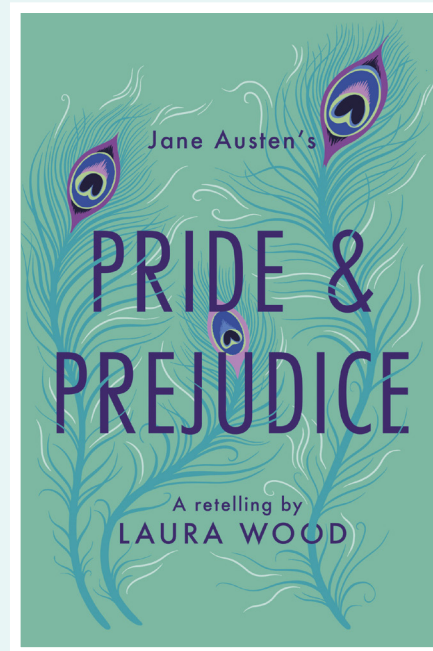


# Barrington Stoke

## CLASSROOM RESOURCES



## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE: A RETELLING Laura Wood

- PART 1** Synopsis and Themes
- PART 2** Character Study
- PART 3** Suggested Questions to Develop Reading Strategies
- PART 4** Creative Writing Exercises

## PART 1 SYNOPSIS AND THEMES

### SYNOPSIS AND THEMES

This guide has been produced to provide ideas for guiding readers through Laura Wood's **Pride and Prejudice**, a brilliantly accessible retelling of Jane Austen's beloved classic of the same name. This guide is written to be used after reading the full text in order to discuss the book, its characters and its overarching themes as a whole.

A synopsis is followed by quotes from the book with suggestions for discussion points designed to help young readers engage with the complex topics the book covers. The questions assigned to each quote are intended to further understanding of the text and provide opportunities for classroom discussion or written work. There are also suggestions for creative writing exercises and a brief author biography.

We hope you enjoy using these materials with your students

**Pride and Prejudice: A Retelling** is a short novel that follows the tumultuous love story between Lizzy and Darcy, as they are forced to navigate the strict hierarchies of society.

The story begins with Lizzy Bennet, her four sisters, and their mother, Mrs Bennet, who is determined to find them all an eligible husband. When two wealthy gentlemen – Mr Bingley and Mr Darcy – temporarily move into the neighbouring estate, great excitement ensues. But while Mr Bingley quickly falls in love with Lizzy's older sister Jane, Lizzy herself finds Mr Darcy arrogant and cold. When she later discovers that he has sabotaged the happiness of her beloved sister, her mind is quickly made up – he is the last man in the world she would ever marry.

But appearances can be deceiving, and as their paths cross again and again, both Lizzy and Darcy begin to realise that their first impressions of each other may have been flawed. Yet the rigid rules and conventions of provincial life still stand in their way – will there be space for true love to bloom?

Before beginning the novel with the group, ask them the following questions:

