



The Pursuit of Mary Bennet

By Pamela Mingle
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Questions for Discussion

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?