

Molly: Hey everyone. Before we begin, we have some new patrons to thank. So, shoutout to Ivor, GG, Elizabeth, Lexington, and Patricia. Welcome to the team. If you want to be like these awesome people, and get access to our notes, outtakes, bonus episodes, and more, head on over to [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://www.patreon.com/podandprejudice), or if becoming a patron isn't your thing, but you still want to show your support of the show, check out our merch store. We've got t-shirts, mugs, pillows, masks, and more. The link for that is in the episode description. Now, enjoyed this week's episode covering Chapters 20 to 22 of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Becca: I don't want to give anything away to you. But I was really excited for you to read these chapters, and I just explained the plot of the book as it goes on to Mike. He was like, "Jane Austen wrote that!?"

Molly: [giggles] Right? That's how I feel right now. First of all, my mom and I were listening to the episode that just came out, which is the the chapters prior to this, and I was listening back, and I was like, "Wait a minute, wait a minute, she was dropping all these hints and Jane Austen--." She said-- Oh, my God. I'm flustered.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Listeners, I know I get flustered a lot, but this is, like Mike said, this does not feel like a "Jane Austen novel,' because all of my wild musings that I've been doing over the past eight episodes, it seemed wild even to me. Some of the things that I was saying, and I was like, "This is just fun. I want to fantasize about the absolute wildest thing that could happen in this book, and it hath. It hath happened. It hath come upon us.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

Becca: We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

Molly: We're here to talk about Jane Austen, indeed. [00:02:00] Oh, my God, who knew we were talking about Jane.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Not me. This is a soap opera. This book is so good.

Becca: Just to give some new listeners a little context-

Molly: Yes. Hello, welcome.

Becca: -I, Becca, have read--

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: I've read a lot of Jane Austen work.

Molly: And I clearly have read none.

Becca: That's not true. You have read *Pride and Prejudice*.

Molly: I have read *Pride and Prejudice*.

Becca: If you want to hear Molly read through *Pride and Prejudice* for the first time with me, you can go back and listen to Season 1. But that's not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No, listeners, today, we are talking about chapters 20 through 22 of *Sense and Sensibility*, the end of Volume I, and what a bang we go out with.

Becca: [laughs] Oh, yes.

Molly: First of all, we met four new people in these chapters, and I was all like, "Oh, I know everybody in this book." which was a lie.

Becca: Again. [laughs]

Molly: Yes, again. Here's the thing, listening back to our old episodes [00:03:00], you're so smooth. That guy does not give anything away, but she does guide my thoughts. You kept saying, "I know that we're going to get there," but you kept saying like, "Eddie's being kind of distant and distracted." I was like, "Yeah, what's up with that?" But really.

Becca: [laughs] Oh, man. Do we have a lot to discuss here?

Becca: We do. We should probably just jump right into it.

Becca: Oh, yes. I think that's very much what we've got to do right now. I'm really excited. Listeners, I think this is really rare *Sense and Sensibility* comes alive as a book. But we'll just get into the plot, because some of you who don't read the books maybe are like, "What are they talking about?"

Molly: What are we talking about? Yeah, let's tell you. Okay. Hoo, I'm writing a high of Jane Austen. I read these last night before bed, and I went into my mom's room after I finished reading these chapters, just my [00:04:00] mouth hanging open and a big grin on my face, and she was like, "What?" I was like, "Mom, I was right about something." I predicted this in our last episode.

Becca: You did, and let me tell you, I have had so many moments in this podcasting experience with you, where I have not said something when I've wanted to say something. I have never had a harder time keeping my face neutral than when you predicted that it was somebody else's hair. Because it was so off. It was so flippant.

Molly: It was an offhanded comment. I was just like, "I don't know, maybe it's someone else's hair." It was so spot on and so random that I was right. So, listeners, if you don't know what we're talking about, we'll get there, and I will exactly quote myself--

Becca: Let's get to the plot.

Molly: All right. Elinor and Marianne go to Barton Park, and Mrs. Palmer immediately runs up to them, and she's like, **[00:05:00]** "I'm so excited that you're here." She tells them that she was really surprised to be coming to Barton. She said that one day, Mr. Palmer just came into her room and was like, "Let's go to Barton." My question is why this feels important, because she is the daughter.

Becca: She is the daughter.

Molly: Why was he like-- he hates them all. Why did he want to go to Barton? What called him there? There has to be something. I don't know what it is, but I'm paying attention, and that feels wrong. She then is like, "Ha, ha, he's so droll. He never tells me anything." Then, she invites them to come to London, and offers them a place to stay, and they decline. This is the first time they decline.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Then, Mr. Palmer comes in and he starts complaining about the weather, and he complains about Sir John, and he says, "Sir John is as stupid as the weather." Then, Sir John enters in the next sentence. It is the most **[00:06:00]** words that I've heard Mr. Palmer speak, and also a little bit too harsh.

Becca: Oh, Mr. Palmer is a dick.

Molly: He's an asshole.

Becca: He's so mean all the time. But here's the thing. I love Mr. Palmer, the way I love Lady Catherine de Bourgh.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I think he's so funny.

Molly: He is really funny.

Becca: I don't know if you picked up on this, but, well, we'll get there. But Mr. And Mrs. Palmer are very reminiscent of another couple in the Jane Austen canon.

Molly: Mr. and Mrs. Bennet.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: We talked about that in the last episode.

Becca: Yes, indeed. She's really explicit about it in this part.

Becca: She is. There was a line-- Well, we'll get there. Sir John comes in, and he is like, "Marianne, I know that you didn't go to Allenham today," and then, she gets all embarrassed. Then, Mrs. Palmer is like, "Oh, we all know. You don't have to be embarrassed. We all know about Willoughby," which is absurd, the gossip levels.

Becca: Oh, my God. Imagine meeting someone new, and them being like, "Ha, your crush," [00:07:00] and you're like, "Oh, my God." Then, they're like, "Don't worry. I know everything."

Molly: It's because Sir John told them, he thought that would make them better friends. It's very weird.

Becca: Yes. I got to hand it to the Middletons and the Palmers for bringing a good amount of comic relief to this section-

Becca: Yes.

Becca: -because they are a ridiculous family.

Molly: They are absolutely absurd. Then, Mrs. Palmer starts talking about how pretty Willoughby's house is, and Mr. Palmer says, it's the most vile house he's ever seen. I just wonder how did they end up together? Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, I do see the love there. I know that some people would disagree with me, but here, he hates her, and I don't understand how he ended up there.

Becca: I actually think this is a really good example of what separates some couples in Jane Austen from others in terms of the archetypes and the actual characters underneath. Because there's a really good line about this relationship if I can find it, "His temper [00:08:00] might perhaps be a little soured by finding, like many others of his sex, that through some unaccountable bias in favour of beauty, he was the husband of a very silly woman, but she knew that this kind of blunder was too common for any sensible man to be lastingly hurt by it."

Molly: I underlined that, hair flip.

Becca: Yeah, you did. That's a very important line. I think it tells you why they're together and why they're like this.

Molly: Because she's hot.

Becca: Yeah, the same thing that brought Mr. and Mrs. Bennet together, which is she was young and hot, and he wanted her, and he regrets it. Bennets!

Molly: I wrote Bennets next to this line listeners. I'm getting good at this.

Becca: Yes, you are. Oh, God, I love. You know what it is also is, you've walked into *Pride and Prejudice* with no context. Now, you're walking in with all this context, and you can put these pieces together in the world.

