



Emma & Knightley: Perfect Happiness in Highbury

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"... the wishes, the hopes, the confidence, the predictions of the small band of true friends who witnessed the ceremony, were fully answered in the perfect happiness of the union."

Thus the last line of Jane Austen's Emma. A year later, Emma and Knightley are still living at Hartfield, surrounded by the Westons, the Eltons and the Bateses. But as events unfold, the couple must deal with the return of Frank Churchill, now widowed, and Knightley's apparently endless patience is tried by events in his brother's family, as well as his beloved Emma's whims and fancies.

But the irrepressible Emma is restless ...

Emma wants Knightley to stop treating her like a child. Knightley meanwhile wants his young bride to love him as a husband, not as the man she's always looked up to. With tragedy in the offing, and events unfolding that include beloved characters from Emma, the couple must find their way to each other, and to perfect happiness.

With a wonderful grasp of the manners and style of the day, this warm and witty exploration of a marriage between a sheltered (not to say spoiled) young lady and the man she looked upon as an older brother fulfills the romantic longings of Jane Austen lovers everywhere.

Emma & Knightley: Perfect Happiness in Highbury Details

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From Reader Review Emma & Knightley: Perfect Happiness in Highbury for online ebook

Lisa Daleiden-brugman says

Fun and light-hearted. Totally enjoyable.

Heather says

Took me awhile to get into, but I stuck it out and was so glad I did!!

Cassandra says

As soon as I finished reading Emma, I turned to this book. I think the author did a pretty good job keeping both Emma and Knightley (individually) true to the original. However, I felt like their relationship with each other was not what Austen would have written. The two enjoyed a good verbal sparring in Emma but it seemed as if they had NO communication in the sequel. As a result, there were misunderstandings galore. In Emma, they were not afraid to tell each other what they felt even if they disagreed. In this book, it seemed as if they were living side by side without any actual interaction.

Also, I didn't think Churchill was all that bad in Emma... this book paints him as a monster.

All in all, I enjoyed the story, even though I think Emma and Knightley would have/should have communicated more. The author stayed fairly true to Jane Austen's style and I felt like most of the characters were true to the original story. So far, this is my favorite Austen sequel.

Mirah W says

Not a good continuation of Emma and Knightley's story. I thought the growth experienced by Emma in Jane Austen's novel was completely forgotten about by the author. I don't recall Emma feeling such distaste for certain characters and nd there seemed to be too much of a disconnect between Emma and Knightley. Although, I do have to admit, I love the path the author chose for Ms. Bates...for some odd reason I think it actually worked.

Megan says

Tons of typos and missing quotation marks. Plot -- average. Characterization -- eh. Didn't really feel like Frank Churchill or Miss Bates or Mrs. Weston was really the character they were in the Jane Austen original. A little bit of a let down.

Heidi says

Adaptations and sequels based on Jane Austen's work are so enticing to me because I love Jane Austen so much. That said, you have to read them with more than a few grains of salt, sometimes, because nobody writes Jane Austen's stories and characters like she wrote them.

"Emma & Knightly" was a cute and entertaining sequel to the story, with probable events that didn't require too much stretching of the imagination to picture them part of the original. I did think the author took the characters a little too far over the top with some of their eccentricities, as in Emma's case, and there was almost a tone of mockery in some of the beginning chapters when she reviewed the original story, but on the whole this is wholesome, well written, and entertaining.

Amanda says

It started out so promising but went nowhere quickly. Every character was weepy and melodramatic. I'm a pretty dramatic person who is very emotional, and it was too much for ME. There wasn't anything to look forward to anyway, so it wasn't worth enduring it.

Morgan Feeney says

It's interesting to think about what Emma and Knightley might have made of their marriage, but I'm not sure that this book really sells it. I think that the two of them, by the end of the original novel by Jane Austen, had come to communicate with each other in a much more harmonious fashion than anything portrayed here, and that Emma had really and truly changed and matured as a person. I don't see her being snobbish towards Harriet or really, as behaving as she does in this novel at all. Inexplicable.

