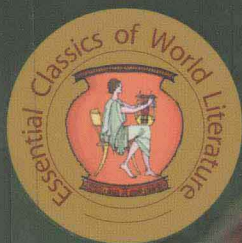
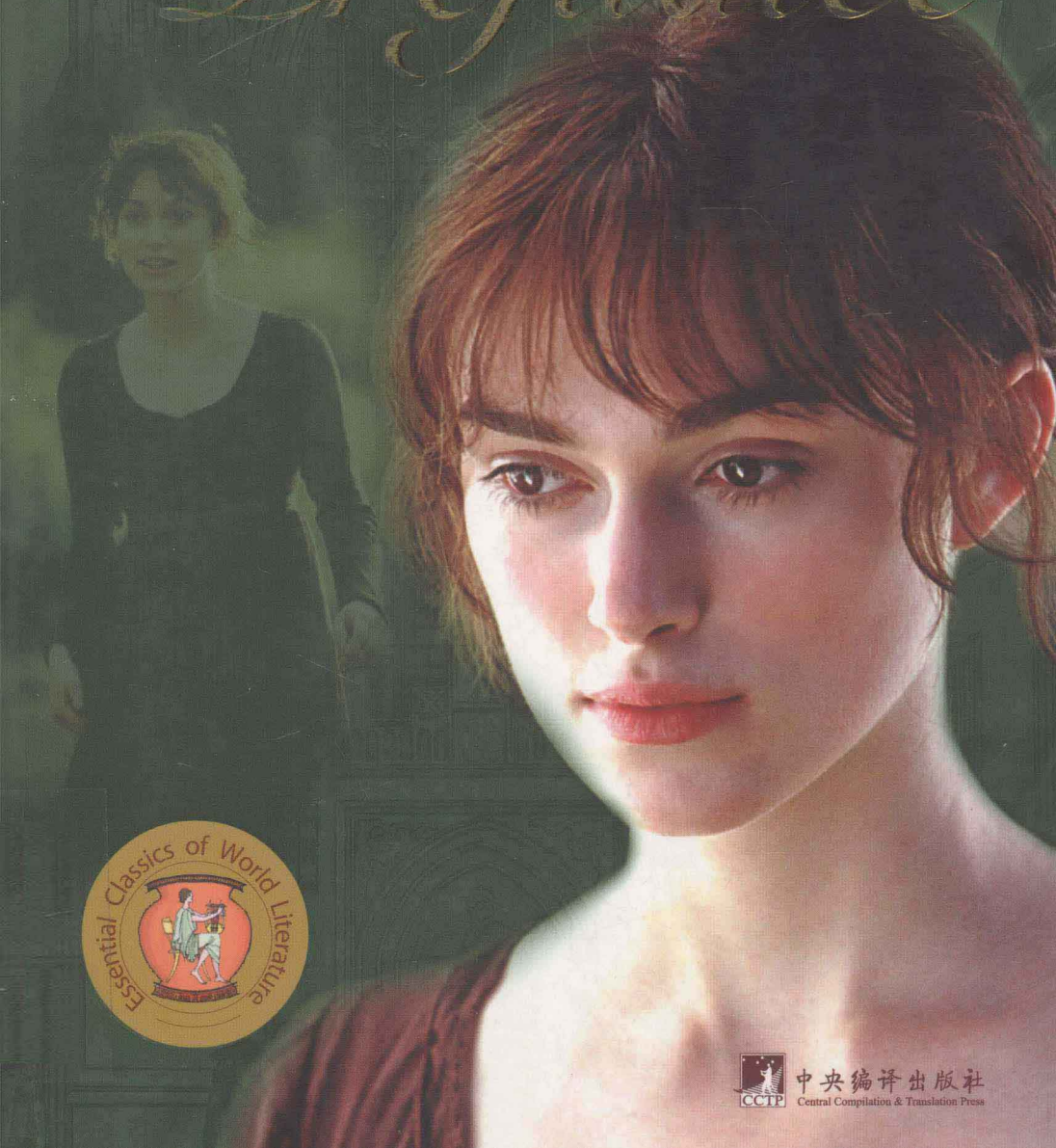