Molly: Yes! Then, Mrs. Palmer says, “Oh, maybe I’m thinking of a different house,” and in this chapter or in this set of chapters, a few things [00:09:00] popped out at me that this book is about, that we’ve talked about before, but that Jane Austen is really trying to bring to light, and one of them is taste, people’s taste in things. These two clearly have very different tastes. Mrs. Palmer thinks that one thing is nice, and Mr. Palmer thinks that another thing is nice. So, that’s interesting, and that’s something that we’ve talked about a lot.

Becca: Yeah, and I also think there is a sense that taste in this time, and now as well, but really in this time, was something that was also objective not just subjective, and someone could have taste, and a lack of taste. I also think that people’s proclivities for certain things are definitely big in this book. There’s a lot of emphasis on the arts and literature with a lot of these characters, but I think that there is also an undercurrent of objectively what is tasteful, and what is not tasteful.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: I think you’re picking up on Mrs. Palmer, being afraid, a little bit to be caught distasteful

Molly: [00:10:00] Yes.

Becca: But also, she’s just one of those people who is determined to be happy, because she’s in this heinous marriage.

Molly: I underlined a line that said that, and I’ll read it later. Then, John mentions another family that he would have invited to dinner, and Lady Middleton says that they had just dined there. That would be improper, not tasteful, etc. They’re having these little conversations about that, Mr. Palmer says that Mrs. Jennings is very ill bred, because she’s like, “Oh, we don’t care about such ceremony.” He’s like, “Well, you’re very ill bred.” Then, Mrs. Palmer says to Mr. Palmer, “Did you know you are quite rude?” Then Mrs. Jennings jokes that she has the upper hand over him anyway, because he can’t give Charlotte back to her now. That’s Mrs. Palmer’s name, Charlotte. Mrs. Palmer thinks this is hilarious, and she whispers to Elinor, “Mr. Palmer’s so droll.” I am waiting for this woman to crack.” I am so excited. I know what’s going to happen. She’s just like, [00:11:00] “Hahaha. Everything’s great. She’s on fire. Everything is so good.”

Becca: Have you watched, *Avatar the Last Airbender*?

Molly: I’ve not seen it all the way through, but I’ve seen enough.

Becca: Some of our listeners are going to pick up on this reference, but “There is no war in Ba Sing Se.”

Molly: I don’t think I got that far.

Becca: Basically, they get to Ba Sing Se, which is this one last holdout major city in the war against the Fire Nation, and they come with a warning that the Fire Nation is coming. They find out that the entire city of Ba Sing Se is being controlled by this weird, corrupt, authoritarian government.

Molly: Oh!

Becca: Then, they're being shown around the city by this creepy woman who smiles all the time and goes, "There is no war in Ba Sing Se."

Molly: I vaguely remember this from watching it when it was on TV before Netflix, TBT. That also sounds a lot like the city in *A Wrinkle in Time*, where all the kids come out and are bouncing their basketballs, and they're like, "Everything's great." Yeah, [00:12:00] or "Everything is awesome."

Becca: [singing tune] Everything is cool, and you-- Not paying for that song.

Molly: No. But yes, that is very much the vibe of her, and I'm really ready for her to just break. So, waiting for that. Oh, one of the things that Elinor thinks about her, I wrote it down, was what we were just saying, "It was impossible for anyone to be more thoroughly good natured, or more determined to be happy than Mrs. Palmer." I think that wording just shows that she is not, she is deeply not happy. So, excited for that. I really like her. I think I'm going to stick with Helena Bonham Carter as her.

Becca: Okay.

Molly: Yeah. Elinor is thinking about Mr. Palmer and judging him, and this brings up another thing that I think this book is about, which is character, like what's your true character, and what's the persona that you want to present to the world? We talked about that a little bit in the last episode with [00:13:00] Edward.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Mm. And now here, she's noting that she thinks that he wants to put on this persona of being better than everyone, and in doing so, pushes everyone away, but then, he's not really as uppity as he seems.

Becca: Mm-hmm. Elinor's a cute little couch psychiatrist.

Molly: Yeah, she thinks she's got a really good judge of character, doesn't she?

Becca: Yep.

Molly: I think that she's going to be wrong about some people. Hmm.

Becca: Whomst? Anyway, let's keep going.

Molly: [giggles] Okay. Then, Mrs. Palmer invites them again, the Dashwoods, to stay with them at Christmastime, and she turns to Mr. Palmer, and she's like, "Wouldn't that be great?" He's like, "Oh, yes. That's the only reason I came here, was to invite them at Christmastime," which one, he sucks, but he's funny. Two, they declined again, which at this point is getting rude.

Becca: Yes. [laughs]

Molly: And it goes on. Then, she keeps begging them, and she's like, "Oh, it's going to be so [00:14:00] fun." Mr. Palmer's canvassing." I guess he's a politician. "We meet so many people all the time, but poor fellow. It is very fatiguing for him. For he is forced to make everybody like him," and then it said, "Elinor could hardly keep her countenance that she assented to the hardship of such an obligation."

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, nobody likes Mr. Palmer.

Becca: Yeah, he's such a jerk.

Molly: Yeah. Then, she asks Elinor if she likes Mr. Palmer, and she's like, "Yeah, sure," and then, she tells her that he likes her and her sister very much, and this whole section had the vibe of her being like, "My boyfriend and I saw you across the bar," which I know they're cousins.

Becca: No. Well, they're not really.

Molly: Well, they're cousins-- no, by marriage.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Very distant cousins to John Middleton, and Charlotte's related to Lady Middleton.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, it's all kosher.

Molly: It's all kosher.

Becca: Got a proposition for throuple here.

Molly: Yeah, that's what I was [00:15:00] getting. But I know that's not the case, but it just had that vibe.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Regency throupling.

Becca: Regency throupling. [giggles]

Molly: A Regency unicorn. Is that what it's called? Am I using that terminology, right?

Becca: Wait, is it throupling called a unicorn?

Molly: No, but on Tinder, sometimes women will post like, “No, I’m bi, but I’m not your unicorn,” because they don’t want a couple to approach them about a threesome. The unicorn is a slang for a bisexual woman who sleeps with a couple. I was right. Anyway, that’s the vibe that I was getting, but I know that it’s wrong. Okay. So, moving on.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: [giggles] Then, Elinor decides to change the subject when she again invites her over, and Elinor says no. She changes the subject by asking if the Palmers know Willoughby. Mrs. Palmer is like, “Yes, we know him very well.” Then, she says, but I’ve never talked to him before. I just see him around a lot, and he’s in the opposition to Mr. Palmer in their political thing that they’ve got going on, which [00:16:00] I don’t know if that’s important. Then, she says she’s excited that Marianne is going to get married to him and be their neighbor.

Then, Elinor is like, “That’s not-- Where did you get that from? That’s not even a thing. It is, but it’s not.” Then, Mrs. Palmer’s says Colonel Brandon told her.

Becca: Which is just tragic.

Molly: Well, first of all, they had me in the first bit. I thought that she was saying that Colonel Brandon was out there gossiping, but then she goes on immediately after to be like, “Yeah, I saw him,” and said, “Isn’t Marianne going to marry Willoughby?” Then, he looked uncomfortable.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Is that not what happened?

Becca: Yeah, no, that’s exactly what happened basically.

Molly: Well, it’s funny.

Becca: Oh, my God. Poor Brandon.

Molly: Poor Brandon. It is tragic.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: His whole thing that he’s got going on is tragedy.

