

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to give a huge shoutout to our newest patrons, Michelle, Ruth, and Ava. Welcome to the team. If you want to be like them and get access to our notes, outtakes, Jane Austen-themed cocktail recipes, and more, head on over to our Patreon at patreon.com/podandprejudice.

And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapters 44 and 45 of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Becca: I promised you I was going to read you all the vegan treats you can order from the vegan bodega.

Molly: Right, right. Listeners, you catch us at a hungry time usually.

Becca: So, this is under vegan treats available.

Molly: Hope.

Becca: Vegan carrot and cream cupcake.

Molly: I want that. I saw that this morning when I was getting my burrito.

Becca: Vegan red velvet cupcake.

Molly: Oh, no!

Becca: Vegan chocolate mint chip cupcake.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: Vegan chocolate peanut butter mousse cupcake.

Molly: Oh, wait.

Becca: Vegan carrot cake, which I believe is a slice of the same thing the cupcake is. Vegan cookies and cream Oreo cake, Vegan death [00:01:00] by chocolate cake, vegan French silk cheesecake, vegan peanut butter mousse bomb cake. It says in parentheses 'big slice.'

Molly: Big slice.

Becca: Big slice. Vegan chocolate chip cookie, vegan oatmeal raisin cookie, vegan banana chocolate chip cookie, vegan caramel chip cookie, vegan peanut butter cookie, vegan mint chocolate cookie, vegan peanut butter cup brownie, vegan peanut butter mousse brownie, vegan cheesecake brownie, vegan triple chocolate brownie, vegan pumpkin whoopie pie, vegan white cream whoopie pie, I can't say whoopie pie apparently. Vegan chocolate cannoli, vegan tiramisu, vegan donuts, vegan cinnamon or pecan buns. Guys, I have been with many lovers in my lifetime, but I've never had anybody look at me with more arousal than Molly is looking at me right now. [laughs]

Molly: Here's the thing, here's the thing. [00:02:00] This morning, I went to the vegan bodega. We call

it the vegan bodega. It's just a normal bodega that has a lot of vegan options.

Becca: They're the nicest people too.

Molly: They're so nice. I went there this morning because I had a morning and I was like, "I deserve a burrito." So, I went for a breakfast burrito. And I was looking at the-- what's it called?

Molly and Becca: The display.

Molly: Yeah. The pastry display, and I see that the cinnamon bun is vegan and that the pecan bun is vegan. I was like, "Man, I wish everything else in this display was vegan because it all looks so good, but I guess only those two things are vegan," because nothing else was labeled. But I was looking at the Oreo cake and I was like, "That's what I want to eat." Now, I know, it's vegan and we're going to have to order it." [laughs] Becca, I'm so sorry.

Becca: It's okay. I am probably going to order a vegan brownie.

Molly: Yeah. [laughs]

Becca: Because I read it and I was excited. I won't [00:03:00] lie to you.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: We're hungry.

Molly: Yeah. The thing is that I'm not hungry but I'm thinking about cake now, and my eyes are watering a little bit.

Becca: Your eyes are watering or your mouth is watering? [giggles]

Molly: My eyes are watering. I get emotional about my Oreo cakes, okay?

Becca: Speaking of emotions.

Molly: Speaking of emotions, really good--

Molly and Becca: Segue.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Really good segue.

[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 *Sense and Sensibility*, Chapters 44 and 45 or Volume III Chapters 8 and 9.

Becca: I'm so proud that you look that up ahead of time.

Molly: It helps that I read the chapters last night.

Becca: Yes. Ooh, okay. Just a quick heads-up. There is some weird sound happening outside. It's either a plane that's going over very slowly or there's a ghost [00:04:00] that's just really upset right outside.

Molly: Okay, okay. One, I hear that. I also have an ear infection. So, one, I have a sinus infection. Two, my ear is infected. So, not great at hearing and smelling things. However, I want to do a book recommendation, which I think is fun for our bookish listeners. I'm currently reading *Under the Whispering Door* by TJ Klune. Becca can attest that I've been feeling my feelings about it. It's really, really good.

Becca: She's audiobooking it and I'll walk into the kitchen, and she'll just have her earbuds in, and she'll just be quietly on the verge of tears but smiling.

Molly: Yeah, that's pretty much how to describe this book. It feels it's sad but in the most warm and fuzzy comforting way. I can't help but I feel happy while listening to this heart-wrenching novel.

Becca: Ah, wonderful. But we're talking about a different novel today. For those of you joining us for the first time, I, Becca, have [00:05:00] read a lot of Jane Austen books.

Molly: And I, Molly, have not read any before doing this podcast. But now, I've read almost two.

Becca: If you want to listen to Molly read through *Pride and Prejudice* for the first time, you can check out Season 1 of this podcast. But that is not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No, today we are talking about *Sense and Sensibility*, which is heated and emotional.

Becca: This chapter is one that I had in my back pocket and I was going along, so excited for you to get here for so long, and we're here.

Molly: We're here, and last night, I was reading in and I texted Becca, "This is longer. Are you sure you want to do two? Because I have a lot to say." But the second one is likely a short chapter. So, we're going to be fine. But this chapter, I have a lot to say.

Becca: Oh, there are a lot of things to say about Mr. John Willoughby.

Molly: John!

Becca: Listeners, you might remember that last episode ended with us seeing Willoughby again

suddenly for the first time in, [00:06:00] what, 20 chapters?

Molly: Yeah, and being like, "Whomst?"

Becca: Exactly. Whomst?

Molly: Whomst the fuck are you doing here?

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: It sounds like it means something different from what I mean it to mean.

Molly: No, it's perfect. It means something absolutely perfect.

Molly: Whomst the fuck are you doing here? Yeah.

Becca: Well, it's Willoughby. So, probably somebody.

Molly: Yeah. Oh, my God.

Becca: All right. I guess other than really lusting after vegan desserts, there's not much to do other than start this up.

Molly: Yes. Chapter 44, which I really hope is correct because I said it with such confidence at the start of this episode. Elinor has just run downstairs to see Willoughby, and she immediately turns to leave. She walks into the room, she sees him, she says, "Nope," about face, turns around.

[laughter]

Becca: She's just yeets herself back. She's like, "Oh, no, not that."

Molly: Not that, anyone else. And he tells her to stay. He said it with a tone of assertion, like, "Fuck you," right off the bat.

Becca: I will say this. [00:07:00] This is one of the scenes that reminds me that *Sense and Sensibility* made an excellent stage play. Just the way it is, it's so dramatic and theatrical.

Molly: Bedlam did that, right?

Becca: Believe so.

Molly: Elinor is like, "No, you can't possibly have business with me." He's like, "No, my business is only with you." She's like, "What? Okay, I guess so. But just be quick and calm down," because he is aggravated. She feels nervous that if he stays, Colonel Brandon is going to get back and see him there, and that's going to be really awkward for all of the reasons that would be awkward.

Becca: Not just awkward. Last time they saw each other, they dueled.

Molly: They dueled!

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I forgot they dueled.

Becca: Because there's a casual little duel in the middle of this fucking book.

Molly: Wait, they dueled. Was Colonel Brandon-- I mean he was mad at Willoughby about obviously, his daughter, but he was also like, "How dare you do this to Marianne?"

Becca: It's a combo. Marianne's not entirely out of [00:08:00] that equation. It is primarily about impregnating his ward but it is also about Marianne Dashwood's honor for sure.

Molly: It's a combo plate.

Becca: It's like if Eliza's pregnancy is the General Tso's chicken, then the Marianne Dashwood is the side of pork fried rice.

Molly: Yeah. Or, if the Eliza pregnancy is the Oreo cake and Marianne Dashwood's honor is the vegan brownie.

Becca: I was going to say the glass of vegan milk that goes with the Oreo cake.

