

EMMA
a screenplay
by
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from the novel by
Jane Austen

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FADE IN:

The screen is a deep and mesmerizing blue with folds of black arrayed across the surface, looking like the sky succumbing to night. THE CAMERA MOVES IN SLOWLY as white flecks float dreamily by-- are they stars or is it snow? A planet lowers into view. We soon see that it is a small painted globe with only one country spread across its surface: England. Except for London, which is marked by the Tower, no other towns are recorded but the town of Highbury, lovingly detailed: there is a charming house marked Hartfield, showing a beautiful young woman, Emma, and her father, Mr. Woodhouse. There is a house marked Donwell Abbey, showing a handsome man in his thirties, Mr. Knightley. And there is a man in his early forties, Mr. Weston, lifting his bride, the former Miss Taylor, in her thirties, over the threshold over their house, marked Randalls. As we examine this, we hear a voice:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

In a time when one's town was one's world and the actions at a dance excited greater interest than the movement of armies, there lived a young woman who knew how this world should be run.

Suddenly the planet drops and we see that it hangs by a string. THE CAMERA PULLS BACK and we see that the string is held by Emma Woodhouse, the beautiful young woman, wearing a royal blue dress. Below her a child tosses white confetti. Her father stands with her. Emma scoops the ornament in her hand and presents it to Mr. and Mrs. Weston, in their wedding clothes.

MRS. WESTON

It's beautiful, dear Emma!

CHILD

Where are the other countries?

MR. WOODHOUSE

There are no other countries but England. And no town but ours.

A maid offers cake. Mr. Woodhouse shakes his head with a smile.

MR. WOODHOUSE

No, I cannot eat wedding cake-- too rich. It strains the system. I advise you not to pass any more. You will only endanger the other guests--

Emma leans in and speaks softly to Mrs. Weston.

EMMA

I ought to take Father home for our supper. But--

(Overcome)

dear Miss Taylor-- now, dear Mrs. Weston-- such happiness to you both! Such happiness this brings to all of us!

They embrace. The camera closes in on them, stopping on Emma's back where the ornament rests, hanging from Mrs. Weston's hand. As the narrator speaks, the screen fills with that part of the ornament called "Hartfield" where Emma stands with her father.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Indeed, the Westons' happiness was shared by all present. But when some guests went home, another emotion gained prominence.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: HARTFIELD, THE WOODHOUSE HOME-- NIGHT

Their house is handsome and warm. It lacks nothing but their old friend. Emma and her father sit at dinner, at a loss.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Poor Miss Taylor! She was always so happy here. Why she would give this all up just to be married!

EMMA

I am grown now. She cannot put up with my ill humors forever. She must wish for children of her own.

MR. WOODHOUSE

You have no ill humors, my dear, and your own Mother, God rest her, could have been no realer than Miss Taylor. Can she really wish, with so excellent a charge as you, a young lady who, under her coaxing, has grown into the very ideal of society, to give life to a mewling infant who will import fresh diseases every time it enters the house and needs every chore done for itself? No, I called her poor Miss Taylor and poor indeed she is!

There is a knock and the door opens. It is MR. KNIGHTLEY. Handsome and self-assured and warm-- a clear favorite here.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

All right-- who cried the most at Miss Taylor's wedding?

MR. WOODHOUSE

Come in!

EMMA

Welcome back! How is sister? Is your brother giving her the respect we Woodhouse ladies deserve?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

He is, and she blossoms under it. Their happy children testify to it.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Poor Isabella! She was the first to leave me. Most likely, that's how Miss Taylor got the notion to go--

They rise from the table and walk with Mr. Knightley into the library where a fire burns invitingly.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Don't be too hard on Miss Taylor. It must be easier for her to have only one to please than two.

EMMA

Especially when one of us is such a troublesome creature!

MR. WOODHOUSE

I am afraid I am very troublesome--

EMMA

Dear Papa! I could never mean you. Mr. Knightley loves to find fault with me, that's all, as a joke.

MR. WOODHOUSE

But what fault is there with you?

Emma smiles at Mr. Knightley as if that settles that. He settles happily into a chair. She pours some Port for him and her father.

EMMA

He has come to hear about the wedding and I shall be happy to tell him, for we all behaved charmingly.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Emma bears it well, but she is most
sorry to lose Miss Taylor--

Emma, her back to them as she lifts the drinks, winces sadly.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

We would not like Emma so well as
we do if she should not miss her
friend. But she must be happy that
Miss Taylor has settled so well.

She turns, smiling now, and offers them their drinks.

EMMA

Indeed, one matter of joy in this
is that I made the match myself.
And what a triumph! People said Mr.
Weston would never marry again.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

(Amused)

Triumph? You made a lucky guess!

EMMA

Have you never known the triumph of
a lucky guess? Had I not promoted
Mr. Weston's visits and gave little
encouragements and smoothed little
matters, we might not have had a
wedding today.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Then please, my dear, make sure we
have no more. Marriage is so
disrupting to one's social circle!

EMMA

Only one more, Papa, for Mr. Elton.

The two men groan. She proceeds, unperturbed.

EMMA

When he joined their hands today he
looked as if he would like to have
the same kind office done for him.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Have him here for dinner-- that is
kindness enough.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Yes, Emma. Mr. Elton is a man of six and twenty. He knows how to take care of himself.

EMMA

(Laughing)

One does not like to generalize about so many people all at once, Mr. Knightley, but you may be assured that men know nothing about their hearts, whether they be six and twenty or six and eighty. Excepting you, of course, Father. No, Mr. Elton will be the next person to benefit from my help.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Poor Miss Taylor, indeed! It is Mr. Elton who deserves our pity!

He and Mr. Woodhouse share a laugh. Emma smiles at them, but sips her drink happily, with no intention of changing her plans.

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- NIGHT

Carriages pull up to the Woodhouse home.

INT: HARTFIELD- NIGHT

The party for Mr. Elton. The Woodhouse home blazes with candles and talk. Emma and her father greet people with MR. ELTON, who is young and attractive in a cold sort of way. Coming in are the elderly MRS. BATES; her spinster daughter, MISS BATES, very round and cheery; MRS. GODDARD, older and severe; and HARRIET SMITH, a shy and becoming young lady, about 18 years old.

EMMA

Mrs. Bates, Miss Bates, so happy you could come. Mr. Elton.

MISS BATES

Very much obliged for your having us, very much, indeed. I was just saying to Mother, I said, "Mother, we should be very much obliged to Miss Woodhouse for having us." And indeed we are. So obliged, indeed! In fact, when I said to Mother--

Emma knows she had better jump in or lose the evening. She places her hand on the small of Miss Bates's back and ushers her in.

EMMA

We are obliged to you for coming.
Do come in and be warm.

(Shifting her attention)

Mrs. Goddard, how lucky the school
has spared you. And I believe--

Emma nods to the young lady with Mrs. Goddard. Mrs. Goddard nods.

MRS. GODDARD

Indeed, this is a former pupil of
mine whom Miss Woodhouse was kind
enough to include in tonight's
festivities, Miss Harriet Smith.

Emma shakes hands with her, as does her father.

HARRIET

It was kind of you to include me.

EMMA

(Laying a hand on Mr.
Elton)

I know we are all happy to make
such an attractive new friend.

Mr. Knightley, walking by, rolls his eyes. Emma turns a bit too
quickly to Mr. Elton and says:

EMMA

Mr. Elton, meet Miss Smith.

He smiles broadly at Harriet and offers a charming half bow.

MR. ELTON

Delighted.

INT: HARTFIELD HOUSE- NIGHT

Mr. Woodhouse is offering people chicken at the dinner table.

MR. WOODHOUSE

White or dark, Mr. Elton?

Mr. Knightley, seated next to Emma, whispers teasingly:

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Aren't you going to pick that for
him, too?

EMMA

(Blithely ignoring him)

Mrs. Weston, is there any more news
of Mr. Weston's son?

Harriet, seated with Mr. Weston, turns to hear. He explains:

MR. WESTON

I was married many years ago to a woman whose life was taken by illness just three years after the birth of our son, Frank. After much anguish, I allowed him to be raised by my wife's brother and his wife, the Churchills, as I could not give an infant the care he required and still manage my business. He is a young man now and lives in London. He has never been here. Mrs. Churchill is not well and does not like to be without him.

MRS. WESTON

His coming would be the final blessing for our marriage.

HARRIET

How lucky to have been twice blessed in marriage. It has always been my belief that one loves only once. I am happy to be wrong.

Emma watches Harriet admiringly.

MR. WESTON

Not so happy as I, Miss Smith!

HARRIET

No, indeed, especially with the blessings of a child.

MRS. WESTON

I had the most thrilling letter from him. I have it to show after dinner if anyone cares to see it.

DISSOLVE TO:

Each person at the party reading the letter in a series of dissolves with their comments:

MISS BATES

Most charming and kindly--

MRS. BATES

Beautifully expressed!

MRS. GODDARD

It's not merely the feeling in it,
but the penmanship is so confident.

DISSOLVE TO:

The end of the party. Emma and her father bid the guests goodbye.

MRS. WESTON

A perfect evening. And isn't Miss
Smith a delightful girl?

EMMA

I watched her throughout the
evening with continuous pleasure. I
think I shall undertake her
introduction into Highbury society.

MRS. WESTON

She could ask for nothing better.
Come, Mr. Weston, I wish to write
your son. Goodnight, Mr. Woodhouse.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Good night, Miss Taylor.

EMMA

(Indirectly correcting:)
Goodnight, Mrs. Weston. Mr. Weston.

They leave. Mr. Woodhouse shakes his head.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Poor Miss Taylor! She so obviously
wanted to stay!

CUT TO:

EXT: HIGHBURY-- DAY

Emma and Harriet are walking to town.

EMMA

You do not know who your parents
are?

Harriet shakes her head.

EMMA

And are you not curious?

HARRIET

Mrs. Goddard has told me that I cannot know them and so I have left it at that. Because of her kind attentions over the years, Mrs. Goddard has been my true guardian.

EMMA

Of course--

HARRIET

Oh, look, it's the Bates house. Should we stop in?

EMMA

I think it's better if we don't. It is Tuesday and usually they have a letter from their relation Jane Fairfax of which they read me every word. It is a subject in which I cannot meet their interest.

HARRIET

I do not know Miss Fairfax.

EMMA

There's not much to be said for her. When pressed I say that she is elegant. Tell me more about you.

EXT: ROAD-- DAY

Emma and Harriet come round a bend.

HARRIET

The nearest I have to family are the Martins of Abbey-Mill-Farm with whom I lived for a bit. Mrs. Martin had two parlours and an upper-maid and eight cows. Mr. Martin used to cut her fresh flowers every day.

EMMA

How lucky for Mrs. Martin to have such an agreeable husband.

HARRIET

(Laughing lightly)

Oh, Miss Woodhouse, Mr. Martin is not her husband. He is her son.

EMMA

Ah! I see. Then he-- is unmarried?

HARRIET

Though I cannot understand why! He seems perfect in every particular.

This concerns Emma. She smiles and links her arm through Harriet's. As they turn and walk down a hedgerow:

EMMA

Tell me more about Mr. Martin.

EXT: HIGHBURY- DAY

The hedge. Emma and Harriet can be heard on the other side of it.

HARRIET

He brought me walnuts once, and went three miles to get them, just because he heard me say I liked them. Wasn't that kind?

They appear. Emma's smile has faded; her brows are knitted.

EMMA

How nice that his work does not overbusy him. I suppose Mr. Martin is not a man of information beyond his own business? He does not read?

HARRIET

Oh, no, he does.

EMMA

He does?

HARRIET

Yes, he reads Agricultural Reports and sometimes the Elegant Extracts. I recommended he read "The Romance of the Forest."

EMMA

And what sort of looking man is he?

HARRIET

I thought him very plain at first, but I do not think so now. Have you never seen him when he is in town?

EMMA

The yeomanry are precisely the sort of people with whom I have nothing to do. A degree or two lower and I might be useful to their families. But a farmer needs none of my help and is therefore in one sense as much above my notice as in every other way he is below it.

HARRIET

(Humbled)

Oh-- to be sure.

EMMA

Despite the mystery of your birth, I have no doubt your father is a gentleman, so I urge you to be cautious about your acquaintances--

They turn a bend in the road and Harriet gasps.

HARRIET

Miss Woodhouse, there he is now! How do I look?

EMMA

Very nice, dear. Good enough, certainly, for Mr. Martin.

Mr. Martin approaches, young and energetic, fond of Harriet.

MR. MARTIN

Hullo! This is a bit of chance, isn't it?

HARRIET

Hello, Robert. May I present, Miss Woodhouse? This is Mr. Martin.

MR. MARTIN

Hullo! How do you do?

Emma, her arms folded, nods politely. They all begin walking.

HARRIET

Were you able to get "The Romance of the Forest?"

MR. MARTIN

Oh, blast! I forgot-- and I was in Kingston, too! But I go again tomorrow and will make every effort to get that thought in my head.

HARRIET
(Smiling delightedly)
How's your mother?

Emma falls a few steps behind so that she may study the subject more carefully. We hear her thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)
I knew there was work to be done with you, Harriet, but if this man is pleasing to your taste, I see we are starting from scratch.

EXT: ROAD-- DAY

Emma is several yards behind them. Mr. Martin turns and waves goodbye to Emma. She nods. Harriet comes rushing back.

HARRIET
Well-- is he what you expected?

EMMA
I'm afraid he is, dear. I imagined him a degree nearer gentility.

Harriet is taken aback.

HARRIET
True, he is not so genteel as a real gentleman like Mr. Knightley.

EMMA
No, though you might not see one in a hundred men with "gentleman" so plainly written across him as Mr. Knightley. But let us judge him next to another man-- oh, let's say, Mr. Elton. Mr. Elton is a fine man, and, if I may say so, all the finer of late since meeting you. He is thoughtful in ways Mr. Martin can never be--

HARRIET
Oh, Miss Woodhouse, whatever his faults, Mr. Martin is thoughtful.

EMMA
I see. Did he take your advice and get the book you asked him to read?

HARRIET

(Embarrassed)

Oh, well-- no... Yes, I wonder that he did not remember it.

EMMA

I suppose it's not as important to him as other things, that's all. Did I mention that Mr. Elton said some very kind things about you the other day?

Emma smiles enticingly. Harriet becomes excited.

HARRIET

Can you not tell me what they are?

EMMA

Oh, it is not my place to intrude in personal matters.

Harriet's face falls and she does not press the point. This disconcerts Emma who wanted the point pressed.

EMMA

But, as my friend, I could make an exception, if you wish?

Harriet nods eagerly. They turn the corner.

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Afternoon tea. Emma and Mr. Elton sit by the fire.

MR. ELTON

Miss Smith was always a beautiful creature, but the attractions you have added are infinitely superior.

EMMA

Oh, I have done very little--

MR. ELTON

If it were admissible to contradict a lady!

EMMA

A more amiable nature than Harriet's would be hard to find. I wonder if she has ever had her likeness taken?

MR. ELTON

Oh, Miss Woodhouse! The idea of it! You have revealed your gifts for representation in the portraits which make this house so warm. Let me entreat you to exercise that talent in favor of your friend.

Harriet enters with cake.

EMMA

Harriet, did you ever sit for your picture?

HARRIET

Goodness, no. No, no, never, and I'm sure I never should.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Harriet is sitting for her portrait. Mr. Elton paces excitedly. Emma studies Harriet with care. Harriet is embarrassed.

MR. ELTON

May I look? I cannot stand to wait another second!

EMMA

All right, Mr. Elton.

He crosses to the canvas. He is astonished by the achievement.

MR. ELTON

Incredible! You have caught her!

EMMA

Mr. Elton, really, you overreact.

MR. ELTON

Indeed, I do not-- nor can not.

The camera moves to see the drawing. She has only the outline of Harriet's head.

EMMA

I have not done a likeness in so long because the spouse of the subject always complains. As there are no spouses in the room today, I trust I may proceed safely.

MR. ELTON

No husbands and wives at present,
Miss Woodhouse!

Harriet blushes. Emma smiles with satisfaction.

DISSOLVE TO:

Harriet in the same clothes, still sitting, Emma and Mr. Elton in new ones. Mr. Elton reads to the ladies from a book.

