

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to give a huge shoutout to our patron, Anna, who upgraded their pledge. If you want access to special content like our exclusive Patreon Discord community, check out our Patreon at patreon.com/podandprejudice. We are now less than a month away from our first ever live show. We're so excited. It's happening November 18th at 04:00 PM Eastern Time at Caveat NYC. Early tickets are available until November 11th. Patrons get a 15% discount.

For those of you who don't live in New York, don't worry. The show is going to be live streamed for just \$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, so get them before they sell out. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering the first episode of the 2009 *Emma* miniseries, starring Romola Garai, with our guests Diane and Zan from The Thing About Austen.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

Becca: We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

Molly: We are [00:01:00] here specifically to talk about--

Molly and Becca: *Emma*.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: -2009.

Becca: Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen novels and watched many adaptations of her work through my life.

Molly: And I, Molly, have never done any of that before, and I'm doing so for the first time through this podcast.

Becca: If you want to hear Molly read through *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility* for the first time, you can listen to Seasons 1 and 2 of this podcast respectively, but that is not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No, today, we are talking about *Emma* 2009, starring-- I cannot pronounce her name.

Zan: Romola Garai.

Molly: Romola Garai.

Diane: Romola Garai.

Molly: Romola Garai.

Becca: Romola Garai.

Molly: And-

Becca: Jonny Lee Miller.

Molly: -daddy.

[laughter]

Molly: I'm obsessed with him.

Zan: Rightfully so.

Molly: And we are joined today by Diane and Zan from The Thing About Austen. Hello.

Zan: Hi.

Diane: Hello. Thank you for having us.

Becca: Oh, my God, thanks so much for being here. Well, why don't we start with telling the listeners a little [00:02:00] bit about your podcast and your little niche in the Jane Austen podcasting world.

Diane: Yeah. Zan, do you want me to take this?

Zan: Yes, please.

Diane: Okay. Yeah, so we are a podcast about Jane Austen's world. That's our main tagline. So, it's a little bit historical context. It's a little bit literary analysis. Basically, if you are someone who is curious about all the little mentions in Austen's novels and possibly also confused by some of them, our podcast is about explaining all of those things.

Molly: That's awesome.

Becca: If you're someone who listens to our podcast and hears how many questions we ask each other about the Jane Austen world, [Zan laughs] The Thing About Austen is where you might find some answers for those little historical context things. So whenever we have guests on the podcast, we always ask a set of questions to define people's relationships to Jane Austen. Starting with the first question, what is your relationship to Jane Austen?

Zan: That's obviously a hugely complex [00:03:00] question.
[laughter]

Zan: But I would say, my relationship with Jane Austen started when I was around 14 years or 15 years, and I started reading her novels. Scared my parents to death and skipped out on a basketball camp to read *Mansfield Park* in the park. I think that really sets a tone for the way [laughs] that I have interacted with Austen for the rest of my career. So, I actually am a English professor, and so I have a relationship with Austen, both in terms of enjoying her novels just immensely, but also, I really have this fascination with her on an academic realm as well. So, I think she's spanned the gamut for me.

Diane: Yeah. How does one summarize what is practically a lifelong obsession, you know?

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: So, I came to Jane Austen at around age 12. My first Austen novel was *Emma*, which is, I think, not super typical because my second was *Mansfield Park*, which is definitely not typical, [Zan laughs] and I haven't looked [00:04:00] back since. So, Jane and I go way back, [Zan laughs] and Zan and I actually met in graduate school as well.

Zan: In a Jane Austen class.

Diane: Yes. [laughs]

Molly: Wow.

Zan: [laughs]

Becca: Oh, that is so sweet. I was going through it in my head, I was thinking to myself, I would say, in my opinion, *Emma* and *Mansfield Park* are probably her two most diametrically opposed pieces of work. So, it's really fun that you went from-- without spoiling much for Molly like lightness to true darkness--

Diane: Yes.

Zan: [laughs]

Becca: -in the span of just like one book.

Diane: Yeah.

Becca: So, question number two for you guys would be, what is your favorite piece of Austen content? We specify this can be a book, this can be a podcast, this can be a YouTube video, a movie, whatever speaks most to you.

Zan: Well, listeners of our podcast will already know this, but I adore the 1995 film adaptation [00:05:00] of *Persuasion* with Ciarán Hinds as Captain Wentworth. No spoilers, but it's my favorite. But my very favorite thing about that film, it's a little bit of nerdy trivia, is that when it was originally released on VHS in the US, the cover image has two models on it who aren't even in the film. [Molly laughs] It's not just like they're not just on the cover. It's like a steamy, ripped, bodice cover.

Diane: They're doing a full clinch pose, if you know what that is.

Molly: [laughs]

Zan: It's not the actors. It's such a disconnect from the entire film that I absolutely love this VHS cover. [laughs]

Molly: That's amazing.

Becca: So, it's like a Danielle Steel novel cover?

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Zan: Absolutely. Absolutely. It's not the actors. Those two people don't appear in the film anywhere.

Diane: They don't even play side characters.

Zan: No.

Diane: They're not even present in the film.

Becca: Iconic.

Zan: It's so good.

Molly: That's amazing.

Diane: They were clearly worried that the American audience would not be willing to pick up this British period drama from-- [crosstalk]

Zan: It's not sexy enough.

Diane: Yeah, it's not sexy enough.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Wow.

Becca: Clearly, they haven't [00:06:00] looked at the yearning and the dancing enough, but whatever.

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: Yeah. I am going to have to go with-- I was really thinking about this, way overthinking this, but [Becca laughs] I was like, "Okay, what would I really have a hard time being separated from?" I think it would just be the many special edition copies that I have because I am a collector of the various Austen editions. So, I don't know, I just like having all the various editions with the different illustrations, the different cover treatments. It's a problem. It really is. It's a serious problem. I think at last count, I have more than 50 copies of *Pride and Prejudice* because that's the one, obviously, that gets released the most often. But yeah, it's an issue. Plus, my Jane Austen action figure. It's hard to choose between those two things.

Becca: I love that.

Molly: Yeah, I love everything about that. I only have one collector's edition, *Pride and Prejudice*, and it's the one you probably also have it, but it has the handwritten letters.

Diane: Yes.

Molly: Yeah. It's very cool.

Diane: Yeah. If it's the edition done by Barbara Heller, who does-- [crosstalk]

Molly: I think that's [00:07:00] right.

Diane: Yeah. And so, she's like-- It's such well researched ephemera and little pieces that she's pulled out from the novel and then, yeah, done that. It's great.

Zan: It's beautiful.

Becca: Incredible. So question number three is, which Austen character do you relate to the most and why?

Zan: This one is like so revealing. I was like, "How do I share things without oversharing things with the character?"

[laughter]

Becca: You don't have to give an explanation. You can just say who you relate to.

Molly: Or you can overshare.

Diane: Yeah. Would you like to look deeply into our souls or not? I don't know.

Molly: [laughs]

Zan: Like, what level of commitment are we giving on this time?

[laughter]

Zan: But I think that there's a certain amount of relatability to Catherine Morland for me, in terms of there's a certain amount of naivete and not getting it that I sometimes have where conversations will be happening around me and I'll be like, "I think that I'm catching what's happening, but then subtext is flying over my head often." And so I feel like I can at least appreciate [00:08:00] Catherine Morland on that level.

Diane: I think you also have a fangirl enthusiasm for the things you love, much like Catherine Morland.

Zan: Oh, absolutely. Absolutely.

Diane: So that fits. Yeah.

Zan: Yeah.

Diane: I never know how to answer this question, but I will have to go with Elinor Dashwood from, I think, the most known characters since I trend towards the practical. I'm not particularly sentimental. She's much more patient than I am. I think I would have probably had some words with Marianne much earlier than she does in frustration.

Becca: [laughs]

Diane: And then also John Knightley, when I really just don't want to talk to anyone.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Zan: [laughs]

Becca: We love John Knightley on this podcast.

Diane: So, Elinor Dashwood when I'm feeling more patient, and John Knightley when I'm not. [Zan laughs] Also, Sir John Middleton, because I too only want to talk about dogs, and so I relate to that.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, same.

Becca: I think the most relatable moment in any Jane Austen novel is when Marianne's asking John Middleton what he knows about Willoughby and he's like, "He has a really good dog." [laughs]

Diane: Mm-hmm. Yeah. I love Sir John. He's one of my favorite [00:09:00] characters. He's just like [crosstalk]

Zan: [crosstalk] delightful.

Diane: He's just like, "Let's hang out. Let's just talk about dogs and stuff. We're having a great time."

Zan: He's like, "Oh, there's drama, but have you seen the dogs, [Diane laughs] you know?"

Molly: Yeah. He's the guy who's at the party but is only just hanging out with the dog, which is me also.

Zan: Mm-hmm. [laughs] Relatable content.

Diane: Yes, it is.

Becca: Absolutely. My personal favorite question, our final question is-

Diane: Oh, gosh.

Becca: -what is your hottest Austen take? So we use this as a chance for people to say something that they think about Austen that maybe isn't in the zeitgeist. Ours is together. We think, I guess, Lydia Bennet is a tragic figure.

Molly: Or, that Daddy Bennet, Mr. Bennet is-

Becca: Is Daddy-

Molly: -is hot.

Becca: -hot.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: [laughs]

Becca: That's more just Molly's take.

Diane: I hear Molly say that all the time. Every single time it comes up, I'm always like, "Hmm. Okay."

[laughter]

Diane: "I'm not here to yuck your yums, you know? You do you."

Becca: I am. I'm here to yuck your yums.

[laughter]

Molly: I get it.

Becca: No, here's the [00:10:00] thing. To be fair, to Molly, and I'll say this forever, Donald Sutherland in the 2005 version of *Pride and Prejudice*, pretty hot.

Diane: He can get it, for sure. Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. But Molly also started her crush through the book, and then continued it during the wonderful 1995 adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice*, and the mutton chop on-
[laughter]

Becca: -Mr. Bennet in that one, I think are a little--

Zan: It's a lot.

Becca: Yeah.

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I don't know.

Diane: If you could see Molly's face right now, she is glowing. She is glowing-
[laughter]

Diane: -just thinking about Mr. Bennet.

Molly: I am. I just sighed into the distance.

[laughter]

Molly: But we all have our thing, I guess.

[laughter]

Zan: Oh, that's great. I don't know if I have Austen hot takes. I was actually talking to Diane about this.

Diane: Because I have a lot. That's the problem.

Zan: Is she has best hot take?

Becca: Yeah.

Zan: And so we should just pass the mic directly over to Diane.

