

Emma

Viewing Guide

Introduction

The purpose of a curriculum guide is to provide you, as an audience member, a resource to utilize before and after attending the performance.. The guide contains background information on the author and the history of the play as well as suggestions for viewing and reflective questions. Please let us know how we can improve future viewing guides and your thoughts on this one. You may email us at amandarudolph73@gmail.com. Your thoughts and ideas would be greatly appreciated.

Jon Jory

Jon Jory was the Producing Director for the Actors Theatre of Louisville for 32 years. While there, he directed over 125 plays and produced over 1000 plays. He has created play festivals and new theatres. Over his career, he has received many awards including the Special Tony Award for Achievement in Regional Theatre. As a playwright, he has adapted many classic works including *Moby Dick*, *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, and *Anne of Green Gables*.

(<https://www.concordtheatricals.com/perform/catalog?sortBy=DisplayOrder&author=Jon+Jory>)

Summary of Emma

Emma Woodhouse considers herself to be a successful matchmaker even as she forswears marriage for herself. At the beginning of the play, Emma has successfully matched the Westons and has turned her attention to her friend, Harriet Smith. She soon talks Harriet out of accepting a proposal from Robert Martin who Emma considers too common for a match. Mr. Knightly, a family friend of Emma's, advises her to quit matchmaking, but Emma then works to match Harriet with Mr. Elton and in the end, he proposes to Emma who denies him. With dashed hopes, he leaves for London.

Soon Mr. Weston's son, Frank Churchill arrives to the great interest of the young ladies. Emma soon sees this as an opportunity to match Harriet. Again, Mr. Knightly warns Emma that he does not trust Mr. Churchill. And once again, Emma's plans for Harriet fall through when it discovered that Mr. Churchill is already engaged to another, Ms. Jane Bates. Finally, Harriet reveals she has her eye on Mr. Knightly and once this confession is out, Emma realizes her love for Mr. Knightly. In the end, Harriet happily matches with Robert Martin whom she loved from the beginning and Emma and Mr. Knightly are happy together.

Essential Questions Related to *Emma*

- Do our conceptions of love differ from the time period of the play?
- Is it wrong to meddle in a person's life?
- Do friends make better mates?
- Are we still a class-conscious culture?
- Is marriage still necessary?
- Why is it easy to trick your imagination into believing what is not true?
- Is this a comedy?
- Is power different between men and women?

These questions may be used to guide the investigation of the play. As an audience member, you can use these questions to prime your thinking prior to the performance..

Pre-Viewing Activities

1. Think about ways your family members met their spouse or partner. Then show this short video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ar1Y8EKc8Vw> Consider the various ways to meet a partner and how that has changed over time.. Then, consider the world of the play and how matchmaking worked during the time period.
2. Consider: Is it wrong to meddle in a person's life? Think of time when someone meddled in your life or a time when you think it is necessary to meddle in the lives of others. What were the outcomes? Was it worth it?

Post-Viewing Activities

1. Consider drawbacks to the matchmaking in the play and how could the characters avoid the confusion of Emma's imagination. Think of how each character would react based on what you have seen.
2. Write reviews of the play through short form videos. Post your review video on social media using #tsf2026 or @texasshakes.

Useful Websites

<https://www.houstonpublicmedia.org/articles/arts-culture/2011/07/17/28736/a-d-players-jane-austens-emma-adapted-by-jon-jory/>

<https://northlight.org/an-interview-with-jon-jory/>

<https://www.chron.com/life/article/noted-director-jon-jory-brings-his-version-of-2081058.php>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_\(novel\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Emma_(novel))

Useful Reference Sources

Austen, J. (2003) *Emma*. Penguin Classics.