Becca: He’s just sitting in the corner writing some poetry for Marianne, and meanwhile, everyone’s like, “So, Willoughby and Marianne. That’s a couple.” He’s like, [00:17:00] “Yeah.”

Molly: Oh, I forgot that he was in love with her.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I was like, "Yeah, it's sad. He's low." I forgot that he was in love with her and not Elinor, because it just doesn't make sense to me.

Becca: Okay. This is why I clarified this. I actually was explaining things to Mike, because he told me he was a bit confused. He's like, "Brandon and Elinor, right?" No, I was like, "No, no."

Molly: Listen, I don't think it's that far off.

Becca: Well, no. He thought that was in the book.

Becca: Oh, I see. I see.

Becca: But he hadn't listened to the episode yet, where I was like, "No."

Molly: Oh, I see, I see, I see.

Becca: I was like, "This is why I corrected things."

Molly: Yeah, no, that's fair. That's fair. It's confusing to me to still moving forward, because that's-- and she didn't know Mrs. Palmer, did she, when she brought it up to him?

Becca: No, no. Brandon's very close to the chest with his--

Molly: Oh, so that's even [crosstalk]

Becca: [crosstalk] oh, Middletons do know.

Molly: The Middletons do know, and I think that comes up later in the next chapter. But gosh, that really does break my [00:18:00] heart a little bit. Now, thinking about it. He looked uncomfortable, because he loves her.

Becca: Yes!

Molly: Oh!

Becca: He was upset because he loves Marianne.

Molly: Right. Oh, wow. What a sad, sad story this is.

Becca: We're 20 minutes in, and we haven't even gotten to the juice yet.

Molly: God, I know. Okay, so that happened. Then, the next part made me sad, and I just wrote in my notes to read it. The reason it made me sad is because of what we were just talking about, which is that Jane Austen wrote the wrong love story here. So, I'm just going to read it. Elinor says, "Mr. Brandon was very well, I hope." Then, Mrs. Palmer says, "Oh, yes. Quite well and so full of your praises. He did nothing but say fine things of you." My notes, I put sigh and then a little heart, and then, "I am flattered

by his commendation. He seems an excellent man, and I think him uncommonly pleasing.” Then, my notes say, “Ugh.”

Becca: I'm really not going to give anything away. I'm going to give you a big rant about why I think Jane Austen made the right call here at the very end of the book.

Molly: It's fine. I trust her.

Becca: Yes, just trust Jane. **[00:19:00]** Trust Jane here. I think it's a more interesting story not that way, but I get why you feel that way.

Molly: Yeah. Then, Elinor changes the subject back to Willoughby, and Mrs. Palmer says he is well liked by everybody, even though nobody knows him very well. I noticed here-- well, not here in particular, but overall that Mrs. Palmer is a people pleaser. She's just like whatever they want to hear, she'll say, and then she's like, “Oh, yeah, Marianne is so pretty, but not as pretty as you. You're both really pretty and etc., etc.” Then, she goes on to say how happy she is that they're just going to be the best of friends now. But Elinor is not really listening, and then she asks if she's known Colonel Brandon long, and Mrs. Palmer says, yes, she is sure he would have married her, because Sir John and Lady Middleton wanted her to get together with him. But her mom, Mrs. Jennings, didn't think that the match was good enough for her, and Elinor is like, “Did Colonel Brandon ever express that **[00:20:00]** he wanted to marry you.” Mrs. Palmer's like, “No. We didn't know each other very well back then, but I'm happier with Mr. Palmer anyway. He's just my kind of man.”

Becca: We're one chapter in, listeners, Molly's just been through the wringer.

Molly: Yes. To clarify, to recap, Colonel Brandon was never going to marry Mrs. Palmer, and did we learn anything else new in that chapter?

Becca: We've learned that Mr. Palmer really is a huge jerk.

Molly: Mr. Palmer sucks.

Becca: We learned that the Palmer's live near Willoughby, but don't really know him that well.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: We learned that Brandon's confirmed that Marianne and Willoughby would be an item.

Molly: By looking sad about it?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yes. All right, so Chapter 21. The Palmers leave, but Elinor has barely had a chance to forget that they were there when the Middletons force two new acquaintances on her. One day, Mrs. Jennings and Sir John does come home, and they are like, “Lady Middleton, **[00:21:00]** two ladies you've never met are going to come stay with us for a little while.” Poor Lady Middleton, I can picture this whole scene. This whole chapter actually was just pure chaos.

Becca: Justice for Lady Middleton.

Molly: Justice for Lady Middleton, and also, just pure chaos. Everyone is running around like chickens with no heads.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Like what's happening? Starting with this scene, she's like, "What are you doing inviting two random cousins of mine that I've never met before over to the house? Blah, blah, blah, blah." She doesn't even know if they're going to be fashionable or tolerable, because she knows she can't take John or Mrs. Jennings' word for it, because they are neither fashionable nor tolerable.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: One of the quotes that I wrote down that was funny. "Lady Middleton resigned herself to the idea of it with all the philosophy of a well-bred woman, contenting herself with merely giving her husband a gentle reprimand on the subject for five or six times a day."

Becca: Ah, we love a passive-aggressive hoe.

Molly: Yes, I love it. The two ladies arrive, and Lady Middleton actually loves them, [00:22:00] because they're great with children, and they're really nice to her kids. Sir John goes to ask the Dashwoods to come, and he begs them, and he's like, "They really want to meet you. They've heard you're the most beautiful women in the world." I did want to know. He's always commenting on how pretty everybody is.

Becca: I will say this. Have you ever had a family friend who always comments on your looks?

Molly: Yes. It's like in *Bridget Jones's Diary*, when-

Becca: Her uncle.

Molly: -uncle, whatever [laughs] is always squeezing her butt.

Becca: Yep.

Molly: Yeah, it's a gross vibe, but it is a vibe, nonetheless.

Becca: It is a vibe, nonetheless.

Molly: A vibe, nonetheless. I like that on a t-shirt. All right. We shouldn't be allowed to make t-shirts. [laughs]

Becca: I still like Jane Austen is the tits.

Molly: Jane Austen is the tits. That came up in our pre-show-

Becca: Bonus.

Molly: -pre-record bonus episode. So, if you want to hear why Jane Austen is the tits become a patron.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yes. The Dashwoods decline again. It's really rude at this point. We were so confused when Eddie said that he wouldn't say-- [00:23:00] or no, when Willoughby left and said, he wouldn't come back and visit them. You do not decline an invitation in this time period. The number of times that the Dashwoods have declined an invitation now is getting out of control.

Becca: Excessive.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: To be fair, they are asked every day.

Molly: Yeah, I guess. [laughs] My next note was everyone around them is crazy. They are very much-- if we're going with tropes, they're the straight man.

Becca: They are. In this environment, they absolutely are, they're the Michael Bluth to the rest of the Bluth Family.

Molly: I don't know the reference. Is that the banana?

Becca: Okay. You should watch *Arrested Development*. It's not long, and you should watch the original series. the reboot wasn't good. But it's got great meme fodder.

Molly: Okay, great. I will watch it. But they say, they're going to come in a day or two. So, that's settled. They go. They meet the Miss Steeles. There's an older one, and who is [00:24:00] plain looking, and the younger one Lucy is quite pretty and has a sharp eye. Elinor thinks they are sensible, because she sees how they're getting on Lady M-- I write Lady M in my notes. So, I keep wanting to say Lady Macbeth.