[laughter]

Diane: Okay. So [00:11:00] this is the thing that I think about way too much. I think about this all the time. And Molly, I'm going to really try to keep this not a spoiler for you because this is related to *Mansfield Park*. My hottest Austen hot take is that-- Stay with me, Becca. Don't freak out, okay?

Becca: I got you. I'm here.

Diane: Edmund Bertram is the hottest Austen hero.

Becca: Oh, my God.

Diane: Not in terms of character, because he is the worst. He is wet cabbage. [Molly laughs] But just physically, he must be an absolute Adonis. It is the only explanation to me for why two of the characters unnamed for you, Molly. But two of the characters colluding one who is quite worldly, they are so into him and so nothing else makes sense to me. This man must just be like sex walking. It is the only thing that makes sense. [Zan laughs] And I rest my case.

Becca: I can respect that take. You had me in the first half. I'm not going to lie.

[laughter]

Diane: It's the kind of thing where it's like, once he opens his mouth, you would think, "Mm. No, thank you."

Becca: Yeah.

Diane: But [00:12:00] he must just be like a stone-cold fox. It must be radiating off of him. Like, he must be so good looking [Zan laughs] that everybody just passes out when he walks into a room because the personality is not there.

Becca: Yes. You look at a character like George Wickham in *Pride and Prejudice*, also canonically hot.

Diane: Yes.

Zan: Yes.

Becca: This is one of my big gripes with adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* is that in most of them, for some reason, they decided that Darcy should be the hotter actor that Wickham, which isn't canon.

Zan: Right.

Becca: I'm always like, "Well, why would she believe him?" Because part of it is like, he's not believable. He's just hot.

Zan and Diane: Yeah.

Becca: But the one I want to shoutout as I have before in the past and I will again, *Fire Island*, Joel Kim Booster's more recent *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation because that Wickham is so hot and charming that you're like, "Oh, yeah. I'd believe anything he says."

Zan: Anything he says. Yeah.

Diane: Everybody in that movie is so attractive.

Zan: Is super-hot.

Becca: Yes.

Diane: I think the other adaptation that actually gets that [00:13:00] right in terms of, like, Darcy's attractive, but Wickham is like, "Whoa, is *Death Comes to Pemberley* where Matthew Goode plays Wickham."

Becca: Ooh, yeah.

Diane: And I'm like, "Oh, I think this might be one of the first times where I'm like, 'Okay.'"

Becca: Ooh, also, *Lizzie Bennet Diaries*. The guy who plays Wickham in that is also very, very attractive, and you get it. And Darcy's like he's handsome, but kind of a schlub-

Zan and Diane: Awkwardly.

Becca: -in a way that makes sense.

Zan: Yeah.

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: I've forgotten what Wickham looks like in that.

Becca: He's blonde, blue eyed.

Zan: He's got blonde tech bro energy.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Right.

Zan: It's the way that I would-- Yeah.

Becca: He's on a swim team of some [crosstalk]

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: Right. The swim team. Okay.

Diane: What you're saying, blonde tech bro energy, Zan, is not appealing, I got to say. That's not-- [laughs]

Molly: No. Yeah.

Zan: He's hot, but everything-- The charisma is there, but then after a while, you're like, "Mm." It wears off quick.

[laughter]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Absolutely.

Zan: I love that you've said that Edmund Bertram is smoking hot, and that Molly has already said that she's into Jonny Lee Miller because there is an adaptation of *Mansfield Park* with Jonny Lee Miller as Edmund Bertram. [00:14:00]

Molly: Oh, my God.

Zan: So, putting that on your horizon.

Diane: Yup. He has played two heroes.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: I love him so much. I loved all of the Mr. Knightleys that we've seen so far because I think that Mr. Knightley is a very dreamy--

Becca: Sexy character.

Molly and Diane: Yeah.

Molly: He's so hot.

Diane: He is the ultimate stern, brunch daddy.

Molly: Yes.

Diane: So yes, this makes sense.

Molly: And Jonny Lee Miller, as soon as he came on screen, I was like, "Okay. Perfect."

Becca: We were watching this together, and she just went, "Hot."

[laughter]

Zan: It's accurate, you know?

Molly: Yeah, which is a good segue to talking about the episode.

Zan: Right.

Molly: So, let's dive in. The miniseries decides to start at Emma's childhood. So, we see Emma being born. Her dad, played by Sir Michael Gambon, rest in peace. And her mom, who is alive when she's born, obviously.

Diane: [00:15:00] [laughs]

Molly: Immediately though, we find out the worst happens, and her mom dies. So we see that Emma has a hard beginning that makes her father-- It shows her father taking his daughters, pulling them in close and being like, "Your mother died. I'm never going to let go of you too," and it's heartbreaking.

Becca: I also want to point out that speaking of Jonny Lee Miller, the wonderful actor who plays Mr. Knightley in this adaptation, the opening monologue discussing some-- using some of the opening lines from Emma, and also just added monologuing on top of it is narrated by Mr. Knightley at the beginning.

Molly: Oh.

Diane: Yeah, he actually narrates throughout the miniseries, I think, which is, it's like Mrs. Weston narrating the 1996 *Emma*, which--

Molly: Yeah.

Diane: I think it's interesting when they make that choice to have a character also be the narrator because I'm like, "Okay, so are you yourself [00:16:00] narrating right now, or are you just the actor narrating?"

Molly: I feel like it could be himself because of who Knightley is to Emma, and how much he

sees the parallels between her and Frank and Jane throughout the story. So him giving us this at the beginning, and also, he knows her better than anyone else, so he's able to give her inner monologue sometimes. So actually, I love that.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: So, we see Mr. Woodhouse bring in Miss Taylor as a substitute motherly figure. We see Miss Taylor walking Emma down the street as Mr. Perry rushes by to go to Mr. Weston's house where his wife is dying, and we see baby Frank and his dad being sad together because his mom just died. So that's an immediate parallel between Frank and Emma. Mrs. Churchill comes and takes Frank away, and Mr. Weston stands in the rain just crying, and it breaks my heart.

Diane: Yeah.

Becca: This opening between [00:17:00] Frank and Emma, and then we'll get to it, but Jane immediately does the side of Austen that's class commentary as opposed to romance right away because you have three kids that lose a parent, and you have three drastically different results based on social standing, and the TV series immediately highlights that.

Zan: It sets it up especially to have a narrator. It sets it up as an opening of a fairy tale where they've got Emma's life is charmed, and everything's going to be fine, and then you get those really, really specific parallels between Frank and Jane and Emma. Just the way that it's told, it really sets those up. I think you're absolutely right as far as class dynamics, but it also sets it up as like, this is a fairy tale and it's about these three orphans as the opening a salvo as a fairy tale, which I think is really fascinating.

Molly: Yeah. I know that we read this book very [00:18:00] in depth and that I, at some level, understood the parallel between the three of them. But seeing it laid out one, two, three, really just hit home in a way that it didn't necessarily for me and other adaptations or even reading the book.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So Jane being the third of these three, we see her aunt falling on hard times. We see a time when Mrs. Bates actually spoke and was having a conversation with her daughter, and so the Bates are losing their house and they're like, "We have to send Jane away. We're not going to have space for her. We need to downsize." She goes away with Colonel Campbell, and we just watch how much this devastates the Bates'. That just really got me. Her story is so heartbreaking, and she's already lost her parents.

Becca: We'll be jumping ahead just to get there, but the context this gives to [00:19:00] how Emma treats Miss Bates through the whole story makes Emma seem absolutely despicable.

Zan: Yeah, it frames it very overtly.

Diane: Yeah. They have a lot more scenes than this where it's showing Miss Bates and Mrs. Bates alone at home or looking sad together. There's a lot more attention paid to that, I think.

Zan: I think there's also this really fascinating attention to detail in this first episode starting with that scene where we see Miss Bates and Mrs. Bates, and what they choose and what's so hard, and the tension that actually builds up in their own relationship between mother and daughter.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Zan: But then also just with costuming, Tamsin Greig, who plays Miss Bates, her costume in that scene is quite vibrant.

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Zan: The very next scene where we see time has passed, she's wearing the same dress and it's much more faded. I love the way that they just made that so visually apparent because those scenes are pretty much back-to-back. And so I think, [00:20:00] again, it goes to your point where it just makes Emma's treatment of Miss Bates a lot more tangible.

Molly: Yeah, absolutely. So then we get theme song. We see these pretty silhouettes. I loved theme for this, the opening moment. It reminds me of those collector's editions of the Austen books with the silhouettes that are cut out of paper on the front and behind a plastic thing. I don't know, if they did that intentionally, but that's what it reminded me of.

Zan: I was thinking that it was reminding me of paper dolls.

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Oh, that's probably it.

Zan: No, I don't think you're wrong. I think that the silhouette is very much so a thing. But I

was just like, because the very, very next thing after you open that opening sequence with those silhouettes is you see Emma under a table playing with dolls. And so that doll comparison is pretty-- There's a strong correlation there, and I thought that that was really fascinating to see that.

Molly: Yeah. Because the dolls come back-- Every time she's trying to make a match, she [00:21:00] plays with her little dolls. At some point, Knightley's like, "Do you have your dolls ready?" And she's like, "No, I've outgrown them." And he's like, "Okay."

Becca: Yeah. [giggles]

Diane: Yeah. I actually have a copy of Emma where it's-- I think, from the 1970s, paperback copy of Emma, where the cover is an illustration of Emma, and she is holding on to marionette like puppets. They're doing the same thing here. She's like a puppet master with her dolls. She's playing dolls. It's a great visual connection, I think, between the novel and the adaptation that they're doing with that.

Molly: Definitely.

Becca: Absolutely.

Molly: So while Emma is playing with her dolls under the table, Mrs. Bates and Miss Bates are over, and Miss Bates is just going on about something that Jane wrote. This is like, for me, the moment where it hit, how tragic Mrs. Bates is, because like you said, their relationship has become strained, and Mrs. Bates just doesn't talk anymore. Throughout the episode, even, she gets quieter and quieter, and the music that accompanies Mrs. Bates gets sadder and [00:22:00] sadder.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: It's just like, "Oh." It really hits hard. But while she's prattling on, Emma does this eye roll sigh thing, and then it time jumps as she's eye rolling into being seven years later, and Miss Bates is still talking about Jane, [Zan laughs] and I thought that was hilarious. I think Miss Bates is talking about Jane learning French or something. And then Emma goes, "I'm going to ask Mr. Knightley to teach me Chinese." [Zan laughs] Her eyes get huge. She just is the master of facial expressions and eyeball acting.

Diane: Romola does a lot with her eyeballs all the time.

Zan: Absolutely.