Illustrated

JANE AUSTEN

Pride and Prejudice



中央编译出版社
Central Compilation & Translation Press

Essential Classics of World Literature

Pride and Prejudice

Jane Austen



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JANE AUSTEN
PRIDE AND PREJUDICE

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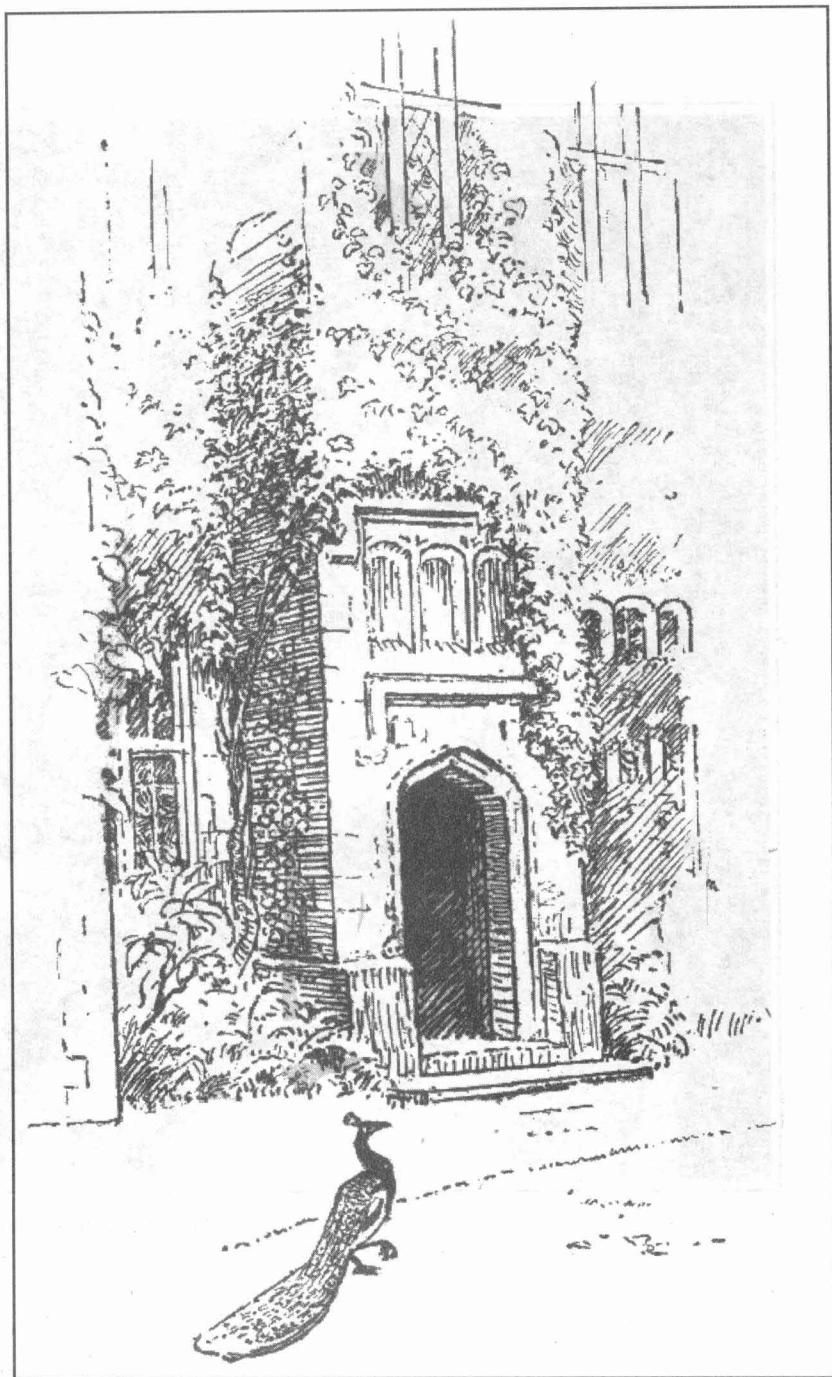
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Portrait of Jane Austen.



