***Emma***

***Chapter 25***

***Vol2Chapter7***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

The next day, Emma's opinion of Mr. Churchill is practically ruined as it is revealed he decided to go to London just to get a haircut. Mr. Knightley arrives, and once told the news he mumbles that he expected no better from Mr. Churchill. Mr. Knightley feels confirmed in his analysis of Mr. Churchill's character. However, his good treatment of Mrs. Weston tempers this in Emma's mind and she decides that it really is a trifling thing to hold against someone.

The Coles family is discussed again, and it is revealed that they have grown in wealth over the years and are now second only in social stature to the Woodhouses. They are throwing an enormous party and everyone of consequence has been invited except Emma and her father. She had no plans to attend, but feels that she is being somewhat ostracized. However, the next day the invitation arrives, and we find out the reason for the delay. The Coles were installing a screen to keep Mr. Woodhouse safe from drafts and wanted to ensure the screen was in place.

Emma cannot now decide if she should decline this invitation. Since the Westons are at Hartfield when the invitation arrives, she asks them for their advice. Much discussion ensues as Mr. Woodhouse frets about visiting after dinner which is something he never does.

It is decided that Mr. Woodhouse will stay home and that Emma will go alone, provided that she does not arrive home too late or sit up afterwards until all hours.

Emma’s good opinion of Frank Churchill is injured when he makes a day trip to London just to have his hair cut. Though Emma does not feel inclined to give up her vow to remain single, she decides that Frank is pleasing enough that she does not mind being associated with him in other people’s minds. Mr. Knightley thinks Frank is a silly young man, just as he had suspected.

Meanwhile, an invitation from the Coles, successful tradespeople who live in Highbury, creates a conundrum for Emma. She had originally decided that she would not accept an invitation from the nouveau-riche family, but when everyone except the Woodhouses receives an invitation to a dinner party at the Coles’ home, Emma feels left out. When an invitation arrives, she decides to accept it.

***Analysis:***

The prospect of a party seems to charge the air, especially since everyone who is well thought of socially will be there. Emma's character continues in her natural course of not wanting to go, but being curious enough to be talked into going even without her father. Her father's concern is touching although he does seem to be overbearing about it to some extent.

***Detailed Summary:***

The next morning Frank comes again with Mrs. Weston, and Emma decides to form her opinion of him by his behavior toward his stepmother. As the three of them tour Highbury by foot, he shows a liking for everything, and Emma is won over. As they pass the Crown Inn, where dances were once held, he seems rather bent on dancing. Recalling that he was to have visited the Bateses, Emma inquires and finds herself defending Jane Fairfax's complexion. After a visit to Ford's, she pursues the subject of Jane and learns

that Mr. Dixon had preferred Jane's music to that of Miss Campbell, a statement that adds fuel to Emma's imagination. Quite gallantly Frank agrees with Emma about Jane's being reserved. When they pass the vicarage, Mr. Elton's house, Frank avers that the house would be big enough for any man living there with the woman he loved. All in all, Emma feels pleased with the new acquaintance.

The next day, however, her good opinion is shaken when Frank goes all the way to London for only a haircut. She can overlook such an act, though, for he may be forming an attachment for her. Others too see it only as a youthful whim, but not George Knightley, who thinks Frank "just the trifling, silly fellow I took him for."

The nouveau riche Coles are planning a dinner party, and though Emma some time past decided never to accept an invitation of theirs, she is irked that she and her father have not been invited now, since all their closest friends have been. While the Westons are visiting at Hartfield, that very invitation comes with a just explanation for its delay. Since she really wants to attend, Emma lets herself be persuaded, though her father declines so much activity. Mr. Woodhouse is finally coaxed into allowing Emma to stay late at the party, and everything is thus settled.

***Detailed analysis:***

Emma is letting herself be "taken in" by Frank in spite of the fact that she sees he is determined to please everyone. She enjoys toying with the possibility that he is growing fond of her, and she lets this enjoyment blind her first into overlooking some negative manifestations of his character and second into confiding in him too quickly with some of her attitude toward Jane. Only later will the reader know it, but, somewhat like Harriet, Emma is having her feelings misled. One thing about Emma, though, remains constant: her approval of a static social hierarchy (Harriet's unknown situation being a notable exception), indicated in her attitude toward the Coles. When this belief comes in conflict with her natural bent for social entertainment, however, she lets herself be persuaded because others have accepted the Coles, because the invitation is in good taste and properly solicits her as an "honor," and because she can attend out of a partial sense of noblesse oblige. The satire in her "letting herself be persuaded" should be obvious.