Becca: I think this is a good time for me to say that this is my favorite acting job on Emma, personally. I love her performances. Emma, I think she is—Simultaneously, she seems immature and rude and crass, but also warmhearted [00:23:00] and joyful in a way that makes her likable even when she's being appalling.

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: Which is not an easy combo to mix.

Becca: Not at all. Not at all. I think it's a very specific balance to really find her adorable while she's doing terrible things.

Diane: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I think her performance is just that precise, delicate balance, because I think Emma's a character that, done incorrectly, is not enjoyable to watch, necessarily. [Diane laughs] But if you really get in on who she is and the dynamics of what makes her so incredible, she's the best character to watch. I think Romola Garai really captures her.

Diane: Yeah, I think she's probably my favorite Emma as well, just because of her ability to walk that line between being a complete brat. But you also like her, and she seems kind of sweet, and she's taking really good care of her father, but you're also like, "Wow, you're [00:24:00] ridiculous." So that's a lot.

Molly: I say this a lot, but Emma as a character is very clueless. I know that's-- [laughter]

Molly: But I think that Romola Garai really shows that in a way that other ones haven't, they seem like they're being mean on purpose, and she seems like she's being mean because she's not picking up on the social cues that she's getting. She's just totally in her own world, so I really love her. So we learned that Jane is reading a list of 100 books. So Emma has made a list of 101 books that she wants to read.

[laughter]

Diane: Such a good detail.

Molly: So good. Knightley comes in and he's telling her off, and as we've already said, hot.

Zan: [laughs]

Becca: Jonny Lee Miller?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: King of Austen.

Molly: He really is.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Emma is complaining about how annoying the Bates', are and how much she hates hearing about Jane, and she knows she should be nice. It just reminds me about them [00:25:00] being little babies and both having the same thing happen to them, but Emma is rich, so she's okay. And then we see John and Isabella outside playing together, which hints that this is not necessarily the beginning of the book yet. John and Isabella are flirting and Emma's like, "Hmm, I think that those two are going to get together." And he goes, "John and Isabella? No." [Zan laughs] Then we, of course, jump to John and Isabella getting married, and that's Emma's first match.

Becca: It's always sunny in Philadelphia. It's like, "They're never going to get married." And then it's theme song comes in and it's like, John and Isabella get married.

Zan: [laughs] Pretty much.

Becca: Yes. Zan understands the reference.

Zan: But it's a quick jump, and I love that. Emma takes credit for it. Just because she's observed it, she's like, "I had something to do with that."

Molly: Yeah. And then as she's at the wedding, she's looking around and she's like, "Hmm, who's going to be next?" And then we get a time jump again [00:26:00] to them still sitting in church, but Emma is noticing Miss Taylor and Mr. Weston making eyes at each other. And so outside the church, she starts pushing them together and tells them to get under one umbrella together, and that is the beginning of their relationship, and we jump to Mr. Woodhouse being like, "This is a terrible thing for Miss Taylor."

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: This is the scene that is in the book that I feel like we don't really get in any other adaptation where Emma just like, you were just saying Zan is like, "I'm taking credit for this." And Knightley's like, "All you did was say that might be nice if they got together. You didn't put in any effort. How can you call that success?" I just really [Zan laughs] love their bickering in this moment.

Zan: Yeah.

Becca: I think they have a very different kind of chemistry than the chemistry we've seen in other adaptations. If you see the 1996 or the 2020 feature film adaptations of *Emma*, it's a much spicier sort [00:27:00] of sweeping-- In 1996, it's a very sweeping romance situation because you have Jeremy Northam smirking, [Diane laughs] all that. And then in 2020, you have a spicy, sexy romance between Emma and Knightley, which is great in its own right. But here, what's beautiful about a miniseries, and particularly, a well-done miniseries is it gives the story room to breathe. It gives the story room to exist in its littler moments. What I like is that you get Knightley and Emma bickering and that familiarity building and very clear on our screens from the get go. You really have that gentle, loving, best friendship back and forth.

Zan: Yeah, their banter is so good in this adaptation.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Zan: Just all of the back and forths. When they're mad at each other, when they're teasing each other, all of their banter feels genuine or organic, I should say. It feels very organic to their characters, and that is lovely to get to [00:28:00] see, like you said, the development throughout as well.

Diane: I think in some of the other adaptations, the heat is there, but it's almost a heat that feels like it's coming from, "Oh, these are two characters that almost just met," and like, "Ooh, sparks are flying." This one very much feels like the kind of banter of, we have known each other way too long and we really know how to push each other's buttons.

Zan: I'm going to call you on your nonsense.

Diane: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yes.

Zan: Yeah. And they're both comfortable doing it.

Molly: Yeah, which I love. Then we see Isabella, who now has a million children.

Zan: [laughs] I was trying to count them. I think that she's got six?

Molly: Yeah, it's a lot.

Zan: Almost three?

Molly: I was like, "How much time has passed enough for that many babies?"

Zan: Right.

Molly: So that's a good metric. She is saying that, it's hard that Miss Taylor is leaving because Emma's going to be all by herself and Mr. Woodhouse is going to be all by himself, and John is like, "Well, you left and came all the way to London." And she's like, "Yeah, but Emma was still there to take care of him." And he says, "So Emma can never marry?"

[00:29:00] and that establishes her predicament as the woman of the household.

Zan: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Mm.

Molly: And then, of course, the little boys run in and Knightley throws one over his shoulder and it's so sexy.

Becca: Yeah, I was going to say that's like-

Zan: Cute uncle.

Becca: -peak dreamboat energy.

Diane: [laughs]

Zan: Yes.

Becca: Dream boat behavior.

Diane: [laughs]

Molly: So then we get the wedding, and this is the start of the book, the wedding between Miss Taylor now Mrs. Weston and Mr. Weston. I love this part. Mr. Perry's about to take a slice of cake and Mr. Woodhouse is like, [Diane laughs] "I'm sorry that there's cake here. I know how much you disapprove of it."

[laughter]

Molly: And he's like, "Oh, yeah."

Diane: "Let me just put this plate back. Oh, no."

Molly: Yeah.

[laughter]

Molly: Emma points out that Frank isn't there, and she thinks that he is staying away to increase his mysteriousness to the young ladies of the town.

Diane: Which, again, I think is a good way that this adaptation shows how imaginative she can in the stories that she's making up in her head, because there's nothing happening where she lives. She's so bored. There's nothing going on. **[00:30:00]** So what better than to make up some fake drama about this guy that she's never even met? Like, "Ooh, he must be mysterious." She's having fun with it.

Becca: I love that point because also it's actually a kind of horrible tragedy. Mr. Weston had to give up his son because he couldn't afford to keep him. His son is so distant from him now, he doesn't come to his wedding, and you can see that heartbreak on his face, and Emma doesn't catch it. All she says is, "Ooh, he is being mysterious." It shears up Mr. Weston to think that, but Emma is inert and sheltered from the hardship of that situation where Mr. Weston that she's coming up with something exciting. That plays into later her fantasies about what's going on with Jane Fairfax as well, like, these people who have real problems and dark family dynamics, Emma's not there, and Emma's instead bored enough to be making up more fun things to fill the gaps in those families.

Diane: Right. I think I can also see that scene as like **[00:31:00]** a little bit of the nice part of Emma where she maybe sees that Mr. Weston is like a little bit down and she's like, "Well, Frank Churchill, he's trying to be mysterious," and cheering Mr. Weston up that way. But again, it's Emma. So cheering him up with the fantastical.

Molly: Right.

Diane: She's not going to go over there and just be like, "I'm sure, he'll come eventually."

[giggles]

Molly: Yeah.

Diane: She's making it fun.

Molly: Yeah, I watched that the same way where I was reading it or watching it as the same way that Knightley often will cheer up Emma and Mr. Woodhouse about stuff by being like, "Oh, do you want to hear about your new niece?"

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: I was reading that as her trying to cheer them up in her own way. After the wedding, Emma and Mrs. Weston cry and say goodbye, and it's very heartwarming, and sad also. The Bates' are just there [Diane laughs] at their house, and they're waving them off, and then Miss Bates just wheels Mrs. Bates [00:32:00] away, and just talking the whole time like, "Oh, yes, it's very exhausting day."

Diane: Well, before that, she says that thing about like, "Oh, the house will be so empty now. It's like a ghost house." [laughs]

Zan: A ghost house.

Molly: Oh, yeah. She's like, "You guys are going to be so lonely in this house now. That sucks for you."

Diane: I feel like the Miss Bates in this adaptation, she has a lot more lines like that, where you're just like, "Whoa, okay." [giggles]

Zan: She's a little bit darker, but in a way that's still nonsensical.

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: But it's interesting too, because as the scene is closing, you've got her pushing her mom down the driveway and you've got Mrs. Weston driving off to her marriage. And so we see these divergent older women, "older" I'm using air quotes heavily here. But these women who had-- [crosstalk]

Diane: They're old, haggard crones, Zan. They have nothing left, okay?

Becca: [laughs]

Zan: They were probably over 27 or something like that.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Ridiculous.

Diane: Yeah, they're dried up.

Zan: But you see that divergence of life choices and options that were available. And then in the very, very next scene, because after Miss Bates has said like, "Ooh, it's like a ghost house," [00:33:00] we actually see Emma wandering through her house having fantasies of like when she was a child. So it's like Miss Bates has implanted that in her little [Diane laughs] fantasy brain and she's like, "It is a ghost house." [giggles]

Molly: I literally wrote, she's watching ghosts of little Emma and Isabella playing together.

Diane: She's having her Dickensian childhoods of Christmas past moment or something.

Zan: Okay. Can I tell you something totally nerdy that I was noticing though is like, while she's having this little-- She's standing in a window while this is happening, and she's looking into the house and she sees past little Emma and Isabella playing. All the while in the background, you can still see Mr. Knightley walking up to the house. So she's in this very liminal moment, and we've got her past, and then we've got Mr. Knightley coming to the house.

Diane: Ooh.

Molly: The future.

Zan: I know. I was like, "I see what you were doing there with liminality."

Diane: [laughs]

Molly: Wow. When Knightley is coming-- This is the first of many waves [00:34:00] that Emma does. She always full-on waves.

[laughter]

Molly: I've never seen people in Austen wave before, but she's waving like a small child.

Zan: Like, enthusiastic.

Diane: Yeah, she's always like just, "Hello."

Molly: Yeah. I wish you guys could see us because we're just waving at our screen.

Diane: [laughs]

Becca: Audio medium. So sorry, Graham.

[laughter]

Molly: Yeah. I think her wave is adorable. I love it. And then Knightley points at her and then waves also. It's like, "Hey, there's my girl."

