***Emma***

***Chapter 41***

***Vol3Chapter5***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* As the summer wears on, Mr. Knightley becomes convinced that Frank’s relationship with Jane Fairfax (or at least *to* Jane Fairfax) is more than meets the eye.
* He’s caught Frank staring at Jane at weird moments. Often.
* Worried that Frank’s attention to Jane might hurt Emma, Mr. Knightley treks over to Hartfield.
* He doesn’t really want to share his suspicions with Emma, but his honor won’t permit him to keep silent.
* They sure don’t make men like they used to! Or could he have another motive?
* Frank passes a few days at the Westons’.
* The Westons, Frank, Jane and the Bateses gather at Hartfield.
* Frank asks Mrs. Weston whether the doctor has ordered his new carriage yet.
* Surprised, Mrs. Weston confesses that she knows nothing about a new carriage.
* Frank blushes and seems confused. He was sure that he read about a carriage in a letter from Mrs. Weston…but perhaps he made it up.
* Mr. Weston laughs at what seems to be a good joke – the doctor is indeed getting a new carriage. In fact, Weston learned of it when he was visiting the Bateses.
* Mr. Knightley immediately glances at Jane, who is blushing deeply.
* Before he can deduce anything further, Emma calls them all in to tea.
* After tea, Emma pulls out a set of alphabet cards which she made for her nephews.
* It’s raining, and there’s not much else to do, so the group starts to make word scrambles for each other.
* Frank makes a scramble for Jane, who pushes it away rapidly.
* Don’t worry – we can always count on Harriet to create an awkward situation!
* She picks up the word and asks Mr. Knightley to help her with it.
* The word is "blunder." That’s another word for a mistake.
* Does anyone else sense that there’s more going on than meets the eye?
* Frank, already on to new mischief, creates a word for Emma. It’s "Dixon."
* Jane sees it and turns angrily away.
* Calling to her aunt, she gathers up her things to leave.
* Mr. Knightley stops to investigate the cause of her sudden departure. (Let’s just call him Sherlock Holmes for this chapter, shall we?)
* He asks Emma to show him the words Frank made. Embarrassed, she says that it’s just a private joke.
* This worries Knightley even more. (Remember the beginning of the chapter?)
* He awkwardly tries to gauge how much in love with Frank Emma is by asking her if she’s noticed an attachment between Frank and Jane.
* Laughing at Mr. Knightley’s ignorance, Emma assures him that there’s absolutely nothing between Frank and Jane.
* At least, she’s positive that *Frank* doesn’t care for Jane.
* Uneasy, Mr. Knightley leaves. (Who is he uneasy about? Read on, friends. Read on.)

***Brief Summary:***

June arrives at Highbury and everyone is in good spirits. However, Mr. Knightley seems to be growing to dislike Mr. Churchill, while everyone else seems to like him more. Mr. Knightley has noticed that Mr. Churchill has made Emma his object of affection, and this concerns Mr. Knightley greatly. He has also noticed that Mr. Knightley appears to be trifling with Miss Fairfax.

A chance for him to further observe the situation is granted when he, Mr. And Mrs. Weston, Mr. Churchill, Miss Bates and Miss Fairfax all meet up by the gates at Hartfield. Emma invites them in to tea and Mr. Knightley does his best to eavesdrop on the conversation. Mr. Churchill notices Mr. Perry riding by and mentions that Mrs. Weston told him in a letter that Perry will be purchasing his own carriage. Mrs. Weston denies this and it is obvious that he heard it from someone else. Miss Bates remembers that she was the one who knew this information, and it is gathered that Miss Fairfax might have been the one to tell Mr. Churchill this information.

Mr. Knightley continues to observe Mr. Churchill through tea and then Mr. Churchill requests that they play a riddling game with Emma's nephew's alphabet letters. The letters are spread on the table and Mr. Churchill jumbles them up for Emma to decipher. He also includes Miss Fairfax in this game, with some rather revealing jumbles that she immediately pushes aside. The last jumble, Dixon, is given to Emma and she figures it out immediately. Mr. Churchill then gives the jumble to Miss Fairfax although Emma asks him not to. Miss Fairfax figures it out and gets very quietly angry. She and her aunt decide to leave.