Molly: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah. Sure. But nobody really drinks milk straight, right?

Becca: I think it happens occasionally.

Molly: I guess a good glass of almond milk I can do.

Becca: One of my former roommates used to drink milk how other people drink water, which I didn't think anyone had done since 1995.

Molly: She sits down, and they sit in silence for a while, and after a minute or two, she's like, "Okay, come on. Really, you've got to just go for it." He says, "Is [00:09:00] Marianne really out of danger?" The way that he's asking again begs the question, is Marianne pregnant?

Becca: That is definitely a way to read it. I also would read it as him just being there. "Please, just tell me she's okay."

Molly: I know. But he's so self-interested and, yes, both. I don't think that Marianne is pregnant. I don't know. After she tells him that Marianne is in fact okay, he's like, "Oh, God. If I had known half an hour ago, but I'm here anyway. So, let's rejoice in the fact that Marianne is okay. Do you think I'm a knave or a fool?" Elinor is like, "Go home, Willoughby. You're drunk." [laughs] He's like, "Yeah, I'm drunk. I had a pint of beer at lunch in Marlborough," and she's like, "Marlborough?" which is I guess, pretty far away. He's like, "Yeah. I've been on the road since 8 AM." He's clearly not drunk.

So, she says, "What are you doing [00:10:00] here then?" He says he's here to make her hate him by one degree less than she does now, which I don't think is possible. And he's there to apologize for "Though I have always been a blockhead, I have not always been a rascal," and he wants to get Marianne's forgiveness.

Becca: I would disagree with you. I think, it is possible for her to hate him a little less than she does now because of the amount she hates him.

Molly: Sure, sure, sure.

Becca: It's like you can take it down a decibel because there's so much room for improvement.

Molly: Right. I guess it's not possible for me to hate him any less.

Becca: That's fair.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That's very fair.

Molly: But he did not wrong my sister.

Becca: He wronged your Marianne. He wronged your fictional character.

Molly: He did. This fictional character wronged my other one. So, she tells him that if that's the case, Marianne has long forgiven him, which I'm like, "Has she?" And Willoughby also says, "Has she? Then, she's done it without reason. She [00:11:00] forgave me too soon. Let me actually justify myself." And he launches into, we can only be described as a sob story.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: I couldn't read this not in a whiny voice.

[in a whiny voice]

Becca: [in a whiny voice] At first, all I wanted was to bang but then she was so cool.

Molly: [in a whiny voice] But then, my feelings got in the way.

Becca: I will say, even though, we're making fun of Willoughby, I am going to read one of my favorite lines from this book.

Molly: I wonder if it's one I underlined.

Becca: It might be but go first, go first a little bit.

Molly: Okay. Basically, what we just wind for three or four pages, he says, first, he was just trying to flirt. He knew that she liked him but he didn't ever intend to return her affections or actually be with her. He explains that he's always lived outside his means which I can't-- that's his own dang fault, but he's hung out with rich people, he's gambled, he's done all this stuff, and he didn't know when his aunt was going to die. That could be a while off. And [00:12:00] that's when he's supposed to inherit the estate. So, he had resolved to marry rich. That's why he knew he could not marry Marianne.

He says, "At that time, he didn't know how much pain he was inflicting on her because he didn't then know what it was to love." So, he decided to marry rich and in doing so, lose all chances of actually having happiness because he did fall in love with Marianne, which is the opposite of what's happened to Eddie.

Becca: We're going to stick a pin in that point and return to it in study questions because it's an astute observation.

Molly: But there's some ways in which the opposite of Eddie and some ways in which it's the same as Eddie which we'll get to. So, Elinor asks did he actually love her at one point.

Becca: And then that leads to one of my favorite lines. "You did then," said Elinor, a little softened, "believed yourself at one time attached to her. To have resistance such attractions, to have withstood such tenderness, is there [00:13:00] a man on earth who could have done it?" "Yes, I found myself by insensible degrees sincerely fond of her. The happiest hours of my life were what I spent with her when I felt my intentions were strictly honorable and my feelings blameless." Disgusting, but I think interesting.

Molly: Do delve.

Becca: I think, this chapter in particular is really, really fascinating for a lot of reasons that we'll again get into in the study questions, but to hint at it here, Willoughby is a villain very obviously. But he's a villain who gets depth, he's a villain who gets minor redeeming qualities, which is rare in a lot of Austen's literature. Compare him to Wickham, for example.

Molly: That's what I'm doing in my head.

Becca: What Wickham doesn't get, which Willoughby does is explanation, a chance to show his side of the story. I [00:14:00] think the way she writes this line is so fascinating, particularly, the way he tells the story, especially juxtaposing it against how Colonel Brandon told his story, a story of honor, and love, and devotion against his selfish story. But his selfish story still involves him falling in love and the way he says it is so deep.

Molly: There are even moments throughout the story where I felt a little bit bad for him. But then, he would say something snooty, and I would immediately retract my bad feelings for him. But I get it. I mean he does prove that he actually did love Marianne.

Becca: Yeah, I think it's not about excuse. It's about explanation.

Molly: Ooh!

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yes. Ooh, we get into it with the excuses. After he says that, he tells her he fully had intended to propose, he was like, "Yeah, I'm going to profess my love to her," but he kept putting it off, and putting it off, and putting it off, because he knew that he had to marry rich.

Becca: I think it's in this [00:15:00] case because he didn't have anything to offer her.

Molly: Right because he didn't have anything to offer yet with the estate not being his, and he was kind of banking on that in the future, but he was just putting it off and he knows it was silly, and he's like, "I won't stop for you to expatiate," which means to speak out lengthen or in detail about how wrong he was for not engaging his faith where his honor was already bad. Another line that made me wonder if they banged.

Becca: It's not clear. Is it?

Molly: I think they banged.

Becca: I think, there's a very fair reading of this book saying that Marianne and Willoughby more bangin', absolutely.

Molly: Yeah. So, finally, he has resolved to do it in his story. He's walking home one day, and he's like, "Yeah, tomorrow, I'm going to tell Marianne how I feel. Next time I can be alone with her, I'm going to tell her." Then, an unlucky circumstance occurs and Mrs. Smith finds out. At this point, he looks at Elinor and he's like, "You probably know what I'm talking about." She's like, "Uh-huh. But I don't [00:16:00] know how you can possibly explain this one away."

Becca: I love this part because it's like, Elinor's softening to him as he's waxing poetic about her sister, and then he's like, "You know this next part," and she's like, "Oh, yeah, you're awful." [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. Oh, yeah. You knocked up a 14-year-old and then left her.

Becca: Fuck you.

Molly: So, literally, all my notes from this point on are just like, "Shut up, stop talking." He keeps at intervals being like, "I don't mean to explain it away," or "I don't mean to try to get you to forgive me." Then, stop talking. You're saying you're not trying to redeem yourself but you are, and it's not working. You're just talking yourself into a deeper hole.

Becca: Yeah, I think, but I don't know. I love this chapter because he's a man of passions and he's not a good man.

Molly: No. Yes, I love the chapter too because we love to hate him.

Becca: Oh, we do. We love to hate him. There's a piece of you that read these parts and is like, "Oh, man, you're a passionate man." There's something about him. He's the bad boy but Austen does it really well of making [00:17:00] it like oh, he's just a weenie enough to remind you that he's a weenie.

Molly: He's a weenie. He's exactly a weenie.

Becca: He is such a weenie.

Molly: He whines, and he weenies and--

Becca: More like weenie bee. Am I right?

Molly: Weenie bee.

Becca: Weenie bee. [laughs]

Molly: Weenie bee. Oh, man, I hate him but I am attracted to him. It's-- aaahh.

Becca: I mean, we've been over this. Willoughby's hot, Willoughby is a bad man, but Willoughby is not a man without his own internal monologue. You know what I mean?