Diane: So cute.

Molly: I love it. So then Knightley comes over. They're hanging out with her dad, and Emma's like, "Coming to see us is part of Knightley's exercise." A daily walk and a scolding of Emma is just preparing for scratch.

[laughter]

Molly: He looks at her and he's so confused. His eyes are like, "What? Did you--? [Diane laughs] What are you talking about?" I love him.

Zan: He's got some good facial expressions too. If Romola Garai is nailing it, he's trying to match that energy with his facial expressions as well.

Diane: Yeah. The two of them are doing a lot just with eyebrows.

Becca: [00:35:00] Oh, yeah.

Molly: Eyebrow acting is a big thing in Austen, I think.

Zan: Agreed.

Molly: I remember saying that a lot about Jennifer Ely that she was just the queen of eyebrow acting.

Becca: Oh, yes.

Zan: Oh, she does a lot with her eyebrows.

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: She definitely does.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Or, just like the smallest little mouth quirk, [Diane giggles] just like it's micro movements in the face. That's how they work. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. Whereas Romola Garai is big moments-- [crosstalk]

Zan: Her whole face.

Diane: Yeah, it's the whole face.

Becca: She's got those giant blue peepers that are just staring into Mr. Knightley's soul whenever she talks.

Diane: [laughs]

Zan: I think she must have put eyedrops in before every scene because they're just like luminescent.

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Yeah. When I talk about her, my eyes get huge. I can't help it.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: It's part of the thing.

Diane: [giggles]

Molly: So then we see the Bates' sitting at tea with Mrs. Goddard outside while the girls all play around, and Emma walks up by herself and waves again.

Zan: [giggles]

Molly: They are shocked that she showed up here by herself because she could have met the travelers foreshadowing and she's like, "Well, [00:36:00] Mr. Knightley says they're not so bad. They come here every year. And I'm not going to stay inside just because Miss Taylor is married now." And Mrs. Goddard is like, "Oh, well, I'm sure you're going to find a new companion." And then Emma, of course, sees Harriet across the lawn. Harriet, at this time, is saying goodbye to the Martin sisters. We learn that she's staying at Mrs. Goddard's to help with the little ones, which, I like that she's older than the kids in this. She's not actually one of the kids. It just makes it feel a little bit more level for her and Emma.

Diane: It is an interesting choice though to take her. She's not just like a parlor boarder. Now, she's also a teacher. So that's even more of a class gap for her to be hanging out with Emma at that point then.

Molly: I wonder if that makes Emma want to take her under her wing even more, because she's like, "Wait a minute, you can't be doing that. Come on."

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: I love how immediately, she's like, "Give me the backstory. Who's Harriet?"

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: [00:37:00] Mrs. Goddard does the whole thing like, "She's the natural daughter of who knows."

Diane: Yup.

Zan: Immediately, Emma is like, "So she's a gentleman's daughter,"-
[laughter]

Zan: -and she has filled in Harriet's background instantaneously."

Diane: Well, she even goes so far as toss out the word like nobility, and I'm like, "Oh, okay."
[laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Yeah. Like, the leap that she's making in that moment is so far, and she hasn't even exchanged words with Harriet yet. [giggles] This is purely based on this-- She's like, "Mrs. Goddard, bring her to my house next time, if you would."

Diane: [giggles] Well, she's like--

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: She's arranging her world however she likes at this point.

Molly: They're her dolls.

Zan and Diane: Yeah.

Zan: Absolutely.

Diane: It was an interesting choice too, and I think sweet to almost make-- It's like you're seeing Emma being sad and a little bit jealous, I think. I don't think she realizes it, because she sees Harriet's relationship with the Martin sisters and she's like, "Oh, I wish I had a friend." Because she makes that comment about like, "Oh, they can't even bear to be away from each other, and she's so [00:38:00] alone." And so of course, Emma's solution to that is like, "Well, I'm going to steal that girl. She's going to be my friend now."

Zan: Right.

Molly: [laughs] Yeah. Honestly.

Zan: But I do love that she's attuned to the fact that she loves and embraces and wants female relationships.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Zan: She doesn't go about it in the best ways all the time. But the fact that that's her priority is to find a strong female friendship as a replacement for Miss Taylor is an interesting thing where-- Again, she's not husband hunting. She has no need to husband hunt. So she just friend hunts instead. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. I feel like early on in reading *Emma*, I was very like-- When I'm saying I often will be like gay at various plot lines [Becca giggles] and I was very gay for Emma and Harriet. But after watching all of these adaptations and also reading *Emma* more fully, I feel like the friendship between Emma and Harriet is so important, and the gay line is Emma and Jane.

Zan: Oh, yeah, I could see that. I could see that.

Diane: Yeah.

Becca: You can already see it [00:39:00] in this adaptation. The palpability with which Jane Fairfax is a character in Emma's brain is so clear cut from the very beginning.

Zan: Mm-hmm.

Diane: Just her as a child underneath the table like, "Oh, my gosh, I don't want to hear about this again."

Becca: The 101 books.

Diane: Yeah.

[laughter]

Zan: This competition with this girl she's met hasn't seen in years. Yeah.

Diane: [giggles]

Molly: Yeah. There is one point later on where she's talking about how much she hates Jane and she's like, "It's really too bad because Jane, Frank, and I are tied together in some mysterious way."

[laughter]

Molly: "Frank is a lost boy looking for home."

Zan: So she sees the connection, and she knows that she's being bad about it. She's like, "It's really too bad that I can't get over this."

Diane: I love that moment because it's such like, "I will be the main character of my own story." [Zan laughs] She's just really, [laughs] "Oh, and the way that we are tied together. We are so connected." I'm like, "Okay, little over the top there, Emma. We get it."
[laughter]

Molly: Yeah. **[00:40:00]** So at the dinner with Harriet and Mrs. Goddard and everyone, Harriet watches Knightley tuck his napkin into his shirt, and she starts to tuck her napkin into her shirt, and Emma gives her this little like, "Mm-mm," and she's like, "Okay, put it in my lap." Because at first, I thought it was just Knightley who was tucking his napkin into his shirt because he's adorable. But I think that the men all put it-
[laughter]

Molly: -in their shirt and then the women all put it in their lap. But I loved the idea of him just tucking his napkin into his shirt and being like, "Ready to eat now."
[laughter]

Molly: Then Mr. Elton comes in late and he says, "He was on business for one who he regards only just above Miss Woodhouse." And Harriet is the only one who doesn't get the joke, she's like, "Whose business?" And Mrs. Goddard's like, "The Almighty."
[laughter]

Molly: And he's like, "Oh, okay," and everyone's silent as she's having this realization.

Zan: But she spells it out twice.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: She's like, "God's business. Got it. It's God's business. Got it."

[laughter]

Molly: Yes. Oh, that's so funny.

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: I totally get it **[00:41:00]** now.

Molly: Yeah. Which I relate to Harriet in a lot of ways, and that's one of them.

Zan: [giggles]

Molly: I've taken to just, if I don't get the joke, I will just ask, because [Zan laughs] normally, I'll just smile and laugh, but then sometimes the conversation goes on too long afterwards about the joke, and I have now lied about getting it,-

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: -and I'm like, "I'm so sorry. We need to go back." [giggles]

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Anyway. When Emma introduces Harriet to Mr. Elton, she calls her special friend, which, again, she has just met this girl two days ago.

The holiday season is coming up and if you're anything like me, you get super stressed and leave all your holiday shopping till the last minute. Let's not do that this year. Uncommon Goods is here to make your holiday shopping easy by scouring the globe for the most remarkable and truly unique gifts for everyone. My personal favorite, and what I will definitely be gifting myself this season is the Book Nook Reading Valet, which holds your book and your page, plus your glasses, coffee, and phone, **[00:42:00]** which will be perfect because I'm going to have to start my next Jane Austen book pretty soon.

I think you guys are particularly going to love their bookish gifts, like, their Literary Women Locket necklaces and the Book Lovers Bookends. Plus, when you shop at Uncommon Goods, you're supporting artists and small independent businesses, which we love. And with every purchase you make at Uncommon Goods, they give back \$1 to a nonprofit partner of your choice. So to get 15% off your next gift, go to uncommongoods.com/whomst. That's U-N-C-O-M-M-O-N-G-O-O-D-S dotcom slash W-H-O-M-S-T for 15% off. Don't miss out on this limited time offer. Uncommon Goods, we're all out of the ordinary.

Then we cut to Knightley and Miss Taylor walking together outside of Randalls, which is gorgeous, by the way. This Randalls is picturesque.

Diane: It's so charming. They've got pixies in the garden, and little hedgehogs just rolling around on the lawn. **[00:43:00]** We don't see that in the miniseries. I'm just saying, in my imagination, that's what-

Molly: That's the vibe.

Diane: -is happening.

Molly and Diane: Yeah.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Totally. She's got it made. They are arguing about, whether or not, Emma's friendship with Harriet is a good thing. And as they're walking, they are playing with little pieces of grass or sticks or something, which they also do a lot in the 1995 *Pride and Prejudice*. I think it's just a miniseries thing to just pick up little pieces of grass and fiddle with them between your fingers.

Zan: Because you're having these long conversations, you just got to do something with your hands apparently. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, I do that too. I remember feeling very represented when I saw it in the 1995. When I saw it again in this, I was like, "Wait a minute,-

Zan: It's a thing[?].

Molly: -maybe I was born in the wrong era."

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Knightley starts digging himself this hole, because she says something about Emma being-- I don't know, what she says about Emma being like a pretty young woman or something.

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And then he's like, "Emma is the prettiest in her family. I mean, [00:44:00] Emma is of special regard. I love to look at her."

[laughter]

Zan: I wrote that down too. I love to look at her. It's like--

Becca: "Fine, you got me. You got me. She's hot. I know."

Diane: She is so hot, but that's not what we're here to talk about, okay? [Zan laughs] Yes, she is very, very hot, but I am not here to talk about the fact that she is so, so hot.

Becca: We don't need to discuss the fact that she is excruciatingly hot, [Zan laughs] because that's not what we're here to talk about.

[laughter]

Zan: You see Mrs. Weston the whole time just being like, "Are we done with that part yet?"

[laughter]

Molly: Because she's not saying anything. He just keeps going.

Zan: Yeah, he just keeps going. [laughs]

Molly: I love it.

Zan: It's beautiful.

Molly: I also love their friendship and the back and forth between the two of them because--

Zan: It's so good.

Molly: When it comes back a lot. It's so good.

