

AUDITION PIECE 9

Scene 6: Remorse

Miss Bates: (*in reserved tones*) Very happy and obliged to see you, Miss Woodhouse, I'm sure.

Emma: (*humbly proffering the basket and setting it down on a table*) How does Miss Fairfax?

Miss Bates: (*returning somewhat to her usual state of friendliness*) Ah! Miss Woodhouse, how kind you are! I suppose you have heard – and are come to give us joy. This does not seem much like joy, indeed – (*dabbing at her eyes with a handkerchief*) but it will be very trying for us to part with her. It is a great change; and though she is amazingly fortunate – such a situation, I suppose, as no young woman before ever met with on first going out – but, poor dear soul! You will excuse her not coming to you – she is not able – she is gone into her own room – I want her to lie down upon the bed. She has the headache. She will be extremely sorry to miss seeing you, Miss Woodhouse, but your kindness will excuse her. You were kept waiting at the door – I was quite ashamed – but somehow there was a little bustle – for it so happened that we had not heard the knock...

Emma: I had understood Miss Fairfax's departure was to be delayed till Colonel Campbell's return. Where, may I ask, is she going?

Miss Bates: To a Mrs Smallridge – charming woman – most superior – to have the charge of her three little girls – delightful children. Jane will be only four miles from Maple Grove.

Emma: Mrs Elton, I suppose, has been the person to whom Miss Fairfax owes –

Miss Bates: Yes, our good Mrs Elton. The most indefatigable, true friend. She would not let Jane say 'No'; for when Jane first heard of it (the morning she was at Donwell), she was quite decided against accepting the offer, and so she told Mrs Elton! But that good Mrs Elton saw farther than I did. It is not everybody that would have stood out in such a kind way as she did, and refuse to take Jane's answer; but she positively declared she would not write any such denial yesterday, as Jane wished her; she would wait – and, sure enough, yesterday evening it was all settled that Jane should go!

Emma: You spent the evening with Mrs Elton?

Miss Bates: Yes, all of us; Mrs Elton would have us come. It was settled so, upon the hill, while we were walking about with Mr Knightley.

Emma: Mr Knightley was there too, was he?

Miss Bates: No, not Mr Knightley; he declined it from the first – but my mother, and Jane, and I, were all there, and a very agreeable evening we had.

Emma: Miss Fairfax, I suppose, though you were not aware of it, had been making up her mind the whole day.

Miss Bates: I daresay she had.

AUDITION PIECE 9

Emma: (*earnestly*) Whenever the time may come, it must be unwelcome to her and all her friends – but I hope her engagement will have every alleviation that is possible – I mean, as to the character and manners of the family.

Miss Bates: Thank you, dear Miss Woodhouse.