***Emma***

***Chapter 28***

***Vol2Chapter10***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

Emma and Mrs. Weston join Mr. Churchill at the Bates' residence and Mr. Churchill is busy fixing Mrs. Bates' broken glasses. Mr. Churchill begins to unmercifully taunt Miss Fairfax to get her to reveal the true donor of the piano, and Emma chastises him in whispers. However, Miss Fairfax blushes quite readily with Mr. Churchill's pointed comments and the two are left to wonder if she really is guilty of having an affair with Mr. Dixon.

Mr. Knightley arrives but does not come in. Instead, Miss Bates goes out to thank him for the generous gift of apples that he sent over the day before. It turns out that he has been left without any apples at all, which makes Emma quite curious about his motives.

Emma enters the Bates’ sitting room and finds Frank occupied with fixing Mrs. Bates’s glasses and Jane seated at the piano. Frank asks Jane questions about how she imagines the piano came to her, and his comment, “True affection only could have prompted it,” makes Jane blush. Believing that Frank is teasing Jane unkindly about Mr. Dixon, Emma whispers that he should stop, and she regrets having shared her speculations about Jane with him. Mr. Knightley stops by to check on Jane’s health but refuses to come in when he hears that Frank is there.

Emma and Harriet go to the Bates women's apartment, where guests have gathered to look at the new pianoforte. Frank flirts openly with Emma and surreptitiously with Jane, reminding her of music they heard together at Weymouth. When Jane blushes, Emma thinks it is because Frank has mentioned that Jane's benefactor sent Irish melodies (alluding to Mr. Dixon). Mr. Knightley happens to pass by, and Miss Bates invites him in. He declines when she mentions Frank is present. Miss Bates comically carries on a loud conversation with Mr. Knightley that all can hear.

***Analysis:***

This forced visit does not seem to appeal to Emma, and she leaves at the first available opportunity. However, the reader is able to discern that Mr. Knightley might really be in love with Miss Fairfax, since he continues to shower the family with gifts.

Mr. Churchill seems to be in love with Emma and does his best to situate himself nearest to her whenever he can. Whether or not this is the case will be soon be revealed.

***Detailed Summary(27-28):***

The day after the party Emma is still delighted but so chagrined at Jane's musical ability that she sits and practices "vigorously an hour and a half" before Harriet comes in. The latter's references to the Martins make Emma feel obliged to accompany her, as protection, to Ford's shop. Standing in the doorway at Ford's, Emma sees Mrs. Weston and Frank approaching the Bates house. Seeing her, they come forward and Frank lets the two women convince him that he should accompany Mrs. Weston to see Jane's pianoforte. Harriet has just waveringly managed to complete her transactions when Mrs. Weston and Miss Bates arrive and invite them over to appraise the new instrument. Back at home Miss Bates is surprised that Frank has not completed fastening the rivet of Mrs. Bates' spectacles, but he says that he has been helping Jane make the instrument steady while Mrs. Bates was asleep by the fire.

When Jane plays, Frank harps upon the Campbells and Ireland to Emma, with innuendos about the instrument. He seems to want Jane to hear him. When Miss Fairfax smiles at some of his words, Emma, who has been feeling sorry for her, now decides that she is "cherishing very reprehensible feelings."

George Knightley comes by on horseback, and Miss Bates talks with him from the casement of an adjoining room so loudly that all can hear. He offers to bring something for her from Kingston, but she wants nothing — except to rattle on with her talk and to get him inside if possible. When she thanks him effusively for some apples he recently sent them, he is embarrassed and says he must hurry on. Shortly afterward the other guests leave also.

***Detailed Analysis(27-28):***

Miss Austen sums up the kind of character that Emma is when, as Emma looks over the nearly blank streets of Highbury, the author says: "A mind lively and at ease, can do with seeing nothing, and can see nothing that does not answer." Frank too has apparently seen this in Emma, for he continues to encourage her suspicions about Jane and Mr. Dixon. Later the reader, who may already have some suspicions of his own about Frank, will learn that Frank is using this conjecture, along with his attentions to Emma, to disguise his real situation. He does a very good job of covering up, and it is this aspect of the novel that has led some critics to point out that on one limited level it is a mystery story. Miss Bates is closer to something like a discovery than she knows when she is incredulous about Frank's not having finished the simple repairs to Mrs. Bates' spectacles. Mrs. Bates' being asleep by the fire has left Frank and Jane alone together.

Humor and attendant satire become paramount when George arrives on horseback and talks with Miss Bates, who is far from being unhappy at having to shout her words to him from the house. His generous nature is obvious throughout the scene; also is his abrupt common sense, which is in comic conflict with Miss Bates' urge to talk at length, for he politely and successfully cuts her short. His continuing attitude toward Frank is illustrated when, about to say that he will come inside for five minutes, he learns that Frank and Mrs. Weston are inside and quickly says that he does not have enough time and that Miss Bates' room is already full enough. Crowning the comic scene is Miss Bates' insistence upon relaying the conversation to the drawing room, where the amused group has obviously already heard every word.

