



The language of Jane Austen's time

Pride and Prejudice was written in 1813. The English that people spoke at that time was a little different from modern English. Here are some of the differences that you will find when you read Pride and Prejudice.

Jane Austen's language modern English

<i>did not, are not, etc.</i>	<i>didn't, aren't, etc.</i>
<i>I wish to ...</i>	<i>I want to ...</i>
<i>to admire</i>	<i>to like or to fancy</i>
<i>a handsome woman</i>	<i>a beautiful woman</i>
<i>shall</i>	<i>will</i>

People did not use first names, except with their families. So Mr Darcy calls Elizabeth Miss Elizabeth or Miss Elizabeth Bennet. Even husbands and wives often called each other as Mrs Bennet and Mr Bennet!



PRIDE & PREJUDICE

CHAPTER 1

The Meryton ball

'Mr Bennet, have you heard the news?' Mrs Bennet said one day. 'A young man with a large fortune is coming to live at Netherfield Park!'

'What is his name and is he married or single?' asked Mr Bennet.

'His name is Bingley and he is single, my dear! What a fine thing for our girls!'

'Why is that, my dear?'

'Oh, Mr Bennet, you are so difficult! Of course he must marry one of them. You must go and visit him as soon as he arrives.'

'I will tell him he may marry any of our five daughters, but I will suggest Lizzy.'

'You will not! Lizzy is no better than the others. She is not as pretty as Jane and not as much fun as Lydia,' replied Mrs Bennet crossly. Elizabeth was quick and clever, but Mrs Bennet was not, and she admired Jane and Lydia more.

Mr Bennet was one of the first of Mr Bingley's new neighbours to visit him. But Mr Bennet loved to laugh at his wife and did not tell her until after his visit.

That evening, the family were in the sitting room. Lizzy was putting some flowers on a hat.

'I hope Mr Bingley will like your hat, Lizzy,' said Mr Bennet.

'How do we know what Mr Bingley will like?' cried Mrs Bennet. 'We are not going to visit him.'

'When is the next ball, Lizzy?' continued Mr Bennet.
'In a fortnight, in Meryton,' said Elizabeth.

'Yes,' said Mrs Bennet crossly, 'and our girls will not be able to dance with Mr Bingley because *you* have not visited him! Oh, I am sick of hearing about Mr Bingley.'

'I am sorry to hear that, my dear,' said Mr Bennet.
'Because I wanted to tell you about my visit to him this morning.'

The effect was just as Mr Bennet had hoped. The ladies all called out questions at once.

'Oh girls, what an excellent father you have!' said Mrs Bennet, when she was calmer.

The Meryton ball had already started when Mr Bingley arrived with his two sisters and another young man.

Mr Bingley was good-looking and had perfect manners. His friend Mr Darcy was tall and handsome. News quickly went round the ballroom that Mr Darcy had a large fortune and everyone admired him at once. They soon discovered that he was proud, however, and then he was not so popular.



Mr Bingley danced every dance and was charming. He was very friendly to Jane, the oldest of the Bennet girls, and danced with her twice. Mr Darcy danced once with each of Bingley's sisters and refused to speak to any other lady in the room. Nobody liked him and they all hoped he would never come again. Mrs Bennet disliked him most of all, because he did not dance with any of her daughters.

Elizabeth did not join two of the dances because there were not enough gentlemen. She heard some of the conversation between Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy.

'Come, Darcy, you must dance. Do not stand by yourself.'

'I shall not dance. I hate dancing. I have danced with your sisters and I will not dance with any other woman in the room.'



'I have never met so many nice girls in my life. Some of them are very pretty.'

'You are dancing with the only pretty girl here,' said Mr Darcy, looking at Jane.

'She is the most beautiful girl I ever saw,' said Mr Bingley. 'But one of her sisters is very pretty too. She is

sitting just behind us.'

Mr Darcy looked round at Elizabeth. 'She is not pretty enough to interest me,' he said coldly. 'Return to your partner and enjoy her smiles. Do not worry about me.'



Later that evening, Jane told Elizabeth that she liked Mr Bingley very much.

'I was very surprised when he asked me for a second dance,' she said.

'Were you?' replied Elizabeth. 'Nobody else in the room was surprised. You were five times prettier than any other woman there. Well, he is very charming and I will allow you to like him. What about his sisters, though? They are certainly very fine and good-looking, but their manners are not so good. Meryton did not seem good enough for them.'

'Caroline Bingley was very nice to me,' replied Jane. 'She is coming to live at Netherfield with her brother.'

'Dear Jane, you never see a fault in anybody,' Elizabeth smiled.