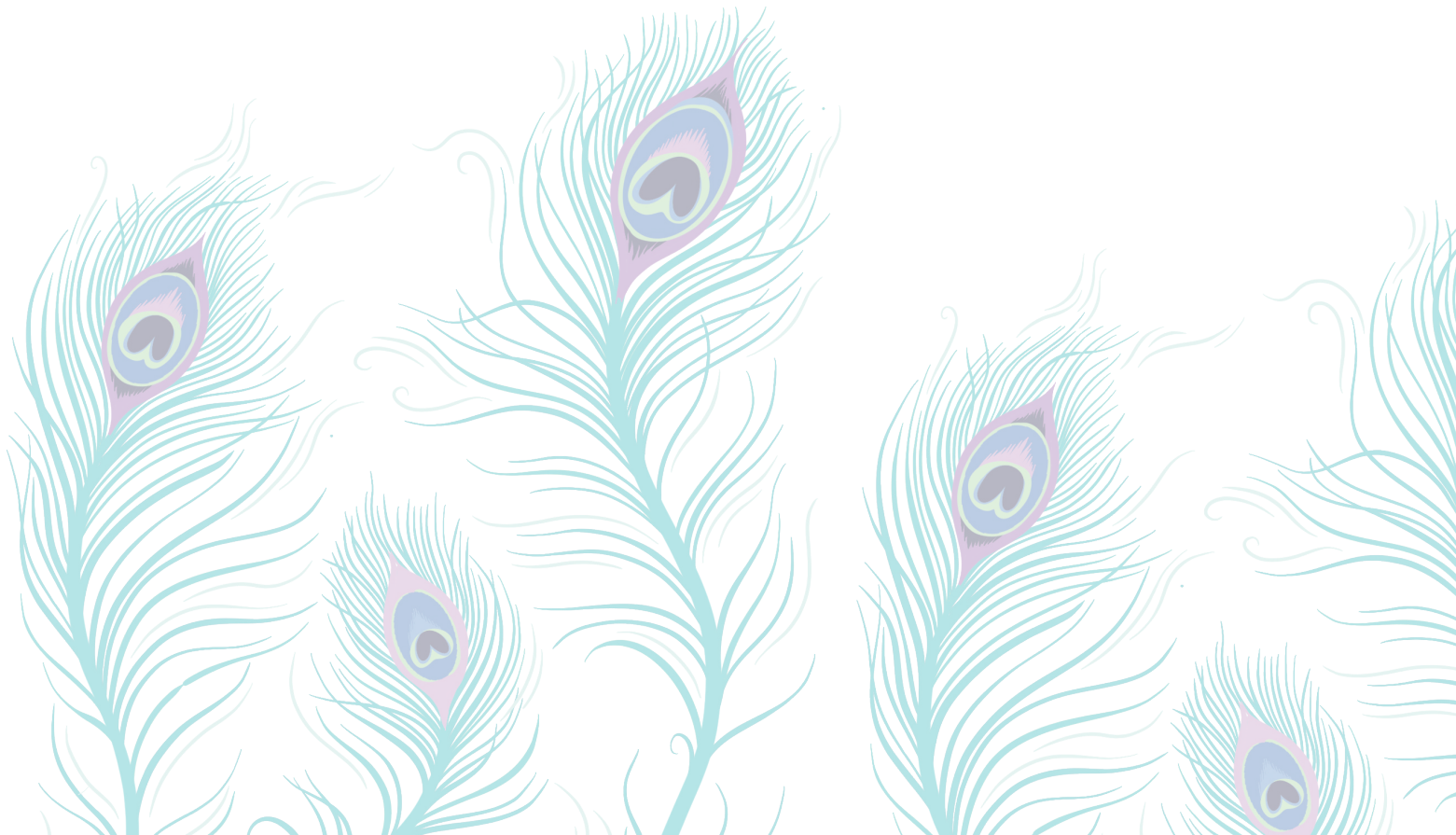
- Have you heard of *Pride and Prejudice* before?

**No:**

- What impression do you get of the novel from its front cover and title?
- What do you think a retelling of the original will change?

**Yes:**

- What do you know about the original novel? (Try not to give away too much of the plot!)
- Have you come across this story in other forms – perhaps a film or television series? Did you enjoy it? Do you think these adaptations are also forms of ‘retellings’? Discuss.
- What do you think this retelling will change from the original book?

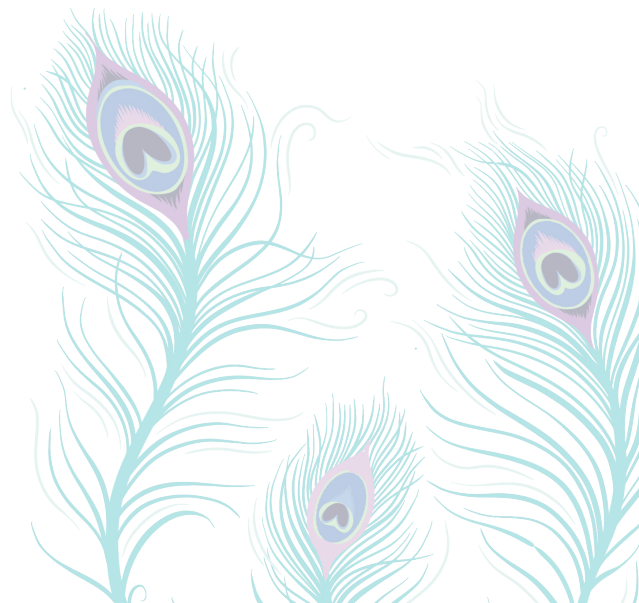


## PART 2 CHARACTER STUDY

### ELIZABETH BENNET

Think about Lizzy as a character.

