-@ 1970s and approached Sue Birtwistle during pre @-@ production . Aiming to communicate the wit and vitality of the novel and its theme of marriage and love in a small town in the early 19th century , he used contemporary classical music as inspiration , in particular a popular Beethoven septet of the period , as well as a theme strongly reminiscent of the finale of Beethoven 's Emperor Concerto . For control over the sound , the music was recorded in six hours by a group of up to 18 musicians and was then fed into tiny earpieces of the screen musicians , who mimed playing the instruments . The actresses whose characters played the piano , Lucy Briers (Mary) and Emilia Fox (Georgiana) , were already accomplished pianists and were given the opportunity to practise weeks ahead of filming . Among the songs and movements that were played in the serial were Handel 's " Air con Variazioni " from Suite No. 5 in E Major HWV 430 and " Slumber , Dear Maid " from his opera Xerxes , Mozart 's " Rondo Alla Turca " , " Voi Che Sapete " and other music from his operas The Marriage of Figaro and Don Giovanni , Beethoven 's Andante Favori , the second movement from Muzio Clementi 's Sonatina No.4 and the traditional folk song " The Barley Mow " . A soundtrack with Davis 's themes was released on CD in 1995 .

Many scenes in the book were set at dances or balls . Jane Gibson based her choreography on The APTED Book of Country Dances (1966) by W.S. Porter , which had several late @-@ 18th @-@ century dances by Charles and Samuel Thompson such as " The Shrewsbury Lasses " , " A Trip to Highgate " and " Mr. Beveridge 's Maggot " . Although these dances gave the story an impression of authenticity , they were anachronistic , being out of fashion by the time of the story . Some fifteen dances were choreographed and rehearsed before filming . Polly Maberly and Julia Sawalha , the dance @-@ mad Kitty and Lydia , had three days to learn the dances . Three days were allotted for the filming of the ball at Netherfield , whose pace and style concentrated on elegance rather than the community enjoying themselves as at the dance at Meryton . The musicians and dancers had earpieces with music playing to allow dialogue recording . Many wide @-@ shots of Elizabeth 's and Darcy 's dance at Netherfield later turned out to be unusable because of a hair in front of a lens so the editors resorted to close @-@ up shots and material provided by a steadicam .

= = Themes and style = =

The adaptation received praise for its faithfulness to the novel , which highlights the importance of environment and upbringing on peoples ' development , although privilege is not necessarily advantageous . Describing the adaptation as " a witty mix of love stories and social conniving , cleverly wrapped in the ambitions and illusions of a provincial gentry " , critics noted that Davies 's focus on sex and money and Austen 's wry , incisive humour and the " deft " characterisation , prevented the television adaptation from " descending into the realm of a nicely @-@ costumed , brilliantly @-@ photographed melodrama " .

To avoid a narrator , the serial delegates the novel 's first ironic sentence to Elizabeth in an early scene . The adaptation opens with a view of Darcy 's and Bingley 's horses as they race across a field toward the Netherfield estate , expressing vitality ; Elizabeth watches them before breaking into a run . While the novel indicates Elizabeth 's independence and energy in her three @-@ mile trek to Netherfield , the adaptation of this scene also shows her rebelliousness and love of nature .

In what is " perhaps the most radical revision of Austen 's text " , the BBC drama departs from a late

18th @-@ century vision of emotional restraint and portrays emotions in a " modern " interpretation of the story . The novel leaves Elizabeth and the reader uncertain of Darcy 's emotions and the adaptation uses additional scenes to hint at Darcy 's inability to physically contain or verbally express his emotional turmoil . On the other hand , whereas the climax of the novel describes Darcy expressing his ardent love for Elizabeth at length (though Austen leaves his actual words to the reader 's imagination) , the adaptation elides this moment and passes directly to the next lines of dialogue . Scholars argue that activities such as billiards , bathing , fencing and swimming (see the lake scene) offer Darcy to a female gaze ; he is often presented in profile by a window or a fireplace when his friends discuss Elizabeth . Many passages relating to appearance or characters ' viewpoints were lifted from the novel .

The novel shows irony with " unmistakable strains of cynicism , ... laughing at human nature without any real hope of changing it " . Laughter in the story , which ranges from irresponsible laughter to laughter at people and laughter of amusement and relief , can also be linked to the sexual tensions among the different characters . Despite their appeal to modern audiences , laughter and wit were seen as vulgar and irreverent in Austen 's time . The BBC drama made changes " with a view to exposing a character , or adding humour or irony to a situation " . The adaptation comically exaggerates the characters of Mrs. Bennet , Miss Bingley and Mr. Collins , even showing Mrs. Bennet on the verge of hysteria in many of the early scenes .

