

**Molly:** Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons over on Patreon, Magali, Rachel, and Judy. And a huge shoutout to our patron, Sarah, who upgraded their pledge. Now, in case you missed it, we are doing our first ever live show on November 18th at 04:00 PM Eastern Time at Caveat, NYC. Early bird tickets are \$18, and patrons get a 15% discount. And for those of you who aren't in New York, don't worry. The show is going to be live streamed for \$10, and you can watch the video on demand for a whole week following the event. Tickets are available at the link in the show notes, and we cannot wait to see some of you there and finally meet you in person. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering the first half of the 1996 *Emma*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow, with our guests, Jillian and Yolanda from The Pemberley Podcast.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

**Becca:** All right. So, should we jump right into it?

**Molly:** I think so.

**Becca:** [00:01:00] Okay, perfect. This is Becca.

**Molly:** This is Molly.

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

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

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

**Becca:** 1996.

**Molly:** The 1996 *Emma*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow, and the slew of other people that I was not expecting to be in this movie.

**Becca:** Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen books and seen many Jane Austen movies.

**Molly:** And I, Molly, am reading all of Jane Austen for the first time through this podcast. And today, we are actually joined by two other people.

**Becca:** Yeah, we have guests, again. We're so excited to welcome our guests from The Pemberley Podcast--

**Molly:** Jillian and Yolanda. Welcome.

**Becca:** Yay.

**Yolanda:** Ooh. Hello. Thank you for having us.

**Becca:** We're so excited to have you guys here. I feel like it's been a long time in the works that we have two Jane Austen podcasts together in this one place discussing Janie herself and all of her works.

**Jillian:** Yeah, I think we were saying before we started recording that this is like a true [00:02:00] bicoastal, cross-continental love fest.

**Becca:** Yes. So, speaking of love, we have a couple questions we ask all of our guests before we get into the Jane Austen content about their relationships with Jane Austen starting with, what is your relationship to Jane Austen?

**Yolanda:** Jillian, do you want to go first?

**Jillian:** Sure, I'll go first. My relationship to Jane Austen. I feel like it started with a fizzle in sixth grade for me, which is when the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* came out. That was the first

time I was exposed to it. I was a big consumer of period things, and princess things, and gown things. And so, at this time in my life, this is like the role that this fulfilled. I watched the movie and I didn't get it at all. They talked so fast and so quietly, and I was like, "Okay. I wish knew what was happening." [00:03:00] It wasn't until I was going into college when *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* came out that it really started to mean something to me, and I was like, "This is amazing." Then I did a very nerdy thing, and my college offered a Jane Austen English class that I took. And that really cemented my role in The Forever fandom. I gained a much bigger appreciation for the 2005 film.

**Becca:** I love that film, and it does so much better on a second watch.

**Jillian:** Yeah, we've found that a lot of other people have had that experience.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Yolanda:** Cool. My relationship to Austen was probably a little later. I was first introduced to the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* in college. So, that's when I first watched it. It was like this whole girls group who were like, "We're going to watch *Pride and Prejudice*. And I was like, "What is this?" But then I went, and I think it's so much fun to watch with a group too, because they're all reacting in real time and they're pointing out the details that [00:04:00] that they've seen over and over that you're watching for the first time. So, that was a lot of fun to watch it in that setting. I think from there, that's where I got more into Austen.

Around the same time then is also then when *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* came out, and that was also just a continuation of like, "Oh, great. More Austen content." So, then it was really around that time that I had, maybe a couple of years later that I met Jillian and we were just talking like, "Hey, maybe we should do a podcast about *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*." It then expanded beyond that into greater Jane Austen works. But yeah, I feel like it started with that adaptation and has only grown from there.

**Molly:** That's actually a great segue. Do you want to tell the listeners a bit about your podcast, The Pemberley Podcast?

**Yolanda:** Yeah. We started it in 2016. So, we are about seven years almost into this process.

**Molly:** Wow.

**Becca:** Congratulations.

**Yolanda:** Yeah, thank you. I [00:05:00] think, at this point, we check in with each other after everything we cover and we're like, "Still want to do it? Yeah. All right, let's keep going."

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Yolanda:** So, that's our method at this point. But yeah, currently we cover Jane Austen adaptations, and we've also expanded into Regency adaptations, mainly just to include *Bridgerton* in the mix because it's so fun and popular. But yeah, we've been doing this for a long time, and we've covered different books and TV shows and movies. We've been able to interview some of the people behind of these projects. So, that's been really great. I think just as fans of these things, just to hear more of the behind the scenes of the process of how things were made or what was an author thinking when they adapted something.

**Becca:** That's a great segue into asking our next question, which is, what is your favorite Jane Austen content that includes anything from a song-based on a Jane Austen novel to a book itself to your favorite movie version? I think you guys may have both answered this with your answers [00:06:00] to what's your relationship to Jane Austen, but feel free to pick something different.

**Jillian:** 2005, I have had to purchase a number of the Jane Austen movies on my-- I use YouTube account instead of Amazon, but I've had to purchase a number of Jane Austen or other period films just, so that I always have access to them. I'm very excited that *Pride and Prejudice* is back on Netflix right now, but like *Pride and Prejudice*, the 2005 one is one that I've had to buy. Same with the 2020 *Emma*. I think that also *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries* will always be one of my favorite web series, so that one I don't have to because it'll live on YouTube forever. That was one where it really made *Pride and Prejudice* break out for me, and so that's another strong favorite of mine.

Additionally, some books that Yolanda and I have covered on the podcast I think have definitely made my way into favorite Jane Austen [00:07:00] adaptations, which is, there's a crazy talented author named Sonali Dev who's written *The Rajes Family* series, and she basically has written modern Bollywood versions of some of Austen's greatest hits. And those books are, I think, some of my favorite adaptations as well.

**Molly:** That's awesome.

**Yolanda:** I would say over the past year or two, *Emma* 2020 has actually jumped up to first for me as far as what is my favorite amongst everything. [giggles] So, I feel like that also even jumped up to my top five on Letterboxd and I was like, "Okay, yes, this movie really means something to me." So, I think the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* definitely was the one in my heart for so long. But then *Emma* 2020 came in and just slowly crept in and took over.

**Molly:** Oh, that is fantastic. I cannot wait to watch it.

**Molly:** Same. I'm so excited. I think what's special about movies like the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* and the 2020 *Emma* is [00:08:00] that something about them just lends themselves to being more accessible to the modern mind. I don't really know what it is exactly. I'm sure there's tons of scholarship on this, but yeah, I just feel like they're more widely consumable.

**Jillian:** Yeah, that's what we like about a lot of these adaptations too. It's part of why we like to cover adaptations specifically on our podcast, because I think when you really read the books, Jane Austen's books, it's actually a lot easier to read than you might think for something that was written at that time. But sometimes, the idea of reading the books can be very intimidating. There's something that's just way less intimidating about watching a movie or a miniseries or reading a contemporary romance, especially like I was saying about *The Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. And Sonali Dev does this in her books as like, when you bring it to a modern setting, the social dynamics really mean a lot more to you when it's brought into something that's more contemporary.

**Molly:** Totally. [00:09:00]

**Becca:** Yeah. So, our next question is, which Austen character do you relate to the most?

**Yolanda:** I kept trying to take BuzzFeed Quizzes or any kind of quizzes just to figure this out and kept getting wildly different answers.

[laughter]

**Yolanda:** So, I was like, "Okay. There's no consensus here on which Austen character I am." I think probably in my heart though, I am Charlotte, just because the practicality of who she is and everything that how she approaches things in a very logical manner. I think at my core, that is who I am and that's who I relate to. I'm like, I get her choices.