Becca: Not exactly, but yeah. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. They're getting on Lady Middleton's good side by being super attentive to the kids. It says, "A fond mother is the most rapacious of human beings." That means excessively greedy or grasping. She'll take any compliment she can get. Any compliment of her children. If you're nice to her kids, you get on her good side. Then, there's a whole page describing the antics of the children. Basically, the children are being annoying, but everyone's like, "Ooh, the children," and then, a pin in Lady Middleton's dress pricks the daughter, and she starts screaming, and everyone starts giving her attention. So, she starts screaming more, and then Lady Middleton offers her some orange marmalade, and takes her out of the room, leaving the Dashwoods and the Steeles [00:25:00] alone.

Becca: I hate to be judgmental, because I am not a mother, and I fully accept that motherhood is one of the most difficult things a person can do. But you can't reward your screaming child with candy.

Molly: With a jam. I was like, "Why is marmalade the thing that she wants?"

Becca: Oh, I don't know, but I think from this section, we're supposed to gather that the Middleton children are kind of little shits.

Molly: Yes, and to be fair, if I was Lady Middleton, I would also just want them to shut up.

Becca: That's why I say I'm not one to judge. I don't have children.

Molly: Yeah, you know what? Good on her. Give them orange marmalade if that's the thing that will shut them up. Give them peanut butter, if they'll get their mouth to stick shut.

Becca: Molly!

Molly: I'm sorry, but their children are shitty.

Becca: Yeah, they are.

Molly: They're gone. We have the Dashwoods in the Steeles alone. One of the Steeles is like, "Oh, poor girl." Marianne says-- This is the usual way of heightening alarm where there is nothing to be alarmed at in reality. **[00:26:00]** "Marianne, they are two years old. They're crying, because they're babies."

Becca: I don't think they're two years old, necessarily. They might be a little older. I think Marianne is making an astute observation about them being brats.

Molly: Okay. In my mind, Annea Maria, the one who was crying is a small infant.

Becca: I thought she was four.

Molly: Okay, I was thinking terrible twos. But in any event, I think Marianne's not even really in these chapters.

Becca: Yeah, this is very Elinor heavy, this part.

Molly: I think she's annoyed at everyone, and she's sad about Willoughby being gone.

Becca: She is.

Molly: It's not about her at this point, and so she's just like-- It even says later that she's being such a bitch, that the Steeles both gravitate towards Elinor, because she's the one who's nice to them.

Becca: Yes, also, Marianne does not suffer fools, and Elinor is polite enough to do so.

Molly: That is also true, and it says as much in this chapter in a line that I underlined. Lucy then comments on how sweet Lady Middleton is, **[00:27:00]** and Marianne doesn't say anything because,

like you just said, she does not suffer fools, and “telling lies when politeness requires it always falls to Elinor,” which is the line that I underlined that we just mentioned.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Elinor is like, “Yeah, sure.” Then, Anne says, Sir John is very charming," and Elinor says, "He is good humored and friendly," but she says it without any éclat, which means brilliant display or effect.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Then, they talk about the children, and Lucy guesses that Elinor thinks, they're spoiled, and Elinor says, “Well, when I at Barton, I don't think of taming quiet children with abhorrence,” which I liked.

Becca: See, Elinor is still being sassy.

Molly: She's still got her sassy ways. Then, Anne starts grilling Elinor. She asks if she was sad to leave Sussex. She says there aren't enough smart beaux here in the country, she must miss all of the smart beaux, and then they talk about beaux for a really long time.

Becca: Listeners, beaus is spelled B-A-U-X.

Molly: B-E-A-U-X.

Molly: B-E-A-U-X. Sorry, I was [00:28:00] burping. It got distracted.

Molly: [giggles]

Becca: We are talking about boyfriends. Notably, this is slang. This is low-class language.

Molly: I was going to ask the Steele's sometimes in their language, they have a little bit of a dialect, like yes. We was in the blah, blah, blah, or I'm not saying, it ain't-

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: -stuff like that. Are they country bumpkins?

Becca: Yeah. They're actually low class.

Molly: Wow!

Becca: Janie made a very subtle effort to trickle that into the dialogue.

Molly: And it came through because I noticed it. I was like, “This isn't how she usually writes.”

Becca: Yeah. It says it later. So, don't think it's giving anything away, but she makes a point of saying they're illiterate.

Molly: Yes, that came through, I didn't make that connection to their level of speech. Actually, I did circle certain words that I was like, "This feels out of place," but I didn't actually think about, "Oh, there are actually--" I knew that they were [00:29:00] illiterate, because they said.

Becca: So, the Steeles are uneducated, illiterate, and they are penniless.

Molly: I'm having thoughts, but I'm not going to say them yet. Lucy is very embarrassed by how blunt Anne is being with all of this. They're going to think all you ever taught to think about as men like, "Come on." Anne's like, "No, I just didn't want them to be bored here where there's no beaux." Then, she's like, "Oh, what about your brother? He was a beaux for he was married right." Now, Elinor is like, "He's my brother."

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Then, she says, he hasn't changed at all since getting married. If he was a beau then, he has a beau now. Then, Anne says, "Married men can't be beaux. They have something else to do."

Becca: [makes bed creaking sounds]

Molly: Wow, this book! Elinor determines after this conversation that she really doesn't need to have any further acquaintance with the Steeles, [00:30:00] and is vulgar and silly and Lucy lacks elegance. The Steeles, on the other hand are obsessed with the Dashwoods. They want to be best friends, and since John is on their side, Elinor knows that he's going to try to get them to be together. It says, because of this, "That kind of intimacy must be submitted to which consists of sitting an hour two together in the same room almost every day."

Becca: Have you ever had someone you dislike really try hard to be your best friend, and you're a nice person. You're like, "I'll hang with you." You're like, "Oh, no." [laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. Poor Elinor. She's too nice for her own good.

Becca: She is.

Molly: But also, it did say here that John doesn't actually know what friendship means. So, for him, sitting in the same room equals BFF.

Molly: Which is why he always pays people to hang out at his house.

Molly: Oh, poor baby! Additionally, he thinks that best friends need to know each other's business. So, he tells the Steeles all [00:31:00] of the Dashwoods' business, all of it. Such that, Anne congratulates Elinor on Marianne's impending marriage, and wishes her good luck for herself soon, though, "Perhaps, you may have a friend in the corner already."

Becca: Maybe.

Molly: Maybe, and then Elinor-- Elinor's not totally surprised by this, because every time she's seen John, he's been like, "Eh? Mm?" and giving her all these looks, and it says that every time they're at dinner, he brings up the letter F, and it says, "The letter F had been likewise invariably brought forward and found productive of such countless jokes that its character as the wittiest letter in the alphabet have long been established with Elinor."

Becca: As listeners might remember, the letter F is tied to Margaret's fuckup of saying that Elinor was in love with a man whose name began with an F.

Molly: [laughs] Margaret.

Becca: Third one.

Molly: Margaret ruined this for everyone.

Becca: Listen, Margaret just brought it all up to the forefront, didn't she?

Molly: She did, and if they didn't know, [00:32:00] then, none of this would happen, and nobody would be sad, but huh. All right, we'll keep going, because the listeners don't know yet, necessarily.

Molly: They might, but maybe not.

Molly: They might. They probably do. The Steeles hear about this letter F, and they want to know his name. John says, "It's Ferrars." Anne says, "Oh, your sister-in-law's brother? I know him very well." First of all, what? Then, Lucy is like, "We've only met him a few times at our uncle's," and when I was reading this, I thought, "Oh, she's a people pleaser like Mrs. Palmer." She just agrees and she's like, "Oh, yeah, I know him." Mm-mm.

