***Emma***

***Chapter 22***

***Vol2Chapter4***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

Highbury begins to discuss the upcoming nuptials of Mr. Elton and Miss Hawkins at great length. Much is made about her and her coming to live in the village. Harriet does her best to avoid this talk, but cannot escape the constant reminder of the failed matchmaking attempt with Mr. Elton.

Miss Hawkins is discussed at length and it is revealed that she is quite wealthy, and reasonably good-looking. The anticipation of her arrival at Highbury is very high and no one talks of anything else.

Mr. Elton arrives back in Highbury and spends most of his time gloating about his upcoming marriage. It seems that the entire village can talk of nothing else.

Elizabeth Martin visits Harriet and invites her to Abbey Mill for a visit. Harriet agrees, and Emma and she cook up a plan to keep her visit restrained to 15 minutes. Emma will drop her at Abbey Mill from the carriage and return promptly to keep the visit short.

***Analysis:***

It appears that Emma's assessment of Mr. Elton was quite accurate. Miss Hawkins, although not ugly, has one claim to fame and that is her fortune of 10,000 and 1 pounds. This is referred to as 10,000 1 since no one knows for sure the entire amount, but they do know it is greater than 10,000 pounds.

The expected arrival of Miss Hawkins has temporarily derailed the village from discussing Mr. Churchill, leaving the reader to wonder if this visit will ever transpire.

Harriet's pending visit with the Martin's is very much on Emma's mind as she does her best to shield her friend from not only pain but also a loss of her rank in society.

***Detailed SummaryCh21-22(Vol2ch3-4):***

Coming the next morning on business with Mr. Woodhouse, George Knightley gives his approbation to Emma for being so pleasant toward Jane, though the two disagree about the reason for Jane's reserve. He is about to give Emma a piece of news when he is interrupted by the arrival of Miss Bates and Miss Fairfax with thanks for a hindquarter of pork sent them by the Woodhouses. Miss Bates is also bursting with the news that Mr. Elton, who has been away only four weeks, is going to be married to a Miss Hawkins whom he has met at Bath. Jane still will not commit herself on anything, even on Mr. Elton, whom she has of course not yet met. George leaves with the other two visitors, and Emma is left with her father, who laments "that young people would be in such a hurry to marry — and to marry strangers too," and with her concern about how Harriet will feel when she learns the news.

After a heavy but short rain, Harriet arrives in a state of perturbation, but it is not because she has heard of Mr. Elton. Instead, she has been detained by the rain at Ford's, the principal fashionable shop in Highbury, where she encountered Robert Martin and his sister, who first ignored her and then came by to speak quite amiably and kindly with her. Emma has to admit to herself that they have acted worthily, but she is disturbed at Harriet's excitement over meeting Robert again, and to assuage it she is obliged to hurry on with the news about Mr. Elton. As Mr. Elton's rights to Harriet's attention gradually revive, Emma is rather glad of the meeting at Ford's for "deadening the first shock, without retaining any influence to alarm."

The Highbury rumors about Miss Hawkins are such good and numerous ones that Mr. Elton needs to tell very little of her when he returns. Her first name is Augusta and she possesses about ten thousand pounds in fortune; since she and he have no one to please except themselves, the wedding will be soon. Emma does not like the pique and pretension that she now sees in Mr. Elton, and she determines what she can of Miss Hawkins: that she is the younger daughter of a Bristol merchant, that her parents are dead, and that her older sister is married to a gentleman near Bristol. Emma does not think very highly of these circumstances, but her thoughts and hands are filled with Harriet, who sees and hears, or hears of, Mr. Elton and his concerns at every turn before he leaves again for Bath.

When a few days later Elizabeth Martin calls at Mrs. Goddard's and, finding Harriet not at home, leaves a note, Emma advises a return visit as best. It will be a social call to establish what Emma feels is the proper relationship among them, for she herself will take Harriet in the carriage, leave her at the farm, and return for her after only fifteen minutes. Her heart does not fully approve of the scheme, but she can think of nothing better.

Not a week after Miss Augusta Hawkins' name had been mentioned among Highbury, she had already been revealed to be handsome, elegant, accomplished and highly amicable, although Emma notes that she has no truly respectable family connections. Mr. Elton returns to Highbury with renewed spirits as he is to be married shortly. Harriet’s spirits worsen upon Mr. Elton's return, although she has now resumed contact with Elizabeth Martin. Emma suggests that Harriet visit the Martins out of considerations for propriety.

***Detailed analysis:***

Wealth is the primary motive for Mr. Elton's marriage to Miss Hawkins. She has a fortune that she brings to the marriage, but certainly not the social status that Emma has. It is here that Austen makes the distinction between wealth and status. Miss Hawkins is certainly wealthy, but the source of this wealth is important. Her family's fortune comes from the somewhat disreputable trade industry, not from the ownership of property, which is the source of the income for the Woodhouses and Mr. Knightley.

For the first time, Emma assents to Harriet's contact with the Martins. It is significant that Harriet is so dependent upon Emma for her decisions, virtually unable to decide anything without first checking with her friend. In addition, Harriet's preoccupation with Mr. Elton borders on obsession. She has a limited attention span. If she does not think or speak about Mr. Elton, the subject is Mr. Martin. This may be part of the reason that Emma suggests that Harriet visit the Martins, if only to give her an opportunity to think of something other than Mr. Elton. An additional concern, as always, is propriety. Whatever embarrassment there may be between Harriet and the Martin family, she must be kind and civil to them.

This chapter and the previous chapter continue the settling of the situation for Mr. Elton and Harriet, at the same time extending the subordinate plot thread of the Martins. Emma's sense of social distinction is further affirmed both in respect to the Martins and in her attitude toward what she learns of Augusta Hawkins. Jane is still something of an enigma, but one problem that Emma has set in motion becomes clear when she realizes that "Harriet was one of those, who, having once begun, would be always in love." She now sees her management of Harriet as a bit of a chore but also as a matter of course.

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

***Summary part 1:***

Favorable gossip circulates in the town about Miss Hawkins, [Mr. Elton](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s fiancée. Mr. Elton, having left greatly offended, returns to town especially delighted to spread reports of his beautiful, accomplished, and amiable bride with an independent fortune.

***Analysis part 1:***

Mr. Elton’s pride is apparent as he quickly moves from Emma to Miss Hawkins. His boasting in this second, swift success reveals his shallow sentiment and lack of grace.

***Summary part 2:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) finds [Mr. Elton](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) even less agreeable than before with his airs of pretension, but she is grateful that his marriage will relieve the tension in their relations. She is pleased to find his bride no more well connected, though wealthier, than [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), in spite of Mr. Elton’s disdain and self-importance.

***Analysis part 2***

Ironically, much of the snobbery that Emma finds distasteful and unfair in Mr. Elton’s assessment of Harriet applies to Emma’s own proud devaluation of Miss Hawkins and the Martins.

***Summary part 3***:

[Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s preoccupation with [Mr. Elton](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) continues, only to be distracted by a courteous visit from [Mr. Martin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s sister. [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) encourages Harriet to return the visit out of civility, though she ensures that Harriet will not stay too long and re-establish intimacy with the Martins by dropping her off and picking her up.

***Analysis part 3:***

Despite Emma’s belief that Harriet’s nature is too shallow to love deeply, Harriet demonstrates a steadfast if silly attachment. Emma continues to control Harriet’s affairs, believing her own judgment to be superior to her friend’s.