**Jillian:** That's great. No, I have always felt like loved the most and felt close to Lizzie Bennet and I'm sure a lot of people have as well. But I'm like-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** She's a relatable queen.

**Jillian:** She's a relatable queen. And so, that's the answer I'm going to go with.

**Becca:** That's a great answer. That's actually very sweet because you guys picked best friends.

**Molly:** Oh.

**Yolanda:** That's true.

**Jillian:** Yeah.

**Molly:** I have to say after watching [00:10:00] this movie that we're about to talk about, I am Harriet Smith.

**Becca:** And I'm a little bit Emma.

**Molly:** Yeah, you are.

**Yolanda:** Oh, that's sweet. [laughs]

**Yolanda:** That's perfect.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Oh, God. Yeah, I can't say that too loud, out loud. There's a certain level of flaw in character that I hope I don't carry from Emma. [laughs]

**Molly:** But she's self-aware.

**Becca:** Yes, she's at the end of the book.

**Molly:** Yes. Sure.

**Becca:** And our final question for you guys is, what is your hottest Austen take? Like, what is your take that pulls you out of the norm for how people think about these books? For example, one of our hot takes on our podcast is that, Lydia Bennet is a tragic character.

**Yolanda:** Mm-hmm.

**Jillian:** Hmm. That's a good question.

**Yolanda:** I have mine, so I can go first.

**Jillian:** Yeah. So, yours first.

**Yolanda:** I don't think it's a hot take. I think it's just like commentary on the characters. [00:11:00] [giggles] But I think that Mr. Bennet is awful and that Mrs. Bennet doesn't get the credit she deserves for everything she's doing for that family and trying to get all her daughters married.

**Becca:** She's trying to get them to not starve.

**Yolanda:** Yeah. And Mr. Bennet's just like, "It's fine." [crosstalk] "No, it's not fine." So, I don't know, that's not really a hot take, but that's just added commentary.

**Molly:** Yeah. It's definitely, I would say the correct take. I personally took up early on a very incorrect take for-

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** -Mr. Bennet, which is that he's daddy and very hot and I was like a big fan. But in terms of what he is actually doing in the book and in the time period, he's absolutely a neglectful parent. I want everyone to know that I understand that, but he's also sexy.

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Especially played by Donald Sutherland.

**Jillian:** It's also, I think, because he has a library.

**Molly:** [00:12:00] Oh, yeah.

**Jillian:** He stays out of the drama. And perhaps, there's something a little bit subtly, inherently sexy about that. But we had an interview recently where one of our guests referred to Mr. Bennet as an absentee father.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** In that vein, I was rewatching the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice* recently, and I saw that scene. I really saw that scene where Lizzie is convincing Mr. Bennet not to send Lydia to stay with the Forsters, with the militia. And he's like, "She just needs to learn. No one's going to hurt her, no one's going to try and take advantage of her."

**Molly:** Famous last words.

**Jillian:** And I'm like, "That's actually really stupid of you to say that out loud to another daughter and just be like, 'It's going to be fine. I want peace and quiet here.'" It's pretty terrible. I don't know that I have a crazy hot take, I think. I was just thinking, like, "I wonder if Elizabeth and Darcy would have actually worked in real life after the events of *Pride and Prejudice*." Sometimes I think about. They came a [00:13:00] long way, but I wonder if it's enough to have a happy marriage.

**Yolanda:** If the class difference was just too much over time and the expectations of the family?

**Jillian:** Yeah. Lady Catherine didn't change. She didn't go anywhere. In fact, Lizzie shook that hornet's nest right before getting engaged.

**Yolanda:** Messy. [giggles]

**Jillian:** Who knows if there's anything Lady Catherine could do to take that out on the Darcy's. But I do question. Yeah. If the love really can overcome, how different they really are?

**Yolanda:** Maybe they left Pemberley. Maybe they went to go live in the country and just went away from everyone.

**Jillian:** I would like it if they could at least stay at Pemberley.

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Jillian:** These manners are so far away from each other that I'm like, "That's rural. For England, that's rural. That's pretty wide-open spaces as you can get."

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** I think one of the linchpins of that relationship, there's two things that I think, sell me that Lizzie and Darcy could make it [00:14:00] work. One is little Miss Georgiana acting as the glue between those two and making them both the softest versions of themselves. So, I think that she would help. And number two, if you read the final chapter of *Pride and Prejudice*, it implies that Darcy and Lizzie basically ghost the rest of the Bennets except Jane and Bingley. Not entirely. They send them money and whatever, but they don't invite them around often. Jane is too nice and invites her sisters around a lot. It's really mostly Lydia that they do this. They let Mary ends up married to some lawyer and Kitty apparently

chills out and matures a bunch and can be a proper lady in society. But I think Darcy does quite a bit of avoiding the in laws to keep their relationship working.

**Jillian:** Man, but what kind of a marriage is that where the Bennet family goes from being like that to, yeah, we just don't talk to them [00:15:00] anymore, and it's made things so much easier?

**Molly:** Yeah, it is sad.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** But you know what's not sad? *Emma*.

**Molly:** *Emma*. Happy endings for all.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, we're here to talk about the 1996 adaptation of *Emma* starring, famously, Gwyneth Paltrow. It was written and directed by Douglas McGrath, who is most famous for his work on *Bullets over Broadway*. It is a movie that came out in the midst of a Jane Austen cinema craze, because if you look at the dates of it, it coincides with a very popular BBC adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, if you've ever heard of it. And even more famously, the 1995 adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* that was starring Emma Thompson, Alan Rickman, Hugh Grant, and the entire universe of British actors.

This movie came out and [00:16:00] received quite a bit of praise, but not quite as much praise as *Sense and Sensibility*. There was a mixed bag when it came to reviews of the movie, but Austenites to this day continue to watch it, particularly for Gwyneth Paltrow's performance of *Emma*. So, to start this pod, I guess, we could go around a circle and say what we think about the movie.

**Molly:** I have watched it twice now before we dive into the plot. I loved it, and we will talk about what I thought of the ending. But I thought the first 90 minutes, we were like, "Perfect." I had a great time, and I hated how much I liked Gwyneth Paltrow as Emma. I thought she was great.

**Jillian:** She's perfect for the role, in terms of who we now know her to be. I don't want to say she's not an actress anymore, but she's definitely taken a step back from acting and to focus on her empire. It's a very Emma thing to do.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Jillian:** [00:17:00] My thoughts on the movie, I feel like honestly, my overall thoughts are I'm like, "It's all right. It's okay." For a long time, I think it was our strongest *Emma* adaptation. I feel like in addition to Gwyneth Paltrow, this is like a pretty star-studded cast. Like, you've got Toni Collette, who is hot off of *Muriel's Wedding*, and she's on the rise as your Harriet, who is a character who's also constantly on the rise. She's doing this for a while. She's almost protégé. Alan Cumming as Mr. Elton, who was perfect.

The film, to me, feels like a very well-cast play. I felt like I was watching a play in theater unfold, and we were like traipsing between manners. But overall, I thought the film is all right. I feel like definitely want to discuss this film and not give too much of a spotlight to *Emma* 2020. But like Yolanda was saying earlier, it's an [00:18:00] adaptation that's really grown on us. And so, I just feel like this felt like a more basic interpretation of *Emma*.

