***Emma***

***Chapter 23***

***Vol2Chapter5***

***Summary and Analysis***

***Summary:***

Harriet is dropped off at Abbey Mill for her visit with the Martins. Meanwhile, Emma uses the fifteen minutes to pay a visit to an old servant who lives near by. She returns punctually fifteen minutes later and is waiting for Harriet at the gate to Abbey Mill.

Harriet discusses her visit with the Martins and reveals that while the mother and sisters were somewhat cool at first, they warmed quickly. Mr. Martin was nowhere to be found.

The girls decide to visit Mr. And Mrs. Weston, only to find that they had already left to visit them at Hartfield. Emma bemoans this and reluctantly has the driver return to Hartfield, where she is sure she will miss them.

However, the Westons stop the carriage en route and reveal a shocking piece of news. The long awaited Mr. Churchill will be arriving at Randalls the very next day. Mrs. Weston asks Emma to think of her at 4:00 so that all will go well, which Emma faithfully promises to fulfill.

The next day arrives and as the clock strikes twelve, Emma walks into a room only to find Mr. Weston and Mr. Churchill standing before her. Mr. Churchill had taken an earlier train and arrived the night before.

Emma immediately takes a liking to Mr. Churchill and is quite pleased with his appearance. The two begin to get to know one another and it seems that they will be quite good friends.

Miss Fairfax is briefly brought up and Mr. Churchill agrees to call on her, as they were previously acquainted.

***Analysis:***

Emma's control over Harriet is evident as she dictates how long she can stay at Abbey Mill and returns promptly to pick her up. Her worries regarding Mr. Martin were unfounded as he was not present for the visit.

The announcement of Mr. Churchill's arrival promises to turn Highbury into a whirl of gossip and speculation. The fateful day arrives and Emma is quite surprised at how much she gets along with Mr. Churchill. This leaves the reader to wonder if her vow to remain single will be broken by Mr. Churchill.

***Detailed SummaryCh21-22:***

Emma takes Harriet to visit the Martins. Ahead of time, they agree that Emma is to return and retrieve Harriet after fifteen minutes. Harriet has a friendly and emotional visit with Mr. Martin’s mother and sister, but when the visit is cut short, it is clear the Martins understand that they have been slighted. Though pained, Emma still believes she is doing what is best for Harriet.

Emma’s spirits are revived by a meeting with Mr. and Mrs. Weston, who bring the news that Frank Churchill’s arrival is imminent. The following day, Emma unexpectedly meets Frank at Hartfield, and she is pleased to find that he is very good-looking, bright, and charming. Frank has just the right compliment for everyone, especially Mrs. Weston, which pleases Emma. Emma can see that Mr. Weston hopes that she and Frank might form an attachment, and she wonders if the thought has occurred to Frank. When his father departs on an errand, Frank leaves to call on his acquaintance from Weymouth, Jane Fairfax.

Harriet's visit to the Martins goes as Emma has hoped, for she picks up Harriet just as the acquaintance is about to become intimate again. On the way home they meet Mr. and Mrs. Weston, who have news that Frank Churchill will arrive the next day to stay an entire fortnight. Mr. Weston promises to bring him soon to Hartfield, and Mrs. Weston asks to be remembered at four the next afternoon when Frank is to arrive. The next morning Emma remembers at every opportunity and then is surprised when at noon she comes downstairs to find Mr. Weston and his son with her father. Frank appears to live up to his reputation, being good looking and lively and having "a well-bred ease of manner." Sure that he knows how to make himself agreeable, she wonders if he guesses that the Westons hope something will develop between her and him. He is all good breeding, even as his father leaves on business and he himself retires to visit the Bateses and Jane, the last with whom he has "the honour of being acquainted."