The old Manor House

Bawton, Friday Sept. 29.
1815

My dear Anna

We told Mr. B. Lefroy that if the weather did not prevent us, we should certainly come & see you tomorrow, & bring Casy, trusting to your being so good as to give her a dinner about one o'clock, that we might be able to be with you the earlier & stay the longer — but on giving Casy her choice of the Fair or Hyades, it must be confessed that she ^{has} preferred the former, which we trust will not greatly affront you; — if it does, you may hope that some little Anna hereafter may revenge the insult by a similar preference of an Allen fair to her Cousin Casy. — In the mean while, we have determined to put off our visit to you till Monday, which we hope will be not less convenient to you. I wish the weather would not resolve upon other put-offs. I must come to you before Wednesday if it be possible, for on that day I am going to London for a week or two with your Mother & Henry, who is expected here on Sunday. If Monday therefore should appear too dirty for walking, & Mr. B. L. would be so kind as to come & fetch me to spend some part of the morrow with you, I should be much obliged to him. Casy might be of the Party & your Aunt Cassandra will take another opportunity. —

Your G. Mama sends her Love & Thanks for your note. She was very happy to hear the contents of your Packing Case. She will send the Strawberry Tarts by Sally Bingham, as early as it next week as the weather may allow her to take them up. —

Yours very affec^{ly}

Ever, dear Anna

J. Austen



A Young Girl of Spirit

When my first is a task to a young girl of spirit
And my second confines her to finish the piece,
How hard is her fate! but how great is her merit
If by taking my whole she effect her release!

(Hemlock)

Contents

Volume I

Chapter 1.....	2
Chapter 2.....	5
Chapter 3.....	7
Chapter 4.....	11
Chapter 5.....	14
Chapter 6.....	17
Chapter 7.....	23
Chapter 8.....	28
Chapter 9.....	33
Chapter 10.....	37
Chapter 11.....	43
Chapter 12.....	47
Chapter 13.....	49
Chapter 14.....	53
Chapter 15.....	56
Chapter 16.....	60
Chapter 17.....	68
Chapter 18.....	71
Chapter 19.....	83
Chapter 20.....	88
Chapter 21.....	92
Chapter 22.....	97
Chapter 23.....	101

Volume II

Chapter 1.....	106
Chapter 2.....	111
Chapter 3.....	115

Pride and Prejudice

Chapter 4.....	120
Chapter 5.....	123
Chapter 6.....	127
Chapter 7.....	133
Chapter 8.....	136
Chapter 9.....	140
Chapter 10.....	144
Chapter 11.....	149
Chapter 12.....	154
Chapter 13.....	160
Chapter 14.....	165
Chapter 15.....	169
Chapter 16.....	172
Chapter 17.....	176
Chapter 18.....	180
Chapter 19.....	186

Volume III

Chapter 1.....	192
Chapter 2.....	203
Chapter 3.....	209
Chapter 4.....	213
Chapter 5.....	220
Chapter 6.....	229
Chapter 7.....	234
Chapter 8.....	240
Chapter 9.....	245
Chapter 10.....	250
Chapter 11.....	257

Contents

Chapter 12.....	264
Chapter 13.....	268
Chapter 14.....	274
Chapter 15.....	281
Chapter 16.....	285
Chapter 17.....	291
Chapter 18.....	297
Chapter 19.....	301
Appendix I.....	305
Appendix II.....	337

Volume I

Chapter 1

IT IS A TRUTH UNIVERSALLY acknowledged, that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife.

However little known the feelings or views of such a man may be on his first entering a neighbourhood, this truth is so well fixed in the minds of the surrounding families, that he is considered as the rightful property of some one or other of their daughters.

"My dear Mr. Bennet," said his lady to him one day, "have you heard that Netherfield Park is let at last?"

Mr. Bennet replied that he had not.

"But it is," returned she; "for Mrs. Long has just been here, and she told me all about it."

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

"Do not you want to know who has taken it?" cried his wife impatiently.

"You want to tell me, and I have no objection to hearing it."

This was invitation enough.