**Becca:** Yolanda?

**Yolanda:** Yeah. I agree that it's very by the book. It's accomplishing what it wants to accomplish. It's really fitting within not just Austen adaptations at the time of what they were

all trying to do and mimic each other too of like, "Oh, everyone's doing Austen adaptations now. Okay. What's our version? What's the US version of this? Or, what could it look like?" So, I feel like it fits in nicely within kind of that context, but I think if you look overall, for me, it becomes a bit of a forgettable film. I had to go back and watch and watch through be like, "Wait, what was the delivery of this line or what happened here? How did they portray a certain scene?" So, I think there's good things about it, and then there's things that just overall feel like okay to me.

**Becca:** This is a first raw [00:19:00] podcast, but I actually very much do not enjoy this movie.

**Yolanda:** Oh, wow. Okay.

**Becca:** Yeah. Listen, it's a Jane Austen adaptation, so it's a certain level of fun.

**Yolanda:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** I love *Emma*, the book, a lot, and I love other adaptations, even though I haven't seen the 2020 adaptation, and I'm very excited to. There are other fantastic versions of this story. I actually don't love Gwyneth's *Emma*. I think she's a little too snotty and not funny enough.

**Molly:** Ooh, spicy.

**Becca:** Yeah. I've been holding this in from Molly for a long time, because we've been talking about getting to this film. I think any problem with the film generally, even my problem with Gwyneth Paltrow's portrayal of Emma, I actually don't think it's a problem with the actors. They cast spectacular actors in this film. I think there's some choices creatively that I don't love. I think a lot of the [00:20:00] acting choices were chosen to be very much too understated, and the pacing is a little weird. I think they cut some of the most iconic lines from the book, which I can already see Molly getting amped up about. [laughs]

**Molly:** I know. I rolled my eyes so loud our listeners could hear it. But Knightley is not Knightley without-- "If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more." He is not.

**Becca:** Yeah. [giggles]

**Jillian:** That was a scene I had to rewatch. I had to rewatch the scene to be like, "I missed it." Like, they obviously said it. [giggles]

**Yolanda:** I was literally just now thinking, "Wait, did he not say that?" And I just didn't notice it because I forgot everything I watched in this film.

**Becca:** No, he doesn't say it. I watch with my boyfriend, Mike, who listens to our podcast, but has never read a Jane Austen novel, and he's like, "Does he not say the line?"

[laughter]

**Molly:** Even Mike knew.

**Becca:** Even Mike knew.

**Jillian:** A sin.

**Becca:** Yes. I am so excited to talk about this movie. My take on it, my [00:21:00] personal opinions on it should not lessen anyone's enjoyment of this film because it's just my opinion. I think that there's a lot of reasons to love it, even if I don't personally. But this is a first for us because I have loved every adaptation we have so far covered on this podcast.

**Molly:** Yeah, I think this is actually pretty exciting because it seems like we have a wide range of emotions on this group of guests on this movie. So, I am excited to dive in.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** With that being said, let's do it.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** So, we get to see the wedding in the first scene between Mrs. Weston and Mr. Weston. It's a very brief little blip, but we're introduced to Emma, we're introduced to Mr. Woodhouse, who was very upset that there is cake being served at this wedding. We're introduced to Mr. Elton. We are introduced to Mrs. Weston and Mr. Weston. This Mrs. Weston is chef's kiss. I love [00:22:00] her so much. I think she is the narrator. Correct me if I'm wrong.

**Jillian:** I didn't care enough to think about it at all. That's where I stand on that.

**Molly:** Fair enough.

**Jillian:** Well, and it's interesting because-- Again, actually, correct me if I'm misremembering this, but I feel like we only heard from the narrator at the very beginning. And the very end, it's not like it carried us through the rest of the movie.

**Molly:** Yeah, that's right.

**Jillian:** So I feel like I heard the narrator's voice so little that it meant nothing to me who they could possibly be in the world.

**Molly:** Yeah. I forgot that there was a narrator at the beginning. When we got to the end and I was like-- We did a watch party on Discord with our patrons. When the narrator started talking at the end, I was like, "Wait, that is not at all in the rules of this world. Why is there a narrator? Who is this?" And someone was like, "Yeah, that's Mrs. Weston." And I was like, "Why? What is happening?" I thought that that was a very weird construct that they developed.

**Becca:** I'll be honest. I had just watched the *Barbie* movie, [00:23:00] and in my brain, I was like, "Oh, it's Helen Mirren."

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Becca:** It's not Helen Mirren.

**Jillian:** You know what? I feel the same way, because it's funny that you say it's Mrs. Weston, because I'm like, "Aren't narrators old?" Like, Mrs. Weston is still a young woman. I feel like she's too young to be the narrator.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** I thought it was Jane Austen. I was very confused. The next scene, we get this little paper machete globe that Emma has made for Mrs. Weston, and it dictates some of the transitions, but not all of them because the transitions are always very different in this movie.

**Becca:** Every time the transitions happened, Mike would just go, "Why are we in space?"

[laughter]

**Jillian:** Yeah, I thought it was weird and kind of weak sauce, and [Becca laughs] I was like, "Well, because it's funny." I've noticed that in *Emma* adaptations, there's a little bit more of



an artistic flair. Like, there's paintings and drawings and still life [00:24:00] transition moments, which is interesting to me. But also, I thought the ones they used in this were not great. Like, it looked like a kid drew everything, I think.

**Molly:** Yeah. I think because Emma's supposed to be not good at art, it made sense. But then her painting of Harriet later is gorgeous, so I didn't really get that. In the next scene, we get Emma and Mr. Woodhouse wallowing about Mrs. Weston being gone. And Knightley arrives, played by Jeremy Northam, who is very handsome, I think.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** I'm glad we're all maybe on the same page.

**Becca:** That is true. Jeremy Northam is a very handsome Knightley. He's very stoic. That part of the adaptation, I think we can all agree. Like I said, the cast is great. It's not their problem. I don't have a problem with them.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** No notes.

**Becca:** I do have some notes, but they're costume related and I will get there.

**Molly:** Okay, cool. They go to sit [00:25:00] by the fire, and Mr. Woodhouse is complaining about Isabella and Mrs. Weston leaving him. And Emma's like, "Oh, you know, she would have, of course, left when I'm so troublesome." And she says that Mr. Knightley loves to find fault with her, like, she's just joking around. And then he says, "Well, I'm practically your brother. Aren't I supposed to find fault with you?" which I was like, "Why are we doing this?"

**Yolanda:** They had to point it out. [laughs]

**Becca:** I always find it super weird when adaptations of *Emma* feel the need to point out any family relationship between Knightley and Emma. It's like, "You don't need to go there. The book doesn't."

**Molly:** Right. But it does help set the scene for their bickering relationship. I think they had to do that in case someone hadn't read the book and they're like, "Who is this guy? Why is there such a friendly relationship between them? That's not normal." But I don't like it. Emma then starts talking about how much she misses Mrs. Weston. I wanted to draw attention to the intimacy [00:26:00] between her and Mr. Knightley in this moment, and then the nods to it along the way. He leans in and he's just whispering to her when he says, "So, she's not far," which I thought was just like, there's something about the way they're sitting here and their relationship. I think that their chemistry is very present. I don't know what you guys think about their chemistry. My girlfriend was like, "I didn't think they had any chemistry."

**Jillian:** I just think that Jeremy Northam is a very sexy man.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Jillian:** I think that the brother-sister comment aside, which we are going to kindly overlook for the purposes-

**Molly:** Sure.

**Jillian:** -of this conversation, I think he's very good at the leaning. He's very good at the eye contact and the nodding, and the eyebrow work is very top tier.

