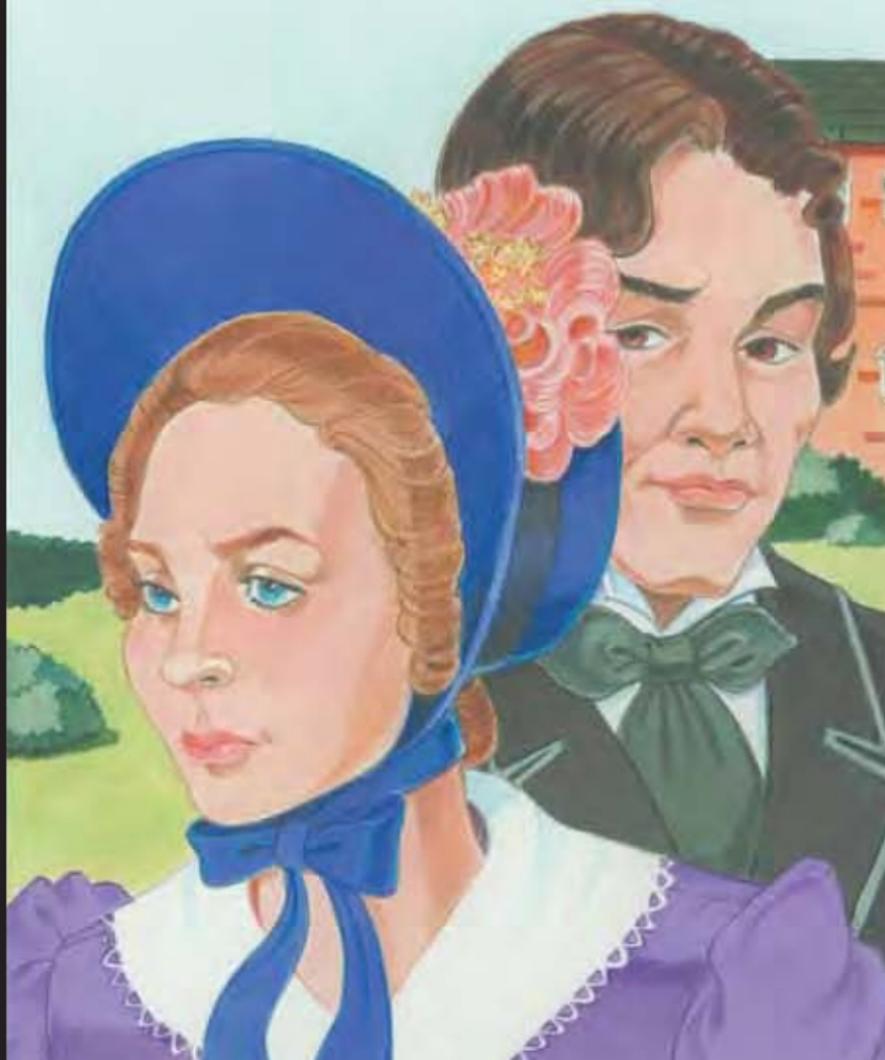


PRIDE and PREJUDICE

JANE AUSTEN



SADDLEBACK
Classics

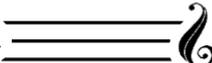
 **SADDLEBACK** *Classics* 

Pride and Prejudice

JANE AUSTEN

ADAPTED BY
Janice Greene



 **SADDLEBACK** *Classics* 

The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn	The Last of the Mohicans
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer	The Man in the Iron Mask
The Call of the Wild	Moby Dick
A Christmas Carol	Oliver Twist
The Count of Monte Cristo	Pride and Prejudice
Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde	The Prince and the Pauper
Dracula	The Red Badge of Courage
Frankenstein	Robinson Crusoe
Great Expectations	The Scarlet Letter
Gulliver's Travels	Swiss Family Robinson
The Hound of the Baskervilles	A Tale of Two Cities
The Hunchback of Notre Dame	The Three Musketeers
Jane Eyre	The Time Machine
The Jungle Book	Treasure Island
	The War of the Worlds
	White Fang

Development and Production: Laurel Associates, Inc.
Cover and Interior Art: Black Eagle Productions



Three Watson
Irvine, CA 92618-2767
E-Mail: info@sdlback.com
Website: www.sdlback.com

Copyright © 2003 by Saddleback Educational Publishing. All rights reserved.
No part of this book may be reproduced in any form or by any means, electronic
or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information
storage and retrieval system, without the written permission of the publisher.