- As the story focuses on Lizzy, we are given a different picture of her compared to other characters in the book.
  - How do you picture her?
  - What words would you use to describe her?
  - What can we tell about her from the way other characters interact with her?
- What do we learn about Lizzy's personality and views on others throughout the book?
- Are there any points in the story where you feel she has grown or changed as a character?
- Are there any ways that you feel Lizzy is unusual for a woman living in her time?
  - How do you think the author uses this to examine the strict societal rules of the period?
- How does Lizzy's personality differ to that of her four sisters?
  - How is this shown through the family's interactions?
- Do you think Lizzy has any character flaws that hold her back in the story? Use specific scenes as evidence.
  - Think about the title of the book. Which part do you think refers to Elizabeth? Why?

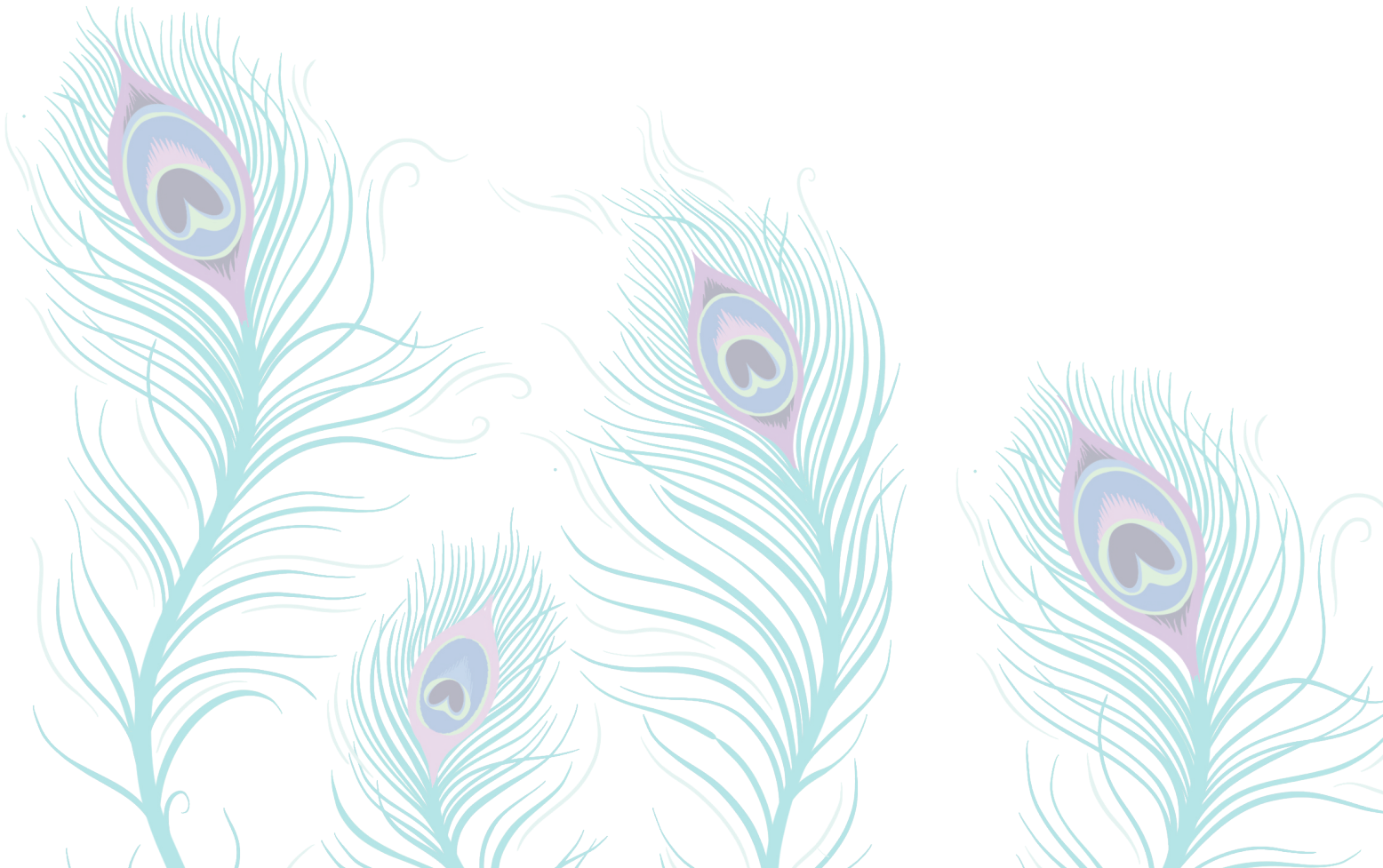


## MR DARCY

*Lizzy looked thoughtfully at Mr Darcy. It was true that he was a very good looking man. He was tall and dark haired, with sharp cheekbones and dark eyes, but his expression was very serious and his dark eyes were cold. [page 6]*

**Think about Darcy as a character.**

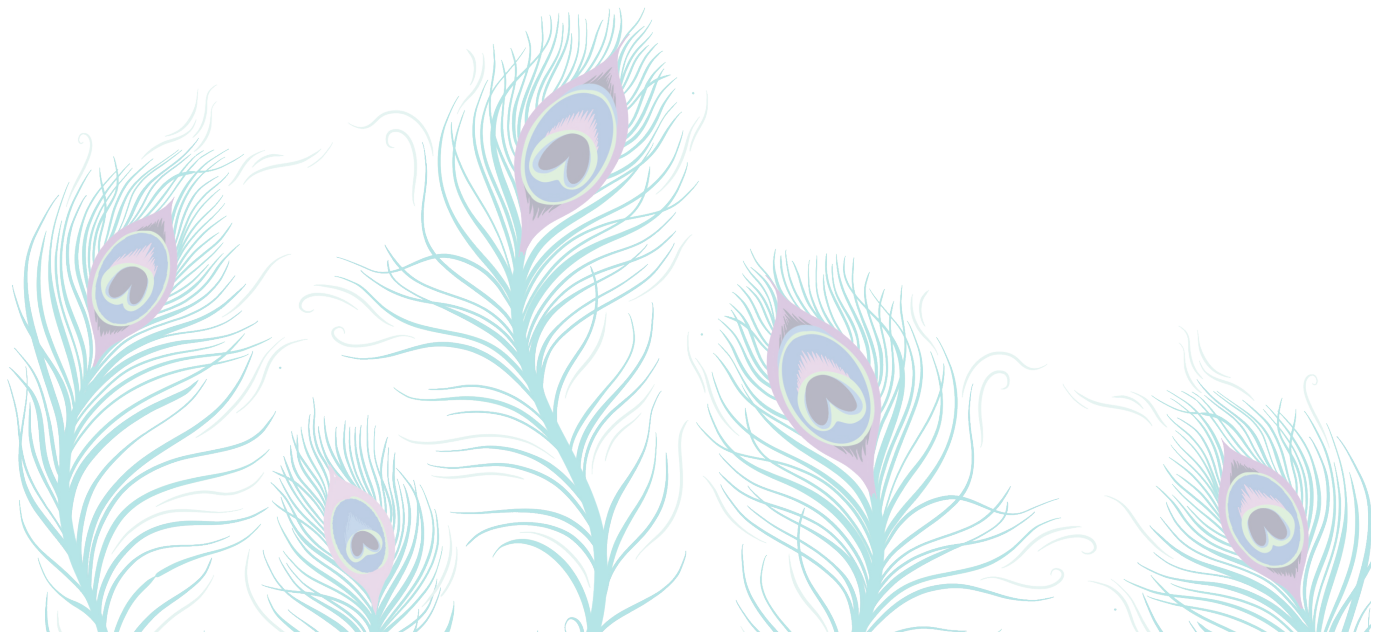
- What was your first opinion of Mr Darcy when he turns up at the ball at the beginning of the book?
  - How did your opinion of him develop throughout the story? Were there any particular scenes or lines of dialogue that caused you to change your mind? Try to provide some examples.
  - How are we shown that Darcy is a changed man by the end of the book?
- Do you think Darcy is a sympathetic character? Why?
- Why do you think social hierarchy is so important to Darcy? How is this shown in his interactions with other characters?
  - Think about the title of the book. Which part do you think refers to Darcy? Why?