**Molly:** The smirking.

**Jillian:** The smirking is very, very elite smirking. So, it's like the very subtle gestures that I think a lot of [00:27:00] like Austen crazed women look for in their men, in their Austen hero men. I feel like he does a great job of doing that, especially if you think about the fact that he is in his mid-30s. He's been talking to women for a minute. I think that the closeness that they have, it's almost like giving it away because they're so familiar with each other that he feels like he has the liberty to lean in that close and whisper that low. I think that he is a gentleman and wouldn't really do that with anyone, but he and Emma already have a certain kind of intimacy between them.

**Yolanda:** I was going to just say that exact word. There is the great intimacy between them that I think otherwise, if you hadn't established a bit of the brother-sister dynamic of like, why isn't he an option for Emma? It's like, [00:28:00] "Oh, because they have this dynamic." It also would have been improper for them to also be together alone or for him to be leaning in, but because there is such a mentor-mentee relationship to them. It's seen as like, "Okay, they can get away with it."

**Molly:** Totally.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think I agree that Jeremy Northam is just a very sexy, perfect pitch of an Austen man. I agree with Molly. I don't think they have a ton of natural chemistry, but I do think that the work he is doing is certainly showing a level of care for Emma. I wish they were a little bit more playful with each other. I like a Knightley-Emma dynamic that's a little bit more bubbly and fun, but I will not go too hard poo-pooing on it quite yet. [laughs]

**Molly:** Okay. Because I have things to say about the playful. I think they're very playful, but we'll get into it. Emma then congratulates herself on making the match between the [00:29:00] Westons and says she plans to match up Elton with someone. And then we cut to a party at Emma's house where we meet Mr. Elton. Emma introduces him to Miss Smith, who is played by, as we said, Tony Collete. She asks him if he'll attend to Miss Smith throughout the night and he says, "If helping Miss Smith will help Miss Woodhouse, I will happily do it." They really play up his flirting with Emma, the whole time.

Something that I noticed later on that I'll just talk about now is that a lot of what works in the book is that, Emma, we are inside of her head. We are getting everything colored with her interpretation of it. When you're watching it from the outside, she's just a little dumb. Like, she's just not catching these things that are actually quite obvious throughout the whole movie. So, it's just a completely different perspective that you're getting.

The Bateses enter, and we get to meet Miss Bates, and she is perfect, everything that I had hoped for in a Miss Bates. [00:30:00] She is just spewing, talking. Her laugh, the giggle she does, she's perfect. Emma then introduces Mr. Elton and Harriet. When he bows to her, he looks at Emma, and it's, again, so obvious. Then we go to dinner and Mr. Weston tells Harriet the whole story of Frank, so that us as the audience can get the story of Frank. And Harriet says the line, "How lucky to have been blessed twice in marriage. It has been my belief that one loves only once. I am happy to be wrong." And he goes, "Not so happy as I miss Smith," which I just thought was really sweet for Mr. Weston.

Then Emma later says to Mrs. Weston that she wants to take Harriet under her wing. And this starts the parallel of Emma taking someone under her wing the way Mrs. Weston took Emma under hers, and the goal that she has for her relationship with Harriet, which I think is a little bit more clear here to [00:31:00] me as a consumer.

**Becca:** Yeah. And I also think one thing this adaptation does do really well is I think there's a lot of fleshing out between Mrs. Weston and that sort of bond. You feel the loss that Emma's trying to fill in her life, like, that hole in her life whenever she's with Mrs. Weston, because there's a really clear dynamic of love and care and trust there that is played very well by the actress who plays Mrs. Weston.

**Yolanda:** I do like that Mrs. Weston is a more present figure in this adaptation. And throughout the film, she is that mentor motherly figure of like, "I have this issue, who do I turn to? It's Mrs. Weston." She's the shoulder to cry on. She's the one who's hearing all of Emma's woes and everything, and she's done that for her whole life, and she will continue to be that figure for her.

**Molly:** It also gives a reason for us to get Emma's internal monologue, which in the book, we're just hearing through her. But in this movie, we're getting to see her just say it out loud to [00:32:00] her best friend, so that is another purpose she serves. The next day or whenever the next scene happens, we have Emma and Harriet walking together, and Emma's asking Harriet about her parents. She says that Mrs. Goddard says she cannot know them. Something I didn't realize is that Mrs. Goddard knows who her parents are this whole time and just isn't telling her. That weird.

**Jillian:** That's really screwed up. It's funny. I feel like in any and all *Emma* adaptations I've ever seen, I've always thought it was a little bit weird that Harriet is gotten to this point in her life, which is like, what, 18 years maybe, like, she's a young woman, like, an old teen or really, really, really, really low 20s. But I get the sense that she's younger than Emma, who's 20 years, 21 years.

**Becca:** I think she's 16 years or 17 years in the book. Yeah.

**Jillian:** I still think that's a really long time to go without knowing who your parents are, especially considering she hasn't-- It's not like she's been living at Mrs. Goddard's forever. She's new in town. [00:33:00] And so, I've always just not understood why she just doesn't know who her parents are. It's part of Emma's fascination with her is she's like, "Ooh, she could be a gentleman's daughter. This could be appropriate, but it could also not be." It's like a little bit of a Schrodinger's box about where Harriet belongs in society.

**Becca:** Yeah. And I think that it speaks to Harriet's character that she doesn't question much and she just lets things happen to her a little bit, as is her defining character trait in the entire story.

**Jillian:** I actually think this is also where I think Toni Collette plays her. So, she does such a great job of playing her so ordinary. I think when Emma forms such a strong attachment to her, Knightley especially is like, "Why I don't get this intense friendship?" I think that Emma's looking for someone who feels like a blank slate to her to indoctrinate [00:34:00] her beliefs and just the way that she sees the world.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, then Miss Bates approaches and Emma is like, "Come on, we got to hide." They hide behind their umbrellas. Then we cut to them walking through the apple groves and Harriet's catching butterflies and talking about Mr. Martin. And Emma says this line, "The Martins are precisely the order of people with whom I can have nothing to do. A degree or two lower, and I might be useful to their families, but a farmer needs none of my help. So, they are as much above my notice as they are below it," which I think is a very succinct way of summarizing why she doesn't like Mr. Martin for Harriet. Then he enters and he is perfect. Emma doesn't say anything when he introduces himself. She just completely turns her nose up at him, and then we get the first of many Emma internal thoughts being voiced over and she says, "Come on, Harriet, we could do better than this." And it's like, "Oh, my God, such a weird construct."

Then later, Emma and Harriet are cross stitching together and Emma [00:35:00] starts shit talking Mr. Martin and plants the idea of Elton in her head. I loved the music here. It was like [imitates music]. Very scheming. Very plots are being formed.

**Becca:** I think the score was nominated for an Oscar for this film.

**Molly:** I wouldn't be surprised.

**Becca:** I think the two-- It was nominated for and it won one and I don't remember which was score and costumes. I have questions about the costumes.

**Molly:** Really?

**Becca:** We'll get there.

**Molly:** Okay. Oh, [crosstalk]

**Becca:** There's one character in particular I have a lot of feelings about.

**Molly:** Interesting.

**Jillian:** Who.

**Becca:** I guess, we'll get there. But I think it's so difficult to make you and McGregor look unattractive-

**Yolanda:** Oh.

**Becca:** -and they managed.

**Jillian:** They did it.

**Becca:** They did it.

**Jillian:** They did it.

**Becca:** I don't know how and why.

**Jillian:** It's with the wig. It's the wig. It's the like what the Beast looked like when he turned into a human at the end of *Beauty and the Beast* in the Disney version is what you and McGregor looked like with that wig, but a little more like berries and cream of the [unintelligible [00:35:59]

[laughter] **[00:36:00]**

**Molly:** I maybe this is a hot take, but I thought he looked great. kas

**Becca:** I cannot condone that.

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Take Molly. There's so much about this movie that we can respectfully disagree about or agree on. But I watched this with Mike. My boyfriend is a huge Star Wars fan and a huge Ewan McGregor, *Obi-Wan Kenobi* fan. He also loves *Moulin Rouge!*. So, when Ewan McGregor, his name popped up on the screen, Mike got really excited. But when he showed up and actually as Frank Churchill, I have several reactions that I wrote down because I thought they were all perfect. First, he was speechless for 30 seconds. Then he said he looks like Fabio, but the Krazy Glue edition.