Molly: Mm-hmm. If there was anyone to be self-destructive about, it would be him. Also, we all know this guy.

Becca: Oh, boy. Do we?

Molly: Yeah. This guy went to college with us, you know?

Becca: This whole book is just a shitting on the guys we went to college with. But you know what? It's fine.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I'm not going to argue it.

Molly: Anyway, okay, ooh. Now, we're talking about him having a knocked up little Eliza, and then leaving [00:18:00] her to rot. He says, "First of all, you heard that from a source that could not be impartial. Not that I need to justify myself or anything, but she was not a saint either."

Becca: First of all, it's not true. Second of all, it was her fault.

Molly: Second of all, he basically calls her, and I'm going to use some words that I think that I would not use, but he's basically calling her a slut, he's calling her dumb. It feels gross to say but he says she doesn't have the-- what are the words? She has violence of passions and weakness of understanding, and this was her fault too. Basically, degrading this 14, 14! 14-year-old girl who he seduced. She did not do anything wrong, obviously. I think all of our listeners know this.

Becca: Oh, yeah. I think, any, what, 25-year-old man, who is like, "I [00:19:00] know you think that I'm at fault for leaving and abandoning this 14-year-old girl and pregnant. But really, she was the instigator." I would say that everyone who hears that sentence would and should take that with a grain of salt.

Molly: Yes. He's saying all of this shit. Well, after reading these last night, I tweeted that this next set of chapters had me screaming Jane Austen is a feminist icon alone in my bedroom, because her response to this, it felt icky to say just now the things that he was saying, but he is saying this stuff, and then he's like, "But again, I don't mean to defend myself. Then, again, stop talking." He says, "He should have been kinder to her for her affection to him, but he really wishes that none of it had ever happened since it led to him hurting Marianne, and Marianne is just so much smarter than her, and prettier than her and just a better person." At this, Elinor just cuts him off, and she says, "your indifference is no [00:20:00] apology for your cruel neglect of her." Bam, boom. She says he must have known how bad her situation was while he was off enjoying himself. He must have known that he had left this girl pregnant and alone. He's like, "No, I didn't know. I gave her my address. She was too dumb to look it up if I had forgotten to give her my address, but I'm pretty sure I did. But she's dumb." Okay. I'm not being coherent when I get emotional about it.

Becca: No, no, this is a good thing to get emotional about because Willoughby's smearing a 14-year-old girl as a tough look for our guy.

Molly: Tough look for our guy and I really love that Elinor came back at like, "Just because you didn't like her as much as she liked you, it doesn't mean that you can treat her that way." So, we get to when Mrs. Smith finds out. Basically, Mrs. Smith found out and disowned him. She said, "Either you can marry this girl or you're not getting your estate." He said, "Well, I'm not [00:21:00] marrying her." Why, first of all?

Becca: Oh, plenty of reasons. One is that he wanted to marry rich. The other is that he's in love with Marianne.

Molly: So, if he had married Eliza, he would have been doing what Eddie had to do.

Becca: Yes. And again, we'll return to that in study questions.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: But I think, Jane Austen is being quite deliberate about the situation, especially comparing it to a Mr. Edward Ferrars.

Molly: Mm-hmm. So, now, he has no estate because he has been disowned, because he refused to marry her. So, he has to marry rich. So, he chooses Miss Grey. He debates at this point whether to send a note to Marianne or whether to go in person. And ultimately, he decides to go in person and just shatters Marianne's heart. He leaves intending never to see her again. Elinor at this point asks why he chose to come in person when a note would have done just as [00:22:00] well. So, I have to ask, "Do we prefer text breakups or in person breakups?"

Becca: I'm a fan of a phone call, honestly.

Molly: I agree, I agree. A text message never but a call, I think, is akin to sending a note because they didn't have phones back then. [laughs] That's my two cents. Oh, he probably did the right thing by going in person.

Becca: It's a fascinating to see Willoughby tried to do the right thing by Marianne.

Molly: It is.

Becca: Because he loves her-

Molly: I know.

Becca: -and he has so many selfish instincts, and he's not a good person.

Molly: It really turns my stomach.

Becca: It's wild. This is a rant I was going to save for study questions, but I'll go for it. What's so fascinating about this is Jane Austen is making the argument that you can be in love and be a bad person. This is something that people say a lot. They're like, "Oh, no, that person doesn't really love you if they're treating you badly. They don't really love you if you're being selfish," and Jane Austen saying no people can be in love, people can be really, really in love with you, and [00:23:00] still not be good enough to be with you, they can still be a very bad person even if they love you and amount that will make your heart melt. People can still not show up for the occasion, people can still be selfish when they love you and I think that is so smart, and so astute, and I think, it's underrated in the discourse of being like, "No, that person can be in love with you and it can still be toxic and wrong."

Molly: Yes. Something else that she's saying during this that is in a similar vein is that you can feel remorse and still be a bad person, too. You can do bad things, and you can feel bad about them, and apologize for them, and you can keep on doing them over and over again. And that's what Willoughby does.

Becca: And you can be the type of person who apologizes for what's gone wrong with the absolute knowledge that you fucked things up so badly, that there is no apology. There is no way to fix the situation you've caused. So, to exist with the knowledge that you have caused people, who sometimes even you love, such immense pain that they [00:24:00] will never truly recover from, it's just something you have to live with. That's what's so interesting about Willoughby as a character. He's not a good guy, he's not nice, but that's not the point. The point is that he was deeply in love with Marianne and has to live forever with the knowledge that he ruined her life. It's an interesting story, it's a fascinating take on what it is to love someone, and how being in love is just not enough.

Molly: It's not. Then, something else about Willoughby is that he is going to live with the knowledge that he's ruined Marianne's life forever, and he's going to feel bad about it. But three weeks earlier, he ruined this other girl's life forever, and he doesn't feel bad about it at all.

Becca: Because he's not a good person. The only difference is that he's so in love with Marianne.

Molly: Yeah. But okay, do we think that he's really in love with her, do we think that he's in lust with her? I feel like there's two different ways this could go.

Becca: That's a good question. I tend to think Willoughby's in [00:25:00] love. Because he's lusting after

Eliza.

Molly: That's true.

Becca: He lusts after her and his lust is satiated, but he travelled across the English countryside when he found out she was dying to make sure that her last dying breath wouldn't involve her hatred of him.

Molly: Yeah, but also, that was a note that I had was that he said, "I couldn't bear the thought that she was going to die hating me." That is a selfish way to go about it.

Becca: It's a super selfish way to love, like super selfish way to love.

Molly: She is dying, and you're thinking, "What does she think about me, me, me, me?"

Becca: Exactly, exactly. But it doesn't mean he's not in love with her. It means he's so enraptured with her, but it also means that he's a person who's a bad person who's in love.

Molly: He's a selfish lover.

Becca: He's a selfish lover. He's a pillow princess, obviously, a pillow princess.

Molly: [laughs] Yes.

Becca: Listeners, does everyone know what pillow princess is?

Molly: I hope so. My mom probably doesn't, and we're going to explain.

Becca: [00:26:00] Typically for Molly's mom.

Molly: Oh, no.

Becca: A pillow princess is someone who in the act of sex does not put in any effort and makes the other person do all of the work because they have no interest in pleasuring their partner. Anyway, back to Jane Austen and love. Yeah, for me, this is one of the big cruxes of the book, which is, like I said, at the very beginning, a lot about the different ways we love each other about the different facets and interesting pieces of love, and what it means to be in love, and what it means to be with someone, and Willoughby is giving us this whole new perspective on love in this chapter from the villain.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: From the guy who ruined fuckin' everything.