**PART 3****SUGGESTED QUESTIONS TO DEVELOP READING STRATEGIES****Think about marriage in the book:**

*“I am not romantic, you know – I never was. I only want a comfortable home of my own. I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as good as anyone’s” [page 62]*

- What do you think about Charlotte’s idea of marriage?
- Do you think marriage was a different prospect for women at this point in history? Think of some examples.
  - Why are the societal challenges for women a particular issue for the Bennet family?
- How does Charlotte’s social and economic situation differ from Lizzy’s? How do you think this might influence their decisions to accept or reject marriage proposals?
- Think about the other romantic relationships in the novel. Some couples to discuss might be: Mr and Mrs Bennet  
Lydia and Mr Wickham  
Jane and Mr Bingley  
Charlotte and Mr Collins.
  - What do you think their first impressions of each other were?
  - Are they well-matched? Do you think they married for love, like Lizzy and Darcy?
  - What can their relationship tell us about what marriage was like at this time?



### Think about Lizzy and Darcy's relationship:

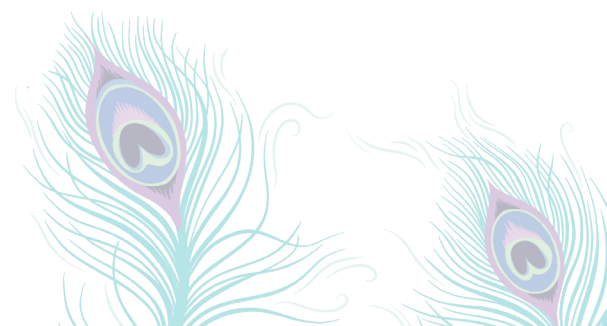
*"I know I am betraying my own good name by declaring my feelings to you," Mr. Darcy continued almost angrily. "The union between our two families will be unthinkable to many; indeed it has been unthinkable to me for a long time. Yet I have found myself bewitched by you."* [page 78]

- What social elements are barriers to Lizzy and Darcy being together?
    - Which of these do you think matters more to Lizzy or Darcy? Try to find some examples in the text.
    - Why do you think the couple have different opinions on social hierarchy?
  - Are there any problems that come from Lizzy and Darcy's own views on the world, rather than the society they live in?
  - What do you think the author is critiquing about 19th-century English society in creating these barriers between the two characters?
  - How do Lizzy and Darcy defy convention by choosing each other?
  - Do you like Lizzy and Darcy's relationship? Why?
- 

### Discuss the meaning of irony and how it's used in the book:

*"Because a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife."* [page 3]

- Think about the way the story is written. Does the author ever say one thing while meaning something else?
- Irony can also be shown through a character's lack of self-awareness. Think about Mrs Bennet and Mr Collins. Can you find any examples where their words and actions suggest the opposite of what is actually happening in a situation?
  - Why do you think the author does this? Does it help you to feel more involved in the story?
- How does this pattern of miscommunication and misunderstanding link to broader themes in the story?