**Molly:** Oh, my God.

**Becca:** Then he said, he looks like he smells like soup. And the final one, and I think this is very true is that he looks like Timothée Chalamet styled as Willy Wonka in the new movie.

**Jillian:** **[00:37:00]** The list could go on and on.

**Becca:** Yeah. But the combo of the berries and cream is just so correct.

**Jillian:** Thank you.

**Becca:** It's also a little bit like female politician hair.

**Yolanda:** Yeah. Even McGregor has said he's regretted this role, I think partially because of the wig. So.

**Jillian:** You know what's crazy? Theoretically, he's perfect for it. Especially, when you take into account the context of where he's at in his career, there are so many-- Not that this was people's first film, but I feel like this was a pretty big film for Gwyneth Paltrow. We were going to get *Shakespeare in Love* in a couple of years. To me, at least, a clear *Emma* to *Shakespeare in Love* pathway there.

**Yolanda:** There is the same producer on it. So, yes, there is a direct link.

**Jillian:** There's literally a direct link. But Ewan McGregor is just like this up and coming, handsome, [00:38:00] young leading man type. That's exactly who Frank Churchill is. It's not even like I think he's terrible. I just think he's not that memorable. I feel like so many Ewan McGregor roles, I'm, like, immediately crushing on him. Immediate crush, immediately yes. And I see this and I like [makes a woosh sound]. He is eclipsed by Jeremy Northam, I think.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** And two things. I completely agree with everything you said. And obviously, we know it's not Ewan McGregor's fault because we've seen him charm the pants off of every woman in the world and a lot of other people who are not women in the world with numerous different roles. So, there's something about this performance that's just lacking. And then also on top of that, Jeremy Northam was allowed to have his own hair.

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Why did they say you and you must put on this Goldilocks Karen wig?

**Jillian:** I wonder if he looked too much like Jeremy Northam. I wonder they let to similar-- [crosstalk]

**Yolanda:** If you [crosstalk] same [00:39:00] short brown hair. Yeah.

**Becca:** One thing I've noticed that happens in a lot of these Jane Austen adaptations, and this is not an across-the-board thing that happens with Frank Churchill and other adaptations, but they will have-- There's a lot of Austen books where there's a slightly devious hot character that's extremely charming at first, but you realize it's not that great at the end. He is often described as hotter than our leading man. Great example of this, Wickham and Darcy. But you'll find in most adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice*, they underplay Wickham's hotness to play up Darcy's heartthrob status.

So, in my head, I make maybe they dressed down Ewan McGregor so people wouldn't want her to end up with Frank Churchill and instead want her to end up with George Knightley. But they should want her to end up with George Knightley because of the story.

**Jillian:** Well, but I also feel like there is a portion of the story where you really are supposed to be shipping them. [00:40:00] They're setting Emma and Mr. Churchill up to be cut from the same cloth. They really could be perfect for each other. This is just the guy. And especially, I feel like they have it in this adaptation. If they do, I literally forget about it. But there's other adaptations where Emma's really hot to meet Frank Churchill. She's like, "He didn't come to the wedding. Oh, when am I going to meet him? You got to meet him before me?" It's a big deal, because I feel like when you live in a small town, the pool of hot guys is pretty small.

**Becca:** Yup.

**Jillian:** So, I get being excited about a guy who's, A, meaningful to your former governess and her new husband like, she loves them and she wants to meet this guy, but I think low key. She wants a hot guy around, and there's nothing wrong with that.

**Molly:** Yeah, totally. I think that's one of my main problems with this adaptation, actually, is that [00:41:00] the flirting to me between the two of them was just not present at all. And so, it doesn't feel earned at the end when Mrs. Weston is worried about how Emma feels and Knightley thinks that she and him were in. I was like, "That's not earned at all. It just wasn't." But we'll come back to it, but, yes, I agree with everything that you said.

**Becca:** Yeah. That was a long Frank Churchill tangent before he's even arrived or mentioned. But if we wanted to talk about one of my biggest gripes with this movie, it's just Frank Churchill, in general, which it shouldn't be because you and McGregor is perfect casting.

**Molly:** Yes, of course. But jumping back, the next thing to happen is the painting of Harriet. She is posed with a harp like angel. This is one of the funniest moments for me. Elton is like, "Oh, my God, you've captured her perfectly." And then we pan to what she's done and it's like an outline of her head. I laughed out loud.

**Becca:** That part is very funny.

**Molly:** And then just to get the [00:42:00] amazing juxtaposition between him and Knightley, Knightley comes up and goes, "You've made her too tall and it is perfect." Then they show it to her dad and he's like, "We have to get it framed." And Elton pops up and he's like, "I'll do it."

Then we cut to Emma just at the store, and Harriet runs up to find her to tell her that Mr. Martin has proposed. She is so nervous and she's like, "Well, I didn't know what to do. That's why I came to you." And Emma, she's like, "I'm not going to tell you, but" and then looks at her through her eyelid. She's tilting her head, raising her eyebrows. She's like, "But I mean mm, mm, mm."

**Jillian:** Like, "Did he proposed to me? I don't think I would accept. I know I wouldn't accept." [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** It's just like she goes lower and lower. Her chin tucks more and more until she's staring her down. Ah, it's intimidating.

**Yolanda:** Well, even the purposeful mistake she [00:43:00] makes of like, "Oh, your proposal for Mr. Elton, right?" And she's like, "Oh, well, no, it's from Mr. Martin." So, it's that whole thing of like, "Oh, it's not who I expected it would be from, so you should also be disappointed."

**Molly:** Right. And then when she decides to turn him down, Emma immediately is like, "I wonder what Mr. Elton's doing right now. He's probably telling his family about you." Then we get, maybe my favorite scene, Knightley and Emma doing archery, which is, of course, the COVID image of this movie. It's just so hot. Also, I wanted to draw attention to the dress. And first of all, pink is her color. Hello, Barbie. But second, there's a weird thing going on where she's got it clipped up a little bit. hat is that? Do you guys know?

**Jillian:** I feel like the clip up isn't necessarily a style choice. I agree with you. I really love this scene because it's pretty active and it is very cupid of her [00:44:00] too and I think why it's on the cover.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Jillian:** But I think it's just a way to keep her hem close to her while she's doing something so active, like, archery.

**Molly:** Oh, that makes sense.

**Jillian:** So, I think it's just like a practical pinning.

**Yolanda:** I noticed that during the dance scenes too, she always has it pinned up.

**Molly:** Oh, yeah. I wonder if that must have just been a thing which we should bring back, because I like to wear floor length skirts, but I'm always like, "What am I going to do when I have to go up the stairs?"

