

**Molly:** Hey everyone. Before we begin today, we want to give a huge shoutout to our newest patron, Emily. Welcome to the team. Also, our live show is this Saturday, November 18th at 04:00 PM Eastern time at Caveat, NYC. If you haven't gotten your tickets yet, I don't know what you're waiting for. Get them before they sell out. It's going to be a blast. We're going to be talking about our boy, Wishbone, playing some games, selling exclusive live show merch, and most importantly, meeting all of you. So please come, we're going to have so much fun. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Episode 2 of the 2009 *Emma* miniseries starring Romola Garai, with our guests, Emily and Lauren, from Reclaiming Jane.  
[Pod and Prejudice theme]

**Becca:** This is Becca.

**Molly:** This is Molly.

**Becca:** We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

**Molly:** We are here specifically to talk about--

**Molly and Becca:** *Emma*.

**Becca:** Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen novels and watched many adaptations of her work.

**Molly:** And [00:01:00] I, Molly, am doing that for the first time through this podcast.

**Becca:** If you want to hear Molly read through *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility* for the first time, you can listen to Seasons 1 and 2 of this podcast, respectively. But that is not what we're doing here today.

**Molly:** No, today, we are talking about the second episode of the 2009 *Emma* miniseries starring Romola Garai and Jonny Lee Miller. And we are joined today by Emily and Lauren from Reclaiming Jane. Hello.

**Lauren:** Hi.

**Emily:** Hello.

**Becca:** We are so excited to have you, guys. You have generously had us on your podcast before, and it feels so ripe for us to return the favor.

**Lauren:** I'm so excited.

**Becca:** Yes. So why don't you tell our listeners first a little bit about your podcast?

**Emily:** So Reclaiming Jane is the pitch. It's an Austen podcast for fans on the margins. So, we try to bring in conversations that aren't typically or aren't publicly had within Austen [00:02:00] fan spaces. We try to talk about topics, like gender and race and the controversial things that the stereotypical Austen fan might not touch on.

**Becca:** We love that. We love that hearing. We, in this community, are all about the making Jane Austen-

**Molly:** Gay.

**Becca:** -content for the masses.

**Molly:** Oh.

**Becca:** Oh, I was going to say for the masses, but the gay masses, to be extra specific.

**Molly:** I thought you were going to say, making Jane Austen content gay, which is something that we do frequently.

**Becca:** Yeah. It's a yes and situation.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** So, I feel like the ethos of our two podcasts lines up nicely for you guys to be on for this discussion. So that leads me to asking you, guys, some questions about your relationship to Jane Austen, which we ask all of our guests, starting with, what is your relationship to Jane Austen?

**Lauren:** I can start. My relationship to Jane Austen started with being a teenage [00:03:00] fangirl after I downloaded *Pride and Prejudice* on iBooks, because I thought that was a good idea. I don't know who decided to tell me. I don't think anyone did. I think I just downloaded it from the iBooks bookstore. But I read *Pride and Prejudice* on an iPhone 3, and somehow that still got me to be a Jane Austen fan girl, and I've been obsessed with it ever since. I was an English major in college. So did the lit nerd thing and took a Jane Austen course. So I read all of her works for the first time in college, and generally enjoy watching Jane Austen adaptations, specifically of *Pride and Prejudice*, but really of all of them.

**Becca:** Love it.

**Emily:** Yeah. Similarly, I began as a teen fan. I read *Pride and Prejudice* when I was like 13

or 14, probably, and then just stopped. [laughs] I read *Pride and Prejudice*, and that was it and did not read any more Austen. I had attempted a couple of things, but never got into it until Lauren sent me a text that said, "Hey, what if we made a Jane Austen podcast?" So [00:04:00] I'm kind of the Molly of Reclaiming Jane.

**Molly:** Love that.

**Lauren:** Okay. But you also were watching a specific adaptation multiple times. You didn't just read *Pride and Prejudice* and never come back.

**Emily:** Okay. You don't have to call me out like that in public.

**Lauren:** Yes, I do.

**Emily:** On another podcast.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Emily:** No. The 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*, of course.

**Molly:** Of Course.

**Emily:** I was completely obsessed with. Junior year of high school, I would watch it like minimum, once a week. It was a lot.

**Molly:** Amazing. That was me in *Titanic*.

**Emily:** Oh, my goodness. Really?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Emily:** That's a big commitment.

**Molly:** Yeah. My family was like, "Again?"

**Becca:** Well, both are really great examples of highly charged period pieces where it's about the yearning and not as much about the, for lack of a better term, hand on the car.

**Emily:** You're so right.

**Becca:** So, question number two is, what is your favorite piece of Austen content? I think Emily might have just answered this question, but it can be anything. It can be [00:05:00] a tweet you really liked about Jane Austen, one of her most famous books, it can be a movie, a YouTube series, whatever really floats your boat.

**Emily:** I think my favorite right now is actually *Fire Island*, which is at the forefront of my mind because I watched-- This pack could be good with some friends. [giggles]

**Becca:** It's a great choice.

**Emily:** [giggles]

**Molly:** An excellent choice.

**Lauren:** I think mine is also a *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation, but a YouTube series. It's *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. Emily and I watched that obsessively our sophomore year of college like every week as the episodes came out, and it still holds a very special place in my heart. So got to say, LBD.

**Becca:** We recently covered LBD on the podcast, and I went back and watched it for the first time since college, and I was like, "Wow, this holds up," but also, is an exact time capsule to 2012.

**Lauren:** Yeah. It's so impressive.

**Emily:** It really is.

**Becca:** Yeah. The combo is very jarring. [giggles]

**Molly:** I think that's my favorite adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. I think I've said that before, [00:06:00] but it's just so good. The way it manages to get the essence of what *Pride and Prejudice* is about, but also just be a very compelling web series on its own, oh.

**Becca:** Absolutely. And really utilizing the format, it's in to tell the story, oh.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Great choices. Question number three. Which Austen character do you relate to the most and why?

**Lauren:** Okay. So, I'm going to not say my stereotypical answer, which is Lizzie Bennet, but I do think-- So in the Reclaiming Jane podcast, we finished *Persuasion*. That was the last book that we read. I got to say, I was like, I do feel a strong affinity for Anne. I know that hasn't been on Pod and Prejudice yet, so I won't say anything more about it. So I'll just say Anne from *Persuasion*.

**Becca:** It's tough.

**Emily:** I will try not to drop any spoilers with this, but I think right now it's Catherine Morland in *Northanger Abbey*. A few episodes back, I had a small rant about how she's definitely

100% autistic, and so [00:07:00] I relate to just so deeply to so many of her experiences as like a teen trying to understand how social interaction works. So yeah, I think it's Catherine.

**Becca:** I love that. I would also say that Catherine-- I don't know much about *Northanger Abbey* because it is like one of my big Jane Austen blind spots, which we will tackle when we get there. But one thing I do know is that Catherine Morland brings fan base energy to Jane Austen work-

**Lauren:** 100%.

**Becca:** -which I think is apt for a lot of relatability for people who are obsessed with fandom things.

**Emily:** Oh, definitely.

**Molly:** I think that one of our guests on the last episode that we recorded of this miniseries also said Catherine Morland. I'm looking forward to whenever we have yes[?] on that, their Jane Austen character is someone I haven't read yet. I'm looking forward to one day being like, "Oh, now I [00:08:00] know which one is Emily and which one's Lauren. Yeah.

**Emily:** It is a little vulnerable to put that out there and be like, "Here, look into my soul a little bit." But you know what? We're making a podcast.

**Becca:** Listen, it's a really great litmus test for figuring out something about the guests that are visiting our podcast, which does bring us to my favorite of our questions, our last question, which is, what's your hottest Austen take? So a good example of this would be that your favorite adaptation is the 1996 *Emma* adaptation starring Gwyneth Paltrow. Like, that kind of hot take.

**Emily:** That is a hot take.

**Becca:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Lauren:** Okay. This is a hot take. I don't know, if it's in the same vein as an adaptation or character reading, but my hottest Austen hot take is that, if a character is described as brown or swarthy, even though I know what Jane Austen means, my hot take is that you can read that character as like nonwhite. I know that's not what she meant and I don't care. So that's my hot Austen hot take is that you [00:09:00] can read that character as nonwhite, if you want to. [giggles]

**Molly:** I love that.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think there is room in Austen's England to see a little bit more color than say maybe BBC-UK sees in those series, but maybe that's just-- [laughs]

**Lauren:** I think there's space for that.

**Becca:** Yeah, I would agree with that.

**Emily:** When I brought up initially my head canon that Catherine Moreland is autistic, I thought that was going to be a hot take. Evidently it was not. There was so much agreement with that and people pulling out arguments that they had made on that same vein. So that's apparently not a hot take. I don't know, I feel like I don't have a lot of Austen hot takes. Lauren, do you know any of mine that I just don't realize?

**Lauren:** I was going to say, reading Catherine Morland as autistic. I'm trying to think if there are other ones that you have come up with on the podcast that are like real spicy takes.

