

Molly: Hey everyone. Before we begin today, we have several esteemed new patrons to thank. So, shoutout to Siobhan, Carys, Jared, Amy, and Felicia. Welcome to the team. Also, a huge shoutout to Chaotica who upgraded their pledge. If you want to be like these awesome people and get access to things like our notes, outtakes, and the occasional livestream where we read BuckWild fanfiction, head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice. In today's episode, we are going to finally learn the answer to the question we've been asking all along. Whomst? Just in time for you to buy our Whomst merch at our Tee Public store. You've all been loving the merch so far, and we're so excited about it. The link to the store is in the episode description. So, check that out if you haven't already.

And now, enjoy this week's episode covering only one chapter, Chapter 31 of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Becca: I'm in my new apartment, and I'm so excited to not be in my bedroom right [00:01:00] now. I'm in my office space currently and-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -what you're seeing behind me are owls on the wall.

Molly: Cute.

Becca: They will be gone. I am going to take them off, but right now-- this was a nursery for the last tenants. So, now, it's set up to be an office and record studio, but it still has owls on the wall.

Molly: I like them, they're watching.

Becca: Mike thinks they're insanely creepy. I have a lot of respect for the person who was here before me, but I don't know why they thought this was cute. It's a bit disconcerting, shall we say?

Molly: [imitating an owl] Who? Who? Whomst?

Becca: Whomst? Well, we found out whomst, didn't we?

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

Becca: We're here to talk about Jane Austen.

Molly: We are here specifically to talk about a singular chapter of Jane Austen book that being Chapter [00:02:00] 31.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: 31 of *Sense and Sensibility*. If you're new here, I, Molly, have never read any Jane Austen sans *Pride and Prejudice* or except for *Pride and Prejudice* until doing this podcast.

Becca: I, Becca, have read many Jane Austens including *Pride and Prejudice*, and if you want to listen to Molly reading *Pride and Prejudice* for the first time, check out Season 1 of our podcast. But that's not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No, it is just juicy, juicy *Sense and Sensibility* today.

Becca: Juicy, juicy *Sense and Sensibility*. *Sense and Sensibility* and juicy-- Sense and Juicibility.

Molly: Juice and Sense of--

Becca: Juice and Juicibility.

Molly: Juice and Juicibility.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Sips coffee.

Becca: Listeners, those of you who are familiar with *Sense and Sensibility* might know that this is the angstiest of chapters. It's one of the angstiest chapters Austen wrote. Its juicy, it is for lack of a better term, the drama.

Molly: The drama. [00:03:00] Listeners, I cried. Honestly, I'm in a place emotionally where I might cry again talking about it.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Because oh, man, poor Colonel Brandon and listeners, you know that I love my boy. I love Colonel Brandon, and this part broke me just in two.

Becca: Oh, yes. The chapter is basically just our little foray into Colonel Brandon's tragic past. Up until this point in time, he's been this sweet, stoic gentleman who has grown in affection of the Dashwood sisters. He obviously cares for Elinor, and he obviously cares for Marianne. I think he cares for Margaret and Mrs. Dashwood as well, although he's not as close to them.

Molly: He does.

Becca: As far as Marianne goes, he's basically just so smitten with her. But I think this chapter actually does a good job of explaining part of why he's so [00:04:00] smitten with her. So, let's just jump into it, because there's a lot to go through here, and we have a lot of Colonel Brandon to discuss.

Molly: Yes. So, ooh, huh, let's get into it. Oh, my gosh. I did text Becca that I was weeping during this chapter. Okay.

Becca: Oh, oh, yeah, guys, I was at work, and I was in the middle of a really big work thing. So, I was in a tizzy, and I just look over at my phone and I see eight texts coming in from Molly, and I was like, "She read it."

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: She read it." For those of you who are interested in whomst, obviously, many of you are because many of you bought our Whomst merch, this is the chapter where we find out.

Molly and Becca: Whomst?

Molly: Yes. So, whomst to be revealed. TBR, Chapter 31 or Chapter Nine of Volume II. Marianne is depressed because where we left off Willoughby had just written her this letter, given her hair back, and all of her letters, and been like I never loved you. Peace. [00:05:00] So, Marianne is depressed. She's wallowing. Elinor continues to just be a good and supportive sister, and trying to get her to talk about it as much as possible. Marianne's feelings are just all over the place. Sometimes, she's making excuses for him. Then, she gets upset when she can't think of anything to excuse him because he is just about butt crack of a human being.

Becca: He is such a butt crack, and also, this is really relatable because like, when someone really hurts you, but you've had a good experience with them, you don't want to spoil the good experience, but kind of they did it anyway.

Molly: Yeah. Oh, that makes so much sense. The thing is, in that situation, oftentimes, you can separate the good experience from the bad breakup. But if they come out and say they never had feelings for you, that soils that experience. So, Marianne, while she's feeling her feelings, is avoiding Mrs. Jennings at all costs. If she has to be around her, she just doesn't speak a word, which rude.

Becca: Oh, so [00:06:00] rude. I get that she's going through it, but Mrs. Jennings has been pretty generous with them.

Molly: Yeah, exactly. She makes a point which is that Mrs. Jennings only has an interest in her right now, because she's a source of gossip, and Mrs. Jennings loves to gossip which is true and fair. But Elinor thinks that Marianne has unreasonable expectations for people. She thinks that Marianne expects everyone to share all of her opinions, all of the weight that she places on the sensibilities for beautiful things and everything. She just can't expect people to all be like her and that's why Elinor thinks that she's being really rude to Mrs. Jennings.

One day, Mrs. Jennings comes in with all the best intentions, is just full of bubbly energy, holding a letter saying that she has something that will cheer Marianne up. So, of course, Marianne thinks it's a letter from Willoughby, but it's a letter from her mother, which of course Mrs. Jennings would think that would cheer her [00:07:00] up. But Marianne is like, "How dare you!?" And she blames Mrs. Jennings. It says that her bringing in this letter sunk the heart of Mrs. Jennings still lower in her estimation.

Becca: The cruelty of Mrs. Jennings, Austen's sarcasm in this part is prime.

Molly: The cruelty of Mrs. Jennings, no language could have expressed.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: All she did was bring in a letter. I get it. It's relatable when you're expecting a text from your crush and your phone screen lights up with a notification and then, it's your mom, you're like, "Damn it!"

Becca: Oh, that's the worst. That's really the worst.

Molly: But that's not Mrs. Jennings fault. It's not Verizon's fault.

Becca: Everything's Verizon's fault, but--

Becca: That's true.

Becca: It is certainly not anybody's fault except the guy not texting you.

Molly: Right. Speaking of Austen's sarcasm at this point, I was reading this and not fully reading into the sarcasm of it, and I was thinking at this point that this chapter was going to be from Marianne's perspective because it was like, the cruelty of Mrs. Jennings, how [00:08:00] dare she? Blah, blah, blah, blah. I was like, "Oh, Marianne is finally going to be the voice behind the chapter." No. No, she's about to leave the room and never come back. So, it's just funny how that works out.

