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Chapter 1

3 Emma Woodhouse was happy, beautiful, clever and rich. At twenty-one, there was nothing in her life that upset her. She was the youngest daughter of a very affectionate father, Mr Woodhouse. His elder sister, Isabella, was married and lived in London and her mother was widowed, so Emma was the mistress of his house.

Emma's mother died when she was five, and Emma and Isabella were brought up by Miss Taylor, a very kind and loving governess. Miss Taylor loved both daughters, but particularly Emma. They lived together as friends and Emma did whatever she wanted.

Unhappiness came at last when Miss Taylor married. The marriage to Mr Weston was a happy one, and Emma really liked Miss Taylor's husband. But now she felt miserable. She had no friends at home, and she missed Miss Taylor very much.

Emma's father hated change, and marriage brought change. On the evening after Miss Taylor's wedding day, they sat together and Emma smiled and chatted as cheerfully as she could. But when tea came, Mr Woodhouse said, 'Poor Miss Taylor! I wish she was here. What a pity that Mr Weston wanted to marry her!'

'I can't agree with you,' said Emma. 'Miss Taylor couldn't live with us forever, and now she has a house of her own.'

'A house of her own! But why does she need a house of her own? This house is three times as large.'

'We'll go and see them often, and they'll come to see us,' Emma promised.

Glossary

- **brought up:** taught; cared for
- **governess:** teacher living in your house
- **miserable:** very unhappy
- **mistress:** (here) woman in charge
- **upset her:** made her sad
- **whatever:** (here) all the things
- **widowed:** left alone after husband or wife dies



Emma wanted to cheer her father up[•], so she decided to play a game of backgammon[•]. But just as she prepared the backgammon table, a visitor walked in. It was Mr Knightley, a good-looking man, of about thirty-seven. He was a very good friend of the family, and he was the brother of Isabella's husband. He lived about a mile away from Hartfield, and he often visited them. Mr Woodhouse was very pleased to see him.

'I hope the wedding went well,' said Mr Knightley. 'Who cried most?'

'Ah! Poor Miss Taylor and Mr Woodhouse.'

'Poor Mr and Mrs Woodhouse,' said Mr Knightley, 'not poor Miss Taylor. It must be better to have only one husband to look after[•] instead of you two.'

'Especially when *one* of those two is very difficult,' said Emma joking. 'That's what you mean, isn't it?'

'That's very true,' said Mr Woodhouse. 'I'm afraid I am sometimes very difficult.'

'But, I didn't mean *you*. I meant myself. Mr Knightley loves to criticise[•] me.'

Mr Knightley was one of the few people who could see faults[•] in Emma Woodhouse, and the only person who ever told her about them.

'Emma knows I never flatter[•] her,' said Mr Knightley.

Glossary

- **backgammon:** board game
- **cheer up:** make happy
- **criticise:** talk about somebody's bad points
- **faults:** defects; bad points
- **flatter:** give compliments
- **look after:** take care of
- **pleased:** happy

'Emma,' said her father, 'will really miss Miss Taylor.'

'Of course Emma will miss her,' said Mr Knightley. 'But all Miss Taylor's friends must be glad • that she is so happily married.'

'And you've forgotten,' said Emma, 'that I made the match • myself.'

Mr Knightley shook his head at her. Her father said, 'I don't do any more match-making •, Emma.'

'I promise I won't do it for myself, but I will • for other people. It's great fun! And now I've been successful, I can't stop match-making.'

'I don't understand what you mean by "successful",' said Mr Knightley. 'People can find themselves a husband or wife.'

'Please don't make any more matches,' said Mr Woodhouse.

'Only one more. I must find a wife for Mr Elton.'

'If you want to be kind to Mr Elton, skip him to dinner.'

'Yes,' said Mr Knightley, laughing. 'I will invite him to dinner, Emma, but leave him to choose his own wife. A man of twenty-six can find his own wife.'

MATCH-MAKING

Do you think match-making is positive or negative?

Have you ever tried match-making your friends?

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- **glad:** happy
 - **match:** (here) marriage
 - **match-making:** (here) finding somebody a husband, wife or partner



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