

Molly: Have you ever had an acne breakout come at the worst possible time? I know I have. I'm an actor and there have been so many times when I've had to go to an audition with a huge breakout on my face. We've all had struggles with our skin and that's why we're excited to partner with Apostrophe, the sponsor of this episode. Apostrophe is a prescription skincare company that offers science backed oral and topical medications that are clinically proven to help clear acne. At Apostrophe, an expert dermatology team will create a personalized treatment plan that is perfectly tailored to your unique skin. Simply fill out Apostrophe's online quiz about your skin goals and medical history, then snap a few selfies, and a board-certified dermatologist will create your initial customized treatment plan. Apostrophe treats all types of acne from hormonal acne to facial acne and even chestne, backne, and buttne. They treat breakouts from head to toe. I don't really wear makeup. So, for me having clear skin is crucial.

I've been using Apostrophe for a few weeks now and there's already a noticeable difference in my skin. People have actually told me [00:01:00] that my skin looks good, which is something that doesn't usually happen to me. We have a special deal for our audience. Save \$15 off your first visit with an Apostrophe provider at apostrophe.com/whomst when you use our code, WHOMST. That's W-H-O-M-S-T. This code is only available to our listeners. To get started, just go to apostrophe.com/whomst and click begin, visit, then use our code, WHOMST at sign up and you'll get your first visit for only \$5. That's A-P-O-S-T-R-O-P-H-E dot com slash whomst, W-H-O-M-S-T and use that code, WHOMST to get your first dermatologist crafted treatment plan for \$5. And we thank Apostrophe for sponsoring the podcast.

Hey, everyone, before we begin today, we want to give a huge shoutout to our newest patron, Maddy. Welcome to the team. We're about to start a new season in September, which means our patrons are going to get to follow along with all my scribbles in the margins [00:02:00] of my book. If that sounds cool to you, head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice. This week's episode is covering *Accomplished*, a new book by Amanda Quain, which is on sale now. So, go grab a copy of the book and enjoy this week's episode with our guest, the author herself, Amanda Quain.

Becca: Are you familiar with the *Sense and Sensibility*, the plot?

Amanda: Deeply.

Becca: Oh, yes. So, Molly found out maybe halfway through the third chapter that Brandon and Marianne ended up together and she was like, "I think I just got a big *Sense and Sensibility* spoiler, and I had a meltdown about it" and was like, "Oh, no, that's a huge thing to figure out." This early on the book, she'll like, "Never trust Willoughby, if she knows that Marianne is going to end up with Brandon. And then, we got to the end of the book and Molly was like, "Marianne ends up with Brandon?" And so, she just got an *Emma's* spoiler, which is our next book we're covering and she's like, "Oh, my God, I can't believe I got this big *Emma's* spoiler," [00:03:00] and I was like, "Give it a few months. You're going to be fine. [laughs]

Amanda: Yeah, you will [unintelligible [00:03:03]

Molly: Yeah. I just have to not think about it is all.

Becca: I think you're going to be fine. [laughs]

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

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

Molly: We are here specifically to talk about a brand-new novel called *Accomplished*. It's based on *Pride and Prejudice*. And we are here joined today by the author, Amanda Quain. Amanda, how are you doing?

Amanda: I'm so good, Molly. I'm so happy to be here.

Molly: We're so excited to have you. Tell us who you are and what you do.

Amanda: So, my name is Amanda Quain, and I am an indie bookseller/author. I work for among children's book buyer for a small indie bookstore in Northern Virginia, which means I bring in all the new kids' books for the season, which is really fun.

Molly: That's so cool.

Amanda: That's job. I get to just pick out books.

Becca: I'm so jealous. That's like a dream job. Holy crap.

Amanda: It's pretty ideal.

Becca: And you write novels to-- Wow, you are **[00:04:00]** just living by dream. [laughs]

Amanda: It was very surreal this last year. I got to order my own book for the store.

Molly: Wow. Oh.

Amanda: I was like, "You know what, I think maybe three guys." I think maybe we can bring three and have this one.

Molly: Congratulation.

Amanda: And it'd be sends me an order for the full or later. So, I'm doing my sign pre-orders through my bookstore. So, like, "We needed a bunch." I was like, "Oops, fine."

Molly: I love that so much.

Amanda: Yeah, it's really fun. I do those, and then I live in Pennsylvania, and write books, and think about Jane Austen all the time. That's my deal.

Becca: It can relate.

Molly: Yes, absolutely.

Amanda: Y'all get it.

Becca: Amanda, thanks so much for joining. So, we have so many questions for you about your novel, *Accomplished*, which is an adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*. But before we get into describing the book, talking about the book, we're going to start by asking you a couple questions. We asked all of our guests starting with, what is your relationship to Jane Austen?

Amanda: I think like cool and fun niche is my ideal Jane Austen relationship. But In [00:05:00] terms of how I came to her, I started reading Jane Austen. I was probably early high school when I first got given--I got given a set of the Dover Thrift Editions. But when my parents, British friends, which feels like a very good way to get a full set of Jane Austen novels. It felt very legit. And I read *Pride and Prejudice* first and loved it, and then I read *Sense and Sensibility* and love that. Then I've petered off.

But right around that time, not to give away too much about my age, but you can triangulate where I am based on the fact that right around the same time, the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* came out and I was like, "I'm all in. This is my forever." And then in college to the class I was just called Jane Austen, where we read every single one of her books and did a nine-week session on each one and they brought a different instructor in for each book to talk about their specialty related to the book. It was a fantastic class.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: Yeah, that is an awesome class. I want to take that class.

