



CEC READING LIBRARY · MIDDLE 3 · R3 CHALLENGE

Pride and Prejudice

18 Chapters

Day 1-18

W07-W12

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 1: A Single Man in Possession of a Fortune

In a country village called Longbourn lived Mr. and Mrs. Bennet and their five daughters: Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Kitty, and Lydia. Mr. Bennet was a calm, witty man who liked to read in his library, while Mrs. Bennet was nervous and talkative, and her great goal in life was to see her daughters well married. One morning she burst into the library with astonishing news: a rich young man named Mr. Bingley, who had four or five thousand pounds a year, had rented the grand house of Netherfield Park nearby. Mrs. Bennet insisted that her husband visit him at once so that their daughters might be introduced. The reason was simple. In those days, the family estate was entailed, meaning that when Mr. Bennet died, it would pass to a distant cousin and not to his girls. Their security, their home, and their future depended on marriage. From her perspective, finding a wealthy husband was essential. Mrs. Bennet could not contribute to the family wealth in any other way, so she tried to establish good connections. The consequence of such pressure was constant worry in the house. It was a significant burden for the five young women. Lydia and Kitty, the two youngest, already pictured themselves in silk dresses at the balls to come. Mary read her books of sermons, and Elizabeth and Jane exchanged amused glances across the room. Even Mr. Bennet, who pretended to be calm, was secretly curious about the new neighbor, and that evening he winked at Elizabeth over his newspaper. ★ Mrs. Bennet wanted her daughters to marry rich men.

THINK How many daughters did the Bennets have?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 2: Mr. Collins Arrives

Mr. Bennet had in fact visited Mr. Bingley as soon as he arrived, though he teased his wife by pretending not to. Meanwhile another visitor was coming to Longbourn: Mr. Collins, a clergyman and a cousin who would one day inherit the estate. He was a pompous, long-winded man who admired his patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, a great deal. Mrs. Bennet hoped he might marry one of her daughters, and so settle the family's future. Her thinking was practical. She knew that a woman's social standing and safety often depended entirely on her husband's wealth, and she wanted all five of her girls to be safe. Mr. Collins chose Elizabeth, but she refused him, saying plainly that she could not marry a man she did not respect. Mrs. Bennet was furious. The consequence of the refusal was a week of shouting. From Elizabeth's perspective, happiness in marriage was essential. Her friend Charlotte Lucas, a plain young woman of twenty-seven, accepted Mr. Collins instead and said that she wished only for a comfortable home. It was a significant difference between the two. Mrs. Bennet desperately wanted all her daughters to marry wealthy men, yet Elizabeth would not contribute to her own unhappiness. She meant to establish her own idea of love. Mr. Collins spoke at great length about his noble patron and his fine pulpit, and at dinner he praised even the potatoes, saying that he could not tell which of the girls had cooked them. Mr. Bennet enjoyed every pompous word in silence and later told Elizabeth that it was the best entertainment he had had in years. When it was time for Mr. Collins to propose, however, he proposed with so many speeches about duty, about his patron's advice, and about the comfort of a clergyman's home that Elizabeth had to hide a smile. She told him gently but plainly that she could never be his wife, and he was astonished that she had not understood his offer to be an honor. ★ Mrs. Bennet desperately wanted all her daughters to marry wealthy men.

THINK Who was Mr. Collins?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 3: Security and Marriage

