

**Molly:** Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Karen, Caoilfhinn, Tiffany, Rona, and Desiree. Thank you so much for your support. If you want to be like these awesome people and get access to bonus content like our notes, outtakes, bonus episodes, and more, check out our Patreon at [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://patreon.com/podandprejudice). And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapters 29 and 30 of *Emma*.

**Becca:** All right. Pasta.

**Molly:** What kind of pasta are you having?

**Becca:** So, Mike's Instagram algorithm has been feeding him vegan recipes recently.

**Molly:** Oh, good.

**Becca:** Do you know that there's that one vegan Instagrammer, who just does recipes all the time, and she's German and she's really small and she does a lot of like-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Yeah. Maya, Fitgreenmind.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** So, she has an aglio olio recipe that's vegan, and it came up on Mike's algorithm the other day, and he was like, "Oh, my God, this looks amazing." And I had to be like, "Yeah, that's like a really common [00:01:00] Italian dish."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** So, he made it tonight and it's fantastic.

**Molly:** Oh, good.

**Becca:** So, I'm really enjoying myself. Although it's not vegan, he did add mozzarella cheese.

**Molly:** I have to tell you, I had a horrible thought while you were eating it.

**Becca:** What?

**Molly:** So, you took a bite of pasta. Listeners, Becca took a bite of pasta. So, there's still some pasta hanging out of her mouth, like she took a bite. Now, if you are watching *The Last of Us*--

**Becca:** I know what you're going to say. Say it.

**Molly:** So, the fungus grows out of the infected's mouth.

**Becca:** The mouth tendrils.

**Molly:** The mouth tendrils-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** As they say on The Ringer-Verse.

**Molly:** And in the episode that I just watched, a character who I will not name for spoiler purposes gets kissed by an infected person and the tendrils reach out and go into their mouth. Anyway, Becca just had pasta hanging out of her mouth like that. [laughs]

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

**Becca:** This is Becca.

**Molly:** This is Molly.

**Becca:** We are here to talk about Jane [00:02:00] Austen.

**Molly:** We are here specifically to talk about *Emma*.

**Becca:** *Emma*. Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen books before.

**Molly:** And I, Molly, had never read Jane Austen before starting this podcast.

**Becca:** If you want to check out Molly reading through *Pride and Prejudice* or *Sense and Sensibility* for the first time, you can check out 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 Volume II of *Emma*, Chapters 11 and 12. Or, if your book isn't broken up into volumes, that's Chapters 29 and 30.

**Becca:** We will call these the blue ball ball.

**Molly:** The blue ball ball. Wow.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Yes. That is what we will call these.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** So gross. Becca, do you want to tell the listeners where we left off?

**Becca:** So, Frank Churchill is in town, the son of Mr. Weston and therefore, Mrs. Weston's stepson. He and Emma are flirting up a storm by [00:03:00] being petty about pretty much everything, but particularly Jane Fairfax and her family. Jane has received a pianoforte, I should say.

**Molly:** From a mystery person.

**Becca:** A pianoforte from a mystery person. We have suspicions that Mr. Knightley might have the feelings for Jane Fairfax.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** And Harriet continues to pine over men.

**Molly:** Yeah. I feel like I'm being very loud tonight.

**Becca:** I also feel like I'm being very loud. I had one drink at a work happy hour, and I am bouncing off the walls, because I'm elderly now and cannot hold my liquor.

**Molly:** If I drink this too fast, I'll throw up.

[laughter]

**Becca:** Listeners, I don't know exactly what our age demographics are, but I feel like some of you are in our boat, which is approaching 30, it's making me become a person who can no longer drink alcohol.

**Molly:** Yeah, I can't hang, as the kids say.

**Becca:** [laughs] They say that? I don't even know.

**Molly:** I [00:04:00] feel like that's a thing. You know who can hang?

**Becca:** Frank Churchill?

**Molly:** Frank Churchill can hang.

**Becca:** Not Mr. Woodhouse.

**Molly:** Not Mr. Woodhouse. Yeah. No, actually, if there was a way to describe Frank Churchill, it would be "can hang and wants to hang so bad," which is how this chapter starts.

**Becca:** Yeah. The absolute life of the party, the blue balls ball.

**Molly:** Yes. So, it starts out with Jane Austen in her rocking chair saying, "Young people would be fine if they just never danced, but once someone gets a taste of dancing, they're going to want to hang." Frank Churchill wants to hang. He must have a dance. So, one day, Emma and Mr. Woodhouse are hanging out at Randalls, and Emma and Frank spend the whole time figuring out a plan for how they can have a dance at Randalls. Emma is only able to get behind this idea, because she knows that people were talking about her after the last party, and she knows that they were talking about how [00:05:00] she and Frank danced together, and she wants to give them something to talk about.

**Becca:** This is also a great moment, because she's like, "This is something where I'm at least a little bit better than Jane Fairfax. Whenever we play the piano at the same party, I'm embarrassed, but this time, I can be the center of attention."

**Molly:** Yeah, she's like, "Jane Fairfax dances like a wet towel."

**Becca:** Yeah, she's like, "Jane Fairfax, eat your heart out." Another reminder. What have we talked about with dancing in Jane Austen?

**Molly:** It's sexy.

**Becca:** And why is it sexy?

**Molly:** Because you get touch hands.

**Becca:** Exactly.

[laughter]

**Molly:** So, they want to have the same group for the party that were at the Coles party, and they start naming people. Emma, Harriet, Jane, the two Miss Coxes, plus the men, which would be the two Gilberts, the younger Mr. Cox, Mr. Weston, Frank, and Mr. Knightley, all in all, making five pairs. But here's my question. They want to have the same party from the Coles, but not invite the Coles?