**Emily:** I guess probably the closest I get is that I think Jane Austen could be a lot more gay. I [00:10:00] think there's a lot more relationship energy, like, romantic relationship energy and sexual relationship energy between same sex characters than is traditionally read.

**Molly:** Emma and Jane, I'll die on this hill.

**Emily:** Enemies to Lovers.

**Molly:** Enemies to Lovers. It's the one we've been waiting for.

**Becca:** Other than Lizzie and Darcy. [laughs]

**Molly:** Lizzie and Darcy, my butt.

**Lauren:** That's old hat. We're done with that.

**Molly:** Been there, done that.

**Emily:** I think that's the real Austen hot take is that Emma and Jane are the enemies to lovers, and Lizzie and Darcy, [Molly laughs] that's where it's really at.

**Becca:** Speaking of energy between Emma and Jane, let's get into talking about Episode 2 of this BBC miniseries of *Emma* that was made in 2009. Before we dive too far into it, do either of our guests have any general thoughts they want to add about this series?

**Emily:** This is the first time that I've watched it. Sorry, Lauren, go ahead.

**Lauren:** No, I was just going to say I also [00:11:00] haven't watched it before, so thank you for inspiring me and giving me a reason to sit down and watch this, because this is delightful. I'm so mad at myself for not watching this before.

**Molly:** It is so good.

**Becca:** I am so excited. I didn't know this was slightly under the radar as an adaptation because this has been my favorite *Emma* adaptation for years.

**Emily:** I watched both episodes today in preparation, and it, right off the bat, gave me big pushing daisies vibes with the narration, which was very funny.

**Becca:** That's actually really true. It's got that campy late 2000s sitcom energy to it.

**Molly:** I noticed the narration a little bit in Episode 1, but I was like, "That feels so out of place." We were doing a Discord watch party, and some of our fans were like, "No, we love it. We love it." And I was like, "No, I don't hate it. I'm just confused." But then as it came back in this episode, I was like, "Well, wait, it's doing something."

**Lauren:** I'm into it.

**Becca:** So, shall we dive right into Episode 2?

**Lauren:** Please.

**Molly:** Let's do it. [00:12:00] Starting off, we, again, get this beautiful intro with the intro music. My girlfriend was in the bathroom or something, and the intro music came on, and she was like, "It sounds like you're watching *Bake Off*. I was like, "Oh, my God, same energy," right?

**Becca:** Comforting British watches. Yes.

**Molly:** Yeah. So we start off with Emma and Harriet reading, which we know was a big goal of Emma's to read with Harriet. She is so proud of herself for reading two pages. She's like, "I have finished two pages." And then she quotes the book, and then Harriet goes, "That's very true, I think," [giggles] which I love. And then Emma just throws the book. She's like, "Okay, that's enough of that for now. We need a break to let the message just sink in."

**Becca:** I believe the correct term is yeets the book.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Oh, you're right. She yeets the book. It's the same energy of Caroline Bingley reading in that one scene, you know>

**Lauren:** I'm reading, [00:13:00] so that I can say that I've read or to be seen reading, but I'm not actually getting anything out of this. Like, I would not be surprised if Emma couldn't share any more than that one quote that she read, nothing else has been retained in her brain.

**Molly:** Yeah, she's actually just been reading that one quote over and over again, so that she could read it out loud.

**Becca:** It's just the most performative reading ever.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, they take out their book of romantic riddles. And as they're looking through it, Harriet asks Emma why she's not married yet. And Emma explains about how she doesn't need to get married, she's the master of her own house, blah blah, blah. She admits that it might be different if she were in love, but she never has been in love and she never will be in love. She doesn't think it's just not in her nature, which her saying it's not in her nature brings back a thing that we said a lot during the book, which is that Emma is Ace.

**Emily:** I was just about to say that. That was the biggest thought in my head was like, "Ace, Arrow, Emma."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Emily:** But what if though?

**Molly:** But what if though?

**Becca:** We had that discussion some during our book coverage, [00:14:00] and we also had some discussion about Emma as a queer character, just generally, both as one who seems to show an affinity towards women and also one who's not so interested in the idea of being with another person. And a lot of listeners wrote in and said, basically, "I feel very seen by this take." So, I think it's a very valid reading of the story.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. Oh, I love Jane Austen.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** I didn't have anything else to add. She does say during this little rant of hers that she is looking forward to being a cool aunt instead of a mother and instead of a wife.

**Lauren:** Relatable.

**Molly:** Yeah. Our Discord members also noted that Emma and Harriet are wearing very similar outfits. So, it's like just showing how Harriet's becoming more like Emma, but her dress is less ordinate, and it's just the shadow of Emma's, which is literally what she is. Emma's shadow.

**Lauren:** I love [00:15:00] costumey details.

**Molly:** Yeah. Then we get Elton coming in, and he's brought a list of flowers or something for the church as a guise of why he's over there, but he is like, "I heard you're making a compilation of romantic poetry. Here's a romantic poem." And Emma's like, "Oh, do you want to bring it to Miss Smith yourself?" And he's like, "No, it'll be quite safe in your hands." Emma is so excited. She runs like a little kid to give it to Harriet, and it's very cute. Harriet just can't figure out this poem, and she is like-- Emma's going through it with her. She's like, "So that means court, and that part means ship? So, what is that put it together?" And Harriet's like, "Ship court."

**Emily:** Ship court.

**Molly:** So earnest.

**Emily:** Bless her heart.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Emily:** That's just always my first thought with Harriet. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah. Honestly, this Harriet in particular is so sweet.

**Lauren:** You can't help but just be fond of her, even as you know nothing. There's not a thought behind those eyes, but [00:16:00] God, you're so sweet.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** The brain is smooth.

[laughter]

**Lauren:** No thoughts. Head empty.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** She still has this plume of curls on her temples that are so distracting to me. And every time she moves her head for the riddle, you see the curls just bounce and bob up their way-- [giggles] Every time I'm watching a scene, she's so good, but it just draws in my eye immediately.

**Emily:** This is an aside, but that was her hairstyle or rather the general hairstyling was one thing that stood out to me as a nerd about fashion things. Harriet is the only one who has anything resembling an actual fashionable hairstyle for the period, which is so bizarre to me.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Emily:** That's 1810s and 1820s right there.

**Becca:** Absolutely. We were talking about this last week as well, how Harriet's hairstyle obviously takes much more effort [00:17:00] than Emma's hairstyle. And so it doesn't really make sense that Harriet would have this very loud hairstyle, where Emma looks very simple and dressed down comparatively. Elton has CW hair, so I guess we're just not doing hair accurate in this adaptation. [giggles]

**Lauren:** I wonder if it's because they want you to read Harriet as out of touch. They know that most people who watch this adaptation are going to get that Harriet actually has superior, accurate hair and Emma's is wrong, but Emma looks pretty and Harriet looks like weird and old fashioned, so you get the character vibes.

**Emily:** That's my assumption is that, because she has these little ringlet curls that bounce all over the place that we'd be like, "Oh, she's girlish and young."

**Molly:** Right. Then we get Mr. Woodhouse waiting outside of the house with his watch, and he looks so nervous, and I just want to give him a hug. He's afraid that something happened, because Isabella is late, and he's like, "You know her. She's late. Her carriage has been overturned." [00:18:00] And then he turns to Emma, and he says, "Do you think Miss Smith is coming down with something. I heard her sneeze in the corridor." And I was like, "If that is not me, I don't know what else is."

**Becca:** But also, he's right, because she is sick, the next scene.

**Molly:** Oh, my God, you're right. I didn't even notice that.

**Lauren:** She was onto something.

**Molly:** Thank God, she didn't come over. Then Isabella and John Knightley arrive, who we love, and they come in for dinner. And at dinner, Mr. Woodhouse is saying that they shouldn't

have gone to the sea because it's unhealthy. As this conversation is going on, Emma asks Knightley if she can have the salt, and he just passes her the salt without looking at her, and she looks so crestfallen. Like, she was hoping that maybe they would make eye contact or something, but they're in a fight because of Harriet and everything.

Then as that little interaction is happening, the Wingfield versus Perry battle is going on, which I'm so glad that we get to keep in this adaptation.

**Becca:** It's true to the book, [00:19:00] The Battle of the Apothecaries is afoot.

**Molly:** Perry the Apothecary.

**Lauren:** That's one of the great things about series adaptations instead of movies is that there's just so much more airtime to be able to include those little details from the books, and it gives you such a richer adaptation, I think.

**Molly:** Yeah. And as the battle is heating up, Knightley jumps in and tries to change the subject to the road and how they can walk to visit Randalls, which then makes Mr. Woodhouse go on about, "How poor Miss Taylor, she got married. We never see her anymore." And Emma's like, "We've only missed seeing her one day." She and Knightley give a little smile at each other like, "Okay, we've defused the situation." And then we get Emma sitting alone with the baby Emma, which our listeners pointed out is like a block of wood, like that baby is not moving.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Emily:** I didn't even notice that. How horrible.