Everyone trickles out but Mr. Knightley stays behind. He feels he must warn Emma about Mr. Churchill. He brings up what he has noticed between Mr. Churchill and Miss Fairfax, but Emma thinks he is mistaken. Instead of going into further detail, Mr. Knightley returns to Donwell Abbey for the evening.

***Brief Analysis:***

Again, we are presented with Mr. Knightley's concern for Emma. There seems to be more behind his noticing of little events between Mr. Churchill and Miss Fairfax. This seems to matter little to Emma, who is set on creating a match between Mr. Churchill and Harriet.

Slowly, the narrator is beginning to reveal that there might actually be some sort of relationship between Mr. Churchill and Miss Fairfax, instead of the occasional hints that were previously dropped in the story.

***Detailed Summary:***

Mr. Knightley begins to suspect that there is some secret understanding between Frank and Jane. During a walk with Emma, Harriet, Mr. and Mrs. Weston, Frank, Jane, and Miss Bates, Knightley witnesses a strange exchange. Frank asks Mrs. Weston if anything has come of Mr. Perry’s plan to buy a carriage. She has no idea what he is talking about, and he swears that she wrote of it in a letter to him some months ago. She denies it, and Frank decides he must have dreamed it. Miss Bates remembers that there was talk of the Perrys getting a carriage at her house (with Jane present) but that it was a secret. Mr. Knightley observes Frank trying to catch Jane’s eye after this.

The party reaches Hartfield, and Emma persuades everyone to come in for tea. A word game ensues, which Mr. Knightley watches. Frank constructs the word “blunder” using alphabet tiles, which he shows to Jane. Then he constructs the word “Dixon,” shows it to Emma, who laughs, and then shows it to Jane, who pushes the puzzle away in anger. When the party breaks up, Knightley stays behind to speak to Emma—he knows that everyone considers her the object of Frank’s affection, and he wishes to warn her. Knightley asks Emma about the “Dixon” joke, and, embarrassed, she refuses to explain. He tells her his suspicion about Jane and Frank, and she laughs at him, stating unequivocally that she can answer for Frank’s indifference to Jane. Knightley is silenced and irritated by Emma’s implication that she is in Frank’s confidence.

***Critical Study:***

During the month of June it is learned that Jane will stay two more months with the Bateses, and George grows to dislike Frank even more. In fact, Frank is on many minds: "While so many were devoting him to Emma, and Emma herself making him over to Harriet, Mr. Knightley began to suspect him of some inclination to trifle with Jane Fairfax." George has seen certain looks pass between Frank and Jane, and one evening during a group meeting at Hartfield Frank mentions news of Mr. Perry which Mrs. Weston says she did not write him because she did not know it until this very moment. Frank says he must have dreamed it, but it turns out that Miss Bates has known it as a secret. The "dream," however, is dropped as the group goes indoors and begins a word game, which George carefully observes. He notes that Frank puts before Jane a puzzle that leads to the word blunder and that another which spells Dixon so displeases her that she turns to Miss Bates for them to go. George remains behind with the idea of "trying to preserve" Emma, but Emma states emphatically that there is nothing between Frank and Jane, that "I can answer for its being so on his" side. "She spoke with a confidence which staggered, with a satisfaction which silenced, Mr. Knightley," who soon afterward takes a hasty leave.

Both the mystery of Frank and Jane and the observant sensibility of George are intensified in this chapter. The chapter is devoted almost entirely to plot action, but a parallel ironic development is worth noting: Just as the verbal irony of generalization in the preceding chapter has misled Emma, here her emphatic generalization about Frank misleads George. In both instances it is Emma's wording that causes misunderstanding, the damaging vagueness resulting from the conflict between the urge to communicate and the need for polite restraint.

***Critical Analysis:***

Mr. Knightley only grows to dislike Frank Churchill more, as he suspects double-dealing in Frank’s pursuit of Emma. It seemed indisputable that Emma was the object of his affections, but Mr. Knightley suspects that he had an interest in Jane Fairfax the whole time. Over tea at Hartfield, Emma, Frank, Harriet and Jane play word games in which they must guess words. The word that Frank gives Jane to guess is "Dixon," which greatly annoys Jane, who promptly quits the game. Mr. Knightley tells Emma about his suspicions about Frank and Jane, but she thinks that there is no romance between them. Mr. Knightley is irritated by the entire situation.