Molly: And we talked about different ways to love because we were talking about how Brandon loves, and how Elinor loves, and how Marianne loves, and how they all love in different ways and expect different things out of their relationships. But they are all focused on the other person and how that relationship [00:27:00] is, but Willoughby is showing us that love can exist in a selfish way. A selfish person can love too, because they're receiving. They're like, "Yeah, me, me, me."

Becca: Yeah, a selfless person can receive and experience all-consuming love and have that spin and spiral out of control. Someday, someday, we're going to read *Wuthering Heights*, which is my favorite book. For listeners who love *Wuthering Heights*, you can imagine me talking about *Wuthering Heights*.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: But that's what Willoughby is. You can talk a lot about lust, and attraction, and selfish behavior. But honestly, Jane Austen explores that through Wickham. And Willoughby, I find a much more compelling villain, because he's a villain with much more to him than simple greed and lust. He is a villain who wants things out of life, who wants specific things and passions out of life. [00:28:00] And he finds them, because of his own moral failings, he not only ruins his own chances of happiness, but also manages to hurt the only person in the world he's ever loved. It's devastating and it's so deserved.

Molly: Tough look for our guy.

Becca: Tough look for our guy, Willoughby. I'm so happy I'm discussing this chapter.

Molly: [laughs] I started thinking about *Wuthering Heights* as a neighborhood in Brooklyn or Manhattan.

Becca: [laughs] Oh, my God! That would be a bad neighborhood to live in.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: *Wuthering Heights* is very rural and very steeped in deep family trauma.

Molly: *Wuthering Heights*, the Musical?

Becca: [starts singing *Wuthering Heights*] No, I'm not paying for the rest of that song but--

Molly: Is Heathcliff the name of the guy in *Wuthering Heights*?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: Do you know something?

Molly: No. On the Instagram, we follow a lot of bookish accounts and I've seen some Heathcliff memes, and I always kind [00:29:00] of just assumed that it was a Jane Austen character.

Becca: Nope. That is an Emily Brontë, man.

Molly: Right. Brontë. All right, so, same thing. [laughs]

Molly and Becca: Nooo!

Becca: Sorry. Listeners, [unintelligible [00:29:15]

Molly: [crosstalk]

Becca: No, the Brontës are very different in tone to Jane Austen. They are not exactly contemporaries but contemporaneous enough that everyone associates them together. But I actually think it detracts from the work with both of them because the Brontës were exploring something much darker than Austen was for the most part.

Molly: No, I fully agree. That was mostly a joke because in my mind, it's the same people that are fans of both.

Becca: This is actually a fun poll. You're clearly an Austen fan if you're listening to us. If you are a Bronte fan, give us a shout on Instagram, and we will see, if you are just an Austen fan or an Austen and a Brontë fan. I personally think they're both awesome [00:30:00] for different reasons, the Bronte sisters lend themselves to a different podcast because they are dark and sad all the time, whereas Jane Austen had a lot of fun, being witty, and sarcastic. Y'all know Jane Austen's lighter than the Bronte sisters were.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Anyway, this is a tangent. Let's go back to this one very problematic man.

Molly: Yes. Willoughby says the reason he came to break up with Marianne in person was for his own pride. At least, he is honest about that. He says he didn't want anyone finding out he had been disowned by Mrs. Smith. So, he wallows about how he had just been thinking he was going to propose and how happy he was just the day before-- [mumbling] And now, he's so full of guilt and bleh, and then Elinor asks if he had promised Marianne that he would return, and this bitch says he doesn't remember.

Becca: He does not recall.

Molly: I did not recall. I don't really understand what he says next. He talks about how-- I can't tell if he's being sarcastic or not. He says that [00:31:00] his misery is a comfort to him, and he looks back on his sad times so fondly. Is he saying because he was less miserable than he is now or is he saying this with sarcasm?

Becca: "Thank heaven, it did torture me. I was miserable, Ms. Dashwood. You cannot have an idea of the comfort it gives me to look back on my own misery. I owe such a grudge to myself for the stupid, rascally folly of my own heart that all my past sufferings under it are only triumph and exultation to me now." Yes.

Molly: Sarcasm or he is happy--?

Becca: He is saying like, "Oh, I knew I was miserable then, but oh, man, that was nice compared to what this is now."

Molly: Okay.

Becca: There's also an element of self-loathing to this part. He hates himself so much that the pain that he's in, there's an element of 'I deserve this', which he does but not cute when he says it.

Molly: Good. At this point, Elinor wants him to leave. So, she's like, "Anything else?" He's like, "Yes. [00:32:00] There's everything that happened when we got to London. The notes." So, he tells her about how the note he received from Marianne was like a dagger to his heart and to know she was in town was like a thunderbolt. Thunderbolts and daggers. He muses on how Marianne would scold him for using such clichés. I would like thunderbolts and daggers on a t-shirt. I think that would be fun.

Becca: I would buy that t-shirt.

Molly: A *Sense and Sensibility* cover looking thing but thunderbolts and baggers.

Becca: I wanted in quotation marks and just credit to 'a dramatico'.

Molly: [laughs] Thunderbolts and daggers.

Becca: A dramatico.

Molly: A drama queen. So, Elinor starts to feel herself warming up to him because he's hating on himself so much. But she is like, "Come on, don't forget, you're married. This is really improper that you're waxing poetic about my sister." So, he continues about how knowing that she still loved him made [00:33:00] him feel remorse for leaving her, which is what we were talking about. You can feel bad and still be bad. He says up till this point, he had been trying to kind of shrug off the whole thing and act like this didn't hurt him, and it meant nothing to him. He had tried to convince himself that one day he would hear she was married and he would be happy for her. All he had to do was keep avoiding them. So, he sulked around London, and watched them leave their house before he actually returned her letter, and Elinor is like, "You watched us leave the house?" He's like, "Yeah, I watched you a lot actually."

Becca: Yeah, he's really admitting to being a great bit of weirdo here.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's like the very awkward moment when you realize all that time, Marianne's was like, "Where's Willoughby?" He's literally like 50 yards behind them just like [sound].

Molly: More like Weirdaby, am I right?

Becca: More like Weenieweirdaby, am I right?

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Guys, like Weenieby or Weirdaby, Weenieweirdaby, [00:34:00] Weirdoweenieby?

Molly: Weirdoweenieby. There's someone names from *Hey Arnold!*

Becca: [laughs] They do.

Molly: Weirdoweenieby.

Becca: I think, the kids still know what *Hey Arnold!* is nowadays.

Molly: Listeners, if you were born after the year 1999, do you know a *Hey Arnold!* Is?

Becca: Please know what *Hey Arnold!* Is. It's great.

Molly: When was *Hey Arnold!* cancelled?

Becca: Hey Arnold! Doo, doo, doo, doo, doo, dooo. Dooo, dooo, doo. Doo, doo, doo doo, doo, dooo. Move it football head.

Molly: Bam, bam.

Becca: Bam.

Molly: *Hey Arnold!* aired on July 10th, 1996. And it plays on TV at between 2:00 and 3:30 in the morning.

Becca: Well, I know, what we're doing tonight?

Molly: [laughs] And it had 5 Seasons. It was canceled 2004. So, yeah. If you were born after-

Becca: 2000.

Molly: -2000, let us know if you know what *Hey Arnold!* is. And if you don't, we have a homework assignment for you.

Becca: It's a really stellar cartoon [00:35:00] show. Anyway, back to--

Molly: Back to Jane Austen.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He's like, "Yeah, I've been watching you a lot. I would duck into stores if I saw your carriage coming. But one time I accidentally ran into John Middleton and he invited me to a dance with the enticement that you would be there." So, of course, he didn't go, because--

Becca: And you remember this dance?

Molly: Yes. The one that Marianne was like, "Willoughby was invited, why isn't he here?" We were like trying to figure out why he wasn't there.

Becca: Well, were we or were you?