The letter from their mother is all about Willoughby, basically, because she doesn't know yet about the letter and the hair coming back to her. She only knew that he was being kind of aloof and whatever. So, Mrs. Jennings then goes to talk with the Middletons and the Palmers. It said that she wouldn't rest until they were able to grieve like she was grieving for Marianne because she thinks that everyone cares as much as she does about these things, and perhaps, John and what's her face, Charlotte do.

Becca: Lady Middleton and Mr. Palmer don't give a fuck.

Molly: No. Zero fucks given. She leaves, and Elinor goes to write to her mom, and then there is a knock. A knock, knock, knock on the door.

Becca: Whomst?

Molly: Whomst? It's Brandon, of course. Marianne at this point is the worst. She's like, [00:09:00] "How dare he come to us?" She says, "A man who has nothing to do with his own time doesn't care about intruding on the privacy of others." Blah, blah, blah. I said, ma'am, he has a lot to do with his own time. He has got a lot going on, and you are being so insensitive.

Becca: Well, she's just mad because he's not Willoughby. That's really just the crux of it. She's just hating everyone except Elinor and Willoughby right now.

Molly: I know. The fact that beautiful young women who are smart and talented, give the time of day to people like Willoughby and let them take over their lives like this.

Becca: Ladies, do not give your time to Willoughbys in this world.

Molly: And anyone can be a Willoughby. Let's just put that out there right now. I think that a lot of us assume that women can't be Willoughbys, but they can.

Becca: Women can certainly be Willoughbys. I personally have experienced more men who are Willoughby as I am also a straight woman. So, that's my experience.

Molly: Yeah. Listen, all my gays out there, protect your [00:10:00] heart.

Becca: It's rough out there.

Molly: It's brutal out there as all of you, as Olivia Rodrigo would say. So, he comes in, Marianne leaves, a pattern that we have seen a lot. He's glad to talk with Elinor alone. I thought that this part was masterfully written. The speech patterns on this man, he is just sputtering. He gets out the beginning of probably 15 different sentences in this section.

Becca: Yeah. He's so anxious to tell this story. It's such an intense story, and people in these days don't talk about their feelings. Brandon is someone who shoves everything so far down in his body that he barely surfaces anything he's feeling at any given point in time. So, he's pulling back the lid to try to give Marianne some peace, and it is killing him. Oh, Molly is not going to be okay during this record sesh.

Molly: I need to read just a little section of his sputtery-- what he's doing here. He comes in [00:11:00] and he says, "My object--my wish--my sole wish in desiring it--I hope, I believe it is--is to be a means of giving comfort-- no, I must not say comfort--not present comfort--but conviction, lasting conviction to your sister's mind." He really wants to say something, and this boy has been trying to get it out for weeks. He has come in and I realized this after reading this section, but he has come in trying to get Elinor alone to tell her this for so long. Every time he's come in and he's like, "Is there no hope?" But he didn't mean for himself.

Becca: No. He meant for Marianne.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: He was trying to protect her this whole time.

Molly: Because he actually cares about her.

Becca: She's a good egg.

Molly: Oh, okay. He comes in. He says he has some news. He wants to be useful. He wants to give lasting conviction to Marianne's mind. Elinor says she understands what he's trying to say, is that he has some proof against Willoughby, and [00:12:00] that his telling it will be the greatest act of kindness that he could show Marianne. Now, at this part in my notes, in my book, I did write that the reason that I ship Elinor and Brandon is because I'm bi. I don't know what I meant by that. But I think it's because I know that Brandon is bi.

Becca: I love Brandon the bi-king[?]

Molly: Bi-king.

Becca: That is something I'm totally on board with. I think now, it might be a decent time in the book to unpack a little bit of why I think Brandon and Elinor are not a perfect match. I get why people like them. I get why it comes up even in the book at some points. But I think what Austen's going for here is actually pretty intentional, and this chapter is a really good example of why they're not so well matched. The truth is that they don't have similar experiences of love. Love is a little different for a lot of different people, and Brendan and Elinor get [00:13:00] along so well, they would have a very comfortable match. They would be very content together. They're, first of all, both hopelessly into somebody else.

Molly: True,

Becca: Second of all, the way that Brandon experiences love is actually not so similar to Elinor's experience, which is this calmer, sort of conversational love she develops with Eric. Eric, I don't know why I'm saying it, Edward.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Whereas, Colonel Brandon is secretly a man of passion, a man of sensibility.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I know that's a hot take, listeners. I know some people really think Colonel Brandon's stuffy and sensible, but this chapter to me says that, Colonel Brandon is someone with deep passions, and deep desires, and deep feelings about insane love, and running through the rain, and all this stuff. So, the truth of the matter is, he's not suited to a "suitable match." He's not suited to just picking someone who [00:14:00] he gets along with out of convenience. That's my take on why Elinor and Brandon actually work better as friends than they do as lovers. I respect people who disagree with me here. But I feel that's what Austen's tried to get up through this story. Does that make sense?

Molly: No, it doesn't, and I don't disagree with you. I think part of why I shipped them which has nothing to do with whether I think they would actually be a good match, just say that about shipping culture, is that like, maybe, this is not true for all people who are attracted to multiple genders, but as someone who is, I do have a harder time in my own brain distinguishing platonic affection and romantic affection. I know the difference, but I think that when I'm reading their relationship, I'm getting those like, "Is this butterflies? Is it not?"

Becca: I certainly don't want to minimize your experience as a member of queer community. I will say that many straight [00:15:00] people also experience a difficulty differentiating between platonic love and romantic love. Straight people don't get a lightning bolt, they're like, "That one!"

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: But as someone who has a lot of platonic intimate friendships with straight men, I really advocate for the belief that, people who could be attracted to each other and have very intimate relationships can have platonic intimate relationships, and I think they can be extraordinarily important.

Molly: Yes. I think that the more I read Colonel Brandon and Elinor's relationship, the more I do just want them to be friends and that makes me happy too. I was more thinking about like, "Why did I think this before?"

Becca: I just want to be so clear. You're not crazy at all.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: This is like, Austen is being very intentional and saying, "Hey, why don't these two get together? Why don't they do it?"

Molly: She's trying to throw us off the [00:16:00] scent.

Becca: And you would not be the first person to think that Colonel Brandon and Elinor would make an excellent match. They are, by all normal measures, perfect for each other.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: They're both smart, kind, sensible. They clearly get along really well. They have really similar notions of how to live a good life. There's a lot of value across. They are really well matched, except for things like chemistry, and love, and passion. That's really the crux of the matter, is that they're perfect for each other, but they don't want to be.

Molly: Yeah, oh. You're right and I like that.

Becca: I like it, too. I think it's a very telling in the story. I'm happy to discuss with any of our listeners if they disagree with me. But this chapter really to me says why Colonel Brandon would not be a good match for Elinor. So, let's get on to why in the actual specifics. Yes.

Molly: Let's get into why. [00:17:00] He decides to tell her the whole story. He starts first at where he left Barton in October. He's like, "Do you remember when I left Barton?" He's like, "Oh, wait, no. I have to go back farther, I'm an awkward narrator. Let me give you some more explanation." He says he can have no temptation to be diffused in this situation, which means in talking about what he's about to talk about, he doesn't want to take up too much time, he doesn't want to spread out his story because it is painful for him. Poor baby boy.