**Becca:** The problem is that we have too few layers nowadays. So, if you did clip up all the way there, would it not show you-- [crosstalk]

**Yolanda:** Right. You're exposing up-- [crosstalk]

**Jillian:** Scandalous to show your naked ankles? Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah. [laughs]

**Jillian:** yeah. No, but that's a great scene. It's also one of top Knightley's three iconic lines where he says, "Men of sense do not want silly wives," I believe.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. Yeah. He also says-- So, they're talking about the proposal from Mr. Martin. And she's like, "Well, I saw her response." And he goes, "Emma, [00:45:00] did you write her response?" [giggles] And she's like, "So, what if I did?" Also, the fact that they are shooting arrows during this whole scene, the more angry she gets or the more she realizes she's done something wrong, her arrows just keep bouncing. It's a very physical metaphor for what they're talking about. She misses her last shot, and the dogs get up and run away, and he goes, "Try not to kill my dogs." And then he gives her this little smirk that shows the playfulness between them, which is going back to what I said earlier that I think there is a playfulness there. He always smiles at her after he says something particularly cutting.

**Becca:** My one problem with this scene is that I don't think he's mad enough at her for what she did to Robert Martin. That's a big fight they have in the books. He clearly gets irked. But I think I would have preferred he get a little madder at her in this scene and not end smirking at her. But I do agree that out of the context of what I wanted this fight to be, that is a very [00:46:00] cute moment.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. The next thing that happens is the unveiling of the portrait that she drew of Harriet or painted of Harriet. Mr. Elton is clapping way long after everyone else has stopped clapping, and so good. And then they're having tea, and she asks Mr. Elton to do a riddle for Harriet's book of riddles. And Knightley is like, "You didn't ask me for one." And she says, "Your entire personality is a riddle. I thought you overqualified." Just so funny. Then she gets the riddle. The pacing of this is very quick up until the very end. She gets the riddle and she brings it to Harriet. We get the famous line, "Now for the cream."

**Becca:** "Now for the cream."

**Yolanda:** [giggles]

**Molly:** They misinterpret the riddle as meaning that he is courting Harriet. Then they go to visit the Clarks, which are a poor, sick family. Emma actually shows some genuine kindness here. She's tucking Mrs. Clark in, feeding her soup. Harriet is sinking into the background, being very uncomfortable. [00:47:00] When they leave, Harriet asks Emma why she isn't married, and she's like, "Do you want to end up like Mrs. Bates?" And Emma says that, "Poverty makes celibacy contemptible, but I'm rich, so I don't need to," which, yes, eye roll.

**Jillian:** It sucks. But I'm like, it sucks also that she's not like that wrong, because what she goes on to say in terms of why she doesn't want to be married is she's like, "I am more Mistress of Highbury"?

**Molly:** Highbury.

**Becca:** Hartfield, I think.

**Yolanda:** Hartfield.

**Molly:** Oh, Hartfield.

**Jillian:** Hartfield. Oh, that's right.

**Becca:** No, no, it's fine. I got them confused so much.

**Jillian:** Highbury is like where they live, but Hartfield is like their manor. But she's like, "I'm more Mistress of Hartfield than most women are to their husband's estates," and she likes that. I also feel like I just want to throw in just for all the folks at home that Mrs. Bates or Miss Bates is played by Emma Thompson's younger sister, Sophie [00:48:00] Bates, and Mrs. Bates is played by their real-life mother, who's also a renowned actress in her own right. So, it's part of Emma Thompson's just hold on most of the Austen adaptations in this time.

**Becca:** Oh, that honestly raises this whole movie a grade in my book.

**Molly:** Yeah. Miss Bates is, when we ask at the end who wins the movie, for me, one of my winners is Miss Bates or Sophie Thompson.

**Becca:** She's played for laughs in a lot of other adaptations, but the Miss Bates in this movie is honestly-- She's cringey, but she's really sad. She comes off very simpering.

**Yolanda:** She is a tragic character in this. I think you feel more of her status in this and just how low she is. And we'll get to the horrible scene later of how much it does hurt when she gets knocked down.

**Becca:** Yup. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Then they run into Mr. [00:49:00] Elton, and Emma is playing up Harriet's role in the visit to the Clarks. We get to see flashback. She's like, "Tell them what you did." And we flashback to Harriet just dropping everything, which is very funny. And then Emma goes, "Oh, no, my lace. You two go on without me." She bends over to tie her shoelace, and it's so over the top. She starts walking behind them with a little child, and she hears Elton saying, "I love celery root." She thinks it's going to be a proposal, which was hilarious. Then we cut to Emma with John and Isabella's baby. I do have to say that this movie has a tragic lack of John Knightley, who I love with all my heart.

**Jillian:** I blinked and missed that scene, honestly.

**Molly:** yes.

**Jillian:** It's not everything, but it weirdly a little bit affirms the brother sister dynamic between Emma and Mr. Knightley, because his brother is married to her sister [00:50:00] and it technically makes them in laws.

**Molly:** Yeah, it is a little weird. He also talks here about how he's 16 years older than her, but how the gap between them has narrowed with time, and they make up in this scene. Then we cut to Christmas. And in the carriage, Emma tells Elton that Harriet is ill and won't be



coming. He looks like very fake sad and then he's like, "Oh, but it's fine. I like a small party anyway." And Emma's like, "Oh, great." And then we know the scene.

**Jillian:** I do think that this whole party and carriage ride before and after is peak Mr. Elton/ peak Alan Cumming. Like, I think he's just so perfect and so thirsty in these scenes.

**Molly:** So thirsty.

**Jillian:** He just lets himself be like, "Finally, I have a moment alone with Emma Woodhouse. I'm going for it." It's different from Mr. Collins cringe, [00:51:00] but it's my equivalent, where he's like, "Target acquired," and she's like, "No, I'm not. Don't hit me." [laughs]

**Becca:** My favorite moment of this movie has to be the moment where he stops acting as Mr. Elton and is just Alan Cumming for a moment, where they're at the party and she's sitting with Mr. Knightley, and he just places himself so gently between the two of them, and I was like, "That is not Mr. Elton. That is Alan Cumming coming to life from this movie for a moment."

**Molly:** He sits down and he says, "I hope I'm not intruding."

**Becca:** The way he says it, he's like, "I hope I'm not intruding."

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Jillian:** I love it. He's so good in that moment, because I feel like that's where-- If you watch the gears turn in his head, he's like, "This is going to work." He's got schemes of his own that have not been working. Emma's been doing her own scheming, and it's not been working. He's been doing his own scheming, and it's not working. There's even [00:52:00] that moment where she's like, "Would you please--? She does him the honor of giving him a task of getting her punch and he's like, "I'll be so fast." And she's like, "You don't have to be that fast. How could I miss you, if you're not gone for very long?" it's just like a very funny misinterpretation of how everyone feels about each other.

**Molly:** So, yeah, there's the villain origin story music that starts playing after she rejects him. He's angsty and he gets out and he slams the door and we're like, "Oh, no, what's he going to do?" Another failing of this movie, I think, is that there isn't enough of, not that I want more Mr. Elton, but I feel like his arc isn't enough. Later on, he snubs Harriet, but he's not as annoying as I wish he should be.

**Becca:** There's not nearly enough Augusta Hawkins in this film.

**Molly:** Yeah. Yeah, which we'll get to.

**Becca:** Augusta. [00:53:00]

**Molly:** Augusta.

**Jillian:** No, but this is an Augusta-Elton-Stan group right here. Well, we were talking about it, because she's awful. But she's so perfectly awful, like, she's great at it.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, on our podcast, we love to hate Augusta Hawkins to the point where I have an Augusta voice that I do, where I'm like, "Mr. Knightley, you're so funny. Oh, my God, I just feel like it'd be such a cute little moment if I was able to pick some strawberries at your estate. You don't have a wife or anything, so you wouldn't mind. I'll be like the mistress of your house. It would be so cute. Like, so cute for a moment. So cute."