Mrs. Bennet's anxiety was not simply foolishness. In the world of Regency England, a young woman had few choices. She could not own property easily, and she could not earn much by working. A daughter without a dowry, whose father had no son to inherit, faced a bleak future, perhaps living on the charity of relatives. The Bennet sisters had very small fortunes, so a good marriage was their best hope. This perspective explains why Mrs. Bennet turned every conversation toward weddings. She wanted her daughters to be comfortable and respected, and she believed that wealth was the way to achieve it. Elizabeth, however, did not share that view. She understood the pressure, but she would not marry for money alone. When Charlotte married Mr. Collins, Elizabeth was shocked and disappointed, for her friend had chosen financial security over love. The consequence was a quiet distance between them. It was a significant lesson about how society could shape a woman's choices. Elizabeth said that she would wait for a man she truly admired. That attitude would contribute to her happiness later, though it made her mother despair. Mrs. Bennet desperately wanted all her daughters to marry wealthy men, because in her society a woman's security depended entirely on the financial position of her husband. Jane and Elizabeth would establish their own path. Even so, Mrs. Bennet kept hoping, and she never gave up scheming. ★ Mrs. Bennet desperately wanted all her daughters to marry wealthy men, because in her society a woman's security depended entirely on the financial position of her husband.

THINK Why did Mrs. Bennet worry about her daughters?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 4: The Meryton Ball

At last the night of the Meryton assembly arrived. The Bennet family walked into the crowded ballroom, and Mr. Bingley came in with his two sisters and his closest friend, Mr. Darcy. Everyone looked. Bingley was pleasant and friendly, with an open smile, and he danced with Jane Bennet twice and admired her beauty. Mr. Darcy was tall and handsome, and it was whispered that he was worth ten thousand pounds a year. At first the room admired him greatly. But he soon showed himself to be proud. He walked about without speaking, refused to dance with anyone outside his own party, and stared coldly at the room. When Bingley urged him to dance with Elizabeth, he looked at her and said, "She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me." Elizabeth overheard, and she told the story to her friends with a laugh, though it hurt her pride. Within an hour the neighborhood agreed that he was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world. Darcy seemed arrogant at first, and his manner was a poor beginning. Later he would say he was merely shy. A first impression can establish a lasting bias, and it is essential to remember that people are more complex. From Elizabeth's perspective, he was simply rude. The orchestra played a lively country dance, and the candles made the room bright. Elizabeth sat down for a while, a little amused, a little hurt, and she watched Jane glow with happiness. She decided that she would not let one man's rudeness spoil her evening, and she danced with a young officer instead. ★ **Darcy seemed arrogant at first.**

THINK Who danced with Jane twice?

Read the story. Then think about each question.