Becca: He does spread it out anyway, but I digress. [laughs]

Molly: Six pages long.

Becca: Yep.

Molly: He starts out by saying she's probably forgotten this, but does she remember a conversation they had at a party one night, when he brought up a lady he'd once known who reminds him of Marianne. Now, we remember because we've been talking about it since then. Whomst?

Becca: Whomst? Obviously.

Molly: Elinor remembers it too.

Becca: Of course, she does.

Molly: Of course, she does.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Because she was thinking about it the whole time, too. But he gives a little smile, because he's like, "Oh, she remembers, we're friends." His whole self-esteem goes up. So, here's his story. This [00:18:00] lady, Eliza, was one of his nearest relations and he grew up with her under his father's guardianship and they were in love. He was obsessed with her. It was like Marianne and Willoughby levels of love.

Becca: Oh, yeah. This was a deep passionate affair.

Molly: For their whole lives too.

Becca: Oh, yes.

Molly: Oh, poor baby boy.

Becca: Like from childhood. Love from childhood, like *The Wonder Years*.

Molly: Oh, when she was 17, he says she gets married to his brother because, "Her fortune was large and our family estate much encumbered," meaning, debt.

Becca: Hello, what is it? What is it? [The Economics of Dating sting]

Molly: The Economics of Dating in Jane Austen.

Becca: Graham, the sting.

Molly: So, his brother though did not love her and she was miserable. But then he's like, "Wait, wait, wait. I have to go back farther, because this is confusing." He's really bad at telling the stories.

Becca: Oh, yeah. Yeah, famously, there are scholars who talk about how bad Colonel Brandon is at telling this [00:19:00] story.

Molly: Oh, my God, I love it. We're going to have to read some of their essays.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: He goes back again. He and Eliza were planning to elope in Scotland. Gretna Green.

Becca: Hell, yeah.

Molly: Lydia Bennet. But her maid betrayed them, and he was banished from the house, and she was locked up, and then married to his brother.

Becca: Forcibly married to his brother.

Molly: Forcibly, who does not love her and she didn't love him. Brandon says, if she'd been happy in her marriage, he would have gotten over it and been like, "Okay, she's happy. I'll get over my own heartbreak," because he genuinely cares about how other people feel.

Becca: Oh, yeah. There's something so unbelievably selfless about the way Brandon loves, it's almost a problem for him.

Molly: It is a problem.

Becca: It's a huge problem for him. He just loves people, but what he loves, he's like, "I don't need to have anything in return. It is enough for me to know that person is okay."

Molly: Ah. Oh, my God. Colonel Brandon is everyone's dream.

Becca: Girl, get you a Colonel Brandon-

Molly: Get you a Colonel Brandon.

Becca: -of any gender, but **[00:20:00]** any person listening to this podcast looking for love, screw the Willoughbys, but get on the Brandons. The Brandons are worth it.

Molly: Marry them right away. His brother is mean to her, and abusive? And she becomes incredibly depressed.

Becca: I think the implication there is, even if he wasn't physically abusive, it was a relationship of deep emotional abuse and torment.

Molly: Yeah, there was a quote that I had questions about. "Happy had it been if she had not lived to overcome those regrets which the remembrance of me occasioned."

Becca: Basically, she could have borne it if she wasn't still regretting the loss love.

Molly: Okay. I think that the phrasing of it confused me because I thought that he was saying like, if she had died earlier, it would have been happier. But that's probably not what he's saying. I mean, it would have been, but--

Becca: It probably would have been.

Molly: Yeah. And then he says, "But can we wonder that was such a husband to provoke in constancy and without a friend to advise or restrain her she should fall?" That is such a modern **[00:21:00]** sentiment. Yes, Colonel Brandon, it's not her fault. She was put into a really bad situation, and I just love that he for once in the 1800s did not blame her for what happened.

Becca: No, he's so understanding of the path she goes down, which is very rare in this time period.

Molly: Yeah. And he blames himself for it a little bit, because he thinks that if he had not left England, she might have been okay. But he left because he thought that would help both of them move past it. So, he's shocked when he finds out that she's married to his brother. But his shock cannot be compared to the shock that he felt when he heard two years later that she was divorced which, at first, I was like, "Yes! She's divorced." But then, I was like, "I guess that's bad for her reputation."

Becca: Yeah, and also her financial state.

Molly: Her financial state.

Becca: It's bad for everything in society.

Molly: Because his brother inherited or takes her money when they get married, is that--

Becca: Yeah, so, what **[00:22:00]** happened basically is that, fun quirk of this time period and generations before, and a century after, when women got married, they ceased to exist as legal persons.

Molly: [makes sad/angry noises]

Becca: So, remember, she was super rich when she walked into this-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -marriage, and their estate was encumbered by debt. So, what happened is that he was going to inherit the estate, so they married her to him to fix the estate, and he got all of her dowry which was giant, and used the dowry to pay off his own debts. When she came into the relationship, all the money, all the possessions she had became his. She ceased to exist as a legal entity, so she is his property. That's how marriage used to work. That's why so many feminists are so opposed to marriage. I would argue that the system has reformed in a lot of ways. Now, women do exist as legal persons, and it's okay to be married nowadays, but **[00:23:00]** the institution itself is based in this really horrific erasure of women.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: All your possessions go to your husband. That's why women collect jewelry partially because it was their only source of individual wealth. There is a dowager put aside for when your husband dies,

but you don't immediately get all the stuff you put into the marriage back if you're a woman. You get an allowance.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: Basically, spousal support.

Molly: They talked about the allowance in this next part and I was going to ask if that was like her divorce allowance or is that just the allowance that she gets for being married?

Becca: No, she would get a divorce allowance.

Molly: Got it. We're going to talk about that in a second. But that makes a lot of sense, because I was like, "Wait, isn't her family rich?"

Becca: No, no, she wouldn't get any of that back.

Molly: Okay. At this point in the story, which we've just done too, Brandon gets up and paces around for a while. He's like, "I've got to collect myself." Elinor is clearly distressed. So, he comes, he kisses her hand, BFFs. Then, he continues on his [00:24:00] story. Three years after the divorce, Brandon returns to London, but he can't find her. He's looking for her. He can't trace her past her first "seducer." So, we get an idea of the life that she has fallen into since the divorce. She gets this legal allowance, but at some point, she signed it over to someone else. So, my take on that was that the money has been going to someone else to pay off some debt.

Becca: I think that's accurate.

Molly: Okay. Six months in, after Brandon is in London, he's looking for her for six months, he goes to visit a former servant of his in a sponging house, which is a house usually maintained by a bailiff for keeping debtors for a day to afford opportunity to come to terms with their creditors or for more than a day. I don't know why the definition is [unintelligible [00:24:43]], but anyway, they're hanging out there, and he finds her there.

Becca: Also, shouts to our king for going and finding her when she's been ripped to shreds.

Molly: Yeah, this has major like in my mind, I'm picturing the same thing of Darcy going around London except less angry and more -

Becca: Desperate.