Molly: [laughs] I and our listeners who were reading along for the first time.

Becca: That's true.

Molly: Thought that he just like wasn't-- I don't know what I ended up saying. But he was actively avoiding her.

Becca: You thought he was ghosting her. You were correct. We called it The Ghosting of Marianne Dashwood.

Molly: Right. Yes, look at me. Toss-toss.

Becca: Yeah. You're getting so good at this you.

Molly: Thank you. The next note he received from Marianne was the note where she was like, "Where were you at this party?" and made him feel even worse, [00:36:00]and love her even more. At this point, he begs Elinor to pity him because he has to pretend to love another woman while only thinking of Marianne. At this point, reading I was like, "Oh, that's why Elinor's feeling bad for him actually."

Becca: Oh, yeah. Because he's still in love with Marianne.

Molly: And she's watching the same thing happen to Eddie.

Becca: And to herself.

Molly: And to herself. She doesn't have to act like she's in love with.

Becca: Oh, no, no, but she has to act like she's not in love with Eddie.

Molly: This book, nobody's doing well.

Becca: No, no. Everyone is unwell either physically, emotionally, or both.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: You know who's doing great?

Molly and Becca: Mrs. Jennings.

Becca: [laughs] Yeah.

Molly: Well, at this point, she's actually a little bit stressed. She thinks Marianne is about to die.

Becca: No, Marianne's chill now.

Molly: Oh, right, right. Marianne is fine. Yeah, you're right. So, she's sleeping. Mrs. Jennings is sleeping right now. So, that's good for her.

Becca: Just having a great, great time. [00:37:00]

Molly: She's having good dreams, Mrs. Jennings. Sweet dreams, Mrs. Jennings. That would be really fun like spinoff series or children's book.

Becca: Mrs. Jennings dream journal. Mrs.

Molly: Mrs. Jennings dream journal. Tonight, I dreamed the child that had triplets, and they were named Mrs. Jennings, and Mrs. Jennings, Jr.

Becca: [laughs] Oh, boy!

Molly: Okay, okay, okay. So, then, he talks about the party when he actually does see her and he explains how hard it was for him to turn her away and how at that moment, she looked as white as death. When he thought that she was really dying this morning, he pictured her looking just like that. Then, in my notes, I was like, "Wait, what about the final letter? That's not the end of your story."

Becca: And what did Elinor say?

Molly: And Elinor says, "What about your next letter? What do you have to say about that?" And he says, "Okay, yes. I got her last letter but my wife opened it, and she got jealous. She wrote the response letter, and had me copy it in my own handwriting, and then return the hair and all of my [00:38:00] mementos back to her." He is really trying to make his wife out to be a villain here.

Becca: Well, to be fair, she probably did exactly that. But have you ever known anyone who's caught their boyfriend cheating and didn't break up? It's exactly like that. It's like block this person on social media, never contact them again, make sure they know that you are taken and you're with me, all this stuff. Generally, if you choose to not break up with your boyfriend after he cheated on you, that is your business for sure. If you feel like what will fix the relationship is cutting him off completely from the people he cheated with, then that's fine. I don't think it's necessarily a long-term solution.

Molly: No, but I also don't think that she's at all at fault for any of this situation. She's mad at him.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He married her and then he was in love with another person who was in love with him. Sure, she [00:39:00] could have dumped him, but maybe she liked him. I don't know. He doesn't have money. So, she must like him a little bit, right? What else would she be marrying him for?

Becca: I think probably because he's hot.

Molly: [unintelligible [00:39:16]].

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But in any event, he's going on about how she just tore everything from him. And Elinor, again, comes back with the feminism in a quote that I have to read.

Becca: Go for it.

Molly: "You are very wrong, Mr. Willoughby, very blamable. You ought not to speak in this way, either of Mrs. Willoughby or my sister. You have made your own choice. It was not forced on you. Your wife has a claim to your politeness, to your respect at least. She must be attached to you or she would not have married you. To treat her with unkindness, to speak of her slidingly is no atonement for Marianne nor can I suppose it a relief to your own conscience." And it does say that she says this with her tone betraying a little bit of the emotions that she's [00:40:00] feeling.

Becca: The emotions she is feeling are feminism.

Molly: Yeah, you're right. He goes on, he's like, "Don't talk to me about my wife. She knew that I didn't love her when we got married." It's like that's no reason to be mean to her. She might have known that, but she might have hoped. I don't know. We don't know this woman.

Becca: Also, just doesn't justify cheating or being in love with another person.

Molly: Yeah, just, oh, it's gross. Everything about the way that he's handling, this is gross. I can see a story in which and I guess, there is a story in which in this book, someone gets married when they're in love with someone else, but does it for good reasons, does it with a pure heart, and that, my friends, is Edward Ferrars. Oh, he's not gar-bage, but he's compost. [laughs]

Becca: Oh, she is victorious. She is victorious in her finding. Oh.

Molly: Becca just put her hands up as if she had scored a touchdown.

Becca: Yeah. I [00:41:00] literally just like, "Whoa, it's time." I've been waiting for this so long, listeners.

Molly: I didn't even know I was going to say that. Just that it just kind of came out.

Becca: I heard it coming and I was like, "It's time, it's time. Eddie is not trash."

Molly: Then, we'll be whines some more and asks if he's convinced her that his intentions were not always bad. She says he's proved as heartless wicked, but that doesn't reduce the effects of his actions, which it does not, and I will stand by that. He is still a bad person. He asks her to tell Marianne everything when she's well again, and Elinor says she will tell her what is necessary to "what may comparatively be called your justification." I like that Elinor sticking to her guns here. She is not telling him that he is in the clear. She's like, "We'll see." She asks why he came now, how he heard that Marianne was sick. He says, "Well, I was in Drury Lane, and I couldn't help, but say, 'Do you know The Muffin Man?'"

Becca: The Muffin Man? [00:42:00]

Molly: The Muffin Man. My new head canon is that Willoughby is The Muffin Man. Or, actually, suppose John Middleton would be The Muffin Man.

Becca: I mean, he doesn't live on Drury Lane but certainly, he would probably make better muffins than Willoughby.

Molly: Yeah, Willoughby's muffins would be like-- I don't know, some bad kind of muffin. I like all muffins.

Becca: No, muffins are great. They don't deserve the slander.

Molly: You're right. Okay. He was in Drury Lane and he sees John Middleton. And John Middleton, his "good-natured, honest, stupid soul" made him tell him that Marianne was sick, knowing it would vexed him." I like good-natured, honest, stupid soul as the new obstinate, headstrong girl.

Becca: I mean I am both of those things.

Molly: Yeah, exactly. Basically, John Middleton hates Willoughby so much. He's like, "Guess what? Your ex-girlfriend's dying," which is not the way to come back at someone [laughs]

Becca: John Middleton's not great with the whole smack-talk thing.

Molly: No. But after seeing how Willoughby responds, he feels a little sorry for him, and then, he's like, "Oh, [00:43:00] remember when you promised me a puppy?" [laughs] So, they're cool now. And Willoughby couldn't bear knowing the Marianne was dying hating him, like we said. So, he gets in his carriage and here he is, and now, we're up to speed. Elinor is just lost in thought over the whole thing. She's thinking over how his early independence-- does that mean his loss of his parents?

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: That led to him being idle, and his idleness made him extravagant and vain, and how his vanity led to him falling for Marianne, and his extravagance made him sacrifice his love for his money. She's going over all of this in her head. This doesn't make me feel bad for him.

Becca: I think it's more the tragedy of him.

Molly: Because it's all one thing led to another?

Becca: Yeah, it's just like you are so close to being the kind of person who's correct, but all these circumstances conspired together to make you a bad one. And because of that, you fail dismally at being a person.