DISSOLVE TO:

Different day. Mr. Knightley looks at the drawing as Harriet continues to sit. Mr. Elton hovers.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

You have made her too tall.

MR. ELTON

It may not be Miss Smith's height
in terms of measurement, but Miss
Woodhouse has captured the height
of her character.

DISSOLVE TO:

Same set-up but with Mrs. Weston present.

MRS. WESTON

Those are not Miss Smith's eyebrows
or lashes. Do you agree?

MR. ELTON

I can only agree that they are
exquisite.

DISSOLVE TO:

Same set-up, the picture now appears finished. Mr. Woodhouse examines it as Mr. Elton hovers.

MR. WOODHOUSE

My dear, I do not know anyone who
draws as well as you.

MR. ELTON

Sir, you have spoken for me.

MR. WOODHOUSE

It only wants a suitable frame. We
will have to get it to London.
Perhaps when Isabella comes down--

MR. ELTON

Might I be entrusted with such a commission? What pleasure I would have on that honorable errand.

Emma and Harriet exchange an excited look.

CUT TO:

EXT: HIGHBURY, TOWN CENTER-- DAY

Emma is at a shop, looking for cloth. In the window appears Harriet, distressed. She taps and gets Emma's attention, signalling her to come out.

EXT: SHOP-- DAY

Harriet leads Emma to a bench. With tears in her eyes, Harriet holds out an envelope.

HARRIET

He wants to marry me.

The tears well up but she breaks into a smile. Emma smiles, too.

HARRIET

Would you mind reading the--

Emma snatches the letter out of her hand.

EMMA

I cannot believe Mr. Elton proposed! He certainly is a--

HARRIET

Not Mr. Elton. No, Mr. Martin, my friend Robert Martin.

Emma's smile fades. She pulls out the letter and grimly reads it.

HARRIET

Is it a good letter, or is it too short?

EMMA

(Surprised)

It is a good letter. One of his sisters must have helped him. Yet it is not the style of a woman--

(Perplexed, but moves on)

Well, it is good and you must answer immediately. He must have his disappointment and move on.

HARRIET
(Very disappointed)
Oh. You think I should refuse him?

EMMA
(Not a question at all:)
You did not plan to return an
answer favorable to this claim?

HARRIET
(Weakening)
Um-- well, I was not sure. That is
why I-- came to you.

EMMA
Oh, it is not my place to intrude
in personal matters.

Harriet studies the letter and seems to soften. Emma snaps to.

EMMA
However, I do lay it down as a
general rule that if a woman isn't
sure, she ought to say no. But I
would be loathe to influence you.

HARRIET
But I depend so on what you think--

EMMA
I would not advise you for the
world. If you prefer Mr. Martin to
every other person you know or may
ever know, if you think him the
most agreeable man you have ever
been-- or ever will be-- in company
with, then why should you hesitate?

Harriet squirms, twisting the letter in her hands. Finally:

HARRIET
If you will not influence me, I
must do as well as I can by myself.
So now I am determined to-- and I
have really almost made up my mind
to-- to refuse Mr. Martin? Do you
think that is right? Or wrong? Is
that wrong?

Emma beams proudly.

EMMA

Now that you have decided, Harriet, I may share the feelings I kept you in suspense of: I think you are perfectly right and doing just what you ought!

HARRIET

(Uncertainly)

Yes-- but, oh, dear! It will make his mother and sisters unhappy.

EMMA

Let us think of other mothers and sisters, who may be more cheerfully employed at this moment. I believe Mr. Elton is showing your picture to his mother and sisters, telling them how the subject is more beautiful than the portrait.

HARRIET

If he shows it, I am sure it is only to praise your artistry--

EMMA

If you are sure, then you are surely wrong. By showing it to them, he is revealing his deeper intentions, which may produce a letter of his own!

Harriet blushes and then smiles. She takes Emma's hand.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- SAME AFTERNOON

Emma has tea with Mr. Knightley, who is laughing gently at her.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Very well, I admit it: you have improved Miss Smith. In good hands, she may become a valuable woman.

EMMA

The good hands, I hope, will not be wanting.

He leans in to her, confidential and eagerly smiling.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I have good reason to believe your friend will soon hear something to her advantage. Something serious.

EMMA

(Thrilled)

Who makes you his confidant?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I have reason to think that Harriet Smith will soon have an offer of marriage--

Emma clutches her handkerchief excitedly.

MR. KNIGHTLEY (Cont'd)

-- from a man most desperately in love with her-- Robert Martin.

Emma stares at him dully, almost as if this is a prank.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

He came to the Abbey two evenings ago, to consult with me about it. He asked if I thought it would be imprudent of him to settle so early; whether she was too young; whether he was beneath her--

EMMA

Better questions for Mr. Martin I could not have chosen myself--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I never hear better sense from anyone than from Robert Martin. He proved he could afford it and as his love seemed solid, I said I thought he could not do better.

EMMA

No, indeed, he could not. Come, I will tell you something in return. He wrote Harriet yesterday--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Yes?

EMMA

Yes. He was refused.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I'm not sure I understand.

EMMA

He asked and she refused.

He mulls this over with growing anger. He rises, indignant.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Then she is a greater simpleton than I believed!

EMMA

The most incomprehensible thing in the world to a man is a woman who rejects his offer of marriage--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I do not comprehend it because it is madness. I hope you are wrong.

EMMA

I could not be. I saw her answer.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

You saw her answer?

(Dawning on him)

Emma, no! You wrote her answer, didn't you? You persuaded her--

EMMA

If I did, which I am far from allowing, I would have done no wrong. He is not Harriet's equal.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I agree with that.

EMMA

Oh, good--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

He is her superior in sense and situation. What are Harriet Smith's claims, of birth or education, that make her higher than Robert Martin? She is the natural daughter of nobody knows whom. She is a girl of no information and little wit. She is pretty and good-tempered-- that is all. The advantage of the match was entirely on her side.

EMMA

What! A farmer, even with all his merit, a match for my dear friend? Do you think I could support her marrying a person I could not admit as my own acquaintance? No, it would be a degradation.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

A degradation? For illegitimacy and ignorance to be married to a respected and intelligent gentleman-farmer?

EMMA

She is a gentleman's daughter--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Whoever her parents, they made no plans to introduce her into what you call "good society." She was left with Mrs. Goddard for an indifferent education. Her friends evidently thought this was good enough for her, and it was. She thought so, too, until you gave her a distaste for her own set. You will puff her up with such ideas of her own beauty, and of what she has a claim to, that soon nobody within her reach will be good enough for her. Vanity working on a weak head produces every kind of mischief.

EMMA

You dismiss her beauty and good-nature, yet I would be very much mistaken if your sex in general does not think those claims the highest a woman could possess.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Men of sense, whatever you may say, do not want silly wives. Upon my word, Emma, better be without sense than misapply it as you do.

EMMA

We think so differently on this point that there can be no use canvassing it. We shall only make each other more angry.

There is tense silence. She acts relaxed but wishes him gone.

EMMA

At least we can agree that the weather has been most pleas--

Glaring at her, he interrupts, with a tone of warning.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Obviously, Emma, you have someone else in mind for your young friend. But if the "great gentleman" you dream of for Harriet is Mr. Elton, all your labor will be in vain.

Emma laughs, to convey an innocent lack of intention, but she is unnerved to hear this.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

As the vicar of Highbury, Elton is not likely to make an imprudent match, especially to a girl of obscurity who may bring him disgrace. He talks sentimentally but he knows the value of a good income as well as anybody.

Emma laughs again and waves his talk away.

EMMA

If I had my heart set on Mr. Elton marrying Harriet, then your opening my eyes would have been a kind service. At present I care only to watch her growing intellect and--

He can stand it no more. He rises and stalks out, saying:

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Please! Good day.

Emma sits still for a moment, trying to regain her equilibrium. She smooths out her dress and picks up her tea. The cup rattles wildly in the saucer. Alarmed, she places it down. She looks out the window after him, no longer convinced that she is correct.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

There is a hallway with portraits Emma has done of family and friends. Emma removes an old uncle's portrait and the framed picture of Harriet is hung in its place, next to a portrait of Mr. Knightley. Harriet, Mr. Elton, Mr. Woodhouse, the Westons and Mr. Knightley clap. Clapping the most vigorously is Mr. Elton. He leans over and whispers something to Harriet, still clapping.

Emma notes this and smiles with satisfaction at Mr. Knightley.

INT: HARTFIELD PARLOUR-- LATER THAT DAY

The guests are eating cake and chatting merrily. Emma is with Mr. Elton. Mr. Knightley is listening and walks up.

EMMA

Harriet is collecting riddles for a quarto she is making and we know you would come up with something cunning--

MR. ELTON

Oh, no, I'm much too stupid.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Emma, you didn't ask me to contribute.

EMMA

(Smiling sharply)
Your entire personality is a riddle, Mr. Knightley. I thought you overqualified.

He laughs and we--

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma hurries across the lawn to Harriet who sits knitting.

EMMA

Harriet, I just found this under the door from Mr. Elton! He claims it is a riddle for your collection, but I think it much better!

She hands Harriet a slip of paper. Harriet accepts it nervously. She reads it with difficulty. Finally, she looks up.

HARRIET

Is it about sharks?

EMMA

For heaven's sake, why would he bring us a riddle about sharks?

HARRIET

Please, Miss Woodhouse, I am in a tremor! Tell me what it means!

EMMA

I'll read aloud and we may decipher it. "For Miss _____"-- I think we may safely put in 'Smith.' Line one: "My first displays the wealth and pomp of kings, lords of the earth, their luxury and ease."

She looks at Harriet, who has no idea. She supplies it patiently.

EMMA

That is 'court.' That's where a king displays his pomp. Next line. "Another view of man, my second brings; behold him there, the monarch of the seas!" That is--?

HARRIET

A mermaid? A trident? Oh, do you think we shall ever know?

EMMA

Ship, dear. The thing which brings the king of the seas is a ship. Now for the cream! "But, ah, united--" the two terms should be united--

HARRIET

(Tentatively)

Oh. Ummm-- Court. Ship.

(Gasps)

Courtship! He writes me about courtship!

Emma nods excitedly. Harriet nearly swoons.

EMMA

Harriet, I think we can have no doubt as to Mr. Elton's intentions. You are his desire. The only thing remaining is for him to find the perfect opportunity to offer proof.

HARRIET

Let's read it again and again!

Harriet unfolds the page again and reads it, joyfully.

EMMA

Dear, you may read it all day! Mr. Knightley is due later and I would be ever so glad for him to hear it!

CUT TO:

EXT: A POOR HOUSE-- DAY

Emma and Harriet, each with a basket, are admitted to the cottage of a poor family.

INT: POOR HOUSE-- DAY

Emma unwraps gifts of food and gives the family two blankets. Harriet shrinks against the door, shy and frightened. Emma wraps a sick older woman in a blanket and feeds her soup.

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD-- DAY

Emma and Harriet are walking home, their baskets empty.

HARRIET

I'm sorry I wasn't more help.
Illness frightens me so--

Emma nods at a house.

EMMA

Look, Harriet. It is Mr. Elton's home. There you go, you and your riddle-book one of these days!

Harriet blushes.

HARRIET

What a sweet house!

EMMA

Pity I cannot contrive a reason for us to go in.

They continue walking.

HARRIET

I do so wonder, Miss Woodhouse, that you are not married, so charming as you are.

EMMA

I have no inducements to marry. I lack neither fortune nor position and never could I expect to be so important in a man's eyes as I am in my father's.

HARRIET

But to be an old maid, like Miss Bates!

EMMA

She is a poor old maid, Harriet,
and it is only poverty which makes
celibacy contemptible to the
public. A single woman of good
fortune is always respectable.

They turn a bend and run into Mr. Elton. Delight all around.

MR. ELTON

How fortunate! I was just on my way
to visit the Clarksons.

EMMA

Harriet and I were just there; she
was kind enough to let me accompany
her on her visit.

HARRIET

But Miss Woodhouse--

Emma squeezes her hand to quiet her. Harriet winces.

EMMA

Her interest in charity is so
great--

MR. ELTON

May I escort you home?

EMMA

Indeed. Perhaps Harriet could
inform you better about Mrs.
Clarkson's condition.

Harriet is a little nervous about this, given that she averted
her eyes during much of the visit, but they start walking.

HARRIET

Oh, umm-- she seemed fatigued in a
tired sort of way and--

Emma lags back. Mr. Elton notices and stops.

EMMA

Oh, please. Go ahead. I have a
little trouble with my lace. I'll
catch up.

She bends down to fiddle with her shoe.

MR. ELTON

Oh, no, we'll wait.

They wait. Emma frowns a little, pretends to do something with her lace which, of course, is perfectly all right, and rises.

EMMA

There! All right then!

They resume walking.

MR. ELTON

So-- Mrs. Clarkson?

HARRIET

Oh. Well, she seemed to have the
chills so Miss Woodhouse--

EMMA

-- gave you a blanket. I gave
Harriet a blanket and she tucked
that poor old lady in, warming up
her with the blanket and her kind
nature. Tell him about the soup you
brought her, dear.

Harriet is not used to this, but gives it a try.

HARRIET

Oh, yes. That soup. Oh, I can't
really tell you--

MR. ELTON

Don't be so modest!

HARRIET

Oh, well, Miss Woodhouse-- um--
watched me as I heated and poured
out some-- uh-- soup-- and then I
took the soup to the bedside and--

A small row of flowers appears. Emma steps on the other side of them, placing a barrier between her and her friends. The row of flowers becomes taller: first there are flowers, then a bush, then a tall bush, then a hedge which obscures Emma and leaves Harriet and Mr. Elton alone. As soon as she is obscured, Emma giggles in triumph. She tilts her head to eavesdrop. She hears nothing. Then, behind her, running, are Harriet and Mr. Elton.

MR. ELTON

Miss Woodhouse!

Emma jerks her head back in place and turns.

MR. ELTON

Forgive us! How rude of you must
think me!

EMMA

Not at all. That hedge appeared so suddenly. Well, shall we?

They resume walking.

MR. ELTON

I found it most interesting what you were saying before, Miss Smith, about the--

EMMA

Oh, dear! My lace again! Really, I must speak about this with Mr. Sullivan. Please go on. I insist.

They walk on.

HARRIET

After having fed her the soup, I lifted her up--

Emma stalls over the lace. Hearing a noise, she looks behind her and sees a child coming toward her with a jar.

EMMA

Hello. Where are you off to?

LITTLE GIRL

To town, ma'am, to get some broth.

EMMA

Would you let me walk with you?

The little girl nods. They start off. The little girl walks a good deal more quickly than Emma anticipated.

EMMA

(Sweetly)

Dear, must we walk so quickly?

LITTLE GIRL

Me mum needs the broth.

EMMA

Perhaps you'd like to play a game?

LITTLE GIRL

Do you want me to upset me mum?

Emma dourly shakes her head. Mr. Elton and Harriet turn a bend and stop, framed by the trees. Emma pulls the little girl's collar to slow her, admiring the handsome picture Harriet and Mr. Elton make. The girl jerks and Emma releases her. She goes,

looking back to make sure Emma isn't following her. Emma notes with pleasure that Mr. Elton seems to be speaking with feeling.

EMMA (V.O.)

Is this it? Is this the declaration
we've sought?

He turns and sees Emma. With a spasm of energy, she resumes walking. As Emma comes near enough, she hears them saying:

HARRIET

Really? Do you mean it?

MR. ELTON

I do! I swear I do!

HARRIET

It's too wonderful!

MR. ELTON

Can you believe it? I love celery
root and what should they be
serving but celery root!

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- NIGHT

A carriage pulls up, joining another. It is twilight.

INT: HARTFIELD- NIGHT

Emma is holding the eight month old baby of her sister and brother-in-law, ISABELLA AND JOHN KNIGHTLEY. She clearly adores the little girl. Mr. Knightley stands with his brother.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

John, this may be the finest
Knightley yet! And she looks so
fetching in the arms of her aunt.

He sits and smiles at Emma.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

If you accepted adults with as
little whim as you do these
children, we might always agree.

EMMA

How fascinating that any
discordancy between us must always
arise from my being wrong.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
(Teasing her gently)
Not fascinating-- just true.
Perhaps it comes from the gap in
our ages. I was 16 years old when
you were born.