**Molly:** It's like a block of wood wrapped up in blankets. It's just completely solid.

**Lauren:** It doesn't even look like vaguely baby-shaped when you see her from-- When it's not a closeup on the baby's face, [00:20:00] that's not even baby shaped. That's just a blanket that's wrapped around like a rectangle.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** You're just so focused on Romola Garai and Jonny Lee Miller just staring at each other intently. I've watched this so many times, I've never noticed that. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah, that's a fake baby. He comes over and they are talking about how they should resolve their own conflicts as well as they resolve the ones within their family. They banter a bit about their age difference, and she's like, "Well, we've grown closer in judgment as we've gotten older." And then he takes her hand and says, "Let us be friends." He touches her hand. I screamed. I was like, "Oh, my God, he just held her hand with his hand." Nobody seemed as excited as me in our Discord chat. I was like, "Oh, my God, you, guys, why is nobody focusing on this?"

**Becca:** Everyone's focused on the wooden baby.

**Molly:** Yeah. So they talk to each other through the baby. They are [00:21:00] like, "Tell your aunt that," blah, blah, blah, blah. And she's like, "Yes, you should grow up to be infinitely cleverer and not so conceited," and they're joking. And then Emma's like, "I hope Mr. Martin isn't too disappointed." We get this flashback of Mr. Martin being disappointed in the fields, being sad.

**Becca:** It's giving Dan Stevens as Edward Ferrars chopping wood.

**Emily:** [gasps]

**Molly:** It is.

**Emily:** You're so correct.

**Molly:** I forgot about that.

**Lauren:** It's like, "Look at me. Look how forlorn I am."

**Molly:** Yeah. All it's missing is the rain.

**Becca:** With my sideburns.

**Molly:** The sideburns are a lot.

**Lauren:** They are. Yeah.

**Molly:** So then, we cut to Emma and Harriet in Harriet's room, and Emma's like, "Oh, you should wear this to the Westons party." And then Harriet is just a disaster. She's so sick. And Emma's like, "Okay, you can't go to this party."

**Becca:** It's a very humorous cut though because Emma's standing there with her dresses up and she's like, "You're going to look so gorgeous at the party." And it's cut to Harriet, who's lying in bed with a spitting bucket in front of her, like [makes heaving noises]

**Molly:** Yeah. And her hair is [00:22:00] down and it's just like a big giant poof of rats' nests,

just like she's been in bed for days. I don't know how many days it's been, but-- [crosstalk]

**Lauren:** It looks like it.

**Molly:** Yeah. Then we cut to Emma and John Knightley walking in the square, and they run into Mr. Elton, and Emma tells him that Harriet is sick, and he's like, "Oh, that's too bad." And then he sees her nephews fighting and he says, "I'm sure having your family here is giving you comfort." And John comes over and he's like, "What are you saying about my family?" [giggles] And at this point, I had to share that the people in our Discord chat were like, "Am I attracted to John Knightley?"

**Lauren:** I can't take that actor seriously as John Knightley because he's a cheating brother in *Love Actually*. And so, every time I see him-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** That's why I recognized him. No.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Wait, wait, wait, is Colin Firth's cheating brother in *Love Actually*?

**Lauren:** Yes.

**Becca:** Oh, my God.

**Molly:** I thought he looked familiar.

**Lauren:** Because I did the exact same [00:23:00] thing, y'all, did going, "Hmm, that man looks familiar." And I was like, "I know. I know that face from somewhere." And it's like, I know his dopey expression. He's trying to lie about why he's in Colin Firth's house.

**Becca:** [gasps]

**Lauren:** And then I looked it up, and it's him.

**Becca:** Unbelievable.

**Molly:** I'm shook.

**Becca:** Wait a minute. So, wait a minute, this man has made a career off of playing the brother of Jane Austen love interest.

**Lauren:** Yes.

**Becca:** Because I know Colin Firth is not technically a Jane Austen love interest-- [crosstalk]

**Emily:** He is though.

**Molly:** But he is *the* Jane Austen love interest.

**Becca:** He is *the* Jane Austen love interest. I'm dying. That's incredible.

**Emily:** Thank you so much, Lauren.

**Lauren:** You are so welcome.

**Emily:** That enhanced my experience.

[laughter]

**Molly:** Truly. And they start talking about the party, the Christmas party at the Westons, and he's like, "Oh, I'm a poor bachelor. I can't afford a carriage." And so, John invites him to come in their carriage with them. Later, they're waiting for their carriage, and John is like, "I only invited him because you were flirting with him so hard," because they kept having these little eye moments [00:24:00] where they were like, "Oops, John's being cranky John. Hehehe." He and Emma's like, "I wasn't doing anything." Like, "He's into Harriet." And John was like, "Trust me, I am always right about this sort of thing, and you better watch yourself because he's into you."

**Becca:** Do you know that meme where it's like you just add nails to someone who's giving love advice?

**Lauren:** Yes, I know. The person who started that for Chris Evans was adding the nails in the bonnet.

**Becca:** Incredible.

**Emily:** John's insight just, it feels like it comes out of nowhere because of the scenes that we see him in earlier where he's just bickering or being impatient, but he is-- Well, okay, Knightley also definitely clucked Elton being into Emma, but John is the only one who says it out loud and is like, "You're really stupid for not seeing this."

**Molly:** Totally.

**Becca:** Yeah. The Knightley brothers are all down to take Emma down a peg. [00:25:00]

**Emily:** This is true.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Emma's like, "No." And then, Mr. Elton comes into the carriage.

**Molly:** And he sits next to her, and he goes, "How very cozy we all are."

**Lauren:** He's right up on her.

**Emily:** He's so close.

**Molly:** He's so close, like, just an arm's length. There's so much space on the other side of you in this carriage.

**Emily:** For someone who was related to so many clergymen, Jane Austen really did them dirty in some of this fiction.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Emily:** Between Elton and Mr. Collins, and I'm sure other people I'm forgetting.

**Becca:** I believe her father was also a clergyman.

**Emily:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** I wonder if this was like a fun inside joke between her and her sisters, like, her dad would never read her books. And so, she's like, "Hehehe." Or, if he did read them, he was at the dinner table like, "So this Mr. Elton." And she's like, "Oops, hehehe." I don't know. That's my head canon.

**Lauren:** I like it.

**Molly:** In this carriage ride, Emma tells Mr. Elton that Harriet is doing much worse, and his immediate response is, "I've never looked forward to an evening out [00:26:00] more." And it's like, "Where is your tact?"

**Lauren:** Not present.

**Molly:** None. The whole ride, John complains about how it's going to snow. It's just like a montage of them riding along and him being like, "Look at this weather. I can't believe we're outside." It's word for word from the book. I love-- This is the Luke I hate snow monologue.

**Becca:** Oh, no notes.

**Molly:** Chef's kiss. Then they arrive and they get out of the carriage, and she sees Knightley getting off his horse and she scolds him for not taking a carriage. There is just some prime bickering where she's like, "I'm ashamed to be seen with you." And he's like, "Well, you're not being seen with me. Mr. Elton's over there to come walk you in." And you see Mr. Elton standing there like, "Hehehe."

**Becca:** This is a beautiful moment of dread though, because you can tell she's taking out her frustration with Elton on Knightley in this moment where she's like, "I wanted you to escort me in." And he's like, "No, Elton's there. He's got you." And she's like, "Oh, no."

**Molly:** Mirroring perfectly the moment later when she tries to get John to come in the carriage [00:27:00] and he's like, "No, Mr. Elton will escort you home."

**Lauren:** What an instigator.

**Molly:** Ah.

**Emily:** It feels premeditated between the Knightley brothers here.

**Molly:** Yeah. I think that they planned this, for sure.

**Becca:** I think John planned that maybe, but George is out there just like staring adoringly at his horse and being like, "La-di-da-di-da. You not know I have a feeling for Emma and the world, hahaha."

**Molly:** He does love this horse. I love what he says. First of all, the horse's name is Bessie. And he's like, "Well, Bessie needed to stretch her legs. [unintelligible [00:27:27] Bessie." But then also, he says, "This man likes to come and go as he pleases, not having to call for horses a day in advance," and blah, blah, blah. One of his lines in this and this is one of my favorites, so I'm going to save the exact wording for later. But they go inside, and Elton makes this huge show of helping Emma get her cloak off. He's like, "Ah, ah, ah, you don't want to crush Miss Woodhouse's cloak."

**Becca:** That is one of my favorite moments from this episode.

**Molly:** Oh, it's one of my cringiest moments.

**Emily:** I cringed [00:28:00] so hard. It's so horrible.

**Molly:** The whole room can hear them.

**Lauren:** You can just see Emma's wheel starting to turn too about, "Oh, no, I hate admitting when I'm wrong, but maybe John Knightley's right. This is the worst."

**Molly:** Yup, you can see the panic starting to sink into her eyes. She goes over to Mr. Weston, and he's trying to tell her about something going on with Frank, but Elton keeps coming up to her. And first, he's like, "Is your father comfortable in that chair?" And then he's like, "Do you want me to get you a drink? Maybe you could come sit over here." She just



misses the whole thing with Mr. Weston, and she's so bummed. You can just see her being like, "What have I gotten myself into?"