ISBN 1-56254-529-9

Printed in the United States of America
08 07 06 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

1	A New Neighbor	5
2	Netherfield Hall	12
3	A Visitor Arrives	18
4	Wickham's Story	25
5	Jane's Disappointment	32
6	Elizabeth Visits Charlotte	38
7	Darcy Admits the Truth	44
8	A Letter for Elizabeth	50
9	Elizabeth Changes Her Mind	57
10	A Family Scandal	64
11	Lydia's Return	70
12	Three Married Daughters	75

S 1

A New Neighbor

There is one truth that most women agree upon: A young, single man with a good income must be needing a wife.

When such a young man moves into a neighborhood, he may not be aware of his need for a wife. But his neighbors are well aware of it. In fact, he is considered the property of one or another of their daughters.

Mrs. Bennet had heard the nearby estate, Netherfield Park, had just been rented. She was very eager to tell her husband.

“My dear Mr. Bennet, Netherfield Park has been rented at last!” his wife announced.

Mr. Bennet made no answer.

“Do you not want to know who has taken it?” she asked impatiently.

“You want to tell me,” Mr. Bennet said, “and I have no objection to hearing it.”

“His name is Bingley,” Mrs. Bennet said. “He is a single man with a large fortune—four or five thousand a year! What a fine opportunity for our girls!”

“How so?” Mr. Bennet inquired. “How can it affect them?”

“Oh, my dear Mr. Bennet!” his wife cried. “How can you be so tiresome? You must know what I am thinking. Perhaps he will marry one of them. You must call on him just as soon as he arrives.”

“I see no reason for that,” Mr. Bennet said.

“Mr. Bennet, you seem to take delight in provoking me. You have no compassion for my poor nerves,” his wife complained.

“You mistake me, my dear,” Mr. Bennet chuckled. “I have nothing but the highest respect for your nerves. I’ve heard you talk about them for 20 years at least.”

Mr. Bennet was an odd mixture of reserve and sarcastic humor. His poor wife didn’t understand him. Her mind, however, was less difficult to understand. She knew little and

understood little. The business of her life was to get her five daughters married.

Mr. Bennet, in fact, was one of the first to visit Mr. Bingley. He revealed this news one evening when his second oldest daughter, Elizabeth, was decorating a hat. "I hope Mr. Bingley will like it," he said quietly.

His wife sighed. "I'm afraid we shall never know what Mr. Bingley likes. In fact, I am sick of Mr. Bingley."

"Why did you not tell me so before?" Mr. Bennet said. "I wouldn't have visited him."

His family's astonishment was just what he had wished! His daughters, Jane, Elizabeth, Mary, Catherine, and Lydia, were speechless. And Mrs. Bennet was the most surprised of all. But she pretended that she knew all along her husband would visit Mr. Bingley.

To the Bennet family's delight, Mr. Bingley attended the next ball. With him, he brought his two sisters, the husband of the eldest sister, and another young man.

Mr. Bingley was a good-looking man. His manners were easy and unaffected. His sisters were fine, fashionable women. His brother-

in-law, Mr. Hurst, looked like an average gentleman. But his friend Mr. Darcy drew most of the attention. He was tall, handsome, and noble-looking. Within five minutes of his arrival, almost everyone knew he had an income of ten thousand a year. For half the evening, everyone admired him. Then their feelings turned to disgust, for they discovered what a proud fellow he was.

While Bingley danced every dance, Mr. Darcy mostly stood alone. At one point, Bingley urged his friend to join in the fun.

Elizabeth Bennet was nearby. She overheard their conversation. Since there were few men to dance with, she was sitting down.

“Come, Darcy!” Bingley urged his friend. “I must insist that you dance.”

“I certainly shall not!” Darcy said. “Your sisters have other partners, and you are dancing with the only pretty girl in the room.” He looked over at Jane Bennet.

“Oh, yes! She is the most beautiful girl I ever saw!” Bingley agreed. “But her younger sister, Elizabeth, is sitting down just behind you. She is very pretty, too.”



Darcy turned and studied Elizabeth for a moment. “She is tolerable,” he said coldly, “but not pretty enough to tempt me.”

After the men walked off, Elizabeth told her friends the story with great spirit. She had a lively, playful personality. She loved to laugh and make others laugh, too.

After the ball, Jane and Elizabeth were talking. Jane confessed that she liked Mr. Bingley a great deal.

“I was very flattered that he asked me to dance a second time,” Jane told her sister. “I

didn't dare to expect such a compliment."

"Did you not?" Elizabeth asked. "I did. Well, he seems very agreeable, so I'm pleased that you like him. Heaven knows, you've liked many a stupider person."

"*Lizzy!*" Jane protested.