**Molly:** Yeah.

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

**Becca:** Yeah. That's how I see Augusta.

**Molly:** So, the next day, Emma comes to see Mrs. Weston and she's like, "You're never going to believe what happened." And Mrs. Weston's like, "Elton's in love with you." And she's like, "Fucking-- Yeah, I guess, everyone else knew but me." And she's [00:54:00] like, "I'm never going to match make again," because she's so devastated that he doesn't love Harriet and then she's like, "But who could I find for Harriet?" And she's like, "Emma, take it down a notch." She's worried about how she's going to tell her.

This is the first of several very good scene transitions in a row. I think they're good. They're corny, but they're good, where she's like, "Yes, you're right. I'll just say, Harriet, and then cut to her telling Harriet. Mr. Elton has gone away, and in fact, he was in love with me and not you." Harriet takes it very well. I mean, very well like "well." She is like, "I would never blame you for this. You're a really good friend. Forever thinking that it would be possible that he would love me."

**Yolanda:** Poor Harriet of just really looking at Emma of like, "You are my guiding true light through all of life, and I will look to you for every right answer if you tell me that he doesn't love me. So, would be," like that sort of thing. [00:55:00] So, it's a poor thing where she just really is relying on Emma for everything at this point. And so, for Emma to have to deliver this bad news like, "Yes, it's devastating for Emma, but also Emma's just trying to find what's the next solution. Who's the next guy we're going to find for you?"

**Jillian:** It's interesting because earlier we were talking about how Harriet just lets life happen to her. And in a weird way, I feel like these love arcs are ultimately pretty good for her because Robert Martin is like her number one. I think it's very special given how Harriet sees herself, that her first choice wants her as her first choice. And then Emma comes along and says, "You can do better." And she's like, "Well, then I guess I can do better." And so, she never had real feelings for Elton. But I think it's like a wounded ego situation where she's like, "Oh, no, he didn't like me. Of course not. Whatever." And of course, later on we're going to [00:56:00] have a pretty big crush on Knightley for saving her the way that he did.

You can't blame her. You can't blame her forming real feelings for Knightley, but it's just interesting. In this moment, I feel like she's overcoming an ego bruise and also like, "Oh, no, the guy that Emma picked--" We're going to get there. I feel like these hurdles ultimately really point her more than ever towards Mr. Martin by the end of the film and she's like, "He was always my choice. He's still my choice. I actually think he's perfect and I'm going to go for it, instead of just letting it happen."

**Molly:** Totally. So, the next thing is Emma's trying to distract her with puppies, but nothing can distract her from her devastation over Mr. Elton. So, Emma brings her to the Bateses because there, she won't be able to get a word in at all. But unfortunately, there is a letter from Mrs. Cole about Mr. Elton, and [00:57:00] they're like, "Okay, we need to pivot. We need to pivot. Oh, good. She has a letter from Jane and Jane is coming to visit." Then we get another one of those nice cuts where Emma, she's like, "You must sit right there and say," and then we cut to her sitting right there and saying, "Welcome to Jane," or whatever. Jane hot, not frail.

**Becca:** Jane, Lady Featherington?

**Jillian:** [gasps]

**Yolanda:** Ow.

**Jillian:** Shut up.

**Becca:** Jane, Lady Featherington from *Bridgerton*?

**Jillian:** Oh, *the* Lady Featherington.

**Becca:** Take a moment. Think about it.

**Yolanda:** I guess, I don't recognize her with all the feathers. That's why. [laughs]

**Becca:** Take a moment. That is definitely Lady Featherington from *Bridgerton*.

**Jillian:** I'm actually googling her right now.

**Molly:** Me too.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** I'm looking her up. Oh, my gosh.

**Becca:** Same actress.

**Jillian:** I'm so pleased.

**Becca:** [laughs] Everyone's losing it.

**Jillian:** oh, my God, she's gorgeous. No, she is hot.

**Molly:** So hot.

**Jillian:** So hot. Oh, my gosh. [00:58:00] It was in front of me the whole time.

**Molly:** Wow, that's bonkers. Yeah, recovering. She is so hot. She is curvy. She's got this dark hair, the arched eyebrows. I pictured Jane being a little more like frail because that's how she's always described, but this Jane is not.

**Becca:** I love Polly Walker. I think she gives a tremendous performance here with very little. I think she has weird casting for Jane for exactly the same reason. She's very strong and sturdy and high status as an actress.

**Jillian:** She's physically and emotionally very different from Emma. I feel like they've been set up as character foils to each other mostly because Emma is competitive with her in a way that I think we never really find out. Or, we assume Jane Fairfax does not see Emma even remotely as a threat, but think about who Frank Churchill's looking at. Like [00:59:00] bone broth, Gwyneth Paltrow, who's that skinny or curvaceous, dark, curly haired Polly Walker, that's--

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** They're not the same. He's not choosing between two of the same kind of woman.

**Becca:** Reading the books though, you feel like Polly Walker is more that sturdy, sure of herself, confident, beautiful woman would be a better fit for Emma. And then Gwyneth Paltrow as wayfish and quiet and stern would be a great Jane Fairfax. I don't love the way they're cast here in the opposite. But I do think that Polly Walker gives an excellent performance as Jane, despite the fact that she's not really in the film much and that she's maybe a weird choice.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Yolanda:** She's very political with her answers. I love her approach to that and her delivery of everything of like, "Yes, Frank Churchill is a man and he lives in this town." Correct, and that sort of [01:00:00] thing. So, yeah, she's great in this movie.

**Jillian:** Diplomatic.

**Molly:** Yes. And Emma hates her diplomacy. We jump to her complaining about it to Knightley and being like, "She's impossible." And he's like, "All right, let's talk about something else. I have some news. I know how you like news." And Emma's like, "Oh, yes, I do like news." And he says, "Mr. Elton is going to marry." Thunder.

[laughter]

**Molly:** There always is one moment with thunder in these movies.

**Becca:** Drama.

**Molly:** Drama. Then we cut to Harriet, who got caught in the storm running to her to tell her that she ran into the Martins at the store. And we get a flashback of this and we find out that Mr. Martin read the book, and he ran outside in the rain, holds his hat over her and tells her she should take the other route because one way is flooded. It's very sweet, and it's clear that Harriet still loves him.

**Yolanda:** That was a very cute moment of him holding the hat over her and then of feeling like, I don't know, maybe he thought like, "Maybe because I didn't read the book. That's why she denied me." And so, [01:01:00] he's still just trying to still pursue her without actively pursuing her because he doesn't want to propose again and get another rejection. He's just like, "I'll just stand here, just be in her peripheral vision and then maybe she'll think of me again."

**Becca:** Our boy, Robbie.

**Molly:** Yeah. The next day, Emma is riding in her carriage through a giant puddle and her wheel breaks, and she is stuck. And who should ride up but Frank Churchill.

**Becca:** Or, Hillary Clinton, depending on who has that haircut.

**Molly:** Oh, my God. We already discussed how we feel about him, but we do get this moment where she's like, "My wheel's broken." And he says, "I guess, you'll have to live here then. Bye-bye," which I thought was hilarious, but then he helps her up and brings her away from the puddle. Later, Emma runs into Miss Bates in town and she's like, "Yeah, I did meet Frank." And Miss Bates is asking about him and saying, she won't see him until the Cole's party. And Emma's like, "What party?" And then we get this. Emma [01:02:00] freaking out about not being invited to a party montage, which is so good. Emma is spiraling. She's checking the mail every day, and her dad is like, "Has the mail come?" She's like, "No, I never care about the mail." And then she pulls it out from under a scarf that she had it hidden under. It is peak Emma.