***Critical Study(24-25):***

Emma's good opinion of Frank is shaken when he travels to London to get a haircut, which seems a vain extravagance. Emma also learns from the Westons, who are visiting at Hatfield, that Mr. and Mrs. Cole are hosting a large dinner to which all the gentry, except the Woodhouses, have been invited. The narrator says that the Coles are "of low origin, in trade, and only moderately genteel." Nonetheless, they have made a lot of money and are intent on joining high society. Emma initially thinks they should be kept in their place. She tells the Westons that she would turn down their invitation. Almost immediately following this conversation, her invitation arrives, and Emma decides to go.

Frank continues to present himself as an amiable companion and someone who likes to socialize and have fun. Likely he sees his visit to Hartfield as an opportunity to break out of the gloom at Enscombe and feels free of the usual familial obligations imposed by the Churchills—hence his eagerness for a ball. But once again, Frank's subterfuge is at work. What the first-time reader of the novel does not know—since the novel is something of a mystery as well as a comedy—is that Frank is secretly engaged to [Jane Fairfax](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Jane_Fairfax), a fact that he very successfully hides from Emma. Frank allows that he saw Jane frequently in Weymouth, as they traveled in the same circles, but admits nothing more.

Emma is also not entirely honest when she calls Jane "my dearest friend." The conversation moves to Jane's accomplished piano playing, and Frank tells her that Mr. Dixon admired her musical ability. Emma then rather impetuously shares with Frank her fantasy about Jane and Mr. Dixon, Miss Campbell's new husband. While Frank initially defends Jane's innocence, he then says he doesn't know her well enough to judge the situation.

Frank's ability to inspire people's confidences is evident in Emma's telling him about her conjectures about Jane and Mr. Dixon. Clearly Frank's chameleon-like qualities have been honed as the adopted son of the Churchills.

When the Westons tell Emma about the party she has not been invited to, she falls back on her class snobbery to soothe herself. Luckily Emma does receive an invitation, and the Coles apologize for its lateness by saying they held off on sending it to see if they could get a folding screen to keep her father out of the draft.

***Summary part by part and analysis***

***Summary part 1:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse)’s high opinion of [Frank](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill) is shaken when she learns that he has dashed off to London just for a haircut, which she feels is rather vain and extravagant. However, she decides that he fits the honor she has imagined for him of being a suitable match for herself—though she still resolves to never marry. [Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) is the only person among their acquaintances who finds Frank trifling and silly.

***Analysis part 1:***

Emma’s good sense regarding the extravagance of a day trip to London for a haircut is compromised by her vanity, as she continues to hold a high regard for Frank as the superior man she and others have paired with her in their minds. Knightley, however, only sees Frank to be the silly man he expected all along.

***Summary part 2:***

Emma has resolved to decline any invitation from the [Coles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), a nouveau-riche family, in order to teach them their place. However, she feels mortified and unhappy when all of her friends are invited to a party and no invitation comes to Hartfield. When an invitation finally arrives, Emma is tempted by the prospect that all of her friends—[Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley), the [Westons](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), and [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)—are attending. She asks the Westons for their advice and decides to accept the invitation.

***Analysis part 2***

Emma’s feelings regarding the affair with the Coles are rather comical, revealing both her snobbery and vanity. Though she believes the Coles below her and wants to teach them not to presume on “superior families,” she feels left out when no invitation comes—she wants the power to reject them—and ultimately decides to attend when everyone else is.

***Summary part 3***:

[Mr. Woodhouse](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-woodhouse) frets over the prospect of leaving his house for a dinner party. [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) insists that he had better stay home while she visits the [Coles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), and he reluctantly agrees on the condition that she will take all precautions for her health on the perilous visit out.

***Analysis part 3:***

Mr. Woodhouse is irrationally concerned about the discomforts of a dinner out, as everyone around him solicitously ensures the sheltered old man is made comfortable—as usual.