EMMA
You were undoubtedly my superior
then, but do you not think the
lapse of twenty-three years has
closed the gap?

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Narrowed it. Come, dear Emma, let
us be friends and quarrel no more.

EMMA
As you wish, and may I say I think
we were both right, as far as good
intentions went? I only hope Mr.
Martin is not too disappointed.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
No man could be more so.

EMMA
Indeed, I am very sorry. Come,
shake hands with me!

He smiles and takes her hand. All is forgiven. A bell is rung for
dinner. As they go to the next room, Isabella takes the baby.

ISABELLA
Sister, when will we meet your new
friend, Miss Smith?

EMMA
She will be with us on Christmas
Eve at the Westons. It looks as
though it will be a most rewarding
holiday for her.

Mr. Knightley looks at her with some suspicion as they exit.

CUT TO:

INT: MRS. GODDARD'S HOUSE-- DAY

Emma sits with a very sick Harriet.

EMMA
We will so miss you tonight at the
party. Mr. Elton will be crushed!

HARRIET
Do you think so?

EMMA
I will come tomorrow and re-enact
his bitter reaction to the news!

They laugh and exchange farewells.

EXT: MRS. GODDARD'S HOUSE-- DAY

Emma leaves the cottage and walks onto the path. She hears her name called. She sees Mr. Elton approach. Behind her, she hears her name again and turns to see her brother-in-law, John Knightley. She greets the men with pleasure.

MR. ELTON
I was just coming to visit Miss
Smith. I heard she is not well.

EMMA
She has an inflamed sore throat.

MR. ELTON
Not infectious, I hope. You should
take care of yourself as well as
your friend. Should we have the
doctor take a look?

EMMA
No, but-- you know, it does seem
wise for people to be cautious in
this weather. Perhaps you should
excuse yourself from the long trip
to the party tonight. With the
evening free, you could visit any
sick in need of comfort--

JOHN KNIGHTLEY
Mr. Elton is welcome to ride in our
carriage to avoid the cold--

EMMA
(Trying to cut him off)
No, he would-- sick visit-- um--

MR. ELTON
How kind of you, sir! I wouldn't
have thought it possible to
anticipate the evening any more.

Emma frowns at her brother-in-law. When Mr. Elton turns to her,
she quickly replaces it with a smile.

MR. ELTON

I will call on your friend before the party so that I may give you the most current report on her condition, one which I hope will have improvement in it. Until then.

He bows to them and leaves.

CUT TO:

EXT: MR. ELTON'S HOUSE- NIGHT

Mr. Elton bounds out of the house and into the carriage as a light snow begins to fall. Inside are Emma and John Knightley. Mr. Elton greets them cheerfully.

MR. ELTON

I am so looking forward to this evening! We bachelors are always happy to go where the food is! I--

This is bothering Emma and she cuts in:

EMMA

And what is your promised report of Miss Smith's condition?

MR. ELTON

(Becoming somber)

I was told that she is rather worse.

EMMA

Such a sad loss to our party today!

MR. ELTON

She will be missed every moment.

He sighs sadly, casting his eyes down. Emma is admiring the length of his suffering when he jumps in with a cheerful:

MR. ELTON

However, I feel, and I hope you will concur, that small parties, when they are select, are the most agreeable. I would rather fall short by two than exceed by two.

Emma frowns her brow. He pats the seat contentedly.

MR. ELTON

What an excellent device this sheepskin is for carriages! How very comfortable they make it. You completely forget the cold! And how fortunate that the snow comes now instead of yesterday when it might have made our party impossible. Now that would have been a real cause for sadness, would it not?

Emma is staring at him, astonished at his good spirits in the face of Harriet's illness. There is an awkward beat when she realizes that she is staring and then smiles and nods.

INT: WESTONS' HOUSE- NIGHT

Emma, Mr. Elton, and John Knightley enter the hall. Emma has already removed her coat to move quickly away from Mr. Elton. She enters the living room where Mrs. Weston passes her and whispers:

MRS. WESTON

Can't tell you now, but Mr. Weston has exciting news about his son--

Mrs. Weston moves away as Emma raises her eyebrows expectantly.

INT: WESTONS' HOUSE-- NIGHT

Emma stands with Mr. and Mrs. Weston, Isabella, and Miss Bates.

MR. WESTON

My son wrote us a beautiful letter in which he spoke of a visit--

Mrs. Weston looks at Emma conspiratorially but moves away to attend to a chore. Emma smiles delightedly. Just then a hand lightly touches her elbow. It is Mr. Elton.

MR. ELTON

Miss Woodhouse, are you warm enough?

EMMA

Thank you, yes.

She immediately turns back to Mr. Weston. Her elbow is touched again.

MR. ELTON

Some of the other ladies were saying they were not warm enough.

EMMA
No, I am fine.

MR. ELTON
Then I saw how close you were to
the fire and I thought you might be
too warm.

EMMA
Thank you, Mr. Elton, but I am in
the perfect state of warmth.

She turns back to Mr. Weston.

MR. WESTON
We could not believe what we read--

MR. ELTON
Miss Woodhouse, is there any effort
I might make on behalf of your
father's comfort?

EMMA
That's very kind of you--

MR. WESTON
The idea that Frank would finally--

EMMA
Umm-- I don't-- I imagine him to be
very comfortable. But thank you for
being so thoughtful.

She turns back but he touches her elbow.

MR. ELTON
No, thank you for thinking I am
thoughtful.

He smiles at her, happy to stand like this. Action must be taken.

EMMA
Perhaps you'd be kind enough to
bring me some punch?

MR. ELTON
I only hope I can complete the task
quickly enough.

EMMA
~~Please~~: I could not enjoy the punch
if I knew that you had hurried.

He makes a small bow and leaves. She turns back to Mr. Weston.

MR. WESTON

But nobody cares about family gossip! I see my wife giving the signal that dinner is ready.

Emma sighs as everyone moves to the dining room.

INT: WESTONS' DINING ROOM-- NIGHT

The table is chatting. Emma is seated next to Mr. Weston.

MR. WESTON

I'm not sure I had your attention before, what with some so desirous of your ear, but I wanted you to know that Frank is coming at last.

EMMA

What a great pleasure for you and Mrs. Weston. I hope I will be able to meet your son during that time, if you can share him.

MRS. WESTON

If his aunt will share him with us! That's what this depends on. She has said yes without giving a date.

INT: PARTY, DRAWING ROOM-- AFTER DINNER

Emma and Mrs. Weston are seated together.

EMMA

It's exciting to think that finally the mysterious Mr. Churchill will--

Mr. Elton is in front of them and seats himself between them.

MR. ELTON

I hope I am not intruding but have you had any new word of Miss Smith's condition from any of the other guests, which might be more cheering than mine was?

EMMA

No, but I know she will be happy to know of your concern.

MR. ELTON

How could I not be concerned? The situation is most alarming!

Emma hears this with relief.

MR. ELTON

Nothing is worse than a sore throat. Its effects are exceedingly bleak. That is why I must, in the presence of your friend, ask you to stop visiting her.

EMMA

What?

MR. ELTON

You are putting yourself at risk and we cannot allow it-- can we, Mrs. Weston? I mean, is this fair-- have I not some right to complain?

Mrs. Weston cannot disguise her surprise; neither can Emma.

EMMA

Excuse me, please, Mrs. Weston; I think Father is ready to go.

EXT: WESTONS' HOUSE-- NIGHT

Carriages are pulling up. Mr. Woodhouse steps into his carriage, followed by Isabella and then John Knightley. Emma, who stands with Mr. Elton, sees Mr. Knightley make the mistake.

EMMA

Brother dear! That's father's carriage--

But he does not hear and enters the wrong carriage.

INT: CARRIAGE-- NIGHT

Isabella looks at him with surprise.

ISABELLA

Darling, what are you doing? You brought Emma in our carriage--

JOHN KNIGHTLEY

Oh, I'm so used to following you--

MR. WOODHOUSE

Let's not change. She's quite safe with Mr. Elton. Drive on!

CUT TO:

INT: EMMA'S CARRIAGE-- NIGHT

Mr. Elton sits with Emma, who strives to keep things as shallow

as possible.

EMMA

Certainly this weather has
complemented the evening most--

Suddenly, Mr. Elton seizes her hand.

MR. ELTON

Please, Miss Woodhouse--

EMMA

What are you doing? Release my
hand!

MR. ELTON

I do not seize your hand so much as
the opportunity to declare these
sentiments--

EMMA

Good heavens! You must stop! I--

MR. ELTON

Please! I am hoping-- no, fearing--
no, ready to die if you refuse me!
Surely my ardent attachment to you,
my love and passion, cannot help
but have made an impression and--

EMMA

Mr. Elton, this is me, Miss
Woodhouse. The party spirit has
confused you. I am happy to deliver
this message to Miss Smith, but you
must direct no more of it to me.

MR. ELTON

Miss Smith? What sort of message
would I want to send her?

(Laughing)

Miss Smith!

Emma is shocked. She straightens up.

EMMA

Mr. Elton, you are not yourself.
The wine has weakened you!

MR. ELTON

If the wine has had any effect, it
has strengthened my will to tell
you that I love you! And I--

EMMA

My astonishment is beyond--

MR. ELTON

--want you to return that passion--

EMMA

-- anything I can express! For you to address me in this way, after your behavior to Miss Smith--

MR. ELTON

I never cared whether Miss Smith were dead or alive, except that she was your friend. Miss Smith! Who can think of Miss Smith when Miss Woodhouse is near?

Emma rolls her eyes woozily. He presses on.

MR. ELTON

I have thought unwaveringly of you and you alone. Everything I've said has been done with the sole view of marking my adoration of you. Why else would I go to London to have your picture framed?

Emma cannot speak. After a pause, Mr. Elton's face lights up. He leans close to her and whispers feelingly.

MR. ELTON

Allow me to interpret this silence: you have long understood me.

That's enough. She faces him squarely.

EMMA

Sit back and kindly refrain from the intimacy of whispering! Am I to believe that you never sought to recommend yourself to Miss Smith?

MR. ELTON

How can you be so surprised? Did you not understand the riddle I brought you?

EMMA

That was for Harriet--

MR. ELTON

I most obviously did not address it to her and left it at your home.

EMMA
(In agony)
Ohhh--

MR. ELTON
She is a very good sort of girl and I am sure there are men who might not object to-- everybody has their level, but I need not so totally despair of an equal alliance as to be addressing myself to Miss Smith! No, I sought to recommend myself to you through those visits, and the encouragement I received from you in return seemed sufficient to--

EMMA
Sir, you have been entirely mistaken. I have seen you only as the admirer of my friend. In no other light could you be more to me than a common acquaintance and I--

MR. ELTON
I cannot believe that--

EMMA
You most assuredly may believe it. And it is well that the mistake ends where it does--

MR. ELTON
But that is her mistake--

EMMA
It is mine as well--

MR. ELTON
She will manage her disappointment. Leave her out of it. How do you feel about what I have said?

EMMA
Any hopes I had with regard to you, Mr. Elton, were for Harriet, and Harriet alone.

Mr. Elton is furious. He folds his arms and refuses to speak. There is a long silence, each one looking ahead or out the window, but never at each other.

EXT: THE VICARAGE-- NIGHT

Mr. Elton gets out of the carriage. She leans forward to say

goodnight, but before she can, he shuts the door.

INT: CARRIAGE-- NIGHT

Emma sinks back against the seat in horror.

EXT/INT: EMMA'S ROOM-- NIGHT

We see Emma through her window, laced with blooming vines, where she sits facing out, writing in her diary by candlelight. She is in her nightgown and greatly distressed. We hear her thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)

Diary, there has been an overthrow
of everything I have been wishing
for, a development most unwelcome,
most--

She drops her pen and puts her hand to her mouth as she exclaims:

EMMA

(Fighting tears).

Painful! Oh, dear!

(Back into V.O.)

If I had not persuaded Harriet into
liking the man, I could have born
anything. But it was I and I alone!

(Aloud:)

Oh, dear!

(Resumes writing. V.O.)

The error is mine. I sought to
bring two people together and I
shall never do it again.

(Aloud:)

Never.

(V.O.:)

Oh, that I had been satisfied with
persuading her not to marry young
Martin. At least there I was right.

(Aloud:)

Well done, Emma.

(V.O.)

But now, the poor girl is lost and
I have no idea who would be right
for her. William Coxe?

(Aloud:)

Oh, no, Never! I could not endure
him, that pert young lawyer!

(Laughs at her relapse)

I am incurable!

(Writing, V.O.,:)
 What I hope can be cured, somehow,
 against everything I have done,
 will be the pain poor Harriet will
 feel when I tell her this dreadful
 news for which I alone am to blame.

She looks at the winter moon. She is not so disappointed with Mr.
 Elton as with herself. The tears in her eyes are tears of shame.

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Isabella, John and the children are leaving to go back to London.
 Emma and her father hug them. As they board the carriage, Mr.
 Woodhouse flips through some letters.

MR. WOODHOUSE
 Well, this is shocking news. Mr.
 Elton's leaving town.

EMMA
 (Hopefully)
 For good?

MR. WOODHOUSE
 No, a trip to visit friends. Poor
 man! Why he would want to travel--

The carriage sets off. They wave goodbye.

EMMA
 Yes, what a--

CUT TO:

INT: MRS. GODDARD'S HOUSE-- DAY

Emma sits with Harriet.

HARRIET
 -- pity he had to leave!

EMMA
 Actually, Harriet, it may be a
 blessing. I don't know how to put
 this unhappy intelligence before
 you except with the introduction
 that I regret having to do so with
 my whole heart.

HARRIET

Miss Woodhouse, nothing you could say would ever be unpleasant--

EMMA

This is, for I must acknowledge myself grossly mistaken in all my ideas on the one subject which has occupied us for the last 6 weeks--

HARRIET

Mr. Elton?

Emma nods grimly. Harriet begins to cry softly.

EMMA

While expressing his fervent admiration for you as a person, feelings I'm sure you recognize we all share, it is unhappily I who have captured his fancy. I naturally do not return the feelings but that does not make it any less of an embarrassment for me and I place the responsibility for it directly on my own shoulders--

HARRIET

Oh, no, never! I have always felt that I did not deserve Mr. Elton's affection so I cannot blame him for believing the same. And I can never blame you, for only so kind a friend would have dreamed it possible for me.

Her tears fall still, but they are without accusation. Emma gratefully squeezes her hand. Harriet rests her face against it.

EMMA

Dear Harriet, I have always hoped that I might have something to teach you, but I see now that I should be lucky to resemble you in any small way.

CUT TO:

EXT: Highbury Street-- Day

Emma approaches a shop. Mr. Knightley comes up behind her and opens the door. She smiles to see him and they enter the shop.

INT: Shop-- Day

Mr. Knightley follows Emma about as she shops.

EMMA

So poor Frank Churchill has again been forced to delay his visit.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

If Frank Churchill wanted to see his father, he cannot be without the means of doing so.

EMMA

(Amused)

You are the worst judge in the world, Mr. Knightley, of the difficulties of dependence. His aunt objects to the visit.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Frank Churchill must override the concerns of his aunt by saying decisively that it is the right thing to do. She could not then object to his going.

EMMA

No, only to his coming back. Frank Churchill may have as strong a sense of what would be right as you do, without being so equal under the circumstances to act up to it.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

If he could not act on it, it could not be so strong a conviction.

EMMA

When it comes to Mr. Churchill, we are both prejudiced: you, against, I, for; and we will never know who is right until he finally comes.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Then we will never know because I doubt he will ever come.

CUT TO:

EXT: HIGHBURY ROAD-- DAY

Emma is walking with Harriet, who seems upset.

HARRIET

Do you suppose Mr. Elton is meeting young ladies while he is away?

EMMA

I don't know, Harriet--

HARRIET

Or is he only trying to forget you?

EMMA

I don't know, Harriet--

HARRIET

I would not blame him. I wonder when he will return?

EMMA

Dear, you must try to empty your mind of Mr. Elton.

HARRIET

Yes, I'm sorry to trouble you. What shall we speak of?

EMMA

I wondered if you would like to help me on a visit to the poor.