Molly: Yeah, and she does say [00:44:00] that she's seeing some of his old self in him, the self that he presented to them that at heart, he has good qualities, not that he is a good person but his good qualities are not being put to use, I guess. So yes, she's thinking very philosophically about it. Finally, Willoughby says he has to go, and he extends his hand, and Elinor gives him her hand, and he says, "Do you think

any better of me now?" She says she forgives him, she pities him, and she wishes him well. He says he will "rub through the world as best he can."

Becca: Aren't we all?

Molly: I really hated that phrase. He says domestic happiness isn't in the cards for him. But if he ever finds himself single again--" and Elinor is like, "Stop talking about when your wife dies or something." He's like, "Okay." So, he leaves. He says he's dreading the day that Marianne gets married, especially if it is the person whom he could least bear, "but I will not stay to rob myself of all your compassion, [00:45:00] goodwill by shewing that where I have most injured I can least forgive." And then, he runs away. At least, he's self-aware about it. He's saying like, "If she marries Brandon, I'll be pissed, but I'm not going to go into that right now because I know that makes me look really bad."

Becca: Like he lost-- I know I've lost any say in the matter.

Molly: Yes. So, that's the end of that chapter.

Becca: It's a doozy.

Molly: That was a long one but here we go. Chapter 45 or Volume III Chapter 9. It's a much shorter one. Elinor says for a while just feeling bad for Willoughby thinking about how he really does love Marianne, basically having all the same thoughts we just talked about for the last hour. She goes back upstairs to Marianne and she's feeling really happy, because Marianne is feeling better and all the stuff. And then, her mother's carriage arrives. She goes downstairs. Mrs. Dashwood is so happy.

Becca: I want to be very-- just return to something from last episode. You were convinced Mrs. Dashwood would just not get home.

Molly: I was convinced that Mrs. Dashwood was going to die.

Becca: And she's fully [00:46:00] fine.

Molly: Yes. But the way that they were leading up to it, I thought she and Brandon were overturned on the road.

Becca: Oh, no. They were really just trying to make you nervous, and then, it was Willoughby.

Molly: Yes. I was convinced that Mrs. Dashwood was going to be dead but she arrives safe and sound, and she is so thrilled that Marianne is okay, she just can't even speak. She's just crying. Elinor and Colonel Brandon each take an arm and they support her into the house, and Elinor looks over Colonel Brandon, and she sees this relief on his face too, and it's very beautiful. He doesn't say anything. Mrs. Dashwood goes into mom mode and she doesn't want to keep Marianne awake. So, she just sits up with her and she tells Elinor to go to bed. Elinor just lies in bed and thinks about "poor Willoughby" and blames herself for judging him too harshly before. Now, that's gone a little too far for me.

Becca: Yeah, Elinor gets a little bit 'Mm' in this one chapter but she does a good job of counterbalancing Willoughby while he's there. But for a moment, I'm like, "Jane Austen, little too [00:47:00] light on

Willoughby for a second.

Molly: I know. There was a brief moment and I wasn't even going to bring it up, but the way that she keeps talking about how bad she feels for Willoughby, there was a brief moment reading this where I was like, "Hang on, are we going to flip flop again?" By flip flop again, I mean am I going to think that we're going to flip flop again, because I used to think that we were going to flip flop lovers? And I thought for a minute, "Is Elinor starting to feel something for Willoughby?"

Becca: Oh, my God, stop.

Molly: I really did. I had full 30 seconds while I was reading this, but I thought that. I got over it really fast.

Becca: Yeah, I'm not even going to entertain that.

Molly: [laughs] So, she's lying there, she's thinking how she's nervous to tell Marianne because she knows that once Marianne hears that Willoughby really loves her, she will never be happy with anyone else, and Elinor really wants her to be happy with anyone else. I wanted to know that Elinor keeps getting put in a position where she has to tell people life-changing things.

Becca: Yeah, it's because Elinor is just the quintessential friend who listens. Every group has one where that one [00:48:00] friend who knows everyone's deep innermost secrets and they just hold all the cards and they never use them.

Molly: Yep. And for a moment, Elinor wishes that Mrs. Willoughby would die and leave Willoughby a widower so that he could be with Marianne. She's like, "What?" I was like, "Elinor, Jesus Christ." But then, she thinks about Brandon and she's like, "No, Marianne should end up with him, not Willoughby." This was weird for me. I didn't like the way that we were talking about Marianne. She was thinking about the prize of her sister and which man was going to get her. I know that's not the intent with what she's thinking it but I didn't like reading it.

Becca: It's weirdly phrased, but I do think Austen is getting at the fact that Elinor thinks her sister deserves the world. At the end of the day, as much as Willoughby loves her, he'll never deserve her.

Molly: What's weird is that later on in this chapter-- we'll get there and I'll come back to this. So, I'll just keep going. It turns out that Mrs. Dashwood [00:49:00] had read into all of Elinor's letters to her and had been planning to come anyway. She was really nervous about Marianne. She had already set up childcare for Margaret. I'm really glad we at least got to know where Margaret was.

Becca: Oh, yeah. She's not alone in the cottage.

Molly: Yes. Justice for Margaret. Mrs. Dashwood is really happy at how much Marianne is improving over the next few days. And Elinor wonders if she's forgotten what happened with Eddie but Mrs. Dashwood simply refuses to think about anything that won't make her happy. She's a little mad at herself though for encouraging Marianne the attachment to Willoughby since it led to this illness. She tells Elinor then that Brandon is in love with Marianne. She tells her this as if Elinor doesn't know. She's like, "Guess what?"

Becca: I know. It's really fantastic.

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Oh, guess what I found out in the car ride here? Brandon's in love with Marianne," and Elinor was like, "Oh." And then, Mrs. Dashwood is like, "Oh, you're no fun. Why aren't you excited about this?" She tells her she [00:50:00] would love for Brandon to marry either of her girls. She thinks that Marianne will be the most happy with him, and I really want to know why she thinks that. Elinor says, "Why do you think that?" Or, she almost asks her, "Why does she think that?" She thinks it can't be based on their age, or either of their characters, or their feelings, or at least not on Marianne's feelings towards him. At this point, I was wondering like, "Does Elinor not think that they would be good together?"

Becca: Not necessarily. I don't think Elinor thinks it's a bad match. I think Elinor thinks that Marianne has very specific ideas about who she should be in love with, and Colonel Brandon does not match those ideals.

Molly: Right. And Marianne is known to stick to her guns on these things.

Becca: Yes, absolutely.

Molly: So, we are going to get into a description shortly of why Brandon is good for Marianne, but Marianne doesn't see him that way. Elinor knows that she doesn't see him that way, and yet, she still is rooting for him, but she's not really rooting for them.

Becca: It's not so much that Elinor [00:51:00] wants Marianne coerced into this.

Molly: No.

Becca: It's more that Elinor sees Marianne as having blinders on, and Elinor wishing that there's something that could happen where she could just remove that little layer of cotton over her eyes.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And see what she's wanted is in front of her in a package she didn't expect.

Molly: Right. Mrs. Dashwood tells Elinor that Brandon spilled all of his feelings to her on their journey. But actually, what happened was Mrs. Dashwood was freaking out about Marianne being sick in the car, and she looked up and Brandon was also freaking out, and she thought he must be in love with her. That just happens to be true.

Becca: I mean that's honestly pretty valid.

Molly: Oh, yeah, I mean, that's how Brandon tells his feelings to people that he's not close with but he's close with Elinor and actually tells his feelings too.

Becca: Brandon's barely said, "I'm in love with Marianne," to Elinor. She's just reading it.

Molly: Mm. I think he's made it pretty clear.

Becca: He has made it super clear. But a lot of it is that he'll say [00:52:00] stuff like, "I guess your sister deserves wonderful love. Your sister reminds me of my ex." He has been like, "I would want to marry your sister if she were available."

