

The Pursuit of Mary Bennet: A Pride and Prejudice Novel

by Pamela Mingle



About the Book

The enthralling story of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE's middle sister, Mary Bennet—an enchanting modern sequel to the beloved classic

For most of her life, Mary, the serious and unpolished third daughter of the Bennet family, has been overshadowed by her sisters—beautiful and confident Jane and Elizabeth, and flirtatious and lighthearted Lydia and Kitty. But with nearly all of her sisters married and gone from the household, awkward, unrefined Mary has blossomed into an attractive young woman with a quiet poise of her own.

When a very pregnant Lydia unexpectedly returns to the Bennet home and scandalously announces she's left Wickham, Mary and Kitty are packed off to visit Jane and her husband, Charles Bingley, in Derbyshire. Yearning for the solitude of home, Mary is dismayed to discover Bingley's handsome and eligible friend Henry Walsh everywhere she turns. Unschooled in the game of love, Mary finds Henry's warm attentions confounding. Is his interest genuine or does she foolishly mistake friendliness for something more? With her heart and her future at risk, Mary must throw caution to the wind to find the truth—a journey of discovery that will teach her surprising lessons about herself and the desires of her heart.

Discussion Guide

1. What are your impressions of Mary at the beginning of the story? How would you describe her?
2. What has changed for the Bennet family since the end of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE? For Mary in particular?
3. Why does Mary say she "carries a degree of anger and resentment in her chest"? Why is she more relaxed at High Tor

than at home?

4. How would you describe Mary's feelings toward Henry leading up to the Pennington ball? His toward her? Are her rash actions at the ball justified? Her anger and hurt feelings?

5. Elizabeth neatly sums up Mary's state of mind: Mary is afraid of love, because she has always felt unloved. Do you agree with her opinion?

6. Henry's proposal to Mary has certain similarities to that of Mr. Darcy's to Elizabeth. What are they? Why does Mary refuse his offer of marriage?

7. After the birth of Lydia's child, Mary returns to Longbourn. How can you explain the fact that Mary, unwed and childless, almost immediately bonds with her new niece? How does Felicity make a difference in Mary's life?

8. Is Mary's assessment of her role in caring for Felicity accurate? Does her self-recrimination remind you of any Austen heroines? If so, explain.

9. What happens during the stay at High Tor and Bristol to persuade Mary that Henry thinks of her only as a friend?

10. Describe the circumstances that allowed Mary and Henry to slowly make their way back to each other. In what way(s) did each of them have to change?

11. Writer and editor James Collins says that beneath the famous first line of PRIDE AND PREJUDICE is this reflection: "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a single woman of small fortune must be in want of a husband." How is this relevant to THE PURSUIT OF MARY BENNET? Does it have relevance for women today?

12. Did the author remain true to Jane Austen's portrayal of the PRIDE AND PREJUDICE characters?

13. How does Mary's relationship with Henry compare to Elizabeth's with Mr. Darcy?

Author Bio

Pamela Mingle is the author of *KISSING SHAKESPEARE*, a time-travel romance for young adults set in Elizabethan England. She is a member of the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators, Pikes Peak Writers, Romance Writers of America, and the Jane Austen Society of North America.

Critical Praise

?Austenophiles rejoice! Here at last is the untold story of the forgotten Bennett sister. Pamela Mingle transports us to Regency England for a delicious tale of the triumph of love over awkwardness.?

? Susan Fales-Hill, author of *IMPERFECT BLISS*

?Delightful...[a] romantic charmer that will leave the reader sighing with pleasure and remembering what it feels like to fall in love.?

? Booklist (STARRED REVIEW)

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