**33:30**

**Mr. Elton:** I am so looking forward to this evening. A party is a party, but a Christmas party! Mmmm…Where is Miss Smith?

**Emma:** I have some sad news. Miss Smith is ill and cannot be with us this evening.

**Mr. Elton:** A sad loss to our party. She will be missed at every moment. …However, I feel, and I hope you will concur, that small parties are the best. I would rather fall short by two than exceed by two. And how fortunate that the snow comes now instead of yesterday, when it might have made our party impossible! Now, THAT would have been a real cause for sadness, would it not?

**Mrs. Weston:** Would you like some punch?

**Mr. Elton:** No, no, not at the moment.

**Mrs. Weston:** What about you, Mr. Woodhouse?

**Mr. Woodhouse:** Oh, thank you, thank you, yes. Weather of this severity is no friend of mine.

**Mrs. Weston:** I know that too well, Mr. Woodhouse.

**Mr. Weston:** My son Frank has written and told us something most exciting.

**Mr. Elton:** Miss Woodhouse, are you warm enough?

**Emma:** Yes, thank you.

**Isabella:** When did you receive his news?

**Mr. Weston:** The letter arrived today, and on the opening, we had the most wonderful surprise. Frank said-

**Mr. Elton:** Some of the other ladies were saying they were not warm enough.

**Emma:** I am quite comfortable, yes.

**Mr. Elton:** And then I saw how close you were to the fire, and thought perhaps you might be too warm.

**Emma:** Mr. Elton! I am in a perfect state of … warmness.

**Mr. Weston:** …At first I did not believe it, so I asked Mrs. Weston to read the letter herself, to make sure I was not dreaming. But indeed Frank said-

**Mr. Elton:** Miss Woodhouse, is there any effort I might make on behalf of your father's comfort?

**Emma:** You are very kind, but I can only imagine that he's quite comfortable. Thank you for being so thoughtful.

**Mr. Elton:** No, thank you for thinking I am thoughtful.

**Emma:** I wondered if perhaps you might be so kind as to bring me some punch.

**Mr. Elton:** I only hope I can complete the task quickly enough-

**Emma:** Please! I could not enjoy it if I knew that you had hurried!

**Isabella:** Thrilling! Simply thrilling news!

**Mr. Weston:** And that was the end of the letter.

………………. Emma! I am not sure I had your attention earlier, with others so desirous of your company but I wanted to tell you that Frank is coming at last!

**Emma:** I so look forward to meeting him! That is if you can bear to share him.

**Mrs. Weston:** That is if his aunt will share him with us. That's what this depends on. She has said yes, but has not given a date.

**Mr. Woodhouse:** Very good. This weather is by no means pleasant for the traveller abroad. Oh, no, no, no…