Zan: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. There's not always room-- Again, it goes to miniseries having room for the whole story with a Jane Austen novel. In most adaptations of *Emma*, you don't really have room for the Mrs. Weston, Mr. Knightley dynamic, which is lovely. I love that you get it in this, like, full scenes of them. [00:45:00]

Zan and Diane: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: That it feels so, again, so organic to them that it's obvious that they have had many conversations about Emma in the past and other things. That's not the only interest that they have in common. But I think it's so, again, to see these friendships in this kind of community, how they evolve and how they are depicted is really lovely. Their friendship is adorable. Absolutely adorable.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Mm-hmm. So then we see Emma and Harriet bringing food to the poor. In the Town Square[?], Harriet sees Robert Martin. As Harriet and Robert Martin, who is adorable, by the way, are just talking, Emma is just giving him this open look of disdain like, "What is this piece of gum under my shoe?"

Zan: I could not stop watching her face, this whole scene. It was so good.

[laughter]

Molly: She had so many facial expressions. Yeah.

Zan: So many. She's like, "What? This guy? This is not true."

Diane: "Oh, gross. Ew. Ew, no, ew. Mm, I don't think so. [00:46:00] Ew. Go away."

Becca: [laughs]

Zan: Like, utter disdain, but also like, "This is implausible. How on earth could this be the case?" So many expressions.

Molly: Yeah. This is the moment for me where I was like, "Oh, she just doesn't understand what's happening around her," because Harriet's like, "What do you think of him?" And she's like, "Oh, my God. Ew."

[laughter]

Diane: It's so true. Oh, my gosh, she cannot even fathom that anybody would want to have a conversation with this man. She is appalled. She's absolutely appalled. It's so sad because he's such a sweet, precious, like, "Oh, little cinnamon roll." Like, "He must be protected at all costs." It's so sad. [laughs]

Molly: He really must. Yeah. Then she does another thing that is just completely not reading the room, which is Miss Bates leans out and she's like, "Emma, I got a letter from Jane. You guys should come in and hear it and hang out for a little bit." And Emma goes, "I'm sorry. We're going to visit the poor." [00:47:00] Like, we see the Bates' in their tiny little apartment that's crumbling around them with their meager little fire and it's like, "That is the poor. There are other poor." But that's so rude.

Zan: Then she immediately to Harriet, it's like, "That was close." Like, "Whoa."

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: So yeah, it's those juxtapositions are so strong in this adaptation.

Molly: Yeah. As Emma and Harriet are walking, Emma convinces Harriet that Robert Martin is nothing, and she should start thinking of other men who are superior conveniently as they are passing Mr. Elton's house, and he's standing [Zan laughs] outside like, "Hello."

Diane: Emma does that wave thing. She's just like, "Hey, check out our basket."

Molly: She's like, "Look what we're doing. We're going to do something good."

Diane: Which is so funny because it's like, if she knew anything about Mr. Elton's character she should know that he could care less about her charitable good works. Like, he does not care.

Molly: No.

Becca: I will also say, we didn't mention it yet, but the fact that Emma is making Harriet carry three times the amount of [Zan laughs] shit that she's [00:48:00] carrying.

Molly: And the poor girl's dropping stuff and she's like, "Oh, God."

Zan: She's even like, "Harriet, you'll get the hang of it."

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. Well, speaking of this Mr. Elton,-

Diane: Oh. Whof. Wow.

Molly: -first of all, I found this Elton attractive.

Diane: Well, that's the thing. Everything this Mr. Elton says, it's just, I can't decide, like, am I reading the book wrong? Have I been reading the book wrong the whole time? Is Emma really that dumb? Because if Mr. Elton of this miniseries is the same Elton of the book, you would have to be an absolute moron to not understand that this man is into you. Everything he says to Emma has such a sexual undertone. Everything he says is like, it's just a full-on tone of seduction. He might as well just be like, "Hey, baby, what's going on?"

Molly: Yeah. That's exactly what he's doing.

Zan: He's always getting so close to her whenever he has that opportunity. [00:49:00] I wrote a same note where I was like, "It's so overt that he is into Emma. There's no way to read this as interest in Harriet." She's willfully misunderstanding every interaction with this dude.

Diane: He says stuff that aren't even sexual innuendo. But the way he says it makes me think, "Oh, is that like a term that I don't know. Do I need to look that up on Urban Dictionary?" Because I feel like it's sexual, even though what he's saying is not actually sexual.

Molly: Yeah. I've only seen three adaptations at this point, but all of the Eltons have been very obvious in that way and I'm like, "Oh, we really got the book through Emma's perspective, [Diane laughs] because that's the only way that we wouldn't have noticed." I'm sure maybe other people noticed that he was flirting with Emma earlier on than did, but she

really tries not to understand. This one, because he's hot, it's like more sexy and less creepy, at least for me.

Diane: Yeah. Well, I think [00:50:00] Alan Cummings is definitely doing that whole like, "Oh, I'm being pretty obvious." But it's also the way he plays it is a little bit funnier. The way that this actor, Blake Ritson, I think--

Becca: Blake Ritson.

Diane: Yeah. The way that he plays it is just, he's like, "I'm hot. I know it. You know it." [giggles]

Becca: Well, what I find fascinating is that, Blake Ritson is like a leading man, and yet another guy who has been without spoilers in a *Mansfield Park* adaptation.

Diane: Also playing Edmund Bertram.

Zan: Edmund Bertram.

Becca: And he is married to Hattie Morahan, who played Elinor Dashwood in the 2008--

Molly and Becca: *Sense and Sensibility*.

Molly: Yup.

Becca: Yeah.

Diane: I love the world of Austen adaptations. [giggles]

Zan: I do too. Loving it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But the thing about him that's so interesting is that, we've had Alan Cumming, handsome man, the guy who plays Elton in the 2020 *Emma* also very handsome. But they play them so comedically like skivvy, and they are comedic character actors that [00:51:00] it's so obviously like [makes retching noises]. This Elton, I want to commend him as an actor because he's still gross.

Zan: [giggles] Oh, yeah.

Becca: But he's so hot. We will get there, but it makes Knightley's phrase ring true that when he says like, "He knows he's a handsome devil,-

Zan: He knows he's a handsome.

Becca: -he will not marry beneath him. He will not marry cheaply." That, to me, makes him like, I suppose, the most book accurate Elton because he's creepy and gross, but he's also really-- You can see why some woman would fall for that.

Zan: Right.

Becca: Yeah.

Diane: You could see why he could run off to bath and get himself a wife.

Zan: Easily.

Diane: Pretty quickly. Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. This Mr. Elton is exactly the kind of guy that I had a crush on in college.

Diane: [laughs]

Becca: Yes, that's actually very true.

Diane: He does seem like he would definitely be in a band and talk to you about his band all the time. Like, all the time.

Molly: Sounds exactly like a guy that I had a crush on in college.

[laughter]

Diane: I think Mr. Elton is a good contrast to [00:52:00] Mr. Knightley who, Jonny Lee Miller, very hot. But they've given him a pretty simple haircut, he's pretty straightforward. And Mr. Elton, he's got that kind of rakish. Like, "I've got a little bit of hair on my forehead."

Molly: He's got really good eyebrows.

Diane: Yeah. I'm tasseled, and like, "I'm moody and broody." He's giving off those vibes.

Zan: [crosstalk] fell that he cares about the fact that he knows he's good looking, whereas Knightley's like, "I do not need to put effort into this. I need to impress no one."

Diane: And that is hot.

Zan: It's hugely attractive. Yeah.

Becca: Oh, yes. Also, Elton's haircut is also like peak 2009 energy. Like, not at all Regency Era.

Zan: Yeah. Emo kind of--

Unison: Yeah.

Zan: Definitely.

Molly: So Emma and Harriet are painting and Elton comes up and he's like, "That is a very good tree, Harriet."

[laughter]

Molly: It is not reader a very good tree.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: As they're painting, we have this sweet moment between Mr. Woodhouse and Mrs.

[00:53:00] Weston where Mrs. Weston is saying that, "Emma's all grown up now and her work as governess is done, but she's always going to be their friend and she'll be there for both of them." And meanwhile, Emma gets Mr. Elton to "commission," a painting of Harriet as she does. She's giving him these flirty glances, which she doesn't mean to, but that's just how her face is.

Zan: It's so communicative that he's like, "I can read that. I've got you." Yeah.

Molly: She's trying to flirt on Harriet's behalf, but it's working in the opposite way.

Diane: Yeah. Because that always does the trick. Always. Always.

Molly: Totally.

Diane: Yeah. Mm-hmm.

Becca: There's also a sense to which this Emma is so playful with how she speaks to everyone that it seems like she is flirting with everyone all the time.

Diane: Oh, yeah.

Molly: I really loved this moment where she goes, "Whose painting do you think Mr. Elton just commissioned?" And Harriet's like, "Who's?" And Emma, her eyes just take up her whole face.

Zan: Her eyebrows are going up and--

[laughter]

Molly: Yeah. **[00:54:00]** She's like, "Hello." Anyway, and then she waves goodbye at Mr. Elton.

Zan: Of course.

Molly: Because she has to.

Zan: Big wave. Big wave.

Molly: Then we see Mr. Martin coming to see Mr. Knightley and he's so nervous he almost runs away. We get these back to back scenes where he comes up to Donwell Abbey, and Emma is painting Harriet, and Harriet's holding an urn above her head and her arms are shaking and she is in so much pain, [Zan laughs] and Elton is scolding her for moving. He's like, "You must be perfect." But while he's not looking, she steals his tiny little pencil.

Zan: It's so funny because she's doing it-- She's trying to be so sneaky about it, where it's like, the fact that they gave a whole scene to her stealing the pencil is so delightful.

Diane: I just kept waiting for that urn to just drop--

Zan: Just drop.

Diane: --and just crash all over the ground.

Zan: She's holding it over her head with one hand while she's trying to get that pencil.

[laughs]

Diane: I've seen this before and I'm still waiting for her to drop that urn.

Molly: Yeah. But as soon as he put his little **[00:55:00]** notebook and pencil down, I was like, "Oh, this is the moment-- They're going to show us." They're probably going to show us the gauze too, if the gauze thing happens. But I'm hoping it does because gross, but also, [Diane laughs] I love it. Meanwhile, Emma is misunderstanding every single thing that comes out of his mouth and is giving Harriet these glances like, "Aren't you so glad he's in love with you?" And Harriet's like, "Yeah, this is the best." And then we cut back to John and Robbie. Robbie is talking about some expansion project, and Knightley is saying, "He doesn't really need his permission, he already seems set on." While they're talking about the farm, they're also clearly not talking about the farm.

Diane: I was enjoying that. They were using euphemistic terms like, "This new expansion project."

Molly: Yeah.

