

Longbourn Study Guide

Longbourn by Jo Baker

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Plot Summary

Longbourn, by Jo Baker, is the tale of servants of Longbourn House, the home of the Bennet family from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. Housemaid Sarah often dreams of a life outside of servitude or of some kind of interesting change until mysterious new footman James Smith arrives. After a disastrous first encounter, a romance slowly blooms between the pair as James works to protect secrets about his past. Meanwhile, their employers, the Bennet family, are overjoyed to learn that a new bachelor has moved in to a local home and the Militia has set up a camp in the nearby town. Mrs. Bennet gets the idea that she must have her girls at all of the local parties plus throw a few of her own so that the eligible and respectable men will notice her daughters. Unfortunately, this causes a problem as James' past comes to light and he is forced to become separated from Sarah just as their love is in full swing. After James' departure, Sarah goes through some changes of her own as she leaves Longbourn to become the personal maid for Elizabeth Bennet after she is married to Mr. Darcy. Over time, Sarah becomes so lonely without James that she is forced to make a decision that will hopefully bring James and Sarah back together again.

During laundry chores, young maid Sarah sees a man coming to the house and believes him to be a traveling salesman. She is mistaken however, as it is the newly hired footman James Smith. At first the pair do not get along, first because of cart accident then because of minor arguments. As time goes on, James begins to realize that he has feelings for Sarah, but she is extremely suspicious of James. When the Militia arrives in the neighboring town, James begins to worry that his hidden past will come back to haunt him. He tries everything he can do to ensure that he is not seen. For Sarah, she is initially suspicious of James and his quiet ways. When a new family moves into one of the neighboring estates, Sarah encounters a young black servant who captures her interests. After an argument with Mrs. Hill over the servant, Sarah decides that she will seek Ptolemy out again. She gets her chance when the Bennet family go to Netherfield for a party and the other servants go to bed. She sneaks over to Netherfield and unexpectedly run into Ptolemy. After discussing his dreams for a better life, they share rum and they kiss, leaving Sarah to question her independence.

The next day Ptolemy announces that Netherfield is closing and the inhabitants, including servants are going back to London. he issues an invitation to Sarah to come visit him sometime. Sarah takes this to mean that she is being invited to follow Ptolemy and once again she sneaks out when she thinks everyone is asleep. When she reaches the crossroads, she finds out that she is not alone. James has followed her and he begs her to stay at least until he is sure that Ptolemy cares enough about Sarah to come get her for himself. Overcome with emotions, Sarah kisses James instead and realizes that it was James she has been wanting the whole time. A secret love affair grows out of this and while James is hesitant about letting his guard down at first, he is happily in love with Sarah.

Since the Militia has arrived, more and more social engagements are being given or attended by Mrs. Bennet and her daughters. James tries to make himself scarce during



any of these times, but catches the attention of an officer named Mr. Wickham. Mr. Wickham is a suitor of Lydia's but Mr. Wickham has another target. He enjoys talking to Polly and giving her treats and money, but he also has ulterior motives. James catches Mr. Wickham before Mr. Wickham's true intentions can be revealed to Polly. An argument ensues, with James punching Mr. Wickham, who reveals that he knows the truth about James' past and that he is planning on ruining James' life. Before Mr. Wickham can do this, James flees the area in the middle of the night.

Broken hearted, Sarah continues to live and work at Longbourn. After Jane's engagement to Mr. Bingley, Sarah is urged by Mrs. Hill to reconsider Ptolemy's feelings for her as Mrs. Hill is no longer distrustful of him. Sarah does not want to hurt Ptolemy, but she makes it clear that she is no longer in love with him. Sarah continues on at Longbourn until Elizabeth marries Mr. Darcy and the pair bring Sarah to their home. Sarah has an easy life there, but she is still unhappy about missing James. As an unexpected twist, she meets with Ptolemy again but she declines his romantic feelings. Since Ptolemy knows that Sarah will never love him as she loves James, Ptolemy decides to tell her that he has recently seen James alive and well working with a road repair crew. Inspired by this information, she leaves Pemberly to somehow catch up with James. After a great deal of time searching different villages for him, she is finally reunited with him.

The pair adopt a nomadic lifestyle and are constantly moving from place to place. They are happy with this, but they also know they cannot stay in one place as James is still a wanted man. After many years of traveling on the roads, Sarah and James, along with their newborn son, make their way back towards Longbourn. An adult Polly is out hanging the laundry by herself as she looks up to find the couple finally coming home.



Volume 1 Chapters 1 - 5

Summary

It is laundry time for the servants of Longbourn House in Chapter 1. House maid Sarah goes outside before dawn to draw water from a well to be heated up but she falls as she is walking back to the house. After fetching more water she comes in to work on the clothes and linens of the Bennet family. The other maid, Polly, helps Sarah as the laundry is hung out to dry on the laundry line. As they are working, Sarah becomes convinced that she sees a travelling salesman coming up the road. When the girls come in from their work to sit down to dinner; Sarah asks the housekeeper, Mrs. Hill, about the salesman, but she is informed that no such person has come to the house that day. As the servants sit in the kitchen, Sarah believes she hears a noise coming from the stables. Both Mr. and Mrs. Hill assure Sarah that there is nothing wrong as they head towards bed with the long day behind them and another one on the way.

In Chapter 2, Mr. Bennet sits at the breakfast table and informs the servants and the family that they have hired a man named James Smith. Both Mrs. Hill and Sarah are astonished that such a hasty decision has been made, but Mr. Bennet apologizes for not including Mrs. Hill in his decision. Lydia accidentally insults Mr. Hill in front of Mrs. Hill and Mrs. Bennet is excited to have a new manservant because she thinks it will elevate the family's social status.

It is a rainy day in Chapter 3 and Sarah is working on her chores. As she passes by the study, she overhears a very heated argument between Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet. She sneaks away before she is caught and vows never to eavesdrop on anyone again. She feels that since Mrs. Hill has been like a mother to her, no one should ever talk to her in a mean or degrading way.

Sarah contemplates the relationships between men and women in Chapter 4, as she wants to impress James when she meets him. She tries to find all sorts of reasons to go outside, hoping to run into him, but no opportunity presents itself until Mrs. Hill realizes that she needs someone to pick apples for the evening's dessert. Sarah happily volunteers, but on the way back, she and James collide into each other, both in a hurry to get their chores done. An argument ensues and Sarah is left feeling unimpressed by James' lack of concern or manners.

Chapter 5 showcases the meeting between Mrs. Hill and James a few hours before he met Sarah. Mrs. Hill takes pity on his ragged appearance and the feeling that he has not ate in quite some time. She has him wash up while she fixes him platefuls of food. James is grateful for this and the pair have a polite conversation about his duties and Mrs. Hill promises that she will find some suitable clothes for him. Later in the evening, James experiences his first time of serving the Bennet family at dinner and everyone, especially Mrs. Bennet, is very impressed.



The next morning, Sarah and Polly wake up at their usual times to start their long day of work. They find that most of the preparations for the day have already been completed by James. Sarah decides to take this free time for a sunrise walk, where she encounters James again. She thanks him for his kindness in doing their work, but James does not have any desire to talk to her. This causes her to believe that something is not quite right with him.

Analysis

Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the main character and a few of the supporting characters in the novel. The reader may find that the Longbourn House and the Bennet family are familiar, as they come from Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. The reader will learn that this entire novel is derived from Austen's masterpiece, except that this story is told from the servant's, mainly Sarah's, point of view. Sarah is a young house maid, although her exact age is not given. She has been in service to this house since becoming an orphan at the age of 6. In this first chapter, Sarah is awake and outside at 4 a.m. as it is laundry day. She is the only one awake at this time and it is her duty to retrieve large pails of water from the well. As Sarah shivers in the cold, she contemplates the fact that ladies of higher social standings would abuse their clothes less if they had to do their own washing. As Sarah mentally goes over these things, the reader learns that outward appearances are a great deal different than what really goes on, which is a cause of embarrassment to the Bennet girls.

The reader should note that these pails of water are extremely heavy and difficult to manage, especially when not concentrating on the task at hand. Sarah gets so lost in her thoughts about wanting to be anywhere warm and with less laundry as she is hauling the water that she slips and falls, causing her buckets to spill. She realizes that she has fallen in pig manure as no one was around the previous day to clean up after their pig who was accidentally freed from its stall. Sarah is uninjured but she knows that her long day has been made even longer and more complicated by the fact that she has to fetch more water and to get herself cleaned up. This event could be seen as an example of how one small inconvenience could ruin the entire day for a servant.

The chapter shifts to later in the morning after the Bennet family is awake and Sarah is back in the house scrubbing along with the other housemaid, Polly. Sarah is frustrated over how dirty the Bennet girls get their petticoats and comes to the decision that the girls would be more careful if they knew how difficult it is to ensure that each petticoat is white no matter how dirty it was. Polly questions Sarah on how much more laundry there is to be done. The reader learns that on top of petticoats, there is also the regular laundry, kitchen linens, equaling about 5 more loads of hand scrubbing. The author illustrates that since there is such an immense amount of laundry in this sort of household, help is usually brought in on laundry day, but the Bennets do not do this. By this time, Sarah has grown even more agitated as the dress she has had to change into since the morning's incident gives her no ability to move. She does not like this dress because of the stiffness but also because of the color, a drab sort of yellow. It is a hand



down that was made for Mary Bennet, which is how Sarah probably gets most of her clothes.

Sarah feels sympathetic for Polly who has been hand scrubbing collars for Mr. Bennet, which as dirty as they are require a lot of strength and patience. Sarah offers to do it for Polly in exchange for Polly stirring the tub of petticoats, saving her fingers from becoming more chapped from the harsh soap and water. Polly is considerably younger than Sarah, but her age is also not given. Polly is a talkative girl and she rattles on about how Mrs. Hill yelled at her a few minutes earlier. It is revealed that it was actually Polly's job to clean the walkway after the pig escaped from its pen earlier and defecated on the walkway. Although she is so young, Polly has a great amount of work to do within the household, to the point where she has the same amount of work as the adults. She is resentful that Mrs. Hill has yelled at her, she feels that it was Mr. Hill's job to clean the walkway since he is the groundskeeper. As Polly continues complaining, Sarah does not pay attention to her but acts like she does as continues the job at hand.

In the late afternoon, Polly and Sarah are hanging out the wet laundry to dry. It is exceptionally cold outside as they hang the washing, making the task even more difficult. Being out in the cold and handling warm wet clothes is miserable work as constant moisture and cold causes the girls' hands to stiffen and the skin to crack open. Sarah is looking out at the road as she hangs some clothing but she becomes excited when she thinks she sees someone coming up one of the old roads. She tries to convince Polly that there is someone else there, but Polly does not believe any of it. Deflated, Sarah goes back to her work, but she sees movement on the road again. This time Sarah is positive that there was a man walking on the road and that it must be a traveling salesman. Sarah calls out to Polly, using the shortened name "Pol", but Polly is offended by that. The reader is informed that Polly's first name is actually not Polly, but Mary. Polly had to have her name changed because it is unacceptable for a servant to have the same name as a member of the actual house. This concept irritates Polly, but she knows she is helpless to change it. Polly disregards Sarah's information and heads off into the fields without finishing helping Sarah work. The reader can see that the two girls have a sister-like relationship as Sarah lets Polly play and enjoy herself while Sarah finishes the laundry and cleans off the walkway quietly.

By the time dinner is ready for the servants, Mrs. Hill is in a terrible mood. The only servants in the Bennet home are Sarah, Polly, Mrs. Hill the housekeeper/cook and Mr. Hill, her husband who serves as groundskeeper and butler. The Bennet family do not believe in hiring any sort of outside assistance to help the housemaids on laundry day and the reader will see that laundry day is perhaps the most tedious day of the week. The house maids are unable to help Mrs. Hill with the other chores and caring for the family, leaving her to manage the entire household herself. This shows that Mrs. Hill is a formidable woman who is capable of handling most of the house duties by herself, but she is also frustrated by this as she has very little help. The group sits down to eat where Sarah asks about a traveling salesman that she thinks has arrived. She is hopeful to have a slight diversion from the rough day she has had and to buy something nice for herself. It may be guessed that servants have very little in the way of extra amusements, unlike their employers. She is assured that no one has come to call,



especially not a salesman. Sarah gives up, although she still believes there was someone on the road, she knows that it would not be best to argue at this point.

The evening passes quietly for the small group, but not without a forewarning sign. Sarah believes that she hears someone in the stables disturbing the horses although no one else can hear it. This is the second time that Sarah has not been believed about something happening. Along with the belief that she saw a salesman come to the house, this can be thought of as Sarah's desire to have something out of the ordinary happening, as her life can be considered dull and repetitious. The other servants hear and see nothing, which agitates Sarah but everyone is too tired from the long day to argue the point even further. As Sarah prepares for bed, she thinks about the salesman's free lifestyle and the possibilities that could be had. She wonders what it would be like to travel without being held accountable to someone and to have a sense of freedom. This is a luxury that Sarah does not have, but this gives the reader an intimate view of Sarah's thoughts and the theme of freedom begins here as she falls asleep.

New developments arise and new characters are introduced in Chapter 2. Mr. Bennet has taken the liberty of hiring a new man to work in the house. Mrs. Hill is surprised and is clearly upset that Mr. Bennet has done so without consulting her first as is the custom. Mr. Bennet is quick as he explains that the family is lucky to have a new person as men are scarce at this time. It is unknown at this point why lower class men are not available, but it is evident that upper class men are still in abundance when Mary suggests that her sister Lydia's boyfriends are still in constant supply. Mr. Bennet takes this moment to ensure that Mrs. Hill does not object to this hasty hire, but Mrs. Hill seems to not have any objections. Mrs. Hill at this point adheres to the strict protocols of not objecting to anything that is said and to agree with any choice her employers make. This is hard for her during this scene as in Lydia unexpectedly and accidentally insults Mrs. Hill's husband as Lydia declares why she is happy to have a new man working around the house. Lydia's sisters are immediately alarmed at Lydia's carelessness, but nothing more is said in Mr. Hill's defense.

The rest of the breakfast goes on smoothly for the Bennet family but is handled with mixed emotions by Sarah and Mrs. Hill. They are curious about this new servant, but apprehensive about adding a newcomer to their ranks. The author uses this chance to give the reader an example of the mental workings of Mrs. Bennet. She has good intentions, but she has no clue about things that do not directly affect her, her daughters, or how to make the family look grander than what it really is. In some ways, this can be seen as selfish, but Mrs. Hill is not mean spirited. She is excited for a new male servant so that she can show off to her neighbors that she is keeping up with the trends and she thinks that the servants should be overjoyed that now their workloads will be lighter. The way she sees it, the current servants should be thankful that Mr. Bennet has been so generous in getting them some help. As she asks for the new employee's name, Mr. Bennet is dismissive when he mentions the last name Smith. It is the only name he gives out, but surprisingly Mrs. Hill says his first name, James. This is a curious piece of information, as Mrs. Hill was not consulted beforehand, but she



knows who the young man is. Nothing more is revealed about this mysterious individual, but it is clear that Mrs. Hill knows more than is stated in this chapter.

The Bennet family and the servants are confined to the house as rain pours in Chapter 3. The family is shown in different levels of activity as Sarah completes her daily tasks. Each of the girls are engaging in their own activities, not caring about the servants cleaning and working around them. While Sarah is carrying a chamber pot down the hall, she passes by Mr. Bennet's study. Although Sarah cannot directly make out what is going on, she knows that an argument is occurring as she can hear Mrs. Hill. Sarah knows that eavesdropping is strictly forbidden, but she has never before heard Mrs. Hill talk for so long to Mr. Bennet. This gives the impression that Mr. Bennet is rather aloof with the servants, never speaking to them more than just giving an order or asking a question or two. Sarah is very curious at this point as she notes that something in the conversation has changed. There is an ominous tone here as Sarah hears Mr. Bennet dismiss Mrs. Hill followed by the shock of Mrs. Hill yelling at Mr. Bennet. This terrifies Sarah as she has never heard Mrs. Hill raise her voice to their employer before and she wonders what could have made Mrs. Hill so angry now. The argument grows louder and more tense, causing Sarah to sneak away. She does not want to be caught in case someone rushes out of the study. To be caught would cause a great deal of trouble and perhaps even dismissal. Sarah feels ashamed that she listened into such a quarrel although she still never made out what exactly was said. She slips out a side door before being noticed shortly before Mrs. Hill exits the study. Mrs. Hill is quite shaken up when she leaves the study a moment later, and the cause of the argument is still unknown.

Sarah's origins are introduced in the last bit of this chapter, which shows how Sarah first got to know Mrs. Hill. She has only vague memories of arriving at the Bennet house at 6 years old from a local orphanage. Mrs. Hill is the first person in a long time to show any sort of kindness to her and the two have bonded like a real family ever since. It is unknown how Sarah became an orphan in the first place, but it is clear that from the minute she arrived, Mrs. Hill has always cared for her as one of her own children. It is also made evident here that Polly is also an orphan and arrived at the house in the same manner in which Sarah did. Because Sarah cares so much for Mrs. Hill, she feels bad that she had to hear Mrs. Hill in such a terrible moment. Sarah is embarrassed that she witnessed Mrs. Hill being verbally abused and feels that Mrs. Hill should never have been disrespected in that manner. Mrs. Hill has done too much for her and for Polly by taking them in and raising them that she is looked upon by the girls with a great deal of love and respect. As she thinks of these things, Sarah comes to the decision that she will never eavesdrop again, as she figures that only negative things can be heard.

Chapter 4 introduces the new servant James Smith as he settles into a room above the stables. It can be guessed that in Chapter 1, James is the person that Sarah saw on the road as well as the person who was in the stable later that evening. Sarah is thinking about James and how to approach him as she cleans the breakfast dishes. It is obvious that Sarah is unsure of how to socialize with a man, presumably since she has only chatted with Mr. Hill about small topics. She has no desire to talk to servant boys from other houses, as she considered them immature. Instead, she draws on what the



Bennet girls would do and this gives the reader a further glance at the attitudes of the sisters. Sarah begins by comparing herself to Jane, who is considered to be physically beautiful and very charming. Sarah figures that she cannot be like Jane because Sarah is too ordinary. This lack of self confidence makes Sarah believe that she is not really worthy of anyone's attention. Sarah moves on to contemplate how Elizabeth handles men. Elizabeth is also attractive, but her sharp wits sets her above her other sisters. It is to be perceived that Sarah would like to be more like Elizabeth out of all of the Bennet girls. As for Kitty and Lydia, Sarah finds that the only things they have going for them are outrageously flirty nature. Sarah sees this as a bit of a negative and decides that she would not like to copy their style. Sarah does not bother to think about Mary as she is so young, she has no experience in courting anyone, so there is nothing that Sarah can draw upon from her.

Instead, Sarah ponders the relationships between the two married couples in the house as the theme of love is explored. She dismisses the relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet very quickly. This is a ploy by the author to show that Mrs. Bennet is oftentimes considered as having an overbearing personality compared to Mr. Bennet's calm one. The couple does love each other, but for Sarah, this is not a good example of what communication between a man and a woman is like. Instead, she prefers to emulate the style of Mrs. and Mrs. Hill. The couple is seen to be respectful of each other and their relationship is calm. Mr. Hill is very devoted to his wife and he demands that everyone gives his wife the utmost respect. Although this is a better model of married life, Sarah perceives this to be a bit dull and decides that the best thing she can do in terms of trying to get acquainted with James is to just say hello and be herself. James is outside sweeping the walkway, and is unaware that Sarah and Polly are watching him. It is clear that the girls are admiring James' decent looks, but they are also glad that they are no longer responsible for sweeping outside.

The day wears on and Sarah becomes more excited about trying to meet James. She is desperate to make a good impression on James, and it is clearly noted that she pinches her cheeks and cleans off her teeth in her efforts to make herself look a bit better. Sarah goes outside, under the guise that she is going to feed the chickens. Mrs. Hill is clever and aware of Sarah's intentions and quickly orders her to get on with her work. Since the first attempt has been foiled, Sarah continues throughout the day to find reasons to go outside. She is disappointed as each time she goes out, he is nowhere to be found. Having been continuously thwarted, Sarah goes on to help with the dinner preparations. In an effort by the author to supply the means for Sarah to encounter James, an incident with Mrs. Hill forgetting to bake an apple pie occurs. Normally, Mrs. Hill is a very resourceful and well put together person, and this case of forgetfulness is quite unusual. Sarah sees this as her prime opportunity but much to her dismay, it is ruined. Her fantasy introduction is instead an argument between the pair after he runs into her leg with his cart. This dialogue sets up the beginning phase of the relationship between James and Sarah as a difficult one. Sarah goes back to the house to pout about this exchange as she tries to garner sympathy from Mrs. Hill and it is shown that while she has a slightly scraped leg, her ego has suffered the most.



Chapter 5 is a flashback to a few hours previous when James first introduces himself to Mrs. Hill. A full description of James shows that he has been homeless for quite some time since he is very ragged and unshaven. Mrs. Hill instantly pities him and there is a hint of foreshadowing in the way she acts towards him. She is very careful with him and is gentle in a mother like way as she sets out items for him to wash with and then some food. James has been very quiet as he is astonished that Mrs. Hill wants him to eat before he works. Clearly he is used to only being fed after a great deal of work, if he has even been fed at all. As Mrs. Hill asks about his past, James is quiet and noncommittal, triggering another notion that James has had some sort of rough past that may be divulged at some later point. As the meal finishes, Mrs. Hill informs James of his duties of working outside as well as helping serve the Bennet family at mealtimes. James' mood slightly improves when Mrs. Hill sends him on his way, with the promise of more suitable clothes in the afternoon.

Although James was dressed in a very simple and old fashioned outfit, he manages to impress the Bennet family, particularly Mrs. Bennet. It is clear here that she is impressed because she now has someone who seems to be more competent than other local males who have been hired on special occasions. She delights in the fact that hopefully word will get around that now they have someone who is visually more sophisticated and that other families will be impressed as well. This continues to go back to the theme of social status and how Mrs. Bennet wants to fit in with everyone else. The only person in the whole house that is unimpressed by James is Sarah, who is still angry about her earlier encounter with him. She does not understand why he is well received by everyone and it is here that Sarah begins to view James with suspicion. His answers are a little too vague for her liking, especially about where he has been before, adding to the idea that more will be revealed about James at a later point.

The next morning, Sarah is astonished to learn that most of her heavier work has already been completed by James. As a rare treat, both Polly and Sarah now have a bit of free time on their hands, but given that they have plenty more work to do, there is not much. As Sarah ventures out for a walk to enjoy the sunrise, she realizes that it was James instead of the salesman that she had seen previously. She fantasizes about where James could have come from, and her thoughts about travelling to other places makes a subtle hint here. When she returns to the house, Sarah casually thanks James for his help but she is still suspicious of him. As she tries to get answers from him on where he has traveled, James brushes her off brusquely, causing her to once again be angry with him. At this point, Sarah feels that James is definitely hiding something and that unfortunately she is the only one who can see it.

Discussion Question 1

Who does Sarah think is coming down the lane as she is doing the laundry? Why is it so important to her? Who is it really?



Discussion Question 2

Why is it so important for the Bennets to hire James? How do the other servants react?

Discussion Question 3

What is Sarah's first impression of James? How is Mrs. Hill's first impression of him?

Vocabulary

scullery, dregs, ambled, contrariness, supple, beaux, emollient, torrent, scant, deference, jaunty, elude, emphatically, shunted, decrepitude, mastication, incivility



Volume 1 Chapters 6 - 11

Summary

Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Hill have a conversation in Chapter 6. Mrs. Bennet wants Mrs. Hill to tell Mr. Bennet that she and the girls need new clothes and other items for all of the social events that she has planned out in her mind. Mrs. Hill denies that she can have any influence over Mr. Hill, but Mrs. Bennet is convinced that if she is the only one who can get things from Mr. Bennet. Mrs. Bennet informs Mrs. Hill that the need for all of these things is that an eligible bachelor has recently moved into the neighborhood and that she has plans on introducing the girls to him. In the meantime, Sarah has been sent to the Bingley house to invite Mr. Bingley to dinner at Longbourn, only to find out that he is in London. Later, Sarah once again becomes angered by James as they argue over the kinds of books they both read.

Sarah helps prepare the Bennet girls for a night out in Chapter 7. She assists Elizabeth in putting on her dress and for her reward she is given one of Elizabeth's old dresses. When she returns to the kitchen James is there but says nothing short of a quick question, they ignore each other. Sarah goes to sit with Polly in their hidden resting spot where Sarah asks if Polly ever dreamed of being anywhere else but Longbourn. Polly does not like the question, which gets Sarah to thinking about Polly's past as well as her own.

James takes the Bennet ladies to their party for the evening in Chapter 8. He decides to stay by himself with the horses as he waits out in the cold. He gives a brief thought to the other servants at Longbourn, but his mind rests for a minute on Sarah. A fight breaks out interrupting his thoughts. Once home, he notices that Sarah has waited up for the ladies and he admires her for it. As she falls asleep, James is wide awake thinking of Sarah again. Mrs. Hill is also awake, thinking of someone who is far away.

A group of army men come to town in Chapter 9 as James and the Bennet ladies return to Longbourn after a day of shopping. Sarah and Mrs. Hill notice that a change has come over James but Mrs. Bennet carries on about the entertaining that she would like to invite the men to. Sarah continues to be suspicious of James especially since his change in attitude has occurred within the space of an afternoon. Determined to find out the truth about James, she sneaks into his room during the evening when he is away. She fantasizes that she will find something that will incriminate James in some criminal activity and that he will be put out of the house. All she finds are a bunch of sea shells, so she puts everything back in its place and she leaves James' room.

Later, as Sarah is working out in the yard, she helps the black man from Netherfield, as his boots are stuck in mud. They strike up a conversation as they walk back to the house with the invitation for Jane to dine at Netherfield. Mrs. Hill shows her disapproval about having a black man in the house, but Sarah does not care, she thinks he is very



nice. As Sarah stands at the door, James comes to stand beside her silently for a while before commenting about the upcoming rain.

