***Emma***

*Emma* is a romantic novel by Jane Austen which is about a 21-year-old woman named **Emma Woodhouse**, who lives with her father, **Mr. Woodhouse** at Hartfield in Highbury. They are good friends with **Mr. Knightley**, who lives in the neighboring Donwell Abbey, and **Mr. Weston** and his wife **Mrs. Weston**, who was Emma's governess before she married.

 ***Emma* Summary**

The *Emma* plot begins with Mr. and Mrs. Weston's wedding. Emma feels she made the match by predicting the two would end up together. She is sad to lose her friend, but she is glad to see her so happy. Emma quickly finds a new friend in **Harriet Smith**, a young woman who was sent to a school run by Mrs. Goddard, and whose origins are unknown.

Emma thinks Harriet is a sweet girl, and she wants to help her, so she takes her under her wing. She advises Harriet and tries to guide her. Harriet is friends with the Martin family, and she is fond of the son, **Robert Martin**. Emma is against the relationship between Harriet and Robert, who is a farmer. When he proposes to Harriet through a letter, Emma manipulates Harriet into rejecting him. Emma wants Harriet to marry **Mr. Elton**, the vicar in Highbury, the town the novel is set. Mr. Knightley, who is friends with Robert, scolds Emma when he finds out her role in the rejection, and he warns her that her meddling will not end well.

Emma believes Mr. Elton has feelings for Harriet, and she tries to encourage it. However, after a ball when Mr. Elton and Emma ride home together in a carriage, he proposes to Emma. He is rejected, and he leaves for Bath, where he finds a wife.

**Jane Fairfax**, the niece of **Miss Bates** (an unmarried woman in Emma's social circle), comes to Highbury, followed shortly by **Frank Churchill** (Mr. Weston's son who was raised by his aunt and uncle, the Churchill's, after his mother died). Emma does not like Jane much, because she is quiet and reserved. Frank and Emma often mock Jane, sometimes in front of her. Frank and Emma get along well, and they often banter and spend time together. For a time, Emma believes she might love Frank, but when he returns to take care of his aunt, Emma's feelings quickly fade.

Emma then gets it into her head that Harriet and Frank should end up together. They talk about Harriet's new feelings for a man who is above her social class. Emma assumes Harriet is referring to Frank. When it comes out that Frank has been secretly engaged to Jane for quite some time, Emma is worried that Harriet will feel heartbroken. It is then that Harriet tells Emma her feelings are for Mr. Knightley, not Frank.

Emma is shocked and upset, but she remains calm in front of Harriet. She realizes that she loves Mr. Knightley. While speaking, Harriet said she believes Mr. Knightley to return her feelings, and Emma fears it is true. When he leaves to visit his brother, John Knightley, and his wife, Isabella (Emma's sister), Emma believes it is to discuss his coming proposal to Harriet.

Mr. Knightley returns, and he and Emma walk together. He is worried that Emma was in love with Frank and that she is now upset at his marrying Jane. Emma assures him that he need not worry. He tries to speak to her on another matter, but Emma scared he is about to tell her he plans to propose to Harriet, cuts him off. She apologizes and asks him to go on, at which point he proposes. She accepts, and they decide they will stay at Hartfield, so Emma can continue to care for her father. Emma and Mr. Knightley's engagement is followed shortly by the engagement between Harriet and Robert.

 **Analysis of *Emma***

Emma is a young woman who is self-assured and who enjoys meddling in people's love lives. She credits herself for Mr. and Mrs. Weston (previously Miss Taylor) getting married. Her perceived success with them boosts her confidence into conceitedness, and she goes too far when she manipulates Harriet. In some ways, Emma can help Harriet, given Harriet's lower social status. However, when it comes to Harriet's love life, Emma inflicts painful damage. Emma believes that Robert, as a farmer, is too low for Harriet. Meanwhile, Harriet's parentage was unknown for much of the book. Emma assumed she was from a higher family, but, in the end, it is discovered that Harriet's father was a tradesman, putting her at a lower social rank than Robert.

After she dissuades Harriet from Robert, who Harriet does like, Emma convinces her friend to set her sights on Mr. Elton. Harriet is easily persuaded, and she quickly develops strong feelings for Mr. Elton. Harriet is a follower, and she looks up to Emma, following her guidance. Emma, though, is not correct. It is herself, not Harriet, who Mr. Elton intends to marry. This hurts Harriet for quite some time. She recovers eventually after she develops feelings for Mr. Knightley. Thinking Harriet likes Frank, Emma encourages the feelings, not knowing the truth. Yet again, Harriet is crushed when the man she loves chooses Emma. At the end of the novel, when both women get their happy endings, their friendship devolves, and they become acquaintances, rather than close friends.

.  **Themes in *Emma***

**What is the main theme of Emma?**

*Emma* uses several themes. One of the most prominent themes in the text is class. Harriet and Emma are from different social classes, and Emma uses her higher status to try to help Harriet. She sees Harriet as being worthy of a higher class, and hopes to find her a husband (first in Mr. Elton then in Frank Churchill), where she can be raised higher.

**What is the conflict in Emma?**

The conflict in Emma arises when she finds out that Harriet feels she loves Mr. Knightley. When she finds this out, Emma realizes that she, herself, is in love with Mr. Knightley. She is scared that Mr. Knightley might marry Harriet.

**What happens in Emma by Jane Austen?**

In *Emma*, Emma Woodhouse meddles with Harriet Smith's love life. Harriet likes Robert Martin, but Emma talks her into liking Mr. Elton, who ends up proposing to Emma. Emma then thinks Harriet likes Frank Churchill, and she encourages the feelings, but then finds out it is Mr. Knightley she likes. Emma realizes her feelings for Mr. Knightley and accepts his proposal, while Harriet accepts Robert's second offer.

**What is the moral of the story Emma?**

Emma learns that she should not meddle in people's love lives. It is better to let love develop on its own, rather than to manipulate or force it.