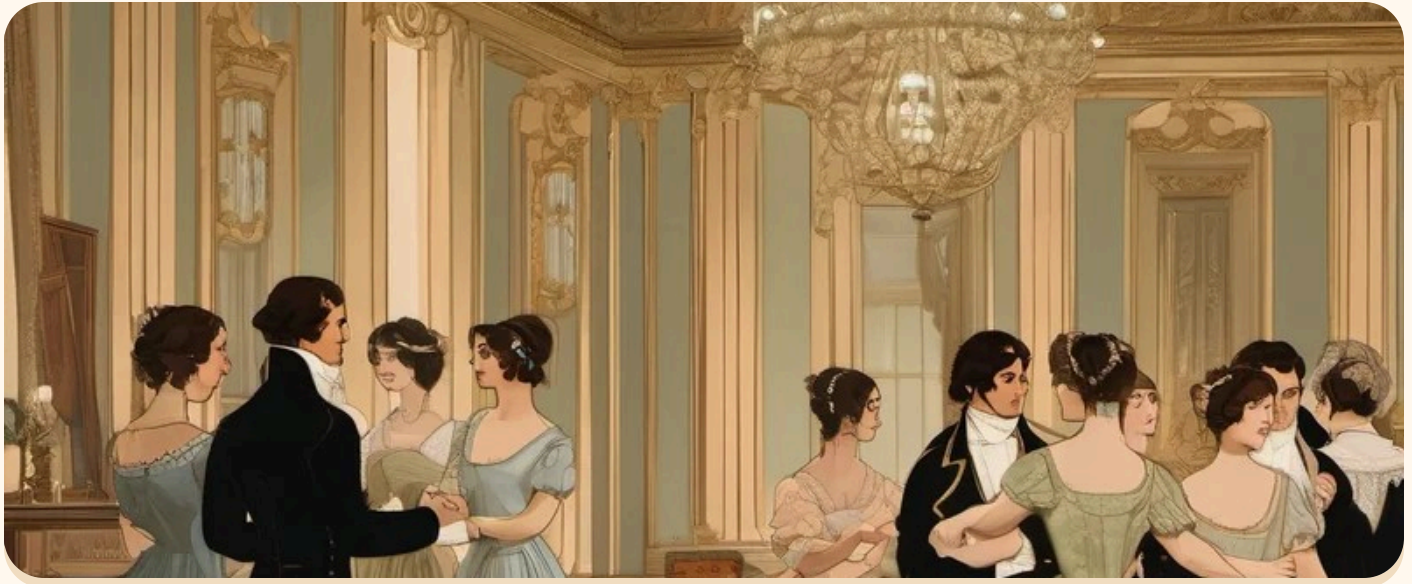


Chapter 5: Cold and Arrogant

After the ball, the neighborhood talked of nothing else. Mrs. Bennet was delighted with Bingley and furious with Darcy, whom she called "a horrid, disagreeable man." Jane told Elizabeth quietly that Bingley was everything a young man should be: sensible, good-humored, and lively. Elizabeth agreed, but she said that Darcy was proud and dull. She had decided to dislike him, and she told everyone about his rudeness in a playful way. At a later party, Darcy did not dance and stood by the wall, watching the dancers with a serious face. Elizabeth teased him gently when they were thrown together at Sir William Lucas's house. Darcy answered with stiff politeness. He was, in fact, a man who found it hard to talk with strangers and who hid his feelings behind a cold manner. However, from Elizabeth's perspective he was arrogant. The consequence was that she saw only the worst in him. Without realizing it, Elizabeth was already building a wall of prejudice. It was a significant error, though a natural one. A cold first impression may establish a lasting judgment, and it takes real effort to examine one's own assumptions. The room remembered Darcy as cold, and Elizabeth could not forget that. Elizabeth promised herself that she would be polite to him but never warm. She said to Charlotte that if he had been handsome and rich and also kind, she might have liked him, but his pride had destroyed any wish to please. ★ **Darcy appeared cold and arrogant at the first ball.**

THINK What did Mrs. Bennet call Darcy?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 6: A Strong Dislike

Soon afterward, Jane was invited to dinner at Netherfield. It rained, and she was sent on horseback so that she would be forced to stay. She caught a cold, and Elizabeth walked three miles through the mud to care for her. When she arrived at Netherfield with her muddy skirts, Bingley's sisters sneered, but Mr. Darcy found himself admiring her bright eyes. Elizabeth did not notice. In the drawing-room, she spoke freely and teased Darcy about his faults. He listened with growing interest, but she took it as scorn. Elizabeth formed a strong dislike of him based entirely on that first impression, which would take the whole novel to overcome. When she compared him with other men, she judged him harshly, and every small thing he did seemed proof of his pride. In truth, Darcy was struggling with his own pride. He believed his family was far above the Bennets and that he must not fall in love with someone from a lower class. The consequence of this mutual blindness was a series of clashes. From each person's perspective, the other was in the wrong. It would take time and a painful lesson to establish a truer view. It was significant that neither saw it yet. At Netherfield, Darcy sat at a small table and wrote long letters, and Elizabeth read a book near the window. Their eyes met more than once, but each looked quickly away. ★ Darcy appeared cold and arrogant at the first ball, and Elizabeth formed a strong dislike of him based entirely on that first impression, which would take the whole novel to overcome.