Amanda: It was so good. [00:06:00] This is just general theme spoiler, Molly. But when we did *Northanger Abbey*, the specialist came in was a professor of Gothic literature, who led us through that level of the book. Yeah, I got all in, and then I studied abroad in London as one often does when you are the person I am, and just stayed with the story from there on out.

Becca: I love that. So, that brings me to my next question. Other than this book you wrote, what is your favorite Austen content? This includes books, movies, really out there adaptations, whatever speaks to you most.

Amanda: I love that you said other than this book I wrote as if this is my favorite-

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: -Austen adaptation. Someone's favorite Austen adaptation that, oh, my God, I can't even imagine. I have my go to and then I have a new go to. But my all-time favorite Austen adaptation has always been *Clueless*. I love it. I like *Emma* a lot, but *Clueless* is perfectly captures. What I love in Austen adaptation, where you take the very soul of the thing, but put it in an entirely different setting, that's [00:07:00] still somehow works. Also, I'm in love with Paul Rudd, which helps.

Becca: Who isn't?

Molly: That's correct.

Becca: He's been a heartthrob for straight up 25 years straight.

Amanda: I don't know what he's doing besides being pure of heart, but I love him. And then recently, I've gotten super into *Fire Island*, the new Hulu *Pride and Prejudice* retelling, it's so good.

Molly: Well, fun fact, listeners. That's the next episode that we're talking about after this.

Amanda: oh, my gosh.

Molly: If you haven't seen it yet, great time to go watch *Fire Island*. Which Jane Austen character do you relate to the most?

Amanda: I think it's going to be my answer for half the questions you asked me. but some people were like, "I'm a Lizzie Bennet." I don't know if you guys have read-- This is amazing, also new Austen adaptation that came out this last year called *Being Mary Bennet* by J. C. Peterson.

Molly: We've had a lot of people recommend that to us.

Amanda: Oh my gosh, it's so fun. And the author, Jenny is just an absolute delight. She and I are buds. But she talks a lot about how a lot of people who have read *Pride and Prejudice* are actually more [00:08:00] Mary's, if you think about it.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Amanda: And I get that. But I, myself am actually Charles Bingley. That's my vibe.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: I love that thing. Bingley's one of my favorite characters in Austen. So, I always enjoy Charles Bingley in real life. We love Sunny and Fred Lee.

Amanda: Exactly. It's just the golden retriever vibes you wish to see in the world.

Becca: Exactly. It manifests them yourself, if you do not actually have a golden retriever.

Amanda: It's true.

Becca: That brings us to our last general Austen question for you. What is your hottest Austen take?

Amanda: Oh, my gosh, I don't have to be controversial Austen opinions. I feel most of them are pretty common. But I will say and if I had to rerecord this, this is going to get me thrown out of your audience. Colin Firth to me will always be a dad for *Mamma Mia!* before he's a Darcy. So, I'm a 2005 girl. I think Colin Firth's so talented. But to me, he's not Darcy.

Becca: That's definitely a hot take, but we leave it in, we live for the drama on this podcast.

Molly: We do live for the drama.

Amanda: So sorry, everyone. **[00:09:00]** Please, still buy my book.

Molly: Our listeners are a pretty even split between the 2005 and the 1995, actually.

Amanda: Okay.

Becca: When we covered the adaptation, we brought on two different guests to discuss it. The first one was like, "The 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* is my favorite Jane Austen content of all time" and the only time it really related to the story of *Pride and Prejudice*. The other person was like, "*Pride and Prejudice* was one of my favorite books and I can't believe this movie was made. It's a disgrace." So, we love have diverse set of opinions on the [crosstalk] 2005. This podcast leans positive on the 2005 with in our hearts believing that the 1995 is a little better, but we love all *Pride and Prejudice* content. [laughs] Okay, I think we're ready to talk about *Accomplished*, aren't we?

Molly: Yes, let's talk about it.

Becca: First things first, talking about this novel, I will just say to our listeners the full title of this novel is *Accomplished: A Georgie Darcy Novel*.

Molly: Which is thrilling, because we **[00:10:00]** are justice for Georgie stands over-- [crosstalk]

Amanda: Yes.

Molly: We love Georgiana Darcy. What an amazing character.

Becca: We're Team protected Georgiana at all costs.

Molly: All costs.

Amanda: And part of this book must have been challenging for him.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Yes, definitely.

Becca: She was not protected, the whole book. So, for our listeners, let's talk about what *Accomplished* is. Tell us a little bit about the concept and what inspired you to write the book.

Amanda: *Accomplished* is, as you guys said, *Pride and Prejudice*, but it's from the point of view of Georgiana Darcy. Normally, this is where I explained who Georgiana Darcy is, but I feel for this group, you probably have a pretty good idea among the listeners. We pick up Georgie, because it is a contemporary retelling at the beginning of her junior year of high school at Pemberley Academy, the

boarding school that she attends that her brother fits attended before her. And she has just come back after recovering from, what we call, the incident, T, I with Wickham Foster, her brother Fitz's childhood best friend [00:11:00] turned her something or other, who may or may not have been dealing at all out of her dorm room and gotten kicked out of school, pulling her reputation along with him.

At this point, the whole school hates her. Her brother does not trust her, because he had to save her from all the things Wickham did, and she basically has nothing in no one, and is determined to rebuild her reputation from the ground up, and she decided, "The best way to do that is to become the perfect Darcy." By doing that she will regain her brother's trust, she'll regain the affections of Pemberley Academy, and she will win the day. Of course, things are never quite that easy.

Becca: No, certainly not. Especially, not in either a Jane Austen novel or in a young adult fiction novel. So, let's talk a bit about why you decided Georgiana. What inspired you to focus on Georgie as a character?