Molly: [00:25:00] "Where is my love?"

Becca: The difference is that Lydia is on the brink of falling, and Eliza has fallen.

Molly: He's scraping the bottom of London and I was also-- I did go and listen to *Les Mis* after reading this chapter.

Becca: It's very Fantine and Jean Valjean. That is the image.

Molly: *I Dreamed A Dream*. Also, a hot take, I think that Anne Hathaway's version of *I Dreamed A Dream* is better than honestly any other version like not necessarily for vocal ability. I know Becca does twitched when I said that. I know it's a hot take.

Becca: I actually think she does a really wonderful job with the song and I think it comes. So, part of it is that it comes at a different part in the story than it does in other versions. Because at that point in time, she's lost everything where usually it's like she's lost her job.

Molly: Gotcha. Okay, okay, okay. That makes sense. I saw the play like a really long time ago, so I don't remember it as well. I also saw the movie a long time ago. I haven't seen it since it was in theaters, but listening to it, and then also watching the [00:26:00] thing, what I'm picturing is her version of *I Dreamed A Dream*, but Eliza because she is at this cracking point, and I think what Anne Hathaway does with it is so beautiful because in her case, it is not a power ballad. It is like she is falling apart, so, that's why I really like that version. *Les Mis Paris*. You can come for me, but I love Anne Hathaway.

Becca: I'm personally super partial to the longer version of it. I happen to think the best cast of *Les Mis* is the 25th anniversary concert cast minus Nick Jonas. But everybody else in that is so perfect.

Molly: Nick Jonas?

Becca: He plays Marius.

Molly: What?

Becca: I know. But Alfie Boe plays Jean Valjean, and Norm Lewis plays Javert, and they're so good, I could cry. I'm not going to get to this right now.

Molly: Yes, I'm sorry to bring up *Les Mis* but it did feel appropriate because it's also around. Is it around the same time period?

Becca: Yeah, actually would be around the same time period. That's a few decades later, I think. When does *Les Mis* take place? [00:27:00] Oh, my God. It's five years later.

Molly: I thought it felt very similar and vibe, and so, I was really picturing that.

Becca: It's 10 years later, actually, because-- Yep, that makes sense. But yeah, it is that vibe for sure, and it's interesting, because this is a Jane Austen novel.

Becca: Right. This is a Jane Austen novel, and I was telling my mom about it. After I finished this, I was like, "Mom, you're never going to guess what just happened," and she was like, "Jane Austen wrote that?"

Becca: Yes, yes. She doesn't just write petty tea parties. She writes real shit.

Molly: I wanted to read this description of Eliza because it did make me cry. My notes, our patrons will see. I just like all caps, "NO." So, he finds her, and he says, "So altered, so faded, worn down by acute suffering of every kind. Hardly, could I believe the melancholy and sickly figure before me to be the remains of the lovely, blooming, healthful girl on whom I had once doted?"

Becca: [00:28:00] Molly's tearing up, guys.

Molly: I am.

Becca: I think this is the first time I see Molly cry on the pod.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's a lot.

Molly: She has consumption and she's in the last stages of her life, and he says, "Life could do nothing for her beyond giving time for a better preparation for death, and that was given." She is dying. He doesn't even think that it's worth it at this point to try to keep her alive. So, he just takes her and gives her a comfortable place to die and he stays with her.

Becca: It's not that he doesn't think it's worth it to keep her alive. It's that --

Molly: It would be harmful.

Becca: He can't.

Molly: Yeah, he can't, one, and two, that's no life for her, which brings it back to him genuinely caring about her. He doesn't have any selfish motives in this. He's like, "This is no life for you," and that is the purest form of love.

Becca: That's how Colonel Brandon loses his first love. It's devastating.

Molly: I cried. I've truly cried and the chapter is not over yet. It gets-

Becca: Oh.

Molly: -worse. [00:29:00] Ooh, shake it off. Anyway, he stays with her until she dies. She's dead. She's gone. He says, "Why am I telling you all this, Elinor?" Because--

Becca: Molly's crying, guys.

Molly: Because she left him her only daughter.

Becca: Yes. Yes.

Molly: Her daughter from the first man that she slept with after her divorce. Little Eliza. This daughter that everyone thinks is Colonel Brandon's love child. He knows that everyone thinks that but he still takes care of her--

Becca: Takes care of her anyway.

Molly: Yeah, and he doesn't care what people think.

Becca: Nope.

Molly: Oh, so he's got little Eliza. He sends her away to school because at this time, he has no family because fuck his dad, fuck his brother, and he's got no home because he's been banished from his estate. Then, his brother dies five years ago at this point, thank goodness, because his brother sucks. So, she comes to visit Delaford very frequently, [00:30:00] now that Delaford is his. I just like I wrote down this quote, because it was just the way that he said. He said, "I am well aware that I have in general been suspected of a much nearer connection with her" just what I was saying like he doesn't care that people think that's his daughter. He wishes it was.

Becca: No. he's taking care of her as if she is his illegitimate child, but he has never been a man to break any sort of honor. He just really loved her mother and has decided that she is now his family and it's beautiful. Beautiful

Molly: It's so beautiful. Beautiful.

Becca: I love Colonel Brandon.

Molly: I love Colonel Brandon so much. Okay, at this point three years ago to the day, not to the day, but three years ago, Eliza gets moved to be under the care of a respectable woman who has a few other girls in her care around the same age and in the same situation. But then, last February, Eliza disappears. Brandon had allowed her to go on a little trip with her friend to Bath, to visit her [00:31:00] sick father. Sick father is confined to his house, and Eliza and her friend are tromping about the streets having a grand old time.

Becca: They're Kidia-ing it up.

Molly: They're Kidia-ing Which like Bath, Brighton, the two towns that are like--

Becca: Spring break and Cancun!

Molly: Yeah. They are there, and the dad doesn't know anything. Brandon's like, "Where's my daughter?" He's like, "I don't know. They were visiting. But I was in the house, I'm sick, and they disappeared." I don't know what happened to the other friend, but Eliza just straight up off the face of the earth doesn't come back. For eight months, Brandon looks for her. I did not catch on. I just want to say, I did not catch on to the number of months until later. So, he looks for her for eight months.

Becca: We'll get back to those eight months.

Molly: We'll get back to those eight months. At this point, Elinor jumps to a conclusion that I thought was a little bit wild, but she goes, "Could it be, could Willoughby?" I was like, "What?" But [00:32:00] --

Becca: Oh, but.

Molly: Because he's telling this story for a reason, right, listeners? So, eight months goes by. He's at Barton, he gets the note in October. We're back in October at Barton. He leaves for London that very morning. We don't know what that says, the note. "Little did Mr. Willoughby imagine when his looks censured me for incivility and breaking up the party that I was called away to the relief of one whom he had made poor and miserable."

Becca: Yep.

Molly: [gasps] So, he gets the letter, he goes. He wonders if Willoughby had known that it was from Eliza, would he have done anything different in his behavior or anything, but he thinks probably not since he had already done that which no man with a heart could have done, left a pregnant girl with promise to return and then never coming back.