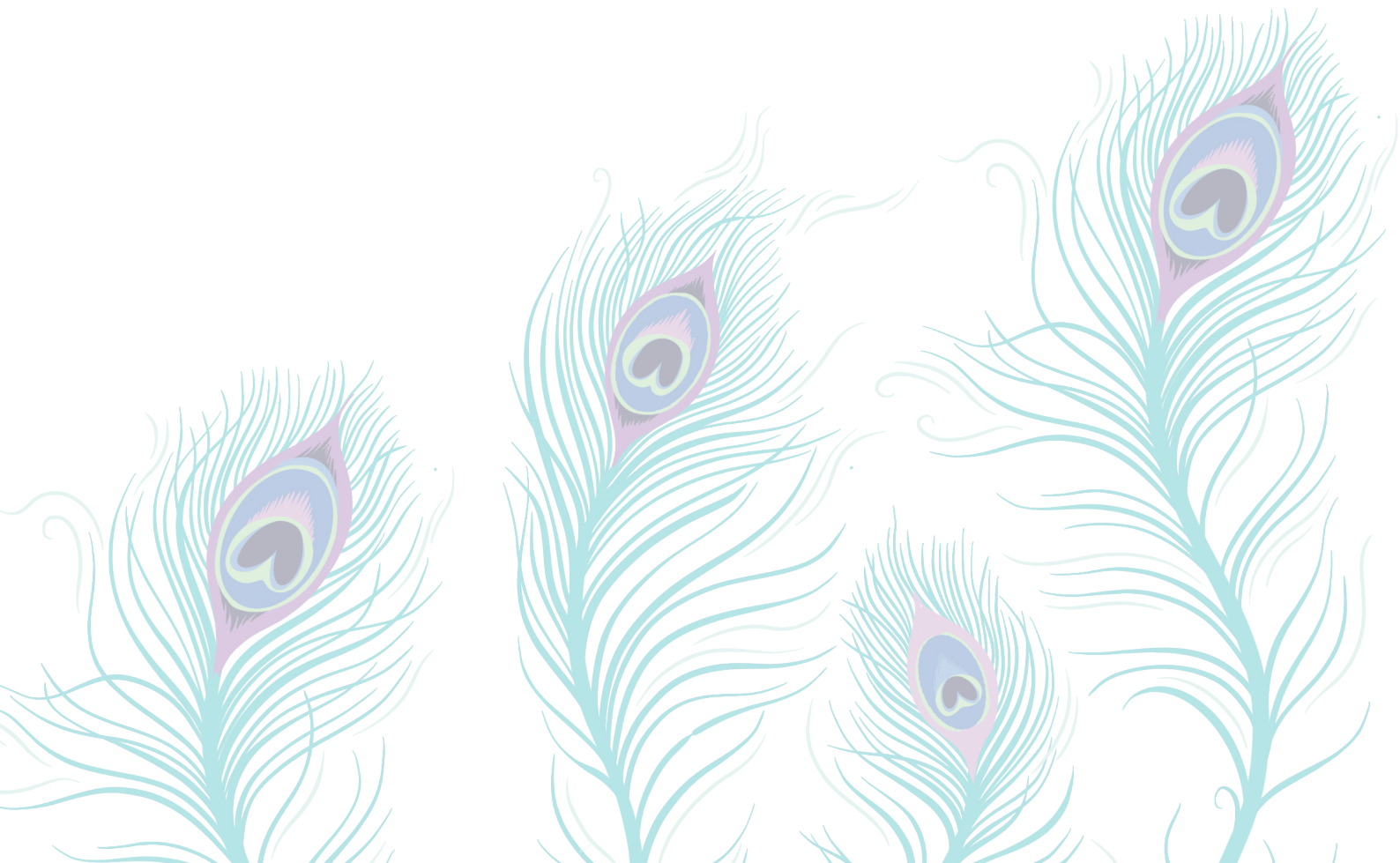
## Think about Mr. Darcy and Mr. Wickham as romantic heroes:

- How do you think a romantic hero should look and act?
  - Do Mr Darcy and Mr Wickham match this description?
  - Are there any aspects of their characters that aren't very hero-like?
- At what point did you start to suspect that Mr Wickham might not be as genuine as he first seems?
- Why do you think Lizzy finds Mr Wickham more appealing than Mr Darcy, to begin with?
- What do you think Lizzy likes so much about Darcy, in the end?

