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Emma

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Jane Austen

Austen is one of the most popular novelists of England. Her novels interpret, critique and comment upon the British 'landed gentry' at the end of 18th century.

- ❑ *Her novels explore feminine sensibility, dependence of women on marriage, female quest for social identity, and economical security.*
- ❑ *Her novels are considered to be critique the novels of sensibility of the 18th century and part of the transition to 19th century literary realism.*
- ❑ *She uses biting irony, realism, humour and social commentary in almost all her novels.*
- ❑ *Important works:*
Pride and Prejudice, Sense and Sensibility, Emma, Mansfield Park, Pride & Prejudice Love & friendship., Northanger Abbey, Persuasion.



Born: 16th Dec., 1775, England
Died: 18th July, 1817, England

Jane Austen: An Artist



Jane Austen led a singularly sequestered life, though life among her six brothers and one sister gave her sufficient glimpses of the inside world that gets depicted in her work but the placid village life in which men and women of five or six families come together and interact.

This narrow scope was self-imposed and did not deter her from gaining a breadth of understanding of human nature and deep vision of complexity of human relations never before attempted by anyone.

Jane Austen herself refers to her art as executed “*with so fine a brush on a little bit (two inches wide) of ivory.*” she had deliberately ignored the great happenings of her time, avoided the passionate and the emotional to the extent that made Charlotte Bronte frown upon her *as too cold and unmoved to be to her liking.*

Ordinary daily life formed the subject matter of her works, the uneventful routine in which tea-parties, ball dances and family visits are the major events. No deaths, or births disturb this placid life, nor are there such natural calamities as floods or earthquakes.

Her novels have simple plots, at the center of which is the affair of heart. All her works have happy ending – the couple or couples are happily married; but this is preceded by intense drama of events that occur in well-planned sequences.



Jane Austen's Novels: Characteristics

Jane Austen has been called "*the pure novelist*" who presents an authentic criticism of the country society she knew so well within the limits of art. She did for the English novel what Lake poets did for the English poetry - She simplified and refined it making it a true reflection of English Life.

Her Limited Range:

Austen represents in her novels the world that she knew.

Her Sense of Comedy:

Austen's novels are domestic comedies of high order.

Humour and Satire:

Austen had a keen sense of the absurdities of men and women, but she was never harsh or unkind. Her satire is always gentle, never severe and savage.

Love and Marriage:

Love & Marriage form an important element in the novels of Austen. Hers was practical idealism.

Characterisation:

Her special charm as novelist lies, not in any great insight into characters, but in the impracticality with which she individualizes and differentiates them.

Style:

Her style is natural & unaffected, clear and careful.

Emma: Introduction



Emma published in three volumes in the year 1815. The novel is set in Highbury, England, in the early 19th century. The story centres on Emma Woodhouse, a precious young woman whose misplaced confidence in her matchmaking abilities occasions several romantic misadventures.

Characters

Emma Woodhouse:

21 yrs old imaginative & self-deceiving heroine, witty & charming

George Knightly:

Emma's brother-in-law, the Woodhouses' trusted friend & advisor.

Mr. Woodhouse:

Emma's father and patriarch of Hartfield

Harriet Smith:

17 yrs old, pretty, Emma's protégé & the object of her matchmaking scheme.

Frank Churchill:

attractive, charming, and clever, deceitful & rash, Emma's potential suitor

Jane Fairfax:

Emma's rival in beauty and accomplishment, kind-hearted, Miss Bate's niece





Mrs. Weston:

Formerly Miss Taylor, Emma's beloved governess & Companion

Mr. Weston:

Widower & proprietor of Randalls, Frank's father, warm & sociable

Mr. Elton:

Village Vicar, desire to marry Emma, proud, conceited & superficial

Mr. Robert Martin:

21 yrs old farmer, industrious & good-hearted

Miss Bates:

Friend to Woodhouse, Jane's Aunt, a woman with goodwill

Isabella Knightley:

Emma's older sister, pretty, amiable, and devoted to her family

John Knightley:

George Knightley's brother, lawyer, sharp in temper

← Minor Characters →

Mrs. Elton, Mrs. Churchill, Colonel Campbell, Mrs. Dixon, Elizabeth Martin, Mrs. & Mr. Cole, Mr. Perry, Mrs. Bates, Mrs. Goddard



Emma: Plot

Emma Woodhouse has the world at her fingertips. She's young, pretty, and smart; she also happens to be the reigning queen of her village's social scene. Emma lives in Highbury, a small town about sixteen miles outside of London, with her aging father. Mr. Woodhouse loves Emma, but he's utterly unable to offer her any guidance – which is perhaps why Emma doesn't seem to have any sense of her own limitations. Life seems pretty sweet – if a bit boring – and so Emma decides to spice things up by taking on a protégé, Harriet Smith. Even though Emma's determined never to marry herself, she immediately decides to find Harriet a husband.

Determined to make Harriet into a gentlewoman, Emma sets out to refine Harriet's tastes – especially in men. She convinces Harriet to dump Robert Martin, the young farmer who likes her, and set her sights on the town's clergyman, Mr. Elton. Unfortunately, Mr. Elton turns out to be in love with Emma – or at least with Emma's money. After the Mr. Elton debacle, Emma thinks that she's learned her lessons in matchmaking. Luckily for us (if not for Harriet), she hasn't.

When the dashing Frank Churchill comes to town, Emma tries very hard to fall in love with him herself. She can't seem to fall head over heels for him, but she does manage to make a good deal of mischief by flirting with him in front of Jane Fairfax, a young woman who recently returned to Highbury to live with her aunts. Meanwhile, Emma decides that Frank might just be the perfect new man for Harriet.





Emma's exploits are watched – and commented upon – by her good friend, Mr. Knightley. Although Emma frequently ignores his advice, she cherishes his good opinion. When Mr. Knightley accuses her of belittling her poor neighbors, Emma begins to reflect upon her mistakes and even starts to change her ways.

Unfortunately, Harriet confesses that she loves Mr. Knightley, not Frank. All of a sudden, Emma's plans crumble. She realizes that *she* loves Mr. Knightley too. Convinced that Mr. Knightley might be interested in Harriet, despite the fact that he practically lives with the Woodhouses, Emma crushes Mr. Knightley's attempts to propose to her. Eventually all romantic muddles are cleared: Emma marries Mr. Knightley, and Harriet marries her farmer, Robert Martin.

Emma's story is surrounded by side-narratives of life in Highbury, including the romance of Frank and Jane Fairfax, the marriage of Emma's former governess, Mrs. Weston, and the escapades of the social climbers, Mr. and Mrs. Elton.



Emma, like Austen's other novels, deals with the subject of young ladies finding proper husbands. Through the novel Austen focuses on the common rather than the exceptional trait/behaviour of human.