Becca: Okay, we need a record scratch [record scratch], and then another record scratch [record scratch], and then I'll just what? What do we need here?

Molly: We need a bomb going off. [explosion] Maybe, like the--

Becca: Maybe not that because that'll hurt our listeners' ears.

Molly: You're right. [00:33:00] Just a record scratch, glass breaking [record scratch/glass breaking combo] shatter.

Becca: Yeah, we need a woman scream [woman scream]. We need sounds of fire [fire sounds?] We have a full-blown mention of sex in a Jane Austen novel.

Molly: Uh-huh.

Becca: Willoughby knocked up Colonel Brandon's ward.

Molly: His daughter.

Becca: Ish.

Molly: She is young. How old is she, 14?

Becca: Yeah, like 15.

Molly: Um. What we learn at this point is that Willoughby knocked her up in Bath, left not eight months later, started wooing Marianne, and just never went back to her. He just disappeared.

Becca: He used her, abused her, losed her.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And went to find another hot teenager.

Molly: Yeah, disgusting.

Becca: We do not stan. Fuck Willoughby.

Molly: Fuck Willoughby.

Becca: I want to commend you for never trusting him and also for [00:34:00] clocking that W.

Molly: That W, someone wronged our girl.

Becca: Someone with a W last name wronged Jane Austen.

Molly: Yeah. At this point, Brandon says he's been trying to tell Elinor this for weeks.

Becca: He's been trying to go to her and be like, "Ooh, is it too late, because how do you tell someone who's engaged to Willoughby?"

Molly: Right.

Becca: This shit.

Molly: So, when he found out that they were not engaged, he was like, "Okay, now's the chance like, I'll make her feel better about it. She dodged a bullet."

Becca: Oh, boy. Yeah, she needs to hear this.

Molly: She truly does. I know that Marianne's probably going to be argh-- She's probably going to be like, "I don't believe you" or really sad to know that her love is such a terrible, terrible, terrible human being. But whatever, she needs to hear. So, he says he hopes this news will make her feel better and that she won't be disgraced in the same way Eliza was, that she can feel good about her life knowing that she is not going to fall that way. But can she still be disgraced though? Because we were talking about her letters and stuff. [00:35:00] If anyone were to see those, they would think that they were doing the same thing.

Becca: We're going to get to that in the study question. [crosstalk]

Molly: Okay, great. Okay. Okay, great. Put a pin in it.

Becca: Sorry. Listeners, this is a podcast but I just gave Molly a significant look.

Molly: She really did. Sometimes, there's long pauses and I don't want to cut them, because I remember the looks that you give me, but I'm like, [crosstalk]

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Colonel Brandon hopes that Elinor doesn't think he intended to make himself look better in comparison, but it did not seem that way at all, and that's the thing, is that he never seems like he has any ulterior motives, and I just love the way he's written like, he just seems genuinely good. Elinor says, "No, no, no. Don't worry. I totally got you." This is going to make it much easier for Marianne to get over this, to move past it. She can stop trying to acquit him now." I love that word. She asks then if Brandon has seen Willoughby, and he says one meeting was unavoidable, because he challenged him to a duel?

Becca: [00:36:00] Yeah.

Molly: I don't know why that's so funny to me, but I just can't picture Colonel Brandon.

Becca: Oh, it's fucking-- Men are so stupid.

Molly: It's so stupid.

Becca: Men are so stupid. Sorry. I love our listeners who are men. I don't think you're stupid. But like dueling?

Molly: Dueling.

Becca: Are you serious?

Molly: Dueling.

Becca: Dueling?

Molly: Elinor at this point. I loved this "Elinor sighed over the fancied necessity of this but to a man and a soldier, she presumed not to censure it.

Becca: Dueling?

Molly: She's like, "Real?"

Becca: A dueling?

Molly: Dueling. But she doesn't say anything. She's like, "This is just all he knows how to do. He's a soldier."

Becca: She's just like this is how men work through things, whatever. No, don't use violence.

Molly: But I don't understand, so they dueled but neither of them got hurt. I don't remember how the duels were.

Becca: All right, let's see if I-- I don't want to get sued by Lin-Manuel Miranda, but most disputes [in a singsong voice] died and no one shoots.

Molly: Right. They come together with their guns and then they talk about it while pointing at each other is that?

Becca: No, [00:37:00] you aim the pistol up the sky.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: And both of you shoot up, and then the duel's over.

Molly: So, what if you don't? Can you at the last minute, shoot at them?

Becca: You get one shot in a duel.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: If you're dueling with pistols.

Molly: Right.

Becca: You don't have to be. You can duel with swords, or knives, or whatever. I don't pretend to be an expert on dueling.

Molly: Yeah, I only know the song, and also, they did a duel in *Bridgerton* where no one got hurt, right?

Becca: Well, I don't think they even dueled at that point. Did they? Oh, yeah, they did, because she went between them and they shot her.

Molly: Right. [laughs] Anyway, dueling is stupid.

Becca: Dueling is super stupid, but you only get one shot and you can be a man of honor and just like aim your pistol up the sky, and then if you both do that, then no one dies. But if one of you does that and another one shoots, then you get someone dying, or you can just shoot at each other and enjoy each other, or kill each other, whatever. But you can just aim up. So, my guess is that both Brandon and Willoughby just shot at the sky.

Molly: [00:38:00] So, I hope that in the movie, we get to see this because again, I don't know who plays Willoughby, but--

Becca: I'm just going to go ahead and say this is not in the movie.

Molly: Damn it.

Becca: I know. Sorry.

Molly: Well, okay, here's how I would have it. I know that Hugh Grant plays Eddie but in a similar way to how I thought Colin Firth played everyone in *Pride and Prejudice*, I have been filling Hugh Grant into every role that I don't know who it is.

Becca: Honestly, Hugh Grant wouldn't be a bad cast for Willoughby either. He'd just be a different cast.

Molly: Yes. So, I'm picturing Willoughby and Alan Rickman in their full garb, being absolute-- just not knowing how to do this and being like, "I challenge you to a duel," and I'm standing there like--

Becca: Brandon's an army man. Brandon knows how to duel.

Molly: No, I know, but I can't picture Alan Rickman doing it. Because he's like a sweet boy.

Becca: *Expelliarmus!*

Molly: [laughs] Oh, man. Yeah, Okay, okay. So, that happens. Then, he tells Elinor that Eliza and the baby had [00:39:00] been removed to the countryside. This is actually where I realized that Willoughby had knocked her up. It took me a while.

Becca: Is this where you texted me?

Molly: Yeah, this is where I texted you because also, the way that it's revealed, again, there was the eight months hint, he said that he had made her really wretched but they didn't actually necessarily say that she had a baby until Elinor asks if she's in town, and he says no, "as soon as she recovered from her lying in for I found her near her delivery. I removed her and her child into the country and there she remains." I was like, [record scratch] "Ah."

Becca: Record scratch there too.

Molly: Yeah, that's where for me the glass shattered and the record scratched, but I think that it was definitely earlier implied.

