

Chapter 1

Read through the following pieces of text and answer the set of questions that follow:

"Why, my dear, you must know, Mrs. Long says that Netherfield is taken by a young man of large fortune from the north of England; that he came down on Monday in a chaise and four to see the place, and was so much delighted with it, that he agreed with Mr. Morris immediately; that he is to take possession before Michaelmas, and some of his servants are to be in the house by the end of next week."

"What is his name?"

"Bingley."

"Is he married or single?"

"Oh! Single, my dear, to be sure! A single man of large fortune; four or five thousand a year. What a fine thing for our girls!"

"How so? How can it affect them?"

"My dear Mr. Bennet," replied his wife, "how can you be so tiresome! You must know that I am thinking of his marrying one of them."

"Is that his design in settling here?"

1. Summarise what Mrs Bennet says about Mr Bingley. What does she know about him?
2. How does Jane Austen give us the impression that Mrs Bennet's information is actually gossip?
3. Throughout the novel Mr Bennet feigns a lack of interest in his family and their marital circumstances; what in this section suggests that, despite his manner, he does have concerns for them?
4. How does Austen make Mrs Bennet seem silly?