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

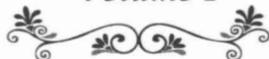
"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

"Design! Nonsense, how can you talk so! But it is very likely that he *may* fall in love with one of them, and therefore you must visit him as soon as he comes."

"I see no occasion for that. You and the girls may go, or you may send

Volume I



them by themselves, which perhaps will be still better; for, as you are as handsome as any of them, Mr. Bingley might like you the best of the party."

"My dear, you flatter me. I certainly *have* had my share of beauty, but I do not pretend to be any thing extraordinary now. When a woman has five grown up daughters, she ought to give over thinking of her own beauty."

"In such cases, a woman has not often much beauty to think of."

"But, my dear, you must indeed go and see Mr. Bingley when he comes into the neighbourhood."

"It is more than I engage for, I assure you."

"But consider your daughters. Only think what an establishment it would be for one of them. Sir William and Lady Lucas are determined to go, merely on that account, for in general, you know they visit no new comers. Indeed you must go, for it will be impossible for us to visit him, if you do not."

"You are over-scrupulous, surely. I dare say Mr. Bingley will be very glad to see you; and I will send a few lines by you to assure him of my hearty consent to his marrying which ever he chuses of the girls; though I must throw in a good word for my little Lizzy."

"I desire you will do no such thing. Lizzy is not a bit better than the others; and I am sure she is not half so handsome as Jane, nor half so good humoured as Lydia. But you are always giving *her* the preference."

"They have none of them much to recommend them," replied he; "they are all silly and ignorant like other girls; but Lizzy has something more of quickness than her sisters."

"Mr. Bennet, how can you abuse your own children in such way? You take delight in vexing me. You have no compassion on my poor nerves."

"You mistake me, my dear. I have a high respect for your nerves. They are my old friends. I have heard you mention them with consideration these twenty years at least."

"Ah! You do not know what I suffer."

"But I hope you will get over it, and live to see many young men of four thousand a year come into the neighbourhood."

"It will be no use to us if twenty such should come, since you will not visit them."

"Depend upon it, my dear, that when there are twenty I will visit them all."

Mr. Bennet was so odd a mixture of quick parts, sarcastic humour,

Pride and Prejudice



reserve, and caprice, that the experience of three and twenty years had been insufficient to make his wife understand his character. *Her* mind was less difficult to develope. She was a woman of mean understanding, little information, and uncertain temper. When she was discontented, she fancied herself nervous. The business of her life was to get her daughters married; its solace was visiting and news.

MR. BENNET WAS AMONG the earliest of those who waited on Mr. Bingley. He had always intended to visit him, though to the last always assuring his wife that he should not go; and till the evening after the visit was paid, she had no knowledge of it. It was then disclosed in the following manner. Observing his second daughter employed in trimming a hat, he suddenly addressed her with, "I hope Mr. Bingley will like it, Lizzy."

"We are not in a way to know *what* Mr. Bingley likes," said her mother resentfully, "since we are not to visit."

"But you forget, mama," said Elizabeth, "that we shall meet him at the assemblies, and that Mrs. Long has promised to introduce him."

"I do not believe Mrs. Long will do any such thing. She has two nieces of her own. She is a selfish, hypocritical woman, and I have no opinion of her."

"No more have I," said Mr. Bennet; "and I am glad to find that you do not depend on her serving you."

Mrs. Bennet deigned not to make any reply; but unable to contain herself, began scolding one of her daughters.

"Don't keep coughing so, Kitty, for heaven's sake! Have a little compassion on my nerves. You tear them to pieces."

"Kitty has no discretion in her coughs," said her father; "she times them ill."

"I do not cough for my own amusement," replied Kitty fretfully.

"When is your next ball to be, Lizzy?"

"Tomorrow fortnight."

"Aye, so it is," cried her mother, "and Mrs. Long does not come back till the day before; so it will be impossible for her to introduce him, for she will not know him herself."

"Then, my dear, you may have the advantage of your friend, and introduce Mr. Bingley to *her*."

"Impossible, Mr. Bennet, impossible, when I am not acquainted with him myself; how can you be so teasing?"

