***Emma***

***Chapter 52***

***Vol3Chapter16***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

* Although Emma’s a bit unsettled by the thought of hurting Harriet, she writes to her immediately.
* In the letter, she offers to send Harriet to London to stay with Isabella.
* Apparently Harriet happens to have developed a bad tooth.
* Isabella loves doctors. It’s a match made in heaven.
* With Harriet gone, Emma can finally enjoy spending time with Mr. Knightley without feeling guilty. A little bit of distance can change everything!
* In her spare time, Emma pays a visit to Jane and the Bateses.
* As she walks up to the door, Emma remembers the horrible awkwardness of her last visit.
* Suddenly shy, she waits at the bottom of the stairs as the maid announces her name.
* This time, however, Jane comes running down to greet her.
* Emma congratulates Jane on her engagement.
* They both apologize profusely and hug each other.
* A sappy make-up scene ensues.
* Or rather, a sappy make-up scene *would* probably ensue.
* Unfortunately, Jane has other visitors, so this can’t happen.
* In fact, her other visitor turns out to be none other than our old friend, Mrs. Elton.
* Mrs. Elton remains as catty and superficial as ever.
* It’s so nice to know that some things never change.
* Mrs. Elton is pretty sure that Emma doesn’t know anything about the engagement – and so she proceeds to do a lot of loud whispering behind one hand. It’s pretty funny to all concerned.
* Even Jane has trouble hiding her laughter.
* Emma and Jane part as friends.

***Brief Summary:***

Emma is relieved to find that Harriet does not want to visit her, making it much easier to exclude her from what is going on at Hartfield. She decides to call on Miss Fairfax in the hopes of putting things right with her.

However, when she arrives Mrs. Elton is already there and it is impossible for her to get a word in edgewise. The discussion centers on Miss Fairfax's recovery and Mr. Woodhouse's feeling better.

Mr. Elton arrives, out of sorts and very overheated. He was supposed to meet Mr. Knightley at Donwell Abbey, but Mr. Knightley was nowhere to be found. He mentions running into Mr. Larkin, who seemed very upset and told him Mr. Knightley was not at home. Mr. Elton did not believe him, and traveled all over the fields just to make sure Mr. Knightley was not at home. Emma feels that it is best to leave now and heads for the door.

Miss Fairfax sees her out and they finally decide to put the past behind them and start anew as friends. Miss Fairfax reveals that she has been deceiving Emma by how she was acting towards her and is very sorry. The chapter ends with both of them declaring their friendship towards one another.

***Brief Analysis:***

As the book nears its close, all of the characters seem to be taking their places for their final bow. Emma has finally reconciled with a willing Miss Fairfax, Mrs. Elton is the same as ever and Miss Bates is her useful talkative self.

The mysterious meeting with Mr. Elton and Mr. Knightley must not go unnoticed at this point and we are left to wonder why Mr. Knightley did not show up for a meeting he invited Mr. Elton to attend. Mr. Larkin's apparent bad mood leaves the reader to wonder if Mr. Knightley has already announced his plans to move to Hartfield.

***Detailed Summary:***

Harriet agrees to Emma’s plan to send her to London on the pretense that she needs to see a dentist, which satisfies Emma since she does not want to hurt Harriet with news of Emma and Mr. Knightley’s engagement. Emma decides not to tell her father of her engagement until Mrs. Weston, who is pregnant, has given birth to her baby. Meanwhile, she pays a visit to Jane. They are unable to speak openly because Mrs. Elton is there, and Jane’s engagement is still supposed to be a secret. However, Emma interprets some of Mrs. Elton’s remarks and expressions as ostentatious indications that Mrs. Elton is in on the secret of Jane and Frank’s engagement.

Mr. Elton turns up, annoyed that Mr. Knightley has missed a meeting with him. Emma decides he must be waiting for her at Hartfield and leaves. When Jane walks her out, they are reconciled, each feeling that she owes the other an apology, both full of goodwill.

***Critical Study:***

Harriet proves to be as desirous of avoiding a meeting as is Emma, and Emma has no trouble getting her invited and off to London for at least a fortnight. Wanting to wait until Mrs. Weston is delivered of her baby before telling Mr. Woodhouse of her engagement, Emma now has adequate time and takes the opportunity to call on Jane, who meets her on the stairs herself. She is very gratified by Jane's greeting, then hears Augusta Elton within. Inside, the latter meets Emma with unusual graciousness because she thinks she alone is in on the secret of Jane's engagement and proves her attitude by her constant tasteless asides and "secret" teasings of Jane. Mr. Elton is expected to pick up his wife after (Augusta asserts) a meeting with Mr. Knightley at the Crown, a meeting that Emma says is to be tomorrow. Emma is proved right when Mr. Elton arrives hot and disconcerted after a long walk to Donwell Abbey, where he was unable to find George in spite of having sent a letter. Emma can smile because she guesses that George is waiting for her at Hartfield. When she leaves, Jane attends her all the way downstairs, where they both apologize and forgive each other for their misunderstandings. Emma is happy to learn that Jane and Frank's living with Mr. Churchill at Enscombe is settled, and she concludes thus: "Oh! if you knew how much I love every thing that is decided and open!"