Becca: Nope.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Nope.

Molly: First of all, who's the uncle? I want to know who's the uncle. Elinor is thinking who's the uncle, but she doesn't ask. For the first time ever, Mrs. Jennings does not say what the gossip is. Elinor notes [00:33:00] though that the tone in which Anne spoke of Eddie, Edward, seems to imply that she doesn't like him, and that is the end of that chapter.

Becca: What a cliffhanger. What could that possibly mean?

Molly: Argh.

Becca: Then, we come to Chapter 22.

Molly: Chapter 22, which in my notes has a lot of exclamation points and a lot of question marks after it.

Becca: I have my Groggu for support.

Molly: All right, Groggu, let's get us through this. This chapter is a doozy. Like I said, Marianne is not having it with the Steeles. So, they gravitate towards Elinor, and she soon discovers that Lucy is clever, but generally she's ignorant and illiterate. Elinor feels bad for her, because she's never been educated, but, "She saw with less tenderness of feeling, the thorough want of delicacy of rectitude," which means righteousness, "and integrity of mind, which her attentions, her assiduity, which means her close attentions, her flatteries at the park [00:34:00] betrayed." Basically, she sees that Lucy is fake.

Becca: Oh, yes.

Molly: Fake, fake, fake, fake.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Fake.

Becca: And not just fake. kind of manipulative.

Molly: Fake, manipulative. She's like, "Oh, what a lovely house you have." Argh!

Becca: Oh, God. Molly looks murderous.

Molly: Because Lucy sucks. When I was first reading this, I was like, "Why is she doing what she's doing right now? She, that's stupid?" No, she is fake and manipulative, and she knows exactly what she's doing, and I hate her.

Becca: We're going to have a really good conversation about Lucy Steele in the study question.

Molly: Oh, good.

Becca: Yeah, I think that it's really clear, you can see it subtly, even as she was just introduced. She was so charming to John Middleton and Lady Middleton that she got a place to stay. Lady Middleton wasn't keen on her just showing up at the house. I'm going to be so kind to her children.

Molly: Yeah. Yeah, because they never really explained how they came to [00:35:00] be coming to their house. It said that they were in town, and they met with two ladies, and I was like, "Who the fuck are these two ladies?" They're bringing back to the house. They're their cousins. But they weaseled their way in there.

Becca: Yep.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: Specifically, Anne does not have the charm to do so, but Lucy does.

Molly: Yeah. Mm-hmm. Mm. Yes. Actually, one of the lines was that Elinor is not here for a person who marries insincerity with ignorance, and I would like to just-- We've got *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and the third of the trilogy, *Insincerity and Ignorance*. The last Austin novel.

Becca: It's a spinoff about Lucy Steele.

Molly: Yes. If you've got that written, let us know and we'll review it.

Becca: No one writes anything about Lucy Steele. [laughs]

Molly: [crosstalk] Because she sucks.

Becca: Yah, she sucks.

Molly: One day, they're walking together, Elinor and Lucy. Lucy asks how well Elinor [00:36:00] knows Mrs. Ferrars. Elinor says she's never met her, trying not to give too much away, because she has met her, but she doesn't want to be like-- I think she's a bitch, right?

Becca: I don't believe Elinor's met Mrs. Ferrars.

Molly: Ever?

Becca: Mm-mm.

Molly: Never. Wow. All right, so she's being truthful here then. Then, Lucy gets super weird, and says, she knows it's a weird question, but maybe there are reasons, but I can't really say. I don't mean to be impertinent, and Elinor is like, "It's fine. Weird question, but let's move on." So, they walk in silence for a little bit, but then you know this bitch. You know this person who's like, "Oh, I'm sorry, I brought up that thing earlier, but let me talk about it some more--"

Becca: Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. Oh, yeah. We all know her. We all fucking know her.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: We all know a fucking Lucy Steele.

Molly: We know her. She's doing it in such an innocent way that on a first read-- I've read it once, and then, I skimmed through it a second time. On a second [00:37:00] read. I was like, "She's a calculating bitch."

Becca: Oh, yes. Absolutely.

Molly: She brings it up again. She's like, "I can't bear to how do you think I'm impertinent? Especially, because your good opinion is so worth having." Then, she says she knows she can trust Elinor, and she would just love her advice, because she's in such an uncomfortable situation, but she doesn't. Since Elinor doesn't know Mrs. Ferrars, then it's no use anyway, but, ugh, she wishes she could tell her

what's going on. Elinor is like, "I didn't even know that you were at all connected with that family. So, I'm quite surprised you're asking about her actually." Because it doesn't make sense. She's just randomly asking you about Mrs. Ferrars when she has no connection with the family. Lucy's like, "But of course, you're surprised. What if I did tell you everything? You'd understand why I'm asking."

Becca: She's trying to taunt Elinor into asking her.

Molly: Yeah, she's like, "Don't you want to know why I'm asking about Mrs. [00:38:00] Ferrars?" which she did not have to bring up, and then, she uses it as an excuse later. Then, she says, "Mrs. Ferrars is nothing to me now, but she may be very soon." Elinor is like, "What? Are you acquainted with Robert Ferrars?" Which at first, I was like, "Who's Robert?" But I guess that's the brother, Eddie's brother?

Becca: Younger brother. Yeah.

Molly: Then, she fell into the trap, and then, Lucy is like, "No, not Robert. His elder brother."

Becca: Record scratch. [record scratch sound]

Molly: Record scratch.

Becca: She is acquainted with a Mr. Edward Ferrars.

Molly: Edward Ferrars.

Becca: The quote I wanted to read is this one right here. "What felt Elinor at that moment? Astonishment, that would have been as painful as it was strong, had not an immediate disbelief of the assertion attended it. She turned towards Lucy in silent amazement, [00:39:00] unable to divine the reason or object of such a declaration, and though her complexion varied, she stood firm in incredulity, and felt in no danger of a hysterical fit or a swoon." The way Jane Austen writes that moment, that immediate disbelief, combined with an almost palpable nausea.

Molly: Her stomach dropped.

Becca: You can feel her stomach drop in those words.

Molly: Then, they're like, "The no, no, no, no, no, no, no." Where it drops into your stomach, and then your chest is going, because you don't want to believe it. She's like, "I'm not going to believe it." She decides it's not true.

Becca: Yes, she does. So, let's go on.

Molly: Lucy goes on to say that it's been a huge secret, and she wouldn't have said anything, but she knows she can depend on Elinor's secrecy, and she doesn't think Eddie will be mad, because she knows that he has the highest opinion of her and thinks of her as a sister.

Becca: Ha!

Molly: I might cry.

Becca: Haa!

Molly: I have [00:40:00] a lot of hormones going on right now, and I--

Becca: I want to hear adjectives.

Molly: What did I write? Well, what I wrote is no.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I wrote, "What the fuck?"

Becca: You wrote the same reaction as Elinor.

Molly: No, and then, "Why is she saying this?" Upon a second read, I see it's because she's a fucking asshole.

Becca: There are other reasons to say it. But yeah.

Molly: Yeah, and then, "Sister, I hate her." Is what my notes say. I don't know. How can I even describe how this feels? I just want to talk about how I was right about something.

Becca: Okay, yeah.

Molly: Let's talk about it.

Becca: You in the last episode were like, "Crazy theory but Edward's got a side chick," and then, you went on.