The serial expands on Austen 's metaphorical use of landscapes , reinforcing beauty and authenticity . Elizabeth takes every opportunity to enjoy nature and to escape exposure to Mr. Collins and Lady Catherine . The most symbolic use of nature in the novel is Elizabeth and the Gardiners ' visit to Pemberley in Derbyshire , where Elizabeth becomes conscious of her love for Darcy . The story makes nature integral in the form of Old England . Elizabeth 's appreciation of the beauties of Derbyshire elevates Darcy in her and her relatives ' opinion . Darcy 's gaze through the window works as a movie screen , projecting Elizabeth 's actions for him and the viewer . His participation in the English landscape is his redemption .

= = Reception = =

= = = Broadcast = = =

Between 10 and 11 million people watched the original six @-@ episode broadcast on BBC One on Sunday evenings from 24 September to 29 October 1995 . The episodes were repeated each week on BBC Two . The final episode of *Pride and Prejudice* had a market share of about 40 percent in Britain , by which time eight foreign countries had bought the rights to the serial . 3 @.@ 7 million Americans watched the first broadcast on the A & E Network , which aired the serial in double episodes on three consecutive evenings beginning 14 January 1996 .

= = = Home release and merchandise = = =

The serial was released on VHS in the UK in the week running up to the original transmission of the final episode . The entire first run of 12 @,@ 000 copies of the double @-@ video set sold out within two hours of release . 70 @,@ 000 copies had been sold by the end of the first week of sales , increasing to 200 @,@ 000 sold units within the first year of the original airing . A BBC spokeswoman called the initial sale results " a huge phenomenon " , as " it is unheard of for a video to sell even half as well , especially when viewers are able to tape the episodes at home for free " . The CD soundtrack was also popular , and 20 @,@ 000 copies of an official making @-@ of book were sold within days . The serial was released on DVD four times , initially in 2000 , as a digitally remastered " Tenth Anniversary Edition " in September 2005 , and in April 2007 as part of a " Classic Drama DVD " magazine collection . A high @-@ definition transfer was produced from the original negatives and released as a Blu @-@ ray in October 2008 . The HD version has not been broadcast on television ; the BBC refuses to broadcast anything shot in 16mm in HD . The same

restored version was released on DVD in March 2009 . The Blu @-@ ray was released on 14 April 2009 .

= = = Critical reception = = =

The critical response to *Pride and Prejudice* was overwhelmingly positive . Gerard Gilbert of *The Independent* recommended the opening episode of the serial one day before the British premiere , saying the television adaptation is " probably as good as it [can get for a literary classic] . The casting in particular deserves a tilt at a BAFTA , Firth not being in the slightest bit soft and fluffy ? and Jennifer Ehle showing the right brand of spirited intelligence as Elizabeth . " He considered Benjamin Whitrow a " real scene @-@ stealer with his Mr. Bennet " , but was undecided about Alison Steadman 's portrayal of Mrs. Bennet . Reviewing the first episode for the same newspaper on the day after transmission , Jim White praised Andrew Davies for " injecting into the proceedings a pace and energy which at last provides a visual setting to do justice to the wit of the book . With everyone slinging themselves about at high speed (the dances , in a first for the genre , actually involve a bit of sweat) , it looks like people are doing something you would never have suspected they did in Austen 's time : having fun . "

A few days before the American premiere , Howard Rosenberg of the *Los Angeles Times* considered the adaptation " decidedly agreeable " despite its incidental liberties with Austen 's novel , and named Elizabeth 's parents and Mr. Collins as the main source of humour . John O 'Connor of *The New York Times* lauded the serial as a " splendid adaptation , with a remarkably faithful and sensitively nuanced script " . He commented on Jennifer Ehle 's ability to make Elizabeth " strikingly intelligent and authoritative without being overbearing " , and noted how Firth " brilliantly captures Mr. Darcy 's snobbish pride while conveying , largely through intense stares , that he is falling in love despite himself " . O 'Connor praised Barbara Leigh @-@ Hunt 's portrayal of Lady Catherine as " a marvellously imperious witch " and considered her scenes with David Bamber (Mr. Collins) " hilarious " .

However , O 'Connor remarked that American audiences might find the " languorous walks across meadows " and " ornately choreographed dances " of the British production too slow . In one of the most negative reviews , *People Magazine* considered the adaptation " a good deal more thorough than necessary " and " not the best Austen on the suddenly crowded market " . Although the reviewer thought Firth " magnificent " , he rebuked the casting of Jennifer Ehle as her oval face made her " look like Anaïs Nin in period clothes , and that ain 't right " . The official *A & E Network* magazine summarised a year later that " critics praised the lavish production , audiences adored it , and women everywhere swooned over Darcy . So much , in fact , that newspapers began to joke about ' Darcy fever . ' " Commendation for the serial continued in the years following its original transmission .

