***Emma***

***Chapter 37***

***Vol3Chapter1***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

The Churchills arrive in London, and although everyone is expecting Mr. Frank Churchill to visit often he comes only once in ten days. Emma is agitated but convinces herself that she is not agitated because she is in love with Mr. Churchill, but because she is worried about his being in love with her.

Mr. Churchill seems agitated as well and does not stay long at Hartfield before hurrying off. Emma thinks that he is either not in love with her as much as he was, or he is trying hard not to be.

The Churchills leave London for Richmond, which is located much closer to Highbury. Mr. Churchill announces that he will be available more, even for 24-hour periods, so the long anticipated ball at Crown's is re-planned and reorganized.

***Analysis:***

Emma's constant mental battle with herself continues as she does her best to trick herself into thinking she is not in love with Mr. Churchill. One wonders if Mr. Churchill is trying to do the same thing.

The upcoming ball promises to bring much of this conflict to a head, since Emma must still give the first two dances to Mr. Churchill.

***Detailed Summary:***

Emma thinks about her agitation upon hearing of Frank’s impending arrival and decides that she feels such apprehension more on his behalf than her own—her attachment to him is not very strong. When she sees him again, he is friendly and spirited but visits for only fifteen minutes. Frank’s short visit convinces Emma that his feelings as well must have weakened. Because of his aunt’s demands, Frank is kept away for ten days after this first visit. Mrs. Churchill eventually determines that her family must move from London to Richmond, which places Frank closer to Highbury. Mr. Weston is delighted to have his son nearer, and a date is set for the long-postponed ball.

Knowing that Frank plans to come back to Highbury soon causes Emma to think seriously about her affection for Frank.

As soon as she starts thinking about it, though, she realizes that she doesn’t really have any affection for Frank.

He’s a great friend, sure, but he’s just not the upstanding gentleman that she imagined he would be. In other words, imaginary Frank was so, so much better than real Frank. (Isn’t that always the way things work out?)

Frank does indeed arrive within a few days. He and the Westons visit Hartfield.

Emma notices a slight difference in Frank’s manners.

He’s still fun and engaging, but he doesn’t seem to have any affection left for her, either.

Philosophically, Emma determines that absence doesn’t make the heart grow fonder. In fact, absence is the best cure for half-formed loves. Like hers and Frank’s.

Frank doesn’t visit Hartfield again during his stay, proving Emma right once again.

It’s got to be hard to be so right all the time, don’t you think?

Now that Frank’s residence is a mere nine miles from Highbury, however, the Westons decide to resurrect their plans for a ball.

Although he’s slightly terrified at the thought of rampant disease, Mr. Woodhouse does agree that a ball in May is less likely to cause a pandemic than a ball in February.

Mr. Woodhouse just prays that nothing will happen to the young boys while Emma is out dancing. How could she ever forgive herself? (Sound like any parental guilt trips you’ve gotten?)

***Critical Study:***

Emma's attachment to Frank Churchill has subsided, but she is now concerned that he is in love with her. When Frank returns, he and his aunt and uncle decide to stay a house nine miles away from Mr. Weston. He begins preparations for a ball at the Crown Inn, and Emma is surprised that he only visits her once in ten days.

Emma's concern for Frank Churchill distresses her because she believes that he must be in love with her even though she does not share his feelings. The likelihood that he is in love with her is slim, considering his lack of attention to her in the two months since he left Highbury, but she still worries. When he does arrive, she is convinced that he is no longer infatuated with her ­ if he ever was ­ but this does not worry her. If her belief that Frank Churchill must love her indicates some vanity and self-delusion, her reaction to his apparent indifference to her shows some improvement. She does not feel slighted to have less attention.

Emma realizes that whatever attachment she had to Frank has subsided, but she is worried about their meeting on his behalf. When he comes down to Highbury to see her and his other acquaintances, "she has no doubt as to his being less in love" as well. The Churchills move from London to Richmond because Mrs. Churchill cannot take the noise of London. Frank will now be only nine miles away from his friends. In Highbury, preparations for the ball resume.

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

***Summary part 1:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) anticipates [Frank](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill)’s return with concern that she must disappoint his feelings. She believes her own affections have subsided to insignificance, but that Frank has always been the more in love of the two. However, when he visits Hartfield for only a brief fifteen minutes before dashing off to make other social calls, Emma concludes he must also be less in love than previously.

***Analysis part 1:***

Emma continues to believe Frank to be in love with her, as she has interpreted all of his actions according to the immense gratification of her own vanity. However, she is not cruel: she has no desire to encourage unrequited affection, and desires to protect his feelings as much as possible and watches accordingly.

***Summary part 2:***

[Frank](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill) soon departs for London again, on account of [Mrs. Churchill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s illness. She has decided that they must move from London to Richmond, which will be better for her nerves and health. This move brings Frank closer to Highbury, to the delight of the [Westons](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) and Frank himself. [Mr. Weston](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) can finally hold the ball with certainty, and [Mr. Woodhouse](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-woodhouse) resigns himself to the evils of such excitement.

***Analysis part 2***

Mrs. Churchill’s health and whims are a major factor in directing Frank’s fate. Though he is indeed a privileged young man, he is still reliant upon his guardian and benefactress for many of his pleasures. Indeed, as we will discover, he cannot marry against her wishes as he financially depends on her (though of course he could also do as Mr. Weston did and make his own way in the world, which Frank seems unwilling to do).