

What's Love Got to Do With It

In *Pride and Prejudice* life is not all fun and games. There are many pressures in life: mothers with high expectations for a good marriage and a girl's own expectation of what life and hopefully marriage will be like. Charlotte Lucas is the oldest daughter in a large family, she is not the most beautiful girl, and she is twenty-seven, well beyond the marrying age. Charlotte is Elizabeth Bennett's best friend and Mr. Collins, the man Charlotte finally marries, is Elizabeth's cousin. Charlotte Lucas will marry to solidify her life, not because she loves, for many people are unkind about her ability to marry well; thus after her marriage to Mr. Collins, she spends all of her time avoiding him.

Charlotte knows that even though she wants to marry more than anything in the world, she does not expect love to come about; thus, she decides that it is probably even better if you don't know a thing at all about the person you are marrying. While Charlotte is speaking to Elizabeth about her sister, she expressed her opinion as to Jane Bennet's relationship towards a gentleman. She says it is probably better not to study a person because you would probably know as much after twelve months as if she married him the next day. Charlotte even goes as far as to say that "it is better to know as little as possible of the defects of the person with whom you are to pass your life" (p.21). Charlotte considered Mr. Collins "neither sensible nor agreeable" but since marriage had always been her goal in life, "at the age of twenty-seven, with having never been handsome, she felt all the good luck of it" (p.107). Charlotte is speaking to Elizabeth on her marriage to Mr. Collins, "I am not romantic, you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins' character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state" (p.110). Charlotte is optimistic in entering her marriage even though Elizabeth is not.

The people associated with Charlotte, even her dear friends, have little expectation for Charlotte's marrying well. While Mrs. Bennett is speaking to Mr. Bingley the subject of Charlotte Lucas comes up and Mrs. Bennett can not help but to comment about Charlotte's beauty, "...but you must own she is very plain. Lady Lucas has often said so..." (p.39). Even good-natured Jane, Elizabeth's sister, has something to say about Charlotte's marriage to Mr. Collins. Jane argues that Mr. Collins is respectable and that Charlotte is from a large family and is not exceptionally wealthy. She also states

that

Charlotte, "may feel something like regard and esteem for our cousin" (p.117).

Elizabeth

taking the opposite point of view on the issue says, "Mr. Collins is a conceited, pompous,

narrow-minded, silly man;" then continued to list reasons as to why, "the woman who marries him [Mr. Collins] cannot have a proper way of thinking" (p. 117).

Charlotte, having gone into her marriage with Mr. Collins with her eyes open, puts most of her energy into avoiding her husband. Charlotte finding herself now having

to deal with her husband makes her quarters in the lesser part of their house, leaving the

more attractive part to her husband so he will spend more time there (p. 144).

Also,

Charlotte and Mr. Collins take walks every morning, which Charlotte walked considerably fast in order to leave Mr. Collins to every view, "with a minuteness which

left beauty entirely behind" (p.134). Elizabeth, while visiting Charlotte, observed

another way in which Charlotte tolerated her husband, her observation was, "Her home and her housekeeping, her parish and her poultry, and all their dependent concerns, have

not yet lost their charms" (p.183).

Charlotte neither being pretty nor wealthy has compensated for her husband's annoying traits in many ways. In a time when most girl's goals were to get married,

Charlotte achieved her goals. Even though she may not love, not even like her husband,

she is happy because she will not be a spinster.