THINK How did Elizabeth reach Netherfield?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 7: The Charming Officer

Soon a militia regiment arrived in the neighboring town of Meryton, and the Bennet sisters, especially Kitty and Lydia, were wild with excitement about the handsome officers. One officer in particular caught Elizabeth's eye: Mr. Wickham, a young man with a gentle smile and easy conversation. At a party at her Aunt Phillips's house, he sat beside Elizabeth and chatted warmly. When Mr. Darcy happened to ride by, Wickham turned pale, and Elizabeth noticed. She asked Wickham, with innocent curiosity, whether he knew the gentleman. Wickham answered with a sad look that he had known Darcy all his life. He claimed that Darcy's father had left him a good church position, and that Darcy, out of jealousy, had refused to give it to him. Elizabeth was shocked. The story fit what she already believed about Darcy's pride, and she accepted it at once. Her desire for validation made her an easy target for manipulation. She gave her sympathy without asking for proof. From her perspective, Wickham was an honest man who had been ill-treated, and she told the story to others. The consequence was that more people turned against Darcy. It was an essential mistake to trust a charming stranger so quickly. Wickham knew how to establish trust, and it was a significant skill. The younger girls fluttered about the officers in their red coats, and even Mrs. Bennet said she was glad to have such handsome young men near. Wickham, sensing the interest, took care to speak softly, to praise Elizabeth's wit, and to look sad whenever the name of Darcy was spoken. ★ **Wickham charmed Elizabeth with false stories.**

THINK Who arrived in Meryton?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 8: False Stories

Over the next weeks, Wickham met Elizabeth often. He sat with her at dinners and told her more tales of Darcy's injustice, always with a mournful air. He claimed that Darcy was cold, selfish, and cruel, and that he had ruined Wickham's prospects out of spite. He said he was too respectful of the Darcy family to say more. Elizabeth was touched by his apparent honor. She repeated the story to Jane, who found it difficult to believe, since Mr. Bingley had spoken so highly of Darcy. Jane suggested that perhaps both men had been misled, and that there might be an explanation. But Elizabeth waved aside the idea.

Wickham's tale suited her own opinion so well that she did not want to examine it. Her perspective had become fixed, which made it easy for a clever liar to deceive her. The consequence of her certainty was that she did not ask whether anyone could confirm his claims. It is essential to question stories that match what we want to believe, because the desire for confirmation is a form of weakness. Wickham told Elizabeth false stories about Darcy, and he knew how to establish the trust of listeners. Many neighbors accepted them too. It was a significant trap, and Elizabeth was caught in manipulation she could not yet see. Every neighbor who heard the tale agreed that Mr. Darcy must be a very unkind man. Wickham, pleased, never once corrected them. ★ Wickham told

Elizabeth false stories about Darcy.

THINK *Who found the story difficult to believe?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 9: Easy Targets

At a ball at Netherfield, Elizabeth hoped to dance with Wickham, but he did not appear. She learned that he had avoided the ball, perhaps because Darcy would be there. She felt hurt and angry, and she took it as another reason to blame Darcy. When Darcy asked her to dance, she could hardly refuse, and during the dance she said sharply that she had heard a great deal about his treatment of Wickham. Darcy answered stiffly that Wickham could make friends easily but not keep them. The two parted on bad terms. Elizabeth did not suspect that Wickham had simply chosen to avoid being exposed, for he knew Darcy could tell the true story. This pattern is a lesson for everyone. Our desire for validation can blind us, and skilled liars know how to use manipulation on those who want to be agreed with. From her perspective, she saw herself as a good judge of character, and her pride made her easy to fool. The consequence was a deep misjudgment. It is essential to look for evidence. It was significant that Elizabeth, so quick-witted in other ways, could not see through Wickham. Wickham charmed Elizabeth with false stories about Darcy, showing how our desire to confirm our existing opinions makes us easy targets for manipulation by skilled liars. She danced the last dance unhappy and thoughtful, her mind full of unanswered questions. ★ **Wickham charmed Elizabeth with false stories about Darcy, showing how our desire to confirm our existing opinions makes us easy targets for manipulation by skilled liars.**

THINK *Where did Elizabeth hope to meet Wickham?*

Read the story. Then think about each question.

