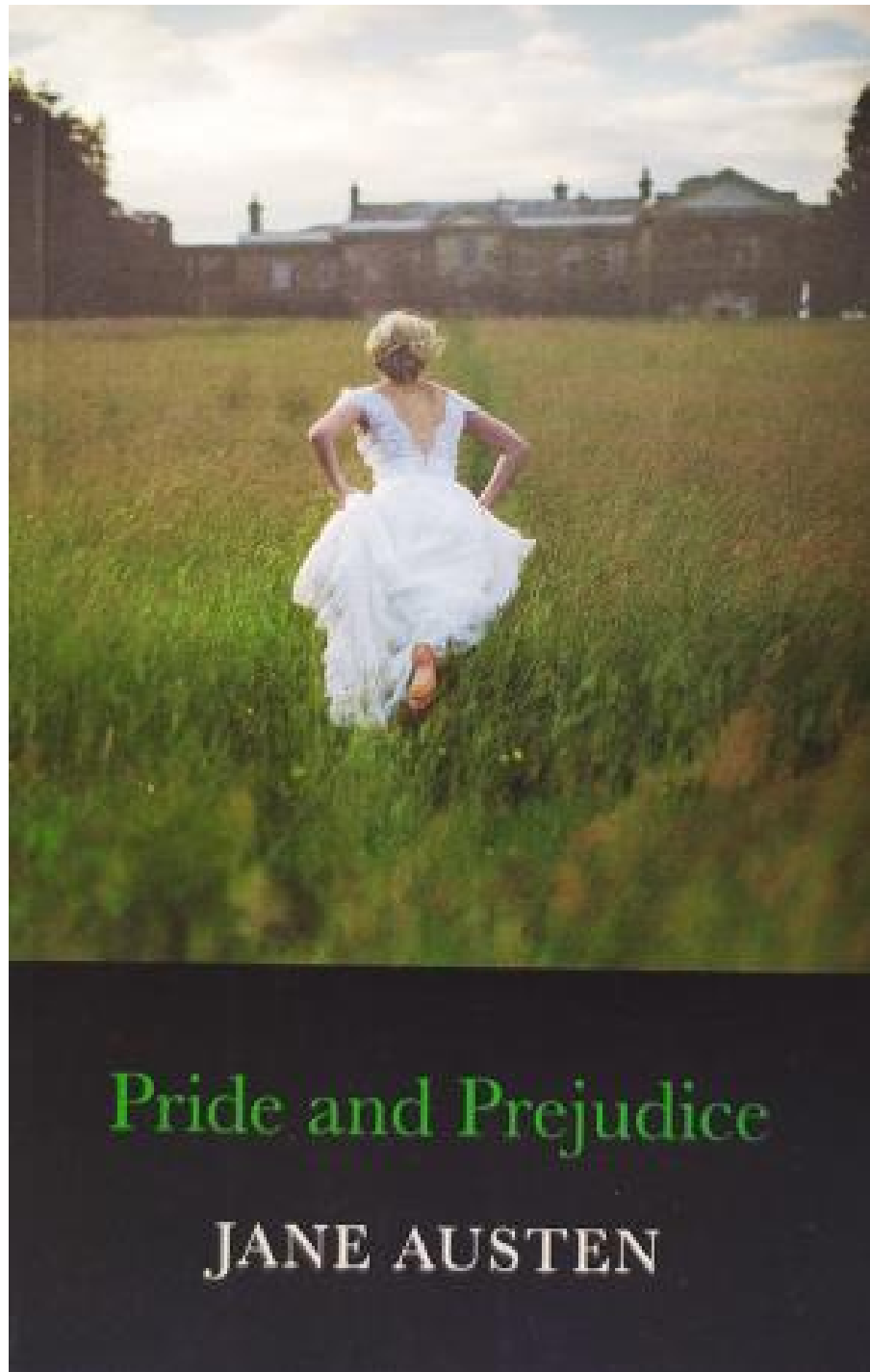


Book Review: Pride and Prejudice



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“Pride and Prejudice” by Jane Austen was first published in 1813 and it is called a novel of manners as it recreates the social life of people during the early 19th century clearly and witfully. Jane Austen brings life to a world where marriage, and social class intertwine, and where characters like Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Darcy find their way through misunderstandings, growth, and love. This book is often called a timeless classic as it still holds literary value in today’s world. This book can be analyzed for many more years to come making it a classic masterpiece.

Pride and Prejudice is mostly about the Bennet family and their social interactions with other people. The Bennet family consists of Mr. and Mrs. Bennet along with their five daughters: Jane, Elizabeth (Lizzy), Mary, Kitty, and Lydia. The daughters’ futures are insecure as after their father’s death their estate would be given to a long, distant cousin, Mr. Collins, leaving them to be essentially homeless. Due to this Mrs. Bennet is desperate to get her daughters married and have them settle in a safe and secure place. The story here hence revolves around the central characters going through character development and societal changes while also maintaining other subplots.