Then at dinner, Mr. Elton tries to get Emma to sit next to him. This is one of my favorite moments. Mr. Weston is like, "Emma, over here, please." She just goes and sits between the Westons, and Elton is like, "Oh," and then just scooches the chair.

**Becca:** He offers the seat to Isabella, who gives them this look like, "What's up with you?" [giggles]

**Molly:** Yeah. [00:29:00] It's so good. And then Mrs. Weston tells Emma basically what she missed, which was that Frank had set off for Highbury, but had to turn back because of a letter from his aunt telling him that she was sick that he got on the way. And Emma says that, "His setting off so recklessly is heroic and romantic and gentlemanly." And Knightley goes, "I thought gentlemen always rode in carriages."

**Becca:** [giggles]

**Emily:** That was so good.

**Molly:** Oh, I love him. She gives him this look like-- I wish that facial expressions could translate into an audio medium, because it's like, "Hmm," basically.

**Emily:** It's petulant.

**Molly:** Yes, it is, in a hot way.

**Lauren:** [laughs] I have to agree.

After dinner, the ladies are sitting around talking shit about Mrs. Churchill, and then the men come in, and Elton sits directly between Emma [00:32:00] and Mrs. Weston, which I feel like is a recurring theme from all of these adaptations that Elton just sandwiches himself in between Emma and someone else.

**Becca:** I don't want to be misquoted on this, but I believe that's in the book.

**Molly:** Oh.

**Emily:** I was going to say, I think that is actually book accurate. It stands out so perfectly. It's such a perfect characterization moment that how could you leave that out.

**Molly:** Now that I'm thinking about it, I do recall us during the book read one week trying to find the perfect meme of someone sitting between two other people. So yeah, oh, that explains why it's in every adaptation. [giggles] It's perfect. So, he's sitting in between them and he's like, "I hope you guys are talking about Miss Smith's cold. I hope you're telling Emma that she should stay far away from Miss Smith, so that she will not get sick, because Emma's health is the most important thing." And as this is happening, John looks outside and goes, "I knew it. [00:33:00] It's snowing. Look where we are." Like, "You wanted to come out here and look where it got us." And then they all get up and they're like, "Oh, my God, we should leave."

Knightley comes in and he's like, "It's not really snowing that much," but he's like, "If you help make your father, I'll call for the coaches." He and Emma have this sweet little moment in the corner. So, they call for the coaches. I'm glad that this happened after dinner in this one, because in the last adaptation we watched, it happened before dinner, and the poor Westerns were here with this Christmas dinner by themselves.

**Becca:** Devastating.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, they're waiting for the carriages, and Emma goes to get in and John walks past and she's like, "Oh, Mr. Knightley, Mr. John Knightley or whatever, can you come in this carriage?" And he's, "Oh, no, it's fine." And so Emma and Elton are alone, and then we get the proposal. He's like, "Look at the stars. Look how they shine for you."

**Emily:** You beat me to it.

**Molly:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Becca:** Do you know what he is? [00:34:00] I'm going to go out on a limb and assume everyone here was on Tumblr in 2009?

**Emily:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Everyone just nodded in unison.

[laughter]

**Lauren:** You pegged us. I mean, what can I say? [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** This is like him in the scene, the hair, the eyes, the voice and the words together just come off as a fan edit on Tumblr Circuit 2009 so hard to me.

**Lauren:** You are so right. I didn't clock the fan edit, but I wrote down. What did I say? Mr. Elton looks like he belongs in a 2000s rock band wearing leather pants, like, a really bad 2000s boy rock band.

**Becca:** He looks like the cover art for like hook from *Once Upon a Time* fan fiction.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Emily:** That's exactly what it is. [laughs]

**Molly:** I'm envisioning a post in which I take his face and put it on these various things.

**Lauren:** I eagerly await that.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** But can we all agree that he's hot though?

**Lauren:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Oh, he's a very handsome man-

**Molly:** [00:35:00] Great.

**Becca:** -who's clearly a very good actor because he comes off as so ooh.

**Molly:** Yeah. Because he has the little eyebrow thing where one of his eyebrows goes a little bit higher, so he looks like a cartoon. He's like a cartoon smoldering. He looks like, what's his face from *Tangled*? A little bit.

**Lauren:** Oh. Flynn Rider?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Emily:** Oh, my God.

**Molly:** Like Flynn Rider, but with leather pants.

**Lauren:** I see it. Honestly, when he came on screen in the first episode, you know the thing where it's like, "Oh, no, he's hot"? That's the reaction.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Lauren:** It's like, "Wait, no."

**Molly:** Yes.

**Emily:** He's just unreasonably attractive in this.

**Becca:** You kind of get why Emma would be like, "Oh, yes, so eligible and why he would think himself able to marry up in the world, because he's got that pretty little face on him?"

**Molly:** Yes, which is book accurate. When Elton is so grimy looking, and all the other adaptations, I'm like, "Well, he's not, actually cute. So why are we trying to push him on Harriet?"

**Becca:** My fiancé walks through at the exact moment of the proposal scene and just goes, [00:36:00] "Umm, okay, watching this tells me now that Alan Cumming was simply miscast in the other one.

**Molly:** Alan Cumming. Well, he just made it very comedic.

**Lauren:** Yes.

**Molly:** They both did. They were a little bit. I think that the Elton in the 2020 does fit with the vibe of the film as a whole because it is a little bit more campy and over the top and aesthetically bigger. So anyway, back to this one. He's also sweaty. I just have to throw that out. Like, he progressively gets sweatier as it goes on, so his face is shining. He comes next to her and takes her hand at one point, and she's like, "Can you get over there, please?" And he's like, "I know that you're just refusing me as a first thing to make me more tempted." And Emma was like, "Okay, Mr. Collins." Like, "Eww."

Then he's saying that she had encouraged him throughout this whole time. And the looks [00:37:00] that she's giving him, she's like, "Okay, sure." She does not understand at all that her friendly behavior could have been interpreted that way. To be fair to her, we should be allowed to be friendly without being mistaken for flirting.

**Becca:** I think we can all agree Mr. Elton is in the wrong here.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Emily:** Unquestionably.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Even if Emma was a little clueless.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Emily:** Oh.

**Molly:** [laughs] So it's a disaster, as it always is. Emma later is getting ready for bed and we

get her voiceover like, "Emma, how could you have been so stupid?" [giggles] We get a flashback to Mr. Elton looking at her painting, and she hears Mr. Knightley's voice saying that, "He's not the man for Harriet. He would never go for someone like that," and she's like, "Oh, how am I going to tell Harriet?" And then, oh, we get my favorite scene. Knightley flings open his double doors [Becca laughs] [00:38:00] to look at this beautiful snowy countryside.

**Becca:** He looks so joyous in this moment.

**Molly:** He's so happy. I love this because a lot of times, we don't get to see Joyful Knightley, just like on his own. We only get it in moments when he's with Emma, but he actually is so freaking cute. So, he flings open the doors and he's breathing it all in, and he goes for a nice little walk through the snowy countryside, and he meets up with John, who's playing with the kids, and they're having a snowball fight, and he's like, "Oh, my gosh, remember, Emma used to be the best at snowballs. Where is she?" He starts looking for Emma, and he sees her in the window, and he waves really big. He's like, "Yay."

**Becca:** And then Emma's tepid little wave.

**Molly:** She's like, "Ah, are we friends, again?"

**Becca:** No, no, they're friends again at this point, for sure.

**Molly:** Oh, right, they did. They made up already.

**Lauren:** She's just depressed.

**Becca:** It's just, she's like, "Oh, God, I'm humiliated, and I want to die, and Mr. Knightley was right about everything." Meanwhile, Mr. Knightley is like, "It's Christmas, and my nephews and nieces are here."

**Molly:** Yeah, he's so [00:39:00] stinking cute. And then later, Mr. Woodhouse gets a letter from Mr. Elton and he's like, "Emma, what's this? Why is he saying he can't come at Christmas? We didn't invite him at Christmas."

**Emily:** The audacity of this man just never ends.

**Molly:** Every first-third of a Jane Austen book can be described as, oh, the audacity of men.

**Lauren:** Honestly.

**Emily:** Correct.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, Emma goes to Mrs. Goddard's and she brings Harriet a present. And Harriet has a present for her, but Emma is just in tears, and Harriet's like, "What's wrong?" And she tells her everything about Mr. Elton. I wanted to note that I love her coat in this scene. It's like a red peacoat or like a burnt orange peacoat. I don't know how to describe the color, but I want it. They're both crying, and Harriet's like, "But he asked you, like, would you maybe change your mind about matrimony?" And Emma jumps up and she's like, "No way." She switches on a dime in terms of vibes. But then she sits down, and she says, "He will regret his decision for you are a far better person than I could ever [00:40:00] be."