Amanda: Okay. So, I'll give you the quick answer first, and then elaborate. The short answer is the Joenas Brothers.

Becca: Ah.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: What a shocking and thrilling answer to that question.

Molly: Our jaws just fell to the floor, listeners. [00:12:00]

Amanda: That was the best simultaneous reaction I've ever received to giving that answer.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: Let allow me to elaborate slightly. So, a few years ago, I had two perfect parallel universes meet in the middle to create this book. I was thinking a lot about the Darcy's as a whole. I come from theater as my background as well as writing. I had been working on a play with my best friend, Rebecca, that we wrote together and started called *Hey, Darcy*, a romantic comedy, which was the tail word, chicks on tour. At some point, they've talked about it in all of these interviews. But it's a story told and dual timeline of Bingley and Darcy's road trips to Netherfield before *Pride and Prejudice* starts aligned with their grand tour of Europe and their 18, like, basically sleeping and wanting their way to the continent.

Molly: Wow.

Amanda: And I play Bingley and my friend plays Darcy, and we just explore toxic masculinity.

Molly: That has really big like *Matt & Ben* vibes.

Amanda: It was very much *Matt & Ben*. Thank you. I tried to pitch it as that a lot and people didn't always [00:13:00] know who *Matt & Ben* was. So, thank you, Molly. It's the exact same vibes as that but Regency.

Molly: Love it.

Becca: Listeners, for those of you who may not know, *Matt & Ben* is a Mindy Kaling project with a her writing partner that is about the writing of *Good Will Hunting* and it's told by two female actresses usually playing Matt Damon and Ben Affleck. It's a great play and we are such theater nerds on this podcast. So, you're fitting in just fine. [laughs]

Amanda: Okay, perfect. We're writing that. And so, I was spending a lot of time. Darcy was the main emotional arc of that show that Bingley had his own stuff to do, but Darcy, there's just a lot of things to unpack before he can fall in love. I was spending a lot of time in Darcy's head and thinking about like, who he is as a person and why he became this way? And then right around the same time, the Joenas Brothers got back together, which was very thrilling for me, personally.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: As a dyed in the wool millennial, obviously, the Joe bros were like my number one back when I was in high school and still really. And there was a documentary that came out about them. I forgot that in the documentary. I [00:14:00] really should have looked this up by now. I forget it every time. I just had it. But it was about the three of them, like, how they found their way back to each other and they filmed as they reunited and worked through their problems. It was fascinating. But I was struck the whole time watching the three of them together and Joe particularly, who was the middle Joenas Brothers, as I'm sure you two know.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Amanda: Just seemed like every time the three of them would be together, he would have his arm around one of his brothers or be touching them in some way, and just like you can tell in the interviews how much he'd missed them and how hurt he was by what had happened, but just like how much he needed his family back together. I was so really into it and just like even when you watch their concert videos now, Joe always has his arm around a brother. He's just always trying to pull them in and trying to get that intimacy.

And then when I was thinking a lot about that and then I was thinking a lot about the Darcy's, they just came together of like, "What does it like to be part of that family? What does being a Darcy mean, not just as a romantic hero, but as a [00:15:00] person, who has to go through life and interact with siblings and with parents and with the world?" And that's where Georgiana came in to me.

Becca: That's a very heartfelt answer. And as people, we love Georgie on this podcast and she's definitely a character we don't spend enough time with in *Pride and Prejudice*. What inspired you to use *Pride and Prejudice* in particular to tell the story? What about the Darcy family really spoke to you, what

about the story really spoke to you as something that you could adapt and tell this family-based story with in the modern era?

Amanda: I think it was really that the story came to me as Georgiana's story. I wasn't coming into this looking to tell a sibling story. I was just started thinking a lot about who Georgiana was. In the book, she has no lines of dialogue in the original text of *Pride and Prejudice*, which I think people often forget. Because in the movies and the other adaptations, she gets expanded reasonably so, but even then, she's still just like, "I'm beautiful and accomplished and perfect."

But when you look at what happened with [00:16:00] her and Wickham, she 14 and-- If that happened to me when I was 14, I wouldn't have been okay. The idea that she was always struck me as a little bit off-- And so, I do think that nothing in my book contradicts what we see in *Pride and Prejudice*, because we do get those scenes of what we see in the original text in my version. And Georgiana wants so badly to be the perfect sister to her brother that she puts on but like, "I'm Georgiana. I'm not perfect. I'm happy. I'm fine." But then underneath all of that, it's just like teenage trauma, you know?

Molly: Totally.

Becca: Yes.

Amanda: We all know. We were all teenage girls. We all get.

Becca: Oh, God, I was such a mess as a teenage girl.

Molly: Same. Becca and as I was. What spoke to you about modernizing it? Why did you choose to tell this as a modern, YA novel as opposed to delving into a period piece writing style?

Amanda: I think part of it is just that, although, I love historical fiction and have read a lot of its contemporary why is really what I [00:17:00] grew up on and loved reading. There's a direct pipeline between the 40,000 Meg Cabot books I've read, and growing up and accomplished. My voice is always lean towards like the snarky and the pop culture references and things like that. And although, I'd love to one day dabble in something a little bit more historical, that contemporary poppy teen voice is really where I've always felt myself drawn to.

Becca: I was a very angsty teen in a lot of ways. My pipeline was very much Sarah Dessen to loving Emily Bronte.

Amanda: Fair.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: [laughs] But I can definitely relate to the poppy YA enjoyment from my youth in general.

Amanda: I just love it.

Becca: Let's talk about Darcy, because you took one of the most iconic characters in the literary canon and you captured his human disastertude and brought it into the most anxious 19-year-old, 20-year-old

kid on the face of the [00:18:00] planet. So, let's talk about Darcy. What's the most essential element of adapting Fitzwilliam Darcy to the modern era?