Molly: Edward has a side chick.

Becca: Edward has a side chick.

Molly: It was just an offhanded comment that I made when you were like, "Why is Eddie being weird?" I was like, "I don't know. I think he's depressed about not being able to marry Elin--" All of the usual reasons that I thought [00:41:00] someone in a Jane Austen novel would feel sad.

Becca: Eddie has a side chick.

Molly: Eddie has a side chick, who's poor and a bitch.

Becca: Yes, and very, very pretty.

Molly: Yes, very pretty and manipulative, and she has him wrapped around her little finger.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: He has her hair wrapped around his finger.

Becca: Oh, let's get into that.

Molly: Yeah. Well, we'll get there. It's not yet. First, she says that he thinks of her as a sister. She knows that he wouldn't be mad that he told her. Then Elinor, again, it's feeling this just complete dread of the present moment.

Becca: Has this happened to you? Because this exact thing has happened to me.

Molly: I can physically feel the sensations.

Becca: The desperate urge to keep your cool, and not give an inch to this person. But also, that plummeting heartbreak when you figure out that you've either been lied to or you've misread the situation so appallingly, that it's as if you are living in a fantasy?

Molly: [00:42:00] But has she mis-- [crosstalk]

Becca: You're going to cry.

Molly: Has she misread the situation, or has she been lied to?

Becca: I don't know.

Molly: You know what? Because I couldn't picture Eddie lying to her, but you know who I can picture lying to her? Hugh Grant.

Becca: [laughs] What?

Molly: That makes sense.

Becca: Let's keep going.

Molly: Yeah, we'll keep going.

Becca: I'm not going to answer you either way on your inquiry.

Molly: Okay. After sitting in it for a moment, she asks if their engagement has been longstanding, she's still trying to carry on the conversation as if her whole world has not just shattered, and we find out that they've been engaged for four years. And Elinor says, "Four years?" Four years!

Molly and Becca: Four years.

Becca: Do some math here. I told you last chapter how old Eddie is.

Molly: 23.

Becca: And How old's Lucy?

Molly: I don't know.

Becca: Also, 23.

Molly: And Elinor is? **[00:43:00]**

Becca: 19.

Molly: 19.

Becca: Well, Elinor and Eddie had their connection made last year. It's been like six months.

Molly: Is Elinor the side chick? Oh!

Becca: And how old was Eddie when he made this connection?

Molly: 19.

Becca: 19.

Molly: Oh, man!

Becca: Oh, my God. I've never seen you this emotional about Jane Austen.

Molly: I almost cried last night. I didn't know I was getting my period, but now it makes sense.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: This is a lot, because I've said before like, "Oh, Jane is flipping the script on us. Oh, this isn't a Jane Austen novel," but this is so relatable.

Becca: Yes. That's why I don't understand why people think-- well, we'll get into it. I don't know why people think Elinor Dashwood is so perfect. I see her as profoundly human here.

Molly: Yeah, she's so relatable. But my main thought through all of this scene is that Lucy knows **[00:44:00]** how Elinor feels, because they just had this conversation two days ago, where they were all joking about how Elinor is in love with Edward Ferrars. She knows this, and now she's trying to play dumb, and also why isn't Elinor catching on to the fact that she's playing dumb, because she knows. They just talked about it.

Becca: Well, for one thing, you could think-- it's not clear whether or not Elinor knows at this point in time.

Molly: Well, Lucy knows.

Becca: Well, though, Lucy's toying with her.

Molly: Right.

Becca: It seems that way, but--

Molly: Well, I don't think that Elinor knows that Lucy is toying with her. I just don't know why she doesn't know. Do you think maybe she does?

Becca: I think she might. But also, that's what's so profoundly human about Elinor, is the capacity that she has to question herself.

Molly: In general, she trusts others, but in this part, she is very much like, "This can't be true up until the last moment." She's like, "It's not true. It's not true."

Becca: Because her instincts were telling her [00:45:00] so profoundly that she and Edward were in love.

Molly: Yes. So, basically, she just can't believe it, and she says, "I didn't even know--" Oh, my God, this part really broke my heart. She says, "I did not know that you were even acquainted until the other day." That's all she can come up with. In this moment, I am picturing Emma Thompson in *Love Actually*, when she's finding out about Alan Rickman, and then, I remembered that Emma Thompson and Alan Rickman were very in love. Actually, and then I got sad about her and Colonel Brandon not and again together again. Anyway, but-

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: That's what I'm picturing is, when Emma Thompson finds the necklace, and she's like, "Oh, this is for me," and then when she gets the CD, and she thought it was going to be the gold necklace, that heart drop, how wrong could she have been? So, that's what I'm picturing here.

Becca: The exquisite way in which Emma Thompson can portray repressed female pain.

Molly: Oh, so good. Lucy says they've known each other for many years [00:46:00] now. He was under the care of her uncle, Mr. Pratt, for four years.

Becca: For your clarity, teacher. Edward's teacher.

Molly: Okay. That's what I was getting. I was like boarding school?

Becca: College kind of.

Molly: This is all starting to make sense to me now, when Lucy was embarrassed when her sister said that they knew him very well. She was like, "No, only for a little bit of our uncle's. Remember?" and Elinor starts getting a little flustered. She's losing her very carefully cultivated sense of composure. This

is one example of where they slip into country slang. She says, "Me and my sister was often staying with my uncle," and I'm like, "All right, yeah. So, you're a little bit lower class." Then, Lucy says she, being so young at the time was obviously unwilling to enter into the engagement without the approval of his mother, but because she was young, and she loved him too much, she was a little bit less careful, and she entered into the engagement anyway.

Then, Lucy says, "Though you do not know him so well as [00:47:00] me, Miss Dashwood, you must have seen enough of him to be sensible he is very capable of making a woman sincerely attached to him." She knows how Elinor feels.

Becca: She does.

Becca: How dare she?

Becca: Yep.

Molly: Elinor says-- she finally is like, there must be some mistake. We must be thinking of two different Edwards. Lucy's like "Nope. This Edward with this mom whose sister-in-law is this person, and blah, blah, blah, blah." She says that she's never heard him mentioned Lucy, and Lucy is like, "That's because it's a huge secret." I noticed at this point I was like, "Is that why he was there for two weeks without telling them?"

Becca: It's not exactly why.

Molly: Okay. Elinor at this point sees that Lucy is definitely telling the truth. Lucy shows Elinor a picture she carries around with her, and it's definitely him. Then, she asks again, that Elinor not saying anything. I wanted to read Elinor's response to this, because it is--

Becca: Heartbreaking. devastating.

Molly: I was going to go with iconic, but that works too. She says, "You know what? I certainly did not seek your confidence, but you do me no more than justice [00:48:00] in imagining that I may be depended on. Your secret is safe with me. But pardon me if I suppress some surprise at so unnecessary a communication. You must at least have felt that my being acquainted with it could not add to its safety." Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: She brought it up out of the blue. So, I think you're right. Elinor knows that she is intentionally making her sad.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Then, Lucy says she knew that she could trust Elinor, and that's why she did it. Plus, she knew Elinor would be curious after she asked about Mrs. Ferrars. But she literally only asked about Mrs. Ferrars so she could bring this up, because she's a bitch.

Becca: Oh, yes.

Molly: She goes on to be like, "I was in the greatest fight in the world the other day when Edward's name was mentioned by Sir John." His name was mentioned by Sir John when Sir John was saying that Elinor is in love with him. It's so obvious.