Harriet bursts into tears. Emma looks at her for explanation.

HARRIET

Mr. Elton is so good to the poor!

Emma rolls her eyes. She takes Harriet's arm and reverses direction.

CUT TO:

INT: BATES HOME-- DAY

Emma and Harriet are seated in the parlor of the Bates' home. Miss Bates, all round and red-faced, flutters around the guests.

MISS BATES

Oh, Miss Woodhouse, what a special, special treat! So lovely of you to come and see us. Isn't it, Mother? Isn't it a special, special treat?

Mrs. Bates opens her mouth to answer but Miss Bates roars ahead.

MISS BATES
The best of it is, the best of it
is, we were just speaking of a
topic that would interest you both.

Emma smiles to indicate curiosity. We hear her thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)
Please don't let it be a letter
from that idiot Jane Fairfax.

Miss Bates gropes around the couch.

MISS BATES
It's a letter--

Emma blinks in dread.

MISS BATES (CONT'D)
from Mrs. Cole--
Emma relaxes.

MISS BATES (CONT'D)
-- who has news of Mr. Elton!

Harriet winces.

MISS BATES (CONT'D)
He has been the toast of every
young lady's eye. Of course, that
can be no surprise to any of us--
oh, forgive me, would you care for
cake? Let me get you some cake.

Rises and cuts some pieces.

MISS BATES
Here you go. Some cake which I hope
will be satisfying to you. Isn't it
nice to have visitors, Mother?

Mrs. Bates opens her mouth but not quickly enough.

MISS BATES
Speaking of Mother, the most
amusing thing just happened to us.
Mother was asking me about our
relative Jane Fairfax--

Emma raises her eyebrows in feigned interest.

MISS BATES

-- asking if there were any news from her even though she said she knew it was not her time for writing-- remember, Mother, how you said, 'I know it's not her time for writing?' You see we always have a letter from her on Tuesday and today, as you well know, is far from Tuesday! But then I said, 'Mother, we have had a letter from her this very morning!' And Mother said, 'Upon your honor?' For, of course, Jane writes on Tuesdays and this is definitely not a Tuesday! But I said, 'Upon my honor!'

She laughs her merry laugh, lightly tapping her knee for emphasis, indicating that this was the punch line.

EMMA

And could you summarize the letter in your own delightful words?

MISS BATES

And cheat you out of the pleasure of hearing it-- as only Jane puts things? Upon my honor, I would not!

She produces the letter. She shuffles its several pages.

MISS BATES

She's coming to visit, that's the best part, but first of all, she has a cold.

EMMA

Oh, no--

MISS BATES

Yes! But listen how bravely she manages: "Dear Grandmamma and Aunt, if my hand seems a bit weak--"

DISSOLVE TO:

Emma in the same seat and posture but in a different outfit.

EMMA

Tell me, Miss Fairfax, how are we lucky enough to have secured this long-awaited visit?

CAMERA pulls back to reveal JANE FAIRFAX on the couch with the

4

Bates. She is Emma's age, very pretty but reserved.

JANE FAIRFAX

The Campbells have gone to Ireland for vacation, so I have come to be with my grandmamma and auntie, which is better than any vacation.

She kindly pats her grandmother's hand. We hear Emma's thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)

Perhaps I was wrong about her. She is more giving than I knew.

MISS BATES

Tell Miss Woodhouse whom you saw in Weymouth. Frank Churchill, that's whom she saw. Frank Churchill.

EMMA

(Excited)

Oh, Was he handsome?

JANE FAIRFAX

(Circumspect)

Many people say he is.

EMMA

(Hopeful)

Was he agreeable?

JANE FAIRFAX

(Circumspect)

He was in no way disagreeable.

EMMA

(Still hopeful)

Was he a man of information?

JANE FAIRFAX

(Still circumspect)

All his statements seemed correct.

Emma smiles and nods. We hear her thoughts.

EMMA

(V.O.)

I take it back. She is--

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma is arranging flowers in the kitchen with Mr. Knightley.

EMMA

-- the worst! She wouldn't tell my anything about Frank Churchill!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Perhaps you dislike her because you see the woman you would like to be.

Emma laughs heartily at this.

EMMA

Really, Mr. Knightley, you should perform in the town square, you are so comical!

She takes the vase and exits. Once her back is to him, her face crinkles up a little bit, wondering if he's right. He follows.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Nevermind all this, I have some news and I know you like news.

EMMA

Oh, yes, I always like news!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Mr. Elton is going to married!

Emma turns in shock.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- A LITTLE LATER THE SAME DAY

Harriet in the front doorway facing Emma.

HARRIET

Miss Woodhouse, I am in a state of trauma!

EMMA

You've heard?

HARRIET

About what?

EMMA

(Flinching)

Oh! Nevermind!

INT: PARLOUR-- DAY

Emma listens as Harriet narrates her trauma, seated in a chair.

HARRIET

I was on my way here for our visit.
It started raining so I ducked into
Ford's to wait it out--

EXT: STREET-- DAY

We see her plight: she hurries down a rainy street into Ford's.

INT: FORD'S CLOTH AND HABERDASHERY SHOP- DAY

Harriet comes in, nods to Mr. Ford, and browses.

HARRIET (V.O.)

As I admired some fabric, I heard
the bell and who should come in but
Elizabeth Martin and her brother!

Mr. Martin and his sister enter. They don't see Harriet, who
shrinks behind a bolt of fabric.

HARRIET (V.O.)

I thought I should have fainted!
Then they saw me and began
whispering and then she came up to
me and spoke!

We see all this. Miss Martin approaches and offers her hand. She
is polite but there is obviously an awkwardness.

HARRIET (V.O.)

She said:

MISS MARTIN

I'm sorry we never meet now.

HARRIET (V.O.)

And I said: "You are too kind."
Then I saw that he, Mr. Martin, ~~my~~
Mr. Martin, was coming toward me--

He approaches uncertainly. He nods and smiles, though he seems
sad. Their conversation is earnest but awkward.

HARRIET (V.O.)

Finally, I said I had to go.

He tilts his head "Goodbye" to her and she leaves the shop.

EXT: SHOP-- DAY

Still raining. Harriet hurries from the shop. After a few
seconds, Mr. Martin comes bounding out.

HARRIET (V.O.)

But then he followed me! I was not
three steps outside-- and he said:

MR. MARTIN

You had better go by Mr. Cole's
stables. The near way is flooded.

She nods gratefully to him and dashes down the street.

INT: WOODHOUSE PARLOUR-- DAY

Harriet finishes her story.

HARRIET

Oh, Miss Woodhouse, do talk and
make me comfortable again.

EMMA

(V.O.)

I suppose this would not be the
right time to mention that Mr.
Elton is engaged.

(Smiling and speaking:)

This was awkward because it was the
first time you have seen Mr. Martin
since refusing his proposal. There
can never be a first time again.
You, and, I must say he, behaved
very well. But I think you will
find that the kindest thing you can
do for yourself is to put Mr.
Martin out of your mind for good.

HARRIET

Yes, I will. I shall do so
immediately. He is behind me now.

EMMA

Would you mind helping me with
these? Could you bring that plate?

They collect dishes and walk to the kitchen. As they exit:

HARRIET

It was awfully nice of him to warn
me about the flooding.

EMMA

Yes, dear.

HARRIET

He got his coat wet coming out to tell me. That's the coat Mrs. Martin gave him for his birthday--

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- MORNING

Emma is cutting flowers. Her father knocks on the window and signals for her to come in.

INT: HARTFIELD-- MORNING

Emma is in the parlour with Mr. Weston and his son, FRANK CHURCHILL. Frank is very good looking, with a friendly manner.

MR. WESTON

Emma, it is my honor to introduce you to my son, Frank Churchill.

Frank bows cordially and she shakes his hand.

EMMA

A name I know as well as my own, so long have I heard it spoken! We did not expect you until later today.

FRANK CHURCHILL

It is always a pleasure to come in on one's friends before the look-out begins. I would not presume to do so in most cases, but I felt in coming home I might be forgiven.

Upon hearing the word "home," Mr. Weston looks on Frank with delight. Emma shares the feeling. Frank continues.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I, too, have heard your name-- well, read your name so often in my parents' letters, that this is like meeting a character from a book.

EMMA

I hope we'll have the chance to become better acquainted.

They begin crossing the room.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Perhaps you would join Mrs. Weston and me on our walk tomorrow where I shall see the sights of Highbury--

As they walk, the walls behind them DISSOLVE into an identically colored wall of a building on the streets. They are walking through town in new outfits with Mrs. Weston on the next day.

EXT: TOWN-- DAY

FRANK CHURCHILL
I cannot tell you how delightful I think Highbury is.

EMMA
You must meet some of the people.

FRANK CHURCHILL
I do know one person residing in Highbury; her name is Fairfax, though she is staying with relatives whose name is Barnes or--

EMMA
Bates. Jane Fairfax.

FRANK CHURCHILL
Ah, do you know her?

EMMA
Yes, she is very-- elegant. If you visit her, you may not get a word in; her aunt won't hold her tongue.

MRS. WESTON
(Gently changing subject)
Emma, have you received your invitation for the party the Coles are giving our Frank?

Emma turns to her with curiosity.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma enters a room where her father sits.

EMMA
Has an invitation come for a party at the Coles for Frank Churchill?

MR. WOODHOUSE
No, child--

EMMA

Of course, we will have to decline
as the Coles are beneath us, but I
don't wish them to hope falsely.

DISSOLVE TO:

Emma in a different dress, going through the mail. No invitation.

DISSOLVE TO:

Emma in a new dress, agitatedly checking the mail. No invitation.

DISSOLVE TO:

Emma and her father playing a game of cards. She is testy.

EMMA

Why don't they write? Perhaps they
know I must reject the invitation.
Still, as a close friend of his
parents, they should have the
courtesy of extending it. Unless
they don't want me. But I cannot--

CUT TO:

INT: COLE'S HOUSE-- NIGHT

Mrs. Cole is shaking Emma's hand at her front door.

EMMA

-- tell you how delighted I am to
have been invited, Mrs. Cole!

INT: COLES' DINING ROOM-- NIGHT

Everyone is seated at dinner. Emma is next to Frank Churchill.

MRS. COLE

When I called on Miss Bates earlier
I was struck by the sight of the
most beautiful pianoforte which had
been sent to Jane Fairfax.

MRS. WESTON

Who gave it to her?

MRS. COLE

That is the exciting part of the
story: there was no identification
of the donor in any way--

MR. WESTON
It must be from Colonel Campbell.

MRS. COLE
(Helpfully to Frank Churchill)
You know her own parents died and the Campbells have raised her--

FRANK CHURCHILL
Ah! Then surely they gave it.

MRS. COLE
Well, Jane had had a letter from them and not a word was said of it.

FRANK CHURCHILL
Perhaps it's a surprise.

MR. COLE
We will be joined after dinner by Miss Fairfax, as well as Miss Bates and Miss Smith, so perhaps she will know more. It is certainly a most beautiful instrument, much more so than ours. Ours is an older--

As the conversation follows these lines, Emma turns to Frank.

EMMA
Why do you smile?

FRANK CHURCHILL
Hmmm? I was smiling because I wonder if there's anyone else whom we should suspect of being Miss Fairfax's musical patron? Colonel Campbell's daughter, recently married to Mr. Dixon, was Miss Fairfax's dearest friend. Perhaps she sent it as a way for her friend to occupy herself away from home.

EMMA
I had not thought of Mrs. Dixon, but that certainly makes sense.

FRANK CHURCHILL
As much sense as Mr. Dixon?

EMMA
You mean as their joint present?

FRANK CHURCHILL

Not precisely. I cannot help suspecting that after making his proposals to Miss Campbell, Mr. Dixon fell in love with Miss Fairfax who is, after all--

EMMA

Very elegant. But that is too scandalous an idea!

FRANK CHURCHILL

Then why did she, after years of vacationing with the Campbells, avoid travelling with them to Ireland and come here instead? Let us see, some time, how she reacts to the word "Dixon."

Emma looks at Mr. Churchill with surprise and pleasure. He smiles back at her, pleased to have tantalized her with his theory.

INT: COLES' PARLOUR-- NIGHT

Harriet, Miss Fairfax, and Miss Bates have entered the party. Miss Bates blabs away to Mrs Weston. Mr. Knightley speaks softly to Jane Fairfax who smiles. Emma introduces Harriet to Frank.

INT: PARTY-- NIGHT

Mrs. Weston links her arm through Emma's and walks across the room with her, their heads tilted in toward each other.

MRS. WESTON

My dear, do you know how Miss Bates and Jane Fairfax came here tonight?

EMMA

They were invited.
(Scandalized)
Were they not invited?

MRS. WESTON

No, yes, of course they were.

They both laugh at their excitement and the misunderstanding.

MRS. WESTON

I meant: do you know how were they conveyed here?

EMMA

They walked, I assume.

Mrs. Weston shakes her head and pauses dramatically.

MRS. WESTON
Mr. Knightley sent his carriage.

EMMA
(Not getting the meaning)
Well, yes, he's very kind.

MRS. WESTON
You give him more credit for
disinterested benevolence than I
do. A suspicion has darted into my
head which I cannot get rid of: Mr.
Knightley and Jane Fairfax are a
couple.

Emma is thunderstruck. She cannot believe it.

EMMA
Mrs. Weston! how could you think
such a thing! Jane Fairfax, of all
women!

MRS. WESTON
She has always been a favorite with
him, as you well know--

EMMA
Dear Mrs. Weston, do not take to
match-making-- you do it ill! Jane
Fairfax and Mr. Knightley-- every
feeling revolts! Apart from every
other good reason, and any reason
opposing the idea is a good one,
how could he bear being in the same
family with Miss Bates! "So kind of
you, Mr. Knightley, so obliging of
you, Mr. Knightley! In fact, I was
just saying to Mother--"

MRS. WESTON
But his interest in Jane is clear--
his anxiety about her health, his
admiration for her playing of the
pianoforte and-- oh, my goodness!
(Clutches Emma's arm)
What if the pianoforte is from Mr.
Knightley?

The thought makes Emma sick.

EMMA
Never!

MRS. WESTON

He did not offer one suggestion about its donor at dinner which is not like him at all. He loves--

EMMA

Mrs. Weston, you stun me. You have taken up an idea and run wild with it, something you rightly used to reproach me for doing. No, it is impossible, absolutely imposs--

MRS. WESTON

The carriage, the pianof--

Emma looks around the room.

EMMA

He's not even speaking to her. She's with Frank, poor man--

Frank and Jane talk quietly together.

MRS. WESTON

Perhaps she and Mr. Knightley stay apart publicly to keep it secret.

EMMA

Hush, friend, here comes Mr. Cole--

They both put on smiling faces.

MR. COLE

Miss Woodhouse, would you do us the honor of trying our pianoforte?

EMMA

I fear I lack the talent.

MR. COLE

Perhaps I should ask Miss Fairfax.

INT: PARTY-- NIGHT

Emma plays the pianoforte. She sings and, after a verse, is joined by Frank. It startles her but they sing beautifully. Mr. and Mrs. Weston exchange a happy look. At the end, there is applause and he takes her to her seat. Jane Fairfax is brought up by Mr. Cole and Frank Churchill, upon seeing this, does not sit with Emma but accepts people's encouragement and returns to sing with her. Mrs. Weston pats Emma's hand proudly and Emma smiles modestly, but then notices out of the corner of her eye that Mr. Knightley is leaning forward and watching Miss Fairfax's performance with an interest she feels he did not express in

hers. At the end, he applauds heartily-- enough to cause Emma to frown. Jane Fairfax begins another song.

INT: PARTY-- NIGHT

Mr. Knightley tiptoes over to Emma. He whispers as they listen.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Doesn't she play marvelously?

EMMA
Very elegantly.

He laughs softly.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
I know your code!

EMMA
How sweet of you to have lent your carriage so that her fingers would be warm enough for the performance.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Your playing was lovely.

EMMA
Much inferior to Miss Fairfax's.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
No, it was very elegant.

She laughs softly. After straightening out a pleat, she whispers:

EMMA
Wasn't that kind of the Campbells to give her so generous a gift?

She watches him carefully but he seems cool.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Yes, but I don't approve of surprises: the pleasure is never enhanced and the inconvenience is considerable. I expected better judgement of Colonel Campbell.