Elizabeth smiled. "Oh, you never see a fault in anybody," she said. "In all my life, I've never heard you speak ill of a single human being! You have good sense—but you are blind to the nonsense of others."

Back at Netherfield Park, Darcy and Bingley also discussed the ball. Bingley said he had never met more pleasant people in his life. And as for Miss Jane Bennet, he couldn't imagine an angel more beautiful! Darcy, on the other hand, had no interest in anyone at the ball. He agreed that Jane Bennet was very pretty—but he thought she smiled too much.

The two friends had very different characters. Darcy admired his friend's easiness and openness. Bingley valued Darcy's opinion and judgment. Darcy was well-bred, but stiff. His manners were not inviting, and he often offended people. Bingley was very popular.

The Lucas family lived quite near the Bennets. Sir William Lucas had made a great fortune in trade. He'd even been knighted! After receiving this honor, however, he'd given up business entirely.

Lady Lucas was an especially good kind of woman. Charlotte, her oldest daughter, was sensible and intelligent. She was also a close friend of Elizabeth Bennet's.

The morning after the ball, the Bennets and the Lucases were gathered at Lucas Lodge. Everyone had something to say about Mr. Darcy's behavior.

"His pride doesn't offend me as pride often does," Charlotte said. "He's a fine young man, with family and fortune—he has a *right* to be proud!"

"I could easily forgive his pride," said Elizabeth, "if he had not mortified mine."

"If I were you, Lizzy," her mother said, "I would not dance with him *ever*."

"I believe, ma'am, I can promise I shall *never* dance with him!" Elizabeth assured her.

2 **Netherfield Hall**

The more Mr. Bingley saw of Jane, the more he seemed to like her. As for Jane, Elizabeth could tell that her sister was falling in love. But Elizabeth was pleased to see that Jane refused to show her feelings. That would keep her safe from the suspicions and teasing of others. Elizabeth mentioned this to Charlotte Lucas.

“It’s not always good to be so guarded,” Charlotte said. “If a woman hides her affection, she may lose the man she likes.”

“Jane does help him on—as much as her nature will allow,” Elizabeth explained. “But whenever she sees him, it’s in a large party. She really doesn’t know his character well.”

“Of course,” Charlotte said, “I wish Jane success with all my heart. But happiness in marriage is a matter of chance. I believe it is

better to know as little as possible about the faults of the person you marry.”

Elizabeth smiled. “You make me laugh, Charlotte. You’d never act that way yourself.”

Whenever Bingley was with her sister, Elizabeth watched closely. Meanwhile, there was one thing she failed to notice: Mr. Darcy was becoming interested in *her*.

The next time Darcy saw Elizabeth was at Lucas Lodge. Several couples were dancing at one end of the room.

Sir William Lucas remarked to Mr. Darcy, “There’s nothing like dancing! I believe it’s one of the true signs of fine society.”

“Dancing is also popular in less fine societies,” Darcy said. “Every savage can dance.”

Just then, Elizabeth was moving in their direction. “Mr. Darcy,” Sir William said, “you must allow me to present this young lady to you. She’s a perfect dancing partner.”

Sir William took Elizabeth’s hand and was about to offer it to Mr. Darcy. But she instantly drew back.

“Indeed, sir,” she said quickly. “I don’t have the least intention of dancing.”

When Mr. Darcy asked her if she would dance, Elizabeth politely refused and turned away. They didn't speak again for the rest of the evening.

But Mr. Darcy was to see Elizabeth again soon—in an unexpected manner.

One morning, Jane was invited by Bingley's sisters, Caroline and Louisa, to dine with them that evening.

Jane asked her mother for the carriage.

"No, my dear," her mother answered. "You had better go on horseback. It looks like it will rain, and then you can stay all night."

In fact, it rained hard that day. Jane was completely wet by the time she arrived. She spent the night at Netherfield Hall and was very ill when she woke up.

Hearing this, Mr. Bennet teased his wife. "Well, my dear," he said, "if your daughter should die, at least it will be for a good cause!"

"Oh, people do not die of little colds!" Mrs. Bennet said in an irritated voice.

Elizabeth was worried, however. The family carriage was not available, and she was not a horsewoman. But she was determined to

see her sister, so she decided to walk.

“We’ll go as far as Meryton with you,” Catherine and Lydia volunteered. Elizabeth knew that a militia regiment had recently arrived in the nearby town of Meryton. It happened that their aunt and uncle, the Philipses, lived there. Lately, Catherine and Lydia had talked of nothing but officers.

At Meryton, Elizabeth said goodbye to her sisters and went on alone. She arrived at Netherfield Hall with muddy stockings. Her face was glowing with the warmth of exercise.