***Analysis(26-28):***

These three chapters highlight how misunderstandings can multiply when people misread the intent of others' actions. Because Jane is in delicate health, [Mr. Knightley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Mr._Knightley) brings his carriage to take her home from the party. When he finds out that Jane likes apples and that the Bates family has almost exhausted their supply, he sends his remaining apples of the season to them without saving any for himself. At the party, Emma attributes Mr. Knightley's kindness with the carriage to his natural consideration of others, but Mrs. Weston says, "You give him credit for more simple disinterested benevolence in this instance than I do. ... In short, I have made a match between Mr. Knightley and [Jane Fairfax](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Jane_Fairfax)." Emma is appalled by such an idea because she is possessive of Mr. Knightley, whom she considers to be part of her family. Emma takes his proximity for granted and does not admit, even to herself, how deeply she cares for him. Later, she engages him on the matter of the pianoforte and finds out that he disapproves of the fact that the gift was given in secret. This knowledge brings her some relief.

Emma continues to build her fantasy about Jane and Mr. Dixon, sharing her speculation about the pianoforte with Frank at dinner. Frank encourages her misdirection because he is the one who actually sent Jane the instrument. Meanwhile, he keeps up the pretense of being disinterested in Jane and comes to sit next to Emma. Thus, Frank begins using Emma to hide the real object of his affection.

When Emma sees Frank and Jane at the pianoforte the next day, she completely misreads what is going on. Her envious feelings toward Jane cause her to apply the worst motives to her rival. When Frank asks Jane to play a waltz, she blushes because she is remembering how they danced to the tune in Weymouth. He then points out the Irish music that was sent along with the piano, noting that the sender was considerate to include music with the instrument. Jane blushes again because she knows who the sender is. Frank takes a perverse pleasure in playing this double game with the two women, in which neither perceives the messages he is sending the other. Frank knows very well that Emma will think he is teasing Jane about Mr. Dixon, but of course he is not. It is surprising, given his love for Jane, that Frank has no compunction about allowing Emma to think Jane has such a low character—to be in love with a married man and then to relish a gift that was supposedly sent by him. Frank's attitude is a mark of disrespect toward both women. The effect of Frank's upbringing may be at work here, as he was essentially abandoned by his father to an overbearing and dictatorial mother who constricted his ability to grow as an independent man.

***Critical Study:***

At the Bates' home, Emma listens to Jane play. Mr. Knightley stops by the Bates' while Emma and Frank are there, but because of the numerous visitors he promises to call another time. Miss Bates thanks Mr. Knightley for sending them his store of apples. At the Bates home, Jane Fairfax is the obvious center of attention. When Emma arrives, Frank Churchill is helping her fix her new piano so that she may play. Mr. Knightley arrives to call on Mrs. and Miss Bates, and by extension, Jane Fairfax. Austen is deliberately ambiguous about Jane Fairfax's courtship possibilities. The actions of both Frank Churchill and Mr. Knightley indicate a possible romantic interest in her, but Frank disguises any possible interest by showing such great attention to Emma, while Mr. Knightley behaves with such dignity that no action can be perceived as outwardly romantic. The main subtlety in the chapter is that Mr. Knightley's behavior is consistent throughout the novel. It seems more likely that he would treat Jane Fairfax kindly without having an ulterior motive, since he has such a high regard for decency and benevolence.

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

***Summary part 1:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) finds [Frank](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill) fixing [Mrs. Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s spectacles and Jane at the piano. After Frank adjusts the piano for her, Jane plays delightfully. When Frank teases her about the mysterious gift, Emma notes Jane’s pleased blush and suspects her to harbor inappropriate feelings for [Mr. Dixon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters). Nonetheless, she asks Frank to cease his teasing, which he cannot seem to resist.

***Analysis part 1:***

The interactions between Frank, Jane, and Emma are interpreted differently by each character. As readers, we follow Emma’s misperception that Frank unkindly teases Jane about Mr. Dixon and favors Emma. However, their true relations will eventually unravel these misperceptions.

***Summary part 2:***

[Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) stops by the house to ask after [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax)’s health. [Mrs. Weston](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) gives [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) a knowing look, but Emma shakes her head with skepticism. When Mr. Knightley learns that Frank is in, he decides not to stay and continues on his way. Emma and [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) leave soon after.

***Analysis part 2***

Mrs. Weston and Emma also interpret Mr. Knightley’s behavior differently, and the nature of his feelings towards Jane remains unclear. However, his dislike for Frank could not be more obvious.