Diane: It's like, "That's marriage."

[laughter]

Molly: "The expansion of your family."

Becca: Also, this Robert Martin, we don't get much time with him here, but he's so endearing.

Molly: I know.

Becca: Molly knows this because she knows my fiancé, Mike, quite well, but I love me a [00:56:00] noodle man, [Diane laughs] and he's just very tall, lanky,-

Diane: Lanky.

Becca: -unassuming. Oh.

Molly: So then Harriet gets a letter, which we all know what that is, and she immediately runs to Emma. When she gets there, Emma is telling her servant Amy that there's too many pies. This is a moment where I felt like there was just such a juxtaposition between their two lives, because Emma's wearing this boring gray dress. She is talking to her servant about the menu of the house. She's all by herself in this giant house. Harriet's just gotten a letter of proposal, and she's so excited and she's wearing this green dress and she runs to, her and she's like, "Oh, my God, oh, my God, oh, my God, can you believe this happened to me?" They are just in such different phases of their live.

Zan: Yeah.

Diane: Emma really seems like the old lady in the scene, right?

Becca: Oh, yeah.

[laughter]

Zan: They even dressed her that way.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: I was noticing that too. She's wearing a watch, like, a pocket watch type situation, which is also this [00:57:00] matronly thing to be wearing. And so I was very much so noticing the same thing with the costume, Molly, where she is not in her normal vibrant colors. Emma looks like she's a matron in this.

Molly: Yeah. Because this is just her everyday life.

Diane: Yeah. She's got an estate to run.

Zan: Which makes, again, what happens next when she's going to mess around with Harriet's life a little bit harder to handle. Oh.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: Yeah. Because Harriet has come to her, and they sit down at the fireplace, and Harriet is looking for advice, and Emma's about to mess up this girl's life. She's asking, "If it's a good letter," and she's like, "What should I do?" And Emma's like, "Well, you must be conscious of the pain you're going to inflict." And she goes, "So you think I ought to refuse him?" And Emma has another moment where she just isn't reading the room, she goes, "Ought to. Like, "What? What are you talking about?" And then she's like, "Oh, you [00:58:00] want to say yes?"

Zan: So awkward.

Diane: She's like, "What do you want to do?" Harriet's like, "Yes. I mean, no. I mean, yes. I mean, yes, no. I mean, what?"

Zan: Tell me what I want.

Diane: It is interesting. In the novel, I feel like Emma reach[?] is more overtly manipulative in the scene, where she's just immediately like, "Oh, you weren't planning to say yes, were you do?" It seems like, she knows what she's doing. Whereas in this scene, it seems like a much more genuine, just like shock, like, "Oh, no." [laughs]

Molly: She truly does not understand how Harriet could like this man.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: So she's like, "You want to what?" [Diane laughs] And then she's like, "Oh, I mean, if you want to, I can't convince you not to. But it doesn't feel like it's out of a place of being conniving. It's more out of like, this is genuinely what I feel and I can't help you if you feel differently."

Diane: [laughs]

Zan: Hmm. Yeah.

Molly: But then when Harriet says that she's going to refuse him and she says, "Do you think I am right?" Emma has this beat, and then she's like, "Oh, my God, this is the best news ever. [00:59:00] I could not have been your friend if you were Mrs. Martin of Abbey Mill Farm."

Diane: [laughs]

Zan: Yeah. Well, and then she immediately says, "I don't want to lose you." She says that to Harriet, which is, again, deeply revealing about Emma's motivations, whether she's conscious of them or not. But the fact that she says, "I don't want to lose you when I've just found you as a friend," she's just like, "I understand that you're lonely, but this is not maybe the best way to go about keeping friends." I don't know.

Diane: Yeah. It's the kind of friendship where you're not actually concerned about your friend and what's in their best interest.

Zan: Yes.

Diane: Your friendship is selfish and only about-- because Emma knows she could meet some random-- obviously, not with her dad, but there is a situation where she could meet some random guy and move off to wherever or something could happen to her or whatever, and then Harriet has no one. So it's a situation where, obviously, we know how it ends [01:00:00] in the novel, but Emma could have really ruined this girl's life. Like, she could have really destroyed her long-term prospects here- .

Becca: Absolutely.

Diane: -and really for no other reason, and just she wants somebody to play, basically.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: I think that's why some people do have that big problem with liking Emma. Again, and that's why acting as Romola Garai does is so essential to being able to maybe keep an audience invested, because it's so easy for this to be a massive turnoff to Emma. You just can't recover from this, if you're realizing how deeply she's playing with people's lives.

Diane: Yeah. Because the way Romola plays her, she doesn't come off as-- It's selfish, but it's not-- [crosstalk]

Zan: It's a naive selfish.

Diane: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. It's spoiled.

Diane: Yes.

Becca: Sheltered. Ignorant.

Molly: Yes.

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: It doesn't justify it, but it at least is the context that she brings to it, rather than being like, "Girl, no, you're not going to marry him. I need you," in a very overtly and planned way, [01:01:00] which I don't think-

Molly: Right.

Zan: -comes across in this adaptation at all.

Molly: Right. So we then cut to the revealing of the painting. [Zan laughs] It's not bad.

Becca: [laughs]

Zan: But that's about it, right?

Molly: Yeah, it's fine. It's very pale.

Becca: It's fucking mid. We can say it.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: I think that's accurate.

Molly: It almost looks like a colored pencil drawing.

Zan: Yeah, with a little bit of watercolor going on.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Just a little bit of watercolor.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: It's very pale.

Molly: I liked what Elton said. He said, "In only a few deaf strokes." Because there's not a lot going on.

Zan: There's not much there. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. This Harriet is so genuine and sweet. You can really see how impressionable she is. She's really thinking that he's calling her beautiful when he's calling the painting beautiful, and she's so excited. Whereas I feel like not to compare, because they are both

phenomenal. But Mia Goth in the 2020 [01:02:00] was an excellent Harriet, but she was so almost over the top excitable, and this one is more subtle and sweet and impressionable. Both are good. They're just different.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: So then we get Knightley walking through the countryside to beautiful cello music, which I wrote down. Knightley walking through the countryside to beautiful cello music is my personality now.

Becca: [laughs]

Diane: Knightley can walk across a field towards me whenever he feels like. That's just fine. Great.

Zan: That B roll should be spliced in every other scene, [Duane laughs] I think, is what we need. He likes to walk. We need more visual evidence of his enjoyment of walking.

Molly: Exactly. Like, he talks about walking, we want to see him walk.

Zan: Give us the walk.

Becca: With cello.

Diane: He knows how to stride. He knows how to stride.

Becca: Yes. Oh.

Molly: Yeah. And that cello music is just perfect walking music.

Zan: It is.

Molly: I'm going to walk to it.

Zan: It is.

Molly: [01:03:00] Yeah. He arrives at Hartfield, and Mr. Woodhouse is going off on his third turn around the grounds and he's just asked Emma to tighten his scarf for him. I love this sweet little moment. I am comparing, but both are very good interpretations of Mr. Woodhouse. But like Bill Nighy and his way over the top and-

Becca: Sprightly, almost.

Molly: -sprightly Mr. Woodhouse versus Michael Gambon, who's just sad and lonely, and Emma's all he has, and he needs to be taken care-

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: -in a way that I think Bill Nighy doesn't and both are, again, good interpretations. This one just really hit.

Becca: Yeah. We haven't talked much about it, but obviously in this adaptation, Mr. Woodhouse is played by the really recently deceased Michael Gambon. I actually am pleased-- not pleased, but moved [01:04:00] that we're covering this one, like, so close to his death, because it makes my heart hurt to see his performance, which is wonderful in this. I think Mr. Woodhouse is of a piece with Mr. Weston and the Bates' in this adaptation where that opening scene setting that they did really gives gravitas to his funnier quirks that are usually played for laughs in adaptations. And so he's a very heartfelt rendition of Mr. Woodhouse. His second scarf is absolutely darling. His reluctance to take a third turn around the garden is also absolutely darling.

Zan: Yeah. Because like Molly mentioned at the beginning, where he's literally just holding on to his two daughters after his wife has just passed, he's physically just holding on to them. That's a deeply moving thing. How Michael Gambon performs that is also just-- Oh, it's heavy. But then also the little interactions in this coming [01:05:00] scene between Michael Gambon and Romola Garai as a father-daughter duo, like, the fact that from a distance, she's checking, "Is your scarf on tight?" They're signaling to each other across the garden and things like that, where it's like that relationship is so, so close in this in a way that-- There's a lot of quirks, and there's a lot of maybe negligence on Mr. Woodhouse's part in terms of accepting of what his daughter needs. But their relationship is so adorable in this. Every interaction is sweet, and I love that.

Molly: Yeah. There was one moment that I wanted to mention earlier that you just made me think of, but when Miss Taylor first gets engaged and Emma's talking about, "Oh, she'll have a family next." He's like, "A Family? No, mother's die. That's a fact."

Diane: Die. Yup.

Molly: Oh.

Zan: The look that they give each, where she's like, "I know."

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Yeah, it's such a small line, but it's so powerful, given the upfront story that we've been.

Molly: [01:06:00] Yeah.

Diane: Yeah.

Molly: It could almost sound funny in the context because he's saying, "She can't have a family, mother's die." But the way he says it and because of the context, it's just heartbreaking.

Zan: Yeah. And again, it's that eye acting that Romola Garai is doing, because she sees it. She sees what he's actually communicating is, "Your mother died."

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: She receives that nice and loud, and it's pretty powerful.

Diane: Well, and even after the scene at the very, very beginning, after they're showing the funeral service, and he says something to her and Isabella like, "You'll never leave." He's just like, "Okay, we're going to make the house so safe, and nobody's ever going to go outside, and we'll never leave, and everybody will be okay."

Zan: Yeah.

Diane: Yeah, it's quite moving. So I don't know, I think he's also my favorite Mr. Woodhouse of the various adaptations. I really enjoyed the 2020 *Emma*. Bill Nighy, he's such a riot, right? That's just such a funny, [Becca laughs] hilarious performance. [01:07:00] I love it within the context of that film, but it's definitely not the Mr. Woodhouse of my imagination, like, when I'm reading the book. Michael Gambon is really delivering that for me.

Molly: Totally. Yeah, he's exactly what I pictured.

Zan: This is sort of a tangent. I don't know, if any of you have seen the film adaptation of Elizabeth Gaskell's *Wives and Daughters*. He is also a father in that one. He loses a son in that piece. Michael Gambon, the grief that he portrays when he loses his oldest son, he's just howling with this grief and he just physically can't embody. He's physically holding him, carrying him at one point and then just staggering. The performance in those scenes alone are enough to make you know that Michael Gambon is a powerhouse actor.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Zan: So gorgeous.