Emma is persuaded that Mr. Knightley did not give the gift. The number is concluded and as they applaud there are cries for more.

FRANK CHURCHILL
(To Jane)
I think you could manage this without much effort--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

That fellow thinks of nothing but showing off. Has he no thoughts of her? She'll be tired and--

(Turning to Miss Bates)

Miss Bates, she will sing herself hoarse and become sick. You must put a stop to it.

Emma watches this with consternation. Miss Bates rises to speak with Jane. Emma turns and sees Mrs. Weston who has witnessed the whole thing. Her expression: "I told you so."

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

We hear Emma practicing her pianoforte playing. She starts and stops a few times, trying to get a particular passage right.

EXT: ROAD INTO TOWN-- DAY

Emma walks into town with Harriet.

HARRIET

How I wish I could play the way you and Miss Fairfax did!

EMMA

Dear, you must not compare my inadequate playing to hers. It is like comparing a lamp to sunshine.

As they come around the corner, they see Mrs. Weston and Frank.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Hello, ladies!

MRS. WESTON

We're on our way to the Bates to see the new instrument. Will you join us?

FRANK CHURCHILL

I hope Colonel Campbell--

(Winks at Emma)

bought a good instrument, because I am the wretchedest being alive at making a civil falsehood.

EMMA

I have ample confidence, Mr. Churchill, that you can be as insincere as any of us.

He laughs delightedly and they turn toward the Bateses.

CUT TO:

INT: BATES HOME PARLOUR-- DAY

Miss Bates is escorting the group in.

MISS BATES

This is so exciting, so exciting indeed! All these lovely visitors here to brighten our day! And it is a day, with no intention of complaining, mind you, much in need of brightening, much in need! Mother wears spectacles, of course, but today she could not wear them because the rivet came loose and without a good rivet--

FRANK CHURCHILL

If you would allow me--

MISS BATES

Oh, you are too wonderful, Mr. Churchill, too wonderful by miles! The town is improved in every particular by your being here! Mother, find your rivet! Mr. Churchill's going to save us! Something wonderful always happens when company comes, I always say--

INT: BATES PARLOUR-- DAY

Jane finishes playing. Everyone nods with pleasure.

MRS. WESTON

It is a wonderful instrument.
The tone could not be richer.

FRANK CHURCHILL

It was very thoughtful of the Campbells--

(A playful look at Emma)
or someone.

Jane does not respond. She folds some music. He examines it.

FRANK CHURCHILL

And the music is lovely. Was this not the music we heard when I met you in Weymouth with the Dixons?

Jane colors deeply. Emma looks at him reprovingly. Then she notices, ever so briefly, that Jane suppresses a smile.

FRANK CHURCHILL

One thing is clear: we all love music and we go too many days without it. I have only a week remaining and I propose that before I leave, we should throw a ball!

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma and Mr. Knightley are in the yard, throwing a stick to the dogs. Mr. Knightley is in sour spirits.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I cannot think of anything less appealing than an evening of watching other people dance.

EMMA

Then you must dance yourself.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I have no gift for it and I get no pleasure from it.

Emma throws the stick again for the dogs.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I'd rather fetch that stick.

EMMA

I'll try to remember to bring it to the ball.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma is sadly reading a letter. We hear the author, Mrs. Weston:

MRS. WESTON (V.O.)

Dearest Emma, I must be brief with this as I am needed to help pack. Frank's aunt has become ill and he must leave to be with her. This dooms the ball, of course--

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma sits in the parlour with Frank. He seems very sad.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Of all the horrible things, leave-taking is the worst.

EMMA

But you will come again.

FRANK CHURCHILL

It's impossible to anticipate my aunt's needs. But such a fortnight it's been! Every day making me less fit to bear any other place.

EMMA

Must you leave this very morning?

FRANK CHURCHILL

My father is to join me here and take me immediately. I am afraid that every moment will bring him.

EMMA

(Happily)

Ah! Not even five minutes to spare for your friends Miss Fairfax and Miss Bates? How unlucky!

FRANK CHURCHILL

Oh, I called there on my way here.

Emma pretends to be happy for him, but her smile seems strained.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I had to, after all their kindness. Miss Bates is a woman one may laugh at, yet I don't wish to slight her.

He appears to have more to say but rises and goes to the window.

FRANK CHURCHILL

In short, Miss Woodhouse-- I think you can hardly be without suspicion-- that I-- that I--

His manner is absolutely serious. He struggles for words. Trying to head off anything too deep, Emma keeps a light tone.

EMMA

No, you were most correct in paying your visit there--

FRANK CHURCHILL

But it-- it was something to feel
that the rest of my time-- all of
it-- might be spent here at
Hartfield. My regard for Hartfield
is most warm-- and I-- I--

He crosses toward her when the door opens. It is his father.

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Frank and Emma stand in front of his carriage. Light snow falls.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I shall hear about you all. I have
engaged Mrs. Weston to correspond
with me-- oh, the blessings of a
female correspondent when one wants
news! In her letters I shall be at
Highbury-- and here-- again!

He smiles at her with enormous warmth. His father opens the door
to the carriage, but Frank continues to smile at Emma.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: EMMA'S BEDROOM WINDOW-- NIGHT

Emma writes in her diary at her desk.

EMMA (V.O.)

Well, he is in love with me. He was
on the verge of telling me when his
father burst in. As we walked to
the carriage he said to me:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

FRANK CHURCHILL

I hope when I come back that our
ball can be held and you must
promise me that you will save the
first two dances for me!

INT/EXT: EMMA'S BEDROOM WINDOW-- NIGHT

She continues writing in her journal.

EMMA (V.O.)

Certainly, I must own that I am in love. It is only a matter of determining how much: I am sure I will know better when I feel how the pain of his absence disrupts my life. How I wish he were to be here tomorrow, because tomorrow there is a grim job to be done:

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma opens the door to reveal Mr. and MRS. ELTON. She is pretty, but there is a formidable self-assurance unsoftened by grace.

MR. ELTON

Miss Woodhouse, may I present my wife?

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Tea is being served by a maid. Mr. Woodhouse has joined them.

MRS. ELTON

Your home reminds me of Maple Grove, which is the seat of my brother Mr. Suckling. The hall, the size of the room-- I am struck by it! I almost fancy myself there.

EMMA

I am glad you can feel so at ease.

MRS. ELTON

My brother and sister will be enchanted with this place! People who have extensive grounds are always pleased to meet others with extensive grounds.

Emma highly doubts this, but avoids expressing so directly.

EMMA

When you see more of this country, I am afraid you will think you have overrated Hartfield. Surry is full of beauties.

MRS. ELTON

Don't tell me about Surry! it is the garden of England!

EMMA

Yes, but we must not rest on that.
Many counties are called that.

MRS. ELTON

No, I fancy not. I have never heard
any county but Surry called so.

EMMA

Ah, well, I know little of other
places. We are a quiet set of
people, more disposed to stay home.

Mrs. Elton glances at Mr. Woodhouse and nods.

MRS. ELTON

Of course, I quite understand. Your
father's state of health must be a
great drawback to seeing the
country. Why does he not try Bath?
It will do him a world of good.

EMMA

He has tried it before without
receiving any benefit.

MRS. ELTON

No, it will do him good, if only
his spirits which I understand are
sometimes much depressed. You must
take him. A line from me and--

(Snaps her fingers)

you would have some of the best
society in the place. And my
particular friend there, Mrs.
Partridge, would gladly show you--

EMMA

(With suppressed fury)

Thank you, but our going to Bath is
out of the question.

(Quickly switching:)

I have not asked you if you are
musical, Mrs. Elton, and that is
because your reputation has
preceded you. All the town knows
that you are a superior performer.

MRS. ELTON

Oh, no, I love music! I am dotingly fond of it and my friends say I am not entirely devoid of taste. To know I was coming into a musical society here was a great comfort to me. I told Mr. E. when he asked me to marry that I did not have to have two carriages as I did at Maple Grove and I could accept moving into a much smaller house-- my house before was quite a bit roomier, I can assure you-- and I could live without parties, balls, plays, because I am blessed with so many resources within myself, but without music my life would be a blank. I am told that you play delightfully, Miss Woodhouse, and I think that you and I must establish a musical club and have regular meetings at your house or ours. I don't want to give up my talent!

Emma does her best to disguise her revulsion at this idea.

EMMA

I couldn't impose on you and I am sure it would take something more dramatic than a change of towns to dislodge a thing as great as your talent.

MRS. ELTON

I myself don't know how great it is-- I only know my friends think it so. Oh, we met your friends the Westons. I like them extremely! He is already a favorite with me and she was so motherly that it wins one directly. Was she not your governess? I was astonished that she was so ladylike. Quite the gentlewoman!

Emma is stunned by this.

EMMA

Mrs. Weston's simple propriety makes her a model for any woman.

MRS. ELTON

And who do you think came in while we were there?

EMMA
I can't imagine.

MRS. ELTON
Knightley!

EMMA
Knightley?

MRS. ELTON
Knightley! Mr. E's friend! And I
must say that he is one friend of
whom he need not be ashamed! Quite
the gentleman!

Emma is stunned. Over the end of the scene we hear Emma's voice:

EMMA (V.O.)
Knightley?

CUT TO:

EXT: CARRIAGE-- DAY

Emma and Harriet are trotting along.

EMMA
Never seen him before and she
called him Knightley! She is
insufferable! Truly the worst!

HARRIET
I saw her at church. She seemed--

EMMA
Vulgar? Conceited? Pushy? Crass?
(Nodding sweetly to a
passerby)
How do you do, Mrs. Starr?
(To Harriet, indignant)
She was actually pleased to
discover that Mr. Knightley was a
gentleman! I doubt he will return
the compliment and find her a lady.
(Smiling at an old man)
Mr. Simons, good day!
(Indignant)
She proposed that she and I form a
musical club! As if we were bosom
friends! Is it possible Mr. Elton
met her while doing charity work in
a mental infirmary? She was simply
slackjawed that Mrs. Weston should
be a gentlewoman! My governess!

HARRIET

Oh, dear.

The carriage stops before a shop. Emma gets down first.

EMMA

Oh, dear, indeed. Well, there is only one thing to do with a person one dislikes as much as that.

HARRIET

What?

EMMA

I must throw a party for her. Otherwise, everyone will feel at once how much I dislike her.

Emma heads for the shop. Harriet lags, looking concerned.

HARRIET

If it does not insult you, Miss Woodhouse, I think for all the reasons we both know, I should not like to attend such a party.

Emma nods sympathetically and opens the door. As they enter:

EMMA

I quite understand. It is a party I would very much like to miss myself.

CUT TO:

INT: BUTCHER'S SHOP-- DAY

Emma is buying food for the party. Mrs. Elton enters.

MRS. ELTON

Miss Woodhouse, we are so excited about the party! I saw you through the window and just wanted to let you know that. And do you know whom I just adore? Whom I just want to wrap up and put in my pocket?

EMMA

(Acidly sweet)
Knightley?

MRS. ELTON

Jane Fairfax. I rave about her! I talk of nothing but Jane Fairfax! We must bring her forward. I dare say you know the lines of the poet: "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen--" We must not allow them to be verified by Jane Fairfax.

EMMA

I scarcely think there's any danger of that. The Campbells take wonderful care of her--

MRS. ELTON

It's obvious to me that whatever advantages she has gotten from the Campbells has come to an end. But a vast deal may be done by those who dare to act. If you and I set the example, many will follow. We live in a style which could not make the addition of Jane Fairfax the least inconvenient. I know that I shall have her for dinners, introduce her to my brother and sister, allow her to travel with us if she will. I am simply going to adopt her and I think you should do it with me!

CUT TO:

EXT: GARDENS-- DAY

Emma sits with Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Weston.

EMMA

For the first time in my life, I felt sorry for Jane Fairfax! Whatever she may have done, she does not deserve Mrs. Elton.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Jane may be glad for Mrs. Elton's attentions, since they are available from no one else.

Emma looks down, knowing the criticism to be true. Then, unable to miss the opportunity, she raises her head and speaks coyly.

EMMA

She seems to receive ample attention from you.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Anyone may know my regard for her.

EMMA
Oh? Do you know how high it is?

Mrs. Weston coughs at Emma. Mr. Knightley looks at the women.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Ah, so you've been settling that I should marry Jane Fairfax?

EMMA
Oh, no. I have not the smallest wish for you to marry her. You could not come and sit with us the way you do if you were married.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Jane Fairfax is a very charming young woman, but she lacks an open temper which a man wishes for in a wife. I have admiration for her, but no thought beyond, not at all. No, no, not at all. I am just not interested in that. Ah, your father signals. Let me see what he needs.

He is up and across the lawn.

EMMA
Well, Mrs. Weston, what do you say to your suspicions now?

MRS. WESTON
He is so very much occupied with not being in love with her that it seems certain that he is.

CUT TO:

INT: HARTFIELD-- NIGHT

The party for the Eltons. The room is filled with people, merrily talking and laughing. Mr. Knightley comes up to Emma.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
It was most kind of you to include Jane Fairfax in this evening.

EMMA
Your words the other day shamed me. I have not tried as I should have.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
You are capable of great kindness.

EMMA
I fall short so often, and she may
not even find this a kindness now--

Emma inclines her head to indicate Jane. Mr. Knightley follows her gaze and sees that Jane is with Mrs. Elton, as well as Mr. Knightley's brother, John. Mrs. Elton is particularly animated.

ANOTHER ANGLE

On Jane and Mrs. Elton as Mr. Knightley approaches. Mrs. Elton sees him and extends her arm to him.

MRS. ELTON
Knightley, help us! Jane went to
the post office today in the rain!
At great peril to her health!

JOHN KNIGHTLEY
The post office has a charm at one
period of our lives, but when you
live to be my age, you will begin
to think letters are never worth
going through the rain for.

JANE FAIRFAX
(Blushing)
You speak of letters of business.
Mine are letters of friendship. As
I am not situated as you are, in
the midst of every dear connection,
I cannot be indifferent about them.

MRS. ELTON
Jane, you sad girl! This is a sign
that I was not there to take care
of you! Knightley, tell her!

MR. KNIGHTLEY
I am sure she knows what she can
endure, Mrs. Elton, but, of course:
(To Jane)
do take care of yourself.

JANE FAIRFAX
(Smiles softly)
Thank you.

Emma has been moving closer, pretending to be looking out for the guests, but listening intently.

MRS. ELTON

I shall speak to Mr. E. and have the man who fetches our letters bring yours, too. I flatter myself in believing that my influence is not entirely worn out. If I meet with no insuperable difficulties, let us consider the point settled.

JANE FAIRFAX

(Surprisingly firm)

Excuse me, but I cannot by any means consent to such an arrangement, so needlessly troubling to your servant.

MRS. ELTON

But I--

But Emma, who has watched Jane with respect, cuts in, smiling.

EMMA

Dinner.

INT: DINING ROOM-- NIGHT

Emma, at the other end of the table from her father, looks about to make sure everyone is happy. She sees Mrs. Elton grab Mr. Woodhouse's arm and squeeze it to make a point. He winces. She sees Mrs. Weston who smiles but glances across the table. Emma follows her look and sees Mr. Knightley and Jane, their heads close together and giggling.

INT: PARLOUR-- AFTER DINNER

At a card table, Mrs. Elton, Mr. Knightley, Jane, Mrs. Weston and Mr. Woodhouse play cards.

MRS. ELTON

What you really need Jane is a position. I shall find you one.

JANE FAIRFAX

That is most kind of you, but I do not wish to be any trouble--

MRS. ELTON

It's no trouble for me to help.

JANE FAIRFAX

Thank you, but I am quite serious in wishing to remain here as I am.

MRS. ELTON

And I am serious, too, child. I resolve to be on the watch so that nothing exceptional may pass us.

There is a rustle of noise and in comes Mr. Weston.

MR. WOODHOUSE

Who is it? Mr. Weston! How delightful! We thought you could not join us.

MR. WESTON

I am back earlier than I thought and I hope you don't mind that I stopped in, knowing all the fun in town was to be had here tonight. I bring good news.

(Glancing at Emma)

My son is coming back! He's going to take a house here!

Everyone murmurs excitedly, expressing their congratulations.