Amanda: I think a lot of it comes down to just like the need to control things around him and being very uncomfortable when he can't. When you see him in the original, when he's at a ball or somewhere where he doesn't understand the social situation, that's where he's most uncomfortable. And so, here, when he's in the midst of this huge familial crisis, because in my version of it, which is only gently adapted from the original. Their father died a few years ago and their mom left. When Fitz was 16, he became the head of the family of him and Georgie. So, he's basically been a father figure to Georgie, whether they wanted him to be or not the last few years now.

She's just had this huge incident that he couldn't stop. And now, he has to try to pick up the pieces from that and I think trying to-- And he up ended his life, basically. [00:19:00] When this happened, he had been out in California at Caltech at the end of Georgia sophomore year when Wickham's incident happens. And so, he transfers to a local SUNY school to be closer to her and to basically, babysit her at the beginning of our story. He just wants so badly to fix things himself. When he can't, because you can't always fix other people's problems. That's very challenging for him.

Molly: Yeah. This isn't so much a question as to just-- I really liked the phrase you just used, which was gently adapted from the original. Because I did feel while I was reading it, I was like, "There are the main elements of *Pride and Prejudice* here. I'm following Darcy's storyline through his phone calls with Georgia and everything." But it really got to take on a life of its own, because you were following a character that in the peripheral of the original story. I thought that was really cool. And I also noticed a few things that I won't give away, but there were some things that were notably different from the original story, particularly, with Lizzie Bennet and Lydia Bennet, [00:20:00] which I loved. I thought that the changes that you made to that storyline made Lizzie so much more of a badass and I will just leave it there, so that our listeners go and buy the book.

Becca: And further without giving anything away to our listeners, I will say, I want to commend you for putting us in a different part of the story and a different perspective than obviously, the Lindsay Bennet story, because then we get to meet new characters who are-- [crosstalk] I was going to go with, "I'm not going to spoil who you're going to--" [laughs]

Molly: Sorry. Okay. Okay, okay.

Becca: [laughs]

Amanda: We can talk about Avery. Avery is on in the cover flaps. We can talk about Avery, a little bit.

Becca: Yeah, just such an organic modern-day character that fits seamlessly into Georgie Darcy's story and such a lovable character in ways that I will not go into because I do not want to spoil for the audience, but I will tell you that I was very drawn to that character, who was wholly new to me as this is mostly Jane Austen characters and I was like, "Oh, cool. [00:21:00] That's how that character was adapted. Oh, cool. That's how that character was adapted" and then I was like, "Oh, a whole new character and I actually really care about him."

Molly: Yeah, me too.

Amanda: Yeah, I was very much like-- I love adaptations. That's something I've always dabbled in. But I've really enjoyed lately the idea of, you know, the *Star Wars* from a certain point of view anthologies?

Molly: Wait, wait, hang on. I'm a very big *Star Wars* fan and I don't know what you're talking about. [laughs]

Amanda: There's only two of them and they've come out over the last three or four years, been a little bit longer ago than that. But the first one is just called *Star Wars* from a certain point of view. The idea is that is 20 short stories, each of them the idea is like, you take the camera and *Star Wars* and what if you just moved it like a little bit to the left and look to what was happening just off to the side. That's what I really loved about doing this as, *Pride and Prejudice* is still happening just off to the side. I feel like I'm blowing Molly's mind like this new *Star Wars* knowledge.

Molly: Yeah. If this was a visual medium listener, my eyes are just flicking back and forth, thinking like, [00:22:00] "When am I going to read this? [laughs] I have to go do it right now."

Amanda: Really fun. There's some amazing authors who they got involved too. [unintelligible [00:22:06] writes an amazing one. Griffin McElroy, who's one of my all-time favorite heroes, writes a story in one of them and they're fabulous.

Becca: I can hear Graham on the other side of this podcast being like, "Molly, stop beaming. It's an audio medium. Tell the listeners you like this."

Molly: [laughs] Listeners, I like this. I like this. But yes, yes. Back to Jane Austen and this-- Yeah, that is what it felt like I'm watching *Pride and Prejudice* happen on the side beginning to follow a whole new character through an adventure that I didn't necessarily know was happening. It's happening alongside and in tandem with *Pride and Prejudice*, but she gets to have her own story.

Becca: And speaking of Jane Austen and things you did carry over from the story, you carried in without giving too much away. Some of the class commentary that Jane Austen so heavily trades in and in my experience, as I keep saying on this podcast often gets dropped in [00:23:00] modern adaptations. Can you talk a bit about infusing that dynamic into the novel?

Amanda: Definitely. Well, it does often get dropped, I think it's one of the things that's most important to Jane Austen. A lot of adaptations do do it really well like *Fire Island*, not to spoil your next episode. That capture that so perfectly.

Becca: I don't want to spoil, but the next episode for the listeners, but I gushed about that in *Fire Island*.

Amanda: Literally, the first five minutes of *Fire Island*, I was pointing at the screen and shouting to no one. I was watching it alone like, "Oh, my God, this is how you do it. This is what you do. You take up *Pride and Prejudice*, you put it in a similar microcosmic society, and that's how it works." You'll just film a second *Fire Island* episode, so I can be on that one, too, because I have a lot of thoughts about it.

[laughter]

Amanda: Or, have you guys read *Unmarriageable*?

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Not yet. No. It's again on the list of things that people tell us to read.

