***Emma***

***Chapter 20***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

More of Miss Fairfax's background is revealed in the beginning of this chapter. We learn that she was orphaned at a young age and cared for by her grandmother, Mrs. Bates, and her aunt, Miss Bates. At the age of nine, she went to live with a family friend, Colonel Campbell, who cared for her and provided an education.

Emma resolves upon the arrival of Miss Fairfax to cease in her dislike. However, as the first week goes on this resolution seems to be getting harder for Emma. Miss Fairfax is described as being almost too polite, and therefore somewhat suspicious in her nature.

Miss Fairfax is acquainted with Mr. Churchill and Emma does her best to find out more about him. Unfortunately, she can only pry very general statements about him out of Miss Fairfax.

***Analysis:***

The game of being polite is quite humorous, as Emma and Miss Fairfax dance around one another. There is still some suspicion regarding the nature of the relationship between Mr. Dixon, the husband of Colonel Campbell's daughter and Miss Fairfax, but as of yet no more is revealed.

One gets the impression that Austen knew someone much like Miss Fairfax and did not think highly of her. The narrator of the story seems to almost sneer while she is being mentioned.

***Detailed Summary (19-20):***

Emma and Harriet are walking one morning when they approach the house of Mrs. and Miss Bates. Though the latter is an inveterate and compulsive talker who in all kindness gives indiscriminate attention to the trivial and the important and who therefore is disliked by Emma, Emma decides that her calling upon them is overdue and that their talk will divert Harriet's thoughts from Mr. Elton. Talk of a letter from Mr. Elton is succeeded by Miss Bates' minute details of a letter from her niece Jane Fairfax, who after a two-year interval is to begin a three-month visit with the Bateses the very next week because the Campbells, with whom she lives, are leaving to visit their recently married daughter, Mrs. Dixon, in Ireland. From the details Emma conceives a lively, though unfounded, suspicion that Jane has aroused the affections of young Mr. Dixon, who not long ago saved her from falling off the boat into the water at Weymouth. However, still promising to read the letter, Miss Bates says that Jane's reason for coming is health: Coming to Highbury will be good for the bad cold which she caught at Weymouth and which has lingered disagreeably ever since. Before the letter can be read, Emma and Harriet happily escape back to the street.

After being orphaned, Jane was taken into the family of Colonel Campbell, a friend of her military father. There she was "brought up for educating others" and became a close friend of the daughter her own age. In this elegant society her beauty and acquirements stand in contrast to those of the daughter, who has won Mr. Dixon. With the boring character of Miss Bates coloring her feelings, Emma does not like Jane and is sorry for her coming. But when Jane arrives, Emma is forced to admire her elegance to the point that she acquits her of having "seduced Mr. Dixon's affections" and even laments that Highbury affords "no young man worthy of giving her independence." When Jane visits Hartfield with her grandmother and aunt, however, Emma's feelings relapse, for Jane is very reserved, wrapping her real opinions "in a cloak of politeness." She is particularly reserved about Weymouth and the Dixons and about Frank Churchill, who was at Weymouth at the same time. On the latter all she will do is repeat the very general lip-service of others, and Emma cannot forgive her.

***Detailed analysis (19-20):***

The beginning of Volume Two not only introduces an entirely new character, Jane Fairfax (prepared for earlier, of course), but also indicates that Emma's flair for intrigue is far from being extinguished. Still trying to console Harriet for her "loss" of Mr. Elton, she can nonetheless imagine an emotional entanglement for Jane and also wish to manipulate her toward a suitable partner. Emma's fluctuating tendency is exemplified in her initial dislike and jealousy of Jane, her subsequent admiration for Jane's qualities and sorrow for her penniless condition, and her final return to disliking the orphan. Concomitant with, and perhaps causative of, Emma's attitude is the fact that Jane is her first real competition in both acquirements and beauty.

A measure of Miss Austen's realism and satire is found in the characterization of Miss Bates. Miss Bates is such a compulsive talker that she jumps hurriedly from subject to subject, as if time is too short for her necessity to vocalize everything that comes into her life (she says practically nothing of herself except as being the object of everyone's goodness), and treats everything as of equal importance. The satire, however, lies not only in the delineation of Miss Bates but also in the kind of society that will put up with her; it is of course ambiguous satire, each element containing that which is not admirable and that which is (Miss Bates, for instance, is good intention personified).