**Lauren:** That was actually like legit sweet.

**Molly:** It was so sweet because you can see that Emma genuinely means it. She's been humbled a little bit by being wrong, and she's seen that she actually messed up by making-- She still thinks that Harriet made the right decision in turning down Robert Martin. But I think that maybe in the back of her mind she's like, "Ooh."

**Lauren:** "Maybe I messed up."

**Molly:** Yeah. Then the seasons change. We get this shot of the snow disappearing and were being replaced by flowers. Harriet and Emma are walking along, and Harriet is still talking about Mr. Elton, and she is talking about him so much that Emma decides to bring her over to Miss Bates, because that is the only place where Harriet will not be able to get a word in edgewise, and who should be there but Jane.

**Becca:** Is that Jane Fairfax's music?

**Molly:** Yes. And this Jane Fairfax is very quiet, and she's sitting there, [00:41:00] and Emma keeps trying to ask her questions, and Miss Bates keeps answering for her. You can see it painting Jane. Like, I cannot wait for the Jane is exhausted scene because this Jane is showing it really well.

**Becca:** I will neither confirm nor deny anything here.

**Molly:** Oh, no.

**Lauren:** That was just such a deliciously awkward scene, because Jane even tries to say at some point like, "You don't really have to read my letters, because I'm sitting right here. So maybe we don't go through all that." And Miss Bates is like, "Oh, but in this letter right here,

let me go get it," and gets up to go get the letter, and then read [unintelligible [00:41:35], "But you could just be quiet."

**Molly:** Yeah, and she just like, "Lets it happen."

**Becca:** I really love this casting of Jane. I'm not familiar with the actress who plays Jane in this, but I think it gets that dynamic between Emma and Jane really nicely, very immediately, because they're both very beautiful, they're obviously contemporaries, and they're both very accomplished. [00:42:00] But you can feel Emma being blunt and a little messy in her presentation sometimes, but much higher status. You can feel Jane being timid, and therefore, revered for her very modest nature and almost in spite of herself.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. So as Miss Bates is reading the letter, Emma is envisioning what's happened, and we see her fantasizing about this incident with Mr. Dixon. So, we see Jane and Mr. Dixon walking along with Miss Campbell, and Jane slips, and Mr. Dixon catches her. This Mr. Dixon looks like Timothée Chalamet as *Wonka*.

**Lauren:** Oh, my God.

**Molly:** Can we agree?

**Lauren:** Yes. I didn't see it until now, but yes.

**Molly:** I couldn't unsee it. I was like, "Oh, what?" Not at all what I pictured.

**Becca:** The perm alone-

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** -makes an impression.

**Molly:** Yeah, [00:43:00] it's a lot of hair.

**Emily:** I've got to say, I loved just the drama and the dramatization of that scene and how it's so clearly just Emma's imagination completely running away with her. There's nothing to suggest that this is what actually happened, especially with the detail of Miss Campbell standing off to the side and looking disgruntled.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. You can see the plot starting to form in Emma's head because she is so bored with her life. I feel like this adaptation in particular really hones in on how bored Emma is, because they even go on later. We'll get there. But she talks about how she's never been anywhere and she's like, "But everything I need is right here in Highbury," but she looks sad about it. So anyway, we hear the whole story, and Jane is like, "It's nothing. It was not a big deal, I promise." But as Emma leaves, she talks to Harriet about like, "Why does Jane think it's not a big [00:44:00] deal? Why didn't she go to Ireland with the Dixons or with the Campbells and blah, blah, blah?" Harriet is just not listening at all. She's like, "Sorry, what'd you say?" And Emma's like, "Oh, my God." And then they run into a mysterious stranger.

**Becca:** I wonder who this could be.

**Molly:** Emma's like, "Can I help you with? You look lost." And he's like, "No, I know exactly where I am," and then he rides away. This interaction confused me.

**Becca:** So, I think the implication is that, spoilers for our listeners who may have only watched part of this episode, it's Frank Churchill.

**Molly:** Uh-huh.

**Becca:** I think the implication is that a week before Frank officially "arrives in Highbury," Jane sees him on horseback in the vicinity, "Why might he have been there? One does not know. Emma never thinks about it again."

**Molly:** Right. Was he there to see Jane?

**Becca:** Well, according to Frank, in this episode, he says, "Oh, I was--"

**Molly:** He was like, "It was too short of a [00:45:00] visit. So, I was like, that would be insulting. So, I turned around."

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah, which is bullshit.

**Emily:** Yeah, don't buy that. But yeah, the way it was edited was confusing because you don't have a sense of how much time has actually passed. I definitely thought it was later the same day, and then they said something about the timeline.

**Molly:** Yeah. Okay. I'm glad we talked this through because I was confused. I was like, "Wait, is this the time that they're talking about later when he came before?" But they also said that he started to leave earlier at Christmas. Anyway, glad we talked about it. Then we cut to Emma, Harriet, and Mrs. Weston sitting, and Harriet's reading and just sobbing, and

Emma and Mrs. Weston are talking about Harriet. Even though she's right there, they're like, "She looks so ill. Why is she so ill? Is she okay? No, she's just sad. Oh, she's depressed." She's just sitting there, and she looks up at them, and she looks like a vampire. Like, her eyes are bright red.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Poor thing. And then Mr. Knightley comes [00:46:00] in and he's like, "Oh, my gosh, have you heard the news?" He's so excited and then he sees Harriet and he's like, "I wanted to say that it was nice that you went to go visit Miss Fairfax." And Emma's like, "That's not news." But then who should come in behind him, but Jane and Miss Bates. And they're like, "Oh, my gosh, thank you for the pork. Have you heard the news? Mr. Elton is engaged."

**Becca:** Harriet just loses her mind almost instantly.

**Molly:** Bursts into tears. Miss Bates thinks that she's happy for Mr. Elton, so she just continues on. She says, "Mother likes the hind of pig best of all. Her name is Miss Augusta Hawkins, and she is worth £20,000. It's the one breath that really does it for me."

**Emily:** And also, the absolute insistence on thinking that Harriet is crying happy tears for some reason. Wouldn't have happy tears ever looked like that? She is bawling.

**Molly:** Oh, yeah. Yeah, she's really unable to read the room in this situation, and she's just really excited that she has the gossip first for once.

**Becca:** [00:47:00] I think the best part is that she goes, "But I couldn't have beat Miss Woodhouse to this knowledge." And she goes, "I knew it you who knows everyone's heart."

**Lauren:** And poor Emma is just sitting there like, "Oh, this is the worst moment of my life by far."

**Molly:** Yeah. Then Emma goes to talk to Mrs. Weston alone at her house another time and she's like, "I was so sure about Harriet and Elton." And Mrs. Weston is like, "Well, it can be difficult to figure out how to impart one's wisdom on a friend." She's looking at Emma like, "I have something to impart on you, if you'll hear me." Emma's not hearing her at all. She's like, "Oh, I know, it's so difficult." Like as if she is now in Mrs. Weston's role for Harriet. She's like, "I understand what you went through with me now. I'm a big girl."

Then Mr. Weston comes in to tell Emma that Frank is coming home tomorrow. And Emma makes a passing comment saying, "Oh, I was beginning to think Frank didn't exist." And Mr. Weston takes this really personally and he's [00:48:00] like, "Why does everyone think that he's never going to come?" And Emma's like, "No, I just really want to meet him. It's actually good that he's so attentive to his aunt, because that means that you were a good father to him," and that makes up for it. And he says that he will bring Frank tomorrow at 4 o'clock precisely. So, the next day at 4 o'clock, Frank arrives. And surprise, surprise, it's the guy from the horse.

**Becca:** Shut up. No.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** The mysterious man referenced in passing through the entire story so far is also the stranger we saw for a brief moment a few scenes prior.

**Lauren:** This is really a subversion of expectations.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Stop.

**Molly:** He mentions that he must visit a Miss [unintelligible [00:48:44]]. Emma says, "Oh, my goodness, why?" And then Mr. Weston, who-- Now, in other adaptations, I've been like, "Mr. Weston is hot." I haven't yet said that in this adaptation, but in this moment, he is hot.

**Becca:** You know.-

**Molly:** No?

**Becca:** -you may have left me [00:49:00] behind on this one. You had me. You had me on the 2020 Emma, Mr. Weston. I love this Mr. Weston, but-

**Molly:** Not hot?

**Becca:** -in the Michael Gambon as Mr. Woodhouse mold for me-

**Molly:** Sure.

**Becca:** -than a nice slice of daddy, if you know what I mean.

**Molly:** Not daddy. All right, so maybe I am [crosstalk]

**Becca:** I'm torturing our guests right now. [crosstalk]

**Lauren:** No. I was thinking this is another instance of, I can't read that actor as anybody

other than the first role I saw him in, because he's also Sir Anthony in *Downton Abbey*, and he's the old invalid for Edith. [laughs] And so that's like the only way I can see him. I'm sorry.

**Molly:** No, that's fair. I actually don't need anyone to agree with me on this one because it was just a passing thought and I'm not entirely sure I even think it, but it's good to always say it when I think it because there might be a listener out there who thinks that and I want them to feel seen.