Meredith (Austen-esque Reviews) says

After reading reviews of this book and "Perfect Happiness" earlier edition of "Emma and Knightly" and seeing that many people had criticized this book, I was skeptical to give it try. Since there aren't many good sequels to "Emma" out there, I was willing to try something that was not raved about.

I wasn't disappointed. The story was intriguing, perhaps not the greatest sequel written. But overall, ended up being a bit of a page turner!

We find Emma a year or more into her marriage with Mr. Knightly and she finds out that she has a lot of learning and growing to do. She is put to the test when her quiet little life and the lives of people around her are undone with a few life-changing events. Emma herself struggles with her new role as "wife" especially since her relationship with Mr. Knightley for so many years has been one of brotherly love. In this continuation of Emma, there are deaths, about three marriages, two new likeable characters, and a developing of the character of Frank Churchill (which in my opinion is very close to the portrayal Jane

Austen made of him in Emma). I really enjoyed the character development in this book: I think Jane Austen created some of the most unique, realistic, and flawed characters in literature and it is interesting and comforting seeing them develop into the type of people they should be. Just like we should be doing. There are a lot of good lessons for us to learn about communication, jumping to conclusions, grief, finances, trust, and love.

I recommend this book to those who love and long to live in Highbury, those who are not too critical as far as Jane Austen continuations and sequels go, and who like the character of Emma and are curious how she matures and handles being married to Mr. Knightley. I do not recommend this book to those who desire a certain level of writing in Jane Austen continuations and sequels. If you want writing in the style of Jane, in the voice of Jane, and characters that are true to Jane, you might not enjoy this book.

Charity U says

It was fine, but I had a few problems. Nothing bad or objectionable. But there were some editing errors (Selina Suckling called Serena multiple times) and a lot of quotation marks were dropped. The writing wasn't that great, and I won't be keeping the book. Good if you love Jane Austen's "Emma" but otherwise...

Jennifer Gentry says

I really wanted to like this book as "Emma" is one of my favorite Jane Austen novels (not as well-loved as "Pride and Prejudice", but that's beside the point). Upon reading the sample, I was thoroughly intrigued with the idea of discovering what Mr. & Mrs. Knightley's ever-after resembled. How was life at Hartfield? How did they adjust to living as husband and wife after viewing each other for so long as friends--and friends with such a disparity in ages? How did the marriages of some of the other characters turn out? Would Augusta Elton develop any taste and lose her sense of vulgar vanity? (After reading this book, I can say with all certainty that she did NOT.)

Within the opening pages, we discover that Jane Fairfax Churchill, after giving birth to a son, met an unfortunate and untimely death. This sets into motion a series of events that completely alters everyone's lives--and the Knightleys' marriage. These events were interesting enough that, despite my utter dislike for the story, I simply **had** to finish reading the book instead of abandoning it as I heartily wished to do.

Perhaps I've seen the Gwynneth Paltrow version of "Emma" too many times to be able to accurately perceive the truth in this from the actual story, but it seemed to me that Emma, by the time she married Mr. Knightley, had undergone a transformation in the way she viewed other people. She seemed less of a snob, less concerned about status and such. This, however, is far from the Emma that Mrs. Billington portrayed. Her Emma was just as haughty and snobbish--and judgmental--as the "real" Emma from the start of Jane Austen's novel. No transformation had been made after even a year of marriage, which I find extremely hard to believe.

I also read with disapproval the portrayal of Emma & Knightley's marriage and their lack of communication. How could two people--as portrayed by Jane Austen--with so much ability to make themselves known and heard by the other suffer through so many months of a sudden lack of communication? There were times I just wanted to smack both of them and shout, "Talk to each other!" While possibly more true to real life

(especially during those early years of marriage), it was not the Emma and Knightley I've grown familiar with through the years. And while I appreciated not having to read about it (I heartily disapprove and dislike when authors use descriptive sex scenes---particularly in Austen continuations. I believe she would roll over in her grave at such things), I find it extremely hard to believe that there was no passion in their marriage, as Mrs. Billington would have us believe.