In Chapter 10, the same servant from Netherfield arrives again to inform the Bennets that Jane has caught a cold and will be staying with the Bingleys. As he chats with Sarah, she finds out that he is from London and he describes some of his favorite places to her. Mrs. Hill sees this and becomes determined to not let them get to know each other any better. Elizabeth Bennet goes over to Netherfield to take care of Jane and decides to stay with her. When the servant returns again, this time to gather a few things for Jane and Elizabeth, Mrs. Hill hurriedly gathers clothes while Mrs. Bennet takes this as an opportunity to have the girls dress in prettier things hoping that Mr. Bingley will take notice of them.

The next day, Mrs. Hill plots to keep Sarah out of the house in case the Netherfield servant comes back. She sends Sarah to Meryton for sugar and the servant comes back to find Sarah already gone. While in Meryton, Sarah walks by the Militia's barracks where she witnesses one of the soldiers being flogged. Because she is so shocked, she rests at the grocer's for a while before walking home. James has become visibly worried about her and looks for her on the road. Before she can see him, he hides in a bush then silently follows her home. Once she is home, she is immediately sent to bed as Sarah herself has caught a cold.

Sarah remains in bed for a large part of Chapter 11. She is able to get back to some of her duties on the following Sunday, which is the same day that Jane and Elizabeth return from Netherfield. The same servant that has been coming back and forth to Longbourn is there again and he finally tells her his name.

Analysis

The beginning of Chapter 6 showcases the petulant desires of Mrs. Bennet as she pleads with Mrs. Hill to assist her in obtaining new clothes for herself and the Bennet girls. The author uses this conversation as a way to highlight the fact that Mrs. Bennet is focused on the themes of social class and appearances, although the entire scene engages the reader in a display of employer relations. Mrs. Bennet is seen here as nonchalant about Mrs. Hill's duties, hindering her from getting back to the kitchen to continue working on her duties. Mrs. Hill is very patient as she assists Mrs. Bennet but she is secretly wishing that she could leave Mrs. Bennet's dressing room. Mrs. Bennet's absent minded attitude, especially about the untidiness of the room bothers Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Hill is further agitated when Mrs. Bennet blithely gives Mrs. Hill one of her dresses to keep, claiming that it is old and unwearable although there is nothing visually wrong with it. For Mrs. Hill, this is not a gift, it is merely a handout that would take too much effort to mend until it was suitable for a hard day's work. This shows that Mrs. Bennet is totally unaware of how the servants get along with the clothing that they have and the unsuitability of having fine silk gowns.



Mrs. Bennet truly believes that only Mrs. Hill can speak to Mr. Bennet as she is one of the few people he respects. She pouts and is seen as very childish as she begs Mrs. Hill to persuade Mr. Bennet to buy her and her daughters all new clothes. At this point, Mrs. Bennet makes the comment that Mrs. Hill is lucky to not have any children. It is not intended to be malicious, but it is a peculiar statement as it could be seen as a forewarning statement regarding Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Bennet then carelessly goes on with the list of all the social events that she feels make these new clothes necessary. At this point, Mrs. Bennet goes on to lament about how Mr. Bennet does not pay attention to her needs and always puts his attentions into matters that she feels he considers more important than her. This shows that she is a bit jealous of anything that would take any kind of attention away from her needs. It is seen here that Mrs. Hill pities Mrs. Bennet as the underlying cause for the carelessness and the focus on social status comes from the fact that she never had any male children and that she will never be able to have children again. Mrs. Bennet then makes another comment about Mrs. Hill not understanding the cares of motherhood as the true reason for the new clothes is revealed. The neighboring house has been rented to an eligible bachelor who is considered well off and now Mrs. Bennet has herself set on marrying one of her daughters to him. This again plays into the notion of how appearances are important especially in regards to social status as she hopes to impress the new neighbor. When Mrs. Bennet has finished explaining these things, Mrs. Hill reluctantly agrees to help her, but by this time her very little time to accomplish all of her other duties.

The focus of the chapter then shifts to Sarah, and there is a brief flashback to the first time she visited Netherfield House, the home of the new bachelor Mr. Bingley. This flashback is meant to show that when Sarah was younger, she was a very timid girl who immediately was terrified of the elderly owner and of the dilapidated house at that time. Now, she has more confidence and the house has been completely repaired and repainted. She is carrying an invitation for Mr. Bingley to dine with the Bennets later in the evening. The key thing about this invitation is that Mrs. Bennet is trying to subtly show the family off to Mr. Bingley without making her true intentions too obvious. As she steps inside the house, she sees a remarkable difference between this house and Longbourn. One of the key differences is in the staff. There are a considerable number of servants, in particular a black man who speaks directly to Sarah. This is the first time that she has ever met a black man, all of her knowledge of them beforehand was a pictures of slaves, so this experience leaves her shocked that a black man can speak eloquently and does not look like the picture. The man seems very interested in Sarah and kind which is to be seen as the beginning moments of developments later in the novel.

Sarah returns with the message that Mr. Bingley is in London at the moment, causing much frustration for Mrs. Hill as she had already started preparations for the evening meal. The servants of Longbourn discuss the Bingleys and how they have earned their money in the African sugar trade. Polly seems to be the most interested in this and James obliges her by telling her a bit about it. She is in awe of the fact that slavery exists and it is regarded as she has never heard of such a concept. Sarah is frustrated by James' talk of these things and is in disbelief that James seems so knowledgeable. A slight argument ensues between them again, which everyone has noticed. It changes



the demeanor of the quiet conversation to a point where everyone is uncomfortable. Sarah then quickly changes the subject, perhaps to save herself from her feelings getting hurt by James' callous remarks.

Sarah's personal stylist duties are on display in Chapter 7 as the Bennet girls prepare for an evening out. For Sarah, this is just another tedious chore, but it is different as she has to actually interact with the girls. Elizabeth is grateful for Sarah's help but she also wonders about the kinds of social activities Sarah participates in. To question the social engagements of a servant is seen here as a rather insulting for Sarah. Elizabeth should know by now that there are not many social occasions for lower class people, especially the kinds that people in the Bennets' station and above are used to. Sarah knows that because of her station in life, she will never have those kinds of opportunities, so for her there is nothing really to talk about. She nonchalantly states that she goes to some of the village dances, but it is clear that she does not want to further discuss this. Sarah finds these dances boring although this excites the Bennet girls. They decide that Sarah must have something new to wear and begin pulling out their own dresses. It seems that Mrs. Hill's discussion with Mr. Bennet has paid off as the girls have new clothes and are wanting to discard some of their older clothes. It is seen that all of these dresses are in excellent shape and are not very old, so it can be seen as confusing why the girls are so quick to want to rid themselves of these dresses. It is perhaps because they truly do appreciate Sarah's efforts and the fact that they know she does not have much in the way of stylish clothing. Sarah is truly grateful as she picks out a dress that she herself made but has always admired. As she puts away her "new" dress after the girls leave, Sarah has the first thoughts that she is beautiful as well.

When she comes back downstairs, James is in the kitchen warming himself by the fire. The reader should take note that up till now, he has been referred to as James, but now he is called Mr. Smith. This could be because of his duties as an official footman in the house. It could also be because of the stiff and formal attitude with Sarah and James now handle each other. There is little conversation between them as Sarah goes directly to the hiding place she shares with Polly. There is a brief hint of Sarah's desires to be free and on her own as she asks Polly if she would ever like to be somewhere else. As Polly has only ever known a servant's life, she is slightly offended by the question. Her response makes Sarah remember both of their pasts and how they are similar yet different at the same time. Polly has been an orphan since shortly after she was born. She knows of no other people caring for her or any kind of independent life. Sarah, on the other hand, remembers that she once had a family. This is one of the few times that this family is mentioned. Sarah is happy as she remembers her parents and her brother, but it also gives her the idea that if she had a life outside of Longbourn before then she should be able to have one again. This last segment of the chapter gives the intimate notion that Sarah's mental focus may be changing from a life of servitude towards something else in the future.

James drives the Bennet ladies out to a social event for the first time in Chapter 8. He is clearly nervous about doing a good job for the family, but soon the tension eases. Once again, the ladies are impressed with how he is handling things. They feel that he is definitely a better driver than Mr. Hill was and they are very thankful to have him. This



denotes that James is settling into his duties very well in the house. As he drives, he is reminiscent of his home, although no details of any part of his past have been given so far. He also thinks of Sarah for a moment and considers her beautiful. This is the beginning of a shift in feelings for James, although in the past his thoughts have not been clearly communicated, just his aloof nature towards her. Now it is clear that although he finds her beautiful, he knows that if he is to get attached to her then he will lose focus on his job. He also worries that if he were to lose focus, then he might disappoint Mr. Bennet and he really wants to earn the trust that Mr. Bennet has placed in him. James delivers the ladies safely to their party but tries to avoid the other coach drivers. There is no exact reason given for this action, but James feels more comfortable being around the horses than the men getting drunk around a fire. As he stays near the horse, his thoughts drift towards the other servants of the house. He feels that he is settling in with them and he can plainly see that they are becoming attached to him as well. The only person he cannot figure out is Sarah as his mind drifts back to her. This clearly shows that there may be romantic feelings for her starting to develop although all of their conversations have been less than positive.

As James drives the ladies home at the end of the evening, he realizes that he has began to relax in his position. There is a certain point in the narration that claims he has had to be more alert in the past, giving the hint that something more dangerous has happened to him before he came to Longbourn. James is happy that he feels so at ease for probably the first time in his life. When he pulls up to the house, he notices that Sarah has waited up for the Bennets to help them in the house. James is very impressed by Sarah's staying up so late and he catches himself once again staring at her beauty. Sarah on the other hand, has stayed up late to give the rest of the servants a break for the evening so they can rest, plus she wants to read a book that she borrowed from Elizabeth. another motive for her staying up is that she wants to make sure that James actually is back because she still thinks that there is something very shady about him. As she goes to bed, she questions herself on why she is so intent on James' whereabouts, but she has no answer for herself.

A shift in James' demeanor is apparent in Chapter 9. He has just returned from taking Mrs. Bennet shopping in Meryton where the Militia has set up camp. It is clear that something has changed about him, he looks more worn out and more cautious than usual. This is only seen by Sarah and Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Hill is worried that the young man is being overworked, with a list of duties that would normally require a few men, but Sarah thinks that something dark is on his mind. Oblivious to anything else, Mrs. Bennet is intent on making sure the officers will be well entertained by her family, once again with the unwritten notions of furthering the Bennets' social status in mind. As Sarah puts away packages, she contemplates what could have possibly happened in the town that would cause such a drastic change in James. As Sarah recounts Mrs. Bennet's babbling about entertaining Militia officers, Sarah comes to the startling conclusion that James must be hiding from them because he is a criminal.

Sarah gets the opportunity to investigate James' background one night as James takes the Bennets out to a dinner party. Mr. Bennet is less than thrilled with having to be social, showing that he and his wife are very different in this aspect. He also does not



like the fact that the servants will have free time while the family is away, either he is jealous of the fact that they do not have to be bound up in social graces or he prefers that the servants stay constantly busy. Mrs. Hill does not see this as leisurely time as she goes to do things that she normally does not have time for. Sarah, on the other hand, thinks this is the perfect time to sneak into James' room above the stable and snoop into his life. She finds different books, some of which she has read herself, and an old bag. She is excited because she thinks whatever James is hiding is in the bag. She is convinced that whatever is in there is enough to finally expose his secrets to the rest of the house in hopes of getting him fired. At first, she thinks it is stolen money, but unfortunately for her, it is a bag full of seashells. At this point it is unknown how James got the shells or why he has them in the first place. Sarah is amazed by this find but she is also ashamed that she has invaded on his private life. After Sarah puts away the bag and hastily leaves the room, she wonders to herself why she is so preoccupied with thinking about James. She has no clue why she has taken to thinking about him so much, but it is clear that she is very drawn to him. Although the reader knows this, Sarah is completely unaware that James thinks of her as well but all Sarah sees is James' indifference and silence.

Some time later, Sarah is doing chores outside in the rain when she notices a man walking along in the mud and getting his boots stuck in the mud. She recognizes him as the black man from the neighboring house, Netherfield. He is grateful for helping him get unstuck and informs Sarah that the other servants have played a nasty joke on him by telling him that walking through the fields would be the quickest way to get to Longbourn. He is astonished by the sight of cows, and this suggests that before he came to work at Netherfield he has always lived in the city and has never been exposed to much of country life. The man is carrying an invitation for Jane to dine later in the evening with the Bingley sisters. Mrs. Bennet is ecstatic over the invitation. She feels that by dining with the Bingley ladies, Jane is gaining the advantage of getting closer to that family. The Netherfield servant waits for the reply note in the kitchen. He takes note of the vast differences between Netherfield and Longbourn's kitchen. It is to be noted that as the servant is commenting on the small and cozy kitchen, Sarah is ashamed. She feels like everything in the kitchen is very poor looking and that the attitudes of her fellow servants are very ill mannered. Mrs. Hill is seen here as particularly rude to the man, and it can be suggested that she is prejudiced. She pities the Netherfield housekeeper as she feels that having someone like that around the house could be unsafe, but Sarah makes it very clear that she happens to find the man fascinating.

The rain continues to pour down in Chapter 10. The servants sit in the kitchen worrying that Jane will be wet when she arrives for dinner at Netherfield, but secretly Sarah is wondering about the servant and how he was able to get back to the house. Meanwhile, James is feeling the first bits of jealousy as he remembers seeing how Sarah and the Netherfield servant looked at each other. He disregards this feeling as just the need to be protective of the house, but it is seen as something totally different.

When the Netherfield servant returns with another note, this time for Elizabeth, James tries to distract Sarah by having her deliver the note but this fails giving Sarah and the servant a chance to talk. It is discovered that he is formerly from London. This is an



exciting bit of information for Sarah as her longing for other places is starting to become more apparent. She is enthralled to hear the servant talk of various places in London, but the conversation is shortened abruptly by James' return. The author writes James as having a conflicted character here. On the inside, he is now becoming tormented by feelings that can be seen as love, but on the outside he is still cold and calculated toward Sarah. Sarah does not see any of James' true feelings but it can be guessed that she is starting to feel something other than suspicion as well since she longs to learn more about him and wishes that he would just talk to her.

The note from Netherfield indicates that Jane has caught a cold, so Elizabeth goes to be with her. Later in the evening, another note arrives stating that Elizabeth and Jane will both be staying at Netherfield until Jane feels well enough to come home. Mr. Bennet is unhappy with this as he blames Mrs. Bennet for allowing Jane to go out into the cold just for the sake of social status. Mrs. Hill begins packing warm and modest things, but this is all undone by Mrs. Bennet. It is to be wondered if Mrs. Bennet is secretly reveling in the fact that the girls will be spending so much time with the Bingleys as she packs ornate dresses and other frivolous items. Once Mrs. Hill is finished, she unceremoniously gives the bag to the Netherfield servant, again blatantly showing her prejudices against the man. After he leaves, Mrs. Hill contemplates that Sarah is becoming far too fond of him.

The next day, in an effort to keep Sarah out of the house in case the Netherfield servant comes back, Mrs. Hill sends Sarah to Meryton for sugar. This is the first time that the village of Meryton is written in more description. The main part that Sarah walks through is the back streets and the lower class areas. In a bit of extra information about Sarah, it is revealed that she is quite familiar with the area as her parents were popular there. This leaves more questions about Sarah's past and how she came to be at Longbourn many years ago. Sarah passes by the village square, which has been turned into a barracks area for the Militia. Curiosity gets the better of Sarah as she looks around the area since she has never seen anything like it before. To her horror, a man is chained to a hitching post, but his crime is not known. It is to be noted here that the most of the "men" throughout this area are no more than teenage boys. As if frozen, Sarah cannot take her eyes off this scene as another young man with a whip comes forward. The commanding officer and another officer comment on the necessities of discipline within this group and they question whether the man holding the whip can handle the duty at hand. It is clear to see that none of the young men in the yard want this punishment to happen but they are powerless to stop it. Horrified, Sarah witnesses the chained man getting flogged, which causes her to be extremely shocked as she stumbles away.

As a quick deviation from the scene in Meryton, the author goes back to a small event that has unfolded at Longbourn. The Netherfield servant has indeed returned like Mrs. Hill thought he would. He inquires about Sarah, calling her pretty. It is plain to see that the servant is trying his best to get along well with the servants of Longbourn, but due to the fact that he is of African descent, these attempts are turned away with contempt. Mrs. Hill is convinced if she can keep diverting Sarah away from this man long enough, hopefully she can stop the both of them from getting more interested in each other.



The story then shifts back to Sarah's arrival at the grocery store, and it is clear to the shop keeper that something is not right with Sarah. She is evidently traumatized by her experience just moments previous, but she tries to act calm. The grocer worries that she is not well enough to walk back to Longbourn, so out of kindness he insists that she stay and rest for a while. Back at Longbourn, James is clearly missing Sarah as she has been gone longer than normal. Mrs. Hill notices the worried attitude that has come over James as he has uncharacteristically made a nuisance of himself in the kitchen. Mrs. Hill is also slowly becoming aware that James is starting to have deeper feelings for Sarah, which pleases her as she likes James far better than the servant from Netherfield. Unfortunately, James' worry has now set Mrs. Hill to slightly worry about Sarah as well.

Sarah did not return after dinner, causing James to go out looking for her. He is clearly relieved when he sees her walking towards the house, but for an unknown reason he hides to watch her walk along. James is trying to hide his feelings for Sarah as best as he can, but he is having a difficult time in doing so. Part of the reason he is so worried about her is partially revealed to the reader as he is seen wincing when Mrs. Hill makes a mention of the Militia around. In a foreboding thought, he contemplates the true and often vicious natures of men, which suggests that Sarah's suspicions may be true in regards with James' former interactions with the Militia. As James has always been level headed until now, Mrs. Hill begins to wonder herself about James' past. Sarah is seen to have caught a cold herself and is sent directly to bed after she enters the kitchen. As she lies in bed, the trauma of the afternoon's events still weighs heavily on her as she cannot get the sound of the flogging and the man's screams out of her mind.

Chapter 11 depicts the growing friendship between Sarah and the Netherfield servant when the Netherfield carriage brings Jane and Elizabeth back to Longbourn. Until this point, she has never asked him his name, but at this point it is revealed as Ptolemy Bingley. The other servants from Netherfield are shown giving each other odd looks, and it can be surmised that they secretly hold the same prejudices that Mrs. Hill has. Ptolemy was genuinely worried for Sarah while she was sick and it can be wondered if there are possibly more than just platonic feelings on the horizon for him. As the carriage departs, Sarah comes to the blossoming thought that throughout the recent events, she has dramatically changed. The end of Volume 1 indicates that she is aware that both she and the world around her has changed and she knows that there is no going back to the way things were before.

Discussion Question 1

Why is Mrs. Bennet so intent on having Mrs. Hill ask Mr. Bennet for new clothes? Why does Mrs. Bennet feel she cannot do it herself? What underlying problems are present for Mrs. Bennet?



Discussion Question 2

How does James adjust to his new job? What makes his attitude begin to noticeably change?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Sarah so attracted to the servant from Netherfield? How is he different from James? How do the other Longbourn servants react to the interactions between Sarah and the servant?

Vocabulary

sanctum, futile, proffered, dessicated, missive, supplication, gallivanting, obliging, coifed, wafted, reverentially, respite, precarious, nostalgia, proximity, lurid



Volume 2 Chapters 1 - 7

Summary

Mr. Bennet informs the family and the servants that his cousin, Mr. Collins will be arriving later in the day during Chapter 1. Mrs. Hill goes to Mr. Bennet to protest, but she the conversation is cut short and she is sent on her way. Frustrated, Mrs. Hill goes about getting the spare bedroom ready for Mr. Collins' arrival. Sarah and Polly assist Mr. Hill as best as they can. Mr. Collins arrives and he is very friendly towards everyone he meets, including the servants. In the meantime, James learns that a fox had killed the pheasants he had been raising. He gathers them up to be cooked before getting ready to work inside the house. When he arrives inside, he sits with Polly in the scullery as he listens to Sarah getting yelled at for being clumsy. Sarah later comes in to sit beside James and Polly to get out of Mrs. Hill's way, but they are caught and quickly dispatched to do their jobs. James thinks about how much he has settled in at Longbourn as he listens in to the Bennets and Mr. Collins in the family room. He finds out that Mr. Collins has come to the house because he is the heir of the estate and that he is looking the Bennet daughters over to consider for marriage. He then breaks up the conversation by serving dinner which is a relief to Mr. Collins.

In Chapter 2, the Bennets are at a party being thrown for the Militia officers by Mrs. Bennet's sister. James tries to avoid the officers as much as he can, so he stays outside in the cold reading a book by lamplight even though he can go inside and sit with the other drivers. When the party is over, he drives the family home, with the Militia constantly on his mind.

The Bingleys come to Longbourn to invite the Bennets to an upcoming ball in Chapter 3. While the Bennets and Bingleys are chatting, Sarah goes outside to talk to Ptolemy. They take a walk to a quiet place and he offers her his cigarette. He informs her that he plans to open his own tobacco shop. As Sarah takes a puff of the cigarette, Mrs. Hill catches the pair.

In Chapter 4, Mrs. Hill watches James as he fixes a shingle in the late night pouring rain. When his light is out, she goes to bed and prays that Sarah will come to her senses. The next day, she forbids Sarah from ever seeing Ptolemy again and a minor argument breaks out. Sarah resumes her duties but she is stopped by Mr. Collins who asks about the Bennet girls. During the conversation, she asks him what she should do about her own happiness, but is cut off when she tries to tell Mr. Collins a bit about her problems and is directed to see Mrs. Hill about them. As Sarah finishes her chores, she realizes that she is no longer happy with the life that she has.

Chapter 5 finds the Bennet sisters hiding from Mr. Collins when they realize they have no decorations for their dancing shoes. They ask Sarah to run to the shoe store to fetch these things, but by the time she gets there she is completely soaked from the rain and covered in mud from the carriages that pass her as she walks. On her way back, she is



offered a ride on the back of the Bingley carriage by Ptolemy. James sees her get off the carriage and when he sees her in the house he wants her to ask him to go for any errands going forward. She gets mad and yells at him but feels guilty as he was just trying to be helpful.

The day of the Netherfield ball arrives in Chapter 6. The Bennet family leaves for the evening, Mrs. and Mrs. Hill go to bed, and this leaves Sarah awake to wait up for the family. This puts Sarah in a bad mood and in a fit of temptation and anger, she drinks some of Mr. Bennets' wines. As she does this, she compares herself to Mrs. Hill and decides that she must make a vow to never become settled in one place and never experience anything of the outside world.

Sarah sneaks out of Longbourn and over to Netherfield in Chapter 7. She unexpectedly runs into Ptolemy as he is outside smoking a cigarillo and drinking rum. They share a drink as Ptolemy shares his feelings about society. Afterwards, he grabs Sarah in his arms and he kisses her for the first time.

Analysis

Chapter 1 of this volume comes with the introduction of Mr. Collins, the cousin of Mr. Bennet and the heir to the estate. Tensions between employer and employee are on the rise as Mr. Bennet has given Mrs. Hill only that afternoon to fully prepare the guest room and to plan a proper dinner. Mrs. Hill realizes that the timing of Mr. Bennet's announcement is retribution for the argument seen in a previous chapter. To fully accuse him of punishing her would be an unforgivable folly on Mrs. Hill's part and so she is left helpless as Mr. Bennet condescendingly tells her to get back to work. To show that Mrs. Hill has the ability to rise above such a challenge, she delegates the room preparation to Polly and Sarah which unfortunately adds to their daily work, while she hurries to prepare a good dinner. The theme of appearances is once again heavily displayed here as Mrs. Hill knows that everything must be perfect. The reader is informed that since Mr. Collins is the heir to the Longbourn estate, anything less than perfection could displease Mr. Collins and he could fire the whole staff once he claims his inheritance. Thankfully, Polly and Sarah are up to the task and are able to devote all of their time in making sure Mr. Collins has a clean and warm room.

Sarah imagines that Mr. Collins is someone older and more refined, showing that she has not been with the house long enough to have met him in the past. Her impressions are wrong as Mr. Collins turns out to be the exact opposite once he arrives. He is not only opposite of what she thought his appearance should be, he is also opposite from the Bennets in the way he talks to the staff. He is shown to be very friendly and is grateful for their hard work in rushing to get his room ready. Mr. Collins is curious about the rest of the house but Sarah is unsure of what to say as she has never encountered someone so curious about the inner workings of the house.

There is a brief and slightly distracting deviation from the main point of this chapter as James mourns the loss of some of the pheasants that have been recently killed by a



fox. He compares their trusting nature to his own and he finds that he is beginning to get rather too accustomed to living this easy life. Once again, his past life comes into question as he brings the dead pheasants into the house to be cooked. The Militia seems to prey on his mind but there is still no hint of his actual involvement with them, which suggests that the answer to this may be given soon because of Mrs. Bennet's fascination with entertaining the troops.

The reason for Mr. Collins' visit is revealed as James listens in to the Bennets' conversation in the family room while he sets the dining table. He does not mean to listen in, but this does give the reader the chance to learn more about Mr. Collins and of the developments that are bound to occur. James only hears snippets of the conversation but for him it is enough. First it is revealed that the Bennets are not as financially stable as they prefer to appear, which is another example of the theme of appearances. The second, and probably most shocking, is that Mr. Collins is there to look the Bennet girls over so that he may choose one for his wife. This concept of nonchalantly choosing a wife out of a line up is offensive to James and he tries to subtly make it known by the loudness of his moving things around. Mrs. Bennet, her daughters, and Mr. Collins are so oblivious to James' obvious attempts at distracting them that the only way he can get them to discontinue the conversation is to burst into the room. In a hint towards what could be Mr. Collins' true nature, the narrator insists that Mr. Collins is only being gracious about this outburst because he is hungry and he has traveled a good distance. It is noted that he would not put up with this kind of behavior at his own estate and he definitely will not have it when he eventually becomes the master of Longbourn.