Harriet gives Emma the details of her visit with the Martins. Fatigued by the business of Harriet, the Martins, and Mr. Elton, Emma visits the Westons. [Frank Churchill](https://www.gradesaver.com/emma/study-guide/character-list#frank-churchill), a very good looking man, finally arrives in Highbury, and Emma immediately likes him, for he is quite charming and well spoken. Emma, [Mr. Woodhouse](https://www.gradesaver.com/emma/study-guide/character-list#mr-woodhouse) and the Westons socialize with Frank Churchill, and Emma is pleased by the beginning of this acquaintance.

***Detailed analysis:***

In addition to introducing Frank Churchill, who is to be a major character in the novel in spite of his actual coming on the scene so late, the present chapter offers a contrast between the natural attraction of Harriet toward Robert Martin (whose presence on the short visit is felt more because he is not physically there) and the comparatively artificial attraction of Emma toward Frank — artificial because it is based, not upon any real association, but upon the unstated yet prescriptive hopes of the beloved Westons and upon the kind of predisposition that can be kindled by an expectant community in general. Both of these factors have worked successfully upon Emma's imagination, while it has been Robert as a reality that has worked upon Harriet.

As for Frank, to Emma at least he proves to be the all-pleasing young man she formerly pictured to George Knightley. It is worth remembering that, when she thus described him, she was still partly following an argumentative position opposite to her real opinion. One cannot be certain whether this was meant to be merely argumentative or laudatory; but in any event, having now met and talked with Frank, she is indeed "very well pleased with this beginning of the acquaintance." It is highly ironical that, as simpleminded Harriet's attention was directed toward Mr. Elton by Emma, strong-willed Emma's attention has been directed toward Frank at least to a great extent by others than herself.

Through Harriet's long tale of her visit with [Robert Martin](https://www.gradesaver.com/emma/study-guide/character-list#robert-martin), Austen gives some insight into Harriet's limited imagination. The mere sight of a trunk that will be delivered to Mr. Elton disturbs poor Harriet and ruins her visit to the Martins. This reaches past mere shame and mourning over her unsuccessful courtship with Mr. Elton and absolves Emma of some blame for her pain. Emma may have attempted to design a romance between Harriet and Mr. Elton, but it is now Harriet's duty to let go of her obsessive pain.

Frank Churchill's final arrival at Highbury reveals little substantial information about the young man, who still remains a mystery. More significant is that, despite this lack of any more tangible information, Emma is quite pleased with Frank. She knows that she will like Frank at first sight, when he has had no opportunity to exhibit any personal qualities, positive or negative, and she takes every minor shading to his personality as an example of his excellence, just as she earlier idealized [Harriet Smith](https://www.gradesaver.com/emma/study-guide/character-list#harriet-smith) and Mr. Elton when she had designs for them.

Although the two plotlines have no apparent connection, Austen continues to tie together [Jane Fairfax](https://www.gradesaver.com/emma/study-guide/character-list#jane-fairfax) and Frank Churchill. Since there is little reason for the two plotlines to connect with one another, this must be taken as foreshadowing for later developments between the two characters.

Harriet is miserable after she snubs the Martin women, under Emma's direction, by paying them a 15-minute visit. Mrs. Martin (Robert Martin's mother) and her daughters had "received her doubtingly, if not coolly; and nothing beyond the merest common-place had been talked almost all the time," until Mrs. Martin remarked that Harriet had grown, which brought up the memory of their previous warm relations. Despite Harriet's anguish, Emma feels strongly that she must keep her friend from the Martins for her own good.

After the visit, Mr. and Mrs. Weston stop Emma and Harriet on their way home to announce that Frank is finally coming. The next morning, Mr. Weston wastes no time in bringing him around, and Emma finds him "a *very* good looking young man." Both Emma and Mr. Weston like that Frank refers to Randalls, Mr. Weston's estate, as "home." Emma is also satisfied that he speaks highly of his new stepmother. Frank leaves, preparing to pay a social call to [Jane Fairfax](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Jane_Fairfax), whom he mildly refers to as "a very elegant young woman."

