

Character Descriptions

Women

1. EMMA (late 20s-30s): almost unbelievably charming; a natural comedienne. Bouncily flirty; possesses more power of manipulation than even she understands; has a certain sunny, charming self-regard—it's what allows her to get away with so much. Very very VERY clever—and fancies herself even more clever than she is. Capable of getting ahead of herself. Incredibly dexterous, verbally. Capable of being unfair or short-sighted or impetuous; maybe a bit overindulged. Grew up with wealth. Can be a bit overconfident and self-congratulatory. Capable of getting quite competitive. Generous with those she considers family. Eminently lovable and eminently fallible. Has emotional depth. Very educated, but is not allowed a profession—and thus is a bit like a border collie without any sheep. Frustrated, and thus sometimes putting her considerable energies in the wrong places. Ahead of her time. Given the chance, she just might run the world.

2. HARRIET SMITH (20s): a deeply likable girl from the lower classes, who's been given a basic education. A sweet, naturally affectionate human being, but not the brightest flame in the stove. A born enthusiast; the kind of person who leaps WAY before she looks. Has a strong tendency towards hero worship. A born follower. VERY impressionable. Has a desperate adoring friend-crush on Emma. Wants to be in love. Gets flustered easily. A bit naïve.

3. MRS. WESTON (mid 30s-late 40s) / as cast: Emma's former governess. A very smart woman with a good sense of humor; very perceptive and grounded. Not afraid to tell it like it is. Capable of really teaching deep lessons. Not without edge, when she chooses. Lovable and opinionated. Gives great advice. Picture the coolest aunt imaginable.

Doubles with Mrs. Bates (70s+) / as cast: An elderly lady, very opinionated, who communicates exclusively in grunts and hand gestures. Mrs. Bates is completely obscured by bonnet and scarves and shawls; she's a big pile of fabric, rather like Cousin It. We never see what's underneath all the layers.

4. MISS BATES (40s+) / as cast: headmistress of a struggling

school for girls. An incredibly good-natured, if motor-mouthed and daft, woman. Very very proud of her niece Jane Fairfax, whom she talks about obsessively. Once she starts talking, you can't get a word in edgewise.

5. JANE FAIRFAX (20s-30s) / as cast: You know that girl who always seems to do everything right? Jane is that girl. An overachiever. Very composed. Very beautiful. Very discreet. Very accomplished. Very smart. Every hair in place, and it seems effortless. Works as a governess, until she quits under mysterious circumstances. The only girl-child in a family full of schoolteachers, and thus—seemingly—a model of perfect behavior. Maybe a little bit stiff. Under all of this A+ decorum, she's hiding a love affair with Frank Churchill—she doubts he can be faithful. Is hiding deep passions under that flawless exterior.

6. MRS. ELTON (20-30s) / as cast: not bright. What's more, she has a laugh that's the auditory equivalent of nails being torn out of your fingers. Is delighted by everything. Her libido is.... quite active. Thinks her new husband, Mr. Elton, is the most desirable thrilling brilliant man alive. A truly intolerable woman. May actually be a hyena, wearing a human suit. May also double with Mrs. Bates.

Men

1. MR. KNIGHTLEY (30s-40s): a handsome man; a super charming man; an upright fellow. He's also a bit of a rule-follower; maybe sometimes a bit of a stick in the mud. Very clever. Capable of getting ahead of himself and edging towards know-it-all. Can be competitive. Is preoccupied with Emma—they get under each other's skin in the most delightful way. Gets quite jealous of Frank Churchill. Has the best intentions. Feels deeply. A genuinely good guy. Ultimately learns to admit vulnerability and share his feelings.

2. MR. WOODHOUSE (60s+) / as cast: an over-anxious, melancholy hypochondriac, but people humor him, as he's a nice man under it all. Obsessed with the healing powers of gruel. Tends to darkly predict fatal illnesses as a sign of concern. May double with MR. WESTON, (40s-50s) / as cast:—the kind of man who likes to make awkward “dad jokes.” Very very proud of his

son, Frank Churchill. An unsubtle matchmaker. A good man; not a mean thought in his head. Maybe is prone to blurting out the wrong thing.

3. MR. ELTON (any age) / as cast: a clergyman who sometimes gets the wrong idea. ADORES poetry. A born social climber. Fancies himself a great romantic. Thinks ladies are naturally coy and enjoy wordplay. Is determined to woo, and win. Thinks he oozes charm; maybe just oozes. May double with Mr. Weston.

4. FRANK CHURCHILL (20s-30s) / as cast: an incredibly charming, handsome, mischievous flirt of a man—the kind of man who gets away with almost everything, because he’s so irresistible. Not a bad guy, really; just a bit too likable for his own good. Ladies love him. Funny. Gossipy. Clever. A little spoiled and manipulative. A bit unused to hearing “no,” and as a result, doesn’t really believe in “no.” Can be callous or unthinkingly cruel or self-indulgent. Wishes to reform, but can’t.... always.... help himself. Enjoys half-truths and innuendo. Is, underneath everything, in love with Jane Fairfax—but that doesn’t mean other women become uninteresting to him. Doubles with ROBERT MARTIN—a sweet groundskeeper, in love with Harriet. Non-speaking. May also double with Mrs. Bates.