Molly: Fair. Fair, fair, fair. Mrs. Dashwood goes on about how good a person he is, and how much he's in love with Marianne, and Elinor is like, "Okay, that's true. But he's also a really good person outside of that and you can ask Mrs. Jennings, and the Middletons, and me. We're really good friends. And if Marianne could be happy with him, then that would be a really good connection for all of us." She then asks if Mrs. Dashwood gave him hope of Marianne's hand, and Mrs. Dashwood says he didn't actually ask. But she did tell him that time would make Marianne get over Willoughby. But Brandon, Elinor points out, doesn't seem any happier about that now than he like usually is. Mrs. Dashwood says, "He thinks Marianne's affection too deeply rooted for any change in it [00:53:00] under a great length of time."

Becca: He might also think that because of the amount that both Elinor and Marianne have made it clear that Marianne believes in first love only.

Molly: Yes, they do talk about that quite a bit.

Becca: Happened a while ago in the book, but was very significant.

Molly: Yeah. He's been thinking about it this whole time.

Becca: He's overanalyzing it still.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Brandon!

Molly: Brandon! Also, he thinks he's too old for her but Mrs. Dashwood doesn't think, he's too old. She goes on about how he isn't as handsome as Willoughby but he's kinder. Anyway, there's always been something in Willoughby's eyes that she didn't like. She's like, "Don't you remember? I didn't always like him." Elinor was like, "No."

Becca: Frankly, my mother does this too. I always hated him.

Molly: [laughs] I think that the Dashwood's are probably canonically Jewish. She's a Jewish mother.

Becca: [laughs] If anybody's Jewish in this book, it's--

Molly and Becca: Mrs. Jennings.

Becca: She's a [unintelligible 00:53:49].

Molly: *Sense and Sensibility*.

Becca: *Sense and Sensibility*, yeah.

Molly: Yeah. Mrs. Dashwood then goes on to say how gentle Brandon's this position is, and [00:54:00] this is the part I wanted to read out loud about why he is a good match for Marianne, which I'm still not 100% sold on, but I understand where we're coming from with this description. "And his manners, the Colonel's manners are not only more pleasing to me than Willoughby's ever were, but they are of a kind I well know to be more solidly attaching to Marianne. Their gentleness, their genuine attention to other people, and their manly unstudied simplicity is much more accordant with her real disposition than the liveliness often artificial and often ill timed of the other. I'm very sure myself that had Willoughby turned out as really amiable, as he has proved himself the contrary, Marianne would yet never have been so happy with him as she will be with Colonel Brandon."

This gets back to the idea of taste that we talked about way early out of the book, and how we talked about Marianne being so in love with Willoughby because he shared all of her tastes, like her taste for the beauty and sensuality of the [00:55:00] world and all of this stuff. But tastes can be more refined, and I think that Colonel Brandon and his sensibilities, they're not so over the top and put on as Willoughby's are. He silently appreciates all the same things that Marianne appreciates loudly, and that's what she really has lying underneath all of it.

Becca: I think it gets to something very nuanced. I think taste is something that we form over years, and we all have personality traits we go for and things we picture in our significant others. Then, when we go and we get out in the world and date, we find a lot of the things we were looking for are actually placeholders for what we actually really need in a partner. For example, liking someone who's got a flippant and immature sense of humor is a stand-in for someone who lightens the mood and makes you laugh. But being a flippant, immature person doesn't mean you're funnier than everybody else. It just means that you [00:56:00] might make a person feel bad enough about themselves to feel like they're not in on the joke correctly. But then, if you figure out what you actually wanted from them in the first place, it's a lot stronger. So, in this case, you have Marianne's love for poetry and her desire to be with someone who shares that and her desire to be with someone who's frothing at the mouth to be with her versus someone like Brandon and Marianne is looking for someone to really profoundly love her, to love her and for her to love back. And Brandon's love is quieter and simpler, but it's much more steadfast and much more true. No matter how much Willoughby actually loves her, he can't offer her that.

Molly: Yeah, I think we agree on this. The only thing that I will say that is keeping me from fully shipping Marianne and Brandon-- I am shipping Brandon with anyone. I think he deserves a big, shiny world. [00:57:00] He's the best. I think Marianne deserves really good stuff too and like that, they both deserve really good things. But I still haven't seen them talk to each other.

Becca: [laughs] That's fair. That's really, really fair. There is still some book left. But yeah.

Molly: There's still some book left, but I'm like, "We're running out."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Anyway, we are almost done. At this point, Mrs. Dashwood is like, "Marianne will be at Delaford. Maybe we should move closer to Delaford," and then she gives Elinor kind of meaningful

look, and Elinor's like, "Oh, God, why does everyone want me to go to Delaford?" And lastly, Mrs. Dashwood says she doesn't know how big his fortune is, and she doesn't really care, but she knows it must be a good one because she's heard that he's rich. But she genuinely doesn't care which is again, we love Mrs. Dashwood. I had forgotten because she's been out of the book for so long, but she is such a good mom.

Becca: She loves her [00:58:00] daughter so much.

Molly: She just wants them to be happy. I love it. Then, a third person enters. They don't specify.

Becca: [crosstalk] Jane Austen got really tired as she was ending the chapter. She goes, "A third person came in."

Molly: To be fair, she did just write a marathon of a chapter. So, she must have been tired. A third person comes in and Elinor is like, "All right, I'm going to go be by myself." She just goes, and she feels bad for Willoughby in a corner, and I don't understand it, but that's the end of those chapters.

Becca: Which brings us to Becca's study questions after what has been a doozy of two chapters. We talked about a lot of the stuff in these study questions already, but we will reiterate some points. Willoughby's story is fresh in the Austen world. We've talked about it a little bit, but let's talk about it a little bit more. How's it different?

Molly: Like you said, he's a villain. He says over and over again, "I'm not trying to justify myself, I'm not trying to justify myself," and he doesn't justify himself, because he's still a villain. But we do get to know a bit of his [00:59:00] motivation, and it's wild that love was involved in the picture. It's not a big reveal. I feel like a lot of these stories that the men get to do are like, a big reveal about their past like Brandon had, or like Darcy has about Wickham, it's just basically what we already knew, which was I was just trying to bang, then, I caught feelings, but then, I was poor. We did find out that he was disowned, which is a big thing, like he lost his money.

Becca: Yeah, it does point us towards a couple of things. One, obviously, Economics of Dating and Jane Austen. [Economics of Dating and Jane Austen stinger] Graham, the sound effect. We have yet another man who is forced to make a financial decision about marriage over a love decision about marriage, which is less common for men in this time period, but still exists as an impediment to them in society. Now, Willoughby makes it clear that it's because he wants to be ultra-rich, not because he wants to not starve. But definitely, he's still hindered by his own capacity to wed.

[01:00:00] On top of that, I also think it's worth noting, we didn't bring this up before, but does this sound like everybody's fantasy that there actually blew them off? Like caught feelings the whole time and is going to spend the rest of his life miserable about it?

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Also, that he was following them throughout London trying to avoid them because he was embarrassed that he was a dick.

Becca: We call this the yo-yo, I don't know if you've ever experienced this, but when you date for someone for a while, and then they break up with you in a really shitty way--

Molly: And then, three weeks later, they text you and they were like, "I fucked up."

Becca: No, it's like three months later, and you've gone through your breakup mourning process, and you're on to something else, and they sense you're on to something else, and then they DM you at 1 in the morning.

Molly: They always can sense when you are thriving, and they want to bring you down.

Becca: Exactly. That's what Willoughby's doing, although Marianne's not really thriving right now, shall we say?

Molly: To be fair, it is a little bit kind of sweet that he, without knowing what he was doing, got in a car and [01:01:00] came to see her.