Chapter 2 is a short chapter which shows James continuing to worry about the Militia's presence as he waits with the horses at one of the houses in the village. Mrs. Bennet's sister is throwing a party for the officers, but James thinks this idea is frivolous. It is seen that he prefers living an ordinary life without all of the need for fancy dinner parties and things of that nature. This chapter is a definite indication that James is trying to hide some unsavory part of his past as he tries to avoid the attention of the officers entering and leaving the house. This entire experience is setting his nerves on edge as he tries to avoid contact with anyone. Even though it is freezing outside, he declines an offer to come inside and sit with the other drivers, perhaps in hopes that he is not recognized by anyone. Instead, he prefers to read in solitude until the Bennets are ready to go home. As he drives the carriage, his mind keeps slipping back to the Militia and he is so tense that even the horses feel it as he handles the reins, and it is to be noted here that his skill and ease with the horses has been mentioned in previous chapters which makes this information that much more foreboding.

More developments arise for Sarah in Chapter 3. The Bingleys come to call on the Bennets and Ptolemy is with them. Mrs. Bennet is seen as extremely excited to see her neighbors and is more so when they explain that they are throwing a ball soon and that the Bennets are invited. This visit gives Sarah the chance to sneak outside to talk to Ptolemy, although it is a bit of a taboo. In a fit of temptation, they go for a walk where Ptolemy informs Sarah of a bit of his past. It is divulged that he is a former slave, having been bought by Mr. Bingley's father. His mother is still a slave where he is from, but his



country of origin is not mentioned. Sarah learns that he plans on opening a tobacco shop soon and that thought is exciting to her. He offers her his cigarillo, but Sarah is unsure if she should partake in smoking it. The temptation does get the better of her, which can be viewed as one of the experiences that shapes her evolution into an independent woman. Smoking is to be considered as a symbol of Sarah starting to develop her own identity and awakening of a sense of freedom within herself. This is cut short when Mrs. Hill catches them with Sarah still holding the cigarillo. It is quite obvious that Mrs. Hill is furious with Sarah and this is the first time that Mrs. Hill is seen demonstrating her anger. Her anger stems from the fact that she was embarrassed that Sarah did not come as she was called to help the Bingleys prepare to leave. Mrs. Hill then tells Sarah to get her work done quickly, but due to Sarah's new found sense of freedom, the feeling that she does not want to be a servant any longer is beginning to become more apparent.

Chapter 4 begins with a slight digression from the flow of events to focus on Mrs. Hill. While everyone sleeps, she is awake watching James from her window as he fixes a broken shingle in the rain. She is still very concerned for him and stays at the window until his light is out. Mrs. Hill is shown to have a great deal on her mind, more than just the usual fulfilling house duties. Here the reader sees that she has already made plans for her little family, as she is to be seen as the mother figure of the group. This is the first time that her hopes of Sarah and James marrying comes to light. The match would be suitable as the pair could continue on at Longbourn and this would keep Sarah from having far off notions. She then begins to think about what would truly satisfy her, something that is deemed unusual since she is so devoted to making others happy.

For Mrs. Hill, work seems to be the only thing that calms her and gives her clarity and a sense of purpose. She hopes to instill these things in Sarah while at the same time keeping her from Ptolemy. Sarah is infuriated when Mrs. Hill confronts her and forbids her from ever talking to Ptolemy again. Mrs. Hill feels that not only is she looking out for Sarah's best interests, but she is also trying to uphold the social class and the reputation of the Bennet family. It would be the center of gossip if the Longbourn house maid was to socialize with someone like Ptolemy. Sarah gathers up her courage and is defiant to Mrs. Hill for the first time but is forced to back down in fear of losing her position. This confrontation slightly hurts Mrs. Hill who is convinced that she is only trying to keep Sarah from getting hurt.

Mr. Collins breaks from the traditional role of future employer as he engages Sarah in a conversation about the Bennet daughters. He questions Sarah about each daughter, seeking insight from a neutral party into how they behave and other issues. This line of questioning is disconcerting as Mr. Collins is trying to find out if they know how to do work and they have the ability to be obedient. This gives the notion that he is secretly more controlling than his outward appearance would suggest. Mr. Collins seems very set on Elizabeth as most of his questions focus on her. Sarah then takes this breach of formality to ask for his advise since he is a preacher. He advises her to continue doing her work, to fully commit to being a servant and there she will be content. When Sarah tries to explain about the pursuit of her own happiness, she finds that she cannot as she has no ability to convey the confusing feelings she is having towards Ptolemy and the



events that led to this notion that her world is changing. The conversation shifts and Mr. Collins is visibly uncomfortable with continuing this conversation. This ends the familiar and casual tone of the encounter as he quickly dismisses her saying that these matters are of no spiritual concern. He is certainly wrong as Sarah finally comes to the realization that she no longer wants to be just a servant, thus enhancing Sarah's mental and emotional development and providing a key turn in the novel's events.

The Bennet girls' dislike of Mr. Collins becomes known in Chapter 5 as they try to hide out from him under the guise of doing mending work. It is suggested that they are now becoming aware of Mr. Collins' habits and his reasons for being there. This brief moment is forgotten as a more important matter for the girls has arisen. In the interest of having the best appearances at the upcoming Netherfield ball, they suddenly remember that they have no accessories for their shoes. The role of a proper servant is displayed here as Sarah wordlessly knows that she will be the one who is sent for these things instead of the girls going to fetch the items themselves. They give no thought to the fact that Sarah will once again have to go out in the cold and damp for their needs nor do they offer to go for her.

The effects of this trip are visible as Sarah is soaking wet and covered in mud once she arrives at the store. Clearly she is very upset at having to go to such lengths for the girls' needs as at this point she no longer cares if the girls will like what she brings home or not. It is to be wondered if this is a stark contrast to her previous attitudes on doing the Bennets' errands. Sarah is embarrassed of her current condition as other customers come into the shop. The only thing that seems to brighten her disposition is seeing the Bingley carriage roll past her and seeing Ptolemy. She knows that she is forbidden to have any interaction with him, but she accepts his help in hitching a ride on the carriage anyways. Ptolemy is sympathetic to her ordeal and only wants to help her get home quicker, but there could be consequences if she is caught. The only person to have witnessed this interlude is James working in the fields. A brief feeling of jealousy passes over him but it is quickly gone. When he encounters Sarah, another argument breaks out even though James has good intentions. He wants to protect Sarah from getting so wet and dirty again so he suggests that next time she is sent on an errand that she allow him to do it. Sarah perceives this as an order from James and is offended that he is treating her like she cannot do her job. This argument hurts his feelings although he does not show that to Sarah, but she feels secretly guilty that she has allowed her anger to get the better of her once again.

James' emotions for Sarah are becoming harder for him to hide, but he also has the sense that he cannot afford to show them as it would cause him to lose focus and to become too settled into this comfortable life. The reader knows that James still has past secrets that are haunting him and controlling his every action. His jealousy over the fact that she could fall in love with someone else is eating at him but he knows that to tell her would be useless. The reader is then informed that James has chosen to do extra work inside the house just so that he can be near her without looking obvious. He is charmed by her fierce independence and her hardworking spirit. In the meantime, Sarah is shown comparing the two men currently in her life. On the one hand, Ptolemy pays attention to her and she fantasizes about the way he helped her onto the carriage. This



is a very vast difference between him and James, especially because of his quiet and aloof nature towards her. His silence gives Sarah the illusion that he has no interest in her and, therefore, she quickly dismisses any thoughts of him. Instead, her mind wanders to the amount of miles she has traveled in her life and there is a brief sense that she would rather be out on the road to places unknown.

The relationship between Mr. and Mrs. Bennet is lightly mentioned in the beginning of Chapter 6. As Mr. Bennet gets ready for the ball, he reveals that he actually hates the whole notion of parties, finding them frivolous and unnecessary. He is not one to be caught up in the whole concept of social status and things like that. He only attends these functions because Mrs. Bennet is so hooked on them and if he does not share her enthusiasm then she will be very mad at him. This shows Mr. Bennet's character of being the weaker spouse as he does not want to incur her anger. Everyone looks the part of a sophisticated upper class family, even James who does not care for all sorts of fancy items has been made to look the part. Even though this is a party for the upper class, the servants have been extremely busy all day with trying to get the Bennets looking perfect. This detail of extra work showcases not only the differences between the servant class as they will never in their lifetimes be able to go to a party such as this and the upper class who find these parties a normal part of their lives but the necessity to have the perfect appearance in order to impress others as well.

This chapter also shows the strain that has been placed on the relationship between Sarah and Mrs. Hill. Mrs. Hill decrees that the rest of the servants are going to bed and that Sarah must stay up to wait for the Bennets to return. Sarah sees this as punishment for her interactions with Ptolemy and her recent insubordination. This leaves Sarah in the house all alone to hash out her thoughts. In an unprecedented move, she goes into the drawing room and drinks some of the Bennets' wines and sherry, something she would never do if the Bennets were actually home. As she is drinking her mind turns to Mrs. Hill and the author gives a closer look at the disgust that is growing in Sarah as she condemns Mrs. Hill for never having experienced any other kind of life than that of a servant. It can be speculated that the alcohol is causing Sarah to think this way, but she vows that she will never turn out dull and lifeless like Mrs. Hill. Her mind then shifts to the Bennets and there is a certain amount of disdain for them as well. After the last drink she hazily recalls something that was suggested to her about taking a walk when she gets some free time, closing the chapter but laying the foundation of a possibly intriguing encounter.

A drunken Sarah walks in the night to Netherfield in Chapter 7. By now it can be assumed that the alcohol is controlling her actions as sneaking out in the night to be with Ptolemy could get her fired if caught. As she nears the house, she can see inside the ballroom windows and she discovers that the upper class people were extremely boring to her as they chatted and danced. This sheds a new light on the upper class for her as she sees a lot of women in the same dresses they have worn to previous balls or gowns cut from material she has seen for a long time in one of the shops. The view of these people and knowing that these were the same horrible people she encounters every day disgusts her even more. She is caught off guard by a voice speaking to her and she is delighted to find that it is Ptolemy. The effects of the alcohol are wearing off



as she is now becoming apprehensive about being at Netherfield when she should be at Longbourn. He is drinking rum and it is divulged that he has the same disgust for the upper class that Sarah has. This too can be viewed as he also has had too much to drink as his words and movements are slurred. Sarah's shyness wears off as he offers her more to drink which she gladly accepts. There is a major plot twist here as in their drunken revelry, Ptolemy takes Sarah in his arms and kisses her, closing the chapter on a cliffhanger.

Discussion Question 1

Who is Mr. Collins? Why is it so important that he be impressed with Longbourn?

Discussion Question 2

Describe the changing relationship between Sarah and Ptolemy. How does this give Sarah a new sense of freedom? How do others view this friendship?

Discussion Question 3

How does Sarah view being a servant? How is this evolving? What events are helping Sarah change her views?

Vocabulary

dregs, fortnight, cumbersome, gullet, cessation, gallants, sauntered, traipsed, dissolution, quelled, apropos, amiable, billowing, benign, ebullience, vapid, assiduously, thrall



Volume 2 Chapters 8 - 14

Summary

Mr. Collins has proposed to Elizabeth but she has refused him in Chapter 8. Mrs. Hill worries that Mr. Collins will now marry someone else as Elizabeth is summoned to speak with her father in private. Mrs. Bennet is hosting a tea with some of Elizabeth's friends, looking for their assistance in coaxing Elizabeth to marry Mr. Collins. The next day, Mrs. Hill goes to Mary to ask her to sit with Mr. Collins since he is lonely, and Mary only agrees to do it out of good manners. Before Mary comes to the family room, Mr. Collins informs Sarah that she was right in talking about how duty can make a person unhappy then asks for a peice of cake, but finds himself unable to eat it.

The other girls have gone to the Meryton post office, but have returned with 2 Militia officers. Mrs. Bennet is insistent on James serving everyone the afternoon tea, but he is nowhere to be found. As Sarah goes to the kitchen to find James, Ptolemy walks in with a letter from Netherfield, infuriating Mrs. Hill. As he waits for a reply from Mrs. Hill, Polly alerts everyone that she and James have been hiding since they saw the officers walk in the house with the ladies. Mrs. Hill does not believe her and sends her off to finish her work. Sarah then shifts her attention to Ptolemy who informs her that the Bingleys are heading back to London and he is to go with them later in the afternoon. Sarah and Polly help the officers put on their coats to leave, and one, Mr. Wickham, gives Polly a coin which makes her very happy.

The people at Longbourn continue with their daily activities as the people at Netherfield, including Ptolemy, leave in Chapter 9. Later in the evening, Sarah gathers her things and sneaks out into the night, hoping to follow Ptolemy. Unknown to Sarah, James is hiding and following her along the way. Sarah catches him following her and she advises him not to follow her. An argument breaks out and Sarah reveals that she has seen James' seashells. She takes off again but James stops her to tell her that if she really wants to be with Ptolemy she should write to him and have him come get her. Sarah reaches out and kisses James before heading back to Longbourn with him.

Mr. Collins leaves Longbourn in Chapter 10 after the announcement of his engagement to Elizabeth's friend Charlotte Lucas. Mr. Wickham becomes a regular guest of the house and he spends time with the Bennets but also tries to become friends with the servants, particularly Sarah and Polly. Christmas time comes and Mrs. Bennets family, the Gardiners, come to spend the holiday. During this time, Mr. Wickham and James have a verbal exchange which leaves James feeling suspicious and wanting spring to come quickly so that the Militia will hurry up and leave.

Jane leaves for London with the Gardiners and Mr. Collins marries Charlotte Lucas in Chapter 11. Later that night, Sarah sneaks out of bed to go to James' room. She says she wants to start over with him and re-introduces herself. Next she goes to him and kisses him as she undresses him. She feels the scars on his back and James is scared



that Sarah will find him disgusting and leave him. Sarah does not do this and the pair have their first sexual experience together.

In Chapter 12, Sarah makes a habit out of coming to James' room at night. Polly is the only one who figures out what is going on between Sarah and James. Elizabeth informs Sarah that she is going to stay with the Collins family for a few weeks. Mr. Wickham comes to the kitchen to try to fit in with the servants again, but he quickly leaves once Mrs. Hill suggests that he help peel turnips if he has such a desire to be among them. James watches Mr. Wickham through the window and when Mr. Wickham leaves, he scares Mrs. Hill and Sarah by demanding to know why Mr. Wickham was in the kitchen.

Elizabeth reveals to Sarah that she will be accompanying Elizabeth on her journey to London and Kent in Chapter 13. James encourages Sarah to go as it will do her some good to see new places. As Elizabeth leaves, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet get into a small argument over Elizabeth's happiness. Once in London, Sarah realizes that London is dirtier and noisier than she had imagined. Elizabeth spends one night in London, then travels onward to Kent. While at the Collins home, Sarah tries to befriend the staff there, but they do not reciprocate her friendliness. The parish patron, Lady Catherine de Bourgh comes to inspect the parsonage, making the servants nervous with her over demanding ways. Since Sarah thinks she has nothing more to do one afternoon, she takes a walk through the village but is slapped by the housekeeper after she returns. Mr. Darcy becomes a regular visitor to the Collins' home, but Elizabeth does not believe that he is interested in her. Meanwhile, James goes through his usual daily routines, but he misses Sarah incredibly. He finds himself getting annoyed at how the Bennet girls throw themselves at the Militia officers, thinking no good will come of it.

Sarah and Elizabeth return from their travels in Chapter 14, to James' happiness. He is also happy to find out that the Militia will be moving on soon, but the Bennets host a dinner party the night before the regiment's departure. On the night of the party, James serves the wine, but notices Mr. Wickham staring at him. After the dinner, Mr. Wickham corners Polly in the dining room. Just as he is about to molest her, James comes in and an argument ensues, resulting in James slapping Mr. Wickham. In response to this, Mr. Wickham reveals that he knows James is a deserter from the Militia and that he intends to tell Mr. Bennet and the other officers. This causes James to pack up and flee into the night, leaving Sarah and Longbourn behind.

Analysis

Chapter 8 gives the reader the events that transpire the day after the Netherfield ball. Sarah is still angry with Mrs. Hill and makes a point to show it. It is to be noted that Mrs. Hill internally feels bad about all that she has done and said to Sarah, but her intentions are to protect Sarah from making a mistake. This is a motherly instinct that Mrs. Hill has, but she is cut short by Sarah's attitude towards her and the sudden flurry of activity going on around her. Excitement is rampant as it is learned that Mr. Collins has proposed to Elizabeth. It is a comical scene as the servants try to listen in to what is going on behind a closed door as this occurs. This should soothe Mrs. Hill's worries



about the state of Mr. Collins inheriting Longbourn, but her hopes are squashed when Mrs. Bennet emerges from the room. Nothing is actually said regarding Elizabeth's refusal to marry Mr. Collins, it is simply implied by the servants pitying him. At this point, Sarah uses her intimate knowledge of the Bennet girls to suggest that Elizabeth was the wrong match for him and that Mary would have been happy to marry him, as she is seen as the quiet sister.

The narrator takes a brief check on Jane and Elizabeth as Jane tries to console an emotional Elizabeth. It is surmised that Elizabeth is deeply offended by Mr. Collins' proposal, but Jane tries to advise her that she should not be so angry. She is aware that Mr. Collins was only trying to do the right thing by marrying Elizabeth, as he is the future owner of Longbourn. This does nothing to help Elizabeth and in an attempt to steer the conversation onto another topic, Elizabeth inquires about the dress she gave Sarah in a previous chapter. This sudden deviation is an irrelevant attempt by Elizabeth to discuss a more frivolous topic. Elizabeth has been summoned to speak with her parents in the library, where the mood is extremely tense as Mrs. Bennet is visibly upset. There is nothing more given in this scene as Sarah leaves the room before the conversation begins. It is some time later that Mrs. Bennet is hosting a few of Elizabeth's friends during tea time. She is hopeful that her friends can use peer pressure to convince Elizabeth to marry Mr. Collins but it can be guessed that she is steadfast in her refusal. Mrs. Hill has a short bout of jealousy over Elizabeth's stance on this subject, which is one of the rare times that Mrs. Hill has allowed herself to think about true love.

The story jumps ahead to the next day where the fallout from Mr. Collins' proposal has taken its toll on another sister. Mrs. Hill wants Mary to go downstairs and entertain Mr. Collins as he has been left in the drawing room by himself. It is considered odd that no one from the Bennet family desires to interact with him at this point. The fact that Mary is seen as she had been crying is a visible acknowledgement that she had feelings for Mr. Collins and is upset that he did not choose her. No explanation of Mr. Collins' choice has been identified at this point in the story.

Chapter 9 is the most intense chapter as of yet with a dynamic twist in events for Sarah and James. While life goes on as usual for the Longbourn residents, Ptolemy Bingley leaves with the rest of the Netherfield servants. There is a revelation here that Ptolemy sincerely has romantic feelings for Sarah and there is a feeling that he regrets leaving her behind. There is nothing else overly descriptive about this open admission but it is significant here as it has only been alluded to in previous chapters. It is apparent that Sarah views Ptolemy's lighthearted request to look him up in London as a genuine invitation to follow him. After everyone has fallen asleep, Sarah gathers her things which include a rag doll, which is the first and perhaps only tangible item linked to Sarah's past. As Sarah is so eager to leave her Longbourn life behind, she sneaks out of the house and towards the main road. Unbeknownst to her, James in his role as a protector follows her until she discovers him. They are standing at the crossroads, one part is the road to London and the other back to the local village. This can be seen as a metaphorical summary of how Sarah is viewing her own options. The plot takes an unexpected turn as James urges Sarah to insist that Ptolemy come to her if he has any feelings. This is a confusing passage as James' feelings have been well established,



but in letting her follow her own heart, James is showing how much he cares for her. It is interesting to note that in previous chapters, Sarah has been very wary of James, but it is revealed that it is to hide her feelings away from him as well. This discovery is magnified as she reaches out and unexpectedly kisses him, making her choice of path obvious.

Nothing much is said on the way back to Longbourn, but these pent up feelings have now emerged, creating a secret couple. They are unsure of any sort of consequences for this illicit romance, but there is something else secretive going on as Mr. Collins is shown the next morning heading out of the house towards an unknown location. This worries Mrs. Hill as there seems to be little to no interaction with Mr. Collins by the staff or the Bennets. With James and Sarah trying their hardest to act as if nothing has happened between them, it is Polly that is starting to see through this facade. As the chapter closes, Sarah lies in bed and has an epiphany. As much as she has been daydreaming about getting away from Longbourn to find her happiness, it might actually be found at Longbourn after all. This insight is a dramatic shift from previous chapters where Sarah longs for a different life.

A serious concern has been alleviated for Mrs. Hill in Chapter 10 as the engagement of Mr. Collins and a close friend of Elizabeth's, Charlotte Lucas. The introduction of this minor character adds a calming effect for Mrs. Hill, as Charlotte has been a regular visitor to Longbourn for many years and is considered to not have any fancy ways. This will more than likely seal the fate of the Longbourn servants as permanent fixtures in the home, putting Mrs. Hill's mind slightly at ease. She still worries about Mr. Collins, however. Mrs. Hill works very hard to make sure that he is well provided for when he stays at Longbourn, but she is slightly agitated when her extra efforts go unnoticed. It is clear to see that this arrangement does not affect Elizabeth, but this is having a terrible effect on Mary as she is still coming to terms with having feelings for Mr. Collins.

This chapter also sees the introduction of another character, Mr. Wickham. He is clearly an odd person, with his smooth talk and always seeming to be around when least expected. In previous chapters, he has only been briefly mentioned as someone who comes to the house with the other Militia officers and is favored by the Bennet ladies. In this instance, he is standing in Sarah's way as she is carrying a heavy tray back to the kitchen. He tries to have a conversation with her, but there is a sense that Mr. Wickham does not want to be helpful to Sarah even though he admits that he is the son of a servant. There is a foreboding element in this exchange as he makes sure to block Sarah's path and in the way he is seen to interact with all women, regardless of who they are. During the Christmas holiday with the Gardiner family, James is introduced to Mr. Wickham. James is quite aware that something is very ominous about Mr. Wickham, especially as there is a slight taunt made by Mr. Wickham over James' reluctance to join the Militia. James is quick to retort about Mr. Wickham's lack of actually seeing any fighting in any foreign country, which does not sit well with Mr. Wickham. Some time later, Polly catches Mr. Wickham's attention again and earns a pocketful of coins from him. When Sarah questions her about it, Polly becomes defiant, hinting that Mr. Wickham thinks more of her than anyone else in the house. Without any proof, Sarah is already suspecting that Mr. Wickham may yet be a harmful presence in the house. This



feeling is different than the feeling she had towards James as there is no hint of innocent curiosity here, there is only a sense that Mr. Wickham is someone that no one can trust. This should let the reader know that Mr. Wickham will have some role to play in the events yet to come.

Relationships are at the forefront of Chapter 11 as Mr. Collins and Charlotte Lucas get married. Although Mrs. Bennet is openly happy about this, there is an underlying tone of jealousy in when she wishes the couple happiness. Mrs. Hill is still seen as very pleased yet she continues to do little things like making a hand warmer for Mrs. Collins to seal the permanency of the servants' employment at Longbourn. It is Mrs. Hill's hope that everytime the new Mrs. Collins would use the warmer, she would be reminded that the servants are kind and very capable of handling the estate once the time comes.

As night falls, the reader is given a better view of James' lonely room above the stable. It is the perfect place to watch Sarah come and go, but there is little in the way of comfort and warmth. James sits reading maps of places he would like to go to but finds himself wishing that he could have maps of places he has already been to. He wants to show these to Sarah to educate her on his own travels and give her the knowledge of the unmentioned things in his past. He cuts these thoughts short, his feelings for her are immense but there is a deep apprehension to letting Sarah get too close to him. This apprehension is shattered by Sarah as she sneaks into the room. She says "good morning" to him, surprising James, but this goes back to Sarah's first attempts to meet James. In previous chapters, she tried to find ways to tell him "good morning" and introduce herself, but this is ruined by an accident and an argument. This is a briefly comical attempt to make up for that incident and to start their relationship anew. James is torn between his desire for her and the need to keep her distant. It is clear that he feels unworthy of her attentions and that he wants her to stay away as he considers himself a poor choice for a lover. The narrative at this point depicts a physical scene, but one of discovery as well. Sarah notices the scars on James' back and he is instantly scared that Sarah will leave although no clues are given as to how he came by them. The chapter closes with the allusion that the pair are in the process of disrobing amidst James' fears of losing Sarah but wanting to be completely honest about his past.

Chapter 12 begins with the reading being given the knowledge in an undetailed way that James and Sarah have had their first sexual encounter together. The narration skips ahead by several months with no further details given except that Sarah's sneaking out at night has become a daily occurrence with Polly secretly becoming aware of what is going on. James continues to be wary of his surroundings and of a hidden danger that is only known to himself. There is a subtle hint that there is a large concern that something will come along and ruin James' happiness and it will be wondered if there is a link between these fears and something darker from his past. Meanwhile, Sarah is blissful to the point that she has a new insight into her life at Longbourn. Tedious tasks are now handled with more patience and for her the days seem more bearable with the promise of seeing James later. As Sarah is helping Elizabeth dress, there is a reference to Elizabeth's upcoming travels to visit the newly wed Collinses. Sarah does not pay much heed to this conversation, but it's random appearance in the progression of this chapter, it could be of more importance in further chapters.



James' paranoia over Mr. Wickham is seen at a new height as the chapter outlines another peculiar encounter with Mr. Wickham. He finds his way to the kitchen under the guise of being lost. It is evident that Mrs. Hill and Sarah have thoughts on his true intentions of being in the kitchen with them. He uses his past as former servant to try to fit in with Mrs. Hill and Sarah, but they find his sleek manner of talking more offensive than anything. It is only Polly who trusts Mr. Wickham's every word. She is seen as being amused by his jokes he considers clever. It can be suggested that Mr. Wickham may have more dishonorable intentions as the reader sees him giving Polly more attention than what would be considered appropriate for a grown man to give a child. To further illustrate Mr. Wickham's seedy character, Mr. Wickham suddenly wants to go back to the drawing room after Mrs. Hill suggests that he use his former training to help out in the kitchen. The reader is aware that James is watching this exchange from outside the kitchen window and that there is a certain tension building up inside of him. It is made evident by his bursting into the kitchen once Mr. Wickham has left the area. The reader will wonder if there is a connection between James and Mr. Wickham as James' anger and then sudden silence seems to frighten both Sarah and Mrs. Hill.