= = = Awards and nominations = = =

Pride and Prejudice received BAFTA Television Award nominations for " Best Drama Serial " , " Best Costume Design " , and " Best Make Up / Hair " in 1996 . Jennifer Ehle was honoured with a BAFTA for " Best Actress " , while Colin Firth and Benjamin Whitrow , nominated for " Best Actor " , lost to Robbie Coltrane of *Cracker* . Firth won the 1996 Broadcasting Press Guild Award for " Best Actor " , complemented by the same award for " Best Drama Series / Serial " . The serial was recognised in the United States with an Emmy for " Outstanding Individual Achievement in Costume Design for a Miniseries or a Special " , and was Emmy @-@ nominated for its achievements as an " Outstanding Miniseries " as well as for choreography and writing . Among other awards and nominations , *Pride and Prejudice* received a Peabody Award , a Television Critics Association Award , and a Golden Satellite Award nomination for outstanding achievements as a serial .

= = Influence and legacy = =

As one of the BBC 's and A & E 's most popular presentations ever , the serial was " a cultural phenomenon , inspiring hundreds of newspaper articles and making the novel a commuter favourite " . With the 1995 and 1996 films *Persuasion* , *Sense and Sensibility* and *Emma* , the serial was part of a wave of Jane Austen enthusiasm which caused the membership of the Jane Austen Society of North America to jump fifty percent in 1996 and to over 4 @, @ 000 members in the autumn of 1997 . Some newspapers like *The Wall Street Journal* explained this " Austen @-@ mania " as a commercial move of the television and film industry , whereas others attributed Austen 's popularity to escapism .

While Jennifer Ehle refused to capitalise on the success of the serial and joined the Royal Shakespeare Company at Stratford @-@ upon @-@ Avon , the role of Mr. Darcy unexpectedly elevated Colin Firth to stardom . Although Firth did not mind being recognised as " a romantic idol as a Darcy with smouldering sex appeal " in a role that " officially turned him into a heart @-@ throb " , he expressed the wish to not be associated with *Pride and Prejudice* forever and was reluctant to accept similar roles . He took on diverse roles and co @-@ starred in productions such as *The English Patient* (1996) , *Shakespeare in Love* (1998) , *Bridget Jones 's Diary* (2001) , *Girl with a Pearl Earring* (2003) , *Love Actually* (2003) and *Bridget Jones : The Edge of Reason* (2004) .

Pride and Prejudice continued to be honoured years later . A 2000 poll of industry professionals conducted by the British Film Institute ranked the serial at 99 in the 100 Greatest British Television Programmes of the 20th century , which the BFI attributed to its " managing to combine faithfulness to the novel with a freshness that appealed across the generations " . *Radio Times* included the serial in their list of " 40 greatest TV programmes ever made " in 2003 . It was also named by *Entertainment Weekly* as one of the 20 best miniseries of all time . In 2007 , the UK Film Council declared *Pride and Prejudice* one of the television dramas that have become " virtual brochures " for British history and society . Lyme Hall , Cheshire , which had served as the exterior of Pemberley , experienced a tripling in its visitor numbers after the series ' broadcast and is still a popular travel destination .

= = = Lake scene = = =

The adaptation is famous for a scene in its fourth episode where a fully dressed Darcy , having emerged from a swim in a lake at Pemberley , accidentally encounters Elizabeth . While many critics attributed the scene 's appeal to Firth 's sexual attractiveness , Andrew Davies thought that it unwittingly " rerobed , not disrobed , Austen " . When Davies wrote the scene (it was not part of Austen 's novel) , he did not intend a sexual connection between Elizabeth and Darcy but to create " an amusing moment in which Darcy tries to maintain his dignity while improperly dressed and sopping wet " . The BBC opposed Davies 's plan to have Darcy naked but the producers discarded the alternative of using underpants as fatuous . According to Davies , Firth had " a bit of the usual tension about getting [his] kit off " , the scene was filmed with Firth in linen shirt , breeches and boots . A stuntman , who appears in midair in a very brief shot , was hired because of the risk of infection with Weil 's disease at Lyme Park . A short underwater segment was filmed separately with Firth in a tank at Ealing Studios in west London .

