

From the full length play:
Emma
Adapted from Jane Austen by Tracy Wells

EMMA, *Imaginative and funny young lady who intends to find love for her friend Harriet, but unintentionally finds love for herself; female*

GEORGE KNIGHTLEY, *Wealthy and kind friend of the Woodhouse family who keeps Emma on her toes and who eventually finds love with her; male*

AT RISE: The walking path through Highbury. EMMA enters, walking slowly and dejectedly.

EMMA

Until now I've never realized how important Mr. Knightley is to me. I suppose I've always taken for granted that I came first in Mr. Knightley's life. He's been a part of my life for so long—since John and Isabella were married. He watched over me, and endeavored to improve me, always challenging me and letting me know when I have done or said something I shouldn't. And slowly over time, without even realizing it, I have fallen in love with him.

(Stopping)

I don't even know if I could dare hope that he would ever feel the same way about me.

(KNIGHTLEY enters unseen by EMMA)

I have given him more than enough reason not to.

KNIGHTLEY

(Coming up behind EMMA)

Not to what?

EMMA

(Turning, abruptly)

Mr. Knightley! How long have you been standing there?

KNIGHTLEY

Not very long. Why, are you embarrassed that I overheard you talking to yourself?

EMMA

That depends...how much of what I said did you overhear?

KNIGHTLEY

Not very much.

EMMA

(With a smile)

Good.

KNIGHTLEY

What are you doing out here alone, talking to yourself?

EMMA

I'm just going for a walk. I needed to clear my head.

(Starts to walk. KNIGHTLEY joins her)

KNIGHTLEY

Is this about Mr. Churchill's engagement to Jane Fairfax?

EMMA

You know about that already?

KNIGHTLEY

I had some business to attend to with Mr. Weston. He told me.

(Sadly)

I suppose you're very disappointed at the news. I know you had feelings for Mr. Churchill.

EMMA

(Chuckling)

You're right—I *had* feelings for Mr. Churchill, but that was ages ago. I realized quite some time ago that I could never marry anyone like him.

KNIGHTLEY

I thought you never wanted to marry anyone at all.

EMMA

Yes, well I may have to rethink my position on that.

KNIGHTLEY

(Curiously)

Oh?

EMMA

Once I realized I could never marry someone like Mr. Churchill, I knew there was one man and one man only that I could—and hopefully would—marry someday.

KNIGHTLEY

Is that so?

EMMA

But I fear I am too late. I have reason to believe that he loves another.

KNIGHTLEY

(Stopping and turning to EMMA)

Emma, I fear I must tell you what you will not ask.

EMMA

(Walking ahead, shaking her head)

Then please don't say it. I don't know if I'm ready to hear it.

KNIGHTLEY

Very well.

(Catches up to EMMA and they walk slowly for a moment)

I'm sorry, but I can no longer contain what I must say.

(Takes EMMA'S hands)

Tell me, Emma, have I no chance of ever succeeding?

EMMA

If you mean to ask Harriet to marry you, then I can assure you that you will receive a favorable answer.

(Breaks away and starts to walk)

KNIGHTLEY

Harriet! Why do you always think of Harriet before yourself?

(Starts to chuckle)

Oh, you silly girl.

EMMA

(Turning sharply)

I am not silly!

KNIGHTLEY

(Crossing to EMMA and taking her hand)

Yes you are. You are silly, and willful, and stubborn, and challenging.

(EMMA starts to become angry. KNIGHTLEY caresses her face)

KNIGHTLEY

And funny and kind and generous and beautiful.

EMMA

I...I don't understand.

KNIGHTLEY

You are the love of my life, Emma Woodhouse. You know this must be true because I am nothing but honest with you. I always have been and I always will be. Just as I have always been in love with you and always will be.

EMMA

Oh, Mr. Knightley, you have no idea how happy I am to hear you say this!

KNIGHTLEY

Then can I hope that you feel the same for me?

EMMA

All of that and more, Mr. Knightley. I love you too. I always have and I always will.

(KNIGHTLEY and EMMA embrace)

I only wish I would have realized my feelings for you sooner. It would have saved me a lot of trouble.

KNIGHTLEY

Yes well, you wouldn't be Emma Woodhouse if there wasn't trouble nipping at your heels.

EMMA

I promise that once we're married I'll stay out of everyone else's romances.

KNIGHTLEY

There you go again, Emma—getting ahead of yourself and planning out everyone's romantic futures. You do realize I haven't asked you to marry me yet?

EMMA

Oh no! I *have* done it again. Disregard my silly speeches. I don't know what I'm talking about.

KNIGHTLEY

Actually, for once you do.

(Getting down on one knee and taking EMMA'S hand)

Emma Woodhouse, will you marry me?

EMMA

Nothing would make me happier.

(KNIGHTLEY stands and they embrace; EMMA becomes upset)

EMMA

Only, I've just realized that I was correct all along—I'll never be able to get married!

KNIGHTLEY

I thought we'd gotten past all of that nonsense.

EMMA

It's not that I don't want to get married, I just can't! My father will never allow it. You saw how upset he was when Anne married Mr. Weston, and she was just my governess. He'll never allow me to be married and leave Hartfield.

KNIGHTLEY

Well it's a good thing that I already thought of that.

EMMA

What do you mean?

KNIGHTLEY

I spoke with your father yesterday, and asked him for his blessing to marry you.

EMMA

What did he say?

KNIGHTLEY

He wasn't happy at first, but when I explained to him how much safer he will feel once I move *into* Hartfield when you and I are married, I think he felt a lot better.

EMMA

You would do that? You would leave your estate to come live with Papa and I at Hartfield.

KNIGHTLEY

I would do anything for you, Emma.

(They embrace as HARRIET enters)

EMMA

Then I will marry you, Mr. Knightley. And the sooner the better!

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