***Emma***

***Chapter 19***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

This chapter opens during a walk with Emma and Harriet. Harriet is still bemoaning the loss of Mr. Elton and Emma is trying to figure out how to distract her. She decides to call on Mrs. and Miss Bates in the hopes that will help.

Unfortunately, the Bates have just had a visit from Mrs. Cole, whose son is a close friend of Mr. Elton. The girls are regaled with the stories of Mr. Elton at Bath and then a more dreaded turn of conversation occurs.

Emma, hoping to avoid the subject of Miss Fairfax entirely, is forced to sit through a description of Miss Fairfax's latest letter. The Bates' are very excited about this letter, since Miss Fairfax mentions that she will be arriving within a week for a three-month stay.

Emma hurries to leave before the actual letter can be read, but not before she gathers some suspicion about Miss Fairfax's sudden decision to visit.

***Analysis:***

Two new characters are mentioned in this chapter, but only in passing. Mrs. Cole and her son are friends of Mrs. And Miss Bates, as well as Mr. Elton. It seems that no matter where Emma turns, she can't get Harriet away from news about Mr. Elton.

Emma's suspicions are raised regarding Miss Fairfax's imminent visit. It is revealed that there may be more than meets the eye to Miss Fairfax and her possible relationship with a married man. Although this was looked down upon during this time period, it was extremely common.

***Critical study:***

Emma has taken charge of Harriet, and in an effort to divert her friend as they are out walking one morning, she suggests dropping in on Mrs. and Miss Bates. Although Emma finds the Bates women tiresome, especially the talkative Miss Bates, she has the social obligation to keep up their acquaintance. Miss Bates reports that her niece, [Jane Fairfax](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Jane_Fairfax), is expected to arrive for an extended visit. Jane was orphaned as a young girl but was provided an education by friends of her father's, Colonel and Mrs. Campbell. Jane is good friends with the Campbells' daughter, Miss Campbell, who recently married Mr. Dixon and moved to Ireland. Jane has been invited, along with the Campbells, to visit the newlyweds, but instead she is returning to Hartfield because of ill health. The narrator says, "At that moment, an ingenious and animating suspicion entered Emma's brain with regard to Jane Fairfax, this charming Mr. Dixon, and the not going to Ireland." Emma wonders if there are inappropriate feelings between the two. Emma escapes with Harriet before Miss Bates has a chance to read them Jane's entire letter.

During a walk, Emma has little success turning Harriet’s thoughts from Mr. Elton and therefore decides that they should call on Mrs. and Miss Bates, a duty that Emma usually shuns. During their visit, they are forced to hear about Mr. Elton and his travels, and though Emma has tried to time her visit so as to avoid hearing about Miss Bates’s niece, Jane Fairfax, Miss Bates produces a letter from Jane, who lives with her guardians, Colonel and Mrs. Campbell. The Campbells are about to visit their newly married daughter, Mrs. Dixon, in Ireland, which means that Jane will be coming for an extended visit in Highbury in a week’s time. Based on slight evidence, Emma suspects that there has been a romance between Jane and the Campbells’ daughter’s husband, Mr. Dixon, and that this is the reason that Jane is missing the trip to Ireland.

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

***Summary part 1:***

On a walk with [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) decides to call on the Bateses. Though she dislikes visiting them because they are tedious and keep “second and third rate” company, [Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) and her own conscience have often suggested that she call on them more often, as such visits are the greatest of their limited pleasures.

***Analysis part 1:***

Though Emma has the sense and heart to know what is good, she is loath to sacrifice her own enjoyment for the sake of others. She does, however, possess a developing impulse of self-correction, aided by Mr. Knightley.

***Summary part 2:***

The garrulous [Miss Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) pours forth solicitous inquiries and gossip about the town, mentioning the [Coles](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), flattering [Mr. Elton](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), and finally bringing up a [letter](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/symbols/letters) from her niece [Jane Fairfax](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax). Orphaned at a young age, Jane lives with her guardians Colonel and Mrs. Campbell and is a great favorite within the community. Emma is determinedly polite as Miss Bates dotingly rambles on about Jane, despite finding Miss Bates silly and disliking Jane.

***Analysis part 2***

Miss Bates is considered by critics to be a masterpiece of comedy, as a foolish and gossipy spinster. Yet there is something also pitiable and sympathetic in the confinement of her life, which revolves around living with her mother and chatting about her small social set. Her ability to be easily cheered within her limitations is even admirable.

***Summary part 3***:

[Miss Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) reports that [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax) will be visiting Highbury next week, as the Campbells are leaving for Ireland to visit their newly married daughter and her husband, [Mr. Dixon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters). [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse), fancifully weaving together innocent details from the narrative, suspects a previous romance between Jane and Mr. Dixon that prevents her from visiting Ireland with the Campbells.

***Analysis part 3:***

Though Emma has sworn off matchmaking, her imagination is still active in spinning together intriguing romances and perceiving the world through her fancy. In the innocent chatter of Miss Bates, she manages to hear—to manufacture—a story of hidden love.