As time continues to go by, there is little in the way of excitement until Elizabeth informs Sarah that she will be going to visit the Collinses and that she is bringing Sarah with her in Chapter 13. Elizabeth feels that Sarah should be elated by this news, but the reader is given the impression that Sarah is the opposite as it will take her away from James for a considerable amount of time. Once again, the division between the employer and employee are evident here as Elizabeth is blind to Sarah's state of shock at this news. Elizabeth thinks that she is giving Sarah a treat by allowing her to travel with her. The reader knows that not only is there more work that will need to be done, but Sarah is going to miss James immensely as she will be gone for 6 weeks. James encourages this travel and assures her that it will be good for her. One of the curious items about this trip is where Sarah will be sitting. As she is only a servant and there is very little room inside the carriage, she has to sit on the back board on the outside on the journey. James fastens a seat belt around her, not only to help her but so that he can whisper a secret goodbye to Sarah before anyone sees them. At this point, there is still no one other than Polly that knows of their relationship.

Mrs. Bennet is shown having mixed emotions at Elizabeth's departure. On the one hand, she is still jealous over the recent marriage of Mr. Collins. Mrs. Bennet firmly believes that Elizabeth should be the new Mrs. Collins and she makes it verbally known to her husband, causing a slight negative tone to the scene. Mr. Bennet is casual in his reply, further angering Mrs. Bennet who pouts that he will never understand her feelings. During this small argument, the nonchalant attitude of Mr. Bennet towards his wife is obvious. His few replies are sarcastic and short, alluding to the knowledge that Mr. and Mrs. Bennet do not have a very loving relationship. It is Mrs. Hill that comes to the aid of Mrs. Bennet with the hint that she has had to console Mrs. Bennet more than once after the Bennets have a disagreement.

The chapter strays from main setting of Longbourn to follow Sarah on her journey with Elizabeth and the Lucases. The trip is described in plenty of detail as Sarah is seeing many things for the first time, especially London. Previously, Sarah had envisioned



London as a wonderful place, but what she sees is disappointing to her as the city is described as dirty and noisy. Once at their first stop, the home of the Gardiner family, Sarah is unsure of herself and of what to do in this large place. Since they are only staying overnight, Elizabeth invites Sarah to come with her and her aunt as they go shopping. What seems like an adventure turns into tedious work. Being the servant and especially with no money of her own, Sarah is the one that has to carry all of the packages and follow Elizabeth and her aunt. The day is long and the night is lonely and uncomfortable for Sarah as she is not used to the sounds of a busy city.

The next day, the group are once again in the carriage, making their way to the Collins' home in Kent. The description of this leg of the journey is not particularly given, except that as Sir William Lucas makes a great show of how he talks to the toll worker on the road, he feels pleased with himself that he has the ability to communicate with people who are of a lower social class as if they do not speak the same language. This is a true example of how the lower social classes are sometimes treated by those who are considered upper class. Shortly afterward, there is another example as the group have arrived at their destination and Sarah is walking through the door. Although Sarah was the one trying to help Mr. Collins with his questions about the Bennet girls while he was at Longbourn, it is apparent that he does not remember Sarah's name at all. This shows that to Mr. Collins, Sarah is just an ordinary servant and as such he feels no guilt in not remembering her.

There is a stark difference between the maintenance of Hunsford Parsonage, the home of Mr. and Mrs. Collins, and Longbourn. Sarah tries to make conversation with their unnamed housemaid, but Sarah is quickly denied. There is a conveyance that the housemaid is afraid to do anything that would put her focus onto anything other than her cleaning, which is confusing for Sarah. Sarah knows that both Mr. and Mrs. Collins are ordinary people who are easy to get along with. The answer to this dilemma comes in the form of Lady Catherine de Bourgh, who is denoted as being extremely picky about every minuscule detail of the house. The housekeeper and maid are terrified of her as she constantly makes negative comments about how the house is run and that the staff should be replaced if they cannot meet her expectations. As Sarah is unaware of the protocols of this house, she mistakenly leaves the house after her work is finished to take a walk around the area. The housekeeper slaps Sarah upon her return, the housekeeper is not concerned with the fact that Sarah does not know the rules of the house, the only thing she has her mind on is what the neighbors would say about one of the servants being idle. This is an image of how appearances are important even for the servants as well as the treatment of employees.

Meanwhile, James is miserable at home missing Sarah. He continues his duties, and he continues to try to hide himself around the Militia men. The Bennet daughters are constantly using him to drive them to various parties and it is to be noted here that although James is appreciative of his job, he has little patience for the girls. He finds their flippant ways disturbing, especially Lydia's as she constantly flirts with the officers. He understands that soldiers are often quite different than how they act around ladies. His biggest worry is that while the girls are having fun at the moment, danger could be upon them at any time from the officers and that flirting will not help them at all.



Chapter 14 gives the reader the climax of James' development at the hands of Mr. Wickham. He is happy that Sarah has returned but their feelings have to be kept hidden in fear that they will be discovered. James is also thrilled that the Militia will be leaving soon as he will be able to live a calm and peaceful life without worrying every minute about someone realizing he is a deserter. Lydia seems to be the only one that is less than enthused about this as this will mean the end of her wild evenings and back to the tedium of country life. Polly is also unhappy about this as she really likes Mr. Wickham. Polly is an innocent girl who does not realize that underneath Mr. Wickham's kind words and extra bits of change and candies, that he is very manipulative and dangerous.

On the last day of the Militia's occupation, the Bennets hold a large party. James just wants to get through this last night as quickly and quietly as he can. There is foreshadowing here as James pours wine at the dinner table. The look that Mr. Wickham gives him denotes that Mr. Wickham knows more about James than the other officers. James regards this look as very upsetting, he sees that Mr. Wickham could possibly make trouble for him.

The evening progresses with everyone at the party getting drunk, possibly from all the toasts to the departing officers. This high amount of drinking may be considered the influence for Mr. Wickham cornering Polly as she is clearing the dining room. He asks her about the kinds of candies she likes as a ploy to garner her attention. Polly innocently tells him what she wants as she honestly believes that he is just trying to be friendly. A few moments later, however, there is a slight change in Polly's attitude as Mr. Wickham starts touching her cheek. The feeling is not described, but it can be assumed that it is fear and apprehension as Mr. Wickham is obviously drunk.

Just as Mr. Wickham is about to make his move, James walks in interrupting the scene. As he feels he must protect Polly, he orders her out of the room, much to her resentment. This angers Mr. Wickham as it James has interfered with his plans. Mr. Wickham displays his jealousy over James having a comfortable life and makes a lewd comment about his relationship with Sarah. This results in an the climactic event that will alter the course of James' fate as he slaps Mr. Wickham. The slap does no physical damage, but it extremely important as this gives Mr. Wickham the ability to have James arrested for assaulting an officer. Mr. Wickham actually takes a perverse pleasure in this as he can now reveal that James is a deserter from the Militia as well. As a final insult, Mr. Wickham cruelly suggests that James run away before the authorities are told, but James knows this will be the only way to save his own life. His only thoughts are on Sarah as he quickly gathers his things and starts to leave. He stops outside the parlor window and sees Sarah serving the Bennets and the officers, hoping to catch her attention. A metaphorical point is made here as Sarah is so busy she pays no attention to actually looking out the window as she shuts the curtain. In this action, this is symbolic of the closure of the unintentional and as of yet unknown closure of their relationship.

The end of this chapter brings forth two arising plot points. The first is Lydia leaving with the Colonel Forster and his wife to spend time with them as they travel with the Militia. This can be seen as a bad omen, given Lydia's obsession with Militia men. The second



is the realization that James has left Longbourn. Sarah realizes this after she awakens the next day and finds that the usual things James does around the house have not been done. For her, there is a distinct relationship between the Militia leaving and James not being anywhere around, which will bring a new twist into the plot and the development of Sarah's character.

Discussion Question 1

How does Mr. Collins' marriage proposal affect both the Bennets and the servants? Why is it so important that Elizabeth say yes to this? What is the reaction when she refuses?

Discussion Question 2

What is Sarah's reaction to being asked to accompany Elizabeth on her trip? What makes the trip bad for Sarah?

Discussion Question 3

Why is Mr. Wickham so interested in Polly? How does James react to this attention? How will it change James' life?

Vocabulary

debility, provincial, abatement, profuse, perfunctory, obliquely, blustery, matriarchs, ravenous, penchant, inveterate, billeted, indolent, begrudge, sanguine, arbitrary, accretion, ineffable, caul, spinster, mordant, deigned, miscreant, acquisitive, attestation,



Volume 3 Chapters 1 - 10

Summary

In Chapter 1, a young Margaret Hill goes alone to a small house 12 miles away from Longbourn to give birth to a son. She gives the baby up for adoption to the farming family she is staying with before returning to Longbourn to continue working. Mr. Bennet courts and eventually marries a young Miss Gardiner, therefore ending his relationship with Margaret and Margaret marries Mr. Hill, the butler. He promises Margaret that the marriage would be in appearance only as he prefers the company of men. Shortly after marrying Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Bennet begins having children, starting with Jane. The second child, who is male and would have become the heir of Longbourn, dies shortly after birth. Afterwards, Mrs. Bennet gives birth to 4 more daughters but no more sons. Since there is a considerable amount of work that now must be done, Mrs. Hill is allowed to adopt a little girl from the orphanage to raise as a servant for the Bennets.

The young adopted baby is named James Smith and Mr. Bennet visits him frequently. After his visits, he always has a private meeting with Mrs. Hill to discuss James' progress. On his last visit to the Smith farm, Mr. Bennet learns that James has run away to join the Militia. Mrs. Hill asks Mr. Bennet to find James, but he refuses, stating that people would find the truth out about he and Mrs. Smith and that would be socially unacceptable.

James is a new soldier helping with the cannons in the Militia in Chapter 2. His troop is ordered to go to Salamanca, Spain and he with his commanding officer Sergeant Pye and the other three cannon crew members slowly go there while the rest of the regiment travel without them. They stop along the way when one of their horses dies and they must get a new one. They go to a local farmer to take his horse, but Sergeant Pye kills the farmer when he protests. They travel onwards through the countryside and kill a wild pig and its babies to eat. They carry the pigs with them but are robbed of them by Spanish bandits. By the time they catch up with their regiment and get close to Salamanca, new orders arrive that they are to return to Portugal.

The whole crew stops in a small Spanish town where there is much partying going on for the soldiers, but the people are extremely poor. Soon they are given new orders to head to the south, towards the sea. The regiment continues to walk but somewhere in the night, the group stops to rest. James takes the horses carrying the cannon to a small shack where he finds British officers inside. They invite him in, and being extremely tired, James falls asleep. When he awakens, he finds that the horses, the officers, and the rest of his regiment are gone.

James tries for a few days to catch up to his regiment. Along the way, he meets another group of soldiers, but they admit that they are deserters from the Militia. After a few more days, he finally catches up to his regiment, but he is immediately arrested as a deserter and for the loss of the horses. James tries to explain that the unknown officers



he had met in the shack turned out to be deserters who stole the horses. He is considered a liar and condemned to death, but he is granted leniency by the fact the he returned to his post. Instead, he is flogged with 50 lashes and then chained.

The town that they are in is attacked and James is let out of his jail cell to attend to the cannons. The battle between the British forces and the French goes on, and the British are left to retreat. Most of James' fellow soldiers have already left on boats to go to nearby British ships, so he and Sergeant Pye are left with the horses carrying the cannon. Pye orders James to kill the horses to save time. James does not do this and Pye kills the Spanish mare. This angers James past the breaking point and he kills Sergeant Pye instead of another horse. With this, James walks in the opposite direction of the fleeing British soldiers and away from the Militia forever.

In Chapter 3 James wakes up to find himself in the house of an old lady, her daughter-in-law and her granddaughter. The grandmother tells James that her son is dead and that the ladies are left to fend for themselves. To thank them for their generosity and to be useful he fixes their small boat that has a hole in it. Once it is fixed, the younger woman and James go fishing and are very successful. The months go by with James helping out as much as he can and the ladies becoming more attached to him. On one autumn night, the younger lady, Maria, comes to James' bed and she is his first lover. In the morning, James decides that he cannot stay with these ladies any longer. After Maria starts walking back to the house after giving James his lunch, he starts walking on the beach away from the house picking up seashells as he goes along.

James becomes a crew member of the ship, the Snapdragon and he has almost two years of adventures traveling the ocean trade routes. He arrives back in England, but in his desire to leave the ship behind, James asks for shore leave. To make it look like he is just going out for a while, he has a few drinks with his fellow sailors, excusing himself to use the restroom. Once he leaves his comrades, he begins walking towards Meryton, with the entire journey lasting a month. When he arrives, the Bennet girls are just leaving the house to go on a walk and Sarah and Polly are out in the back, hanging the laundry.

Sarah informs Mrs. Hill that James had been flogged by the Militia before in Chapter 5. Frantic, Mrs. Hill goes to Mr. Bennet for help in finding James, but Mr. Bennet refuses. This makes Mrs. Hill furious and she leaves the house, aimlessly walking to calm her nerves.

Sarah asks Elizabeth if she would write to Lydia as she is traveling with the Militia if she has heard anything about James in Chapter 6. Elizabeth at first does not know who Sarah is talking about, but she vaguely remembers James when Sarah says he is the footman. Elizabeth promises to write to ask Lydia to check for James the next time she writes to her, but warns Sarah that Lydia's penchant for the officers may keep her too busy to look for a servant.

In Chapter 7, Mrs. Hill goes to town to pay some bills, leaving Sarah and Polly alone for the afternoon. Out of boredom, Sarah takes Polly to a nearby field. She informs Polly



that there used to be houses in the field and that at one time she lived in one with her father, who was a weaver, and her mother who Sarah remembers always wore a bright red dress.

The Gardiner family come to visit in Chapter 8. While they leave the youngest of the children in the care of Mrs., Hill, the Gardiners and Elizabeth head out for an extended tour of parts of the country. Elizabeth never tells Sarah that she is leaving or if she has heard anything about James, leaving Sarah to continue worrying. Mrs. Hill, on the other hand, dives into her work to try to get her mind off of the things at hand.

A messenger comes in the middle of the night in Chapter 9. He is carrying a message from Lydia telling her parents that she has run off to be with Mr. Wickham. Mrs. Hill is left to console Mrs. Bennet, so she slips laudanum into her drink and covers her up to sleep. Sarah decides that she will lay in James bed in his room over the stable, wanting to have any last remembrances of him.

Jane has Sarah go to the post office with a letter for Lydia in Chapter 10. The post office lady is nice to Sarah as she is trying to get anything that could be used as gossip out of Sarah. Sarah does not give any information about the Bennets, but asks about mail of her own, causing the post office lady to shift her attitude towards Sarah.

Analysis

Chapter 1 of the third volume gives the reader the back story of Mrs. Hill and how this has shaped the person that she becomes. It also highlights the true character of Mr. Bennet as Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet once had a romantic relationship. The affair results in a pregnancy for Mrs. Hill but it is out of the question for the pair to marry. At that time, Mrs. Hill is a servant of Longbourn and since Mr. Bennet is of an upper class as well as her employer, which makes the relationship scandalous. Out of fear that her position could be lost or that the community would look down on Mr. Bennet, she goes to a small farm several miles away. Mrs. Hill is lonely as she is shut up in a room by herself, but it is obvious that Mr. Hill does not care about this. After Mrs. Hill turns the baby over to the Smith family, she is filled with a secret sorrow and a sense of bitterness towards Mr. Bennet. Mr. Bennet agrees to pay the Smiths regularly for the boy and to keep an eye on him, but that is all he feels obligated to do. This shows that Mr. Bennet at one time was quite reckless and uncaring.

After Mrs. Hill's return to Longbourn, business goes on as usual, with no one ever the wiser about Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Hill. Mr. Bennet is quick to forget all about his former love, but it is wondered if he ever had feelings for Mrs. Hill or was this just a strictly physical relationship. Once the young Miss Gardner becomes a point of Mr. Bennet's affections, Mrs. Hill is left being just a servant. She feels a bit resentful at Mr. Bennet's marriage to Mrs. Bennet, if Mrs. Hill had been in better social and financial circumstances and was not a servant, it can be guessed that the pair would have been married. Mr. Hill, the butler, takes pity on Mrs. Hill and asks her to marry him, so that she may be considered a respectable woman. In this, Mr. Hill has his own purposes for



marrying her as it keeps his secret of being homosexual. Although they are not overly romantic, Mr. and Mrs. Hill come to enjoy their relationship over the years and have a deep amount of respect for one another.

As for Mrs. Bennet, the birth of her first child brings a shock to her with the pain and the mess. She vows never to have anymore children, but a male heir must be produced for the good of the estate. Unfortunately, the one male child she has dies shortly after he is born. Having a male child is the ultimate thing for a wife of this era, as it secures the family bloodline and all of the properties and monies that come with it. The inability to bear an heir causes a great amount of stress and depression for Mrs. Bennet, causing the persistence to keeping up with social classes and appearances.

The young child, who has been named James Smith, grows up with no knowledge of his true parentage, but Mr. Bennet makes sure to constantly visit. The Smiths are sometimes the point of gossip as they mysteriously have nicer things than the others in their area plus Mr. Bennet always takes time out to visit. The reader should note that Mr. Bennet will do whatever it takes to uphold his reputation and to maintain a certain image. Mrs. Hill has no say in how Mr. Bennet conducts himself as he has no intention of ever declaring that the boy is his. When Mr. Bennet returns from his usual trips, he and Mrs. Bennet have a private meeting in the library, but unknown to Mrs. Hill, these meetings always break her heart as she would like to do more for the boy but cannot without risking a scandal. The notion of appearances and social standing are so important that they are enough to keep a mother from her child.

As the years go by, Mrs. Hill is left with the care of Mrs. Bennet and her 5 girls, without any chance to ever see her son. After all of this time, Mrs. Hill is very tired but still resilient. The one thing that helps alleviate this pressure is the adoption of a small girl from the village orphanage. The reader learns that this girl is Sarah and that she has been in the orphanage for 6 months as her parents and brother have died of typhus, thus ending the previously mentioned mystery concerning Sarah's lack of family. This arrangement soothes Mrs. Hill's heart as she now has a child of her own to care for, but it is evident that this is still different, as she still wants her own child.

Chapter 2 begins an account of James' life after he runs away from the Smith home to join the Militia. It is here that the reader gets the true tale of how he comes to eventually hate the Militia and the cause of his paranoia at Longbourn. The reason that he joins the Militia is not clear, but it is deduced that James' life had been a miserable one, with his foster parents telling him that he would never amount to anything. Originally, James enjoys being in the Militia as it gives his life meaning. As he and his regiment leave England to go to Portugal and Spain, James is proud of being a gunner and having a title and something specialized to do. This feeling begins to change after the arrival in Portugal, when he sees the filthy conditions left by the English soldiers who came before him.

James' job requires careful concentration and is a considerable bit more work than that of a regular soldier. The harsh realities are relayed in detail as James must travel with the cannons as the rest of the regiment moves forward. The cannons are extremely



heavy and take longer. The commanding officer that travels with them is Sergeant Pye, a vicious man who has little patience for anyone that would try to get in his way. An example of this occurs when the gunner crew stops to get a new horse, as one of the original horses has died of starvation. Sergeant Pye wants a local farmer's horse so bad that he is willing to kill the farmer for trying to stop him and then shrug it off with no feeling. The landscape of war torn Spain is described here as harsh, unforgiving, and extremely poor. The reader can see that the war has also taken a toll on the residents of the areas. Most of the people in the area either have no food or they are carefully concealing it. This, along with the obscene graffiti seen on a building's wall a short time back, suggest that the English Militia is not a shining beacon of valor that others visualize them to be.

The men themselves are extremely hungry and cold but they have no choice but to continue their march. In an act of irony, once the crew approach their destination of Salamanca, they are given orders to go somewhere else. The hunger, cold, and fatigue displayed throughout the beginning of the chapter is starting to intensify, but James realizes that the citizens of the neighboring town feel all of this much worse than he does. The cloud of desperation is so thick that young girls sell their bodies in hopes of a crust of bread. In another example of Sergeant Pye's hideous nature, James comes upon a scene of Sergeant Pye having sex with a minor. He does not see the squalid conditions of the town or the people's hunger, in fact he uses it against him as he obtains sex with the promise of bread of which he does not deliver. He feels that he has the upper hand in this as he knows that the people are too weak to oppose him. Sergeant Pye is so malicious that he openly carries his food, taunting the people with the promise of it. This sickens James, which is a dark omen of things to come.

An important aspect of Sergeant Pye's character besides his fondness for sex is that he has a sexually transmitted disease that is taking its toll on him physically but he makes James promise not to say anything. Unknown to the reader at this time, Sergeant Pye's disease is also starting to affect his mind. As the gunner crew continue to march in the cold with no shoes and their horses near death from starvation, they are yet again diverted to another small village. As they stop for a rest, a major development that will cause the climax of James' tale occurs. James finds an old hut to rest in but it is filled with other British officers that James does not know. They welcome James in, but the extreme fatigue James is suffering from causes him to sleep without paying any attention to the conversation. It is unknown how long James has slept, but once he awakens, the hut is empty and the horses are gone. His regiment has already moved on without him, but the tracks and debris make a trail for him to follow

As James is optimistic that he will catch up with the others soon, he runs into another group of soldiers. These soldiers are visually too clean to have seen much fighting, something that James notices. He inquires about the war being over, which is viewed as comical by the men. James learns that these men are deserters, but instead of James joining up with them, he carries on his search for his regiment. He eventually finds them and he is thrilled to be back. This excitement is quickly turned into fear and dread as he is arrested for being a deserter. There is no questioning him nor is he allowed to give his tale of events, he is told that Sergeant Pye has turned him in. James is still hopeful that



he can explain things to someone and that given his good record he will be exonerated. He is convinced that this is all just an honest mistake and that someone will surely realize this.

As James is locked in a cellar, this is the first time that the reader sees James' hopeful and dutiful nature turn to a feeling of homesickness. This is not a usual thought of home, it can be surmised that James did not have a loving home environment with the Smiths, but he longs for the home of Mr. Bennet. James recalls that Mr. Bennet would always be extra kind to him during his visits to the Smith house, of course the reader but not James knows that this kindness comes from Mr. Bennet's secret of being his father. The motivation for James' arrival at Longbourn is given here, which is the promise that if James is ever able to go back to England, he will seek Mr. Bennet out and become his faithful servant in return for all the kindness Mr. Bennet previously showed him.

James undergoes a short and one sided trial by his commanding officers. He tries to tell his side of the story as he is chained to a post. After Sergeant Pye slaps him into silence, James is terrified of what is happening, but he still does not understand the full situation at hand. James is accused of desertion for which the penalty of this is immediate execution. In an ironic twist, James' good record comes into play here and he is shown leniency. Just when James becomes relieved that they will be forgiving since he returned to his regiment, that leniency is revealed to be a severe flogging with 50 lashes. This flogging marks the ultimate change in James and can be regarded as the climax of his story.

James is freed from his confinement only to join in the fighting against the French. He and Sergeant Pye are the only two original gunners left, but they are given new men and new horses. By this time, James has become a silent and uncaring figure, he no longer is worried about dying as he has already hit rock bottom. The battle is given in little detail, but the results are clear that the British must retreat in any way they can. This retreat is hastily made by everyone except for Sergeant Pye and James who are left holding the horses. In a shocking decision, Sergeant Pye orders the horses to be killed. It is here that the reader becomes fully aware that Sergeant Pye has become demented, possibly from the sexually transmitted disease that lingers within him. In an instant, Pye kills the Spanish mare in a horrific scene that sparks James' underlying anger causing him to lash out and kill Sergeant Pye. Combined with the recent flogging, the atrocities he has seen during this war, and the despair he feels over wanting to go home, a symbolic experience occurs as he sheds his soldiers clothing while walking away from the body of Sergeant Pye and the retreating British ships and out the ocean. This action not only is symbolic of his freeing himself from his Militia life, it also makes him a wanted man which is his underlying dilemma.

Chapter 3 gives the reader the results of James' flight into the sea. Instead of being left for dead, he awakens after an unknown time in the home of an elderly lady. There is a considerable language barrier here as Spanish words and phrases are seen here, but James can pick out a few of the words, including finding out that the woman's son has died, leaving his young wife and daughter in the care of the elderly woman. The old woman seems to have a sort of eerie omniscience as she tells James that he is also



dead, which is a metaphor for the fact that James has changed internally. With this new mentality comes a new vitality and desire to survive. He proves this by asking to help the ladies work, but their boat has a hole in it. Working on the boat gives James a sense of purpose as he believes that he is there to help improve the lives of these three females. There does not seem to be any other people around in the area, so the ladies are in some way thankful to have James.

The work on the boat lasts many days and it is therapeutic for James while he adjusts to this new life. The boat he fixes is finished and he is successful in catching a multitude of fish with Maria. By this time it is noticeable that Maria is becoming more attached to him as she is more affectionate. This affection is seen in subtle ways, like her hands brushing his as she hands him his bowl of soup. James is comfortable with his life now as the fish are plentiful and he and the women have settled into a routine. This routine is broken by James being awakened one night by Maria climbing into his bed. Maria's coming to him in the night is a ploy to keep him there with the ladies as some sort of substitute for her late husband. James knows that he can never take this man's place, nor does he want to. His mind is clearly set on going home to England, but he does not have the ability to convey this feeling to Maria. The morning wears on with a silent awkwardness, even the small girl does not interact with James the way she has previously. Either out of guilt or out of the knowledge that James will be moving on soon, Maria cannot look James in the face as she serves him lunch on the beach. James does not want to hurt her feelings, but he knows he cannot be happy there for much longer. Once Maria is out of sight, James makes his escape and begins his long journey home. Along the way he picks up the seashells that Sarah finds in previous chapters as a symbol of the time he has spent there.