Amanda: Yes, good. But that's *Unmarriageable:Pride and Prejudice* in Pakistan. And that also picks it up and puts it in a very class-based society. [00:24:00] It's just so much of the problems you encounter in *Pride and Prejudice* are based on class and the way that the characters move throughout the world. Obviously, for the Darcy's, those are not the same. Even calling them problems isn't quite the right word, because they don't have problems. They're fabulously wealthy and fabulously rich. But I wanted Georgiana to have to reckon with that a little bit, because you don't see the Darcy's really ever reckoning with our wealth in many adaptations and it just felt almost irresponsible to not--

When you're talking about the story from Georgiana, effectively, it is to not deal with that in some way. She's at this boarding school that her families attended for generations. For all of her problems anything that could be solved with money. It is solved with money. It just felt important to discuss that a little bit and to say like, "Okay, yes, we have problems." Certainly, the fact that she has money doesn't mean Georgiana does not have problems, but she has different problems than a Bennet character would in the same world. I [00:25:00] wanted to see them exploring that a little bit. I really love how it turned out and the way that the different characters interacted with it I was really pleased with how it all came together.

Molly: Yeah, definitely. Because I think when I'm reading *Pride and Prejudice* or when I was reading *Pride and Prejudice*, by the end of the book, I was like, "Well, Bingley and Darcy, they're rich, but they're still good people." I don't care about their money or their privilege, because they're good people and they do good things with it. But Caroline Bingley and Catherine de Bourgh, I hate them, because they're rich.

Becca: Classist monsters.

Amanda: Right. I feel it's also easier to separate in the original almost, because like, "Okay, they have £10,000 a year." I know, that's a lot, but it also means nothing, right?

Molly: Right. It's distanced. But with this, it was like, yes, Georgie is a good person and Fitz is a good person, and they're rich. But she actually has to reckon with checking her privilege and being like, "Oh, not everyone has this. This isn't normal necessarily. It is how I was raised and I can't change that. But at least, I [00:26:00] can acknowledge that I'm privileged in this way."

Amanda: Right. And I was very heartily inspired in reading the whole book. But in this part, particularly by both *Clueless* and by *Legally Blonde*, two of my favorite movies of all time. The way that the main characters in that are both very privileged women, who don't inherently change who they are, but have to reckon with how they move through the world and the way that what they do affects people. I really want to see Georgiana go on a similar journey.

Molly: Yeah, I love that. So, I want to talk a little bit more about adapting this as a YA novel?

Amanda: Mm-hmm.

Molly: What was the hardest part about adapting it as a YA romance and also, the most fun part?

Amanda: I almost feel I cheated a little bit by picking Georgiana to adapt, because she's just like, it's a very easy one to one transfer. She's a teenager already. I age down a few of the other characters, Darcy and Lizzie and their whole gang are in college. In this version, they're 20. They come down a little bit further than what the age gap would be in the book. But they still by being in college or in a different world than Georgiana's [00:27:00] boarding school life. But I just feel, I was just like, "Yeah, she's a teenager. She lives at home with her tutors. Just move it on over to a boarding school." It's amazing how many things you just move on to a boarding school.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: As I was reading, I'm like, "Oh, my God, no wonder everyone was in boarding schools. There's no parents to deal with." I know that there are more rules in a real boarding school than there ever is like a wide version of a boarding school. I know this.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: But I'm not the first book to pretend that there aren't very many [laughs] [unintelligible] [00:27:28] boarding school. See, I want that fun of living a little bit more independently, but you get to also be a teenager, which is so much fun to play in.

Becca: It definitely did remind me of a New England version of *Zoey 101*. If you ever watch that show--? [crosstalk]

Amanda: Ah, Becca, what a compliment to give me. Thank you.

Becca: [laughs]

Amanda: [laughs]

Becca: I was such a big *Zoey 101* fan and that I remember watching it being, "God, I want to go to Pacific Coast Academy."

Amanda: Right.

Molly: And then looking back on it and now, I'm watching it and I'm like, "That is not what any boarding school has ever been, like, ever."

Amanda: It is not.

Becca: But it is so fun to pretend. [00:28:00]

Amanda: I was talking to another author once. He was telling me that he was doing research on boarding schools, because he was getting ready to write a boarding school. But he's like, "Yeah, there's so many more holes than you think." I have a conversation before I ever wrote *Accomplished*. But as I sat down for this, I was just like, "It's fancy old, rich person boarding school. There's probably less rules here."

Molly: [chuckles] Yeah.

Becca: Listen, listen, there's no need for it to be to the letter every single boarding school that actually exists. A lot of boarding schools are very boring places, I'm sure. But those who attended boarding school can, actually, let me know if I'm wrong about that.

Amanda: Well, let me know, because it's too late. The book's written. I like to pretend for anything that does not quite work. My geography also might be a little messy. But this is already an alternate universe, where *Pride and Prejudice* doesn't exist. So, maybe also in this alternate universe, boarding school rules are much looser and the geography of New York State is slightly different.

Molly: I'm from upstate New York and I was like, "Yeah, it makes sense that she has to drive six hours to Rochester."

Amanda: That was definitely going to hold up no matter where you are. I went to college in upstate New York and that's where [00:29:00] I got picked up for the inspiration. I do think I moved the Endless Mountains region into a different area of upstate New York-

Molly: That's okay.

Amanda: -but it's fine.

Molly: They were taking a loop de loop around the scenic route.

Amanda: Yeah. They had a lot of emotions. They're like, "Navigation was not very good."

Molly: Yeah, and it was foggy.

Amanda: Right. I won't go into too many details, but the scene is near the end of the book. But there's a scene where they're driving through terrible fog in the Endless Mountains region and had to pull over. That was based on a thing that did happen to me driving back to college when I was from Thanksgiving break once I had pullover at a truck stop for an hour, because the fog was so bad.