In case there was any doubt, this chapter proves the basically good character and personality of Jane. Augusta gets an incidental and minor degree of comeuppance, perhaps all that her small character merits: littleness deserves littleness. Emma, who can now feel tolerant of even an Augusta, has before her, in the person of Jane, a lovely and radiant example of openness, a quality that she can appreciate more than ever because of her wish to be absolutely open and frank with George.

***Critical Analysis:***

Harriet finally learns about Emma and Mr. Knightley and bears the news well enough. Emma visits the Bates in order to see Jane Fairfax. Mrs. Elton is also there and tells Emma that she knows the good news about her and Mr. Knightley. Emma learns that Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax will marry soon, after an appropriate period of mourning for Mrs. Churchill.

With Harriet gone from Highbury, Emma is free to enjoy Mr. Knightley's presence. This chapter emphasizes the inappropriateness of Emma's friendship with Harriet Smith. Harriet is a burden to Emma with her consistent heartbreaks and fragile nature, but in this case she bears the news about Mr. Knightley well. Austen gives the sense that Harriet’s disappointment is necessary and even appropriate in order to force her to settle on a man who has an equal status. Unlike her situation with Mr. Elton, Harriet is entirely to blame for any pain she has suffered because of her feelings for Mr. Knightley. Since Mr. Knightley did not mislead her, Harriet's belief that he might love her is entirely a product of her developing vanity.

The chapter also reinforces the earlier theme that marriage does not simply affect the prospective husband and wife. Just as Emma and Mr. Knightley have to think about others' desires and emotions, Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill must show the proper respect to others. Marrying so soon after Mrs. Churchill died would be an affront to her memory, since it would indicate how the ill-tempered old woman prevented Frank from doing as he pleased.

***Significance:***

Emma forgives Frank his misdemeanors because she is so happy. She shares Frank's letter with [Mr. Knightley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Mr._Knightley), who is not overly impressed with it. He exclaims to her, "My Emma, does not every thing serve to prove more and more the beauty of truth and sincerity in all our dealings with each other?" After reading the letter, Mr. Knightley tells her he has been thinking about [Mr. Woodhouse](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Mr._Woodhouse) and thinks the best course of action is for him to move into Hartfield and live there with Emma and her father after they marry. Emma is moved by Mr. Knightley's sacrifice and says they should both think about it, but he is sure of his decision.

Harriet responds to Emma with a civil but not overly friendly letter. Emma thinks that "an angel only could have been quite without resentment under such a stroke." Because Harriet needs to see a dentist, Emma arranges for a London visit for her friend, where she will stay with Emma's sister, Isabella. Emma pays a visit to the Bates women and Jane. Both engagements are still secret, and Jane does not know about Emma's. Emma wants to wait to announce her engagement until after Mrs. Weston, who is pregnant, gives birth. Mrs. Elton, however, seems to be aware of Jane's engagement. Jane and Emma are able to exchange some mutual words of apology and part as friends.

The joy of couples in love is conveyed in these chapters, in which Emma easily forgives Frank because she is so happy, and even [Mr. Knightley](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Mr._Knightley) can be charitable toward the man he views as an incorrigible coxcomb. Emma and Jane are able to apologize and part as friends. Now that both women have reached the pinnacle of happiness, they can be on equal footing, unlike Emma and Harriet.

Mrs. Elton continues to provide comic relief. She is upset that Mr. Knightley has kept [Mr. Elton](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Mr._Elton) waiting and says, "I cannot imagine how he could do such a thing by you, of all people in the world! The very last person whom one should expect to be forgotten!" Mrs. Elton may actually be in love with her husband, and she cannot imagine someone slighting her "lord and master," as she calls him.

Mr. Knightley wants to be with Emma as his wife, and so he is willing to move into her home so that her fussy father will not be inconvenienced by her departure as a bride. This is as good as love gets in the Regency era. [Austen](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/author/) shows the relationship between Emma and Mr. Knightley as one in which there will be equal give-and-take.

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

***Summary part 1:***

Harriet agrees to go to London, as she wishes to consult a dentist. Emma is grateful for the postponement of a painful meeting between the two. She then decides to call on [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax). They do not speak openly of the secret engagement because of [Mrs. Elton](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s presence, but the visit is passed with mutual consciousness, warmth, and feeling. As Jane walks Emma out, they each apologize and establish their good will for the other.

***Analysis part 1:***

Emma and Jane finally become friends, as each feels she has misbehaved towards the other and is humbled by the other’s generosity. In their mutual happiness, they are also full of mutual good will. Emma is finally able to fully and selflessly appreciate Jane’s merit, and Jane also seems aware of Emma’s kindness.