Chapter 4 outlines the passage home for James aboard the Snapdragon. It is not a direct route home, lasting nearly two years. During this time, James keeps to himself. In his fear that questions would be asked about his last location, he does not interact with the crew and prefers to keep his shirt on at all times. During his voyages, James is exposed to many things he would never see if he was still in the Militia or in England. The slave trade is one of the most important things that James sees. James makes a parallel comparison between himself and the slaves as wish that they could be free and they both know they are doomed to this life. James is aware that now he is a marked man, he is a true deserter now and a murderer on top. Previously, James had given little thought to freedom, but after seeing the slaves with their distraught and resigned expressions, he realizes that his freedom was the one true thing he ever owned.

The opportunity to leave the Snapdragon and continue on his quest to reach Longbourn comes when the ship arrives in Lancaster, England. James does not come right out and say that he is leaving the crew, he just asks for some shore leave time. It is important to note that he is easily given shore leave because the captain and officers of the Snapdragon have always thought he was a Spanish man, given his deeply tan skin and accent. This works to James' advantage in his desire to keep his true intentions hidden. To continue the ruse, he has drinks with his crew mates at a local pub. When he says he needs to urinate, he takes the opportunity to slip off into the night down a country road that will eventually lead him to Meryton and Longbourn.



As walking is James' only way of travel, it takes him a month to get to where he needs to go. Along the way he is able to shed his Spanish clothes and get English clothes, once again the shedding of clothes is a symbolism for leaving a part of his past behind. It is here at the end of this chapter that the reader is brought back to the events of the first chapter, but now it is told through James' point of view. From James' viewpoint he is able to watch the Bennet family as the girls head off on a walk, but he particularly notices Mr. Bennet and how much he has aged since he has last seen Mr. Bennet. James goes a little further up the road and this is the first time he sees Sarah and Polly as they are out doing the laundry.

The novel shifts back to the present in Chapter 5 as the discovery of James' disappearance has created panic for Sarah. Although there is no actual evidence that Sarah has been told of James' past she knows that he has been flogged and that the Militia was involved. The coincidence of the Militia leaving at the same time is a cause for alarm for Sarah and she lets Mrs. Hill know. This causes a feeling of anger and fear in Mrs. Hill. Her pain comes from the fact that she never wanted her son to live such a harsh life. She confronts Mr. Hill, but once again his sense of superiority and the need to keep up appearances outweighs any personal feelings. He is unwilling to help Mrs. Hill find James. He is furious with Mrs. Hill for suggesting that he write to contacts in the Militia for information on James. This would cause a scandal and people will find out that he has been with a common maid would ruin the precious social class standing that Mrs. Bennet has been so keen to work on. The scene between parents shifts back to a scene between an employer and employee as he nonchalantly dismisses her. In her frustration, Mrs. Hill leaves the house, but it is interesting to note that she too is concerned with appearances as she soon realizes that people will talk if they see her without her shawl or bonnet.

Chapter 6 is an extremely short chapter that does not provide any sort of vital information for the dilemma at hand. This chapter is used to show the employer/employee theme and how it is applied when one of the staff leaves. It is a conversation between Elizabeth and Sarah as Elizabeth has mail from Lydia on her travels with the Forsters. Sarah is hopeful that Lydia has news of James, but none of the Bennets seem to have any care about him. In fact, they barely even know his name. Elizabeth makes a hollow promise to ask Lydia about it, but at this point this may be just a way of assuaging Sarah's feelings.

Mrs. Hill and Sarah come to an undescribed understanding in Chapter 7 as both ladies speak of their relationships with James. There is not much given to this conversation but it is important as now Mrs. Hill and Sarah have combined their efforts to find James. This chapter is another short snippet, but there is valuable information within it. The scene shifts to Sarah and Polly being alone as Mrs. Hill has gone into the town to settle the estate business accounts. Here the reader is given more background details of Sarah's life. Polly and Sarah use their free time to walk to an open field near the town. It is here that Sarah says she was born and lived a happy life with her family. It is revealed that her father was a weaver before he died and she has memories of a woman in a red dress, presumably her mother, and of the happy life she had at one time. There is great



insight into Sarah's character, as she has known a life before she came Longbourn and that she was once happy before becoming a servant.

Chapter 8 is more like a red herring chapter as the Gardiner family comes to take Elizabeth on a tour of the country with them. The only information regarding the major plot is that Elizabeth has already broken her promise to Sarah. Elizabeth leaves without helping Sarah by writing to Lydia or further mentioning James' disappearance to anyone. Meanwhile, Mrs. Hill delves into her work, trying to keep her emotions together. This ritual is something she always does when she is faced with negativity.

Chapter 9 brings an explosive element to the subplot concerning Lydia. An urgent message comes in the middle of the night for Mr. and Mr. Bennet. This alone has denotes to the reader that something strange is occurring. After Mr. Bennet glances at it, his attitude has changed and is noticeably harsher as he commands Sarah and Polly to leave the area. Mrs. Bennet is overcome with maternal emotion as she is convinced that some sort of harm has come to one of the girls. The contents of the letter are divulged, but are not given to the reader. The gist of the letter is that Lydia has run off with Mr. Wickham. The tables have turned for Mr. Wickham as he was an exalted guest of the family, now he is mentioned as a villain. This not only infuriates Mr. Bennet, but has sent Mrs. Bennet into a frenzy. For Mrs. Hill, the only time she has seen Mrs. Bennet like this is when Mrs. Bennet lost her son after birth. The reader should note that Mrs. Hill spikes Mrs. Bennet's water with laudanum as she comforts Mrs. Bennet.

Sarah has no desire to care about the actions going on with the Bennets. Her main focus is to find what has happened to James, nothing else concerns her. In a visible act of how much she misses him, Sarah goes to James room in the stable and sleeps in his bed. As everyone carries on with their own actions, this is an image that Sarah is completely alone in her desire to see James again.

Chapter 10 is another chapter that is small but it shows the reactions by some of the rest of the family of Lydia's actions. Jane prompts Sarah to go to the post office as she has written a note to Lydia, presumably to tell her to come home immediately. Sarah is the only one to consider Lydia's happiness and is the only one that can be considered jealous as she still has no word about James. Once at the post office, the element of maintaining a good social image is starting to unravel since the post office lady is extremely prone to gossip and is prying into the family business. She does this under the guise of wanting to ensure any important items get sent to the house right away, but it is evident that the postal lady just wants to know what is going on. Sarah politely declines but asks if there is any mail for her. Here the reader sees the division of the upper and lower class as well. While the postal lady had just been extremely cordial towards Sarah with the Bennet mail, her demeanor seems to have changed and is almost arrogant and mocking when Sarah asks about incoming mail for herself.



Discussion Question 1

Why did Mrs. Hill give James up for adoption? How does Mr. Bennet handle this? Why does he never offer to marry Mrs. Hill?

Discussion Question 2

How does James come to be arrested? Why does he think he will be exonerated? How does his actual punishment change him?

Discussion Question 3

What are the differences between Mr. Bennet's and Mrs. Hill's reactions to the news that James has left? Why does Mr. Bennet act like this? What can Mrs. Hill do about it?

Vocabulary

ruddy, trussed, coquettish, callous, lassitude, jaunts, averse, callow, manacle, stoic, forage, oblique, gluttonous, biddable, quay, pertinent, plight, missive



Volume 3 Chapters 11 - 20

Summary

The servants are given the information about Lydia running away in Chapter 11. Colonel Forster comes to the house to inform the Bennets of what is happening so far. Polly conveys this back to the servants as she has heard much of the conversation about what is going on while she is serving breakfast. Sarah gets the notion to go directly to Colonel Forster to inquire about James. Sarah has another letter from Jane to Lydia, but Mrs. Hill offers to take it to the post office while Sarah goes to Colonel Forster. At the post office, the lady gives away that she has already been given a bit of knowledge about the scandal erupting for the Bennets. Mrs. Hill tries to deny any wrongdoing by the girls, but the post office lady does not believe it. Upon Mrs. Hill's return to Longbourn, Mr. Bennet asks Mrs. Hill to pack his suitcases for him. He intends to leave immediately for London to track Lydia and Mr. Wickham down. Sarah is able to catch Colonel Forster by himself where she inquires about James. Colonel Forster becomes instantly furious with Sarah, saying that he has no time to look for servants when someone like Lydia is missing.

People like Mrs. Bennet's sister come to Longbourn in Chapter 12. They all want express their sympathy for Mrs. Bennet, who has become sick over this scandal. Sarah becomes frustrated as no one is bothering to help her find James. Out of despair, Mrs. Hill turns to her work to keep her mind settled. Mr. Bennet goes to London with no luck in finding his daughter or Mr. Wickham. Upon his return, Mr. Bennet finally starts to become aware of his misconduct towards James and he finally apologizes to Mrs. Hill.

Mr. Wickham and Lydia are actually found some time later in London in Chapter 13 and the pair are married. Mrs. and Mr. Hill sit in the kitchen daydreaming about what it would be like to have the money that came with Lydia's dowry. Polly hopes that everything will go back to normal now that the scandal is over. With James still gone, Sarah feels that nothing will ever be right again as the rest of the house carry on without him.

In Chapter 14, Lydia comes home with her new husband. Lydia is excited to tell everyone about how happy she is to be married, but Mr. Wickham advises her not to talk to servants any longer. She disregards this and visits with the Hills before getting dressed for dinner. As Sarah helps her dress, Sarah starts to ask Lydia about whether or not James was spotted with the Militia. Lydia has no answer for this, only babbles about the officers that were previous guests of Longbourn. Before Sarah can ask anymore questions, Mr. Wickham comes in and interrupts the discussion.

Mrs. Hill confronts Mr. Bennet one final time about James in Chapter 15. Mr. Hill's attitude has softened about his son and he is filled with regret. He admits to Mrs. Hill that he has always worried about their son, but there has never been anything he could do about it. In a sign of solidarity, he pours himself and Mrs. Hill a glass of wine that they drink together.



Mr. Bingley comes to Longbourn again in Chapter 16, bringing Ptolemy with him. During this time, Jane and Mr. Bingley become engaged, much to the happiness of Mrs. Bennet. Shortly afterwards, Elizabeth becomes engaged to Mr. Darcy. As Mr. Hill involves herself with her work, she also notices that Sarah is lonely. On one of Ptolemy's visits to Longbourn, Mrs. Hill is able to put her prejudice aside to talk to him. She is glad to learn that he wants to marry Sarah and to open his own shop. Thinking that this is probably the best match Sarah will ever have, she tells Sarah she needs to go for it, despite Sarah's objections. Mrs. Hill also informs Sarah that because there will be very little work in the house after the weddings, there is a large possibility that she will be unfortunately dismissed with no place to go.

A solution comes for Sarah's employment dilemma in Chapter 17. Elizabeth offers Sarah a job at Pemberley as her personal maid, stepping up from her current role as a house maid. Sarah accepts this as Elizabeth informs her of her mother's plans to let her go because there will be no more room for her very soon.

Sarah arrives at Pemberley in Chapter 18. The house is much bigger than Longbourn and it takes some time for Sarah to get used to the new ways of doing things. Sarah tries to help Elizabeth dress and do her hair, but she is unsuccessful as Sarah does not know of the latest fashion trends. Instead, Sarah is charged with simple tasks like mending Elizabeth's stockings and nightgowns, but Elizabeth gets new things all of the time. The servants are resentful of her and her position, leaving Sarah to feel very lonely.

In Chapter 19, the Bingleys come to Pemberley, bringing Ptolemy with him. Sarah is surprised to see him as she thought he had left the Bingleys to open his new shop. At dinner, Sarah sits next to Ptolemy, but he is chatting with a pretty house maid. As Sarah watches this exchange, she realizes that she never felt anything for Ptolemy except for curiosity. Ptolemy begins talking to Sarah and she tells him that she wishes him luck in opening his shop. Upon realizing that Sarah will never feel for him what she feels for James, Ptolemy lets Sarah in on the fact that he has recently seen James. He is working with a group of traveling road engineers in the north. Sarah thanks him for this information and they never speak again.

Armed with this new information, Sarah makes the decision that she can no longer work at Pemberley, she must go out and look for James. This upsets Elizabeth who begs Sarah to stay. Sarah is determined to leave, even after Mr. Darcy tries to intervene but is unsuccessful. Sarah leaves quietly with no one to say goodbye as she leaves Pemberley and her life of being a maid.

Mary becomes Mrs. Bennet's confidante and caretaker in Chapter 20 and Kitty spends most of her time with older sisters. This leaves Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Hill alone a good deal of the time while Mrs. Bennet is away. They are finally able to have some part of the life they wanted together in these small moments. Mr. Hill passes away in the arms of his lover, but Mrs. Hill and the lover are able to move Mr. Hill to his bed so that everyone will think he died in his sleep. Polly starts studying hard, with the intentions of eventually becoming a teacher. Sarah actually finds James and the pair are finally able



to live a life on the road together. After many years, they return to Longbourn, with their own son with them, as Polly is hanging out the laundry.

Analysis

The scandal caused by Lydia continues to unfold in Chapter 11 as more details are given thanks to Polly's eavesdropping. Lydia and Mr. Wickham have gone to London to elope. From the information given by Polly, it seems that Kitty has been in on this plan as Polly describes the scared look that Kitty has as Colonel Forster converses with the family. Colonel Forster's presence gives Sarah a brilliant idea, instead of getting answers from Lydia, she will go to Colonel Forster as he has more ability to look into the Militia records. Sarah is hopeful that Colonel Forster will be willing to help her, but Polly is quick to wonder why someone like him would help Sarah. Mrs. Hill is also inspired by Sarah's plan, she and Sarah are still the only ones concerned with James' disappearance. Mrs. Hill instructs Sarah to get what information she can while she takes Jane's letter to the post office.

By now, the postmistress is starting to hear the rumors of Lydia's disgrace and the postmistress is shown to be wanting more information on the scandal. This gossip has spread quickly, but Mrs. Hill is just as quick to try to downplay any such rumors. The postmistress is a cliché symbol for the delivery of news, be it truthful or not, through out the village. Mrs. Hill vehemently denies any ill behavior by the girls, but the postmistress' sarcasm suggests that she does not believe Mrs. Hill. Upon her return, Mrs. Hill tends to Mrs. Bennet, who drinks more laudanum to control her nerves. Here the author makes a suggestion as to the relationship between the Bennets and if Mr. Bennet had shown any care towards Mrs. Bennet, she may not have started using laudanum in the first place. On top of Mrs. Hill's duties, she goes to Mr. Bennet to check on him. He asks her to pack his bags as he is going to London to sort this problem out. There is an interesting addition to his bags, a piece of rosemary. This is interesting as it is deemed to be a reminder of their relationship and the subtle reminder of promises that he has broken in terms of their son. This method suggests that she is trying to make him feel some sort of guilt for chasing Lydia but refusing to help James.

Meanwhile, Sarah has been able to find Colonel Forster alone. At first, Sarah is shy to ask the colonel about James, but time is of the essence and she asks him if he could do anything to help her. In a major display of how the lower classes are treated differently, the colonel is enraged that someone like Sarah should be so bold as to think he would do anything to help her. The reader should take careful note of the response given to Sarah about how he does not have the time and the interest to help her, meaning that someone as low as James is not worth his attention. Forster is clearly offended that Sarah would presume to bother him with someone so unimportant. This bit of verbal abuse is not taken well by Sarah who unleashes her pent up anger by breaking one of the kitchen dishes.

The entire community is aware of the events concerning Lydia and Mr. Wickham during Chapter 12. Sympathy is pouring in from all sorts of places for Mrs. Bennet. Here the



reader can see the effects of gossip and the disingenuous outpouring of support. All of this is taking a toll on Sarah who has been patiently waiting for someone to help her find James. During a conversation with Mrs. Hill, she expresses her outrage that no one even knows his name now, that he was a disposable worker to the Bennets and that she should leave to look for him. Mrs. Hill is quick to talk her out of it with the wisdom that James will not know where she is if he comes back. The only thing they can do is continue to wait, no matter how much it distresses them. Mrs. Hill goes back to the remedy that has always worked for her in the past, to focus more on the day's work and thinking about problems less.

Polly is taking the news of Mr. Wickham and Lydia the best out of all of the servants. The reader will remember that Polly genuinely trusts Mr. Wickham as she believes that he is a wonderful, generous, and honorable man. She finds nothing wrong in any of his actions, but she is curious about the comments he made to her about being sweet the last time he saw her. She has no clue that this was a sexual comment, showing her youth and innocence. Mr. Bennet returns from London as a changed man. Now the effects of having a wayward daughter and a scandal are weighing upon him. He is visibly older and shrunken as he tries to deal with the gossip of the neighbors and the deteriorating condition of his wife. Mrs. Hill is finally able to start letting go of her anger towards Mr. Bennet as for the first time, he issues an apology to her for his actions, something she has been waiting for for many years.

Chapter 13 brings the climax to the Lydia/Mr. Wickham dilemma. They are found in London and married, but the details of how this is accomplished are not given. This chapter is a slight deviation from these events as the servants contemplate the particular details of the marriage and of how much money was given as a dowry. Mr. and Mrs. Hill fantasize about the money, as it is more money than they will ever see in their lifetimes. Their hope is that life will go back to normal, but they know that things cannot be as it is supposed that Lydia and her new husband will not be welcomed at Longbourn. For Sarah, things will not be the same without James as she continues to think about him. It is noted by the author that already life had gone back to a time without James as he has been forgotten by almost everyone.

There is a surprise in Chapter 14 as Lydia and Mr. Wickham come to Longbourn. Lydia views herself as a changed woman since her marriage to Mr. Wickham, and she wastes no time in trying to show off to everyone how happy she is. Mr. Wickham has changed also as he does not want her speaking to the servants, which is a deviation from his friendliness towards the servants in previous chapters. Lydia is still naive as she babbles on to a weary Mrs. Hill about the virtues of marriage. It is to be wondered if Lydia has really changed because of her flippant and bouncy manner. Polly is excited that the couple are home, she is dreaming of all of the candy that Mr. Wickham has promised. There is still no suspicion on her part that Mr. Wickham will be untrue to his words. Sarah is eager to approach Lydia about James. Since there has been no word to his whereabouts, Sarah is starting to assume the worst and that James may be dead.

Sarah gets the opportunity to ask Lydia about James as she is doing Lydia's hair before dinner. Once again, Lydia is still only concerned with romance as she tells Sarah that



she needs to follow the Militia so she can have a husband of her own. Sarah tries to enquire about other people that were seen on Lydia's travels, but Lydia only names officers and has no recollection of James. The reader should pay particular attention to the fact that there is a slight mention to Lydia's appearance. Lydia puts on her makeup, but she appears feverish, like there may be an underlying disease that may come into play. This scene is interrupted by the entrance of Mr. Wickham who makes a light quip about taking either Sarah or Polly back to his estate. His eye movement and smile suggest that the invitation is only for Polly as he has unfinished business with her. Sarah is the only one to catch this look, which alarms her. Lydia think this is a clever joke and is clueless about Mr. Wickham's true intentions. Grabbing Polly's hand Sarah has to guide her out of the room, with Polly disappointed that she has yet to receive any treats.

Chapter 15 depicts the confrontation between Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet. Mrs. Bennet is still in her room, Mrs. Hill has been regularly giving her laudanum keeping her unconscious. In this way, Mrs. Hill has the ability to speak to Mr. Bennet freely plus Mrs. Bennet is spared having to deal with the scandal at hand. Mrs. Hill expresses her relief that Lydia has been found safe and will be able to carry on a moderately decent life. She then goes on to admonish Mr. Bennet for the fact that he has been so unwilling to help James during his times of need. These words shed a new light on the subject for Mr. Hill. It is at this time that he freely admits the mistakes he has made in the past and that he feels remorse over his actions. This is the first time that the reader sees any sort of emotion from Mr. Bennet. He tries to explain that he was just trying to make the best out of the situation in a way that would not cause a scandal himself. There is a revelation here that Mr. Bennet has worried about James more than anyone knows, especially when he had left for the Militia. In the best way that she can, Mrs. Bennet is able to sum up James' whole life in just a matter of sentences. She says that James' actions have come from never having anyone around him that loved him the way he was supposed to be loved and through this he did not care about his death or life. This scene is considered to be the most emotional between the two of them as it is clear that there is still a level of love between them under the surface.

Chapter 16 finds that Polly has finally been broken of her attachment to Mr. Wickham as he has left without really addressing her or giving her anything. Through this, Polly now looks at Mr. Wickham differently although he and Lydia have left for their own home. This is one of the rare opportunities that Polly is central to the current scene. She feels regret that she is the cause of James leaving. She is aware that something happened between Mr. Wickham and James on the night that he left but is unaware of exactly what. Sarah has been extremely angry at everyone around her for their total forgetfulness about James, but now Sarah sees that Polly thinks of him as well, causing her mood to lighten. Sarah assures Polly that she had no part to play in James' departure. Before now, Sarah has not realized the impact that this has had on the little girl as she has kept her feelings of loss very quiet.

Ptolemy makes a return to the area after a considerable bit of absence. The Bingleys have once again decided to take up residence at Netherfield. The reader should remember that Ptolemy was supposed to have left the Bingleys to open is own tobacco store. He remains unchanged visibly, and he is still attracted to Sarah. On one of the



Bingley visits, Jane gets engaged to Mr. Bingley. This is a suitable match according to Mrs. Bennet. This will elevate Jane's social status and she will be well provided for financially. This causes Ptolemy to come over frequently, either with notes or accompanying Mr. Bingley. Sarah still has her mind squarely set on James, she no longer has any care about Ptolemy. Unfortunately, it has been more than four months since James has been gone and Sarah still has not heard anything about him.

Soon after the engagement of Jane, Elizabeth gets engaged. This is also another perfect match for Mrs. Bennet and her duties are fulfilled for Jane and Elizabeth in terms of making sure they marry well. As this is a chapter of romantic involvements, Sarah is not left out as she once again faces a romantic dilemma. This time it is spurred on by Mrs. Hill. Although she loves James, Mrs. Hill also thinks of Sarah as a daughter and, like Mrs. Bennet, Mrs. Hill wants to see Sarah properly settled with a decent man. There is also a hidden motive in Mrs. Hill's schemes. As three of the Bennet daughters are married, there will soon come a time when the elder Bennets have no need for Sarah and Polly. Mr. and Mrs. Hill's tenure is secure, it is a part of a deal made long ago when the pair were hired.

Mrs. Hill remembers a time when Sarah had a lot of interest in Ptolemy, but it faded once he went to London. Now that Ptolemy is back, this is considered coincidental good fortune. In a sharp turn of events, Mrs. Hill no longer bears any racist thoughts against Ptolemy. This is further aided by a discussion that takes place between Mrs. Hill and Ptolemy. He mentions that he is still going to go into business for himself to build a lucrative tobacco shop. During this discussion the depth of Ptolemy's attraction to Sarah is explained. As the conversation continues, Mrs. Hill is very impressed with his speech and his devotion to Sarah. As the mother figure for Sarah, Mrs. Hill comes to believe that this match will do Sarah good. Not only will she get over her melancholy over James, she will also be elevated in social class. This theme of social class is still very important, even to Mrs. Hill. In time, Sarah may be able to have her own servants. This match is considered as good, if not better than, Elizabeth's recent match.

The news that Mrs. Hill wants Sarah to marry Ptolemy comes with a bit of dread for Sarah. Although she still cares for Ptolemy, it is no longer the intriguing romance she once hoped for. Mrs. Hill does her best to convince Sarah that to do this would be for her own good. A certain amount of sadness comes with this dialogue. Sarah is unimpressed with this new development and is still holding onto her love for James. Mrs. Hill, using her own knowledge and past as a guide, tells Sarah that love is not everything and that she should try to lift herself up. To this, she adds the news that either Sarah or Polly will be dismissed soon as there will be little work left in the house. This is the first time that this information has been discussed between the servants, although Mrs. Hill has had the notion of it for quite some time.

Chapter 17 finds the engagement of both Jane and Elizabeth in full swing. There is a distinct change in the relationship between Elizabeth and Sarah. Once very friendly, now their interactions are hollow and are on a strict employer/employee basis. It is not Elizabeth who has instigated this attitude, it is Sarah based on the fact that Elizabeth has been little-to-no help in locating James. Elizabeth is in a daze of happiness and



does not notice this chilled attitude of Sarah's. Instead, she keeps talking to Sarah as if they are still on more friendly terms. There is a surprise here, as Elizabeth invites Sarah to come work at Pemberley after the wedding. Even Elizabeth admits to Sarah that once she and Jane are gone, Sarah will be dismissed. There is no real compassion in this as the reader knows that Sarah has no other place to go, but as the employers the Bennets are oblivious to the fates of the servants. For Sarah, this is seen as something she has no choice but to do. It is either go to Pemberley or face homelessness. This is a rising action that will set up the climax and conclusion of Sarah's development.

Chapter 18 flashes forward to shortly after the wedding of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. Sarah arrives at Pemberley and there is a large difference between this new home and Longbourn. Here there is a multitude of servants and there is a sense of formality to everything. There is even a separate entrance for the servants, unlike at Longbourn. There is also a hierarchy in place to define the servants' roles. Sarah has now changed from a house maid and a personal maid to just Elizabeth's personal maid. These changes are very jolting for Sarah. At one time, she wished that she could elevate herself and get away from Longbourn, but now she finds that her wish is to still be at Longbourn among familiar surroundings.

As Sarah is given a tour of the home, Sarah comes to realize how immensely large the home is. She is unused to all of this space and the information that she is given. Even the housekeeper makes a comment that there is a large difference between Pemberley and Longbourn, but she sincerely hopes that Sarah will become accustomed to this new occupation. For some time, Sarah is content here as she learns more and more about her new home. The job is seen to be vastly easier in that she no longer has the daily duties of cleaning as well as dressing the Bennet girls. Sarah is now in charge of only dressing Elizabeth. While this task was easy at Longbourn, it has now become difficult. Elizabeth is beginning to show more interest in her looks as she wants to her appearance to please her new husband. This change in Elizabeth marks the further deterioration of Sarah and Elizabeth's previous relationship. Elizabeth's growth in social status causes her to be more judgmental in how services are done for her, causing her to start using the maid of Mr. Darcy's sister. Elizabeth telling Sarah that she has no clue as to the latest fashions is an offhanded insult to Sarah.