Becca: Obvious.

Molly: Argh. She says she suffered much for Edward's [00:49:00] sake, and then she starts to cry, and Elinor does not feel bad for her, which I really liked for her. Then, Lucy says it might be better to break it off, but she doesn't have the resolution for it. It would just make Edward too sad. Then, she asks Elinor what she should do, and Elinor is like, "That's for you to decide." Then, Lucy asks if Elinor thought him low spirited when he was here.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: This is what we were talking about in that episode, and I was like, "Well, I don't know." Sad. Elinor says that he was, and Lucy says that he was so miserable to leave Longstaple where he had stayed for a fortnight before coming to Elinor. That's that two weeks.

Becca: Yep.

Molly: Elinor thinks back and she's like, "Why didn't he tell us who he was hanging out with before he came to us?"

Becca: Molly's just bug-eyed.

Molly: I'm just speechless at this point. My notes in the book, I wrote just the letter, I. I just didn't know what to say.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: [00:50:00] It just poor Elinor having to carry on this conversation. Then, Lucy pulls out a letter from him saying, he's still very sad, and his handwriting isn't as neat as usual, and Elinor sees that it is in fact his handwriting, and she can't doubt any longer that this is true. She's been trying up till the last minute. It said, "For a few moments, she was almost overcome. Her heart sunk within her, and she could hardly stand." Human. Elinor is so deeply human.

Becca: She is.

Molly: She's trying so hard, and she keeps going like a champ. Then, Lucy tells her that, while she carries around a picture of him, she gave him a lock of her hair set in a ring that he's been wearing. That's what I was right about. I said maybe it's someone else's hair.

Becca: You did.

Molly: It seems to-- you can't tell if that's your hair, Elinor. It's inner ring. You can't be sure, [00:51:00] and she was so sure.

Becca: She just assumed it was, and we're going to talk about that. But she basically was just like, "Yeah, that's my hair. How did you get my hair?"

Molly: We accepted that as the reader.

Becca: You accepted that as the reader.

Molly: [laughs] All right, I accept that. But I didn't, yeah, because I said maybe it's not her hair. I didn't think about it too hard, but I was like--

Becca: Yeah, you did. I got the jolt as I listened to our episode today. I was like, "Erh!"

Becca: Yeah. When I was editing it, I was typing up the episode notes for the episode description. I was like, "Huh!" Okay, ooh. Then, Lucy asks Elinor, if she noticed the ring like she's just provoking her at this point. Elinor says, she did "with the composure of voice under which was concealed in emotion and distress beyond anything she had ever felt before. She was mortified, shocked, confounded," which is like-- Elinor's so always the level-headed one, and she's just having [00:52:00] all of these emotions, and luckily, they reached the cottage, the Steeles depart, and Elinor was then at liberty to think and be wretched. Mic drop, end of Volume I.

Becca: Fuck.

Molly: Fuck!

Becca: Yes. So, big bombshell on the story there blowing up all our expectations, and it's time to go into the study questions. I've got some good ones.

Molly: Yes!

Becca: Question number one. What's the purpose of the Palmers in the story, just to return to chapter 20 quickly?

Becca: I think they're there to show the taste and the character, things that I brought up, they are very opposites. They are in an unhappyish marriage. One of them is very silly, and the other one is very rude, and I feel we get a lot of other silly rudeness from other characters, but they're very purely silly and rude. [00:53:00] Is that what you mean?

Becca: Well, those are all great thoughts, and one of the things I was going to say is that they serve as comic relief in a lot of drama, which is very necessary. But I also think and you touched on this. I think they show us the perils of marriage without affection.

Molly: Mm-hmm. Or, yeah, which is what the Bennets did too.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Got to get one of those snuck in there every once in a while. All right, now to the juicy stuff. What are your thoughts on the Steele sisters compared to the Dashwood sisters?

Molly: Well, first of all, they have no decorum. They are rude, they are vulgar, they have no sense of civility, which is like-- I'm a 21st century gal. I don't have a sense of civility either, but they really don't, and they are conniving, or at least one of them is. I think Anne's just there.

Becca: Yeah, but they play a nice foil to the Dashwoods, which is just-- They're both sets of young sisters and a little older, but [00:54:00] whatever. The Steeles are crass, uneducated, poor. Dashwoods are the fallen high-class people. So, the Dashwoods are offered this foil in such an undesirable way. They're offered these really unpleasant dark side of the coin sisters to their light side of the coin.

Becca: Yeah, I'm picturing like, "This isn't what happens," but the moment when Lady Middleton and John leave them alone in a room together, I'm picturing, Lucy being like, "Oh, ho, ho, ho, ho," and then smile dropping off her face and glaring at them. Even though that's not what happens, that's what's happening in her mind. She's on the attack. She's like, "Hm." Then, you see in this scene, the two sets of sisters sitting across from each other, and just you can see their oppositeness.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Even though Marianne has her moments of too much candor, [00:55:00] there's a marked difference in their place in the world versus the Steeles.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Which brings us to Lucy Steele, and I have a lot to say about Lucy Steele already. What a character to be introduced to! Immediate thoughts. I know what they are. They're mostly just swear words but go for it.

Molly: I just can't believe her. What does she have against Elinor? Why is she doing this? Is it because of jealousy? She heard that, Elinor and Eddie had a thing, and she was like, "No, no, no. Yeah, crack the knuckles. Got to get in there. Shut it down, but I'm going to do it in a way that makes me seem innocent like I don't know." Like, "Oh, yes, my love. Hahaha." No, she is trying to protect her man.

Becca: Yes. I'm just getting geared up here for a little Economics of Jane Austen.

Molly: Economics of Jane Austen.

Becca: Lucy Steele is a fascinating character. She is so unlikable. So unlikable. She is manipulative, she is cruel, she is fake, [00:56:00] and it all comes to light in this chapter where we basically see her torture Elinor in some of the best written takedowns in literary history from Jane Austen. She is fascinating. She is so poor, and she is not well read or well educated like the Dashwood sisters. She is

just pretty and charming. That is all she has. She has this boy who is her boy. She's engaged, and in comes this beautiful smart woman who maybe is poorer, but a sensible match enough for Edward, even if she's not Edward Ferrars approved by his family, she's real competition for Lucy. Lucy takes a one look at her, and immediately figures out how to neutralize her the way she neutralized John, neutralized Lady Middleton, and neutralized Mrs. Jennings. She's very smart and very self-preservative.

Molly: [00:57:00] She neutralizes her by making her think that she's asking for advice.

Becca: Yeah, she also sees Elinor's this kind, smart person with a lot of propriety who would steel herself when something like this was brought to her attention and would do the right thing if someone asked her to keep something a secret.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, immediately, immediately, she neutralizes this threat in Elinor by just playing on her incapacity to tell anybody this secret, and making her question everything she thought happened between her and Edward beforehand.

Molly: Yeah, I get what Lucy's doing. What I don't get is how-- Argh. I was going to say how Elinor doesn't see it, but she does. We can see that she does, but she doesn't say. You know that we have a thing like he's-- Honestly, he's playing us both.

Becca: Do you know what Elinor could use a little bit of here?

Molly: What?

Becca: Marianne.

Molly: She could use a little bit of Marian-- [00:58:00] She could use a little bit [laughs] of sensibility.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. She could. She needs to stand up for herself. That's one thing. That's one thing is like, Elinor should be standing up for herself and being like, "You know how I feel about him." On the other hand, Eddie is playing them both.