The central characters of this book are Elizabeth Bennet and Fitzwilliam Darcy. Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy first met at a ball where none of them had favorable impressions of one another. Elizabeth was called “not handsome enough” by Mr. Darcy leaving her with a bad first impression of him. From there onward everything Mr. Darcy did was met with disgust and prejudice by Elizabeth. During this time of misunderstandings Mr. Darcy had started developing feelings for Elizabeth, while she remained unaware. Meeting Elizabeth’s expectations and standards was hard but Mr. Darcy had no choice to reach the pinnacle as he had already fallen for her cleverness and wit. After a lot of misunderstandings, arguments and personal growth, both Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy got together as Elizabeth finally fell for Mr. Darcy.

The book also includes a subplot involving Mr. Bingley and Jane Bennet. Mr. Bingley and Jane met in the same part where Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy met. Contrary to the main couple, both Jane and Bingley had favorable impressions of one another. Since they both liked one another, they were likely to be engaged until a wave of societal judgment and social class difference hit their relationship. Manipulated by his own family and friends, Mr. Bingley began to view Jane as dishonest. He assumed that Jane's affection was insincere, driven solely by his wealth. Being convinced this was the case Mr. Bingley leaves Netherfield and moves back to London, leaving Jane behind, confused and heartbroken. Not knowing what she did wrong Jane heartbrokenly cries over Mr. Bingley for a long time. Eventually, Mr. Bingley and Jane get reunited with the help of Mr. Darcy bringing Mr. Bingley back to his senses. They eventually get married and live happily. This subplot plays a crucial role in showing the main theme of this book, social class difference.

Pride and Prejudice’s main themes are pride, prejudice, social class and reputation, growth and development and love. These themes make this book everlasting as they can be seen in any generation or century. These are themes that are bound to be repeated due to human nature.

Here, pride is characterized primarily by Mr. Darcy as he is originally very aloof and abrasive towards people around him. He believes that he is the best due to his wealth and handsomeness,

oftentimes making that ego his biggest flaw. He thinks of people less fortunate than this as lower and often belittles them. When first meeting the Bennet family, Darcy thinks of them as lower and shows his pride. Elizabeth also displays pride as she keeps her head held high in every situation. She is not scared to correct others when they are wrong even if it makes her look bad. This shows how the pride of two people can be completely different as Darcy's pride is more negative and egoistic whereas Elizabeth's pride is self assured and gratified.

Prejudice is showcased throughout the book mainly by Mrs. Bennet. She is quick to judge a person based on their wealth and social status. At the same time we can safely say that Elizabeth, although more astute than her mother, had prejudice against Darcy due to initial impression. She didn't ever let go of her impression leading to a lot of misunderstandings in the relationship. We can say that Darcy was also prejudiced as he talked to people only if their social standing was on the same level as his. He did not care enough to get to know anyone in a lower social circle than his as he believed they were filth and not important enough to waste time upon. This again, shows the contradiction between Elizabeth's and Darcy's prejudice. Elizabeth's prejudice was based on a first impression whereas Darcy's was oftentimes baseless. Another prominent theme in this book is social class and reputation. This is showcased by different scenarios in the book. When Mr. Bingley left Netherfield, after being gaslit by his friends and family to think of Jane as someone not worth wasting time upon due to her social status is one scenario. Here, Mr. Bingley was told by his sisters that Jane didn't truly love him just because they didn't like the fact that Jane had a lower social class.

Growth, development and love is a prevalent theme in the book. These themes are showcased by almost every character in the book. Mr. Darcy becomes less egoist and prideful about his social status after meeting Elizabeth whereas Elizabeth, who used to be skeptical of Mr. Darcy changes her prejudiced view of him and the both of them fall in love with each other. Similarly, after fighting a lot of misunderstanding and attempts of separation, love brings Mr. Bingley and Jane together.

The themes in this book can certainly be connected to the real world. Pride can be connected to the real world with people in higher power thinking of themselves as unbeatable. This can be connected to our politicians who think that they can commit any crime and get away with it due to their political power. This is their ego and pride speaking and this pride will remain as long as humanity stays.

Prejudice can be intertwined in the real world with the fact that today people judge people based on their looks and social media followers. If someone is skinny, they are called sticks and bones whereas when someone is chubby they are referred to as buffaloes and elephants. This is prejudice as individuals who don't even know the other person comment on their appearance without knowledge of that person's life. Similarly, people are so quick to make judgements based on what people post online, showing prejudice and oftentimes ignorance. This can be interrelated in today's world with the caste system as well. If someone is said to be of a "lower" caste they are often looked down upon and are forced to stay away from people of "higher" castes. This shows how the social class and the difference in how people treat each person based on their social standing. This is the world we live in full of pride and prejudice.

In conclusion, "Pride and Prejudice" shows society as it is and as it will always be. Society is ever changing but pride and prejudice will always remain. People will always be quick to take pride in something they did, be it good or bad, be it egoist or down-to-earth. The world will always hold prejudice for others as new technology develops, making it harder to know anyone truly. Pride and Prejudice is a timeless classic as it shows how there are some factors in society that never change, even if we try. The reason why it is hard to get rid of pride or prejudice in people is because it is human nature. Only thing we can do is suppress our prejudice and think more openly. After all, we all hold some amount of pride in ourselves and have prejudice towards something around us, even if it is left unsaid.