Actually, that brings us to about halfway through the movie. So, we are going to do our study questions really quick, and then we'll bring you two back for a Part 2. So, listeners, don't go anywhere or do go anywhere because it'll be two weeks until you get the next episode. But yeah, let's dive into those study questions.

**Becca:** Okay. So, we always do standbys for the film. So, the first question is favorite line delivery so far.

**Molly:** I have a couple. One, being Miss Bates. Every time she yells something to Mrs. Bates as an end of her sentence. She's like, "Oh, that was lovely pork that you sent us, right, Mother pork." [01:03:00]

**Yolanda:** [giggles]

**Molly:** She's just like pork, and then she does a couple of those where she's like, "Not Jane's day," for writing. She's so funny. That was one. Another one is Harriet reading the riddle from Mr. Elton and saying, "Is it about sharks?"

[laughter]

**Jillian:** That's really funny.

**Yolanda:** I think I like the moment between Harriet and Robert Martin of him warning her like, "You have to go by the stables and that sort of thing," just because of the moment of the intimacy of like, they're a little bit leaning in and he's holding the hat over her, the rain's coming down, it's romantic, and they both have feelings for each other, but they can't say it. So, I like that delivery.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Jillian:** I like that one too. And I also like when Knightley is warning Emma that there's no way Mr. Elton is seriously interested in Harriet, he has this line where he's like, "He may talk romantically, but he will act rationally." I like the [01:04:00] way he like-- It's so British the way he says that. [laughs]

**Becca:** Oh, yes, my favorite line is not a line, but it is that moment that Alan Cummings sits down between Knightley and Emma, and he just plops himself down and he's like, "Hope I'm not intruding." I think that moment is just like the most entertaining moment of the first half of this film. It's so good.

**Molly:** There's one more for me, just because we just talked about it and because I think that I want to give you and McGregor a little bit of credit for this movie, but I just love when he says, "I guess, you'll just have to live here then. Bye-bye."

**Yolanda:** [giggles]

**Becca:** Okay, next question. Notable additions to the storyline via the movie? It can be additions or exclusions. So, I think a decently notable exclusion is Emma's perkiness, because I think Paltrow plays her with a more grown up [01:05:00] air. Like, you do think she could be pitching you on some goop foot cream in this film, as opposed to prancing around being like, "I'm a matchmaker. I'm a matchmaker. I'm going to set everyone up," which is a little bit more like how I see Emma.

**Yolanda:** Yeah, I agree with that. I think Emma here is softer, and I think she's a little more gentle in how she approaches everything. She's less like the entitled young woman that maybe she is more of in the book. And her, I think they're trying to justify more of her meddling ways of like, "Yeah, she really does mean well, and she really wants the best for people." I think that's not so much in the book where she thinks like, "Oh, I know what's best for everyone. Therefore, I will make these decisions for them." But here, yeah, she's trying to make a real difference, but she keeps failing.

**Becca:** Yeah. And you get the sense in the book if it's like, Emma thinks that Highbury is her dollhouse and she's playing with her little dolls, and trying to make them kiss.

**Jillian:** Yeah, I feel the same answer as Yolanda, [01:06:00] just like her, like the way that Gwyneth Paltrow plays her versus how she is in the book.

**Becca:** Yeah. Also, pour one out for our guy, John Knightley, the sassiest of all sassy characters.

**Molly:** Yeah, like a really tragic loss of him. We barely even get to see him and Isabella. We don't get to get that relationship so much as just knowing that they exist.

**Becca:** Next question. Best part of the film so far and worst part of the film? You can start with either your best or your worst, depending if you want to end on a good note or you want to start on a good note.

**Molly:** My best and worst are potentially the same for this half. The transitions, they are both the weirdest and the funniest things about this movie so far. The paper machete globe is so strange. The way that it started with like, we're looking at this [01:07:00] globe as it floats through an abyss and the characters painted on it. And then each time we transition from a scene, it's zoom in on the globe, "We're at Hartfield. Now we're in Highbury." It's very strange. Additionally, there are some strange fade outs. Like, we are watching a made for TV movie. I don't think this was a made for TV movie, so I don't know why they faded out. That's weird.

Some of the best ones are the ones where we cut mid-sentence from Emma saying something in one scene to in another scene, or someone else saying finishing her sentence in the next scene. Those are a very cool and quirky way to transition that I thought was fun and also justifies at the end. Mrs. Elton turning directly to the camera and talking to it. That was weird, but it's in the same world as that.

**Becca:** Yes. [01:08:00] My favorite part so far is, I think, probably Toni Collette's performance as Harriet. I think it's campy, and I think it's fun, and I think she's very entertaining. My least favorite part so far, I have to give it to Frank Churchill's wig. It pains me. I think it's so difficult to make you and McGregor look bad and they did it. I don't know how or why. But putting that aside, I also-- Again, I'm not a huge fan of Gwyneth Paltrow's performance of Emma. I think she misses out on what's more fun about the character. She just comes off as sort of a stickler snob, in my opinion, and less like a dumb, loud, rich girl who's spoiled and doesn't pay attention to anyone around her. So, that's how I feel so far.

**Jillian:** I think my favorite moment is the archery scene between [01:09:00] Emma and Knightley, because I just think that there's a lot of scenes in this film that I just like, I watch and then I forget about them. I feel like, to me, it's the most iconic of the whole film. Like, her dress and the archery and the power dynamic and the opinions of them shifting and being reflected in the archery. I think it's a great, really active scene. So, I love that. Least favorite, it sucks. It's funny watching Alan Cumming as Mr. Elton react poorly to being turned down. But I'm always like, "Oh, it's just also hard as the dynamic of" like, they were both so wrong about how she felt about him. She had to just say it and then she had to tell Harriet. That's my least favorite part. When people get their feelings hurt, it's my least favorite. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Oh, God.

**Yolanda:** I'm going to focus less on the characters more [01:10:00] as a film. But I think my least favorite and favorite part is the cinematography, because the indoor shots just feel so cramped and so dark and so crowded that it feels like you're just like, "Could they not have opened it up a little bit more just to feel like a little bit more of like, 'Where's the room and who's everyone in there?'" But then the outdoor shots, anything outside or anything with-- It seems like they must have used golden hour light because there's such a softness around all the characters, especially with Gwyneth Paltrow and Emma, like, the glowing light around her and with her blonde hair and everything, it looks really soft and light, but then everything inside just feels so dull in comparison.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Yolanda:** So, the two contrast there.

**Becca:** Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining us for Part 1 of what will be two parts of talking about the 1996 adaptation of *Emma* starring Gwyneth Paltrow. Listeners, for next time, we will be wrapping [01:11:00] up our coverage of this movie. So, never fear. We will have so much more to say about Frank Churchill's wig, and whether or not, "If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more," was a necessary inclusion in the final scene or

not. Thank you so much for joining us, Yolanda and Jillian. Do you guys want to tell our listeners where they can find you and your podcast?

**Jillian:** Sure. I mean, you can follow us on Instagram, Twitter, Threads, Patreon, and TikTok, [@thepemberley](#). And you can email us comments or questions at [thepemberleypodcast@gmail.com](mailto:thepemberleypodcast@gmail.com).

**Yolanda:** And we're across all podcast platforms. You can just search The Pemberley podcast.

**Jillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Amazing. Anything else before we wrap up today, Molly?

**Molly:** I don't think so.

**Becca:** Okay. Well, until next time, stay proper.

**Jillian:** And remember that the most incomprehensible thing in the world to a man is a woman who rejects **[01:12:00]** his offer of marriage.

**Becca:** Still today.

[giggles]

**Molly:** Yeah. Fair.

[music]

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

[Transcript provided by [SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription](#)]