Molly: Wow.

Amanda: Yeah, I didn't have nearly the situation they have in the book, because I was alone. Devastatingly [laughs]

Becca: Who was your favorite *Pride and Prejudice* character to adapt?

Amanda: I remember earlier when I was like, “All my questions to your answers might be pretty similar”? The answer to this is once again Charles Bingley.

Molly: Yeah.

Amanda: Charlie Bingley, as he becomes in *Accomplished* is, as I was writing him, I'm like, “This is the greatest piece of contribution [00:30:00] to literature I've ever done quite frankly.” In our version, he's like a himbo frat boy with a heart of gold and I just love him. Everything he writes is ends with an exclamation point and we meet him at a frat party, where he helps Georgie learn how to use a keg and then just goes very quickly along on her elaborate matchmaking scams including setting off fireworks at a random high school. He's such an absolute delight to move through the world with and I love him.

Molly: He really is a himbo. That is so cool. I was like, “What is the word for this, sweet, drunken, love bug, who everyone's obsessed with?” He's hot. He's totally a himbo and he's so pure

Amanda: He's 100% a Hemsworth. We first meet him at, so, it's like a ton no colors being frat party.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: As they have in college. He's just wearing no shirt, but to autumn leaves and just like, “Yeah, what more do you need out of Bingley than that?”

Becca: I have to say, the way you manifested [00:31:00] Bingley into the modern world was had me grinning the entire time. Because I was like, “Yes, this man would be this positive ball of muscles and beer and pureness.”

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Everybody, here it is, the word I'm looking for.

Amanda: Yes.

Becca: This is a literary podcast.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: Yes. He was so much fun and then a little side shoutout as well to Lydia Bennet, who was also really fun. Actually, Lydia was not in the original version of that I wrote, because as I mentioned before, I'm a big *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* fan and I just have always thought that the way they portrayed the character on that, both in her storyline, which I won't go into Molly and her spoilers. And the actor M. K Wiles was just perfect. So, I didn't want to mess with it. But my editor was like, “Listen, you're telling *Pride and Prejudice*. We're calling a Wickham story. Lydia needs to be involved.” I ended up putting her in and I really like how she came together as she called herself, self-proclaimed Goddess of target.

Molly: Yeah, I was going to say, “She works at Target.” It's perfect.

Becca: Yeah, it's exactly Lydia Bennet would be in this day and age.

Amanda: Yeah. That was the last scene we [00:32:00] added. That was the very last edits that scene got tossed in there. But I just had so much fun doing it. Experiencing the Darcy's experience is a supercharger for the first time. It turns out was what we needed in our lives.

Molly: Oh, absolutely. On the flip side of that, who was the hardest character to adapt?

Amanda: No way. Lydia gave me that little bit of like, "Oh, I don't want to mess with the adaptations I know and love of her." And also, didn't want to make Lydia a villain, which when you're telling Georgiana story, it could be very easy to do, because Wickham is a fairly major character in the book. Wickham, the opening incident, Georgie is back at school and then she finds out the Wickham is back. He's not at school, but he's lurking around the campus trying to get her to get back together with him and join up with him again.

And so, it'd be so easy to make Lydia just like Wickham side piece. I don't think she's portrayed-- Georgie is not going to be her best friend or anything like that. But I really wanted to make it, so that she still had her own internal life and [00:33:00] was not just a caricature of herself. So, that was definitely a line I worked carefully to thread.

Molly: Yeah, I don't want to give away any spoilers about how that plotline wraps up. But just for your knowledge, I really liked how that ended up.

Amanda: Good, good.

Molly: I like to imagine that Georgie in her way found some camaraderie with Lydia and felt care for her, because they both dealt with the same guy.

Amanda: Right.

Molly: Yeah. That's all I'll say about that.

Becca: I'll just say, I think generally, one thing I really appreciate about modern adaptations of Jane Austen is, exploration of these victims of these rakes.

Amanda: Right.

Molly: To go back to a former episode of ours, if you look at the 2008 adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*, there's much more said about Colonel Brandon's ward in that version than there is in any other version. And you actually meet her and see what her life is now.

Amanda: Right, right.

Becca: And [00:34:00] I think that the reclaiming of characters like Lydia and in this case, also, Georgie as well, and their stories and how they deal with these awful men is really one of the best parts of seeing more contemporary adaptations of Jane Austen work.

Amanda: Yeah, definitely. It's interesting, because I've had a lot of people tell me that how much they hated Wickham in his version. A friend of mine was like, "Yeah, this is the most I've ever hated Wickham." I'm like, "Oh my gosh, really?" I don't think it was that different as the average Wickham. But then I realized like, "Because it's the first time--" Not the first time. There are other versions. But one of the few times you see Wickham through the eyes of his victim, the entire time. You see his gaslighting and the way he's manipulating her.

I also think once you take away the cravat, he becomes more skeezy immediately, apparently. But he very much is still a character who the whole school loves Wickham. Georgiana is in the marching band in this version. That's my musical, little twist for that and Wickham was as well. And the whole band hates her forgetting [00:35:00] Wickham picked out. And so, by seeing it from the Wickham's perspective, you can realize how bad some of these men are.

Becca: Really, quick sidenote. I noted in your acknowledgments that this is an ode to your marching band experience?

Amanda: Yes.

Molly: What instrument did you play?

Amanda: I played the piccolo and the flute. Noted lovingly by how I gently and caring they made fun of the fluids inside the book of stats.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: That's where all the best jokes came from. I was acquired kid in high school.

Amanda: Oh, nice.

Becca: The amount of soprano jokes I have told in my lifetime are numerous.