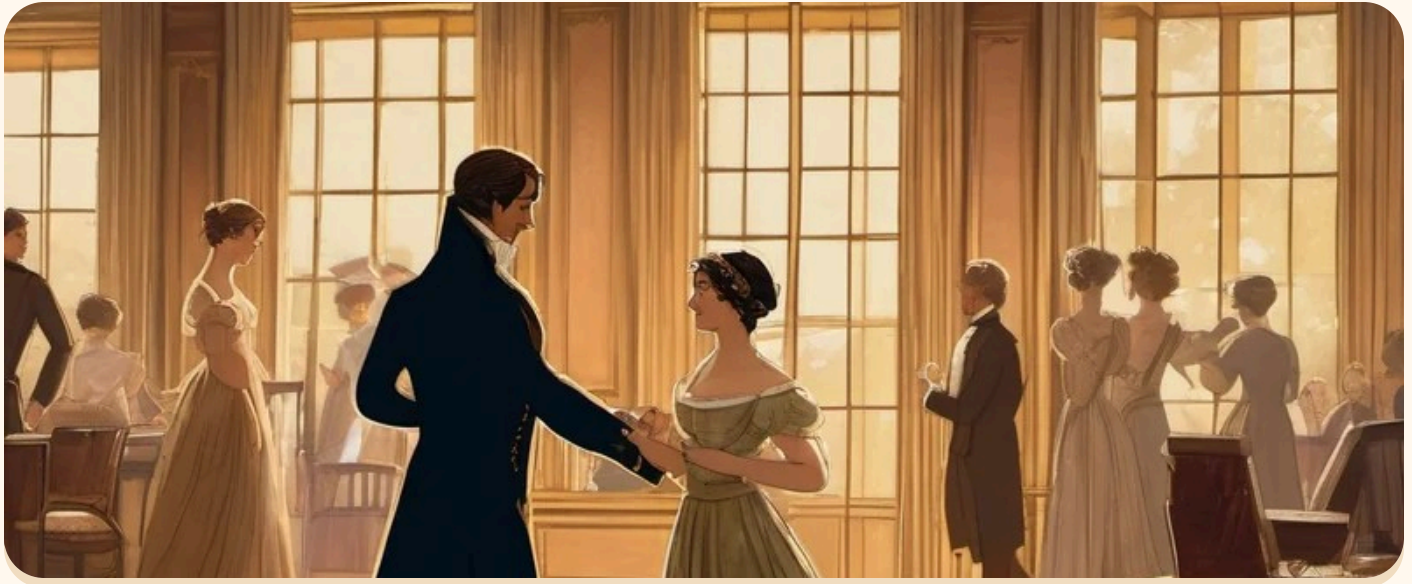


Chapter 10: The Proposal at Hunsford

The following spring, Elizabeth visited her friend Charlotte, now Mrs. Collins, in the village of Hunsford, next to the great house of Rosings, where Lady Catherine lived. There she met Darcy once more, for he was Lady Catherine's nephew. One evening, while she was alone and feeling unwell, he came to the parsonage. To her astonishment, he stood before her in great agitation and told her that he loved her, in spite of her family's lower rank and what he called her "inferiority." He asked her to be his wife. Elizabeth was offended by his proud way of speaking, and she answered angrily. She said she could not accept a man who had separated her sister Jane from Bingley and who had ruined the fortunes of Mr. Wickham. Darcy was stunned. He admitted that he had advised Bingley to leave Jane but defended his reasons. He bowed and left. The next morning, as Elizabeth walked in the park, Darcy met her and handed her a long letter. He said only, "Be so good as to read it." Darcy's letter changed Elizabeth's thinking. From her perspective, nothing would ever be the same. The consequence was a night of painful reading. It was a significant letter, and it began to establish the truth. For a moment she stood as if turned to stone, her heart beating strangely, and she could not decide whether she was more angry or more astonished. Darcy had just offered her his hand, his fortune, and his name, and she had refused them all within minutes. She looked at the letter in her hand, which felt heavier than it should, and she wondered whether the pages would defend him or merely make her angrier. At last she sat down on a bench and broke the seal. ★ **Darcy's letter changed Elizabeth's thinking.**