Sarah's life is actually quite lonely as she spends most of her days confined to Elizabeth's rooms. Her days are seen as long and tedious with them becoming even more so as Elizabeth continues to cut Sarah's duties down. Now Sarah is only allowed to mend simple garments that may never be used again as Elizabeth has developed a taste for constantly shopping for new clothes. There is no great interaction with the rest of the Pemberley servants. When there is a brief occurrence, it is filled with tension as the other servants regard Sarah with contempt and distrust. All of these items contribute to the growing feeling of unhappiness inside of Sarah. Once again she starts longing to be free from being a servant at all.

The final dialogue between Sarah and Ptolemy comes in Chapter 19. The Bingleys have come to spend some time with Elizabeth, and it is a surprise that Ptolemy is among them. It is clear that he has never left his position as a footman, and it is to be wondered



if he will ever leave it. At first, Ptolemy ignores Sarah, preferring to keep to the company of the other Netherfield servants. It is unclear at this point if Ptolemy already knows that Sarah has rejected him. He focuses on another maid during dinner, giving little attention to Sarah. Sarah watches this and is reminded of how he acted the same way towards her that he is currently acting with this maid. This knowledge gives Sarah the final proof that she could never love Ptolemy as much as she loves James.

When the conversation shifts to Sarah, Ptolemy cannot look her in the eye. He is still extremely devoted to Sarah, but he is starting to figure out that these feelings will never be reciprocated. This is especially evident as she wishes him luck with his future endeavors. This effectively breaks Ptolemy's heart but he knows that Sarah is in love with James. There is a revelation that Ptolemy has seen James recently. This information inspires and excites Sarah. Her reaction to this also lets Ptolemy know that there will never be a chance to change Sarah's mind. Reluctantly, Ptolemy gives Sarah the information she has been waiting months for and how to find him. These final words come as a relief to Sarah but it also marks the end of the interaction between Ptolemy and Sarah. After Ptolemy tells Sarah what she wants to know, he turns his back on her, never to speak to her again. This closure brings with it a cliffhanger as the reader will never know if Ptolemy is ever able to leave Netherfield to open the shop he always talks about.

There is a life changing event that occurs on the day Sarah and the rest of the servants are paid. After many years of wishing for a different life, Sarah has gathered the courage to end her employment as a servant. This comes as quite a shock to Elizabeth. It is not a shock of a friend's departure, but the shock that Sarah would be so ungrateful to Elizabeth as to leave her post. The other servants regard this as absurd that Sarah would want to leave a fine position and home to explore the unknown. Sarah is clear in her plans and will not be dissuaded from them. She knows that the road will be long and rough, but if it leads back to James, she is willing to make that sacrifice. Her plans are to walk with others who are homeless and looking for work. She is not averse to a hard day's work and she knows that by traveling with others, she will be safe.

There is a final example of the callous attitude that employers sometimes have for their employees. Elizabeth has instructed Mr. Darcy to interrogate Sarah and find the reasons for her departure. The entire scene has the feel that Sarah is being intimidated into staying. Mr. Darcy uses guilt to try to coerce Sarah into staying. He feels that Sarah should be more grateful that Elizabeth has taken her in and that Sarah is a fool for leaving such a prime position. He also expected Sarah to stay as more of a companion for Elizabeth as it is divulged that Elizabeth is now pregnant with their first child. They do not bother to inquire the true reasons for Sarah's resignation, they are only concerned for their own comfort. Even the knowledge that Sarah is wanted to be by Elizabeth's side during her pregnancy is not enough to persuade Sarah to stay. She is determined to find her own happiness for once, no matter who it may offend. Sarah's actual departure is lonely and unceremonious, a visual attestation of the other servants and Mr. and Mrs. Darcy's views about Sarah. This is the resolution of her life as a servant, but the beginning of a whole new one.



In Chapter 20, the novel concludes as there are resolutions for all of the main and supporting characters. Mrs. Bennet is so happy about the success of her daughter's marriages that the neighbors do not care to be around her. She remains oblivious to this as she still focuses on the other two unmarried daughters. Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet are content in this, as they begin to show a more relaxed and loving relationship towards one another any time Mrs. Bennet is out of the house at more social engagements. As their subplot is resolved, it is given that Mrs. Hill is now more content as she knows that everything she has gone through in the past has led to these moments.

Mr. Hill passes away in the arms of his lover, but the secret of his true lifestyle can remain hidden. The deception comes from Mrs. Hill and the grieving lover carrying Mr. Hill back to his bed to make things look like he died peacefully there. There is a brief flash forward of Polly as a school teacher in the village school. In the current time, Polly has taken to studying quite a bit and is determined to make a better life for herself. The only unclear detail at this point is the whereabouts of Sarah. She has not written to anyone, causing Mrs. Hill great worry. The conclusion of the novel focuses squarely on the climax and resolution of Sarah's fate. The actual journey is described with little detail, but she is successful in finally tracking James down. By this time his body has aged considerably due to the hard work he has been doing in the years since he left Longbourn. Because Sarah has held out hope and is still deeply in love with him, she is able to instantly recognize him among a group of road workers. James is shocked that Sarah has found him again and the reunion is heartfelt although brief. As James is still a wanted man, the pair must continue to move from town to town without calling attention to themselves. The final scene of the novel takes place many years since the beginning of the novel, but it is a reverse of the actions occurring in the beginning. A young couple, armed with a young child, comes walking up the lane to Longbourn. In the distance, a more mature Polly is hanging out the laundry when she happens to spot the couple, just as Sarah spotted James in the past. The couple are indeed Sarah and James and they have finally come home to the place where they realize that they are the happiest.

Discussion Question 1

How does the scandal with Lydia affect the Bennets? How does Lydia feel about the commotion she has caused?

Discussion Question 2

Why does Mrs. Hill start to be nice to Ptolemy? Why does she think it is a good idea for Sarah to marry him?

Discussion Question 3

How is Sarah's life at Pemberley different than her life at Longbourn? What is Elizabeth's reaction to Sarah's resignation?



Vocabulary

brazenly, extrapolate, comportment, patina, trajectory, smitten, translucent, ineffectually, livery, slothful, inconsolable, austere, jostle, reconcile, intractable, spindle, torsion



Characters

Sarah

As the main protagonist of the story, Sarah is the older of the two housemaids who has been living under the care of housekeeper Mrs. Hill since she was 6 after being left an orphan when her parents and her brother pass away from cholera. She is regarded as beautiful by James, but she does not believe so herself. She is gray eyed and small framed but has a strong independent streak. At first, Sarah is extremely suspicious of new servant James Smith, but she grows to care for him gradually, especially after finding his bag of seashells one night while snooping through his room. She strikes up a friendship with a servant from a neighboring house, Ptolemy Bingley, but it is stopped short by Mrs. Hill when Sarah is found to be smoking cigarettes with him. Mrs. Hill believes that Sarah has romantic interests in Ptolemy, and she tries to forbid Sarah from seeing him but Sarah disobeys her. On the night of the Netherfield ball, Sarah sneaks out to see Ptolemy where they share rum and kiss. This makes her question not only her desire to continue working as a servant but her feelings for Ptolemy as well.

After the Bingleys and Ptolemy leave Netherfield, Sarah comes to the decision that she needs to leave Longbourn in search of Ptolemy in London. She sneaks out one night after everyone has fallen asleep, but she does not know that James is watching her from his room. He follows her to the crossroads between the road to London and the road to the local village, which is a metaphor for Sarah choosing a free life or going back to the familiar settings of being a servant. During the confrontation between her and James, she suddenly comes to terms with the fact that she actually does not know Ptolemy well enough to develop feelings for him but that she has always cared for James. This starts a secret affair between the two, but it also begins to diminish Sarah's needs for a free life.

When James flees Longbourn after being outed by Mr. Wickham, Sarah is near inconsolable. She wants to leave to find him, but Mrs. Hill initially talks her out of it. Mrs. Hill even changes her attitude towards Ptolemy and tries to get Sarah to marry him to no avail. After Elizabeth marries Mr. Darcy, Sarah joins them at their home to become Elizabeth's personal maid. While there, she has an easier life, but it still cannot compare to the life she wants to share with James. Against the advice of everyone around her, Sarah leaves her life at Pemberly to search for James. She is finally free from her life of servitude as she roams the English countryside looking for her lover. After a considerably long time of searching, she finds James again and the pair take up a nomadic life together for many years before finally returning to where they were the happiest at Longbourn, this time with a child of their own.



James Smith

Born in 1788 as the illegitimate child of Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Hill, James arrives as the mysterious new servant of Longbourn House and the anti-hero of the novel. After running into and having an argument during their first meeting, James begins to fall in love with Sarah. He is still seen as her antagonist as they bicker about even the smallest things. The main things that attract him to her is her fierce argumentative streak, her independence, and her intelligence. His feelings deepen but he knows that he cannot tell her the truth. Not only is he afraid that she would not reciprocate his feelings, he also is trying to escape a dark past. In order to protect her from that past, he feels he must push himself away from her.

While in the Militia he is the cannon loader and he is very faithful to the war effort. When he is arrested for desertion, he remains hopeful that he will be heard. He is found guilty despite his efforts, but he is shown leniency because he has returned to his duties. The bad thing about this is, leniency comes in the form of 50 lashes with a whip on his back. This event changes his whole mindset, he no longer has fear of anything including death and has a hardened mentality against the Militia. He is then jailed only be freed when the village is under attack from the French. Everyone else has retreated from the area, leaving Sergeant Pye and James. James has lost his respect for Sergeant Pye, first for his sexual misconduct in another town, next for not listening to him after his arrest, and it has hit its lowest as Sergeant Pye orders James to kill the horses instead of untethering them. This final heinous act by Sergeant Pye is the catalyst that causes James to stab him to death. From this, James is not only changed emotionally, but externally he has made the cross between innocence and guilt as he becomes a deserter and for the murder of Sergeant Pye.

James is rescued by an older lady and her family. It is the hope of these ladies that he take the place of the old lady's dead son and the younger woman's husband. James finds that he cannot in good conscience do this as he has made a promise to himself that he will return to England and seek out Mr. Bennet. His thoughts are squarely on home as he becomes a crew member of the Portuguese ship, the Snapdragon. While on board, he witnesses the slave trade and he feels sympathy for the slaves. Upon his return to England, he sneaks away from the ship and heads to Longbourn to fulfill his intentions of becoming Mr. Bennet's faithful servant.

Mrs. Hill

Mrs. Hill is the housekeeper of Longbourn House and in some ways the adoptive mother of Sarah and Polly. She is seen as someone who is always to be respected and who is very skilled at her job. When James is hired, she has a very loud argument with Mr. Bennet over the hiring of James and seems to be the only person who is ever able to do so. Mrs. Bennet begs for Mrs. Hill's aid in getting Mr. Bennet to buy new dresses for herself and her daughters. Mrs. Hill reluctantly does so and is successful in her efforts. Mrs. Hill is seen as a sympathetic companion for Mrs. Bennet as she is the one



Mrs. Bennet always turns to when she is troubled. Mrs. Hill is also the only person in the house that has the ability to get away with arguing with Mr. Bennet. She is overheard arguing with Mr. Bennet shortly after James' arrival.

In later passages, Mrs. Hill is extremely worried about the future of Longbourn. She tries her hardest to make a good impression on Mr. Collins, the future heir of Longbourn when he arrives to pick a wife from one of the Bennet girls. The main cause of her concern is what will happen when he takes over and either he or his wife want to change the staff. Mrs. Hill is afraid that she and the other servants will be dismissed with no homes to go to. Secretly, Mrs. Hill agrees with Mrs. Bennet that Elizabeth should have married Mr. Collins, but she is made happy in his choice of Charlotte Lucas as a bride. Mrs. Hill knows that Charlotte is a nice quiet girl. In order to make a further good impression on the new Mrs. Collins, Mrs. Hill makes a hand warmer for Charlotte as well as trays of her favorite dessert, in hopes that Charlotte will continue to keep the staff the same.

Ever since James has arrived at Longbourn, Mrs. Hill is especially fond of him and although she is seen as a motherly influence over all of the servants, she is particularly attached to James. In the third volume of the novel, one of the first chapters reveals that Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet had a love affair once that resulted in Mrs. Hill being pregnant. Mrs. Hill gives the baby to a local farming family to raise, with Mr. Bennet always watching out for his progress. Mr. Hill is the butler of Longbourn at that time and he agrees to marry Mrs. Hill so that she can keep her reputation and so that she might have some sort of happiness. The baby is revealed to be James Smith and Mrs. Hill becomes angry with Mr. Bennet when James flees from Longbourn. Mrs. Hill wants Mr. Bennet to find him, but he refuses and Mrs. Hill feels that she and Mr. Bennet are failures at having lost their son once again.

As for the relationship with Sarah, there is a mother/daughter relationship more so than an employer/employee relationship. Mrs. Hill has cared for Sarah since the age of 6. After James leaves, Mrs. Hill's attitude for Ptolemy softens, especially after he explains that he wants to open a shop of his own and rise above a servant's life. Mrs. Hill tells Sarah this information and suggests that it would be for the best if Sarah is to marry Ptolemy. Sarah declines, and both of them continue to hold on to their hopes that James is somewhere alive.

Elizabeth Bennet

Elizabeth is the second Bennet daughter and is known for her sharp wit. She is also beautiful as well, but she does use that for any advantage. In some ways, she can be considered a friend of Sarah's as they both share a love of books and out of the Bennet daughters, Sarah has the most interaction with Elizabeth. When Mr. Collins comes to Longbourn to find a wife, he picks Elizabeth and proposes to her. To the dismay of both Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Hill, Elizabeth refuses the offer. She does not like the way that he is constantly preaching and she finds him annoying. Mr. Collins next turns his attentions



to Elizabeth's friend, Charlotte Lucas. When the pair are married, Elizabeth is genuinely happy for them.

Elizabeth goes, along with Sarah, to visit them at their house in Kent. While there, she encounters Mr. Darcy, a man who often dined with the officers at Longbourn. Through this meeting in Kent, Elizabeth learns more about Mr. Darcy and the pair become engaged. When she leaves for his estate at Pemberley, she takes Sarah with her. After Elizabeth's arrival, she becomes very changed as at this point she is more concerned with her looks in an attempt to keep Mr. Darcy happy. When Sarah announces that she is leaving her position, Elizabeth is extremely upset as she has become pregnant and wants Sarah's help. It is presumed that Elizabeth's feelings are hurt by Sarah's sudden departure as their casual friendship will be over, but it can also be viewed as simply an employer not wanting to lose a talented employee.

Ptolemy Bingley

Ptolemy Bingley is a servant at the neighboring Netherfield House. He is considered extremely odd by his co-workers and others as he is of African descent. Ptolemy was brought to England from a plantation in Africa where his mother is still a slave. Sarah likes him instantly as he has a good nature and tells her of places she has never seen. He is seen as a temptation for Sarah as he talks of his ideas. Ptolemy is also a representation of freedom and of the unknown, which is clear as Sarah is excited of his talks about places Sarah has never been to before but often wondered about. Mrs. Hill does not like him because of his dark skin and contrives to keep Sarah away from him as much as possible in the beginning. Ptolemy likes Sarah as well and kisses her as they sit outside of the Netherfield ball. He leaves with the rest of the Bingleys back to London shortly after, saying that he is going to open his own tobacco shop. The next time that Sarah sees Ptolemy is at Pemberly, the home of Mr. Darcy and Elizabeth. He has come with the Mr. Bingley and Jane and it is clear that he was never able to leave his duties as a servant. It is also clear that he still has romantic feelings for Sarah, but he understands that she no longer feels the same way about him. In an effort to do one final thing for Sarah, he tells her that James is alive and where he was last seen, which gives Sarah hope that she can find James.

Mr. Hill

Mr. Hill is a quiet elderly gentleman who is the butler, gardener, and driver of Longbourn House until the arrival of James where his duties are lessened. He is seen as quiet and defers to his wife about almost everything. Not much is known about him or how long he has been with the Bennet family. He marries Mrs. Hill after she gives up the illegitimate child she has with Mr. Bennet for adoption so that Mrs. Hill will not be humiliated. Mr. Hill loves Mrs. Hill in a platonic or familial way and he has never ask for anything more than that. He also does this to cover up his own secret life. Mr. Hill is a homosexual man who does not want anyone to know about his true lifestyle. He has lovers from other farms, but they are never a visible part of his life. Mrs. Hill knows about this and is



understanding concerning this. She has never fully interacted with any of his lovers, but she has at least been introduced to a couple of them. When Mr. Hill passes away, he does so in his favorite spot by a tree with his long term secret lover. Out of respect for him, Mrs. Hill and the unnamed lover hurry to carry him into the house so it appears that he has died in his bed, thus never revealing his secret.

Polly

Polly is the other housemaid in the Bennet house. She came to be there after being living in an orphanage since birth. Polly's actual name is Mary, but it is changed to Polly while in the Bennet house as one of the Bennet daughters has the same name. The sharing of a name would go against formality, and since Polly is nothing but a servant, it is she who had her name changed. Her age is never distinctly given, but she is described as young enough to still suck her thumb and to eventually be enrolled in school. Polly is a hard worker and very helpful around the house. She has a very sweet and innocent nature, trusting everyone she meets. She and James are instant friends and this can be regarded as an example of a older brother/little sister relationship. When Mr. Wickham begins courting Lydia, he often promises Polly sweets and spends a good bit of time being overly nice to her. James discovers Mr. Wickham as he is about to molest Polly and he defends her by hitting Mr. Wickham. Polly hides in the barn with James during the night and informs the other servants at Longbourn that he has run away. Over the next few years after Sarah has left Longbourn, Polly enrolls in school and is seen as an avid reader. Many years later, she becomes a teacher at a local school.

Mr. Collins

Mr. Collins is the preacher cousin of Mr. Bennet and the future heir of Longbourn House. At first he is seen as a very friendly man, especially as he breaks an unwritten rule of never directly talking to servants when he talks to Sarah. As he stays with the Bennets for quite some time, he is seen to be a nuisance. The Bennet girls avoid him in their rooms as he is almost always reading sermons to them and Mr. Bennet shuts himself up in the library as often as he can. Only Mrs. Bennet and Mrs. Hill are particularly interested in his presence. Both ladies would like to see Mr. Collins marry one of the Bennet girls. If this were to happen then Mrs. Bennet would be happy, as it is a socially respectable match. Mrs. Hill thinks that such a marriage would secure the positions of not only herself but the other Longbourn servants as well.

Mr. Collins makes it a habit to ask Sarah about each of the girls. In this, it is clear that Mr. Collins is looking for someone frugal, of high moral character, and someone who will obey him and not question his authority. Shortly after the Netherfield ball, he proposes to Elizabeth, but she denies him, causing him to be very depressed. His spirits are quickly lifted upon the meeting and courting of Elizabeth's close friend, Charlotte Lucas. The pair marry and head back to their home of Hunsford Parsonage in Kent where Elizabeth Bennet and Sarah stay for six weeks.



Mr. Bennet

Mr. Bennet is the owner of Longbourn House and Sarah's employer. Mr. Bennet hires James Smith without the prior approval of Mrs. Hill and gets into an argument with her the following day over the issue. This is the only time that he is shown as having a strong opinion on any issue. He is someone who is seen as mostly quiet and very reserved. He spends most of his time in the library among his books and away from others. He is not overly concerned with appearances or the demands of his social class. He prefers to stay home instead of attend the many parties that the family is invited to. The only party that is noted that he attends is the Netherfield ball, but he tells James that the only reason he is attending is because he would rather go than face the wrath of Mrs. Bennet if he does not.

Although Mr. Bennet wants to see his daughters happy, he does not want to do anything that would force them into any sort of relationship. This is evidenced by Elizabeth's refusal to marry Mr. Collins. Unlike Mrs. Bennet's snide comments about how Elizabeth could have married Mr. Collins and everything would be fine, Mr. Bennet sees that Elizabeth would not be happy in this relationship. Mr. Bennet is often at odds with his wife over such small things, but the arguments never seem to go very far.

Mr. Bennet is a secondary character but he is an integral part of the plot. Before he married Mrs. Bennet he was secretly in love with Mrs. Hill, and the pair conceived an illegitimate child. The child was given up for adoption, but Mr. Bennet has always kept track on the child. The child is revealed to be James Smith, but James is never made aware of this knowledge, as Mr. Bennet is perceived to not want to divulge this information to anyone, possibly out of guilt that he could not marry Mrs. Hill. When James runs away after the confrontation with Mr. Wickham, Mr. Bennet realizes his feelings but does not do much about it other than admit to Mrs. Hill that he has made a mistake.

Mrs. Bennet

Mrs. Bennet is the sometimes overbearing wife of Mr. Bennet. She is a round woman with an affinity for the best in perfumes and make up. Her dressing room is often cluttered with all sorts of accessories and things and she gets offended when Mrs. Hill offers to clean up. She is sometimes clueless about the lives of the servants, in particular when she gives a silk dress to Mrs. Hill thinking that it is a present but in reality for Mrs. Hill it is not, as it is too fancy to work in and needs a lot of alterations in order to make it fit. For Mrs. Bennet, social status is everything and she will do whatever it takes to ensure that her family is considered one of the best in the area. She has no care about how much it costs to keep up social appearances nor does she care about the extra work that it entails.

When Mr. Bingley moves to the area, Mrs. Bennet pleads with Mrs. Hill to convince Mr. Bennet that she and her daughters need new dresses. Mrs. Hill is reluctant to do this, but she gives in after hearing Mrs. Bennet pleading with her. She feels that Mr. Bennet



does not listen to her and cares more about house matters than he does the welfare of his girls. Mrs. Bennet is a depressed woman, she had a son who died shortly after birth many years prior and was never able to have children again. Because of this, there is no heir to Longbourn and so the estate must pass on to Mr. Collins.

When Mr. Bennet hires James Smith, Mrs. Bennet is delighted that there is a new male servant in the house. She feels that the house can be considered as trendy as most of the young able bodied males have gone into the Militia. Once the Militia sets up camp in Meryton, Mrs. Bennet keeps busy by hosting and attending many parties for the officers. She does this so that she can show off her daughters in hopes that one of the officers will be attracted to the girls. Upon the arrival of Mr. Collins, Mrs. Bennet is sure that one of the girls will have the good sense to marry him and keep their social status up and the estate in their family. She is extremely disappointed as Mr. Collins is rejected by Elizabeth and then goes on to marry Charlotte Lucas. Mrs. Bennet feels that Elizabeth is a fool for this mistake, but her heart is in the right place.

Mr. Wickham

Mr. Wickham is the son of one of Mr. Darcy's stewards and has recently bought his way into being an officer of the Militia. He is loved by the Bennet ladies, in particular Lydia. Mr. Wickham is a sly and scheming man since he of a middle class and does not fit in with either the upper or servant classes. The ability to use both classes to his advantages makes Mr. Wickham a dangerous person. He is able to influence the Bennet girls and is able to accompany them in social engagements.

With the servants, he can claim that he is very comfortable and prefers the company of the servants, but in reality he is just wanting to get close to Polly. He constantly gives her treats and money, but there is a hidden and insidious purpose to this even though Polly just thinks he is being a gentleman. He would like to have sexual contact with her although she is only a young girl. James starts to become aware of this and is very wary of Mr. Wickham, although he also suspects that Mr. Wickham has some knowledge that James is a deserter as well. This comes to light when Mr. Wickham corners Polly on the last night of the Militia's presence in Meryton. Just as his hand is moving down past her neck, James walks in and orders Polly out of the room.

As James is then leaving the room, Mr. Wickham calls James' attention, saying lewd things about Polly. This causes James to lose his temper and to hit Mr. Wickham. Seeing that now Mr. Wickham has the upper hand, he informs James that he knows that James is a deserter and he plans on letting the authorities and Mr. Bennet know about this. The only solution Mr. Wickham gives James is to leave and never return. There is nothing kind about this, Mr. Wickham just wanted James out of the way so he can continue his lecherous behavior.

After the dinner party is over and everyone leaves, Lydia leaves with Colonel Forster and his wife but sometime in the middle of the night, she sneaks out of that house with Mr. Wickham. This causes a great scandal for the Bennet family as they travel to a



number of towns before going to London. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet meet them in London where Mr. Wickham marries Lydia out of moral propriety, but once they return to Longbourn, he still has his eyes on Polly. Polly no longer wants to be around him as he never lived up to his promises to bring her exotic candies and the new Mr. and Mrs. Wickham quietly leave Longbourn.

Sergeant Pye

Sergeant Pye is the commanding officer of the gunner crew where James is stationed. He is a man who does not like direct contact nor does he tolerate any opposing opinions. He kills a poor farmer because he tried to keep Sergeant Pye from stealing his horse. Sergeant Pye does not see the horror in his action, he just disregards what he has done by saying that the farmer should not have gotten in his way. His nature is extremely uncaring and somewhat arrogant, especially after he has had a few drinks. In one of the small villages, Sergeant Pye can see the destitution of the people and the devastation that has swept through the town. He laughs this off and uses it to his own advantage to receive sex from some of the young citizens in exchange for some of his bread or rations. The cruel nature is seen here as Pye has no intention of giving anything to these people and he knows that they are powerless to do anything about it. This is one of the events that causes James to feel hatred for Sergeant Pye. Later, when James is accidentally left behind from his regiment, it is Sergeant Pye that turns him in as a deserter. James is put on trial and Sergeant Pye leads it but is unwilling to listen to James' explanations, condemning James to be punished by flogging.

As a result of Sergeant Pye's sexual indiscretions, he has contracted a sexually transmitted disease. His skin is changing color, he has open sores in various places, especially his genitals and he is becoming demented. It is because of this disease that Sergeant Pye makes the irrational decision to kill the horses instead of just untethering them during the British retreat after a French attack. Sergeant Pye is so delusional that he orders James to do it, but James refuses, causing Sergeant Pye to kill a Spanish mare. This action causes James' anger to rise to the point he stabs Sergeant Pye, killing him. After this murder, James walks away from the Militia forever, becoming the deserter he was accused of being.

