

## Pride & Prejudice review

Within the world of movies and entertainment lies action and the bustle of Hollywood film-making. Many franchises get so caught up in the logistics, they lose their way in a world of greedy money monsters. One that stands the test of time (and Hollywood) is Joe Wright's 2005 rendition of *Pride & Prejudice*, Jane Austen's 19th century romantic classic. With a subtle yet moving screenplay, vibrant scenery, and spectacular casting, his project is one of the best movies adapted from a classic.

The screenplay was adapted wonderfully from the novel. Many screenwriters have tried different takes on classics that did not end well- for example, Baz Luhrmann's 1996 *Romeo + Juliet*- but Deborah Moggach, screenwriter for Wright's *Pride & Prejudice*, did an impeccable job of mixing originality with elements already introduced by Austen's novel. She kept the 19th century speech and environment, but added a modern twist in the witty comments and independence of each of the Bennet sisters. Her script is the perfect balance of romance, wit, and heart- a concoction meant for success in the early 2000s.

Shot in areas of England such as Kent and Derbyshire, Wright's choice of scenery transforms itself into a character who breathes life into the production. Austen's novel is filled with pomp and circumstance surrounding Mr. Darcy and the Bingleys, which contrasts with the Bennet family's country life. When switching between classes, the difference in decor and style is palpable and adds various levels to a world already explored in literature. The crew spent four to five months scouting for film locations and what they came up with was nothing short of awe-inspiring. Beautiful countrysides and town life fill the movie with no green screens necessary.

Another aspect of the film that makes it so noteworthy are the casting choices. Keira Knightley (*Pirates of the Caribbean*) and Matthew Macfadyen (BBC show *Spooks*) were chosen to bring Elizabeth Bennet and Mr. Fitzwilliam Darcy to life. Wright, at first, did not want to cast someone as "attractive" as Knightley for the role of Elizabeth but then realized, "she is really a tomboy [and] has a lively mind and a great sense of humour." ([focusfeatures.com](http://focusfeatures.com)) Knightley turned out to be the perfect Elizabeth; she's an understated beauty who incorporates "book Elizabeth's" wit and sarcasm in the film realistically.

The director found casting the role of Mr. Darcy to be particularly difficult, however, because, "Colin Firth cast a very long shadow," as the 1995 Darcy. Also, Macfadyen probably would not have been cast had it not been for the role of Elizabeth Bennet being inhabited by someone as well known as Knightley. ([Wikipedia.com](http://Wikipedia.com), *Casting*) Alongside the two leads, we have the rest of the Bennet family as well as Mr. Bingley and his sister, Caroline.

Donald Sutherland (*The Hunger Games*) plays Elizabeth's father, Mr. Bennet, while Brenda Blethyn (*Secrets & Lies*) completes the parentage as Mrs. Bennet- the boisterous, frivolous mother who only cares about marrying off her daughters and shopping. "Sutherland is deeply amusing as a man who lives surrounded by women and considers it a blessing and a fate, and as his wife Blethyn finds a balance between her character's mercenary and loving sides." ([rogerebert.com](http://rogerebert.com)) While majority of the film is geared toward the two eldest Bennet sisters, Jane and Elizabeth, the three youngest sisters hold their own. Carey Mulligan, Jena Malone, and

Talulah Riley create a fierce trio that excites the audience with youthful spirit and, oftentimes, foolish decisions. The family dynamic between these cast members is quite impressive and very convincing.

Simon Woods and Kelly Reilly create the cold sibling relationship of Charles and Caroline Bingley, Darcy's closest friends. We don't see much of Caroline in Wright's version, thankfully; he opted to establish her disdain for Jane and Elizabeth, then focus on the main storyline. Mr. Bingley, unlike his sister and Darcy, is just as lively as the Bennet's and takes a quick liking to Jane. I found his character in this film to be quite amusing, something needed in a classical, serious romance such as this.

The movie does have opposers, however. Some maintain that Colin Firth's portrayal of Mr. Darcy was levels above Macfadyen's, or that the 1995 BBC adaptation was just better overall and there's no way to top it. Others state that the film was chock-full of "rambling dialogue" ([rossanthony.com](http://rossanthony.com)) and slow pacing: "A film with zero pace that centers around a forced romance and more dancing than *Saturday Night Fever* and *Breakin' 2: Electric Boogaloo* combined." ([Jon Popick, rottentomatoes.com](http://www.rottentomatoes.com)) I disagree with Popick's statement because anyone who's read the book or even paid attention to the movie can tell that Elizabeth and Mr. Darcy are from two different classes who don't even think about a relationship with each other at first. Mr. Darcy even states, somewhat imprudently, that he has gone against his "better judgement" in order to confess his love for Elizabeth. I hardly think that's "forced." And as for the "many dances," there's two dance scenes. TWO!

Overall, the movie is very well done with little room for criticism, at least where the book is concerned. Wright and the entire cast and crew pulled off a spectacular, entertaining film that holds its own in the genre of book-to-movie adaptations.

## Works Cited

- Wright's quote about Knightley in paragraph three:

[http://www.focusfeatures.com/article/pride\\_\\_prejudice\\_\\_the\\_production?film=pride\\_and\\_prejudice](http://www.focusfeatures.com/article/pride__prejudice__the_production?film=pride_and_prejudice)

- Wright's quote about Macfadyen in paragraph three:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pride\\_%26\\_Prejudice\\_\(2005\\_film\)#Cast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pride_%26_Prejudice_(2005_film)#Cast)

- Quote about Sutherland in paragraph five:

<http://www.rogerebert.com/reviews/pride-and-prejudice-2005>

- Ross Anthony's quote about dialogue in paragraph eight:

<http://rossanthony.com/P/prideandprejudice.shtml>

- Quote about pacing:

[https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1153077-1153077-pride\\_and\\_prejudice/reviews/?page=2&sort=rotten](https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/1153077-1153077-pride_and_prejudice/reviews/?page=2&sort=rotten)