THINK Where did Elizabeth visit Charlotte?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 11: Reading the Letter

Elizabeth sat down on a bench in the park and began to read. At first she felt only anger. But as she went on, her feelings changed. Darcy explained, in a calm and honest tone, that he had separated Bingley from Jane because he believed that Jane did not truly love him, and that he thought her family's behavior would harm his friend's reputation. He confessed he had been mistaken about Jane's feelings. Next he told the truth about Wickham. Darcy's father had left Wickham a gift of money, and Wickham had spent it all, then demanded more instead of the church position. Years later, Wickham had tried to run away with Darcy's young sister Georgiana, who was only fifteen, hoping to take her fortune. Darcy had stopped him in time. Elizabeth's cheeks burned. She read the letter again and again, and she realized that she had judged without evidence. The words forced her to rethink everything. From her new perspective, she saw that her pride in her own cleverness had misled her. The consequence was shame. It was essential to face the facts, and a significant change began within her. She resolved to establish a more honest view of herself. Darcy's letter forced Elizabeth to rethink everything. The letter went on for many pages. Darcy wrote in small, neat handwriting that he did not wish to renew her pain, and that he wrote only to be fair to himself. He added that he had once watched Jane closely at a ball and had seen no sign of strong feeling, though he now saw he had been wrong. Elizabeth put down the paper several times, unable to go on. She recalled that he had never mentioned the money. She remembered too how often she had flattered herself that she could judge people at a glance. The more she thought, the more she saw that her vanity had led her wrong, and a hot flush rose in her face. ★ **Darcy's letter forced Elizabeth to rethink everything.**

THINK Why did Darcy separate Bingley from Jane?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 12: Ashamed of Her Pride

For days, Elizabeth walked alone, turning over everything in her mind. She recalled every conversation with Wickham and saw how little proof he had given. His words had been warm and plausible, but he had never offered any evidence, and he had told his story to a young woman he scarcely knew. She also remembered how often she had mocked Darcy's pride, and how she had been proud herself in believing that she could read anyone's character. "How despicably I have acted!" she cried. "I, who have prided myself on my discernment!" Her vanity had been pleased by Wickham's attention, and she had been offended by Darcy's neglect. She felt genuinely ashamed of how easily she had been misled. Darcy's long and honest letter forced her to rethink every assumption she had made about him and about Wickham. From her new perspective, she saw the world with clearer eyes. The consequence of this discovery was a humbler spirit. It was an essential step in her growth, and a significant moment in the story. She began to establish a more careful way of judging people, one that weighed evidence before opinion. She also saw that Darcy's pride, though real, was matched by genuine honor. She wrote to Jane that she was much changed, though she did not yet say why. Looking at herself in the mirror that night, she smiled faintly and shook her head, as if to say that she had learned something at last. ★ Darcy's long and honest letter forced Elizabeth to rethink every assumption she had made about him and about Wickham, and she felt genuinely ashamed of how easily she had been misled.

THINK What did Elizabeth realize about Wickham?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 13: Lydia Runs Away