Maria

After James walks out into the ocean and faints, he wakes up in the house of an elderly lady. She explains that her son has died, leaving his wife and daughter. As James recovers, he works on the family's boat as it is the only way they can survive. The younger lady introduces herself as Maria one evening after he comes back from working on the boat. Once the boat is fixed, James and Maria take the boat out into the water where they are successful in catching a multitude of fish. During the time that James is with them, Maria grows increasingly affectionate. The culmination of this affection comes when Maria surprises James in bed one night and she becomes his first sexual partner. This encounter is an attempt to keep James with them permanently



although he has promised himself that he would return to England as soon as he could. The next morning, Maria does not look at James either out of guilt for her actions or that she knows that he plans on leaving the family anyways. After Maria goes back inside the house during lunch, James gets up from his work walks down the beach and out of her life forever.

Mary Bennet

Mary is the third Bennet daughter and is considered to be quite plain in both action and looks. She is quiet and reserved, spending much of her time practicing her piano. Sarah has very little interaction with Mary, so there is not much in the way of her mannerisms and day-to-day routines. After Mr. Collins is refused by Elizabeth, Mary is clearly upset, as secretly she had feelings for him. Her disappointment is overlooked by all but Mrs. Hill, who feels sorry for her. With the side plots of the story heavily involving her sisters and her parents, Mary is often overlooked as a significant part of the story, despite her crushed feelings over Mr. Collins. As time goes by and the other sisters are married off, Mary is left with her younger sister Kitty to be with their mother. In time Mrs. Bennet comes to look at Mary as a confidante, engaging her in important decisions as well as devoting most of her time to her. Mary eventually gets used to this kind of attention and in this she is happy. There is no knowledge of her ever finding a suitable husband for herself, just the hope that she may meet someone like Mr. Collins.

Kitty Bennet

Kitty is the fourth Bennet daughter. She is quite lively and seen as incredibly frivolous. She is attractive in her own right and she is very vain about it. She uses her over-the-top personality to flirt with all of the officers and she has no care for any gossip about her or her actions. Once her sisters are married, she spends a considerable amount of time with them as they become her chaperones.

Lydia Bennet

Lydia is the fifth and youngest Bennet daughter. She also has a wild and flirty side which she uses to her advantage. She has an endless stream of boyfriends and is unhappy when she finds herself lacking one. Lydia is quite obtuse when it comes to how others feel and is shown to be especially overbearing to her older sister Kitty. Lydia is probably the most excited about the Militia coming into the village, as it gives her the opportunity to attract more men.

Lydia attracts the attention of Mr. Wickham while he is a guest at Longbourn. After the Militia leaves Meryton, Lydia is allowed to travel with Colonel Forster and his family as they follow the Militia. In the middle of the night, Lydia runs away with Mr. Wickham to elope. This causes a terrific scandal for the Bennets and for Colonel Forster. Mr. Bennet uses people to find her eventually in London, where he goes to force Mr. Wickham to marry Lydia. Lydia is now considered ruined in the public and her mother's eye, but

Lydia does not seem to care. After a while, Mrs. Bennet's thoughts change on this matter as the other girls become married as well, securing their social statuses.



Symbols and Symbolism

Laundry

Laundry is the first chore that is described within the novel. It is also one of the hardest jobs for the housemaids, Sarah and Polly. It is expressed that many other households hire extra help on laundry days because it is such a tedious chore, but the Bennets do not. This leaves Mrs. Hill to do all of the inside housework and to serve the Bennets whenever they need her, putting her in a nasty mood by the end of the day. It is during this chore that Sarah sees a stranger coming up the road. She is convinced that it is a salesman, but she is told that no one has been to the Bennet house whatsoever. This information proves to be incorrect, but it is not a salesman like Sarah thought. It is the new house servant, James Smith, that has been to the house to interview for a job at Longbourn.

At the end of the novel, as Sarah, James, and their baby return to Longbourn, it is an adult Polly looking at strangers coming up the road as she does the laundry.

Seashells

When Sarah sneaks into James' room to be nosy, she finds a bag under his bed. In the bag are a handful of seashells that he has collected. Upon seeing these, Sarah realizes that she was wrong to investigate James' private life and quickly leaves his room, with the vow to try to stop spending so much time thinking about him in a negative manner.

After James kills Sergeant Pye and leaves the Militia, he is saved by an old lady, her daughter in law Maria and her young child. After a brief romantic encounter with Maria, the women of the house view James differently and he feels guilty about his presence there. James decides that he can no longer stay with them because he does not feel he will not be able to make them happy. As he walks away from the house, he picks up seashells, possibly as a reminder of his peaceful time there.

Flogging

The first time flogging is mentioned is when Sarah is sent on an errand to Meryton as Mrs. Hill wants to keep her away from Ptolemy. Sarah witnesses a man being flogged in the Militia barracks and this deeply traumatizes her. After she returns home and recuperates from the cold she got from walking in the cold, she comes to the realization that she can never go back to being just a simple house maid ever again.

Later it is revealed that James was once flogged for being considered a deserter and a thief from the Militia when some fellow soldiers stole their horses and left in the middle of the night. This has hardened James against the Militia and is the cause of continued emotional and physical pain for James.



Militia

The militia causes a major plot development for the Bennets as it brings a whole group of suitable bachelors near. This excites Mrs. Bennet as she contrives to plan social activities for the officers, hoping that at least one of them will be a good match for one of her daughters. Along with the Militia comes, Mr. Wickham an officer who is originally the son of a servant but has just recently bought his way through the ranks. During a fight with Mr. Wickham, it is revealed that James was once a part of the Militia but now he is considered a thief and deserter. James had already been flogged severely for this offense, but he has been on the run from the Militia ever since.

In a flashback chapter, James was once very loyal to the Militia and his commanding officers. When he is accused of desertion he is flogged and imprisoned. James later leaves the Militia after he murders the demented Sergeant Pye. Since then, he has been on the run, trying to avoid the Militia as much as he can, until they come to Meryton.

Cigarillo

When the Bingleys call on the Bennets to inform them of an upcoming ball, Ptolemy and Sarah walk to a hidden part of the yard where he offers her his cigarillo. Driven by a sense of temptation, Sarah accepts this and begins smoking. This can be seen as the opening of a new sense of freedom for Sarah as she is doing something for the first time that is exciting to her. The pair are unfortunately caught by Mrs. Hill who forbids Sarah from ever speaking to Ptolemy again, citing that any interaction could be a large mistake. Later, when Sarah sneaks over to Netherfield during the ball, she is outside by herself when someone starts talking to her. She is able to recognize that it is Ptolemy as he is in the shadows smoking another cigarillo. This time, Ptolemy shares his rum with Sarah and after having a considerable amount to drink, they kiss. The next day, Ptolemy comes to Longbourn to deliver a note to the Bennet ladies that the Bingleys are leaving and to tell Sarah goodbye. He plans to go back to London with the rest of the Bingley servants, but he plans to leave and open his own tobacco shop.

Shoe Roses

Shoe roses are a decoration that are considered a trend of the time period and an important accessory to the Bennet girls' gowns. When they find that they do not have any good ones, they send Sarah out in the rain and the mud to get the appropriate ones. Sarah becomes covered in mud and rain as she walks to a store in Meryton. On the way back, she hitches a ride on the back of the Bingley carriage with Ptolemy, disobeying a direct order from Mrs. Hill. James is the only one who sees this and in an attempt to help Sarah he says that she should ask him to go on errands in town whenever it is rainy out. This causes Sarah to get mad at him once again, but she later regrets this action as she knows he was trying to be helpful.



Pamela

Pamela is the novel that Elizabeth loans to Sarah after she is finished reading it. Sarah reads it to herself as she sits up at nights by herself, especially when she is waiting for the Bennet family to return from social engagements. The novel is a steamy romance, which Sarah feels is inappropriate to read aloud during the evenings to the other servants. Sarah finds herself wondering about her life in connection with the plot of this book. In it, the master of an estate is openly pursuing one of the maids working for him. Sarah ponders if Mr. Collins will try this on the first afternoon of his visit when he is seen to be extremely talkative towards her. This is not the case, as Mr. Collins later turns out to be totally dismissive of any conversation that does not pertain to his interests in the Bennet daughters.

Rag Doll

Sarah has an old rag doll in a box under her bed. This is possibly her most prized possession, as it is the only thing that she has from her childhood. It is only mentioned when Sarah is running away from Longbourn to try to join Ptolemy in London and when she leaves Pemberley to find James.

Spanish Mare

After James is flogged for desertion he is imprisoned only to be released when the French invade the small Spanish village the Militia is camped in. The rest of the regiment has left James and Sergeant Pye behind to take care of the cannon and the horses pulling it. Sergeant Pye orders James to kill the horses instead of taking the time to unstrap them from the cannons, but it can be surmised that his sexually transmitted diseases have made him demented. Since James is reluctant to kill the mare, Sergeant Pye mercilessly kills it himself. This causes James to become extremely angry which results in James killing Sergeant Pye and then deserting the Militia.

Snapdragon

The Snapdragon is the Portuguese ship that James becomes a crew member of after he leaves Maria. He travels to many exotic places and sees the slave and sugar trades of the Caribbean and forms anti-slave views. He never divulges much information about himself to his crew mates and usually prefers to keep to himself. James spends almost two years aboard the Snapdragon before it lands in Lancaster, England. He asks for shore leave for the very first time and it is readily given to him as he has been a model sailor. Some of his crew mates invite him to a local pub for a drink, but after one round James decides he has had enough. James claims that he needs to use the restroom, but instead he walks out of the bar and heads for the country roads leading him back to Meryton.



Settings

Longbourn House

Longbourn is the name of the manor in which the Bennet family and their servants live. It is a small estate outside of the village of Meryton. The bedrooms in the house are not very large but the home overall is always well kept. The main setting within the house in terms of the servants is the kitchen and the scullery, the small storage space beside the kitchen. For scenes involving the Bennet family, a good deal of the actions occur within the Bennets dressing rooms. There is an occasional dialogue within the Bennet library, as Mr. Bennet spends most of his day there. Not much is divulged in the description of the rest of the manor. As the Bennet family are secretly not financially stable and there is no male heir, the estate will be turned over to Mr. Bennet's cousin, Mr. Collins. Mrs. Hill worries that Mr. Collins will want to come in and change all of the staff once he inherits Longbourn, so she tries her best to impress Mr. Collins. After Mr. Collins is rebuffed by Elizabeth, he marries her cousin Charlotte Lucas, and it is guaranteed that the house will remain in familiar hands.

Meryton

Meryton is the village that is close to Longbourn. The Militia has set up there with a barracks in the village square and because of this Mrs. Bennet feels the need to entertain the officers, plus there are many social activities in the town. There is not much in the way of physical description of the town, just an alleyway that Sarah walks down and briefly reminisces about her childhood. In an effort to keep Sarah away from Ptolemy, Mrs. Hill sends her to the village on an errand. It is revealed during this errand that Sarah comes from Meryton, her parents inhabited a house in the low income section of the town and she is still known by some of the residents there. While on this excursion, Sarah comes across the barracks where she witnesses a man being flogged. This sickens her to the point that she is visibly shaken and emotionally drained. On the way back, she is walking in the damp and chilly air, only to catch a cold which lands her in bed for a few days, causing James to worry about her. On another trip to Meryton, this time to buy shoe roses for the Bennet girls, Sarah walks to Meryton in the rain. Because she is walking on the main road, carriages pass by her covering her in mud, by the time she reaches the shoe store, she is a muddy and wet mess.

When Sarah runs away to find Ptolemy in London, she is at the crossroads as one road will take her goes to London and the other goes to Meryton. This is a metaphor for the conflict in Sarah. The road to London leads to a life free from being a servant. It is filled with unknown possibilities. The road to Meryton represents the same life she has always had and the continued feelings of inadequacy. While at these crossroads, James comes to her and begs her not to go to London for a while until she is absolutely sure that she is in love with Ptolemy. Hearing James say this is the catalyst she needs to realize that it isn't Ptolemy she has been wanting, it is James.



Netherfield House

Netherfield House is a neighboring house that was recently rented out to the Bingley family. Sarah is sent there once to invite young bachelor Mr. Bingley to Longbourn for dinner. While there, she encounters Ptolemy Bingley, a black servant, which is quite unusual for this area, and the pair become friends quickly. When Jane is invited over for dinner by the Bingley sisters, she catches a cold and she and her sister Elizabeth stay there for a few days. Later, a ball takes place at Netherfield, which the Bennets are invited to. Sarah sneaks away during this time to come to the house to see Ptolemy and they share her first kiss. Shortly afterwards, the entire Bingley family and the servants leave to go back to London. Jane becomes the mistress of Netherfield after her marriage to Mr. Bingley.

Pemberley

Pemberley is the house of Mr. Darcy and his family. When Elizabeth marries Mr. Darcy, she moves to Pemberley and takes Sarah with her. It is considerably larger than Longbourn, which at first is mesmerizing for Sarah as she settles in to her new life. While there, Sarah has an easier life of being a lady's maid, doing things like sewing and making sure Elizabeth is properly dressed. When Elizabeth's sister Jane arrives for a visit, Sarah runs into Ptolemy again. He informs her that James is still alive and his last location. With this knowledge, Sarah leaves her servant job behind her as she goes in search of James.

Spain

James is stationed with the Militia in Spain. On the way to Salamanca, James witnesses his commanding officer kill a farmer over his horse and he has witnessed the atrocities that war has played upon the citizens in the villages. Once they are close to Salamanca, his regiment is ordered to go back to Portugal but then another order comes in saying that they are to go to a village close to the sea. On the way there, James becomes so tired that he unhitches the horses and stumbles into a shed where there are officers that he does not know. They invite him in to rest, but as he sleeps, they steal his horses and leave him, with the rest of his regiment leaving him behind as well. Once he catches up to his regiment, he is automatically arrested for the loss of the horses and desertion. He tries to explain his case, but he goes unheard. The usual sentence for desertion is execution, but he is shown leniency because he came back. Instead, he is given 50 lashes and imprisoned, only to be let out once the French invade the area. He is ordered to kill the horses by his commanding officer who has become demented, but James kills him instead. After the murder, James passes out near the sea where he is rescued by Maria, her mother-in-law and her daughter. As he heals, he helps them work on their boat and to fish in it once it is finished. They spend a peaceful time together until Maria and James become lovers and he realizes that he will not be happy there and the only place he will be happy is in his hometown in England.



London

When the Bingleys leave Netherfield, they say that they are returning to London. Ptolemy Bingley goes along with them, but he tells Sarah before he leaves to come look him up in the shop that he plans to open. Sarah takes this as an invitation and she sneaks off in the middle of the night to head to London. She is stopped by James who convinces her to come back to Longbourn and she realizes that she has feelings for him. Later, Sarah accompanies Elizabeth to London as she is traveling to see the Gardiner family in London and then the Collinses in Kent. Sarah had envisioned a bright, beautiful, and promising city before she left but what she sees when she gets there is the exact opposite. She finds it too dirty and noisy for her tastes and she is soon ready to leave the city behind. When Lydia runs off with Mr. Wickham, they are eventually found in London. Mr. Bennet and Mrs. Bennet go to London to talk with her, but the conversation is not revealed except for the discovery that she has married Mr. Wickham.



Themes and Motifs

Social Class

The theme of social class and the differences between them are the key themes of the novel, especially since it is told from the servant's perspective. The servant class is considered the lowest class. They do not earn much money and do not have the same privileges as the upper class. The low class do not have the same access to clothes and other goods. They do not have the same kinds of parties or other entertainment activities. Even in church, the low class have to sit in a different section. The Bennet family is considered middle to upper class, although it seems that their finances would suggest that they are merely middle class. To Mrs. Bennet, social class means everything and she will do anything it takes to uphold and elevate that status.

One of the main things that Mrs. Bennet uses to secure the social standing of the family is by keeping the girls in the latest fashions. When Mr. Bingley moves to Netherfield, Mrs. Bennet insists that she and the girls have new clothes. In order to achieve this, she recruits the help of Mrs. Hill, the only one who is considered capable of convincing Mr. Bennet to buy new clothes. The ruse is effective as the girls are able to give Sarah one of their dresses as they have "mysteriously" been allowed to have the new dresses they need. The wearing of these dresses is a sign to the people around them that they have the financial means to keep up with the latest trends and the capability to associate themselves with others of higher social classes. Of course, the Bennets do not have very much money, but they must keep up the appearance that they do, or else they could lose their social standing.

Another aspect of the Bennets' social status is the ability and need to interact with men of similar class. Mrs. Bennet is on a full scale campaign to ensure that her daughters make a good marriage match. Mrs. Bennet always takes the daughters to any party being held in the area. In order to do so, the Bennets must not only attend all of the society parties in the area, such as the Netherfield ball, but they must also host parties as well. Mrs. Bennet excels in hosting parties often for the Militia when they are stationed in Meryton. The new officers mean a new crop of young men to introduce to her daughters, in hopes that one of them will make a good match. Mr. Bennet has no cares about all of these social engagements, he prefers to stay alone in his library and not be bothered, but when the Netherfield ball occurs, he attends. It is not because he wants to socialize with the other prominent families of the area, he only goes so that Mrs. Bennet will not argue with him later over his absence.

Only Lydia becomes attached to one of the Militia men, but unfortunately, this causes a great scandal for the Bennets. Lydia runs off with Mr. Wickham in the middle of the night, becoming the cause of negative speculation and vicious gossip. On the surface the other matriarchs of the upstanding families pity Mrs. Bennet, but even the postal office lady gossips about the family in private. The only thing that can be done to save the family name at this point is to make Mr. Wickham marry Lydia and to send them off



to a neighboring village away from scrutinizing eyes. After Jane is married to Mr. Bingley and Elizabeth to Mr. Darcy, Mrs. Bennet is quite relieved and pleased that her daughters have married men that are considered men that are of better financial and social circumstances. This secures the Bennets' place in the social classes of the area.

On the other side of the social class spectrum are the servants and laborers of the area. Social activities are few and far between in occurrence. They are no more than just little picnics or dances in the town square. The dress is not overly trendy as most of the people do not have the money for finer dress. When Jane and Elizabeth give Sarah a dress it is an older dress to them, but Sarah is thrilled by it and only wants to wear it for special occasions. Although the novel focuses on the lives of the servants, there is not a great deal of detail given to the social structure of the lower classes other than the description of one of these local parties.

Other than Lydia's scandal, another potential scandal has the ability to ruin the Bennets' social status. In 1788, a young Mrs. Hill gives birth to a little boy that she gives to the Smith family for adoption. Because the father is Mr. Bennet, Mrs. Hill is forced to stay silent as the affair would destroy the Bennet family name. Mr. Bennet does not do the honorable thing by marrying Mrs. Hill, for someone of his standing to marry one of his maids would be another cause for great controversy. Instead, Mr. Bennet portrays himself as a benefactor of the Smith family and visits frequently as young James grows. When James runs away from the Smiths to join the Militia, Mr. Bennet claims that his hands are still tied and that James is now an adult capable of making up his own mind, much to Mrs. Hill's anger. Even many years later, Mr. Bennet does not want to get his hands dirty with the admission that he has a child out of wedlock with someone from a lower class. His nonchalance continues when James runs away from Longbourn after his altercation with Mr. Wickham, much to Mrs. Hill's dismay. This proves that although Mr. Bennet outwardly displays a non-caring attitude towards social status in not attending many functions, he is still overly concerned with protect the family's status no matter who it hurts.

Employer Relations

The novel lends a different light to the concept of employer relations. Where Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* shows life from the employer side, *Longbourn* shows things from the servant's side. Here the reader gets a glimpse of the tedious amounts of work that the servants must do every day. This includes details about some of the more undignified duties, such as washing feminine napkins and other items that are considered unsanitary and disgusting. The author adds these details to help illustrate that the work is very hard, often very dirty, and all of this is almost always under-appreciated.

At the head of the employee hierarchy is Mrs. Hill. She has the direct charge over housemaids Sarah and Polly and is the housekeeper of Longbourn. Mrs. Hill dispatches the girls on their duties while attending to her own as she is also the house cook. Mrs. Hill has more advantages than the other servants. She has the confidences of Mrs.



Bennet, especially when it comes to needing something from Mr. Bennet. Mrs. Hill is the only one of the servants who has a bit of freedom when it comes to speaking to Mr. Bennet, and she uses it effectively to aid Mrs. Bennet in buying new clothes for the girls. Even Mr. Bennet has a certain respect for Mrs. Hill. When James is hired as a footman, Mr. Bennet is apologetic towards Mrs. Hill that she was not consulted first, giving the indication that Mrs. Hill is usually present for the hiring of new workers. This particular hire causes a great argument between the two in the library, which is a definitely piece of evidence of the respect that Mrs. Hill commands. Any other servant that would speak to Mr. Bennet would more than likely be put out of their jobs. The result of the confrontation still is not positive for Mrs. Hill, she is dismissed from the room by Mr. Bennet who has the upper hand of being the employer. Mr. Bennet shows his upper hand again as he gives Mrs. Hill no chance to fully prepare of the arrival of Mr. Collins. This is seen as an insult to Mrs. Hill and payback for the earlier confrontation.

Upon the arrival of Mr. Collins, everything has been neatly prepared in an effort to impress him. At first, Mr. Collins is very happy with his accommodation and he is very friendly. He breaks an unspoken rule that a guest must not get friendly with the servants when he chatters to Sarah. This changes when Sarah asks about being happy in her duties and the spiritual connection to this. Mr. Collins becomes quite agitated and offended that someone like her could have asked such a question. The entire rest of Mr. Collins' visit has Mrs. Hill doing all sorts of extra things as she hopes to ensure his satisfaction. Since Mr. Collins is the future heir of Longbourn, he must be pleased at all times. If he is not, once he inherits Longbourn, it is very likely that he will dismiss all of the servants to bring in servants who will conform to his needs. This is evidenced by Mr. Collins thinking that James' outburst at the beginning of Mr. Collins visit is highly offensive and that he will not have such bad manners after he inherits Longbourn.

On Sarah's visit to the Collins' home, Mr. Collins is at the door welcoming everyone into the house, but as Sarah is just an employee, making her name not worth remembering from the last time he saw her. It is here at the Collins' home that there is another fine example of this sort of relationship. The parish's main benefactor, Lady Catherine, comes to call on Mr. Collins. She is extremely harsh and over bearing towards the servants. If any small mistake is made right down to the taste and temperature of the tea, they could be fired with little pity from anyone. This causes great strain for Sarah as the housekeeper and the servant of the Collins home are extremely harsh towards Sarah, although she does her best to help them any way she can.

Even the Bennet girls are often guilty of being oblivious as employers. Before the Netherfield ball, they realize that they are out of shoe roses. It is pouring down rain outside and none of them are willing to go. Instead, they ask Sarah to go to the shoe store for them, so they will not have to get wet. Sarah winds up going for them, but getting covered in mud and rain in the process. They hardly tell her thank you when she returns, but they are thrilled to have their shoe roses. When Jane and Elizabeth are married, Sarah goes to Pemberley to live. Sarah is given only menial tasks after Elizabeth realizes that Sarah has no knowledge of current fashion trends. This includes mending hems and stockings or other simple chores. The problem is that Elizabeth buys new clothes on a daily basis to the point where she has no need to wear the items



that Sarah as painstakingly mended. After Sarah announces her resignation, Elizabeth seems offended that Sarah should want to leave such a privileged life. She begs Sarah to stay, but Sarah refuses. Elizabeth has Mr. Darcy try to talk some sense into Sarah, but is infuriated as he tries to intimidate Sarah into staying for Elizabeth's pregnancy. They have no thought to any of Sarah's wishes, nor do they wish her good luck in her future as they are appalled that one of their servants should want to leave them.

Finally, when James leaves Longbourn, no one other than Sarah seems to care that he has gone missing. When she mentions James' disappearance, Elizabeth dismisses this as the idea that James has found better paying work. Although she promises to write to Lydia to see if he has joined the Militia, there is no evidence that she has actually done so. Elizabeth did not even really know James' name until Sarah says that he is the footman that has been working there for several months. After an extended time of hearing nothing, Sarah decides to go to Colonel Forster to see if he can find out anything. This is highly offensive to Colonel Forster as he does not care that one of the servants is missing. As more time goes by, hope dwindles for Sarah as no one seems willing to help her, nor does anyone even seem to remember that they had a footman named James at all. This shows how replaceable employees are to the Bennets and people of their social class.

Romantic Relationships

There are many different relationships that occur between the characters. Both the Bennets and the servants have romantic entanglements that progress the story line and are a foundation for the novel as a whole. For the Bennets, romantic relationships are the key to gaining better financial circumstances and for upholding or improving their social status. For the servants, relationships are just as complicated as marriages can be used to secure their own employment stability, to cover past indiscretions or current secrets, In both cases, love - or a minor form of it - definitely come into play, although it may not always seem like it.

Sarah has two major romantic entanglements that she must work through. The first one is with the handsome servant from Netherfield, Ptolemy Bingley. Ptolemy is taken with Sarah immediately after he meets her for the first time. Sarah grows intrigued with him more and more after each time he visits Longbourn. He opens her eyes to possibilities of life outside of Longbourn and shares with her about his travels. Their growing romance is highly frowned upon by Mrs. Hill as she thinks that no good will come of this since Ptolemy is from Africa. Mrs. Hill's attitude worsens when she catches the pair smoking during a visit by the Bingley family and she forbids Sarah from seeing Ptolemy again. It is because of this that Sarah runs off to Netherfield during the ball to see Ptolemy after she has a few drinks. They kiss each other, possibly out of drunken excitement, but it further enhances their relationship.

The romantic attachment that Sarah feels for Ptolemy dwindles quickly as she realizes that she does really know more about him other than that kiss and that she really wants James. Sarah ends up not following Ptolemy to London but stays at Longbourn with



James. After James leaves, Sarah sees Ptolemy twice more. The first is when Jane gets engaged to Mr. Bingley. Ptolemy comes to the kitchen and by this time Mrs. Hill's opinion of him has softened. She would like to see Sarah with Ptolemy, as he plans to open a shop of his own and it would help Sarah get over James. Sarah declines this as she is still in love with James, but she tries to let Ptolemy down gently. The second and final time is at Pemberly when the Bingleys come for Christmas. Ptolemy tries to avoid Sarah as he knows that he is no longer wanted. After a brief conversation, he reveals that he has seen James as a road worker. This makes Sarah very happy, but it makes Ptolemy sad as he knows he will never get Sarah to love him as much as she does James.