***Critical study:***

Jane Fairfax, orphaned at three, was raised by Miss Bates, her maternal aunt, and Mrs. Bates, her maternal grandmother. Additionally, she was educated and nurtured by Colonel and Mrs. Campbell. Jane's father, a lieutenant in the infantry, took care of Colonel Campbell when he was ill and saved his life. When the Colonel returned to England, he made sure Jane received an education, and she began to spend time with the Campbells. The family showed a lot of affection for Jane, and she grew up to be a beautiful and highly accomplished young woman. Because the Campbells are of modest means and cannot provide for her, however, she plans to take a job as a governess after enjoying a few months' vacation in Hartfield. Emma dislikes Jane because they are about the same age, although Jane is much more accomplished in her studies. She is also annoyed because Miss Bates dotes on Jane and constantly brags about her.

Emma resolves during their first visit to change her attitude toward Jane and allows herself to feel compassion for the other woman, who will waste her talent and elegance in the teaching trade. But her heart is hardened by Jane's aloofness. When Jane and the Bates women come to Hartfield, Emma learns that Jane and Frank spent time together in Weymouth. Jane, however, will not provide any information about young Churchill. For this, "Emma could not forgive her."

Jane’s history is given, starting from how, at age three, she became an orphan after her father was killed in battle and her mother died of consumption and grief. Jane lived with her aunt and grandmother in Highbury until she was eight years old. Then, a friend of her father’s, Colonel Campbell, took an interest in her well-being and made her part of his household. He provided her with an education, but, since he would be unable to give her an inheritance, it was understood that when Jane came of age she would become a governess. Meanwhile, Jane became dear to the Campbell family and enjoyed the pleasures of elegant society in London. Her stay in Highbury constitutes her last taste of freedom before becoming a governess.

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

***Summary part 1:***

After the death of [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax)’s father in battle and her mother from grief at the age of three, [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax) was raised by [Mrs. Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) and [Miss Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) in Highbury. Several years later, [Colonel Campbell](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), a friend of her father’s, took her into his family, where she became much beloved. This gave her the opportunity for a superior education, which is particularly critical as she will have insufficient inheritance for independence and must become a governess or marry well. She grows into a fine young lady alongside the Campbells’s own daughter, Miss Campbell, in good society.

***Analysis part 1:***

As an orphan, Jane is dependent on the good graces of others. Had she not been taken in by her father’s friend, she would have remained in poverty and ignorance comparable to Miss Bates—and, perhaps, met a similar fate as the rather silly spinster. With education, she gains the talents and grace that might make her attractive to a husband. At the least, education gives her the opportunity for employment, which offers the opportunity for moderate financial security in a socially acceptable position.

***Summary part 2:***

With Miss Campbell recently married to [Mr. Dixon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), Jane anticipates her time with the Campbells drawing to a close. She has resolved at the age of twenty-one to seek a position as governess, and she desires to spend her remaining months of freedom with her kind relations in Highbury who love her so dearly.

***Analysis part 2***

Jane reveals her responsible and un-pretentious nature, as she readily prepares to remove herself from her guardians’ charity, giving up her life among high society to make her own way in the world.

***Summary part 3***:

Emma dreads her duty of calling on [Jane](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax), though she cannot quite find her own reasons for dislike justifiable: Jane’s coldness and reserve, Jane's aunt’s annoying chattiness, and the general fuss made over Jane. [Mr. Knightley](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/mr-george-knightley) has suggested Emma dislikes Jane because Jane embodies all the accomplishment and elegance that Emma would like to be attributed to herself. Though Emma denies this, she feels a sense of guilt every time she sees Jane.

***Analysis part 3:***

As with Frank, we meet Jane first through the impressions of others. By now we are accustomed to finding Emma’s perspective biased by vanity and fancy and Mr. Knightley’s sensible and discerning. Mr. Knightley's observations here set up Jane, another comparably accomplished and admired young woman, as a foil or rival for Emma.

***Summary Part 4:***

When Emma encounters Jane this time, she admires her remarkable elegance and beauty. Emma feels compassion, too, for her impending poverty. However, Emma eventually relapses into her old dislike on Jane’s next visit, as Emma finds [Miss Bates](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) tiresome, Jane overpraised, and Jane’s manner “disgustingly . . . suspiciously reserved.” Emma is also disappointed that Jane will speak little of either [Mr. Dixon](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) or [Frank Churchill](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill), the latter of whom Jane encountered at Weymouth.

***Analysis Part 4:***

Emma is a constant work in progress, as she attempts to evaluate Jane fairly. Yet even after generously admiring Jane at their first reunion, she slips irresistibly into the same petty judgments and biases against Jane. Emma’s reasons for dislike remain shallow and motivated by her own fancy, as Jane’s greatest fault is her reserve and the admiration she draws from others.