MRS. ELTON

I'll have to do something with Mr. E. to welcome him. Things are different since he left, you know! Highbury's a new town. There's been an addition, if I may presume to call myself an addition. Personally, I wouldn't presume to, but I know my friends would argue--

As she goes on, Mrs. Weston has come up next to Emma and taken her hand. She gives it a squeeze at this happy news. Emma seems far away. We hear her voice over the throng in the room.

EMMA (V.O.)

Frank Churchill. Hmm.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: EMMA'S ROOM-- NIGHT

She is writing in her diary. We see her through the window.

EMMA (V.O.)

I had forgotten about Frank Churchill. I like him when I am with him but am not at all occupied with him since he has gone.

She looks up. With surprise, she says aloud:

EMMA

I am not in love! Hmm!

(Back to V.O.:)

Remembering that he had been on the
verge of declaring his love before,
I was afraid to see him on his
return, but when he came today--

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Franks' carriage pulls up. Emma comes out the door to greet him.
He is friendly, but not overly so. They go in the house.

EMMA (V.O.)

He stayed only briefly. He had
other stops he wanted to make.

He comes out the door again and enters his carriage. Emma watches
perplexed. Over his exit, we hear:

EMMA (V.O.)

Very charming, of course, but I am
certain his feelings have changed.
As he left, he stopped and said:

FRANK CHURCHILL

How is our friend, Miss Smith?

EXT/INT: EMMA'S ROOM-- NIGHT

EMMA

Wouldn't they be a charming couple?
He would be so lucky. Happy the man
who exchanges Emma for Harriet!

(Writing, V.O.:)

Perhaps I can bring them together
at the ball. Hmmm....

CUT TO:

EXT: THE CROWN INN-- NIGHT

The Inn is ablaze with lights for the long anticipated party.

INT: CROWN INN-- NIGHT

Emma enters. Frank comes up as servants help her with her wrap.

FRANK CHURCHILL

You're here early.

EMMA

I just came to see if I could be of
any service to your dear father.

FRANK CHURCHILL
 (Laughing)
 You're early for the party, but
 late for last minute assistance.

They walk into the ballroom where Mr. Weston is surrounded by many ladies from the town.

FRANK CHURCHILL
 It seems the whole party is here to
 help him get ready for the party.

Emma laughs fondly, but Frank anxiously keeps looking out.

EMMA
 Are you waiting for someone?

FRANK CHURCHILL
 Uh-- Mrs. Elton.

EMMA
 Mrs. Elton? Why ever for?

FRANK CHURCHILL
 I have never met her, yet I hear
 much of her. Oh, is that they-- ?

He dashes to the door as Mrs. Weston comes and takes Emma's arm.

EMMA
 Mr. Churchill just told me the most
 fascinating thing: he has heard
 about Mrs. Elton and he still wants
 to meet her!

Mrs. Weston and Emma laugh naughtily.

INT: CROWN-- NIGHT

The dance has begun. Several people watch. Mr. Weston dances with Mrs. Elton. Emma dances with Frank. She notices Mr. Knightley, apart from the other spectators, watching her dance. She also sees Mr. Elton walking past Harriet, who stands alone. He lets out a sigh and saunters away, making a show of his availability. Emma catches Mrs. Weston's eye and glances to Harriet. Mrs. Weston understands and approaches Mr. Elton.

MRS. WESTON
 Do you not dance, Mr. Elton?

MR. ELTON
 Most readily, Mrs. Weston, if you
 will be my partner.

MRS. WESTON

Dear me, I am no dancer. Let me find you a better partner.

MR. ELTON

Though I am an old married man, I would certainly enjoy dancing with Mrs. Gilbert.

MRS. WESTON

Mrs. Gilbert has told me she does not mean to dance tonight. But I do see a disengaged young lady whom I should very much like to see dancing. Miss Smith.

MR. ELTON

Oh, Miss Smith! I had not observed her. Yes, well, you are very obliging to point her out to me, and if I were not an old married man, I should gladly do the job. But my dancing days are over. Will you excuse me?

He walks away, just as Emma and Frank swirl by. Harriet, who has been able to hear, has reddened terribly, and when she lifts her hand to brush away a hair to demonstrate that she is relaxed, it trembles terribly. Emma, watching, shuts her eyes in fury. The screen goes dark and we hear Frank Churchill say:

FRANK CHURCHILL

Ow!

Emma's eyes pop open and we see that in her anger she has dug her nails into his shoulder.

EMMA

I'm very sorry. Forgive me!

FRANK CHURCHILL

Do not apologize. I am enjoying this very much. Are you?

EMMA

(Distractedly)

Hmm? Oh, yes--

She glances back at Harriet and sees a man from behind talking to her. Because of the other dancers in the way, she cannot tell who it is. She cranes her head. The man turns and he has Harriet on his arm. It is Mr. Knightley bringing her to the dance floor. Harriet is smiling with relief and delight. Emma's face lights up as they join the throng. She looks at Frank, with renewed joy.

EMMA

Did I say I'm enjoying this, too?
For I am, so very much!

INT: PARTY-- NIGHT

The dance concludes. A bell is sounded. Everyone moves to the dining room. Mrs. Elton passes Emma and Mrs. Weston and says:

MRS. ELTON

Mrs. Weston, I love your son! He's a fine man and I am not easy with my compliments. When I give one, it is truly an honor!

(To Emma)

Did you see how Knightley took pity on poor Miss Smith? He is a good sport, as I told you!

INT: PARTY-- NIGHT

Dinner is being eaten. Camera pans down a row of plates, where most of the food is eaten. Comes to a plate still full with food: tilts up and we see Miss Bates, her fork in her hand, the first forkful of food still in place, chatting away to Mr. Elton.

INT: PARTY-- NIGHT

Everyone returns to the ballroom. Emma approaches Mr. Knightley and touches him on the arm. She gestures him to follow her.

EXT: BALCONY-- NIGHT

They are alone on the balcony, the party visible through the window behind them.

EMMA

I can only say that at that moment when you took her to the floor, I was proud to call you my friend.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

The Eltons are unpardonable, and, I must say, they aim at wounding more than Harriet. They seem to want to snub you, too, Emma. Why?

Though she knows the reason, Emma shrugs weakly.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Certainly Mrs. Elton has no reason to dislike you?

Emma continues to play innocent. Mr. Knightley smiles warmly.

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MR. KNIGHTLEY
Confess now, old friend: you did
want him to marry Harriet.

She looks at him and can hold out no longer. She nods sheepishly.

EMMA
I did and they cannot forgive me.
Oh, dear, how could I have made
such a misjudgment? What is the
point of being almost 24 if there
is still so much for me to learn?

MR. KNIGHTLEY
You know more than you realize.

EMMA
I know now that I must own to you
to be completely wrong about Mr.
Elton. There is a littleness to him
which you discovered and I did not.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
In return for your acknowledging so
much, I say that you chose for him
better than he chose for himself.
Harriet Smith has some first-rate
qualities which Mrs. Elton is
totally without. Harriet is
infinitely to be preferred. She
surprised me, most pleasantly.

Emma smiles at him gratefully. Mr. Weston appears in the doorway.

MR. WESTON
Emma dear! Everybody is falling
asleep! Will you come in and set
the example for your companions?

EMMA
I am ready whenever I am wanted.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Whom are you going to dance with?

EMMA
(After a pause, smiling)
With you, if you will ask me.

He offers his hand.

EMMA

You have shown yourself a fine dancer and though this music is a bit romantic, it should not be improper for us to dance. After all, we are not brother and sister.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

(Leading her in)

Brother and sister? Oh, no. No, indeed we are not.

He takes her firmly and sweeps her off to the floor.

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma and her father come inside, having given their dog a run.

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma is cleaning house, dusting and rearranging, humming happily to herself. Through the parlour window, we see Frank Churchill approaching and Harriet is leaning weakly on his arm.

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma opens the door and they enter. Harriet is weak and upset.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I hope this is not too great a disturbance, but I did not know where else to--

EMMA

No, no, please, of course.

They enter the parlour and Harriet looks woozily about.

EMMA

Harriet, dear, where would you like to sit?

Harriet faints into a big armchair.

FRANK CHURCHILL

There, I suppose.

INT: HARTFIELD PARLOUR-- DAY

Harriet has been revived with a cup of tea. She is still shaken.

HARRIET

I was coming to talk with you, and as spring is in the air, was walking with Miss Bickerton, an old friend from Mrs. Goddard's. We decided to take Richmond road--

EXT: RICHMOND ROAD-- DAY

Flashback as Harriet describes the scene. She and Miss Bickerton walk down a road which becomes quite darkly shaded by elms.

HARRIET (V.O.)

Though the road is a public one, it became dark and deserted and Miss Bickerton noticed in the woods to the side, a party of Gypsies.

The Gypsies emerge from the woods, looking creepy.

HARRIET (V.O.)

When one of them advanced, Miss Bickerton was frightened. She has seen even less of the world than I.

Miss Bickerton screams and runs up hill, calling after Harriet to do the same. Harriet tries to run, but stumbles and falls. The Gypsies immediately surround her. They beg and then scream at her, wanting money. An old woman grasps at Harriet's purse.

HARRIET (V.O.)

I thought for certain all was lost when dear Mr. Churchill arrived!

Frank appears and pushes his way through the Gypsies. He shouts at them to back off and he helps her on the road. He carries her for a bit until she can walk. Even then she leans on his arm.

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Back in the parlour, Harriet reaches out for Frank.

HARRIET

How can I ever thank you? How brave you were! I owe you everything!

Frank blushes and will not accept the compliment.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I only brought you to your friend. It is she who will put everything right. If I am no longer needed, I must meet my father.

HARRIET

Of course. Bless you for your help.
Bless you, again and again!

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

We see Frank through the window, walking back to town. Emma and Harriet face each other.

HARRIET

All this trouble to do something I
should have done long ago.

EMMA

What, my friend?

HARRIET

I have come to a decision about Mr. Elton. I am done with him. I do not ever wish to see him or his wife again. I shall never forget them at the ball! I wish them no evil as I do not care enough about them to wish them anything. To prove my sincerity, I shall now destroy something which I had thought to treasure always.

She removes a wrapped parcel and tilts it toward Emma. On the top is written, "Most precious treasures." She opens it.

HARRIET

You know what this is, of course.

She holds up a wadded cotton bandage. Emma shakes her head.

HARRIET

Can you have forgotten? Mr. Elton cut his finger and you urged me to bind the wound. I cut too much bandage so I trimmed it and he played with the extra bit while I finished up. He left this by his chair after he left and I, in my nonsense, made a treasure of it.

EMMA

(Affectionately)

Dear Harriet!

HARRIET

Now that was silly, but here is something that truly was his--

She reaches into the paper. Emma sits up eagerly. Harriet withdraws a tiny stub of a pencil. Emma looks at her blankly.

HARRIET

He left it here once and I took it.

(Bitterly)

I used to take it and hold it! But no more! I want to be rid of these things, as depressing as they once were inspiring, with you as my witness. I think we should burn them.

EMMA

I think it will be a wise and relieving thing to do.

They walk to the fireplace. Harriet throws them in.

HARRIET

Goodbye Mr. Elton!

Emma takes Harriet's hand. We hear her thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)

Hello, Mr. Churchill!

CUT TO:

EXT: HILLSIDE-- DAY

There is a large group of people out picking strawberries: Emma and Harriet, Mr. Churchill, the Westons, Jane Fairfax, the Eltons and Miss Bates. It is a beautiful day and they make a pretty picture on the hill. There is much merriment and laughter.

ANGLE ON:

Emma and Harriet as they pick. No one is near so they can speak openly. Emma, glancing at Frank, eats a strawberry with pleasure.

EMMA

When you get married, you must eat strawberries at your wedding. They are so marvelous!

HARRIET

I shall never marry. There is no one right for me.

EMMA

Really? I was certain you were developing feelings for someone we both know and admire--

Harriet looks at Emma with alarm.

HARRIET

Could you tell? Believe me, I am not so mad to presume that he could ever return my feelings--

EMMA

He obviously cares for you greatly. The service he rendered you would endear him naturally.

HARRIET

Oh, it was so much more than a service! I cannot tell you what I felt when I saw him coming to my rescue. In one moment, I went from utter misery to perfect happiness!

EMMA

He is a wonderful choice for you, but you cannot be certain your feelings will be returned, even given the kindness he showed you. Do not let your feelings go until you are persuaded of his liking you. Let his behavior be the guide of your sensations.

Harriet listens attentively and nods. Emma takes her hand.

EMMA (CONT'D)

I give you this caution now because I shall not speak to you on the subject. I am determined never again to interfere. I will be the model of caution. I will not say his name to you or anyone. The situation will not be softened or cajoled or pushed by me in any way. I will only say this: raising your thoughts to him is a mark of your very good taste.

They hear a laugh several yards away. They look and see Frank holding up a huge strawberry.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I've caught our lunch!

Harriet giggles delightedly and Emma squeezes her hand.

EXT: HILLSIDE-- DAY

Everyone eats lunch on the grass. Mr. Knightley is with Miss Fairfax, displeasing Emma. Frank is between Mrs. Elton and Mrs. Weston. Mr. Weston sits on his wife's other side and Miss Bates sits next to him. Emma and Harriet are next to Mr. Knightley.

MRS. ELTON

Jane, even you must see the foolishness of declining this job.

JANE FAIRFAX

I am most obliged that you care enough to continually make these efforts, but I simply will not consider leaving Highbury.

MRS. ELTON

As your friend, dear, and your protector, I cannot allow you to feel that way. I am sure everyone here agrees with me and I urge you all to join me in encouraging Jane to do the right thing for herself.

There is an awkward silence which finally is ended by Miss Bates.

MISS BATES

These sandwiches are delicious, Mrs. Elton, really most delicious. I am sure I've never had nicer.

MRS. ELTON

I never compliment myself, but my friends always tell me I certainly know how to make a sandwich.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Bye the bye, what became of Mr. Perry's plan to open a dining room?

MRS. WESTON

I did not know he had such a plan.

FRANK CHURCHILL

I had it from you. You wrote me.

MRS. WESTON

But I have never heard of it!

MR. WESTON

Mr. Perry wants to open a dining room? You heard that from Perry?

FRANK CHURCHILL

Apparently I heard it from no one.
I thought for certain I had it from
Mrs. Weston, but I must have
dreamed it. I dreamed vividly of
Highbury when I was away.

Everyone goes back to eating, until:

MISS BATES

Of course I don't mean to suggest
you do not dream as vividly as you
say, I know I sometimes have the
oddest dreams myself at night, but
were I questioned on this matter,
were I in any way asked about this
matter, I would, in the interest of
truthfulness, have to acknowledge
that there was talk from Mr. Perry
about just such a thing.

Everyone listens with interest.

MISS BATES (CONT'D)

Mrs. Perry mentioned it to my
mother because Mrs. Perry is very
fond of my mother, as who is not?,
and also as she was very excited
about the news, even though Mr.
Perry had asked that she not
discuss it. She asked us to keep it
quiet and we did. Do you remember
her coming over, Jane, and asking
us to stay quiet?

There is shift in everyone's attention from Miss Bates, who does
not realize what she has said, to Jane. Jane is embarrassed and
tries to feign confusion. Mr. Knightley looks closely at her and
then at Frank, who also looks at Jane. Frank averts his gaze when
he notices the attention of Mr. Knightley.

MISS BATES (CONT'D)

She asked us to keep her confidence
and for once I can say I did not
drop a word of it out, because I
know that sometimes I do pop out a
thing or two before I am aware. I
am not like Jane in that respect.
And how I wish I were, how I wish--

Frank rises, drawing the attention away from Jane.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Mrs. Elton, let me join in the throng of praise for your marvelous lunch. For those who are done and feel like some amusement, I thought we might play the alphabet game we played at Miss Woodhouse's. Did you bring the letters Miss Woodhouse?

EXT: HILL-- DAY

A series of letters on little tiles are placed before Emma. She must unscramble them. She changes a few letters around and it says "Fine dancer." She laughs and says:

EMMA

Thank you, Mr. Knightley!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Mr. Churchill, you do one.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Very well.