Even though Emma is convinced that Frank Churchill has no romantic interest in her, Mr. Knightley is concerned that he is still pretending to have an feelings for her. He believes that Frank and Jane are having an affair and, as Mr. Knightley has been consistently correct in judging others’ actions, this suspicion is almost significant evidence of the affair. Where he errs is in the idea that Frank Churchill will harm Emma through the deception. Emma is perfectly clear that she does not love Frank, but Mr. Knightley still feels threatened by him. This continues to build the possibility that Mr. Knightley is interested in Emma. His greatest care in this situation is that Emma does not get hurt.

Still, although Emma will not be hurt by Frank Churchill, his behavior is still inappropriately deceptive. He does have a manipulative nature, but does not direct it towards Emma. During the game, Frank teases and taunts Jane Fairfax to the point that she must leave the game. The purpose of Frank Churchill's games seems to push Jane Fairfax into losing her sense of reserve and to reveal her true emotions. This scene parallels the earlier incident in which Mr. Elton uses the riddle "charade" to declare his feelings to Emma via Harriet Smith. Emma finds herself yet again in the middle of a romantic game in which true feelings and emotions cannot properly be conveyed.

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

***Summary part 1:***

[Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) begins to suspect Frank of double dealing with Emma and [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax). He knows that Emma is ostensibly the subject of Frank’s admiration, but he reads symptoms of a secret understanding and admiration between Frank and Jane. He observes a peculiar incident on a group walk to Hartfield, in which Frank asks [Mrs. Weston](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) about [Mr. Perry](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s plan to set up his carriage, referring to information from a [letter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/symbols/letters) she sent him. However, Mrs. Weston has no idea what he is talking about, and Frank laughingly declares he must have dreamt it up. [Miss Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) declares full knowledge of Perry’s plan for the carriage, as Mrs. Perry shared this secret with the Bateses—leading Mr. Knightley to suspect a secret communication between Frank and Jane.

***Analysis part 1:***

Mr. Knightley, despite his cautious disdain for coming to fanciful conclusions through imagined hints, finds himself reading signs of a romance between Jane and Frank. Throughout the course of the novel, Emma, Mrs. Weston, and finally Mr. Knightley play a detective game of sorts in their attempts to piece together the signs of attraction between various characters. However, each is guided and influenced by his or her own desires for drawing certain conclusions. In Mr. Knightley’s case, his early dislike for Frank renders him attentive to Frank's flaws.

***Summary part 2:***

The party arrives at Hartfield, and Frank proposes a word game in which they unscramble alphabet tiles. [Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) seats himself near to observe. [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax) unscrambles Frank’s puzzle, “blunder,” with a blush of consciousness. Frank then sends [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) “Dixon,” which amuses her and angers Jane. Mr. Knightley indignantly suspects that these word games conceal Frank’s deeper game of gallantry and trick.

***Analysis part 2***

Word games provide the medium for the romantic speculation and intrigue that runs throughout the entire novel. Frank’s puzzles allow divergent interpretations for Emma and Jane, but remain incomprehensible to Mr. Knightley. Only those with the inside knowledge can crack the code of Frank’s intentions. At the same time, Frank's games reveal again that in is fun-loving daringness he can be callous and reckless, even hurting the feelings of Jane, whom he loves.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) stays behind to warn [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse), despite his concern that his interference with her affections for [Frank](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill) will be unwelcome. He tells her about his suspicions regarding Frank and [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax), but she laughingly assures Mr. Knightley that she can answer for Frank’s complete indifference towards Jane. Mr. Knightley is unhappy by the intimation that Emma possesses such an intimate knowledge of Frank.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Mr. Knightley proves again that he is willing to risk Emma’s good feelings towards him in order to help her out. The emphasis on Mr. Knightley’s perspective allows us to view Emma, Jane, and Frank from a different light separate from Emma’s biases—though also revealing some of Mr. Knightley’s heart.