Molly: Wait. We need a *Twilight Zone* sort of vibe underneath that. [Twilight Zone kind of vibe music] Molly was having the realization that Eliza was pregnant and had a baby-

Molly: The baby!

Becca: -by Willoughby!

Molly: This child had a child.

Becca: So, she was pregnant. Well, Willoughby was out there macking on Marianne.

Molly: What a dick.

Becca: Dick. Yo, fuck Willoughby. He makes Fanny look [00:40:00] gentle by comparison.

Molly: Yeah, because all she does is be annoying and whiny.

Becca: Well, she did take all their money away from them-

Molly: That's true.

Becca: -and kicked them out of their house. Fanny still sucks. Fuck Fanny, too.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: *Sense and Sensibility* villains are next level villains in Austen works.

Molly: This is definitely-- again I've only read *Pride and Prejudice*, but so far this is my favorite book. Anyway, that is the end of those chapters because then Brandon leaves and Elinor is feeling really grateful for him and also just feeling really bad for him, and just--

Becca: Hard same, Elinor.

Molly: Yeah, we are all Elinor in this moment. He leaves and we're like, "Oh- huh."

Becca: That brings us to Becca's study questions for this part. So, first of all, we now know whomst. We finally know whomst. This has been one of the biggest questions from the book so far. So, let's start with Brandon's love story. We touched on this when I was discussing the Elinor and Brandon friendship/quasi people think it's romance. [00:41:00] What do you learn about Brandon based on this love story?

Molly: I think the biggest thing that we've already talked about a little bit, but that I just think is the most important thing is that when he loves, which he has a lot of love to give, our boy, he cares so much more about the other person than he cares about himself. He is so selfless, and it's not an ingenuine thing I think that we worried about with Jane Bennet. We worried at times that it was just because that's a part of her personality or at least, I sometimes worried I was like, "Jane, come on. Care about yourself a little bit. You know that you should--"

Becca: No, Brandon should certainly care about himself a little bit more than he does. He is not very self-protective.

Molly: He should, but also, it doesn't feel like it's something that-- I think that in Jane's case, I think it's something she's proud of for herself. She knows that she is this person. I think that Brandon feels himself doing this like, "Oh, my God. [crosstalk]."

Becca: I don't know how I'm back here, but somehow, I'm here doing it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Can't not.

Molly: Yeah. But he really just cares so much about other people, his [00:42:00] friends. He cares about Elinor, he cares about the whole family. But he really cares about Marianne, and he really cares about Eliza and also little Eliza.

Becca: So, what I also take from this story is that, first of all, Brandon is a man controlled by his passions. He loves so deeply, like so deeply. He really feels things. Also, Brandon is not a man in control of who he loves at all.

Molly: No. Because he's made the bad choice.

Becca: Yeah, he kind of shut shit down, and he's in control of it as far as he can tolerate his life around whatever happens but he feels these things. He pines so hard. Also, Brandon from the beginning of the story, we learned that he was really stuffy and repressed, and an army man, and the thing about Brandon is also that he's got this thing for really passionate spitfire ladies. He sees something really wonderful in these women who are [00:43:00] very sure of themselves and very counter to their society's norms. Beautiful young women who say, "Fuck you, I will feel how I want to feel." I think that tells you something about how he wishes he could be a little bit more. Oh, Molly's going to cry again.

Molly: I think Colonel Brandon is the most relatable character, the most human character that we've had so far in Austen, we've talked a lot about how Elinor is very human, and she's a three-dimensional character, and all of these things. She's a mess inside, and trying to hold it together, and all this stuff. But I think that Brandon has the fullest range of emotions that we've seen and everything that you just said, I relate to him. I just relate to him so much.

Becca: I think Brandon certainly has the most tragic backstory of anyone we've seen.

Molly: Mm-hmm, and he handles it, and he's going about his life and trying his hardest and that's all that we can ever do. I think that especially now during the last couple of years have been a hard [00:44:00] time for a lot of people, and I think that he's just trying his best and that's why I think he's so relatable.

Becca: Oh, we love Colonel Brandon.

Molly: Really, really do.

Becca: Okay. Next question I have is about Colonel Brandon's brother. What do we learn about how Colonel Brandon is treated by his family and about his brother?

Molly: Well, shoot. His family kicked him out. They were like, "You tried to elope with this girl like your brother's older," because the oldest has to marry-- For the family to get the money, it has to be the oldest person, right? Is that--? I don't know.

Becca: Hello, [Economics of Dating in Jane Austen sting] the Economics of Dating in Jane Austen. Once again, we have talked so much about how the Economics of Dating in Jane Austen affects women. We have not talked about how it affects men as much. We've talked about it a little-- We touched on it with Wickham, but we have not talked about second born men-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -which is something that Austen shoves in our faces with the story very, [00:45:00] very strongly.

Molly: Yes, let's talk about it because I am confused.

Becca: Great. As we've learned, every family wants an heir, every minute family wants a guy to inherit the estate so that they can keep the wealth in the family, keep it growing, pass it down through generations, and obviously, women are most often cut out of those estates. We have a son in this story. So, obviously, Colonel Brandon's brother inherits Delaford and all of the debts and assets that come with it.

But what we didn't talk about is if you have two sons, the second one doesn't inherit the estate. He has money, he has an income, but you see second sons and third sons do things like pursue the church, or pursue the army, or pursue a role as a lawyer, or marry into greater wealth somewhere else. But second sons do not get that place in society that first sons get where they get to inherit the estate. They're second in line. [00:46:00] They will inherit if Colonel Brandon, the brother dies. But they don't get that immediate economic situation.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, you have Brandon in love with this girl, and if he had been the one to inherit the estate initially, it would have been so easy. They could have just married him to her, and that would have been fine. But because he's a second son, he doesn't get that benefit. He doesn't get that sort of freedom.

Molly: Because the estate has all these debts and the older son was like, "It's my right to marry this girl because she's got the money that's going to pay off the debts. If you take that option away from me, he has to go find his own wife--"

Becca: It was just simple. She's just there and she had so much money. It's hard to find marriageable women who are that wealthy, whose families will just give you their daughter.

Molly: Right, and she grew up with them. She's part of their family basically.

Becca: Yeah, and most families who are well, they're going to want their daughters to marry into men with wealth. [00:47:00] Well, Colonel Brandon's family has a lot of wealth, they also have a lot of debt. So, that's risk. You know what I mean? It's a financial proposition.

Molly: And her parents are dead, at this point, because she grew up with them.

Becca: I can't pretend to remember exactly what happened with Eliza's parents. Not totally relevant to the story.

Molly: Yeah. Well, the vibe that I got is that they're dead. So, she already has all this money to her name, and she grew up under-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Well, she would have had the money anyway, because it's a dowry.

Molly: Right, right, right, right. Oh, man.

Becca: This story is a perfect encapsulation of why tying money to romance in this time period was so cruel, both to the women because what happens to Eliza is devastating.

Molly: So sad.

Becca: But also to Brandon because his story is really sad, and he loses out just because he was born second, that unfortunate truth. The ironic thing is he is the one who inherited the entire estate in the end.

Molly: Yeah. Oh, my God. Oh, my God.