Amanda: Yes. I was a huge marching band kid all through high school and college. That's where I met my husband and most of my closest friends. Any marching band romance that is in this book, I'm not saying it's based on real life, because that'd be weird. But it's very hardly inspired by real life.

Molly: I love that so much. I was picturing this all happening in my high school band room.

Amanda: Excellent.

Molly: When I was in high school band, I had the biggest crush on trumpet.

Amanda: Dangerous waters, Molly.

Molly: I know. And there's just something about-- Honestly, oh my God, wait, I'm [00:36:00] having a realization. [laughs] Whoa, having a realization that that guy was a Wickham. Oh, my God.

Amanda: You'd be amazed how many trumpets are Wickhams.

Becca: I was going to say, are trumpets the dangerous bad boys at the marching bands?

Amanda: Oh, yeah. Actually, I tried to make Wickham not a trumpet player at first. I thought it was too on the nose. He was a percussion player at first. Then but I was writing, I'm like, "This is wrong. He's such a trumpet." I have a lot of friends who are trumpets, who are like, "No, I get it. That's accurate."

Molly: Yeah. Wow. I just got full body chills, because he had his trumpet. There's something about like the high notes on a trumpet that are just really sexy.

Amanda: It's when you jump the octaves. And that's Wickham in the book. He's like, "Yeah, he's playing three octaves with everybody else just because he can." He's just like, "Dang, Wickham."

Molly: Just because he can. Oh, my God, I'm going to reread the book and I'm going to picture this guy. But yeah, so, I just had the vibes were immaculate. They were exactly high school band. So, you really captured that well.

Amanda: Thank you.

Becca: I was not [00:37:00] in high school band. I was in middle school orchestra. But then everyone was benefited by me quitting the clarinet. But-- [crosstalk]

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: When high school choir has similar, you still get the vibes of a bunch of musical kids who care a lot about what they're specifically doing. Again, it's the microcosm, right? When you take a specific type of society and you create the stratas in it, which marching bands super is very much that.

Becca: Absolutely. And huge shoutout to my choir director, who was very serious and very into us making really nice music together. Because I saw him so viscerally in the character of the marching band teacher in this, because there's a certain type of music teacher who works with really talented high school students and is really, really invested in making sure that amongst their personal drama, you channel their ambition to make good music and it's so relatable.

Amanda: I love that. I should also clarify that trumpets can be nice. I know plenty of nice-- It's [00:38:00] not that there are no trumpets that are nice, but all Wickhams are trumpets. It's that like-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Absolutely. No, 100%.

Becca: It's necessary, but not sufficient.

Amanda: Yes, exactly.

Becca: I was also enamored with some of the characters in this, because without giving too much away about the plot my boyfriend did trombone in his marching band in college.

Amanda: [crosstalk] And all the main characters in ours are trombone players. I picked that. She was slightly removed. I did want to make it a flute player, because that felt too self-inserity. And also, Georgiana and flute are not quite the right. It's too close to pretty. I needed it to be a little quirkiest. And then I married a saxophone, so that would be weird, too. And then I am running low on quirky instruments. A trombone was a good, gentle misfit, but still effective. And then she would sit by the trumpets, which is very effective for Wickhaming.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Absolutely. I always thought that the quirkiest and most expertise of the marching band were the oboists, because I was like, "That double read, I don't know what to bring of that."

Amanda: Wait, did you oboes in your marching band?

Becca: We didn't have a marching band at my school.

Amanda: Okay.

Becca: But we did have a band and they certainly [00:39:00] had oboists.

Amanda: Okay. Because you're usually can't march with an oboe, because the double reads crack. So, I was like, "Oh, my God, they're so talented--" [crosstalk]

Becca: No, no. My school is not talented.

[laughter]

Amanda: You proved our marching oboes that there's less.

Becca: Yeah, and then there's just like the French war, if we're rounding out the brass section.

Amanda: Yeah.

Becca: And also, shouts to the tubas, obviously.

Amanda: Shoutout to the tubas. I needed slightly easier to maneuver than a tuba.

Molly: Yeah. And Georgie is small.

Amanda: Yeah. I know plenty of small tubas, but it just-- I understand the physics of a trombone slightly better and also allowed for my favorites hilarious, horrible marching band incident scene that I won't go into too many details, because when you guys read the book, I'm assuming everyone who listens will read the book. You seem like good people. You'll read it.

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: When you get to the marching band field-based incident, I will tell you, that was based on real events as well.

Molly: Aah. Oh, no.

Amanda: it didn't happen to me. I saw it happen from the stands and I was back at college for a homecoming game. **[00:40:00]** And it has become known in history as flaminos, which stands for flutes dominos.

Molly: Oh, my gosh.

Becca: Well, listeners, if that does not convince you to go out and buy this book, I'm not sure what will. Because Molly and I both viscerally had the same reaction to hearing that that was a real-life event.

Molly: Yeah, we were like, "Nooooooo."

Amanda: Again, no actual flautists were harmed in the making of this book. So, it's fine.

Molly: Amazing.

Becca: Fantastic. I did want to ask about another thing that was integral to Georgie's experience as a teenage girl. Because I felt it was relatable to me and also, I think, to a lot of listeners of this podcast, which is that she's a Tumblr girl who is obsessed with a BBC series.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: [laughs]

Amanda: Yes. Georgie's fanfic life is just I love it.

Becca: I actually went online and googled, are teenagers still on Tumblr? They are. They're all still on Tumblr. I love it. For maybe our listeners who are not as internety as I was as a teenager, Tumblr was the place **[00:41:00]** for nerdy teenagers, who were a little too obsessed with nerd culture and niche shows that often came from the UK or books that were really important. It was a community of fanfiction that was big if you were really, really nerdy.