"I honour your circumspection. A fortnight's acquaintance is certainly very little. One cannot know what a man really is by the end of a fortnight. But if we do not venture, somebody else will; and after all, Mrs. Long and

her nieces must stand their chance; and therefore, as she will think it an act of kindness, if you decline the office, I will take it on myself."

The girls stared at their father. Mrs. Bennet said only, "Nonsense, nonsense!"

"What can be the meaning of that emphatic exclamation?" cried he. "Do you consider the forms of introduction, and the stress that is laid on them, as nonsense? I cannot quite agree with you *there*. What say you, Mary? For you are a young lady of deep reflection I know, and read great books, and make extracts."

Mary wished to say something very sensible, but knew not how.

"While Mary is adjusting her ideas," he continued, "let us return to Mr. Bingley."

"I am sick of Mr. Bingley," cried his wife.

"I am sorry to hear *that*; but why did not you tell me so before? If I had known as much this morning, I certainly would not have called on him. It is very unlucky; but as I have actually paid the visit, we cannot escape the acquaintance now."

The astonishment of the ladies was just what he wished; that of Mrs. Bennet perhaps surpassing the rest; though when the first tumult of joy was over, she began to declare that it was what she had expected all the while.

"How good it was in you, my dear Mr. Bennet! But I knew I should persuade you at last. I was sure you loved our girls too well to neglect such an acquaintance. Well, how pleased I am! and it is such a good joke, too, that you should have gone this morning, and never said a word about it till now."

"Now, Kitty, you may cough as much as you chuse," said Mr. Bennet; and, as he spoke, he left the room, fatigued with the raptures of his wife.

"What an excellent father you have, girls," said she, when the door was shut. "I do not know how you will ever make him amends for his kindness; or me either, for that matter. At our time of life, it is not so pleasant I can tell you, to be making new acquaintance every day; but for your sakes, we would do any thing. Lydia, my love, though you *are* the youngest, I dare say Mr. Bingley will dance with you at the next ball."

"Oh!" said Lydia stoutly, "I am not afraid; for though I *am* the youngest, I'm the tallest."

The rest of the evening was spent in conjecturing how soon he would return Mr. Bennet's visit, and determining when they should ask him to dinner.

NOT ALL THAT MRS. BENNET, however, with the assistance of her five daughters, could ask on the subject was sufficient to draw from her husband any satisfactory description of Mr. Bingley. They attacked him in various ways; with barefaced questions, ingenious suppositions, and distant surmises; but he eluded the skill of them all; and they were at last obliged to accept the second-hand intelligence of their neighbour Lady Lucas. Her report was highly favourable. Sir William had been delighted with him. He was quite young, wonderfully handsome, extremely agreeable, and, to crown the whole, he meant to be at the next assembly with a large party. Nothing could be more delightful! To be fond of dancing was a certain step towards falling in love; and very lively hopes of Mr. Bingley's heart were entertained.

"If I can but see one of my daughters happily settled at Netherfield," said Mrs. Bennet to her husband, "and all the others equally well married, I shall have nothing to wish for."

In a few days Mr. Bingley returned Mr. Bennet's visit, and sat about ten minutes with him in his library. He had entertained hopes of being admitted to a sight of the young ladies, of whose beauty he had heard much; but he saw only the father. The ladies were somewhat more fortunate, for they had the advantage of ascertaining, from an upper window, that he wore a blue coat and rode a black horse.

An invitation to dinner was soon afterwards dispatched; and already had Mrs. Bennet planned the courses that were to do credit to her housekeeping, when an answer arrived which deferred it all. Mr. Bingley was obliged to be in town the following day, and consequently unable to accept the honour of their invitation, &c. Mrs. Bennet was quite disconcerted. She could not imagine what business he could have in town so soon after his arrival in Hertfordshire; and she began to fear that he might be always flying about from one place to another, and never settled at Netherfield as he ought to be. Lady Lucas quieted her fears a little by starting the idea of his being gone to London only to get a large party for the ball; and a report soon followed that Mr. Bingley was to bring twelve ladies and seven gentlemen with him to the assembly. The girls grieved over such a large number of ladies; but were comforted the day before the ball by hearing that, instead of twelve, he had brought only six with him