

AUDITION PIECE 1

Act One

Scene 1: After the wedding

Hartfield, evening.

(Mr Woodhouse, Emma)

Mr Woodhouse: Poor Miss Taylor! I wish she were here again. What a pity it is that Mr Weston ever thought of her!

Emma: I cannot agree with you, Papa; you know I cannot. Mr Weston is such a good-humoured, pleasant, excellent man that he thoroughly deserves a good wife – and you would not have had Miss Taylor live with us for ever and bear all my odd humours, when she might have a house of her own?

Mr Woodhouse: A house of her own! But where is the advantage of a house of her own? This is three times as large. And you have never any odd humours, my dear.

Enter Mr Knightley.

Mr Woodhouse: It is very kind of you, Mr Knightley, to come out at this late hour to call upon us. I am afraid you must have had a shocking walk.

Mr Knightley: Not at all, sir. It is a beautiful, moonlit night; and so mild that I must draw back from your great fire.

Mr Woodhouse: But you must have found it very damp and dirty. I wish you may not catch cold.

Mr Knightley: Dirty, sir! Look at my shoes. Not a speck on them. But I have not wished you joy. I hope it all went off tolerably well. How did you all behave? Who cried most?

Mr Woodhouse: Ah! Poor Miss Taylor! 'Tis a sad business.

Mr Knightley: Poor Mr and Miss Woodhouse, if you please; but I cannot possibly say "poor Miss Taylor." I have a great regard for you and Emma; but when it comes to the question of dependence or independence! At any rate, it must be better to have only one to please, than two.

Emma: *(playfully)* Especially when one of those two is such a fanciful, troublesome creature! That is what you have in your head, I know – and what you would certainly say if my father were not by.

Mr Woodhouse: *(with a sigh)* I believe it is very true, my dear, indeed. I am afraid I am sometimes very fanciful and troublesome.

Emma: My dearest papa! You do not think I could mean you, or suppose Mr Knightley to mean you. Oh, no! I meant only myself. Mr Knightley loves to find fault with me, you know – in a joke – it is all a joke. We always say what we like to one another.

AUDITION PIECE 1

Mr Knightley: Emma knows I never flatter her. But I meant no reflection on anybody. Miss Taylor has been used to have two persons to please; she will now have but one.

Emma: Well, you want to hear about the wedding, and I shall be happy to tell you, for we all behaved charmingly. Everybody was punctual, everybody in their best looks. Not a tear, and hardly a long face to be seen. We all felt that we were going to be only half a mile apart, and were sure of meeting every day.

Mr Woodhouse: Dear Emma bears everything so well. But, Mr Knightley, she is really very sorry to lose poor Miss Taylor, and I am sure she will miss her more than she thinks.

Mr Knightley: It is impossible that Emma should not miss such a companion. But she knows how much the marriage is to Miss Taylor's advantage; how very acceptable it must be at Miss Taylor's time of life to be settled in a home of her own, and how important to her to be secure of a comfortable provision.

Emma: And you have forgotten one matter of joy to me, and a very considerable one – that I made the match myself.

Mr Woodhouse: Ah! my dear, I wish you would not make matches and foretel things, for whatever you say always comes to pass. Pray do not make any more matches.

Emma: I promise you to make none for myself, papa; but I must, indeed, for other people. It is the greatest amusement in the world! Everybody said that Mr Weston would never marry again. But ever since the day Miss Taylor and I met with him in Broadway-lane, when, because it began to mizzle, he darted away with so much gallantry, and borrowed two umbrellas for us from Farmer Mitchell's, I made up my mind on the subject. I planned the match from that hour; and when such success has blessed me in this instance, dear papa, you cannot think that I shall leave off match-making.

Mr Knightley: Why do you talk of success? Where is your merit? You made a lucky guess; and that is all that can be said.

Emma: If I had not promoted Mr Weston's visits here, and given many little encouragements, and smoothed many little matters, it might not have come to anything after all.

Mr Knightley: A straightforward, open-hearted man, like Weston, and a rational, unaffected woman, like Miss Taylor, may be safely left to manage their own concerns. You are more likely to have done harm to yourself, than good to them, by interference.

Mr Woodhouse: Emma never thinks of herself, if she can do good to others. But, my dear, pray do not make any more matches, they are silly things, and break up one's family circle grievously.

Emma: Only one more, papa; only for Mr Elton. You like Mr Elton, papa – I must look about for a wife for him. There is nobody in Highbury who deserves him – and he has been here a whole year, and has fitted up the vicarage so comfortably that it would be a shame to have him single any longer. (*To herself, thoughtfully*) And perhaps there is another to whom my skills may be of service...