Finally, while Frank Churchill's character is far from reproach in "Emma", I cannot believe he is so bad, so inherently wicked, as Mrs. Billington portrays him in her novel. He has always been selfish, self-centered, and devious. But I just cannot agree that womanizer and debauched cad should also be added to his list of faults.

This book was very well written and would probably be thoroughly enjoyed by someone who has NOT previously read "Emma". The Jane Austen enthusiasts looking for a continuation of a beloved book will want to keep looking.

Ceri says

This is a sequel to Jane Austen's Emma, beginning around 18 months into the Knightley's marriage and all is not well in Highbury. The story begins really quite depressingly; news of a death, and the realisation that Emma and Knightley are emotionally not very close – they have kept up their respective roles of spoiled child and advisor. The story then moves onto a bankruptcy and another death. I had to take a break from this book and come back to it, misery piles upon misery and through it all Emma and Knightley get further and further apart.

At the end of 'Emma' I felt that Emma had matured somewhat and gained a better level of understanding but here the character has reverted to the clueless character of two years before. It is also disappointing to see Mr Knightley constantly pulling away from his wife, he is hardly ever there, and when he is he's usually leaving! Since Mr Knightley provides Emma with so little friendship it is comprehensible that she wouldn't confide in him but I don't feel that would be in line with Emma's character, I think in the circumstances in the story Emma would have felt obliged to tell him of certain events. There was also a reliance on the couple mistaking the other's feelings in the same way that was cleared up in 'Emma' and I felt it was unlikely that they'd both do this again. Plus all this was cleared up in literally five pages, and there must have been so many opportunities for this to be cleared up much more quickly, it seemed unlikely to me that it would have dragged on for so long.

There were some things I liked very much about this book; the style of the writing is really very good, it's witty and ironic and it reminded me of the original book. Emma's sister Isabella is a very minor character in 'Emma' and here she is fleshed out much more, which I thought was done really well. There are also some original characters, most notably Mrs Philomena Tidmarsh, who is an intelligent widow who befriends Emma for a mixture of reasons. However, despite all these positives, the sad subject matter and bad state of the relationship between Emma and Knightley, which I felt was unlikely, meant that I found this book hard going to read.

LeOta says

This book is billed as PERFECT HAPPINESS IN Highbury, but it seemed pretty depressing to me.

Emma and Knightley go through a great deal of unhappiness for most of the book. Both Frank Churchill and John Knightley were also very unhappy. The author took two other Austen beloved characters developed into different characters with the same names.

Bottom line, I didn't enjoy this book and am not able to recommend it.

Jenna says

SOME SPOILERISHNESS

Like my rating, I thought this was ok. I've never read Billington before, so I don't know if this is typical...it wasn't that it was so bad; it just was definitely no Jane Austen. Perhaps she was not trying to imitate Austen's style and perhaps I should not have expected her to. There was just none of the laugh-out-loud wit that I enjoy with Austen, merely a few chuckles here and there. Of course, the focus was more towards the "what happens after the happily-ever-after", which is never quite as dreamily happy once reality sets in. In the past, I have enjoyed that kind of realistic take on the fairy tale story, but maybe I just wasn't in the mood. So, since it gave off more of a serious tone than the lightheartedness I've grown to love in Austen, I felt slightly uncomfortable with their whole situation until the very, very end.

Sara says

The character of Emma is well done. She still has lessons to learn about her haphazard snobbery. New and interesting characters are introduced, and familiar friends like Mrs Elton and Miss Bates do not disappoint. But it seems that Billington did not know what to do with Jane and Frank Churchill. That particular subplot is bizarre and distracting.
