

## SIDE FOR HARRIET SMITH

#1

EMMA

Miss Smith, I am determined to become acquainted and be useful to you.

HARRIET

Thank you. It is more than I deserve.

EMMA

Nonsense. You are a sweet, amiable young lady who only wants a little guidance, which I mean to provide. Shall we begin then? Tell me about your parents.

HARRIET

*hangs her head*

I cannot say, for I do not know. Mrs. Goddard has never mentioned it, and I have been with her for as long as my memory serves.

EMMA

I understand, dear. And tell me, how do you spend your time?

HARRIET

I help the younger girls in their instruction. I spent two very happy months at Abbey-Mill Farm in the summer. Mrs. Martin has two very good parlors, an upper maid; eight cows, and a very handsome summer house in the garden, where next year we are all to drink tea. There are two daughters, and Mr. Martin is ever so kind and obliging. One day, he went three miles around to bring me walnuts because I once mentioned how fond I was of was of them. Mrs. Martin says it is impossible for anybody to be a better son.

EMMA

Son? I understood Mr. Martin to be... I suppose Mr. Martin is not a man of information beyond the line of his own business. He does not read.

HARRIET

He reads a good deal...agricultural reports and some other books. But he reads them all to himself. Sometimes, of an evening, he would read aloud out of the *Elegant Extracts*. That was very entertaining. I know he has read *The Vicar of Wakefield*, but not the *Romance of the Forest*.

EMMA

What sort of looking man is Mr. Martin

HARRIET

I thought him very plain at first, but I do not think him so now. Did you never see him? He is in Highbury every now and then and sure to ride through every week in his way to Kingston. He has passed you very often.

#2

HARRIET

No. What shall I do? Tell me what I ought to do.

EMMA

This is a point which you must settle with your feelings. I shall have nothing to do with it.

HARRIET

I had no notion that he liked me so much.

EMMA

If a woman doubts whether she should accept a man or not, she certainly ought to refuse him. If she can hesitate as to 'Yes,' she ought to say 'No' directly.

HARRIET

As you will not give me your opinion, I must do as well as I can by myself. I have almost made up my mind to refuse Mr. Martin. Do you think I am right?

EMMA

Perfectly right. I kept my feelings to myself. Now that you are so completely decided, I have no hesitation in approving. It would have grieved me to lose your acquaintance, which must have been the consequence of your marrying Mr. Martin. I would not influence you, but it would have been the loss of a friend as I could not have visited Mrs. Robert Martin of Abbey-Mill Farm.

HARRIET

You could not have visited me? I never thought of that before. It would have been too dreadful. I would not give up the pleasure and honor of being intimate friends with you for anything in the world.

EMMA

You would have thrown yourself out of good society. It would have been a severe pang to lose you. My sweet little friend, we will not be parted. A woman is not to marry a man merely because she is asked, or because he is attached to her and can write a tolerable letter!

HARRIET

I'm quite determined to refuse him. But how? What shall I say? I'll never be invited to Abby-Mill again.

#3

EMMA

Harriet, how do you do? It has been four days. You must be well.

HARRIET

Yes, Miss Woodhouse. Quite recovered. I am admiring your work. It was kindness itself that Mr. Elton had the portrait framed so beautifully? He is the very best of men.

EMMA

*(takes a deep breath, resolved)*

Dearest Harriet, I must make a confession with no small degree of shame.

HARRIET

A confession?

EMMA

I am sorry, Mr. Elton has proven to be unexpectedly uncooperative and indifferent. Would that I had not convinced you of his worthiness and interest. I ought not to have attempted it. My assurances, so misguided, will now only cause you pain. I am so deeply sorry.

HARRIET

Miss Woodhouse, please, I do not understand. Indifferent to what? What has happened?

EMMA

Harriet, it has been made quite clear to me that Mr. Elton has been misunderstood. The error is entirely on my part. Imagine my alarm when he declared himself... to me.

HARRIET

To you? Oh. But, of course, he prefers you, Miss Woodhouse. I could never deserve him. The affection of a man such as Mr. Elton must be too great a distinction. Nobody, but so partial and kind a friend as you, Miss Woodhouse, would have thought it possible.

EMMA

I was so certain but greatly mistaken.

HARRIET

You are too kind to find me worthy of such a match. I will bear my disappointment and my feelings. In time they will find their way back to reason.

EMMA

Come, Harriet, a walk in the garden and the fresh air will do us both good.

*They exit through the Great Room and out into the garden. MISS BATES and MRS. BATES enter and notice that EMMA is not there, so she addresses the guests. (Emma and Harriet add capes/coats to their outfit.)*