He takes the tiles and arranges them in front of Jane. They say: "RLUDEBN." She good-naturedly struggles with it, putting together "RUN" and then changing it to "LUNE" then "BLUNE" then finally "BLUNDER." She looks up at Frank who nods, a strong suggestion of mischief in his eyes. She is alarmed.

EMMA

Oh, did you get it? Let's see.

But Jane quickly throws some other tiles on top of it.

JANE FAIRPAX

It was too hard.

EMMA

Oh, do another for her, Frank.

But Mr. Knightley saw the word and his brow furrows. Frank gives her a new word: I-N-D-X-O. She organizes it from "OXIDN" to "DIXON." Emma and Mr. Knightley see the word and Emma gasps lightly at Frank's boldness. Mr. Knightley stares at her. Jane messes up the letters and rises.

JANE FAIRPAX

I did not know proper nouns were allowed. I believe I will walk.

MRS. ELTON

Let me come with you, child, so we may discuss your new opportunity.

JANE FAIRFAX
(Emotionally)
No. I have told you no. Thank you
very much but I decline.

To cover this tension, Mr. Knightley says:

MR. KNIGHTLEY
The afternoon sun wears on me.
Emma, help me bring everyone some
refreshment to drink.

EXT: HILL-- DAY

Emma and Mr. Knightley walk to get tea.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Pray tell me why the word "Dixon"
would have such sting to Jane?

EMMA
I-- do not know.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
My dear Emma, do you think you
perfectly understand the degree of
acquaintance between Mr. Churchill
and Miss Fairfax?

EMMA
Why certainly.

MR. KNIGHTLEY
Because I have lately imagined that
I saw symptoms of attachment
between them which I do not believe
they meant to be public.

EMMA
Mr. Knightley, you amuse me
excessively! They are as far from
being attached as any two beings in
the world.

She takes the punch and walks ahead. He shakes his head, amused.

EXT: PARTY-- DAY

Emma and Mr. Knightley return.

FRANK CHURCHILL
Ah, we are most grateful! You are
always watching out for others,
Miss Woodhouse.

HARRIET

How true!

FRANK CHURCHILL

So to thank you, and to engage us all, I command that all of us should tell Miss Woodhouse some thing very entertaining. You may offer either one thing very clever, two things moderately clever, or three things very dull indeed, and in return, Miss Woodhouse will laugh heartily at them all.

Mrs. Elton and her husband rise.

MRS. ELTON

I do not pretend to be a wit, though I have a great deal of vivacity in my own way, of course. These kind of things are tolerable at Christmas, when one is around the fire, but it seems a waste of the outdoors. Miss Woodhouse, you must excuse me.

MR. ELTON

And me. I'm an old married man and have nothing to say to please Miss Woodhouse or any young lady.

They leave.

MISS BATES

Oh, well, I need not be uneasy as long as we're allowed three dull things-- very dull, in fact. I shall be sure to say three very dull things as soon as I open my mouth, shan't I? Do not you all think I shall?

She laughs good-naturedly. Emma smiles with mock politeness.

EMMA

Ah, there may be a difficulty.

MISS BATES

I doubt that. I am sure I never fail to say things very dull.

EMMA

Yes, dear, but you will be limited as to number. Only three at once.

Miss Bates nods and smiles, at first deceived by the politeness of Emma's tone, but blushes deeply when she realizes its meaning.

MISS BATES

Oh-- ah! To be sure! Yes--

(To Mr. Knightley)

I see what she means. I will try to hold my tongue. I must make myself very disagreeable or she would not have said such a thing to an old friend. Yes, I-- just three, yes.

Miss Bates has tears in her eyes. Emma notices this with alarm, but Frank does not. He continues merrily on.

FRANK CHURCHILL

Father, you start. What have you for Emma?

MR. WESTON

It's a conundrum--

Mr. Knightley, who cannot conceal his anger, rises.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Miss Bates, would you give me the pleasure of your company as I pick a few more strawberries before we lose the sun?

She nods gratefully and they walk off. Emma watches them anxiously, a knot in her stomach, as the game continues.

MR. WESTON

What two letters express perfection?

EMMA

I am sure I do not know.

MR. WESTON

I will tell you then: M and A. M and A. Em- a. Emma.

Everyone laughs and applauds. Emma smiles, but she is clearly under strain and distracted by her faux pas.

HARRIET

This is most pleasant! Let's play some more.

EXT: PARTY-- DUSK

Everyone is packing up, folding blankets, etc.

EXT: BOX HILL-- DUSK

Emma is putting her things in her carriage. She is clearly tired and out of sorts. She hears a voice behind her:

MR. KNIGHTLEY

How could you be so unfeeling to Miss Bates?

She turns and faces Mr. Knightley. He speaks softly, not wishing to be overheard.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

How could you be so insolent to a woman of her character, age and situation? I had not thought it possible!

Emma turns into the carriage, where her face winces, but she turns back to him, feigning a lightness of heart.

EMMA

How could I help saying it? Nobody could have helped it. I dare say she did not understand me.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I assure you, she did. She felt your full meaning. She cannot stop mentioning it-- though with her usual generosity. I wish you could have heard her honor your forbearance in putting up with her when her society is so irksome.

EMMA

I know there is no better creature in all the world, but you must allow that blended alongside the good, there is an equal amount of the ridiculous in her.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

And were she prosperous, or a woman of better fortune, or a woman equal to you in situation, I would not quarrel with you for any liberties of manner. But consider how far this is from the case! She is poor, even more so than when she was born, and should she live to be an old lady, she will sink further still. Her situation, being in every way below you, should secure your compassion. Badly done, Emma, so badly done! She has known you since you were an infant, and has seen you grow from a time when her notice of you was an honor to this: humbling her and laughing at her in thoughtless spirits, and in front of people who would be guided by your treatment of her.

Emma has turned her face away; this is all too painful for her.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

And all of this on top of the unwelcoming way you have treated Jane Fairfax. It is not pleasant for me to raise all this, but I must tell you the truth while I can, proving myself your friend by the most faithful counsel, and trusting that sometime or other you will do my faith in you greater justice than you do it now.

He looks at her, her back to him. He cannot see the anguish on her face. Angry and disappointed, he turns and walks away.

INT: CARRIAGE-- DUSK

Emma covers her face with her hands and sobs.

CUT TO:

EXT: MISS BATES HOUSE-- NEXT DAY

Emma is at the door with a cake. The maid beckons her in.

MAID

Yes, ma'am, the ladies are home.

INT: BATES HOUSE-- DAY

Emma and the maid climb the stairs. The sounds of a bustle are heard as they approach the door and then:

MISS BATES (O.C.)
-- in a hurry, please! She's on her way up!

The maid holds up a finger to Emma.

MAID
Ah-- just a moment, please.

She opens the door a crack and slips through it, closing it quickly. There is muffled conversation during which time Emma waits with embarrassment. The door opens-- too soon.

MAID
All right, ma'am.

As Emma enters, she sees Jane and Miss Bates hurriedly leaving the room through another door.

MISS BATES
Well, my dear, I shall say you are ill and laid down upon the bed--

They exit. Mrs. Bates, seated in her usual spot, sees Emma with alarm. Emma looks down at her cake, ashamed and sad.

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma walks back to the house, without her cake, and looking glum.

INT: HOUSE-- DAY

She enters the parlour where Harriet and Mr. Knightley sit with her father. Mr. Woodhouse looks up warmly, Mr. Knightley coldly.

MR. WOODHOUSE
My dear, how did you find my old friend and her daughter? Emma has called on Mrs. and Miss Bates. She always shows them such kindness.

Emma blushes deeply at this unjust praise. She shakes her head.

EMMA
No, Father. They have been the ones to forebear and show me kindness--

MR. WOODHOUSE

Nonsense, daughter. The charity you have given them--

EMMA

There is no virtue in charity if it is offered as proof of one's superiority-- especially when the donor is, in every important way, lower than the people she thinks herself stooping to help. I have not shown them the kindness they deserve-- the kindness which some friends may doubt I still have.

Emma lifts her eyes to Mr. Knightley. His face has grown warm with her confession. He lifts her hand slowly to his mouth. When it is almost there, he stops.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

The truest friend does not doubt, but hope.

She smiles. He looks at her deeply and then lowers her hand.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I must go. I am leaving town to visit my brother and your sister.

EMMA

I am sorry I was not here sooner, so that-- we could have talked.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

So am I.

EMMA

When will you be back?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I don't know. I-- there is a delicate and perplexing matter I must discuss with my brother, so--

He seems in conflict about something and releases her hand.

EMMA

Well, then...

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Well, then.

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD-- AFTERNOON

Emma sits outside, writing in her journal.

EMMA (V.O.)

Frank Churchill's aunt has died,
taking him away for awhile. This
may strengthen Harriet's chances
with him, since the aunt was sure
to object. I continue in my efforts
to make amends with Jane Fairfax--

EXT: BATES HOUSE-- MORNING

Flashback. Emma is at the door of the house with the maid.

MAID

Miss Fairfax still isn't well.

EMMA (V.O.)

But as I rode home--

EXT: HIGHBURY ROAD-- AFTERNOON

Emma rides in her carriage. Looking out, she sees Jane in the meadow, playing energetically with a dog. Emma sinks back, hurt.

EMMA (V.O.)

I knew it was not that she lacked
the strength to see people; only
that she lacked it to see me.

EXT: HARTFIELD GARDEN-- DAY

Emma finishing the entry in her diary.

EMMA (V.O.)

But I may say to myself that could
Mr. Knightley--

INT: HOUSE-- DAY BEFORE

Mr. Knightley lifts her hand to his lips.

EMMA (V.O.)

Mr. Knightley-- ummm--

And we CUT BACK TO the garden as she looks down at the diary.
Unseen to her, Mr. Weston runs to her across the lawn.

EMMA (V.O.)
 -- have been privy to my many
 attempts to assist Jane Fairfax--
 (Speaking aloud:)
 could he have seen into my heart--
 (V.O. again:)
 I think he would not, on this
 occasion, have found anything to
 reprove.

She turns at the sound of Mr. Weston's approach. He stops at the chair, heaving for breath. Something is obviously wrong.

CUT TO:

INT: WESTON'S HOUSE-- DAY

Emma faces a nervous Mrs. Weston who, in her anxiety, addresses the worst of what she has to say to her needlework.

MRS. WESTON
 Frank Churchill-- is engaged!

Emma's hands go to her mouth with excitement.

EMMA
 I can't believe it! So quickly!

MRS. WESTON
 I do not know what you mean by
 that, exactly, as the engagement
 has been in place for some time,
 secretly between the two of them.

Emma looks at her with confusion. Mrs. Weston finally faces her.

MRS. WESTON
 Emma, Frank Churchill has been
 secretly engaged to Jane Fairfax!

Emma actually jumps from the shock. She is horror-struck.

EMMA
 Good God! You are not serious! You
 do not mean it!

Mrs. Weston averts her gaze again, looking at her needlework.

MRS. WESTON

There has been a solemn engagement between them since October, formed at Weymouth and kept secret since then. It has hurt both his father and me-- most especially because of whom else it might have hurt.

EMMA

I cannot pretend that I do not understand what you mean by that, but let me give you all the relief in my power. There was a period in our acquaintance when I was much disposed to be attached to him. Nay, I was attached. Fortunately, that ceased, for reasons I do not quite understand, and for some time past, I have felt nothing for him. That is the truth.

Mrs. Weston embraces her, with tears of joy.

MRS. WESTON

This was my greatest worry-- I am certain you knew it was our darling wish that you might be attached to each other. Imagine what we felt on your account!

EMMA

You need not worry about that, though how could he have come down here and treated me in this fashion? He encouraged me to hope! It is cruel, truly cruel!

MRS. WESTON

Umm, yes, dear, but I thought you said you felt nothing for him...?

EMMA

I don't, but he didn't know that! He is benefitting from a very lucky coincidence!

MRS. WESTON

Now, Emma, we do not know everything. He promised to write with greater explanations. I do feel he is a good man, however wrong this action may have been.

Seeing her husband in the window. She gestures him in.

MRS. WESTON

Dear, may I entreat you to put Mr. Weston's heart at ease about this match? He was as worried as I about you in all of this! Let him know of your feelings and how fortunate it is for Frank to have found a girl of such steadiness of character.

EMMA

I don't know how steady her character can be engaging herself to a man who pretends he is not engaged and deceives attractive and feeling young women--

Mr. Weston opens the door tentatively, peering in. Emma immediately changes her tune. She smiles and extends her arms.

EMMA

Here is the luckiest father in all of England!

She embraces Mr. Weston. Mrs. Weston faces her from behind her husband, smiling gratefully, and mouths, "Thank you!"

EXT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Mr. Weston's carriage pulls up. He helps Emma down.

MR. WESTON

I hope this is not unkind, but I must ask an injunction of secrecy on this issue until the principals are ready to make it known.

EMMA

Of course, Mr. Weston. I shall tell no one--

(V.O.:)

-- except poor Harriet, who once again has fixed on the wrong man--

(Aloud:)

You may rely on that.

INT: HARTFIELD-- DAY

Emma enters the house and sees Harriet in the drawing room.

HARRIET

Oh, Miss Woodhouse, hello! Your father let me in! Is this not the oddest news you have ever heard?

EMMA

What news do you mean?

HARRIET

About Jane Fairfax and Mr. Churchill.

EMMA

Who told you?

HARRIET

Mr. Weston. He said it is a great secret and that I may only discuss it with you. Isn't it odd?

Harriet sits down and eats a biscuit which a maid had brought in earlier on a plate with other biscuits. She seems unperturbed, a reaction which leaves Emma dumbstruck.

HARRIET

Had you any idea of it?

EMMA

Can you seriously imagine that I knew about this when I was tacitly encouraging you to give way to your own feelings? Had I known, you may trust me to have cautioned you.

HARRIET

(Eating another bite)

Me? Why should you caution me? You do not think that I care about Frank Churchill?

Emma stares at her with a confusion turning to dread.

EMMA

What do you mean? You told you loved a man--

HARRIET

I know we did not name him, but considering that he is so superior to everyone else, I should not have thought it possible to think I meant Frank Churchill! I hope I have developed some better taste than to chose Frank Churchill over him. Furthermore, I never would have even dreamed of him but for you. You told me that more wonderful things had happened--

EMMA

Yes, but I thought you meant--

HARRIET

-- and that there had been matches of greater disparity. Those were your words--

EMMA

But I meant them in reference to--

HARRIET

And without having heard them, I would never have dared to hope--

EMMA

(Trying to stay calm:)

Harriet, please, before we go on, there is something I must clarify. Is it possible that you are speaking of--

(With fear:)

Mr. Knightley?

HARRIET

To be sure! I have never had any idea of anybody else.

EMMA

But you named Frank Churchill-- practically. You spoke of the service he had done you, in rescuing you from the Gypsies--

HARRIET

I never said that--

EMMA

I recall it with perfect clarity--

HARRIET

I may have said I was grateful for his rescue, but not from the Gypsies. I was thinking of Mr. Knightley's coming and asking me to dance when Mr. Elton had snubbed me in front of everyone. That was when I knew in full that he was superior to every other being on earth.

Emma rises and paces in her agitation. She speaks to herself.

EMMA

Good God! This is a deplorable mistake! What is to be done?

Harriet colors a little at this question.

HARRIET

Must something be done about it? You must think him five hundred million times more above me than Mr. Churchill. Yet, you did say that more marvelous things have--

Emma turns with too evident a sharpness.

EMMA

Have you any idea of Mr. Knightley's returning your affection?

Emma, too nervous to face her for the answer, turns to the window, where she can see Harriet's reflection.

HARRIET

Yes, I must say that I have.

Emma grips the curtain with her hand at this news.

HARRIET

You told me to let his behavior be the rule of mine and so I have.

Harriet's voice grows blurry as Emma stares at the window. In the leaden panes, she sees different scenes, which support Harriet's hope: Harriet and Mr. Knightley talking and laughing as they picked strawberries; she sees them strolling in town, engaged in pleasant conversation; and she sees them dancing after the Elton snub. These blur as Harriet's reflection comes back into focus.

HARRIET

Am I wrong to hope as I do?

EMMA

(With the utmost effort)
Harriet, I can only venture to declare that Mr. Knightley is the last man in the world who would intentionally give any woman the idea of his feeling for her more than he really does.

