

Celebrating Pride and Prejudice: 200 Years of Jane Austen's Masterpiece

Susannah Fullerton



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"Think only of the past as its remembrance gives you pleasure," Elizabeth Bennet tells Fitzwilliam Darcy in one of countless exhilarating scenes in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. The remembrance of Austen's brilliant work has given its readers pleasure for 200 years and is certain to do so for centuries to come. The book is incomparable for its wit, humor, and insights into how we think and act—and how our "first impressions" (the book's initial title) can often be remarkably off-base. All of these facets are explored and commemorated in *Celebrating Pride and Prejudice*, written by preeminent Austen scholar Susannah Fullerton. Fullerton delves into what makes *Pride and Prejudice* such a groundbreaking masterpiece, including the story behind its creation (the first version may have been an epistolary novel written when Austen was only twenty), its reception upon publication, and its tremendous legacy, from the many films and miniseries inspired by the book (such as the 1995 BBC miniseries starring Colin Firth) to the even more numerous "sequels," adaptations, mash-ups (zombies and vampires and the like), and pieces of merchandise, many of them very bizarre.

Interspersed throughout are fascinating stories about Austen's brief engagement (perhaps to the man who inspired the ridiculous Mr. Collins), the "Darcin" pheromone, the ways in which *Pride and Prejudice* served as bibliotherapy in the World War I trenches, why it caused one famous author to be tempted into thievery, and much more. *Celebrating Pride and Prejudice* is a wonderful celebration of a book that has had an immeasurable influence on literature and on anyone who has had the good fortune to discover it.

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