Becca: Is he? That actually brings me into my next study question.

Molly: Okay, great. I segued without even knowing I segued.

Becca: Yeah. So, Edward. This is a huge plot twist from what we understood about Edward Ferrars at this point of the book.

Molly: Oh, yeah. [laughs] Yeah.

Becca: He's not that man, you don't think, but I want to talk about how this is consistent with his character and inconsistent, and I don't want to go too far into it, because obviously, there's a lot of book left, and Edward Ferrars is still a character in this book. But tell me everything you're thinking right now about it. How is this consistent, how is this inconsistent?

Molly: Literally in the last episode about this book, we were talking about how he is so [00:59:00] awkward and such a human disaster. He just doesn't know what to do with himself like, "Mm, ha!" We were comparing him to Newt Scamander in the *Fantastic Beast* movies, just so unbearably uncomfortable. But he's not, because suddenly, we find out that he's, one, engaged. He has a love connection with this woman who has little to no substance. I'm sorry, Lucy.

Becca: Don't be sorry. You're right.

Molly: I feel I'm being too harsh on her, because she has a "love connection" with this man, and I don't want to be blaming her for being the other woman. I don't want to blame Elinor for being the other woman, but she is being absolutely terrible. But I also want to put some blame on Eddie, because he's the one who has led two women to believe that he loves them, which is not. That's inconsistent with his character. That's not something that we would have thought him to do, because we thought he was incapable of doing such [01:00:00] things. Not because he's nice, but because he's awkward.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: But he's not nice apparently.

Becca: I'm going to put this out here. First of all, awkward men can be terrible-- [crosstalk]

Molly: That's true, that's true, that's true.

Becca: It happened here all the time.

Molly: That's true.

Becca: It happens all the time. It's one of the common tropes you get where women are like, "Oh, he's sweet, shy, and awkward." I'm like, "He's shy, awkward. Don't count on sweet necessarily."

Molly: Right.

Becca: I'll put that out there first. Two, I want to point out two things, and this is my way of talking about this without spoiling a lot here. So, I'm just going to talk about two aspects of this. One is, we've had a lot of discussion in this book already about first love and second love.

Molly: Ah! Yeah. Ah!

Becca: The concept of a person being stuck between lovers is not actually something that's foreign in this book yet.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: As of now, this is something that has come up multiple times.

Molly: It has. That's intentional, probably on Jane Austen's part.

Becca: Yes, it has.

Molly: I was not thinking that it was ever going to be about Eddie though. I was like, "Colonel Brandon is aged." He's [01:01:00] 35--

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: He's had two loves.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: But I was thinking that Eddie was the simple one, because I think that I was trying to place this into *Pride and Prejudice* context, and I was like, "Colonel Brandon is Darcy."

Becca: He's the--

Molly and Becca: Bingley.

Molly: He's not the Bingley.

Becca: He's not Bingley.

Molly: He's not. He's his own being.

Becca: He's not Bingley.

Molly: They're all their own thing.

Becca: He is his own thing.

Molly: They're all their own thing.

Becca: They are broth-- Yes. Then, the second one and I think this is consistent. I think this is something very subtle, and maybe this is a hot take. We'd had many conversations about Edwards's discomfort with his class, Edward's discomfort with his place, and the burden placed on him in society. To me, it's perfectly consistent with his character that he would find some love and a connection at a young age with a girl who is the opposite of that. Oh, my God, you're flailing!

Molly: I'm flailing, because you said-- because, because, because. Oh, my God, I'm going to lose it because I'm too excited. Okay. [01:02:00] Because you said he's uncomfortable with his class, and he

said that, he feels-- There was a comment that he made about feeling uncomfortable with high society and he'd much rather be with low society, and I said, "Is he calling them a low society?" But no. He meant low society. One, two--

Becca: [giggles]

Molly: What was it? What was it? That he fell in love with this girl when he was 19, and is it possible that he also has feelings for Elinor, and isn't just being a jerk? Whomst?

Becca: Whomst?

Molly: Ah, I don't know what to feel. I don't want to feel bad. I don't feel bad for him. I feel really angry at him, and if I was Elinor right now, I would feel angry at him. I would also really feel angry at him if I was Lucy to be honest. Even though she sucks, she Sucks, I feel bad for her, too, because she just overheard a dinner that this girl has a thing with Eddie, and she's like, "Excuse me," and she was like, "Let me swoop in there," and then she was a [01:03:00] bitch, but she's valid in doing so honestly.

Becca: Yeah. Okay, okay. How ridiculous is it for Elinor to have just assumed that he had her hair randomly?

Molly: Absolutely absurd. It's thinking bad kind of stuff.

Becca: It's absurd.

Molly: It doesn't make any sense. We shouldn't have given any weight to that -- [crosstalk]

Becca: Yeah, we tend to think Elinor is so rational and she is so logical and all these things, but she looked at his finger, saw hair on his finger, and was like, "How did he get a piece of my hair?" No.

Becca: But also, she on the one hand, yes, it's crazy. On the other hand, she was like, "My person is wearing someone's hair around their ring." It's not that far off to think that it might be hers, because she's his person, she thought. But also, listening back to that episode, I was like, "That's absurd."

Becca: All right. Standbys, funniest quote.

Molly: Okay. I had a few options. I'm going to go with one that I didn't read yet. I read a few of them out loud already, and so all of those were funny. I'm going to read the one that I haven't read [01:04:00] out loud yet. This is about the children. Lady Middleton says, "John is in such spirits today," said she, on his taking Miss Steele's pocket handkerchief, and throwing it out of window, "He is full of monkey tricks. And soon afterwards, on the second boy's violently pinching one of the same lady's fingers, she fondly observed, "How playful William is."

Becca: Great stuff. Fucking kids. Questions moving forward.

Molly: I don't even know if I can formulate one. Everything is confusing to me right now. Now, that I know that like, "Is Eddie, the worst?" I don't have any solidified questions at this point. I just want to keep reading.

Becca: Okay. Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Elinor. I just want to give her a hug.

Becca: Yes. I think she lost them, but she won them. [crosstalk]

Molly: She lost them.

Becca: I get your point.

Molly: Yeah, man. I don't know who would win them based on like, "Who did the best?" Hang on, let's split it into two. I'm going to give Mrs. Palmer the first chunk, because she's great, and also, I'm just ready for her to crack. I'm going to give Elinor the second [01:05:00] half, because I need to-- She needs a win.

Becca: All right, great.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I'm into that.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: All right. Listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. Molly, I would ask how you're feeling, but I can see it on your face.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: For next episode, we're going to take a small break from *Sense and Sensibility* once again. I know, very tragic, but trust me, it's worth it, because we are covering one of the most iconic and probably loosest adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Bridget Jones Diary*, and we have a very special surprise guest coming on for that episode. So, we hope you tune in and check that out, and the episode after that. So, not the next coming episode, but the one after, we will return to *Sense and Sensibility*. So, you've just got to read Chapters 23 through 25 to follow along with the book. So, until next time, stay proper-

Molly: -and find yourself someone who isn't going to randomly show up with a side chick.

Becca: Amen.

Molly: Yeah. [01:06:00]

Molly: Pod and Prejudice is edited by Molly Burdick and audio produced by Graham Cook. Our show art is designed by Torrance Browne. Our show is transcribed by SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription. For transcripts and to learn more about our team, check out our website at podandprejudice.com. To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @[podandprejudice](https://www.instagram.com/podandprejudice). If

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