

Side 1 Emma and Knightley

A great explosion of ringing bells as a couple comes out of a church; this is the wedding day of the former MISS TAYLOR to MR WESTON. The ensemble throws flower petals and cheers. EMMA emerges just in front of the happy couple:

EMMA:

(to the audience, very fast:) Ladies and gentlemen, may I present for the very first time: Mr.& Mrs. Weston!!!!

They cheer. The new MRS. WESTON stops and gives her a kiss before she joins her groom... it is all joyous and imperfect and humble; the whole community is there. It is a true country wedding-AND: The ensemble stills-not a freeze; just a sort of suspension, as they become background-Emma turns to us. She smiles:

EMMA:

You see this? *(proudly)* I did this. Yes! Me. All me. Aren't I clever?
(responding to some perceived affirmation from the audience. She may be just imagining it. She circles the bride and groom.)

You see, Miss Anne Taylor-or rather Mrs. Anne Weston, as of today, has been my governess since I was a child. But I am fully-grown *now-(she flirts)* obviously-and practically perfect and certainly done with my education, and Miss *Taylor-(hitting herself in the head)* SORRY, Mrs. Weston-was like to go mad with idleness. As she has always said, a mind must have occupation, or it will come to mischief. AND SO-
(A man has started listening closely; he trails Emma. He alone is moving at the same frequency as herself:)

TO SAVE HER CHARACTER-I made her this lovely match!

KNIGHTLEY:

Emma.
Emma notices him, but plows on.

EMMA:

Miss Taylor long-claimed she had no interest in matrimony, but she was reading too many *(gesturing evocatively)* bodice-ripping novels for me to give that any credit. And Mr. Weston was the widower down the lane, and was developing that vacant, aimless look in his eyes that bachelors do; *(into the audience)* you know what I'm talking about, sir. *(flirtatiously)*- I'll get to you next.

So one day, when-

KNIGHTLEY:

Emma.

Overriding him:

EMMA:

-When we happened to encounter Mr. Weston on a walk-

KNIGHTLEY:

Emma!

EMMA:

I simply pretended to sprain my ankle-

KNIGHTLEY:

-you can't ignore me forever.

EMMA:

Watch me. *(she attempts to ignore him)* And I sat with my foot up on a pillow for a week-forcing Mr. Weston and Anne together to "entertain me"-and by offering divers encouragements, and smoothing little conflicts, I made them / fall desperately-

KNIGHTLEY:

Emma! You can't just-stand here and feed all of these fine people-hello, Madame-complete nonsense.

EMMA:

-How dare you?

KNIGHTLEY:

-Share the stage, for once. *(he clambers into the spotlight with her)*

Emma and he get under each other's skin. They are both clever people-sometimes know-it-alls. There is real banter here; rat-tat-tat.

EMMA:

Ladies and gentlemen, *(rolling her eyes)* Mr. George Knightley, our neighbor. Because Mr. Knightley has known me since I was a child-

KNIGHTLEY:

Since we were both children, I'm only five years older than you-

EMMA:

(sweetly) Yes, but you're so elderly in your soul-

KNIGHTLEY:

-hurtful-

EMMA:

SINCE Mr. Knightley is an (*turning the screw*) old, old, old friend-he wrongly thinks he has the right to interrupt me!

But this is my direct address monologue, sir! The play-is not called "KNIGHTLEY."

KNIGHTLEY:

(*to the audience*) Dear members of the audience, I assure you that Mr. Weston and Miss Taylor would have ultimately wed with or without Emma's interference! (overserious:) Love has its own agenda.

EMMA:

(*mercilessly mocking him*) "Love has its own agenda." Have you been reading Miss Taylor's (the same gesture) bodice-ripping novels?

KNIGHTLEY:

(*losing it*) Only a complete fool, Emma, could ever give you credit for this match!