Poor Jane was indeed ill with fever and headache. When Elizabeth was also invited to stay, she accepted gratefully. A servant was sent to tell the Bennet family of her plans, and to bring back a supply of clothes.

At half past six, Elizabeth was called to dinner. Everyone asked about Jane’s health. Young Bingley seemed truly worried about Jane. Elizabeth warmed to his kindness.

When dinner was over, Elizabeth returned to Jane’s side. As soon as she was out of the room, Mrs. Hurst said, “I shall never forget Miss Elizabeth Bennet’s appearance this

morning. She actually looked almost wild.”

Caroline agreed. “Why should she even come here? Why go scampering about the country just because her sister has a cold? And looking so untidy, too!”

“Your image may be correct,” Bingley said, “but this was all lost on me. I thought Miss Elizabeth Bennet looked wonderfully well this morning. To me, coming here shows a deep affection for her sister.”

“I think very highly of Jane Bennet,” Mrs. Hurst said. “She’s really a very sweet girl. I wish with all my heart that she was well married. But with such a family—and such low connections—I’m afraid there’s no chance of it!”

“I’ve heard that their uncle, Mr. Philips, is a lawyer in Meryton,” Caroline said.

Mrs. Hurst snickered. “Yes, and I believe they have another, somewhere in London, near Cheapside!”

Both sisters laughed.

Bingley looked annoyed. “If they had uncles enough to fill all of Cheapside, it would make no difference to me!”

Darcy said, “But surely you must agree, Bingley, that it hurts their chances of marrying well.”

To this Bingley made no answer.

The next morning, Mrs. Bennet, along with Catherine and Lydia, came to visit Jane.

Mrs. Bennet’s behavior embarrassed Elizabeth completely. First she boasted about Jane’s beauty and good nature. Then she insulted Mr. Darcy. She compared him to Sir William Lucas, whom she said was far friendlier!

After seeing Jane, Mrs. Bennet announced that her daughter was too ill to be moved. She was happy to have Jane stay. Elizabeth groaned. She was eager to have her sister well—and even more eager to leave!

S

3

A Visitor Arrives

That evening, Jane was well enough to leave her room for a few hours. Bingley made sure the fire was well built up before he sat down by her. Elizabeth was delighted to see that he hardly spoke to anyone else.

While Jane and Bingley talked, Darcy took up a book. Caroline Bingley did the same—but she secretly spent most of the time watching Mr. Darcy read. Mrs. Hurst played with her rings and bracelets. Now and then she joined in her brother's conversation with Jane. Mr. Hurst went to sleep.

After a while, Caroline gave a great yawn and said, "How pleasant it is to spend a quiet evening reading!"

No one answered her. She yawned again and began walking about the room. Although her figure was elegant, Darcy didn't look up

from his book. Then she invited Elizabeth to walk about the room with her.

Now Darcy looked up. Without knowing what he was doing, he closed his book. Caroline invited him to join them, but he politely refused. He said it would interfere with their purpose.

“What do you mean by that?” Caroline demanded.

“Because you want to show off your figures by walking,” Darcy answered. “I can see you much better sitting by the fire.”

“Oh, how shocking!” Caroline cried out. “How shall we punish him?”

“Tease him—laugh at him,” Elizabeth suggested quietly.

“No,” Caroline said. “It is impossible to laugh at Mr. Darcy.”

“Mr. Darcy is not to be laughed at?” Elizabeth asked mockingly. “So he has no faults at all?”

“Oh, I don’t believe that’s possible for anyone,” Darcy said. “But all of my life I’ve tried to avoid faults that others might find laughable.”

“Such as vanity and pride,” Elizabeth said.

“Yes,” Darcy agreed. “Vanity is a fault indeed. But pride—when one’s mind is truly superior—that is not a fault.”

Elizabeth turned away to hide a smile. Then she said, “I am convinced then. You must truly have no faults at all.”

“Oh, but I do!” Mr. Darcy said. “I cannot forget or forgive the follies and vices of others. If I lose my good opinion of someone, it is lost forever.”

“Yes, that is a fault indeed!” Elizabeth retorted. “But you have chosen your defect well. It really isn’t laughable. It seems that your defect makes it easy for you to hate everybody.”

“Your fault,” Darcy said with a smile, “is to misunderstand them.”

Caroline was impatient. “Now let’s have a little music!” she said. She was tired of a conversation in which she had no share.

When the pianoforte was opened, Darcy was relieved. He felt more attracted to Elizabeth than he ever wanted to. If it weren’t for her low connections, he feared that he could fall in love with her!