**Becca:** Yeah, I was going to say, this is how you make our listeners feel seen.

**Molly:** Yeah. Just everyone's hot.

**Becca:** [giggles] [00:50:00] Having incorrect take.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah. So, Mr. Weston explained to Frank the Bates' being poor and he's like, "Oh, Jane is different here than she was when you met her, so you should go pay them respects." And Emma's like, "Oh, so you knew Jane at Weymouth? Did you see the incident?" And then you just see panic in his eyes. He's like, "What incident? What are you talking about?" And she's like, "Did you see Mr. Dixon saved Jane's life?" And he's like, "Oh, yes, it was the talk of the town." He was standing very close to her, if you know what I mean.

And he then asks if she's been to Weymouth and she says, "No, she's never left Highbury." This is when we get that moment of her being maybe a little sad that she's lived in Highbury her whole life. Then we get a slice of life scene of Emma and Mrs. Weston at the market, and we see children playing, and we see Emma and Mrs. Weston looking at a tiny puppy.

**Becca:** It's a very cute puppy.

**Molly:** Always got to point out the dogs. When Emma sees Frank in the Bates' window and he makes this [00:51:00] gagging face at her, he's like, "Ugh, what am I doing in here?" And Emma giggles, and Mrs. Weston notices the two of them flirting. And then Frank comes down and he wants to talk to Emma. Emma sees Jane watching them through the window and closing it in this little moment. And then Emma starts talking shit about Jane and he goes along with it.

And then later that day, Emma comes in asking if there's been any post at her own house. Knightley is there just writing a letter just hanging out in their house and she's like, "Did you hear the Coles are having a party?" And Knightley is like, "So you would never accept an invitation from the Coles? What's the problem?" And she's, "Well, you know--" And he's like, "Oh, what, you haven't been invited?" And she's like--

**Becca:** "They know better than to invite me."

**Molly:** Yeah. She's like, "They would never invite me or you or the Westons." And he's like, "Oh, I've already had my invitation." [giggles] And she's like, [00:52:00] "What?" She's just pissed, and she has FOMO, and Knightley's like, "Well, anyway, I'm surprised you're here. You're usually out and about with the prodigal son," he says, it was such disdain dripping off of his voice. And Emma's like, "Oh, well, he has urgent business in London right now." And then Knightley gives her this look and she's like, "He's getting his hair cut.

As that's happening, a letter arrives and Emma looks at it and she starts getting all giddy and smug and she's like, "It's an invitation from the Coles." She's so thrilled. And Knightley's like, "Well, what are you doing? You should reject them right away because she has already stated she would never go." And she's like, "Well, if all my friends are going." And he turns to Mr. Woodhouse and flings his arms out like, "Can you believe this girl?"

**Emily:** I love that you described her as having FOMO, because I think that's really Emma's defining trait is that she just wants to be involved with everything. She wants her finger in all of the pies, because she just wants to be in charge.

**Molly:** She loves to [00:53:00] be the town puppet master.

**Becca:** She is a mix of the town's princess and the town's dictator. She wants full control, but also adoration.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, the party. Knightley meets Emma outside, and she is so proud of him for arriving in his coach. And inside, we learn that Jane has received a mystery pianoforte. And as they're discussing this, Frank is smirking. She goes off with Frank and she's like, "Why are you smiling?" And they start speculating about whether Mr. Dixon might have sent it. They're watching Jane across the room, and Emma's thinking, "Well, a gentleman would never risk a lady's reputation, unless, of course, he is most ardently in love."

I realized it's gone back and forth between adaptations who plants this idea in whose head

about Mr. Dixon. But in the book, Emma plants the idea in Frank's head, and [00:54:00] that's what happens here too. But I forgot that that's what happened, because in other adaptations, Frank plants the idea as a way to cover up his situation. So, I liked that we went back to the original here, because it makes Frank less smart, like, he's just like, "Oh, how lucky am I that this thing came up to cover up my ruse?"

**Becca:** Yeah. I also like that it's more book accurate here. I also love that we see the pianoforte having spent a lot of time in the Bates's house already and knowing that it will not fit well.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm, there's no room for it. Then they ask Emma to play the piano. She does this duet with Mr. Churchill. It's actually very sweet. She's playing and singing and she's clearly having a good time. Knightley is watching her and giving her these little encouraging nods, which is really sweet. And as Jane watches her, I was like, "I like this dynamic between Emma and Jane." We already touched on it a little bit, but it seems like Jane actually wants to be friends. It's a very different approach [00:55:00] than making them in competition and a little bit just always trying to one up each other.

This Jane just seems to genuinely would be like, "Good job, Emma." And then when she goes up to play, she's just wanting to do a good job. She doesn't want to show off. She just does her thing.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think there's two ways to interpret the story. It's because we get the book from Emma's perspective, you could read it as this competitive frenemies situation, which is how the 2020 adaptation of *Emma* plays it up. I think I am more inclined to interpret the book in this adaptation, even though I like the way the 2020 does it as well, which is that this competition between them is something Emma has fabricated in her head just to deal with her envy of Jane Fairfax, and Jane Fairfax is genuinely as sweet as she comes off because the annoying thing about perfect people is that often they are so sweet and actually not [00:56:00] fake and trying to one up you.

**Lauren:** So, you can't even give me a valid reason to hate you. Why can't you just be mean or cruel? You have to be perfectly nice and sweet too. Are you kidding me?

**Emily:** They'd even have a love to hate moment? So unfair.

**Becca:** Hate to love is more like it in this circumstance.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** But I also think that this adaptation, the actress playing Jane, makes her seem preoccupied with other things.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** You get the sense that she's dealing with other shit in her head that has nothing to do with Emma, and Emma is just 100% focused on this dynamic.

**Molly:** Yeah. When Jane starts playing, she goes up to Knightley and she goes, "Oh, she plays so much better than I do." It seems like she's just saying that like, I don't think she's necessarily fishing for compliments, and he doesn't give her one, but she's just like, "Oh, there she goes again being good at stuff." And then she goes to sit with Mrs. Weston and Mrs. Weston is like, "Did you know that Knightley brought his carriage just to give Jane and Miss Bates a ride?" [00:57:00] And she thinks that he might have a thing for Jane. And Emma's like, "No way. Absolutely not." But as Knightley is watching Jane play, Frank says that he's convinced Jane to play three more songs, and Knightley runs up and starts fighting with Frank. He's like, "No, you're going to tire her out with all that playing." It's so awkward. In front of everyone, they're having this argument and Jane's just like, "Oh, my God."

**Becca:** Yeah. I think the both men fussing over her is her like excruciating pain in that moment.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Oh, so good.

**Molly:** Emma is like, "This is no way does he like her though. Try to imagine Miss Bates at Donwell." She starts laughing about how Miss Bates would be at Donwell and Mrs. Weston is like, "No, Emma. First of all, don't be mean. Second of all, I'm serious. He's always like Jane and he's so concerned with her health, [00:58:00] obviously." And Emma looks at Mr. Knightley and she thinks to herself, a quote from earlier, "A gentleman would never risk a lady's reputation, unless, of course, he is most ardently in love." Dah, dah, dah.

**Lauren:** Drama.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** I love the way this ends because it's a cliffhanger unless you know anything about the story. [laughs]

**Molly:** Right. For us, it was like, "Why did it end right there?" But if you were watching this, not having read the book, you're like, "Oh, my God, does he like Jane?"

**Lauren:** "What is she going to do?"

**Becca:** Well, that does bring us to the end of this episode of *Emma* 2009, which brings us to our study questions, which are usually standbys. But today, we have a Patreon submitted study question from our patron, Emily, and her question for us to discuss on air is, how is the relationship between the Bates/Fairfax family shown more in this adaptation than it would be in other adaptations?

**Molly:** Do you think it means the relationship [00:59:00] within the Bates/Fairfax family, like the Bates' and Jane Fairfax, or their relationship with the outside world?

**Becca:** I think we can tackle both.

**Molly:** Okay. For me, I think that the relationship between Jane herself/her family and the Bates' is shown a lot more starting in Episode 1, actually, when we see the Bates' becoming down on their luck and they're like, "Oh, my gosh, we have to get rid of our house. What are we going to do with the kid?" Because the kid is not their child. It's their niece. Her parents are dead. So tragic. And they've taken her in. They clearly love her a lot, but they have to send her away. And so, we've already have that dynamic.

Then with her coming back, we've talked about it a little bit already, but Miss Bates talking over her or answering for her, and Jane trying to say something, but ultimately letting Miss Bates take the reins, because she does respect her aunt and she respects her [01:00:00] grandma and she loves them, but it's an exhausting life for her. So, I love seeing that on display.