Elizabeth came home from her travels in the summer, still thinking about the letter. Not long after, news arrived that shook the family. The youngest sister, Lydia, who was sixteen and carefree, had been invited to Brighton by the wife of Colonel Forster, whose regiment was stationed there. Mr. Bennet, tired of arguing, allowed her to go, though Elizabeth had warned him it was unwise. At Brighton, Lydia was soon with Mr. Wickham. One morning, a letter reached Longbourn from Colonel Forster: Lydia and Wickham had left together in a carriage, and nobody knew where they had gone. Everyone feared they had run away without marrying. Jane turned pale. Mrs. Bennet fell into hysterics. Mr. Bennet set out to search for them in London, in great distress. The consequence of Lydia's reckless act was fear for the whole family. In that era, the honor of a young woman governed her family's reputation, and a scandal could ruin all the sisters' hopes. From Elizabeth's perspective, it was a terrible, significant blow, especially as she now knew what Wickham truly was. She regretted that she had not exposed him sooner. It was essential to find them quickly and establish where they were. The house at Longbourn was suddenly full of tears and shouting, and the servants whispered in the kitchen. Elizabeth sat quietly in the parlor, trying to think what could be done, but each plan seemed hopeless. Mr. Bennet told her that he had been wrong to let Lydia go, and that he would never forgive himself. ★ Lydia ran away with Wickham.

THINK Where was Lydia invited?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 14: A Family in Danger

Days went by with no news. Mr. Bennet returned from London, weary and ashamed, having found no trace of the couple. Jane and Elizabeth tried to comfort their mother, who would not leave her room, and Mary lectured the family on virtue, which was no help. Their uncle, Mr. Gardiner, took up the search in London. Meanwhile, neighbors began to whisper. Some felt sorry for the Bennets; others said it was exactly what could be expected from such a family. Elizabeth saw that Lydia's reckless behavior put the whole family in danger. A single scandal could destroy the marriage chances of her other sisters, and Jane's hope with Mr. Bingley seemed forever lost. Elizabeth remembered, with pain, that she had told Mr. Darcy at Hunsford that he was proud, yet she had now brought him a family whose name was disgraced. She imagined that she would never see him again. The consequence of that thought was a heavy sadness. It was a significant turning point, and she determined to be braver. From her new perspective, she saw how deeply one family member's actions could govern the reputation of everyone else. She promised herself that she would help, if she could. It was essential not to give up hope. Even the servants spoke gravely, and the postman's every visit made the family hold its breath. The days seemed long and the nights longer. Elizabeth sat by Jane's side while the rain beat on the window. ★ Lydia's reckless behavior put the whole family in danger.

THINK Who took up the search in London?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 15: The Elopement

At last a letter arrived from Mr. Gardiner with good news: Lydia and Wickham had been found and would be married. Everyone was relieved, but Elizabeth wondered how the match had been arranged, for Wickham had no money and every reason to avoid marriage. Mr. Bennet could not have paid the large sum that would be needed to persuade him. Mrs. Bennet was overjoyed and talked only of wedding clothes. Later, Elizabeth learned the truth from her Aunt Gardiner: Mr. Darcy himself had traced the pair in London, paid Wickham's debts, and provided the money to settle the match, keeping his part in the matter a secret. He had asked that his name not be used. Elizabeth was astonished and moved. Darcy had acted not out of love for Lydia but from a wish to protect the woman he loved, and also from the guilt he felt for not having exposed Wickham earlier. Lydia's reckless elopement with Wickham put the entire family's reputation at risk, demonstrating that in a society governed by appearances, one person's actions can determine the fate of everyone around them. The consequence was a debt of gratitude that Elizabeth could never repay. It was a significant act of generosity, and it changed her perspective on his character. The truth was essential to understand and slowly she began to establish a new respect for him. Elizabeth read her aunt's letter twice, her hands trembling. She had so long misjudged this man, and now she owed him so much. ★ Lydia's reckless elopement with Wickham put the entire family's reputation at risk, demonstrating that in a society governed by appearances, one person's actions can determine the fate of everyone around them.