Becca: Incredible. Oh. I think that sort of energy of grief is underlying his performance here in a way that's really interesting because often Mr. Woodhouse [01:08:00] is the butt of the joke in, both the book and in most movie adaptations. But this adaptation never lets you forget why he is the way he is, and how much love he has for his daughters, and particularly the special relationship between him and Emma. So I feel like that grief is that undercurrent that gives his performance so much heart.

Zan: Love it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So Knightley and Emma are alone in the house. Knightley is really excited about this piece of gossip. He's like, "I think I have something that even you are going to like." And he's like, "Do you have any of your brides and bridegrooms under there, like, her dolls?" And she's like, "No, I'm quite grown out of dolls." But we all know she's not.

Becca: Oh, no.

Molly: And then he tells her about Mr. Martin's intent to propose to Harriet, and Emma tells him that Harriet has already refused him. Commence the bickering.

Diane: Oh, it's so good. It's so good.

Becca: Oh, good.

Molly: I couldn't write any notes down during this scene because I was just so engrossed in what was happening. It's also basically [01:09:00] word for word what happens in the book. So it's just like, they really got it down and they're yelling at each other. They're angry. She blares out, "Men don't like girls who argue."

Becca: While she's arguing with her future husband, it's perfect.

Zan: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: In his eyes, he's like, "What do you mean, men don't like girls who argue? I like you," but he doesn't say it.

Zan: He's like, "This is hot. What are you talking about?"

Molly: Yeah. [laughs]

Diane: Their face acting is so good because her eyes are getting bigger and bigger, and she's getting so frustrated. He does this kind of--

Zan: He does the "Ugh." [crosstalk]

Diane: Yeah. He does this exasperated where he's just like, "I can't even talk right now."
[laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Also, what I love about her performance in this scene is that she seems surprised that he's so upset.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: She's like, "Oh, yeah, this is just going to be something he's lightly annoyed at me for and we'll move on with our lives because that's what he does. He's annoyed by me."

Zan: Mm-hmm.

Becca: But he keeps getting madder and madder, and she's like, "What is your problem? I did the right thing. I didn't think this was a [01:10:00] big deal."

Molly: Yeah. And then in the middle of their argument, Mr. Elton arrives, and she just runs outside. She's like, "This can wait." And she goes outside and gives him the painting.

Knightley is watching her through the window, and Elton is like, "I think he winks at her when he leaves." He like, "Salutes her."

Zan: He's like, "Does like a salute thing. Uh-huh."

Molly: Yeah. And then he winks very faintly with one eye. [Zan laughs] Knightley is watching this whole thing, and you can see him realizing that Elton is getting signals from Emma that Emma's not intentionally giving off and he's like-- I think he starts to put it together there.

When she comes back inside, he says, "That man is so full of himself. I'm surprised he can stay on that horse."

Zan: Love that line.

Diane: So good.

Molly: They laugh together, but then it's right back to the fighting.

Zan: Yes.

Molly: They pick up right where they left off.

Diane: It's so good because it's 10 minutes of them just arguing. It's a fight that happens in these stages, because they're interrupted by Mr. Elton. And then at one point, he walks [01:11:00] away, and then he comes back and they're arguing through the window. I love it.

Becca: Yeah. And again, Emma keeps thinking the fight's over, and she's like, "Oh, God, you're still on this?"

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: She's like, "Okay, it's time for tea. Let's just tea."

Zan: I love that line. It's when he disagrees with her, she's like, "I really think it's time for tea. And yet, it hasn't appeared."

Molly: [laughs]

Zan: Really upset. She's like, "Change the subject."

Molly: She is so used to things just appearing when she needs them also. [giggles]

Zan: Yes. "Life is supposed to go my way."

Becca: Yeah.

Diane: The two of them here is just exquisite foreplay.

Zan: Like you said, it happens in the stages. So it's like, the first one is just like it's almost more banter at first, where it's like, "Ugh, what is up with it's?" It's almost playful.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: There's a lot of good push and pull, and then we get the break with Mr. Elton, and then it comes back, and then it gets a little bit more intense.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Diane: Well, at what point Mr. Knightley's like, "Oh, by the way, if Mr. Elton's the one that you're thinking about, I've got something to tell you." And it's like, "Ooh, gloves are off."

Zan: That's when he comes back the third time and he's like, [01:12:00] "You are wrong."
[laughter]

Molly: Yeah. He, at first, thought that Harriet was bad for Emma.

Diane: Mm0hmm.

Molly: But when they come back after Mr. Elton, he's like, "I think that you are the bad influence on Harriet. I think you're bad for her."

Zan: Yeah.

Molly: Like, turning it as an insult on her instead of the other way around.

Diane: Which is just the worst thing you could say to Emma, because she's over here like, "I am such a good friend."

Zan: "I am a patroness. Thank you."

Diane: I am Lady Catherine to Harriet's, Mr. Collins, okay?" [Zan laughs]

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Diane: She should be so grateful.

Molly: She says that he's just annoyed because her advice was the one that prevailed. This makes him walk out of the house.

Zan: So mad.

Molly: He's angry. Then he turns and comes back, and she thinks that they're done fighting yet again. [Zan laughs] She turns around and she's like, "I'm so pleased you've come back for we will always be friends." And he's like-

Becca: He's like, "No. Not what I'm here for."

Molly: -"No." [Zan laughs] That's when he says the thing about Mr. Elton, and then storms off just as it starts to rain, and that's the end of that episode.

Diane: So good.

Becca: I love that he ends it with that reference to the [01:13:00] dolls, which opens it up. He says, "Harriet and Robert are not your playthings. They are not dolls."

Molly: Yes.

Diane: And just turns around.

Zan: "One day, you're going to regret that you meddled," and walks out. Ooh, it's such a mic drop for Mr. Knightley.

Diane: You hate to see him go, but you love to watch him walk away.

Molly: [laughs]

Zan: He walks in the rain. What is not to like about walking in the rain with Knightley?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yes. I feel like I have to give shouts to the very last line, which is, "Mr. Woodhouse coming back seeing Mr. Knightley leave and going, "Oh, I knew I should not have taken that last turn."

[laughter]

Molly: Yeah.

Zan and Diane: Oh.

Zan: So sweet and so not aware of what happened. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Nope. Not at all. All right, I think that does bring us to the end of the episode, which brings us to Becca's study questions, the questions we ask at the end of each movie adaptation, starting with, what is your favorite line delivery? I can start.

Zan: [laughs]

Becca: So I think, first of all, I will say, the entirety of that last [01:14:00] fight between Emma and Knightley, every single delivery in that scene could qualify as best line delivery, in my opinion. But because there's too many, I can't pick one. So instead, I'm going to go back to a consistently repeated line through the entire episode, which is, every single time Romola Garai says the name Jane Fairfax,-

[laughter]

Becca: -there is a way in which she delivers Jane Fairfax with the same rhythm each time. It's with so much disdain, fury, and envy each time she says, "It's Jane Fairfax. Jane Fairfax."

[laughter]

Becca: I love it, because you can see she is the villain in little fantasy that she's making for herself.

Diane: Mm-hmm. I had that as well, actually, just that entire argument between Knightley and Emma. But if I had to pick out a specific line from that argument, it would just be Emma's like, "I think it's time for tea."

Zan: [laughs] I love that one so much. "And yet, it has not appeared."

Diane: Her eyes are taking up fully two-thirds of her face when she says [01:15:00] that line, and it's perfect. I just love it.

Zan: See. And mine was also from the argument, because again, the whole thing is gold. But when Mr. Knightley gets so upset and he's like, "Oh, better to have know it's than to misapply them the way you do."

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Zan: I didn't get that verbatim, but where he's just like, "Mm, what is wrong with the way you're using your logic?"

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: The delivery on that, nailed it. He just nailed it.

Diane: Jonny Lee Miller does exasperation-

Zan: So well.

Diane: -so well.

Becca: Perfect.

Diane: Oh, yeah.

Zan: Yeah, he nailed that line for me.

Molly: Mine is also from the argument. Though I did write down a couple, so I'll give one just top us off. But from the argument, Emma saying, "Let us, as you say, live in the real world where men always reject a girl with a pretty face in favor of one with a well-informed mind."

Becca: Incredible.

Molly: Iconic. And then also Jonny Lee Miller saying, "I love to look at her."

[laughter]

Diane: That is a great line.

Becca: Incredible.

Zan: I love to look at her. [laughs] [01:16:00]

Diane: She's very, very, very hot, okay? Okay. I'm glad. Okay. Can we admit it? Yes."

Becca: "We can get it out of the way. Fine. Fine. She's hot."

Zan: [laughs] "I love to look at her, okay? I said it."

[laughter]

Becca: Notable changes from book to film. Obviously, this is a much more accurate one, so it's a little bit more difficult. But to the extent you've noticed—

Diane: I think just the framing device, for me. We talked about earlier, just the way that the focus is much more-- The novel really opens with Emma Woodhouse, right. She is the center—

Zan: She's 21 years.

Diane: Exactly. Yeah. Handsome, clever, and rich. This one, you're opening with all three of these characters, Emma, Frank and Jane. And so, like Zan, you were saying that fairy tale, it feels like an adaptation of a novel that would start with, once upon a time, there were three children who had lost their mothers, and then going on from there. And of course, interestingly, we haven't even met the other two yet, other than [01:17:00] their child versions. I could see the like, coming up next episode. I got the glimpse of Jane Fairfax. I'm like, "Ah, she arrives."

Molly: Yeah, I think I agree with that. I think that's the biggest one in this episode.

Zan: I love the addition of the dolls everywhere. I love that the dolls make the opening sequence, the credit roll. I think that the doll motif is so-- It's a tiny bit on the nose, but it's also very appropriate for the way that the film is set up. Especially with the first episode, the fact that that groundwork of, "They are not your dolls." I think that that's a really lovely through line for this first episode, particularly.

Diane: We're hitting themes.

Zan: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Yes. I agree the framing device, particularly the highlighting of the plight of the Bates' and Mr. Weston definitely is a big change. But for the sake of diversity, I will also say Emma calling Isabella and John as a couple adds [01:18:00] to a idea that she has a pattern of matchmaking, so to speak. So it gives her more fodder than she has in the book to believe she is a matchmaker.

Diane: It's also just fun, because this first episode-- The first half of this entire episode is basically like stuff that happens before the book starts.

Molly: Right.

Speaker 5: So we get a little bit this backstory. It's kind of fun to see a little bit of John and Isabella's courtship. It's fun.