Amanda: Yes. I was so pleased, too, because I had to—Obviously, when you're writing a book, especially this is my debut, you write it over the course of several years usually and edit it. And each time we got close, I'm like, "Okay, I need to check in and see what teens are actually still using for fanfiction." Because I wrote a ton of fanfiction as a teenager. It's where I learn how to write. But I haven't done it as much recently, because I then realized, you could just write fanfic of old books and then you could sell it.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: That public domain. [laughs]

Amanda: I'm really still writing fanfiction. It's just that I don't pay anyone to do it, because the copyright has expired on Jane Austen. Great work. *Pride and Prejudice*.

Becca: Great for us, as well, I will mention. [chuckles]

Amanda: Yes, exactly. But I was like, Ph, God, thank God, Tumblr still exists." Because I had so much fun writing Georgiana's fanfic [00:42:00] obsession. It's funny. It used to be an even bigger part of the book in the earliest drafts and it has to get cut down a little bit to make room for other things that need to make its way in. But I love that she gets into, she's in this very like *Downton Abbey* as BBC show called Sage Hall and she's obsessed with, which fun fact is the name of the church on my college campus, where I got married. I didn't realize. I accidentally did that until the arcs were out. And a friend of mine I went to school with and is works in publishing. So, I sent her an arc. Actually, She's like, "Oh my gosh, Sage Hall is so fun." I was like, "Oh, my God, I didn't even realize."

Molly: [laughs] Oh, my God, I love that.

Becca: Wow. Completely. I was trying to because me it sounded vaguely British. No idea at all. But I got to put in this idea that she discovers her own romance through that, which fun fact is how I found out that I had a huge crush on my now husband, because I actually wrote my first book. I used the word book loosely. It was like a 60,000-word nano fantasy project. My sophomore year of college [00:43:00] and I gave it to my roommate afterwards to read and she was like, "This is super fun, but oh my gosh, you know, the [unintelligible 00:43:04] is just totally Dustin, right?" I was like, "What? No. Oh."

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: And now, we've been married for four years. So, it works out very well.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: That is the cutest thing I've ever heard. My goodness.

Amanda: She didn't tell that story in her maid of honor toast on my wedding. So, it all got to come around full circle.

Molly: I love that so much.

Becca: Also, fanfiction wise, what was your go to for writing for fanfiction? What was your project that you will always worked on?

Amanda: I did a lot of boy wizard stuff match. Because I wrote a lot of Neopets fanfiction.

Molly: [gasps]

Becca: That's incredible.

Molly: Becca and I both just grabbed on to our chairs.

Amanda: Yeah, that was the same physical reaction too. I spent so long trying to get into the Neopian Times, which is the newspaper that was published in website, and I never did. I feel I should be able to put a note in the back of this book that was like, "Okay, I have a book now." [00:44:00] It's going to be one Neopian Times trophy. If I mentioned in Neopet in it, would that be enough for this retrograde phrase that I need from these nameless souls on the internet, we control the Neopian Times?

Molly: [laughs]

Amanda: That's so fanfiction on my old computer. Just contemporary YA essentially, but about [unintelligible [00:44:17]]. And that sentence was incomprehensible to anyone outside of a certain 10-year age period.

Molly: I think that talking about Neopets is an excellent way to end our discussion of this Jane Austen adaptation that you've written-- [crosstalk]

Amanda: Exactly, where we all thought this conversation would end when we started it.

Molly: Yeah, totally.

Becca: I have a couple questions for the benefit of our listeners. Can you tell us when this book might be coming out?

Amanda: It releases July 26th, which is the day that this episode is dropping?

Molly: Correct. Yay, it's out today.

Amanda: It's out now. Go to a bookstore. Panic run, leave your phones, get out of here.

Molly: Go get it now.

Amanda: Go to your local indie. There are signed [00:45:00] copies available on through my local indie one more page books on the website. If you want to get things signed and personalized, get those in very quickly, because the book is now out. It's definitely the preorder part is behind us, but I'll still be signing books there. And yeah, it's available anywhere books are sold in the US and also Australia, New Zealand.

Molly: Nice. A lot of our listeners are actually in Australia. So, that works out really well.

Amanda: I think it comes out the same day. I'm pretty sure. And it's in paperback there, because Australia, which is fun.

Molly: Amazing. So, we'll link that in the episode description. We will link your bookstore and Thriftbooks and *bookshop.com*, and all that good stuff.

Amanda: All the best.

Becca: All right, fantastic. Do you also want to tell our listeners, where they could find you on the internet if they just like to hear your takes in general life?

Amanda: If you've enjoyed my general vibes, you can find me on all social media platforms as *@quainiac*, which is QUAINIAC. I'm on TikTok. Well, I'm on TikTok. I have a TikTok. If anyone has any **[00:46:00]** ideas for how I should use TikTok, please, pass them along to me. Most of my time, I'll on Instagram and I'm on Twitter as well.

Molly: Amazing. Well, thank you so much for joining us and thanks for letting us read your book in advance. It was so good. We had such a great time talking about it with you.

Becca: And listeners, for next episode of the show, because you guys keep asking, you want to tune in to as we've discussed, *Fire Island* available on Hulu. That was what we will be covering. And until next time, thank you, Amanda for joining us and stay proper.

Molly: And find a nice trumpet player.

Becca: Yeah, they exist.

Molly: Yeah, you'll find one.

Amanda: Yeah, write it with your nicest trumpet players. Well, you guys can do a classified--

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 **[00:47:00]**at *podandprejudice.com*. To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook, *@podandprejudice*. If you love what you hear, check out our Patreon at *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.

[Transcript provided by SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription]