***Emma***

***Chapter 45***

***Vol3Chapter9***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Emma walks slowly home, thinking about Jane’s change in fortunes.
* She’s surprised to find Mr. Knightley at home when she arrives. He’s sitting beside Harriet.
* He only meant to stay five minutes – but he’s been sitting there for 30.
* Apparently, he’s made a sudden decision to travel to London and visit his brother. (Mr. Woodhouse, as you can imagine, is highly unnerved by such unnecessary travel!)
* Emma arrives in time to hear her father discussing her visit to the Bates house with Mr. Knightley.
* As he looks at her approvingly, Emma blushes.
* She’s glad that she seems to have done exactly the right thing for once.
* The next day, an express letter arrives at the Westons’.
* Mrs. Churchill *finally* died.
* After death, everyone seems a lot nicer than they were alive. Even Mrs. Churchill.
* Mr. Weston begins to think that he might have liked her, after all.
* Emma realizes at once what this means: Mr. Churchill, Frank’s uncle, is a pretty easygoing guy. It was only Mrs. Churchill who kept Frank on such a short string.
* Now that she’s gone, Harriet and Frank can be together at last!
* (OK, so maybe Emma’s skipping a few steps…like figuring out if they actually like each other. But let’s overlook that for now.)
* Emma decides that there’s not much she can do immediately to help forward Harriet’s love.
* More pressingly, Jane Fairfax has taken very ill.
* Determined to be more friendly, Emma offers to take her on a drive. She’s rejected.
* She drives by her house, trying to make it seem like an accident.
* Jane still doesn’t come out.
* She sends some arrowroot to the house (a medicinal root). It’s sent back.
* Dejected, Emma realizes that Jane doesn’t want her help at all.
* Surprised? Well, not everything works out as Emma plans it.
* As she’s beginning to figure out.
* Later, she hears rumors that Jane was out walking on the cliffs by herself.
* Emma tries not to think about what that might mean.

***Brief Summary:***

Emma returns home to find Harriet and Mr. Knightley sitting with her father. It is obvious at first that Mr. Knightley has still not forgiven her for her rudeness to Miss Bates. However, when her father informs him that she was just visiting Miss Bates, Mr. Knightley warms towards Emma and all is forgiven. He seems about to kiss her hand, but stops before accomplishing this.

Mr. Knightley reveals that he will be visiting his brother and Isabella for a time and will be leaving right away. He leaves for the evening and Mr. Woodhouse is quite upset with the news of Mr. Knightley's impending journey. Emma tries to soften this blow by telling her father about Miss Fairfax's new position as a governess.

The shocking news of Mrs. Churchill's death arrives in Highbury. Although no one was fond of the woman, they all do their best to show proper esteem at her death. Emma feels that perhaps now Harriet will have a chance with Mr. Churchill now that the controlling influence of Mrs. Churchill is gone. However, he and his uncle are removing to Windsor for a time, which puts Emma's plans on hold.

She then turns to Miss Fairfax, in the hopes of undoing some of her unjust treatment in the past. However, Miss Fairfax returns all the notes that Emma sends with polite refusals. Miss Fairfax is apparently quite ill and her chances of leaving for her new position look dim.

Emma finds out that the day she had tried to take Miss Fairfax for a ride in her carriage and was refused was the same day Miss Fairfax was seen walking through a meadow. Emma regrets her past treatment of Miss Fairfax and assumes that she will never be forgiven.

***Brief Analysis:***

Emma seems to be quite preoccupied in regaining the good favor of Mr. Knightley. Again, we are left to wonder if she truly thinks of him as more than just a friend of the family.

Although Emma is quite solicitous of Miss Fairfax, her motivation is questionable. She seems to be doing this more out of trying to get Mr. Knightley's regard, than for any noble reason.

***Detailed Analysis(Ch43-45):***

Emma returns to Hartfield to discover that Mr. Knightley and Harriet have arrived in her absence. Knightley is about to depart for London to visit John and Isabella. His hastiness surprises Emma. Mr. Woodhouse inquires about Emma’s visit with the Bateses, and Emma blushes and exchanges a glance with Knightley. She believes he understands her feelings and forgives her. He makes an unusual gesture, taking her hand and almost kissing it. She is gratified, though a little puzzled about his scruple in completing the kiss.

The next day, unexpected news arrives: Mrs. Churchill has died. Emma thinks this event may improve Harriet’s chances with Frank. Meanwhile, she attempts to provide assistance to Jane, inviting her to Hartfield, sending her healthful foods, and attempting to visit her. Jane pleads ill health, but Emma hears that Jane has been taking outside exercise, and she feels hurt that Jane seems to be particularly avoiding her.

In Emma, Austen presents cleverness as a generally favorable attribute by making it one of her protagonist’s admirable qualities. Austen’s depiction of cleverness was not so kind in previous novels, however. In Mansfield Park, the novel Austen wrote before Emma, the heroine is unfailingly earnest and good, and her main adversary is a woman who is clever and superficial, implying that cleverness is a dangerous quality, not one to be confused with virtue.

Though cleverness is depicted favorably in general in Emma, the Box Hill scene presents cleverness as a hurtful force. Frank Churchill’s ability to deceive everyone into believing he is infatuated with Emma is powered by his restless frustration. Fortunately, Emma is sensible enough not to be taken in by his flirtations, but a less perceptive woman might have been hurt when she discovered they were not serious. Moreover, Frank’s attentions, and Emma’s acceptance of them, cause pain to Mr. Knightley, and we later realize that Frank’s flirting with Emma is also hurtful to Jane.

Emma’s hurtful response to Miss Bates in Chapter 43 is the most blatant example of cleverness as a harmful quality and a clear sign that Frank’s lack of seriousness has had a bad effect on Emma. In tone and substance, Emma’s sarcastic remark to Miss Bates squarely hits its target, but it displays a casual cruelty that we have never seen in Emma before. Mr. Knightley’s reprimand and Emma’s subsequent chagrin may qualify as the greatest emotional crisis in the novel—it is certainly the crisis that is described with the most directness and at the greatest length. Unlike Emma’s unpleasant surprise regarding Mr. Elton and the emotional fluctuations that have accompanied her experiences with Frank, Knightley’s disapproval drives Emma to tears.

When Mr. Knightley reminds Emma that Miss Bates “is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to; and if she live to old age must probably sink more,” he reveals the harsh realities faced by single women in Austen’s time. Genteel women who were not able to marry and who did not inherit enough wealth to support themselves were threatened not only with a loss of social privilege, but also with a fall in material comforts. Or, as in Jane Fairfax’s case, they were forced into a kind of work that amounts to an almost complete loss of freedom. Emma is protected from this threat by her father’s wealth, but we and Emma become increasingly aware that other women in Emma’s society are not so lucky.

***Critical Study:***

Emma is still pensive when she reaches home to find that George and Harriet have arrived during her absence. George is about to go to London for a few days, and his grave manner assures Emma that he has not forgiven her. When Mr. Woodhouse asks about the Bateses, Jane colors, though she notes in George "an instantaneous impression in her favour." With a glow of regard, he presses her hand and is about to kiss it but lets it go. She is nonetheless greatly satisfied that he had the thought of doing it, and they part thorough friends, though she is very sorry not to have come back earlier for the pleasure of talking with him.

The following day news comes that Mrs. Churchill has died, a fact that tends to raise her in the estimation of Highbury. Emma now feels that an attachment between Frank and Harriet has "nothing to encounter." She notes that Harriet behaves with "great self-command" upon hearing the news.

Emma wishes very much "to show attention to Jane Fairfax, whose prospects were closing, while Harriet's opened." An invitation to visit Hartfield, however, is refused; and Mr. Perry reports that Jane has severe headaches and nervous fever. An offer of Emma's carriage at any hour is also refused. Determined to be of help, Emma takes the carriage over, but she gets to talk with only Miss Bates. Jane will not see her. Learning that Jane will eat nothing, Emma sends some superior arrowroot, which is returned. When Emma afterward learns that on that very afternoon Jane was seen wandering about the meadows, she is very sorry to realize "that Jane was resolved to receive no kindness from her." However, she has the consolation of her good intentions and feels sure that George will approve them.

As the novel draws toward its close, some of the plot elements develop rapidly, set free to a degree by the death of Mrs. Churchill. For Emma two opposite relationships develop. While she proves herself to George and comes to more understanding with him, she gets from Jane some comeuppance different from that which came from Augusta Elton; in this instance it comes from someone who, except in the matter of wealth, is Emma's equal but who has not really been treated as an equal by Emma.

***Critical Analysis:***

When Emma returns home, she finds that Mr. Knightley and Harriet have arrived. He tells Emma that he is going to London to spend time with John and Isabella,and is touched to learn that Emma has gone to see Miss Bates. He takes her hand and is about to kiss it, yet suddenly lets it go. The following day, there is news that Mrs. Churchill has died. Emma now realizes that there is no obstacle between Frank and Harriet. She also learns that Jane Fairfax is now in ill health, likely depressed that she must go to Maple Grove.

In this chapter, Emma is determined to set right her previous ill will toward Jane Fairfax. She strenuously attempts to visit her and wish her better health. Not only does she think well of Jane, she now wishes to do something about it. Emma acts with a newfound modesty. She is even embarrassed when her devoted but delusional father compliments her for kindness toward Miss Bates.

Mr. Knightley's romantic attentions toward Emma become more overt in this chapter, although he remains reluctant. He takes her hand when he senses her embarrassment over the false praise, a subtle physical gesture that represents a shift from verbal expressions of emotion that predominate the novel. He is at the verge of expressing his love for Emma but still hesitates.

The death of Mrs. Churchill is a truly unexpected event in the novel, for whatever illness she earlier claimed seemed to be a false pretense for getting Frank Churchill to be near her. Still, the major obstacle for Frank Churchill is now removed. He no longer is prevented from declaring his love for anyone. Yet despite the overwhelming evidence that he must be in love with Jane Fairfax, Emma persists in believing that he could love [Harriet Smith](https://www.gradesaver.com/emma/study-guide/character-list#harriet-smith).

***Significance:***

[Mr. Knightley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Mr._Knightley) is at Hartfield when Emma returns from visiting Miss Bates. She blushes when her father praises her for being attentive to that family, and she then realizes that Mr. Knightley understands she is trying to make amends. Mr. Knightley has suddenly decided to visit his brother in London and has come to take his leave of his friends. He takes Emma's hand and seems about to kiss it, but then he lets it go. The following day, news arrives that Mrs. Churchill has died, and Emma begins to think that maybe Harriet has a chance with Frank. Emma reaches out a few times to Jane, but she is rebuffed, and Emma realizes that "Jane was resolved to receive no kindness from her."***Summary part by part and analysis***

***Summary part 1:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) returns home to find [Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) and [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) visiting. Mr. Knightley is soon to visit the John Knightleys in London, and he wants to say goodbye. When [Mr. Woodhouse](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-woodhouse) mentions Emma’s visit to the Bateses, Mr. Knightley perceives Emma’s intentions with warm gratification. He takes her hand, in a gesture of uncommon friendliness, and is about to kiss it, but then refrains. They part in perfect amity.

***Analysis part 1:***

Mr. Knightley’s manner of departure puzzles Emma, but she is grateful for their reconciliation. Mr. Knightley, despite his criticism, is also generous and quick to perceive her change of heart. He is greatly moved by her efforts, more than his discretion will allow him to express.

***Summary part 2:***

The following day, news arrives of [Mrs. Churchill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s death. Emma reflects that Frank may now be freed to marry whomever he chooses—even [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters).

***Analysis part 2***

Mrs. Churchill, as a willful and powerful woman, holds the young dependent Frank’s fate in her hands.

***Summary Part 3:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) attempts to rectify her past coldness towards [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax): she invites her to Hartfield, sends her food, and attempts to visit her. Jane pleads ill health, but Emma learns that she has been seen out of bed. Emma realizes with sorrow that Jane is determined to receive no kindness from her, but feels it was worth the effort.

***Analysis Part 3:***

Emma’s attempts to demonstrate her good will towards Jane are rejected, causing her some pain and regret. Jane’s own motives for her behavior remain somewhat mysterious, though it will be made clear that Jane feels that Emma has played a role in wrecking Jane's engagement to Frank.