The description of Augusta Hawkins, soon to be Mrs. Elton, is comic. As critic Barbara Thaden has pointed out, this description is a parody of the novel's first sentence that describes Emma. Mrs. Elton has not yet arrived on the scene, but when she does, she will appear as Emma's foil. In regard to the Martins, Emma determines that Harriet must extend some semblance of politeness by returning Elizabeth Martin's visit. She also wants to make sure that a return visit does not awaken the embers of friendship that still burn in Harriet's heart. For this reason, she allows her friend a mere quarter of an hour with the Martins.

After Harriet describes the visit, Emma is aware of the pain that all the parties feel about the change in their relations. Emma can sympathize with the Martin women's resentment. But there is something at work here beyond Emma's seeming refusal to make an exception for what she sees as a difference in class. If she were to admit that Robert Martin is, in fact, suitable for Harriet, she would also have to admit that she has done Harriet a great disservice in preventing her from making a suitable and profitable match based on love and affection. This is too much for Emma to bear, so she sticks to her story—that Robert Martin is beneath Harriet.

When Emma meets [Frank Churchill](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Frank_Churchill), he is exactly what she and all of Highbury expect: handsome and charming, with good manners. From the very beginning, Frank seems to be someone who knows how to satisfy people by reinforcing their projections. For example, he refers to his father's home as his home. He is careful to praise Mrs. Weston's looks and merits. Frank is also careful to flatter Emma. No doubt Frank, as the adopted son of a difficult woman he depends on as a benefactor, has had years of practice learning how to flatter and please. He certainly appears to be well versed in double dealing, evidenced by his seeming indifference toward [Jane Fairfax](https://www.coursehero.com/lit/Emma/character-analysis/#Jane_Fairfax).

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

***Summary part 1:***

[Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters)’s visit with the Martins is distressing to all parties. Just as Harriet, [Mrs. Martin](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters), and the Martin sisters begin to recover their former familiarity and intimacy, [Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) arrives to retrieve Harriet. The Martins perceive the intended slight of her visit’s brevity, Harriet is miserable, and even Emma feels pained by the offense she has led Harriet to inflict upon the Martins. Nonetheless, Emma believes that the separation between the Martins and Harriet is for Harriet's own good.

***Analysis part 1:***

Though Emma is not insensible to Harriet’s pain and regrets offending the good-hearted Martins, her conviction of the Martins’ social inferiority spurs her to continue to “protect” Harriet from them. Harriet, for her part, is too weak-willed to go against Emma’s guidance, though she is soft-hearted enough to feel wretched about the affair.

***Summary part 2:***

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) and [Harriet](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) run into a cheerful [Mr. and Mrs. Weston](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) on their return, who announce that Frank Churchill is to visit the next day. Frank arrives early, and Emma meets him at Hartfield. She finds him handsome, well bred, and charming; altogether, he meets her expectations, and she anticipates they will become fast friends. He knows how to make himself agreeable and is eager to please, generously praising Mrs. Weston to Emma’s gratification.

***Analysis part 2***

Frank is exactly the charming young man Emma has anticipated, though her own biases have been known to lead her to find many characters to be just what she expects—and wants—them to be. It is too early, however, for even Emma to know the intentions that lie behind this young man’s charm.

***Summary part 3***:

[Emma](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/emma-woodhouse) suspects that [Mr. Weston](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters) watches eagerly for a developing attachment between herself and [Frank](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/frank-churchill), and Emma wonders if such suspicions have crossed Frank’s mind as they have hers. At the end of his very agreeable visit, Frank mentions that he will drop by the Bates residence, to pay a visit to his acquaintance from Weymouth, [Jane Fairfax](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/emma/characters/jane-fairfax).

***Analysis part 3:***

Within the rather confined circle of Emma’s society, marriage is on everyone’s mind. It is perhaps the most significant live event, and one that arrests not only Emma’s too active imagination, but also in fact everyone’s attention.