Becca: You might remember, the whole thing's [00:48:00] still crowded with debt as we remember from Mrs. Jennings talking about it earlier on.

Molly: Because his brother did a bad job.

Becca: Exactly. He's squandered Eliza's fortune.

Molly: All for nothing. This poor girl.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: She had to go through all of this, and the estate still went to Brandon, and still had debt. That's heartbreaking.

Becca: Yep. It's all so devastating. It's a good example of how a system built to oppress women also oppresses men.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: All right. How does this story change the dynamics of the book and just Austen's writings in general?

Molly: We've entered into a part of society that I think we haven't touched on yet. We saw Lydia in London being debauched, but we have not seen the people who are at the end of their rope in the way that we are now seeing that Eliza was at the end of her rope and just existing to survive. We're seeing that, first of all, there's like a more well-rounded full worldview as opposed to [00:49:00] just the wealthy and the slightly less wealthy who complain about being poor [giggles] but who are not. Willoughby-- well, we'll get to him.

I think it just adds a level of-- The stakes are higher. The stakes are higher for everyone. The stakes are higher for Marianne, even though she dodged this bullet. In retrospect, her stakes are higher. She could have been destroyed by this man. In fact, we don't know what happened at Allenham, and we've been

hinting at that for a while. The stakes are still high because of girl went and got herself knocked up, and that's a whole other story, and now I'm afraid for her. The story is different. Like I said earlier, I went into my mom's room after I finished this chapter and I was like, "You're never going to guess what Willoughby did. You're never going to get whomst."

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: She was like, "What?" I told her the whole story and she was like, "Jane Austen wrote that?"

Becca: Yeah. The whole book, I've been pointing out to you when the sex exists in the book and guiding you to those places, but you could have thought I was crazy or overreading it, [00:50:00] and this is the first time where I'm like, "No, we know Jane Austen knows what's going on here."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That is how we know. She came out and said it. She came out and said the sex is happening. And not only that, you are totally correct that we have seen mostly the upper classes here. And the stakes don't feel high, but they actually are, and this chapter is one piece of why. First of all, we're seeing real poor people for the first time in a debtor's house finding a prostitute dying of consumption, who used to be a high-society woman and the only thing that changed that as she wanted to get out of a shitty marriage.

Molly: Oh, my God.

Becca: That's the risks that these women are living in society with. It makes Mrs. Bennet feel a lot less crazy.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And Austen constantly is touted by people as being prissy and beating around the bush and all this, but no. Jane Austen is writing about sex. Jane Austen is writing about these transgressions, and [00:51:00] how they affect women, and men for that matter. It's a little piece of her giving you, "Yes, you are right. I am actually talking about people having sex behind closed doors in these books."

Molly: Yeah, man. Yeah, it's true that I feel we talk on the show about sex a lot. But it does often feel like a reach.

Becca: A lot of people talk all the time about how Jane Austen is quite chaste, and for the most part, her books are pretty chaste comparatively, but underneath the surface of that chaste exterior is this undercurrent of sexual tension and sexual deviance that runs through all of her books. So, now, she's pulling back the cover just a little bit for you to see what's actually at stake for these women if they ruin their reputations, if they marry poorly, or if they marry well and the guy just turns out to be a dick.

Molly: Yeah, we also haven't seen-- we've seen a lot of relationships where the man is not into the woman. Mr. And Mrs. Bennet. Well, we think he is. I think he is.

Becca: Mr. Palmer and Charlotte--

Molly: Mr. Palmer and Charlotte though, we've seen that in this, and then now we're seeing a [00:52:00] relationship where the man was actively at least emotionally abusive to the point where she needed to get out of there. She got divorced and good for her. But I know, ultimately, it was her downfall, but good for her because she was in an unhappy marriage. It just sucks that the society is in such a place that then that led to her having to fall in that way, get consumption.

Becca: Totally. All right, so next question. Fuck Willoughby, giving you a quick minute to just rant about Willoughby. Go.

Molly: First of all, I wanted to complain about him complaining about his level of wealth because, sir, you will have an estate waiting for you. Shut up. As soon as your witchy aunt dies, you're going to be fine. So, calm down, first of all.

Second of all, the [00:53:00] fact that this is a child. He has had a child with a child because Brandon is not that much older than Willoughby, maybe 10 years? [cringey noises] Fathering grandchild? No, super weird. So, that's gross, and now he's on to the next. Marianne is how old? 17? That's a normal-er age. But still, it's just gross, and the fact that we know that he, according to Brandon, left Eliza with promises to return, and then he just dipped out. He might not know that she was pregnant, but still you don't just dip out and ghost like he ghosted Marianne. [cringey noises]

Becca: Yeah, and I think it also is really telling that you started using the language of child in predator again, because we talked about this early on, because Brandon is so much older than Marianne and why that's like a-- But [00:54:00] again, you see Brandon really caring and respecting the choices of the women in his life. Willoughby is manipulative and taking advantage of young women for his own sexual deviance.

Molly: We talked about this.

Becca: Yes, we did. It makes a difference.

Molly: Yeah, we compare to Brandon and Marianne to Wickham and Lydia.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: And now, we can compare them to Willoughby and Marianne. It's that he doesn't make a move.

Becca: Yeah. It's also that he sees her as an adult and isn't lying to her, and he's being honest with her, and respectful like those things matter in these circumstances. Age differences can be okay where both partners are very respectful of the other person and take the other person's adulthood seriously. But what you see now with Willoughby is that he is manipulative and he is squandering the good faith of these young women.

Molly: And using them because he doesn't think that they are for [00:55:00] human beings. He's using them for his own personal pleasure and whatever, and then ditching them on the side of the road.

Becca: Yeah, fuck Willoughby.

Molly: Fuck Willoughby.

Becca: All right, last question before the standbys. What do these transgressions mean for Marianne, exactly?

Molly: Well, she dodged a bullet potentially, but like I just said, we don't know what went on at Allenham. We can't say that she's not going to end up pregnant. I would have thought that was a stretch for Austen. That might be taking it too far in terms of the drama that we can handle in this book. The drama.

Becca: The drama.

Molly: But I also now would not put it past her. So, that's possible. Marianne could end up with child. I think the main thing that it means though is that now, it should make her feel better. It should make her be like, "Oh, he goes around and does this. That's not someone I want to be associated with." I think how it's going to make her feel is like, "Oh, I'm not special. He never loved me. Why did he make me [00:56:00] feel that way?" Just because if I was her, I would feel really hurt.

Becca: Oh, it's terrible. One thing I think it does is it should make Marianne question her judgment of people, and what's important.

Molly: Oh, yeah. Because she thought she has a good judge of character.

Becca: Yes. Willoughby is so handsome, and he loves poetry, and he is romantic and passionate, and all these things that made him and Marianne so compatible. But it's a farce because Marianne was chasing this thing that's a lie because Willoughby's shit. Remember when he gave her a horse named Queen Mab?

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: We talked about that at the time how gross and weird they were being, and Marianne was talking about how she needs someone who likes all the same literature as her, and feels the same way about love as she does. I don't want to fault Marianne for all of that, because I am so a fan of it being okay to be romantic, but the lack of care in [00:57:00] which she put other aspects of a person she should fall for did not do her well here. So, that's one thing.