**Becca:** Lauren and Emily, any thoughts to add?

**Lauren:** I was going to say similarly, the biggest difference I see to other adaptations is that extra time we get to spend with them in Episode 1, because it's one thing to hear through dialogue that they used to be of a higher class or at least closer to Emma's ranks than they were previously, but now they've fallen on hard times, and it's another thing to be shown it at the beginning of the episode, even if it's very briefly to see them in a home of relative splendor. And then the next time we see them, they're in this very cramped, darkly lit apartment. Like, it doesn't seem like the entire house is there. It looks like they rent a room. Seeing that stark difference is, I think, a really great storytelling device and gets us a lot more of the backstory of the Bates/Fairfax clan in a really succinct way. Like, it's done really well. We only need to see that one scene of them [01:01:00] saying, what do we do with Jane in this nice house before we see them in their current circumstances to really get just how far they've fallen. I feel like that's not expressed as well in other adaptations.

**Emily:** Yeah. Jumping to the other half of that question, interpretation I guess about the Bates/Fairfax versus the world sort of, one scene, and I'm fairly confident it was in this episode that said to me how much they have become outsiders in their own community is when the Knightley family is leaving after Christmas, and Miss Bates is wheeling her mother down the gravel drive and just chattering the whole way about how they're going to have such a nice walk back to the village. Maybe it was the first episode. I can't remember.

**Molly:** I think it's in the first episode when Isabella is moving away. No, when Mrs. Weston-

**Emily:** That's right.

**Molly:** -is leaving-- [crosstalk] Yeah.

**Emily:** Yeah, it was after the wedding. Okay. Yeah.

**Molly:** But yeah, totally.

**Becca:** I love everyone's thoughts. I would only add to it, I [01:02:00] think what we get from this adaptation, which we don't always get even in the books is the why of the Bates family, why they're like this. And the answer to that question is almost because of each other. It is played for laugh so much that Mrs. Bates is basically like this mute older lady who is almost part of the furniture compared to her very chatty spinster daughter. What you see here is that Mrs. Bates caves in on herself when she loses everything, including her granddaughter, Jane. Miss Bates becomes chatty, partially to fill that air that was left by her mother. And then Jane is shy and timid, partially because she's terrified, having been sent away as a



small child to live with a man she didn't know very well. And then strained by the dynamic that has formed since she left between her aunt and her grandmother. I think that it highlights for us [01:03:00] just how obtuse and almost cruel Emma is in her actions towards this family to see that their relationships have formed them into this group of people who really struggle to make it day to day, no matter what Miss Woodhouse is thinking about and who she's setting up.

**Molly:** Yeah, it's tragic.

**Emily:** Yeah, I was just going to say, Emma likes to know her own family relationships as being so dramatic and tragic in some ways. But this is its own little family tragedy that's playing out right in front of her eyes, and she doesn't see the realities of it at all.

**Molly:** It makes it even harder to watch her and Frank just putting them down when they're already down, like, don't kick them when they're literally at the lowest point that they could be at. It's not a good look, but it's definitely thrown into a bigger light in this adaptation.

**Emily:** Yeah, this adaptation makes me feel even worse than any others about how mean, especially Frank and Emma [01:04:00] are about the Bates'. And about Jane too, like, y'all don't need to talk shit like that.

**Becca:** Yeah. Even Ms. Bates talking incessantly about Jane is put into context because Jane is the only bright spot in her life, the only thing that's turned out okay, it's-- Oh, it's devastating. Without giving too much away, it makes Box Hill.

**Molly:** I know. I'm not looking forward to that.

**Becca:** Thank you so much for your question, Emily. Patrons, that's a reminder that at the \$15 tier, you can submit your own study questions for our coverage of certain adaptations, and we are happy to discuss them on the air. So please send them in. So that leaves us with our standby study questions. First, best line delivery?

**Lauren:** Oh. Speaking of the Bates, I think for me it has to be, "Thank you for the High Court reports. And by the way, have you heard the news? Mr. Elton's engaged." That was my favorite line delivery of the whole episode.

**Emily:** I second that. It was peak comedy, for sure.

**Molly:** Only to be topped by what she says immediately after, which is-- What was it?

**Becca:** "Mother [01:05:00] so prefers the hind. Her name is Miss Augusta Hawkins, and she's worth £20,000."

**Molly:** Yeah, she's the hind of pig. I have two. In addition, we have Mr. Knightley talking about liking to take his horse instead of going in a carriage and he says, "This gentleman likes to leave a place when he wishes. He likes to be able to stride out into the world as he wishes and go home again when he chooses." He does stride, doesn't he?

**Molly:** Cue *Fight Song* by Rachel Platten.

[laughter]

**Molly:** Then my other one was, like, it started to snow, and Isabella is saying like, "Well, I can get out and walk if we don't have enough room in the carriage." Or like, "If the carriage breaks down or--" I don't know why she says. She'd get out and walk. I remember it from the book. And John Knightley goes, "In those shoes? I don't think so."

**Becca:** Once again, nails.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Okay. Mine is, "Uh-huh, careful there. Miss Woodhouse's cloak must not be crushed." Oh, Mr. Elton with a cringe.

**Molly:** Yeah, so cringe.

**Becca:** God bless. All right. [01:06:00] Second question. Notable changes from the book? They don't have to be good or bad. They can be either or neutral.

**Molly:** I have a question. Is that how they find out about Elton being engaged in the book? Because I seem to remember that not being how it happens.

**Emily:** It's been over a year since I read the book now, so I don't recall.

**Becca:** I can say it happens. Miss Bates is the one to break the news.

**Molly:** Okay.

**Becca:** But it happens, I believe, when they go to visit Miss Bates.

**Molly:** Okay. So she doesn't show up at their house.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** Okay. So not as big of a difference as I was hoping it would be. I don't know, it's

pretty book accurate. So let me just think. Someone else can go first.

**Becca:** I'll go. There's something that adaptations of *Emma* always seem to think is crucial, and I'm not sure why, which is to give us a moment where Frank is seen before he's actually [01:07:00] met. And I am not sure why every single adaptation does this. I'm not wrong. This doesn't happen in the books.

**Lauren:** No, I don't think so. Because I had the same thing where it's like, my notable change was, why did Frank Churchill just randomly pop up for a scene? And then I second guessed myself and said, "Well, wait, maybe he did randomly pop up in a sentence in the book?" But I don't think so.

**Becca:** I'm pretty sure he just comes and just meets Emma. But this adaptation and every adaptation seem to insist on inserting a little scene in there where he flirts with Emma on a horse, then rides away. And then Mr. Weston's like, "This is my son, Frank Churchill." And Emma's like, "Oh, we've met." [giggles]

**Molly:** Yeah. I don't remember that happening in the book. So that's a good addition.

**Lauren:** It's like, is this just in the period drama playbook where it's like, you must meet a mysterious person on a horse. You cannot meet him in a room. You cannot meet him around other people. You must have a run in on a horse on a deserted garden path, and then you can see him for real. I was like, "Who is writing the playbook for these scripts?" I don't understand.

**Molly:** I'm sorry to Jane Austen if this [01:08:00] is in the book. I'm sorry because to us, also because our listeners will let us know, but we don't remember-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Molly, she's not alive. So, it's okay.

**Lauren:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah, I know. Thanks for clarifying though.

**Becca:** I will say the best introduction in any Jane Austen adaptation ever would be Brandon and Marianne in the 1995 *Sense and Sensibility*. Can't be beat. When she's singing and he comes in and he's staring at her like the world revolves around her, it's the best introduction of all time. So, I don't need Frank Churchill saying, "I'm not lost."

**Molly:** Yeah, I agree with that.

**Emily:** Yeah. It was such an awkward, weird scene too. I don't know, it seemed weirdly placed.

**Molly:** Right. Like, why would he choose that moment to turn around and run away?

**Becca:** Does anybody have any other adaptation changes, or is it just simply this accurate?

**Molly:** It's pretty accurate.

**Emily:** I don't know if it would have taken place in this episode, but one of my favorite [01:09:00] scenes in the book is when Harriet brings out her box of treasures that she's collected from her time pining after Mr. Elton and ceremonially burns them.

**Molly:** Oh, yeah, that has to happen. They can't have cut that. But when?

**Becca:** It may or may not occur.

**Molly:** Later.

**Becca:** A little later.

**Emily:** Okay. I hope it does.

**Molly:** I will neither confirm nor deny. So then, we do least favorite and favorite parts of the movie. We start with the least favorite because we want to end on a positive note. I will bring it again to that Frank Churchill scene. I think it's very confusing in the narrative where it is, and I think it's very jarring to then see him a little bit later and be like, "Oh, you were just here." And then he's like, "Oh, thank you. I was here a week ago." And you're like, "That was three minutes ago, but okay." I would also say, I like the device of narrative Emma, but I think it's a little-- Like, it's very standard BBC fair to have that little voiceover thing. I'm a lukewarm on that narrative device here. I [01:10:00] like it better than the journaling in the Gwyneth Paltrow, but I'm glad they use it with a light touch, I will say.

**Molly:** I was going to say, I feel like it would make more sense if they used it with a heavier touch, so that it wasn't so random. Like, if it was a through line throughout the thing instead of every now and then, Emma being like, "A man must be really in love," blah, blah, blah. It's like, okay.

