From *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE* (1)

Mr. Bingley was good looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners. His brother-in-law, Mr. Hurst, merely looked the gentleman; but his friend Mr. Darcy soon drew the attention of the room by his fine, tall person, handsome features, noble mien; and the report which was in general circulation within five minutes after his entrance, of his having ten thousand a year. The gentlemen pronounced him to be a fine figure of a man, the ladies declared he was much handsomer than Mr. Bingley, and he was looked at with great admiration for about half the evening, till his manners gave a disgust which turned the tide of his popularity; for he was discovered to be proud, to be above his company, and above being pleased; and not all his large estate in Derbyshire could then save him from having a most forbidding, disagreeable countenance, and being unworthy to be compared with his friend.

Mr. Bingley had soon made himself acquainted with all the principal people in the room; he was lively and unreserved, danced every dance, was angry that the ball closed so early, and talked of giving one himself at Netherfield. Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves. What a contrast between him and his friend! Mr. Darcy danced only once with Mrs. Hurst and once with Miss Bingley, declined being introduced to any other lady, and spent the rest of the evening in walking about the room, speaking occasionally to one of his own party. His character was decided. He was the proudest, most disagreeable man in the world, and everybody hoped that he would never come there again. Amongst the most violent against him was Mrs. Bennet, whose dislike of his general behaviour was sharpened into particular resentment by his having slighted one of her daughters.

**Assignment 9:** Answer these questions.

1. 'Mr Bingley was good looking and gentlemanlike; he had a pleasant countenance, and easy, unaffected manners.’ This is an example of a balanced sentence. What can you notice about the information before and after the semicolon?
2. ‘His sisters were fine women, with an air of decided fashion.’ What does this sentence suggest the phrase ‘fine women’ means to the people in the room?
3. What is implied by the words ‘merely looked’ in the description of Mr Hurst?
4. The first description of Darcy has two balanced halves.
   1. What are the two pieces of information about Mr Darcy, placed so evenly on either side of the second semicolon in the third sentence of this extract?
   2. What is the irony here?
5. Jane Austen says that Mr Darcy’s manners ‘turned the tide’ of his popularity. This is such a common metaphor that it is almost a cliché. Why do you think the author has used it?
6. The gentlemen describe Darcy as ‘a fine figure of a man’; the ladies regard him as ‘much handsomer than Mr Bingley’.
   1. In what way are the particular phrases used here appropriate to the speakers?
   2. Why would the two sexes express the idea in different ways?
7. A very balanced contrast is given between Bingley and Darcy in the second paragraph. How is this balance created?
8. What is achieved by the personification in, ‘Such amiable qualities must speak for themselves’?
9. ‘His character was decided.’ Comment on the impact of the brevity of this sentence.
10. Comment on the use of the superlatives ‘proudest, most disagreeable’ in the description of Darcy.
11. Note that the last sentence in the extract mentions Mrs Bennet. Comment on the inclusion of the sentence in this paragraph.
12. Although these two paragraphs are written in the third person, much of the language sounds like the conversation one might hear at a ball, and the narrator is in fact indirectly reporting the opinions of the characters at the ball.
    1. Quote at least two lines that sound like the kind of gossip one might hear in a ballroom.
    2. What effect does Jane Austen gain by reporting from this point of view?