Another thing is, again, the sex is explicit in the book now, and we do have the Allenham court scene. We have the level of intimacy between Willoughby and Marianne. It's not clear at this point in the book, what that means. We do know Willoughby was willing to do those things with a woman who was at least of a social standing where he shouldn't have, and Marianne's poor at this point for the wealthier classes. She's very vulnerable to this sort of situation. So, it's very panic inducing for someone like Elinor to know that her sister was in the hands of this guy, alone with this guy, and in his house.

Molly: In his house, and then he disappeared, and because he's doing this with poor women like Eliza, mom is dead, and she's in a house with other--

Becca: [00:58:00] She's living on Brandon's good wealth.

Molly: And then, he just dipped out without waiting to see what happened, and he tried to do that with Marianne by dipping out to London and then there she is.

Becca: Granted, Marianne is certainly of a higher social standing like even without the money, but she is vulnerable. She is living off of somebody's goodwill right now.

Molly: Right.

Becca: She's a beautiful young, impressionable girl. There's just a lot of danger here, and it's not helped by how much Marianne felt, obviously, this guy and I have something that's permanent.

Molly: And was writing to him these letters and everything.

Becca: Yeah. So, there's a certain lack of care for impropriety. Now, as I said, it's not clear that that's what happened. But it is certainly a fair reading of what has happened so far, and the fact that it is a fair reading puts Marianne in so much danger.

Molly: Yeah. I also wanted to read this quote because we were talking about Marianne, what she looks for in a person, and all of this, and they [00:59:00] brought it up in this chapter, which makes me think that they're hinting at the fact that we're going to have to see Marianne become more sensible. Elinor says or Elinor thinks, "Elinor had not needed this to be assured of the injustice to which her sister was often led in her opinion of others by the irritable refinement of her own mind and the too great importance placed by her on the delicacies of a strong sensibility and the graces of a polished manner. Like half the rest of the world, if more than half there be that are clever and good, Marianne, with excellent abilities and an excellent disposition, was neither reasonable nor candid. She expected from other people, the same opinions and feelings as her own, and she judged their motives by the immediate effect of their actions on herself." So, she, up to this point, I think has been a little self-centered, and not looking at the big picture, and Elinor's drawing attention to that. She judges people based on how they affect her, how much they agree with her, how much they are the same [01:00:00] without thinking about anything else.

Becca: I think that's a real danger too in all of us. We're all looking for the person who's the most compatible with us on the most superficial things. But that doesn't account for whether or not that person is going to actually be of character to deserve you.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, it's really important to look past some of the less important things and be able to see the person who will not actually ruin your life.

Molly: We don't love a life ruiner.

Becca: Like Willoughby did to Marianne. Great. So, that brings us to our standbys. I think I'm going to change the first one for this chapter in particular, because there's nothing funny in this chapter except the beginning with Mrs. Jennings.

Molly: Yeah, I didn't write anything down.

Becca: We're going to do just favorite quote.

Molly: Ooh, okay. So, this is after he's describing getting the letter in October. He says, "Little did Mr. Willoughby imagine I suppose when his looks censured me for incivility and breaking up the party that I was called away to the relief of one whom he had made [01:01:00] poor and miserable. But had he known it, what would it have availed? Would he have been less gay or less happy in the smiles of your sister? No. He had already done that which no man who can feel for another would do. He had left the girl whose youth and innocence he had seduced in a situation of utmost distress with no creditable home, no help, no friends, ignorant of his address, he had left her promising to return. He neither returned, nor wrote, nor relieved her."

The way that everything has led up to this point, and bringing it back to that time, and then saying like, what would he have done if Willoughby as just an asshole? He would have still done exactly the same as he did. He would still be doing the same with your sister like he sucks. And also, I think it's well written. I loved this whole chapter. It's so hard to pick a favorite part because even though every single part is a punch to the gut, still so beautiful.

Becca: Some scholars clock this chapter because it's dramatic for Jane Austen, and also because [01:02:00] Colonel Brandon is not a particularly eloquent narrator.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But I think it's perfect for those two reasons. One, it injects stakes into the book and shows you really just how much in danger these women were in his hands. Two, I think the fact that Brandon is not a good storyteller is so in line with his character and his incapacity to usually share how he feels, he's gotten not used to saying it out loud, that I think this chapter is actually intentionally written to be a little jagged and sloppy, and it's brilliant on Austen's part.

Molly: Yeah. Wait, can I add one more?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: On that note, another favorite part is this part. He says, "Even now, after the recollection of what I suffered--" and then he cuts himself off and he says, "he could say no more and rising hastily walked for a few minutes about the room. Elinor affected by his relation and still more by his distress could not speak. He saw her concern and coming [01:03:00] to her, took her hand, pressed and kissed it with grateful respect. A few minutes more of silent exertion enabled him to proceed with composure." That really shows what you're saying, he is trying his dang hardest.

Becca: He is. All right, questions moving forward.

Molly: Now, we know whomst. So, I don't need to ask whomst.

Becca: Yes. We don't need to say whomst anymore right as we put the merch out.

Molly: Yeah, right. I want to know if we're going to confront Willoughby. I would love to see us confront Willoughby. I know that they've already dueled, but I want to see Marianne confront Willoughby.

Becca: Dueling?

Molly: Ugh. I want to see Elinor confront Willoughby, and I guess I still don't know what happens with our boy, Eddie, and Lucy. Because we've compared the two situations now and they're very different. Absolutely.

Becca: Yes, yes. Now, you can say very surely that Edward is not nearly a bad guy as Willoughby.

Molly: Not nearly as bad as Willoughby. I'm still **[01:04:00]** annoyed at him, but I don't want to murder him.

Becca: Oh, my God. Yeah. He's trying really hard to not ruin lives, where Willoughby, it's just like a destructive fire.

Molly: He's a life ruiner.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He ruins people's lives.

Becca: Yes. More *Mean Girls*.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: All right. I can't believe I'm even saying this because I know the answer, but who wins the chapter?

Molly: Colonel Brandon.

Becca: Our boy.

Molly: Our boy.

Becca: Our king. Our bi-king.

Molly: Our bi-king. Oh.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: Oh, no words. I have nothing else to say about it.

Becca: I love Colonel Brandon. I'm so glad to share that character with you. I can't wait for you to see him on screen too.

Molly: Oh, me too.

Becca: We're going to have a tough time with that, audience.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Hoo!

Molly: Hoo!

Becca: All right. Listeners, that concludes this juicy episode of Pod and Prejudice. Next time, we're back to the three-chapter structure. So, if you can read Chapters 32 through 34 or Chapters **[01:05:00]** 10 through 12 of Volume II in your copy of *Sense and Sensibility* for the next episode. Until next time though, stay proper--

Molly: --and find yourself a Colonel Brandon.

Becca: Yes. Do that for sure.

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. To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook [@podandprejudice](https://www.facebook.com/podandprejudice). If you love what you hear, check out our Patreon at [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://www.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.