

**Character List**

Character List

**Emma Woodhouse**

The protagonist of the novel. In the well-known first sentence of the novel, the narrator describes Emma as “handsome, clever, and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition.” In some ways, the twenty-year-old Emma is mature for her age. Because her mother is dead and her older sister married, she is already the head of her father’s household. She cares for her father and oversees the social goings-on in the village of Highbury. Emma’s misplaced confidence in her abilities as a matchmaker and her prudish fear of love constitute the central focus of the novel, which traces Emma’s mistakes and growing self-understanding.

**Mr. George Knightley**

Emma’s brother-in-law and the Woodhouses’ trusted friend and advisor. Knightley is a respected landowner in his late thirties. He lives at Donwell Abbey and leases property to the Martins, a family of wealthy farmers whom he likes and counsels. Knightley is the only character who is openly critical of Emma, pointing out her flaws and foibles with frankness, out of genuine concern and care for her. In this respect, he acts as a stand-in for Austen’s and the reader’s judgments of Emma.

**Mr. Woodhouse**

Emma’s father and the patriarch of Hartfield, the Woodhouse estate. Though Mr. Woodhouse is nervous, frail, and prone to hypochondria, he is also known for his friendliness and his attachment to his daughter. He is very resistant to change, to the point that he is unhappy to see his daughters or Emma’s governess marry. In this sense, he impedes Emma’s growth and acceptance of her adult destiny. He is often foolish and clearly not Emma’s intellectual equal, but she comforts and entertains him with insight and affection.

**Harriet Smith**

A pretty but unremarkable seventeen-year-old woman of uncertain parentage, who lives at the local boarding school. Harriet becomes Emma’s protégé and the object of her matchmaking schemes.

**Frank Churchill**

Mr. Weston’s son and Mrs. Weston’s stepson. Frank Churchill lives at Enscombe with his aunt and uncle, Mr. and Mrs. Churchill. He is considered a potential suitor for Emma, but she learns that though Frank is attractive, charming, and clever, he is also irresponsible, deceitful, rash, and ultimately unsuited to her.

**Jane Fairfax**

Miss Bates’s niece, whose arrival in Highbury irritates Emma. Jane rivals Emma in accomplishment and beauty; she possesses a kind heart and a reserved temperament. Because Jane lacks Emma’s fortune, she must consider employment as a governess, but her marriage to Frank Churchill saves her from that fate.

**Mrs. Weston**

Formerly Miss Taylor, Emma’s beloved governess and companion. Known for her kind temperament and her devotion to Emma, Mrs. Weston lives at Randalls with her husband, Frank Churchill’s father.

**Mr. Weston**

The widower and proprietor of Randalls, who has just married Miss Taylor when the novel begins. Mr. Weston has a son, Frank, from his first marriage to Miss Churchill (Frank was raised by Miss Churchill’s sister and brother-in-law). Mr. Weston is warm, sociable, and

**Mr. Elton**

The village vicar, a handsome and agreeable man considered a welcome addition to any social gathering. When he reveals his indifference to Harriet and his desire to marry Emma, only to take a bride at Bath shortly thereafter, he comes to seem proud, conceited, and superficial.

**Mr. Robert Martin**

A twenty-four-year-old farmer. Mr. Martin is industrious and good-hearted, though he lacks the refinements of a gentleman. He lives at Abbey-Mill Farm, a property owned by Knightley, with his mother and sisters.

**Miss Bates**

Friend of Mr. Woodhouse and aunt of Jane Fairfax, Miss Bates is a middle-aged spinster without beauty or cleverness but with universal goodwill and a gentle temperament. Emma’s impatient treatment of her reveals the less attractive parts of Emma’s character.

**Isabella Knightley**

Emma’s older sister, who lives in London with her husband, Mr. John Knightley, and their five children. Isabella is pretty, amiable, and completely devoted to her family, but slow and diffident compared to Emma. Her domesticity provides a contrast to the independent celibacy Emma imagines for herself.

**Mr. John Knightley**

Emma’s brother-in-law, and Mr. George Knightley’s brother. As a lawyer, John Knightley is clear-minded but somewhat sharp in temper, and Emma and her father are sometimes displeased with his severity.

**Mrs. Elton**

Formerly Augusta Hawkins, Mrs. Elton hails from Bristol and meets Mr. Elton in Bath. She is somewhat attractive and accomplished; she has some fortune and a well-married sister, but

**Mrs. Churchill**

Mr. Weston’s ailing former sister-in-law and Frank Churchill’s aunt and guardian. She is known to be capricious, ill-tempered, and extremely possessive of Frank. Frank is able to marry Jane Fairfax, as he desires, only after Mrs. Churchill’s death.

**Colonel Campbell**

A friend of Jane Fairfax’s father who lives in London and who takes charge of orphaned Jane when she is eight years old. Colonel Campbell feels great affection for Jane but is unable to provide her with an inheritance.

**Mrs. Dixon**

The Campbells’ daughter and Jane’s friend. Mrs. Dixon lacks beauty and lives with her husband in Ireland.

**Mr. Dixon**

Husband to the Campbells’ daughter. Emma suspects that Mr. Dixon had a romance with Jane Fairfax before his marriage.

**Mrs. Goddard**

Mistress of the local boarding school. Mrs. Goddard introduces Harriet Smith to the Woodhouses.

**Mrs. Bates**

Mother to Miss Bates and friend of Mr. Woodhouse. An elderly woman, Mrs. Bates is quiet, amiable, and somewhat deaf.

**Mr. Perry**

An apothecary and associate of Emma’s father. Mr. Perry is highly esteemed by Mr. Woodhouse for his medical advice even though he is not a proper physician, and Mr. Woodhouse argues with his daughter Isabella over Perry’s recommendations.

**Elizabeth Martin**

Mr. Martin’s kind sister, with whom Harriet was good friends before meeting Emma and turning down Mr. Martin’s marriage proposal. Harriet’s feelings of guilt and her desire to rekindle her relationship with Elizabeth pose a dilemma for Emma, who finds the Martins pleasant, worthy people, but worries that Harriet may be tempted to accept Mr. Martin’s offer

**Mr. and Mrs. Cole**

Tradespeople and longtime residents of Highbury whose good fortune of the past several years has led them to adopt a luxurious lifestyle that is only a notch below that of the Woodhouses. Offended by their attempt to transcend their “only moderately genteel” social status, Emma has long been preparing to turn down any dinner invitation from the Coles in order to teach them their folly in thinking they can interact socially with the likes of her family. Like the Martins, the Coles are the means through which Emma demonstrates her class-consciousness.