James begins his time at Longbourn as the antagonist and polar opposite of Sarah. He is deemed to be quiet, reserved, and mysterious compared to Sarah's argumentative and suspicious character. As the novel progresses, the reader is informed that James acts like this around Sarah because he is so interested in her. He does not want to give away his feelings because he does not want to be rejected. He also does not want to get to attached to Sarah in case anything goes wrong and he is forced to flee unexpectedly. Sarah does not see this as she keeps her mind focused on Ptolemy. Her mind is changed in what seems like an instant as she is stopped by James at the crossroads. It is here that she experiences the dilemma of going into the unknown to London and Ptolemy or to stay with someone kind and caring in the familiar setting of Longbourn. Sarah chooses the latter and eventually figures out that she made the right choice in staying with James. After James runs away from Longbourn, her love for him is so great that she becomes desolate and unhappy with life. Her mind constantly stays on James and she is determined to find him, no matter how far she has to go. After Ptolemy tells Sarah where he last saw James, Sarah leaves the security of her job as Elizabeth's maid at Pemberley to look for James. It is not an easy life of traveling on the road and having no actual home, but her love for James keeps her determined. After many months of walking from village to village, Sarah finally sees James and the pair are reunited in a brief scene that resolves a major conflict between Sarah and James.

Mr. and Mrs. Hill also have their own fair share of romance, but with a twist. Mr. and Mrs. Hill love each other in a platonic way and have a great deal of respect for one another. The marriage is actually a cover for their own hidden romances. Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet at one time had a love affair, resulting in the birth of James Smith. Rather than admit his feelings for Mrs. Hill, Mr. Bennet marries the daughter of a prominent attorney so that he can elevate his own position. Heartbroken, Mrs. Hill remains just the housemaid, but Mr. Hill sees her despair and asks her to marry him. He wants to help her by shielding her from any more hurt feelings and by giving her the ability to say that she is a respectable married woman. Mr. Hill also has a secret agenda as well with this marriage. Mr. Hill is actually a homosexual man, something that is a strict taboo. His lovers come and go from various farms and he is never allowed to be open with any of them. Mrs. Hill understands this and keeps his secret, making the guise of a perfectly happy couple work. Towards the end of the novel, Mr. Hill passes away in the arms of a long time lover in a hidden part of the gardens. So that Mr. Hill's secret can be kept in death as it has been in life, Mrs. Hill and the lover quickly carry Mr. Hill to his bed to make it look as if he died peacefully in his sleep.



There are much happier endings for two of the Bennet girls. The romances of these girls are scattered as they are only parts of the subplot, but they are filled with intrigue and provide a different perspective on Austen's classic tale. Jane becomes quickly attached to Mr. Bingley shortly after he moves to Netherfield. Jane is filled with despair when he unexpectedly returns to Netherfield after the ball and she goes to her uncle Gardiner's house in London in hopes of seeing him again. This is a perfect match according to Mrs. Bennet. Mr. Bingley has been made extremely wealthy through the sugar trade, has plenty of real estate, and is very well connected to London society. Jane is beautiful, intelligent, resourceful, and has the graces of a young lady of high society. This match is shortly followed by the marriage of Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy. As Elizabeth is in Kent visiting the Collinses, Mr. Darcy frequently visits where ever she is. Elizabeth tries to play this off as just coincidences, but Sarah knows better. This is another terrific match for Mrs. Bennet. Mr. Darcy is considerably richer than Mr. Bingley and has plenty of aristocratic connections. Her fears that her daughters will not make good matches are alleviated, plus she is truly happy that her girls have found love.

The only one of the Bennet sisters who goes through the novel with no romantic attachments is Mary. She has an unrequited love for Mr. Collins, but he ignores her. When Mr. Collins comes to Longbourn to choose his wife, his thoughts are never on Mary at all. Instead, he sets his sights on Elizabeth as she is witty, frugal, unconcerned with expensive or fancy items, and maintains a no nonsense frame of mind. These are the things he is looking for a future wife. Mary possesses all of these things as well, but Mr. Collins overlooks this. He asks Elizabeth to marry him shortly after the Netherfield ball. Elizabeth's reaction is a mixture of anger and disgust, while Mary is heartbroken that she has been passed over. Deflated, Mr. Collins still neglects Mary and settles on Charlotte Lucas, a good friend of Elizabeth's. This is very disturbing for Mary, as she is considered more of the spinster character of the group, being the second oldest. As time goes on and she becomes more of an asset to her mother, Mary begins to relish this idea while keeping the hope that another man like Mr. Collins will eventually come along and appreciate her.

Personal Pasts

The past formulates how some of the characters develop in the present timeline of the novel. Not all of the characters have a hidden past, such as Polly or the Bennet girls, nor are they directly affected by these pasts. The pasts of Sarah, James, Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet are showcased in this novel throughout various parts to outline the character's development. They are not given in any particular sequence, but they appear where they are needed to enhance the reader's understanding of the personal turmoil that each character faces.

Sarah's past is only glimpsed at in small flashbacks scattered in Volumes 1 and 2. After she hears the argument between Mrs. Hill and Mr. Bennet she recalls that she came from an orphanage to Longbourn at 6 years old. Mrs. Hill takes her in and feeds her better than she has been fed in quite some time. This sets up the maternal bond that the pair tentatively share, although it has its ups and downs. Sarah once had a family



and they lived in the low income section of Meryton. Her parents were known by the locals and she also had a younger brother. She vaguely remembers this family but they all died of illness, leaving her to an orphanage with only a rag doll as a reminder of the family she lost. Although this past is given very little detail, this bit of information is sufficient to shape a significant portion of Sarah's character. She was not always the servant to someone else and she knows this. From this knowledge, she has an independent streak and knows that being a servant is not what she wants to be for the rest of her life. This differs from Polly, the other maid, as Polly has been with the house since she was an infant and has no recollection of a life of her own.

Ptolemy Bingley comes from a plantation in Africa and is the son of a slave who still resides on the plantations there. He was freed by the senior Mr. Bingley as Ptolemy was one of his favorite servants. There is a deep connection to the family from this, but there is also a sense of Ptolemy's own desire for the freedom to no longer be a part of the Bingley household. This also gives him a certain contempt for the upper class as he feels that their daily lives are filled with frivolity and he means to cash in on this by opening a tobacco shop that will become renowned throughout London. He has traveled to many places, which he tells Sarah about when they see each other. These experiences that he relates to Sarah in turn give Sarah inspiration to be free from being a servant as well. Ptolemy can never escape his past as his skin is extremely dark and a visible reminder that he was once a slave. Because of this, he is often met with racism by not only his fellow Netherfield servants, but others like Mrs. Hill as well although Mrs. Hill reluctantly warms up to him in hopes that Sarah will get over James after he flees from Longbourn.

As for Mrs. Hill, she also has a past that is shared only in vague and brief glimpses in the first section of the novel. She is seen sometimes staring out the window in the middle of the night, praying about an unknown person and their safety. She does this at various points but it is only later that it is revealed that she is praying for her own child. As evidenced in Volume 3, Mrs. Hill had a tryst with a young Mr. Bennet, resulting in a child. Unfortunately, she was not considered of a good social class and was unable to marry Mr. Bennet. In fact, she was just one of the servants at Longbourn and, therefore, marriage would have been impossible. In order to hide her shame, she gives the baby up for adoption and returns to Longbourn. This causes a great deal of sorrow for Mrs. Hill as she did not have much choice in the matter. It is to be supposed that if she did keep the baby, Mr. Bennet could have easily denied everything and Mrs. Hill would have been fired with no place else to go and would always be considered an outcast. In order to save her reputation, Mr. Hill asks to marry her. This serves a dual purpose. Not only is Mrs. Hill able to be considered a respectable lady and her secret would remain hidden, but Mr. Hill's image and personal secret would be safe as well. The marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Hill covers up the fact that Mr. Hill is a homosexual, something very forbidden during those times. Marrying Mrs. Hill keeps any sort of suspicion away from him and he is able to carry on with his lifestyle.

The entire composition of James' character relies on the hardship he has faced in the past. After being raised by adoptive parents, James sets out with Militia in his youth as he feels that he has no other place in life. He is a skilled soldier and is very loyal to the



Militia until he is betrayed by some other soldiers as they stole Militia horses and left him holding the blame. He is severely flogged for this, despite his pleading that he was left behind and that he was still loyal to the Militia. Afterwards, his thoughts have hardened against the Militia as he murders his commanding officer after he is ordered to do something he considers despicable and leaves the Militia. There is a certain sadness and desperation with his character that is evidenced in his quiet manner and the fact that he tries his hardest to keep Sarah from knowing that he is in love with her. He does not want her to find out his truth as he fears that she will be disgusted with him. This harsh past also gives him an incredible sense of paranoia when the Militia comes to town. He tries desperately to keep his face hidden and to interact with the officers as little as possible so that he is not recognized. There is also the feeling of distrust as he interacts with them. He has seen their often wild ways before and he believes that no good can come of the interactions between the officers and the Bennets or their servants.

Mr. Wickham is one of those officers that James distrusts. He comes to Longbourn as one of the officers, but he has only recently become an officer. He is the son of a steward for Mr. Darcy, therefore he is not considered of the servant class nor is he considered of the upper class. He uses his devious charm and his officer status to win over the ladies who make him the object of their attentions. This lack of place because of where he comes from makes him a dangerous character. He is successful at winning the Bennet ladies over to fit in to their society, but he also uses his higher status to impress Polly. Polly is no more than a young teen and very impressionable, which Mr. Wickham uses to his own advantage. He gives her bits of money and sweets and promises her more. Polly thinks that it is just a gentleman being kind, but those around her, particularly James, knows that something is amiss. This comes to an explosive conclusion as James' suspicions are correct when he catches Mr. Wickham as he is getting ready to sexually assault Polly. As for the Bennets, his trustworthiness is gone after Lydia sneaks out of the Forster home to go off with Mr. Wickham, causing quite a scandal that ends with him having to marry Lydia.

Appearances

Appearances are important to mainly the women in the novel. Mr. Bennet has no pretenses about appearances, he seems to be happy with the way things are. Mrs. Bennet is shown to have her eyes on anything that would give the appearance that the family is the best in the neighborhood. When she hears that a new and higher class family has moved in next door, Mrs. Bennet takes to scheming on how she can make sure that her girls look their best. In an effort to begin the process, she invites young Mr. Bingley to dinner. She says that the first dinner is nothing formal, calling it a "family dinner". The narrator points out that the key to such a meal is to look as if it is just a simple meal but everything must be absolutely perfect. In order to keep up the pretenses of being the perfect family, Mrs. Bennet also has lots of plans for entertaining not only the Bingleys, but the local Militia as well. This will put considerable strain on Mrs. Hill, but Mrs. Bennet does not see that; the only thing she sees is how the neighbors will look upon the family as the sophisticated people they appear to be. The



reader is made aware that Mrs. Bennet's focus on this issue stems from the fact that she was never able to have a son which has caused her depression.

The Bennet daughters also have a high sense of appearance. All of the girls are considered beautiful in their own ways. They must appear perfect at all times as they are hoping to attract financially secure husbands. Although Mrs. Bennet does not care about the expense, the girls are seen as more thrifty as they go about making ribbons and hair pieces from scraps of cloth. They are also concerned with Sarah's appearance and want to help her as well. When they get their new dresses after Mr. Bingley moves in next door, the girls decide that Sarah needs a new dress as they show their appreciation for her help. They also want to make sure that Sarah has a pretty dress for when she goes out to her own social engagements. The dress is one of their old ones, but it still is usable and Sarah finds it very pretty.

There are times however, when the Bennet girls do focus so much on their appearances that it causes problems for others. It is a considerable amount of work to get the girls dressed for parties and other activities. Their hair must be curled properly, causing blisters for Sarah occasionally. The inconvenience to Sarah does not matter to these girls, one example is where they realize that their dancing shoes have no roses on them. It is pouring rain outside and very muddy, so they themselves do not want to go. Instead, they send Sarah into Meryton to buy the roses. Along the way she gets covered in mud and soaked through her clothes. She makes it to the shop but she is so covered in water and mud that she has to stand on an old rug at the door as other customers come in and out. The girls have given no thought to what the results of this outing will be for Sarah, all they care about is that they cannot be seen without proper and perfect roses on their shoes.

This need to appear as a member of high society is very important, not only to Mrs. Bennet but to Mrs. Hill as well. When Mr. Collins arrives, Mrs. Hill is in a hurried state. She is upset because Mr. Collins is the heir to the estate since Mr. Bennet did not have any male children. Mrs. Hill worries that if he does not see a perfect house with great servants, then he will hire a whole new staff when he inherits Longbourn. This would put Mrs. Hill and the rest of the servants out with no where to go. She insists that if she had a few more days notice, she could focus on making a more set plan to having everything looking perfect. Another example of Mrs. Hill's focus on appearances is as she is trying to stop Sarah from seeing Ptolemy after they are caught smoking. Mrs. Hill does not like Ptolemy, particularly for his easy manner and his dark skin. Since racism is still prevalent during these times, she knows that if Sarah chooses to be more friendly with Ptolemy, there will be gossip and this could injure the Bennets' pristine reputation.

Even Mr. Hill needs to keep up a certain level of appearances as he has a very big secret. Although he loves Mrs. Hill, later in the novel it is discovered that it is more of a platonic love, blossomed out of a need to keep up the appearance that Mr. Hill is a heterosexual male. His lovers come from various farms, but at the end of the day he always comes home to Mrs. Hill so that he is not discovered. It is to be guessed that if the secret is found, he could be dismissed from his position and be left homeless. This is an arrangement that works for Mrs. Hill as she has been forced to give her baby, born



out of wedlock, to a neighboring family and she wants to keep up the appearance that nothing has happened and that there is nothing to hide with her own life.

As for the protagonist, Sarah, she is also concerned with appearances, but not in the petty and over zealous way of the Bennet girls, although she is seen on one occasion trying to emulate their attitudes to visualize how she should act around a man. Sarah, for the most part, sees herself as unattractive. Most of her clothes are donated to her and are of a drab color that she hates. She constantly has blisters on her hands due to her hard work and is never shown to use any makeup or perfumes. Because of these things and her belief that she has unsophisticated manners, she feels that she is unworthy of gaining someone's affections. This turns out to be very untrue as first Ptolemy Bingley likes her just for as he finds her simplicity intriguing. As the novel progresses, the reader sees that James also is in love with her because he does find her physically attractive, as well as her fiery spirit.



Styles

Point of View

The novel is written in third point omniscient point of view, keeping the focus mainly on Sarah but often delving into the actions and thoughts of other characters, particularly Mrs. Hill and James. The other characters are not often shown in an omniscient view, the instances of this happening are very few and far in between. The narration primarily keeps to the actions and thoughts of the main protagonists of the story, Sarah and James and their interactions with the other characters. In this way, the narrative focuses mainly on the series of events as it unfolds for the protagonists with very little deviation. The major plot line of the novel is the growing romance of Sarah and James as Sarah deals with her conflict of wanting to experience the world but having no ability to do this and James deals with issues from his past. There are few small flashbacks, mostly in spots where the information learned in them enhances the progression of a particular point, such as when Sarah is lying in bed beside Polly as she compares how both girls view their lives differently. Larger flashbacks that take up whole chapters are given in the third volume of the novel. This is used to reveal the purposes of major plot points such as why James hides from the Militia and why Mrs. Hill is very protective of James.

Language and Meaning

The language in this novel is mainly straightforward and makes the entire story fairly easy to understand. The reader must be aware that some of the spellings of words are in traditional British style, particularly words that usually end in - or are spelled with - our. Examples of this are "colour", "parlour", and "labour". Words and phrases that are relative to the Victorian time period are used to give the novel an authentic feel. Since there is much talk of the fashions of the time, words like frocks, pelisse, bonnets are scattered throughout, as well as other common terms used in housekeeping and daily life of the Napoleonic War era of England. It should also be noted that there are a few obscenities scattered in various places which makes this book more appropriate for mature audiences.

The dialogue in the novel is straightforward and simple. There is very little evidence of periodical slang in this, especially since the Bennets are of a higher class and would not use slang and it can be expected that their employees would not be permitted to talk this way either. Most of the conversations are kept short, especially when the Bennets speak to the servants. The descriptions of actions, people, and places are adequate; there is nothing that is overstated or blown out of proportion. Most of the actions are laid out in detail, such as when James is flogged, but other actions are given in enough subtle detail, such as any sexual scene, that the reader will be able to visualize what is happening. The settings are displayed so that the reader can get a better understanding of the British countryside as well as the typical British home of that time period.



Structure

The novel is broken up into three distinct Volumes with varying amounts of chapters. Volume 1 contains 11 chapters, Volume 2 has 14 chapters and Volume 3 has 20 chapters. In Volume 1, the reader is introduced to the settings, characters, and major plots of the novel. Major themes are also at the forefront here as they set up the dilemmas and begin to advance character development. This volume mainly focuses on Sarah as she becomes acquainted with the two men who will shape her path towards her growing feelings of discontent with the ordinary life that she has. On the one hand is James Smith, a frustrating enigma in her life. She spends most of this portion of the novel despising James as he is viewed by her as cold and uncaring. On the other hand is Ptolemy Bingley, a servant from a neighboring house of African descent. He takes an instant liking to Sarah and he fills her head with stories of his travels, causing her to yearn for these experiences herself. She finds him extremely fascinating, but she also wishes that James would be engaging as well. As subplots for this section, the Bennets are filled with joy as a new bachelor comes into the area. Also, the Militia has set up an encampment in the local town, causing James to worry about his secret past.

The characters' story lines become more complex as Volume 2 showcases Sarah's growing feelings of despair in her job as she wants to be free from the life she is living. Sarah is becoming more defiant and is found questioning herself and others about the individual sense of happiness and life. She is also becoming more aware of her romantic feelings as well. A major plot development between Ptolemy and Sarah is outlined in the early parts of this volume, but it is quickly deflated as Ptolemy goes back to London. In later chapters of this volume, Sarah's feelings for James shift as he finds himself growing more in love with her. A new character, Mr. Collins, is introduced as a slight problem for the Bennet girls. Their romantic adventures are hinted at as their social activities become more prevalent. There is also the introduction of Mr. Wickham, the main antagonist for James as he causes the climax in terms of James' story line when an incident forces James to leave Longbourn before his secret is revealed to the rest of its inhabitants.

Volume 3 begins with a series of flashbacks from the life of Mrs. Hill and of James as both of their secrets are fully exposed in separate chapters. Also, the main romantic developments for the Bennet girls reach their climax as the girls finally find husbands. Within this development, major tensions arise between the Bennet parents and Lydia but the conflict is resolved. This volume also brings the resolutions for all of the other characters but it also skips a number of years to show all of them having drastically changed and their conflicts satisfied. The novel concludes with a twist on the beginning of the novel as Polly becomes the young lady looking up from the laundry to see someone coming down the road.



Quotes

The young ladies might behave like they were smooth and sealed as alabaster statues underneath their clothes, but then they would drop their soiled shifts on the bedchamber floor, to be whisked away and cleansed, and would thus reveal themselves to be the frail, leaking, forked bodily creatures that they really were.

-- Narrator (Volume 1, Chapter 1 paragraph 5)

Importance: This shows that while the Bennet girls held themselves as held in a higher social position than the servants, they are truly no better. In some instances they are worse because of the facade that they put on of being overly beautiful and clean, but the servants know that this is not quite the case as evidenced by their laundry. This also shows a certain laziness and arrogance about these girls as they leave their dirty and embarrassing items to be cleaned by people that are considered to be of a lower class.

But now change had come to Longbourn, and Polly was staring at it as if she were a simpleton, and Mrs. Hill kept topping up its glass, and even Mr. Hill was smiling and glancing at it and then shyly away, and Sarah was left heartsunk and ignored, and wishing that this change, with its dark hair and its hazel eyes, and its skin the colour of tea, had never come to Longbourn at all.

-- Narrator (Volume 1, Chapter 4 paragraph 94)

Importance: This quote denotes the first impressions Sarah has of new arrival, James. Through a disastrous first encounter with him, she has a negative feeling about him. She also dislikes the fact that everyone seems so enamored with him. This quote also shows a hint of jealousy in that everyone is paying attention to James and Sarah feels as if she is being ignored.

That's what I mean: somewhere you could just be, and not always be obliged to do. Somewhere where you could be alone, and nobody wants or expects anything of you, just for a while, at least.

-- Sarah (Volume 1 Chapter 7 paragraph 49)

Importance: This is the first time that Sarah has vocalized any sorts of notions of having an independent life. She says this to Polly, but Polly wants nothing to do with that sort of thinking. The quote also shows the difference between the housemaids. Sarah yearns for a time when she isn't constantly having to take care of someone else while Polly is incapable of thinking about a any other way of life.

The only thing of which she was certain now, was that she would not go on like this for ever. Things were cut adrift, and shifting, and nothing could continue as it had been.

-- Narrator (Volume 1, Chapter 11 paragraph 38)

Importance: This quote shows that Sarah has come to the realization that she is a changed person now and that she can no longer look at the world the same way she



had been. She has changed because she has been talking to Netherfield servant, Ptolemy, has developed feelings for James, and she has seen a man flogged for an unknown crime. As this is said at the end of Volume 1, this can be seen as a subtle hint that Sarah will change even further.

A family of this size, with Mr. Bennet's income, I don't see how they could all be idle. Or, indeed, what good it would do, to bring up a child to be of no practical use to herself or anybody else.

-- Mr. Collins (Volume 2, Chapter 4 paragraph 32)

Importance: Mr. Collins says this as he is asking Sarah about each of the Bennet daughters as he is considering marrying one of them. This points out that there is a difference between the Bennets and Mr. Collins. Whereas Mr. Collins believes in hard work and not keeping up with appearances, while the Bennets take pleasure in a more lavish life. It also gives the reader a hint at the kind of woman Mr. Collins is looking for, someone down to earth, dependable, and frugal.

She was tougher than she knew. She wanted nothing from him. She bushed him aside like a fly.

-- Narrator (Volume 2, Chapter 5 paragraph 99)

Importance: The quote shows Sarah's independent streak and the perceived feelings Sarah has for James. This also shows the reader that it is partially because of this independence that James is immensely attracted to Sarah.

Mr. Bennet would never have admitted this to any living person, but the most pressing reason for his attendance at Netherfield was that if he did not go, he would never hear the last of it from his wife. It was easier to suffer the discomforts of a ball than his wife's disgruntlement that he did not.

-- Narrator (Volume 2, Chapter 6 paragraph 4)

Importance: Mr. Bennet does not like the frivolity of balls and would much rather be quietly at home, but he knows that Mrs. Bennet would not only feel insulted that he did not go with her, she would feel that he has no cares about upholding their place in society as well. Mr. Bennet knows how much Mrs. Bennet wants to keep up the appearance of a sophisticated and well-off family, and that he must play his part in things as well in order to keep her happy.

But whatever James told himself, he could not be consoled: things could not be the same at Longbourn now; he could no longer be at ease. He had let his mask slip; his other self had glimmered out, and he could not bear to let that creature loose, not here.

-- Narrator (Volume 2, Chapter 10 paragraph 86)

Importance: James' brief encounter with Mr. Wickham makes him feel uneasy about his identity being recognized and his secret uncovered. As Mr. Wickham calls him a coward, James starts to feel his anger rise, but he knows he must suppress it or there



could be trouble. He also knows that there is something more ominous about Mr. Wickham and that he is not to be trusted.

If Elizabeth was not going to be happy, she may as well have married Mr. Collins, and they all would have been safe.

-- Narrator (Volume 2, Chapter 13 paragraph 63)

Importance: This defines Mrs. Hill's sentiments on Elizabeth and her refusal to marry Mr. Collins. Mrs. Hill wanted the match to be made so that she would know that her job and all of the other servants' jobs at Longbourn would be safe. Her biggest worry is that Mr. Collins would marry someone of a higher social status who would change how things are run and the staff at Longbourn when he inherits the estate.

See, a man like me 's not so easy for me to get along. neither fish nor fowl, me. Frog, really; or a toad. No place in the world for me but in the mud. You, you've got yourself nicely set up here. Cozy little billet. Well supplied with comforts. But you're a dog-in-the-manger, and you begrudge me mine.

-- Mr. Wickham (Volume 2, Chapter 14 paragraph 90)

Importance: Mr. Wickham tells James this after James catches Mr. Wickham just as he is about to molest Polly. At this moment, Mr. Wickham is angered by James' interference and is jealous that James has a place in life. Mr. Wickham is the son of a steward, someone who is not necessarily a servant, but not someone of a high social status, therefore he is not readily accepted by either group unless he uses his devious ways. This quote comes just before James' anger gets the better of him and he hits Mr. Wickham, causing Mr. Wickham to declare that he is going to get even with James by calling out to the other officers that James is a deserter. This causes James to flee in the night, leaving Longbourn and Sarah.

No one ever seemed to care, so he didn't really care either. He didn't know that he could be loved. That's why he didn't think twice about throwing himself into harm's way.

-- Mrs. Hill (Volume 3, Chapter 15 paragraph 22)

Importance: Mrs. Hill's quote about James basically sums up his character prior coming to Longbourn and falling in love with Sarah. Mrs. Hill put him up for adoption and Mr. Bennet only cared enough about him to give his adoptive parents money every now and then, but James never finds out the identity of his birth parents. James joined the Militia because he thought he could do no better in life but now his life is ruined because of it.

It had, of course, been her heartfelt wish for as long as she could remember, that she would see something of the world beyond Longbourn; she should she thought, have been more precise in her wishing. she should have wished for happiness in which to see it.

-- Narrator (Volume 3, Chapter 18 paragraph 3)

Importance: Sarah finally gets her wish of leaving Longbourn to go to Pemberley with Elizabeth after she marries Mr. Darcy. For as long as Sarah can remember, her wish



has been to go to other places. Now that she has what she has been wishing for, she regrets it. She misses James immensely and she realizes that she was the happiest when she was with him at Longbourn.