

Elizabeth describes Lydia and Wickham marriage in this way- 'passions were stronger than their virtue'. Whilst Lydia had a passion for independence and Wickham's appearance, Wickham is lured to marry her by the money Darcy offers to preserve the family reputation. Both have too grave faults, for the marriage to work so therefore it's doomed to fail.

Wickham and Lydia's marriage is a parallel to that of the Bennet's. Both marriages stem from first impressions, Lydia's being of Wickham that he is a handsome soldier and Wickham's simply that Lydia is young and available. Lydia solely wished for Wickham on the basis of physical attraction and passion, too irrational even to think about security or love. Austen presents their marriage as doomed to fail, as like Mrs Bennet, Lydia's looks will not last for ever, and Lydia will soon see Wickham for what he truly is. Wickham especially did not even intend to marry Lydia until he was paid to by Darcy. Wickham's affection is described, like Mr Bennet's as having 'sunk to indifference'.

Charlotte simply marries Mr Collins because she wants a household and to avoid becoming a spinster, as at 27 and not particularly attractive 'not all of us can afford to be romantic'. Mr Collins wants to marry because Lady C has told him he must, he does not care to who, 'design of selecting a wife'. Mr Collins further reflects his pragmatic approach to marriage during his proposal to Elizabeth when he lists his reasons for marriage very ordered starting with the fact he needs a wife as a clergyman. This shows how they entered into a marriage of convenience, not one of love.

Charlotte's pragmatic attitude to the marriage is further shown by her declaring 'love in marriage is merely a matter of chance'. Austen uses her as a vehicle to express the perilous position upper-middle class women were in if they did not marry as they would become a burden on their family. This is interesting as Austen herself did not marry, and relied on her brothers to support her, possibly drawing on her own experiences to show why women should marry even if only for a comfortable living.

Mr Bennet is presented negatively by Austin as an uncaring and inattentive husband. Lizzy describes, through use of focalisation his 'continual breach of conjugal obligation... was so highly reprehensible.' Whilst Mr Bennet made a bad decision regarding his marriage, Austen shows he still should be a good husband and care for his family, because his attitude lead to Lydia having opportunity to elope with Wickham.

The Bennets' marital home is Longbourn, which when split into long and bourn, reflects the nature of the Bennets' marriage.

Marriage

Bennets' Marriage



Colonel Fitzwilliam

'Younger sons cannot marry where they like'- Colonel Fitzwilliam. As a younger son he is not entitled to a large inheritance, therefore he must make a prudent match to ensure his financial future. This shows men too must take care of which match they make.

Elizabeth and Darcy's Marriage



Elizabeth and Darcy's relationship develops and grows throughout the novel. It is shown to be based on love as both care about the other enough to want to change, and they both gain qualities from each other that they were previously lacking. Darcy loses his pride and snobbery 'he has no improper pride'-Lizzy, and Elizabeth loses her prejudice and learns not to always trust first impressions. Their marriage and its parallel, Jane and Bingley's, is shown to be the ideal, which reinforces Austen's idea that love is the most important thing in a marriage.. Darcy is described by Lizzy as 'perfectly amiable', showing the intensity of love between them.

Lizzy and Darcy are intellectual equals, 'a woman may take liberties with her husband'. Unusually in a marriage of the Regency era, Elizabeth and Darcy have equal standing, showing this marriage has a solid foundation of true love.

Wickham and Lydia's Marriage



Charlotte and Collins' Marriage



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