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## Think about the cultural impact of *Pride and Prejudice*:

- *Pride and Prejudice* has had a considerable impact on modern-day romance stories. Are there any characters in your favourite books and films that remind you of Lizzy or Darcy?
- What about modern retellings like *Bridget Jones's Diary* – why do you think Lizzy and Darcy's relationship is so timeless and relevant to the current day?





## PART 4

## CREATIVE WRITING EXERCISES

### Write a 'missing scene' from the book

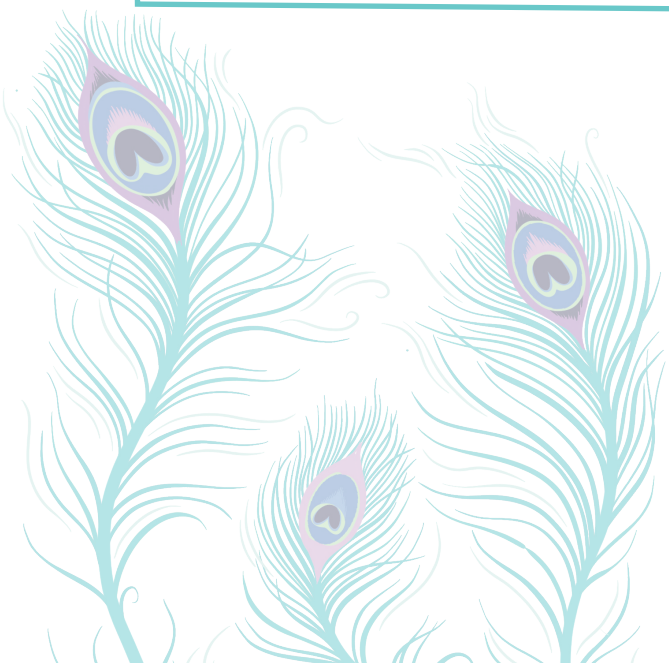
*Imagine and rewrite a scene from the book that the reader is not privy to. Some options to consider could be the scene where Charlotte is proposed to by Mr Collins, or the dramatic intervention from Mr Darcy after Lydia and Mr Wickham's elopement.*

### Rewrite the ballroom scene from the start of the book from the perspective of Mr Darcy

*Choose a moment from the ball to think about Darcy's perspective on events. Think about how his opinions on the town and its inhabitants might influence his thoughts and feelings. How do you think he feels the first time he sees Lizzy?*

### Create a newspaper announcement for the wedding of either Lizzy and Darcy or Jane and Bingley

*Think about the sort of wedding these characters might have – would it be expensive and over-the-top, or quiet and understated? What location might they choose? Think about the language that newspapers would have used at the time – and don't forget to mention important relatives and guests! You might even like to draw a scene from the wedding to go with your article.*



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

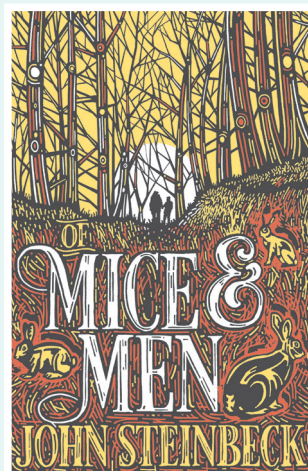


Laura Wood is a bestselling and award-winning author of books for children and young adults. She has a PhD in English Literature from the University of Warwick and in 2014 was awarded the the Montegrappa Scholastic Prize for New Children's Writing. Laura's books include the *Poppy Pym* series, *Vote for Effie*, and *A Sky Painted Gold*.

## ENJOYED *PRIDE AND PREJUDICE*: A RETELLING? TRY OUR DYSLEXIA-FRIENDLY CLASSICS



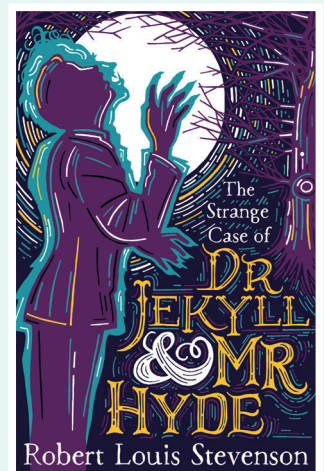
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