Harriet's heart fills with this sentence. She comes to Emma and embraces her. Emma returns the embrace, but we see that she is heartbroken, and a tear has formed. We Emma's voice.

EMMA (V.O.)
This is evil.

EXT: THE WESTONS' HOME-- AFTERNOON

Emma and Mrs. Weston walk along a small pond behind the house.
Ducks float along the top.

MRS. WESTON
But why should it be evil that
Harriet attach herself to a man you
so admire?

EMMA
I have given it much thought,
asking myself many times why this
should have unsettled me so and I
came to see with a shock that I do
not admire Mr. Knightley as I have
so long thought.
She stops for a moment, unable to go on. Her hand goes to her
mouth as she steadies herself. Mrs. Weston takes her other hand,
lending her support and waiting. She uncovers her mouth and says:

EMMA
I love him. So dearly, so greatly!
Outside of you and my father, his
is the only opinion which matters
to me. I did not know it, I did not
know it until poor dear Harriet
said that she had the hope of his
returning her feelings. And then I
felt ill that I could lose him and
I knew that no one must marry Mr.
Knightley but me!

MRS. WESTON
Dearest girl! Can you be serious?

Emma nods. Mrs. Weston breaks into a smile and hugs her.

MRS. WESTON (CONT'D)
My dear! How heavenly!

EMMA
But I am now too late. Just before
he left town, he said:

INT: HARTFIELD PARLOUR-- THE DAY BEFORE

Mr. Knightley faces Emma, holding her hand.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

There is a delicate and perplexing matter I must discuss with my brother--

EXT: WESTONS' HOUSE-- AFTERNOON

Emma and Mrs. Weston continue their walk around the pond.

EMMA

That has to be Harriet. I hope his brother advises him to be careful. After all, she is the natural daughter of nobody knows whom--

MRS. WESTON

Dear, I like Harriet very much, as, I might remind you, do you. But remember, Harriet's feelings are evidence of Harriet's feelings only. Nothing of importance can be known until Mr. Knightley returns. Until then, you must put him out of your mind. Can you?

EMMA

Certainly, I can. I may have lost my heart, but not my self-control.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: EMMA'S BEDROOM, LOOKING IN-- NIGHT

Emma, in her nightgown, writing in her diary by candlelight.

EMMA (V.O.)

Dear diary, today I tried not to think about Mr. Knightley.

INT: KITCHEN-- MORNING

Emma hands the cook a menu she wrote.

EMMA (CONT'D, V.O.)

I tried not to think about him when I spoke about the menu with cook.

MAID

(Studying menu)

Oh-- is Mr. Knightley coming?

EMMA

Why do you say that?

MAID

Lamb stew is his favorite. We
always have it when he comes.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: GARDEN-- AFTERNOON

Emma picks flowers. She stops as she cuts a daisy.

EMMA (V.O.)

I tried not to think about him in
the garden where I thrice plucked
the petals off a daisy to ascertain
his feelings for Harriet.

Emma plucks the last petal and frowns.

EMMA (CONT'D, V.O.)

Daisies really are drab little
flowers.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT: EMMA'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

EMMA (CONT'D, V.O.)

And so the struggle continues. I
tried not to think about him when I
went to bed, but--

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: EMMA'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

Earlier. Emma blows out her candle. The moonlight illuminates her face. She shuts her eyes, but tosses and turns. Finally, her eyes open and she sits up. She throws back the sheets.

EMMA (CONT'D, V.O.)

-- there was something that had to
be done.

She strikes a match and relights the candle. She carries it with her out of the room.

INT: HALLWAY, HARTFIELD-- NIGHT

Emma walks down the hall, coming to the little gallery of portraits which she has painted of her friends. She scans the pictures. She finds one of a man labelled "Uncle Raynsford." He is a dour, chunky person with especially bushy eyebrows. She moves the candle down and two portraits, side by side, come into its aura: Harriet's which is next to Mr. Knightley's. She removes

Harriet's and switches it with Uncle Raynsford's.

CUT TO:

INT: EMMA'S BEDROOM-- NIGHT

Emma finishes her entry.

EMMA (CONT'D, V.O.)

I don't know when he'll come back.
He often goes for weeks at a time.
Until I know what he has decided, I
am afraid I will have to be content
with my discontent.

She closes her journal and carries the candle to her bed table,
where she rests it. She drops to her knees and clasps her hand.

EMMA

Dear lord, if he cannot share a
life with me, is it wrong to ask
that he not share it with anyone--
that we go on as we go on now, he
stopping by at any hour, always the
brightest part of our lives, a
natural and easy member of the
family? I could be content if he
would just stay single. That's it!
If he would just stay single, lord,
that would be enough for me to be
perfectly satisfied--

She crosses herself and gets into bed, blowing out the candle.
She lies awake, no hope of sleep, and adds:

EMMA

-- almost. Amen.

CUT TO:

EXT: HIGHBURY-- DAY

Emma comes out of a shop. As she does, Mrs. Weston approaches.

MRS. WESTON

Hello, child. I've been looking for
you. We have just come from paying
our visit on Jane Fairfax and I
must tell you all that she said.

EXT: COUNTRY ROAD-- DAY

Emma and Mrs. Weston walk as Mrs. Weston recounts the visit.

MRS. WESTON

On the misery of what she had suffered, she said, 'Since the secret was born, I have not known one tranquil hour.'

EMMA

I fear that I contributed to her unhappiness.

(Becoming emotional)

Oh, Mrs. Weston, if only I had helped her all along and made friends with her instead of snubbing her and spending my time on Harriet, maybe I would not be in the unhappy predicament I'm in now.

They are at a crossroads. Mrs. Weston stops.

MRS. WESTON

Dear girl: Do not despair. You will find your match, Mr. Knightley or no. I must turn here and meet Mr. Weston. Do not, if you can help it, overtax yourself with worry. Enjoy the air and all will be well.

Emma smiles and nods. Mrs. Weston turns and walks. Emma mutters:

EMMA

Yes, all will be well for Harriet!

She walks around the corner. She bumps into a man who is walking with his head down. She gasps: it is Mr. Knightley.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Oh, Emma! Forgive me! I was lost in my thoughts--

EMMA

Mr. Knightley! I didn't know that-- you were back.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Just.

EMMA

Ah.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Yes. Just.

EMMA

Ah. Yes. I am on my way home.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I was just there, looking for you.
May I walk with you?

EMMA

Of course.

They walk down the road. She studies his face. Though her face retains a serene expression, we hear her panicky thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)

He seems sad. Why? Is it because he
has something to tell me which he
knows will make me sad?

(Can't help herself;
aloud:)

Oh, dear!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

What?

EMMA

What? Oh, something about the deer
we need for the-- venison stew...

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Ah.

EMMA

Yes.

They walk on. She steals another glance at him, but this time he is looking at her. They both look away. Her thoughts continue:

EMMA (V.O.)

Perhaps he is sad because he told
his brother of his plans to marry
Harriet and his brother
disapproved. I love his brother!
When will he speak? I cannot stand
this any longer.

(Aloud; pleasantly:)

Now that you are back, there is
some news for you to hear that I
think will surprise you.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

(Quietly)

Of what nature is this news?

EMMA

The very best. It is a wedding
between two people that--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Oh, yes, Jane and Mr. Churchill.
Mr. Weston wrote and told me.

EMMA

Undoubtedly, you are less surprised
than the rest of us. You tried to
caution me. I wish I had listened,
but I seem doomed to blindness.

She is sad when she says this, for she means it about Mr.
Knightley. He misunderstands, thinking she regrets the loss of
Frank Churchill, and after walking a few more steps, he kindly
slips his arm through hers, squeezing it gently. She looks at
him, both confused and excited by the gesture. But then:

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Time will heal your wound.

EMMA

My wound?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

For Frank Churchill. I know you
must have been cruelly disappointed
by his secret. He is a scoundrel!

EMMA

You are very kind, but I must tell
you that I knew early on that
however pleasant his company was,
Mr. Churchill lacked other
qualities-- honesty, as we now
know, being one of them-- which are
essential to me in a life's mate.

Mr. Knightley looks at her with renewed eagerness.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Emma, is that true? I'll confess I
could never assure myself from your
manner as to what you felt.

EMMA

He imposed on me, but he has not
injured me.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

He has gotten everything he wanted,
a great expense to others and no
cost to himself. He offends me
deeply and yet-- there is something
in his situation that I envy.

This remark places Emma in a panic. We hear her thoughts:

EMMA (V.O.)

Good God, this is it! He's going to say that he envies Frank's having found a mate. He wants me to ask him so he may tell me, but I must quickly change the subject. What can I tell him? I'll tell him about that lamb stew--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

You will not ask me the point of my envy? But Emma, I must tell you what you will not ask, though I may wish it unsaid the next moment.

EMMA

Oh, then don't speak it. Take a little time to consider! Do not commit yourself to something which may injure us both to have said.

He is mortified by this outburst. He reddens and says tightly:

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Very well.

They are at the gate to her home. He opens it.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Good day.

She goes in. He closes the gate and walks off. As she reaches the door, her shame overtakes her. She looks back at him, walking away, his head bent, and, after a pause, runs after him. He turns as he hears her steps. She catches her breath.

EMMA

Mr. Knightley, I stopped you ungraciously just now and gave you pain. But if you have any wish to speak to me openly, and ask my opinion about anything you may have in contemplation, as your friend I cannot refuse you. Indeed, as your old friend, I will hear whatever you wish to tell me.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

(Sadly)

Emma, after everything, I do not know if I want to call you my friend.

EMMA

(Horrificed)

But why? I know I made mistakes,
but had you been here these last
few days, you would have seen how I
have tried to change. Please,
please tell me I am your friend.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I do not want to call you that if
it means-- if it means that I could
have no chance of ever succeeding.

She looks into his eyes and the earnestness she sees overpowers
her. She does not move; she does not trust what she is hearing.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

My dearest Emma, for dearest you
will always be, whatever the event
of this hour's conversation, most
beloved Emma, tell me at once, I
beg you: could I-- might I-- ever
succeed with you?

Emma stares at him in shock. We hear her thoughts.

EMMA (V.O.)

Is this a dream? Am I still in bed?
(Tilts her head back
slightly)
See if you can feel any pillows--

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I cannot make speeches, Emma. If I
loved you less, I might be able to
talk about it more. I have spoken
against Frank Churchill from the
moment I heard of him because I
knew he was intended for you.

He paces, embarrassed. Emma pinches her arms to wake up.

1

MR. KNIGHTLEY

It affected me so strongly that I was about to leave town when the strawberry picking party was held and I so wanted to be with you. When you made the mistake with Miss Bates, I thought that evidence of his influence and, angered by it, I left to seek my brother's company. But he is, as you know, married to your sister and seeing her kept you fresh in my mind, and the torture, I assure you, was acute. I only felt hope again when I heard of Mr. Churchill's and Jane's engagement.

He turns back to her.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

And then I felt glad-- glad without guilt!-- knowing that Frank did not deserve you, and I rushed back, anxious for your feelings, keen to be next to you. I rode through the rain and I would ride through worse than that if-- if I could just hear your voice-- telling me that I have at least some chance to win you.

She takes his hands.

EMMA

Mr. Knightley, if I have not spoken, it is because I am afraid that I will awaken myself from this dream. It cannot be true!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

It only feels false because we have never felt anything like it before.

EMMA

But I feel so mistaken in my make-up, so flawed and full of error to deserve you.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

It is your imperfections which make you so perfect.

(Taking her in his arms)

Marry me, oh, marry me, my wonderful darling friend!

They embrace-- many times, with much happiness.

EMMA

Now I need not call you Mr. Knightley. I may call you my Mr. Knightley!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Let us go to your father so I may--

EMMA

Oh, dear! I cannot marry you!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Why ever not?

EMMA

Father! First my sister, then Mrs. Weston. I don't think he could bear my leaving, even for a man he regards as highly as you. I cannot abandon him. I cannot.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I could not secure your happiness with our marriage while attacking that of your father. As long as his joy-- which is to say his life-- requires your being at Hartfield, can it not be my home, too?

EMMA

Could you agree to such an arrangement?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Only with extreme happiness. I should love sharing a roof with your father who is so great an artist.

EMMA

Father-- an artist?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Did he not make you?

They embrace again.

INT: HOUSE-- AFTERNOON

We can see through the window into the parlour where Mr. Knightley speaks to Mr. Woodhouse. Emma stands nervously watching. At the word "marriage," Mr. Woodhouse's face takes on a cloudy look, but then Emma kneels down and tells him they will live with him. He becomes ecstatic. He gets out of his chair to

embrace them, calling continuously for the maid to bring port. As the camera pulls gently back, we hear the voice of the narrator:

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The elation Mr. Woodhouse felt was soon shared by many:

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD, LOOKING THROUGH FRONT WINDOW-- DIFFERENT TIMES

In a series of dissolves, we see Emma and Mr. Knightley, their outfits changing with each new dissolve, and a succession of friends, coming to pay their respects: the Westons; Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax; Miss Bates and her mother. Each visit is suffused with love and celebration.

NARRATOR

While these exchanges lifted the hearts of the couple, there was one visit which did not:

DISSOLVE TO:

Emma alone with Harriet, seated in the window. Harriet bows her head, crying. She lifts her hand, asking Emma to stop. Then she rises and runs from the room. Emma puts her face in her hands. Mr. Knightley enters and kneels to comfort his fiancee.

NARRATOR

In every other respect, these busy days were Emma's happiest.

DISSOLVE TO:

Emma and Mr. Knightley, seated on a couch, reading a letter.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Frank Churchill sent a long and heartfelt letter apologizing to Emma which earned him their forgiveness and respect. This new happiness was doubled when her dearest friend gave her the dearest news a married woman can:

INT: WESTONS' HOUSE-- EVENING

Emma and Mrs. Weston embrace. Mr. Knightley shakes Mr. Weston's hand.

EMMA

A baby! God bless you all!

CUT TO:

EXT: HARTFIELD GARDEN-- DAY

Emma cuts flowers. Mr. Knightley approaches.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But one day, Emma was approached with some news that Mr. Knightley did not expect her to like--

Hearing his footsteps, she turns to greet him.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Darling, I have some bad news.

EMMA

What?

MR. KNIGHTLEY

Well--

EMMA

Is it truly bad? You seem, I must say, to be suppressing a smile.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I think you will find it very bad. Harriet Smith has consented to marry-- Robert Martin.

Emma's cannot conceal her shock. She fairly jumps at the news.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I knew you would not like it. How I wish we did not differ on this.

EMMA

Please, first: whatever happened?

He helps her pick up her tools and flowers and they begin walking to the house.

MR. KNIGHTLEY

They met again at a party. Seeing her, Mr. Martin gathered his nerve and spoke. She was so receptive to him that he soon acquired the fire to put again the old question to her, which this time, she accepted.

EMMA

Harriet!

MR. KNIGHTLEY

I know this disappoints you, but
Robert Martin really is a fine--

EMMA

Darling, you mistake me. This is
the perfect end for my sad career
as a matchmaker, a role I gladly
retire by being instead so very
happily matched. I only wanted
Harriet's happiness. Now that she
has found it, it makes my own
complete.

He gently takes her into his arms. She lifts her arms to his
shoulders. In her hand is a clutch of the flowers she has cut.
Lost in her pleasure, she releases them. As they fall one and two
at a time, the camera moves with them.

CUT TO:

EXT: CHURCH YARD-- DAY

Flowers fly through the air. Emma and Mr. Knightley walk down a
garden path in wedding clothes. Friends shower them with flowers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

There were those who thought the
wedding a bit shabby:

CUT TO:

MRS. ELTON

Not nearly enough satin!

CUT TO:

A new version of the painted ornament from the beginning: The
Westons and baby; Frank and Jane with Mrs. Bates; Harriet and Mr.
Martin. In the window of the Woodhouse home, Mr. Woodhouse reads
in his chair. On the doorstep, looking out across their very
happy world, are Emma and Mr. Knightley. As the CAMERA PANS:

NARRATOR

However, the wishes, the faith and
the predictions of the small band
of true friends who witnessed the
ceremony were fully answered in the
perfect happiness of the union.

THE END.

ORIGINAL