The *Guardian* declared the lake scene " one of the most unforgettable moments in British TV history " . The sequence also appeared in Channel 4 's Top 100 TV Moments in 1999 , between the controversial programme *Death on the Rock* and the Gulf War . The *New York Times* compared the scene to Marlon Brando shouting " Stella ! " in his undershirt in *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Firth 's projects began alluding to it ? screenwriter @-@ director Richard Curtis added in @-@ joke moments of Firth 's characters falling into the water to *Love Actually* and *Bridget Jones : The Edge of Reason* , and Firth 's character from the 2007 film *St Trinian 's* emerges from a fountain in a soaking wet shirt before meeting up with an old love . The creators of the 2008 ITV production *Lost in Austen* emulated the lake scene in their *Pride and Prejudice* through their contemporary heroine who cajoles Darcy into recreating the moment .

Cheryl L. Nixon suggested in *Jane Austen in Hollywood* that Darcy 's dive is a " revelation of his emotional capabilities " , expressing a " Romantic bond with nature , a celebration of his home

where he can ' strip down ' to his essential self , a cleansing of social prejudices from his mind , or ... a rebirth of his love for Elizabeth " . Linda Troost and Sayre Greenfield wrote that the scene " tells us more about our current decade 's obsession with physical perfection and acceptance of gratuitous nudity than it does about Austen 's Darcy , but the image carves a new facet into the text " .

= = = Bridget Jones = = =

The fictional journalist Bridget Jones (in reality Helen Fielding of The Independent) wrote of her love of the serial in the paper 's Bridget Jones 's Diary column during the original British broadcast , mentioning her " simple human need for Darcy to get off with Elizabeth " and regarding the couple as her " chosen representatives in the field of shagging , or rather courtship " . Fielding loosely reworked the plot of Pride And Prejudice in her 1996 novel of the column , naming Bridget 's uptight love interest " Mark Darcy " and describing him exactly like Colin Firth . Following a first meeting with Firth during his filming of Fever Pitch in 1996 , Fielding asked Firth to collaborate in what would become a multi @-@ page interview between Bridget Jones and Firth in her 1999 sequel novel , Bridget Jones : The Edge of Reason . Conducting the real interview with Firth in Rome , Fielding lapsed into Bridget Jones mode and obsessed over Darcy in his wet shirt for the fictional interview . Firth participated in the editing of what critics called " one of the funniest sequences in the diary 's sequel " . Both novels make various other references to the BBC serial .

Andrew Davies collaborated on the screenplays for the 2001 and 2004 Bridget Jones films , in which Crispin Bonham @-@ Carter (Mr. Bingley) and Lucy Robinson (Mrs. Hurst) appeared in minor roles . The self @-@ referential in @-@ joke between the projects convinced Colin Firth to accept the role of Mark Darcy , as it gave him an opportunity to ridicule and liberate himself from his Pride and Prejudice character . Film critic James Berardinelli would later state that Firth " plays this part [of Mark Darcy] exactly as he played the earlier role , making it evident that the two Darcys are essentially the same " . The producers never found a way to incorporate the Jones @-@ Firth interview in the second film but shot a spoof interview with Firth as himself and Renée Zellweger staying in character as Bridget Jones after a day 's wrap . The scene , which extended Bridget 's Darcy obsession to cover Firth 's lake scene in Love Actually , is available as a bonus feature on the DVD .

= = = Other adaptations = = =

For almost a decade , the 1995 TV serial was considered " so dominant , so universally adored , [that] it has lingered in the public consciousness as a cinematic standard " . Comparing six Pride and Prejudice adaptations in 2005 , the Daily Mirror gave 9 / 10 to the 1995 serial (" what may be the ultimate adaptation ") and the 2005 film adaptation , leaving the other adaptations such as the 1940 film behind with six or fewer points . The 2005 film was " obviously [not as] daring or revisionist " as the 1995 adaptation but the youth of the film 's leads , Keira Knightley and Matthew Macfadyen , was mentioned favourably over the 1995 cast , as Jennifer Ehle had formerly been " a little too ' heavy ' for the role " . The president of the Jane Austen Society of North America noted in an otherwise positive review that the casting of the 2005 leads was " arguably a little more callow than Firth and Ehle " and that " Knightley is better looking than Lizzy should strictly be " . The critical reception of MacFadyen 's Darcy , whose casting had proven difficult because " Colin Firth cast a very long shadow " , ranged from praise to pleasant surprise and dislike . Several critics did not observe any significant impact of Macfadyen 's Darcy in the following years . Garth Pearce of The Sunday Times noted in 2007 that " Colin Firth will forever be remembered as the perfect Mr. Darcy " , and Gene Seymour stated in a 2008 Newsday article that Firth was " ' universally acknowledged ' as the definitive Mr. Darcy " .