**Emily:** Yeah. I felt that way about several Austen adaptations. It's like, oh, they've chosen a thing to set them apart, but they didn't lean into it enough. Like, if you're going to do it,

you've got to really make that part of your production. Yeah, I agree. Either you cut it or you do it way more to acclimate the audience to this being part of your adaptation.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Lauren:** I think my least favorite part was not an actual critique. Those were all very well-reasoned things for why something should or should not be in the narrative. My least favorite part was the CGI snow right before the Elton proposal.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Didn't even notice.

**Lauren:** It [01:11:00] caught my eye immediately. [laughs]

**Molly:** That's so funny.

**Lauren:** It's a TV show. It's 2009. It's not like the special effects budget is going to be that high. So, it makes a lot of sense to me. But I had to pick a least favorite, and I really enjoyed the episodes. My least favorite is [Becca laughs] the CGI snow. [laughs]

**Molly:** That's so funny because I went to Warner Bros Studios a couple of months ago and went to the *Gilmore Girls* set. One of the things that they told us was about snow in the show because they started out using asbestos, which is obviously very bad for everyone, and they were like, "Wait a minute, this is bad for everyone." So, they stopped using asbestos. That's how they used to do snow across film, I guess. And then they switched to potato flakes or potato starch flakes. It's just like flakes of potato starch.

**Molly:** That made sense.

**Molly:** If you watch *Gilmore Girls*, it's just so fake. They're just dumping potato starch from the sky and none of it melts. It's just sitting on [01:12:00] their shirts. Anyway. So I love the fake snow.

**Lauren:** It's just the swirly snow is what's CGI. I'm sure they use something like potato flakes or something else for snow that actually needs to coat the ground or be in the actor's clothes or things like that. But it was like one moment specifically where it's swirling in front of the carriage, and I was just like, "Oh, no." [giggles]

**Molly:** I love that. We're watching *Frosty the Snowman*.

**Becca:** Incredible stuff.

**Emily:** Similar little nitpick that I don't think even was my least favorite or whatever. It just stood out and was jarring to me. And this is such a specific thing, Mr. Woodhouse's knit scarf. [giggles] I'm just staring at it like, I know what knit stitch that is. This is so just out of period. It's got the stupid little fringe on the end of a knit scarf. Like, what are you doing? It bothered me so much. Every time he wore that, all I could do was laser in on that scarf and think about it. [giggles]

**Molly:** I love how specific that is.

**Becca:** Okay. Counterpoint though, he does look darling.

**Emily:** He does [01:13:00] look very darling. He looks so cozy in that scarf, but it threw me off every time.

**Molly:** Amazing. Mine is, I love John Knightley. I really, really love him in the book and the adaptations. But I think that I like bored John Knightley more than I like crotchety John Knightley, which is more book accurate. But I forgot that that's how he was in the book. I think that I became more accustomed to watching the more Hugh Laurie sort of--

**Becca:** Mr. Palmer energy.

**Molly:** Yeah, Mr. Palmer energy John Knightley. This John Knightley has his moments where I'm like, "Yes--" He's funny, but I didn't like how he turned to Mr. Woodhouse. This happens in the book where he turned to Mr. Woodhouse and he's like--

**Becca:** [laughs] Very book accurate.

**Molly:** I know. He's like, "I know you wanted to come out tonight, but now look where we are, stuck in the snow." And I'm like, "Leave him alone." So that made me sad.

**Emily:** He's such a bitch.

**Molly:** Yeah, he really is.

**Lauren:** Leave Mr. Woodhouse alone. Leave him alone.

**Molly:** [01:14:00] I've gotten used to loving John Knightley because I've been spoiled by these other adaptations that don't do the book accurate thing. It really has to do with what order you watch the adaptations in I feel like, because this Knightley, I love him, but he's just a little bit mean. So that's my least favorite thing, I think.

**Becca:** Fair. All right, now we got to say favorite things. I'll start. I suppose I'll go with at least one that has already been said, but Knightley bursting out of the doors on Christmas Day with a giant smile on his face is like peak cinema.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** I will also give it to because it hasn't come up yet. The performance of the guy who plays Frank Churchill in this, I really like this Frank. It is not an easy character to nail. We have nitpicked pretty much every other Frank Churchill we've seen of the other two we've seen. I think he has a [01:15:00] boyish sheepishness that hides his skeevier activities in this one. I think he has one of those faces that you'd trust, which makes his later actions sort of unbearable.

**Molly:** Well, it almost-- I think that it really goes to make him more of a character that stumbled upon doing something shitty. He is like, "Oh, fuck, I'm in this situation," and things just happen to him, and he just doesn't make good choices. But it makes him less sinister, I think, in my opinion.

**Emily:** I will say I had two favorite things. One is very small, but it's just like, you know the sort of sleeveless, like, teal dress that Emma wears in a couple scenes over a shirt?

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Emily:** The color of that is just so perfect on Romola Garai. So, I really love that. But also, the scene where they're leaving Randalls at Christmas, [01:16:00] and that moment between Emma and Knightley where he's like, "We have to make sure that your father is comfortable. I'll go call for the carriage." Just like, that moment was so perfect and lovely, and it was a great character interaction.

**Becca:** This adaptation does the casual intimacy between Emma and Knightley with, oh, such care, and also they get the room to do it because it's longer.

**Lauren:** My favorite was also an Emma and Knightley moment. So that was a perfect tee up. Emily, thank you. And mine was when they are discussing both the Coles invitation and then Frank Churchill and his haircut, because it's just such a perfect-- Those two actors have great chemistry, and it's just so funny watching them banter and go back and forth. It's such obvious flirting that is hilarious to me that at this point in the narrative, they do not get it, because as a viewer, I'm watching it like, "You, guys, this is like Regency foreplay. You do realize that this is what your argument is, and you're doing this right in front of Emma's dad." [laughter]

**Emily:** Right in front of his salad.

**Lauren:** Right in front of his salad.

**Molly:** [01:17:00] Yeah. Mine is also Emma and Knightley [Becca giggles] as we imagine. Every moment that they're standing outside of a party together, the first one where she's like, "Oh, I'm so embarrassed to be seen with you not arriving in a carriage." And then later when she's like, "I'm so proud of you for arriving in a carriage." I just loved the juxtaposition of those two together.

**Becca:** Oh, incredible. Great picks. Finally, last but not least, who wins the episode? Slightly different, because this can be like a character, an actor, or any person on the production team, or the audience for that matter.

**Emily:** I think Jonny Lee Miller really killed it.

**Becca:** The problem with this adaptation is that, for every who wins the episode, it's going to be Jonny Lee Miller. He is fantastic.

**Lauren:** Fair.

**Molly:** He's so good.

**Lauren:** I will give a non-Jonny Lee Miller answer and say Romola Garai's facial expressions win this episode for me, because she's just like, her eyes are so expressive. Just the way that she contorts her face to show either like [01:18:00] disbelief or confusion or disgust is just so, so good. So, her facial expressions win everything for me.

**Molly:** That's what I said last episode, so I'm going to choose something different. I'm going to give it to the actor playing Jane Fairfax, because I think that I really feel like her interpretation of Jane is book accurate, but also that's another role that's really hard to nail to understand why she is the way she is and what's going on in her head. I feel like even in just a few short scenes, we've started to get that from this Jane. So I'm excited for her.

**Becca:** Absolutely. I will give it to the actor playing Mr. Elton because he is so handsome,

he's giving ingenue male face and manages to make us all cringe with the full gusto that Mr. Elton should make us cringe in spite of his face.

**Lauren:** Well done.

**Emily:** Very good.

**Becca:** So good for him. **[01:19:00]** All right, listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next time, we are going to be covering Episode 3 of this adaptation. Fairly predictable. But first of all, Emily and Lauren, thank you so much for joining us. We had so much fun with you, guys. Do you want to tell the people where they can find you?

**Lauren:** Yes. You can find us online at [reclaimingjanepod.com](http://reclaimingjanepod.com). You can find us wherever you get your podcasts under Reclaiming Jane. And then we're also on all the social medias, we are on the formerly known as Twitter or X as [@reclaimingjane](https://twitter.com/reclaimingjane). We are also [@reclaimingjane](https://www.instagram.com/reclaimingjane) on Instagram and we're Reclaiming Jane Pod on Facebook.

**Becca:** Thank you, guys, so much for joining us. Molly, that wraps us up for the week. So, until next time, stay proper--

**Molly:** --And burst out of your double doors into a beautiful, snowy countryside, because you deserve it.

**Becca:** Everyone deserves it.

**Molly:** Yeah. Beautiful.

[music] **[01:20:00]**

**Molly:** Pod and Prejudice is edited by Molly Burdick and audio produced by Graham Cook. Our show art is designed by Torrance Browne. Our show is transcribed by SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription. For transcripts and to learn more about our team, check out our website at [podandprejudice.com](http://podandprejudice.com). To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, [@podandprejudice](https://twitter.com/podandprejudice). If you love what you hear, check out our Patreon at [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://patreon.com/podandprejudice) to see how you can support us or just drop us a rating and a review wherever you listen to podcasts. Thanks for listening.

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