THINK Who arranged the match?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 16: Understanding at Last

Not long after Lydia's wedding, Mr. Bingley returned to Netherfield, and Mr. Darcy came with him. Jane received Bingley kindly but with reserve. Elizabeth watched Darcy carefully. He was quieter than before, polite and respectful, and he sought her company without any trace of his old pride. At last Bingley, who had never stopped loving Jane, proposed to her one morning, and she accepted with joy. The whole family rejoiced; even Mrs. Bennet was beside herself with delight. Soon afterward, the haughty Lady Catherine de Bourgh arrived at Longbourn and demanded to see Elizabeth. She had heard a rumor that Darcy would propose, and she insisted that Elizabeth promise never to accept him. Elizabeth refused, firmly and politely, saying she would not be bound by any promise. When Darcy heard of it, he took new hope. He found Elizabeth on a walk and spoke honestly: if her feelings were still as they had been in April, he said, she should tell him so at once, and he would never mention it again. Elizabeth and Darcy finally understood each other. The consequence of their honest talk was happiness. From her perspective, he was no longer proud but kind, and from his, she was warm and wise. It was an essential change and a significant gift. They would establish love on honesty and contribute to each other's growth. When they walked together, Darcy spoke to her of his sister and his estate, and Elizabeth listened with real interest. For the first time, they talked as friends who had made mistakes and wished to be forgiven, and the air between them was clear and warm. The sun was setting, and the hedges glowed gold. ★ Elizabeth and Darcy finally understood each other.

THINK Who proposed to Jane?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 17: Pride and Prejudice Together

Elizabeth told Darcy gently that her feelings had changed completely since the spring. He was overjoyed. As they walked together in the lane, he explained that her words at Hunsford had stung him deeply, yet they had also helped him. He said that she had taught him a lesson: "You taught me a lesson, hard indeed at first, but most advantageous. By you I was properly humbled." He confessed that he had been brought up to think well of himself and meanly of others, and that she had shown him his pride. Elizabeth admitted that she had been as much to blame, for her prejudice had led her to misjudge him. They laughed over their first meeting, the ball, the overheard remark, and the dances. Each now saw the other more truly. Mr. Bennet, too, gave his blessing, once he was assured that Elizabeth truly loved him. Elizabeth and Darcy overcame pride and prejudice together. The consequence of examining their own flaws was a love that could last. From her perspective, Darcy was good; from his, Elizabeth was brave. It was essential for each to change, and the lesson was significant for both. They would contribute to one another's happiness and establish a home of respect. Elizabeth's father kept looking at Darcy with surprise, and finally shook his hand. The sisters laughed for joy, and that evening the whole family drank a toast to the unlikely pair. Even Mary, who rarely smiled, said that she had never seen anyone so happy as her sisters. ★ Elizabeth and

Darcy overcame pride and prejudice together.

THINK What did Darcy say Elizabeth taught him?

Read the story. Then think about each question.



Chapter 18: A Love Worth Growing For

The two weddings took place together on one bright morning: Jane to Bingley, and Elizabeth to Darcy. Pemberley, Darcy's grand house in Derbyshire, became Elizabeth's home, and she walked its gardens with wonder. She had first seen it a year earlier, when she visited with her aunt and uncle and was surprised to find how kindly his servants spoke of him. Now she saw it as hers. Mr. Bennet visited often and said that it was the best library he had ever used. Even Lady Catherine eventually made peace. Jane and Bingley lived nearby, and the two sisters met nearly every day. Looking back, Elizabeth and Darcy often said that they could never have been happy at the beginning. Each had a flaw: his pride, her prejudice. Elizabeth and Darcy could only reach genuine understanding after both had honestly examined and corrected the flaws in their own character, suggesting that real love requires personal growth before it can fully succeed. The consequence of that honest work was a marriage built on respect. From their perspective it was essential, not optional. It was a significant truth. Each would contribute, each would establish a shared life, and each knew that love needed patience. The two couples visited each other often, and the children of both families grew up together in the green hills of Derbyshire. Elizabeth sometimes read the old letter and smiled to herself. ★ Elizabeth and Darcy could only reach genuine understanding after both had honestly examined and corrected the flaws in their own character, suggesting that real love requires personal growth before it can fully succeed.

THINK What was Darcy's grand house called?