Becca: That's why Marianne fell in love with him in the first place. He's a romantic. He is. He's just a bad guy. Jane Austen's kind of shitting on romantic guys here.

Molly: What's terrible, and that we have talked about, is that I would date this man.

Becca: That actually leads me to my next question, which you already answered very, very fully. But do you like him now and do you think Austen wants you to?

Molly: I don't think Austen wants me to. I think, he really wants me to. And I don't, I don't. I get why we're feeling bad for him a little bit but it is interesting to examine, why do we still hate him, but when Eddie does the same thing, we are like, "Oh, but you're so sweet." It does come down to ultimately, how they feel about the fact that they're doing it, I think?

Becca: Well, this brings me to my next question, which is, how does Willoughby story relate to the other men in the book. This is where I'm going to talk a bit about Edward and Willoughby because there's a huge distinction between these two men. It [01:02:00] really boils down to what makes Elinor love Edward, and ultimately, what makes Willoughby hateable and unworthy of Marianne. Selfishness versus selflessness. I don't think Edward's being perfect in the situation, either. But both Edward and Willoughby compromised a woman's honor in an era where compromising a woman's honor actually wrecks her socially and financially. Obviously, it's not clear that Edward did so to the same extent that Willoughby did but he certainly did. Now, Edward feels duty bound to this woman. He doesn't particularly care for who's poor, and doesn't do anything for social standing, but moreover, is not the woman he's deeply in love with. But he has stuck by her and has decided to stay there, because he knows that society will tank her after what he's done. So, that is Edward being a little too bound [01:03:00] by duty.

Willoughby's the exact opposite. Willoughby compromised a woman and didn't give a crap about it. He went off, he fell in love with somebody else, and he lost everything because he refused to do what Edward did, compromised the woman you love to do your duty and to honor a girl you've wronged.

Willoughby loses everything and that's when Willoughby decides to marry on up, and so, he ends up losing the love of his life anyway through his selfishness. Now, they're both in a pickle.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: But what Eddie's trying to do is sacrifice everything around him to make it right by societal standards. What Willoughby is doing is blowing everything up for the sake of trying to get what he wants. That's the complete opposite in some ways. Even though, they're in very similar situations, and I think, Jane Austen is trying to juxtapose the two of them against each other to try to show just why Eddie's compost and Willoughby's garbage.

Molly: What's interesting is [01:04:00] that they both got disowned. One of them for doing the right thing and one of them for not doing the right thing. I think, it goes to their families because I think Mrs. Smith ultimately is a good person.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: He was like, "Marry this girl." He was like, "No, I don't want to." The Ferrars is-- are-- the Ferrari?

Becca: The Ferrari

Molly: The Ferrari are bad people.

Becca: Exactly. So, it's a matter of intention. Eddie's intentions are so good and they're hurting him, and Willoughby's intentions are so bad and they've smoked him. I think that Willoughby's a really great reason to like Eddie. Because you see what happens if Eddie is not on the path he's on.

Molly: Yes,

Becca: Yeah. Anyway, okay. What do you think Marianne's reaction to Willoughby's story's going to be?

Molly: Oh man, oh man, oh man, oh, man. I'm right with Elinor that Marianne is never going to be happy with anyone else [01:05:00] unless she's able to do what we just did and write out her pros-cons list and really be like, "Why did he show up now when I was unconscious versus when I could have actually been with him?" If she can do that, she might be like, "He lost his chance." But the thing is, I don't think she is fully over him. When they get you right at that time and you're not fully over them--

Becca: Tricky time.

Molly: It's a tricky time. But I also know how much is left in this book. So, I feel she's going to have to somehow either choose the right man or choose no man at all, because she's not ending up with him. He sucks.

Becca: He sucks. All right. So, we have a dark horse moment with Brandon as a suitor. What do you think about where we get that moment in juxtaposition to Willoughby?

Molly: What do you mean?

Becca: Well, I mean that Brandon's brought the mother when she's on her deathbed. Mother is on board. The sister is on board. [01:06:00] It's all coming up Brandon at this moment.

Molly: Yes, it is all coming up Brandon.

Becca: What do you think of how we find out about these pieces of the story in juxtaposition to where we learned about Willoughby's side of the story?

Molly: I think that Willoughby, we have pity for him but we don't want him to end up with Marianne.

Becca: We do not stan.

Molly: We do not stan. I don't think, ultimately, I know that Elinor is feeling bad for him but I think ultimately, she doesn't want him to end up with Marianne either because, for one, she would have a stepdaughter, which-

Becca: Big LOL.

Molly: -could be weird. Or, a sort of a stepchild. I don't know.

Molly: Her husband would have a bastard child.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Is what would have happened.

Molly: So, I'd like, that would just be weird. I want Willoughby to go have to reckon with her. So, I think he's not looking too hot right now and everyone has turned against him, because he basically drove Marianne [01:07:00] almost to her grave. So, I think that Brandon showing up at this time selflessly just to help out the Dashwoods, that is really good timing for him.

Becca: Yeah, I really think this chapter highlights the selflessness of Brandon versus the selfishness of Willoughby. Brandon is out there immediately going to escort Marianne's mother to her bed while she's dying, without a hope or a prayer of her ever being with him out there trying to make sure she is comfortable and what very well might be her last days of life and driving himself insane, trying to make her happy in that time.

Molly: She could have died while he was gone.

Becca: She could have, and he's gone to get her mother.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's very sweet.

Molly: And he has no hope. He is not thinking about it for himself at all. Whereas Willoughby, on the other hand-- they both hopped in carriages and drove in opposite directions. Willoughby because he didn't want Marianne dying [01:08:00] thinking that he was a bad person. And Brandon, because he didn't want her dying without her mother.

Becca: Yeah, exactly.

Molly: So, it's an easy decision.

Becca: Yeah, and this is another thing, again, going towards what love is and how we experience it again. You have the passion of Willoughby, the immense chemistry between Marianne and Willoughby, but the end of the day, it's all kind of for shit if he's a bad person, and we do have a little agency over where our hearts land, and landing on someone like Colonel Brandon is the best decision anyone can make because we love Colonel.

Molly: Oh, my God, I can't wait to watch this movie.

Becca: Oh, you're not ready. So, we're just going to go to the standbys. Funniest quote?

Molly: So, this is Mrs. Dashwood, she's going on. There was always something if you remember in Willoughby's eyes at times, which I did not like. Elinor could not remember it but her mother without waiting for her assent continued.

Becca: [laughs] That's a [01:09:00] fantastic choice. Questions moving forward?

Molly: All right, we've got not a lot of chapters left. So, who is Marianne going to choose when she wakes up if she chooses anyone at all? I kind of am rooting for her to take some time after her deathbed to just like chill out and not choose a man, but is she going to end up with anyone? Again, we don't have that many chapters left. So, Elinor, Edward, where--

Becca: Whomst?

Molly: Whomst? Where is he?

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: What's going to happen there? I really want everyone to have their happy endings, but we're just running out of time for them to happen in a reasonable way that doesn't leave a bunch of side characters broken hearted, you know?

Becca: Yes. Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Brandooooon?

Becca: Sure?

Molly: He wouldn't got her mother and brought-- Oh, no, Elinor was fooled a little bit by Willoughby

which I didn't love. Willoughby probably came out on top in [01:10:00] these chapters because he convinced Elinor that he wasn't so bad. Brandon brought Mrs. Dashwood. Mrs. Dashwood is alive and there and is being an awesome mom. So, I'm going to give it to both Mrs. Dashwood and Colonel Brandon.

Becca: All right, the cavalry coming in after the Willoughby sob story.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: All right. Listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next episode, you're going to read Chapters 46 through 48. And until next time, stay proper--

Molly: --And find yourself someone selfless.

Becca: Yes.

[laughter]

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.instagram.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.