Molly: Yeah. Also, I think in the book, or maybe it's just the last two that we watched, but I feel like they took some of the love out of John and Isabella's relationship that I don't know if that was so much in the book or not that they were always bickering.

Zan: Yeah, 1996 could go either way. But the 2020 *Emma*, for sure, the two of them hate each other. [laughs]

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Zan: It's sad. I think at this one, they show a little bit of maybe disillusionment when she's got six children around.

Molly: Right.

Zan: But it's not animosity.

Molly: No.

Zan: Obviously, they've got a great sex life, but--
[laughter]

Becca: [01:19:00] You have to have that many kids.

Zan: Right. Yeah, when you take out the love of this supposedly iconic love match, it hurts my little romantic heart a little bit to see adaptations do that.

Molly and Diane: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Diane: This one plays more as like, he's crotchety John Knightley at his desk working on his whatever and stuff. But you get the sense that they are--

Molly: Yeah. He still calls her my love.

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: But they're playing in the garden. They're literally chasing each other in the garden. That's adorable. I love that.

Becca: Okay. So third question is, favorite and least favorite? We'll start with least favorite, so we get the negativity out of the way first thing in this episode.

Diane: Okay. Mine is very fussy, so it doesn't really bother me, bother me, but I don't like Harriet at the dinner party. I'm okay with the conversation stuff, like, her being like, "Oh, Almighty." That's fine. But the fact that she does not know where to put her napkin and how to use her spoon, [01:20:00] I mostly dislike that in this adaptation because it's an insult to the good work of Mrs. Goddard, who you can guaran-damn-tee would make sure that her charges knew how to eat appropriately at a dinner party. I'm just saying. [laughs]

Zan: Especially before bringing out her, she would be like-- Even if she didn't already have that info, she would have been like, "BTDubs, let's get you ready."

Diane: Mrs. Goddard would make sure that she understood basic dinner party etiquette. So it's insulting to Mrs. Goddard.

Becca: That is such a good point. That is such Goddard slander in this adaptation.

Diane: [laughs]

Zan: We will not stand for it.

Becca: My least favorite part is also Harriet related, but even smaller. I understand it might be period accurate, but her hair just sends me, in this adaptation, [Zan laughs] like crimped curl, bangs that go all the way back. She's such a pretty girl. But it's like they did that to make her look like a mop next to Emma. [Zan laughs] I don't understand what's going on. Because Emma's hair looks gorgeous and Harriet's looks like, [01:21:00] "Oh, man. All right." Yeah, that's my big favorite part.

Diane: Well, it's interesting, because actually, Emma's hair looks much more undone and something that she threw together herself without the help of a lady's maid. Whereas Harriet's hair looks like something that took hours to do. It would really be the exact opposite in terms their stations.

Zan: Well, and Harriet is supposed to be attractive. She is an attractive. The actress is adorable. She's beautiful. But the fact that they made her her styling a little less aesthetic

when they clearly are trying so hard with Romola Garai that it's an odd contrast to have to try to strike.

Becca: Yes.

Diane: I almost think that there's a little bit of trying to make her look like a doll –

Zan: Ooh, okay.

Zan: -that she does the way that her hair is styled, it's like so perfect, like, little perfect little ringlets and how it surrounds her face. She looks like a little doll.

Zan: Yeah, I can see that now. Yeah.

Molly: Mm-hmm. This is also incredibly nitpicky because I actually can barely think of anything I didn't like about this. [Zan laughs] **[01:22:00]** Even my girlfriend, she does not like watching Regency Era stuff. She was sitting on the couch playing solitaire and she was like, "I was actually paying attention to this one."

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: High praise.

Molly: She's like, "I think I liked." Like, "Maybe I want to finish watching."

Becca: Oh, my God.

Molly: Yeah, I know. But my thing is, I think that Emma's painting could have been worse, [Diane laughs] I think that in most adaptation or everything that we've seen so far, and also, when I read the book, I pictured her not being that good at painting, reading. She just doesn't continue tasks. She doesn't finish learning skills. She's not super good at piano. She's not supposed to be a good artist. While this was, again, a very mid painting, it was much better than anything I could accomplish. [Diane laughs] So I wish it was worse.

Becca: Fair.

Diane: It is funny when they're painting outside and he walks up to Emma's and like, "Wow, that looks like something from a very accomplished landscape architect, like, doing a rendering for what your gardens will look like." **[01:23:00]** [laughs]

Becca: Harriet's is like, "Crayon."

Molly: Yeah. She was like, "He said my painting was coming along nicely." And Emma went, "Wow. He really must be in love."

[laughter]

Becca: So shady.

Molly: Oh.

Zan: Oh, this is such a cop out. I didn't have a least favorite part. I think that there were just little things where I did notice what Diane was talking about with Harriet that it was so overt like, "This is how you scoop the spoon." You get Mr. Knightley noticing that that's the little bit of play between them. But I think that--

Diane: This is Goddard's slander. Mm-hmm.

Zan: Again, we won't stand for it. [Diane laughs]

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: So it's just those fiddly details. But in terms of storytelling, this is a really cohesive storytelling that they do in this one.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Absolutely. Which brings us to-- It's a good segue to what was our favorite thing in the adaptation. I'll start, I think the banter between Emma and Knightley. We said it before. I'll say it again. It's so pitch perfect in this one. You get the sense **[01:24:00]** that these two are like lifelong buddies who also bicker because they don't know how to deal with the fact that they're attracted to each other.

Diane: Yeah. My favorite part is Knightley's house, and Knightley in his house, [Zan laughs] and just Knightley walking around his house.

Zan: Knightley walking.

Diane: Yeah. Just we get those shots of the exte-- You have to get that. In the Austen adaptation, we got to see the hot real estate. That's essential. So getting to see the exterior of the giant Donwell Abbey. That scene with Robert Martin, that's such a great addition, and getting to see him in his study and I'm just like, "Oh, Knightley in his study with his books and it's all okay. Yeah. Mm-hmm."

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: it's working for me. That's all I'm saying.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Zan: [laughs] Well, I was going to say one of my favorite parts is the way that Miss Taylor, Mrs. Weston gets a lot more range, I think, in some ways, where-- Because she's such a pivotal part of Emma's childhood, [01:25:00] the fact that they extended that opening sequence so extensively, but in a way that allows-- what you're saying, Becca, where you get to sit with it a lot more. And so getting to see all those subtle moments between her and Emma where it's like, "I'm kind of a mother figure, but we're also just absolutely best friends. We're essential to each other in a lot of profound ways." The grief of the friendship, even though everybody's like, "It's half a mile. It's not a big deal." You get the sense that both women are grieving that this is a chapter end for them.

I think even, again, the interaction between Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Weston, all of the moments where we get to see her being this kind of incredible character that stays in the background a lot of times in the book, but she's so essential to Emma. I loved that we got a little bit more time with her.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. Similarly to that, I was going to say [01:26:00] that Mrs. Weston seems a little younger here than she is in other adaptations, which I loved because, first of all, Mrs. Weston is pretty young. She's just getting married. She's probably like in her early 30s, maybe her late 20s, and that allows her and Emma to have more of a friendship bond. So I really loved that as well. Also, Jonny Lee Miller.

Diane: Yeah. I like how Zan had this really deep, thoughtful answer and I'm like, "Let me tell you about Mr. Knightley being hot at his house." Okay.

Molly: He walks around on the grounds to cello music.

Becca: Jane Austen can be both and Jane Austen should be both.

Diane: [laughs]

Zan: Should be. Absolutely. It would be boring if we all said Jonny Lee Miller, but I think it would also be accurate if we all said Jonny Lee Miller.

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Well, I think then we can come to a consensus about who wins the episode.

[laughter]

Zan: It's never not going to be Jonny Lee Miller.

Molly: Right.

Zan: I have to say, Romola Garai's facial expressions win the [01:27:00] film, this episode for me.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I'd agree with that, only to be rivaled by Jonny Lee Miller's facial expressions.

Diane: Mm-hmm.

Zan: Right.

Molly: Right. I was going to say Jonny Lee Miller, but then I was like, "Well, since I could say that every single time, that would be boring. So let's just go ahead and say that for all of the episodes that goes without saying." And also, Romola Garai's eyeballs.

Zan: [laughs]

Diane: Yeah. Despite me being so thirsty about Mr. Knightley, I actually feel like the thing that wins this film for me is Mr. Woodhouse's scarf.

Zan: Oh, good choice.

Becca: Fantastic choice.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Scarf number one or Scarf number two though? [laughs]

Diane: I have a lot of feelings about him and his scarf. He's just always bundled up in it, even when he's inside. I'm like, "Oh, Mr. Woodhouse, as somebody who also runs cold, I see you."

Molly: Yeah.

Zan: Almost, I actually had two things written because I was going-- While I was watching it, and I had Mr. Woodhouse's gruel-

Diane: [01:28:00] Oh, yeah.

Zan: -obviously deserved a mention at least.

Molly: Of course.

Zan: Him sitting with his bowl of gruel, [laughs] I thought that was really adorable.

Becca: Absolutely.

Molly: Also shouts to the soundtrack.

Zan: Gorgeous.

Becca: Oh, yeah, absolutely goes without saying.

Molly: That Cello has to win something.

Becca: Specifically, the cellist on the soundtrack.

Molly: Yeah. That might be my winner, actually. I'll say that. The cellos.

Diane: Do you think that they projected that scene of Jonny Lee Miller walking wob?

Zan: The cello--? [crosstalk]

Diane: Yeah.

Zan: [laughs]

Molly: They had to, because the emotion was there.

Diane: Yeah.

Becca: Exactly. Okay, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. Zan and Diane, thank you so much for joining us. Do you want to tell the people where they can find you?

Diane: Sure, yeah. You can find us, I don't know, wherever fine podcasts are sold for free, because that's the way the podcasts work. You can find us on Instagram,

@thethingaboutausten. And on Twitter, *@austen_things*. [01:29:00] I do have to say, we're both pretty sporadic social media. We get on there occasionally to do a post, and then that's pretty much it. But you can definitely find us there. You can also just go right to our website, which is a *thingaboutausten.com*, and that has links to all of our socials and everything like that.

Molly: Awesome. Well, thank you so much for joining. This was an absolute blast.

Zan: Thank you. This was so fun.

Diane: Thank you so much for having us.

Becca: Yes. Listeners, for next time you're just going to watch the next part of this miniseries. It's going to be pretty straightforward for a while. So, until next time, stay proper-

Molly: -and don't forget to tie your second scarf nice and tight.

[laughter]

Becca: Perfect.

Molly: You don't want to be cold on your third turn about the garden.

[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, [01:30:00] check out our website 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.