**Becca:** That's such a good question and [00:06:00] I don't have answer for it. I looked it up too.

**Molly:** [laughs] It's just like, "This doesn't make sense." This happens again later where they're like, "Well, come ask Ms. Bates," and I'm like, "You didn't invite her."

**Becca:** Well, Ms. Bates, once they establish they're having a ball, I'm sure Ms. Bates is invited.

**Molly:** Okay. So, she's one of the women. I guess if you're inviting Jane, you're going to invite Ms. Bates. They're related. So, that'd be weird.

**Becca:** Absolutely.

**Molly:** But not the Coles though. Fuck them.

**Becca:** Oh, yeah. No, fuck the Coles.

**Molly:** So, they think that five couples doesn't make enough of a party. And so, they're like, "Oh, God, well, then who else can we invite?" They figure that if they're inviting the Gilberts,

then they have to invite their sister and their mother. And then, there's also the younger Cox boy. And then, Mr. Weston is like, "Oh, well, we have these cousins and this old friend of mine," and all of a sudden, they have 10 pairs.

**Becca:** And that is too big for Randalls.

**Molly:** Yeah. They're like, "Oh, crap, we don't have any room for all those people." Frank suggests that [00:07:00] maybe they could open up the doors between the two rooms at Randalls and use both, but Mr. Woodhouse says, "Well, the draft will make Emma catch a cold." And he turns to Mrs. Weston and he's like, "Frank is very thoughtless." And Mrs. Weston is like, "Oh, no, close all the doors. Close all the doors," because she doesn't want him turned against Frank, because she wants to get them together.

**Becca:** Exactly.

**Molly:** Oh, Mrs. Weston playing matchmaker all over the place.

**Becca:** Yeah. Honestly, she's taken over Emma's role in this regard in this book.

**Molly:** Yeah, she really has.

**Becca:** Emma's taking a break to flirt with Frank Churchill, and Mrs. Weston is like, "I'll take up the mantle."

**Molly:** Yeah, she's loving it. Frank then is like, "Oh, yeah, no, we'll be fine in this one room with 10 people." And Emma's like, "No, that's going to be too crowded. There's nothing worse than dancing in a crowded room." I have this image of Emma at a concert and everybody else is in regular everyday clothing, but Emma is in her Regency Era gown and she is just [00:08:00] miserable.

**Becca:** Also, not miserable and like, "Oh, I'm sorry. This is terrible." Wait, Emma miserable, which is like--

**Molly:** Becca's making faces at the camera.

**Becca:** It's a big eye roll and a snobby, "Oh, these people, they are grossed by me," situation.

**Molly:** I have to say this entire chapter though, as much as I want to say that Mr. Woodhouse is being ridiculous or any of them are being ridiculous, I get it. I don't want a crowded room. Well, I want the windows open. Later on, Mr. Woodhouse is going to be like, "Why would you ever open the windows?" But I'm saying like, "Keep the air flow coming."

**Becca:** This gives you COVID flashbacks, because nowadays we're all like, "Hey, let's keep a window open," just because we now understand how air circulates.

**Molly:** Yeah. And similarly, to what Emma's thinking right here, "Yeah, I don't want 10 people standing in this--" Sorry. "It'd be 20 people standing in this tiny room together." Like, [00:09:00] "Open up the doors. Let's get this party spread out 6ft apart."

**Becca:** Also, reminder that this is like the Regency Era. So, when they touch for the dances, we're talking palm touching, getting a little close. But when there's too many people around, there's a lot more closeness. It's not like we're having a grind train here or anything. This is supposed to be like a little distanced.

**Molly:** Right. So, Emma says, "Too crowded. We don't want people that close." And Frank is like, "Yes, totally. You're so right. It's the worst when it's too crowded. But the thing is that how else are we going to do it? I think it'll probably be fine. We started talking about a party and I don't want to disappoint anyone, and maybe we can fit 10 couples in this room. Fine." He's being very wishy washy.

**Becca:** Well, I mean, why does Frank want a ball?

**Molly:** So, he can dance with Emma.

**Becca:** So that he can do what?

**Molly:** So that he can touch hands with Emma. The hand flex.

**Becca:** Yeah. Frank Churchill is [00:10:00] trying to get a ball going, because he's enjoying the company of Highbury, but also because he wants touch palms.

**Molly:** The hottest thing.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm. As we've learned from not only Jane Austen books, but Jane Austen adaptations, which teach us that yearning is the key.

**Molly:** [gasps] And palm to palm is holy palmers' kiss.

**Becca:** This is too nerdy. This is too nerdy for our Jane Austen listeners. Molly is quoting Romeo and Juliet. When Romeo and Juliet meet and they touch palms for the first time, and then they make out. I feel like Shakespeare is like the pre-code era to everything that followed, but it is that same experience of touching someone for the first time. What they do in Jane Austen novels is they quip back and forth at each other for a while before they touch. By the time they do touch, it's like electricity.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Lightning bolt.

**Molly:** Electricity--

**Becca:** Are you singing *Billy Elliot the Musical*?

**Molly:** Yeah, [00:11:00] I'm sorry.

**Becca:** No, don't be. That's beautiful. Go on.

**Molly:** Sparks inside of me. And Emma does have a thought. She thinks to herself that, if she had intended to marry him, she would think more about his motives for everything, like, why he wants to have the ball, why he's disagreeing or agreeing with her? But she doesn't intend to marry him. So, it's fine. She'll just take the compliment.

**Becca:** Not to quote Shakespeare again, but the lady does protest too much.

**Molly:** Oh, my God, so much. Let's see, how many times can we quote Shakespeare in this episode?

**Becca:** Oh, God. Don't say that.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Have you not heard that I've had one alcohol already?

**Molly:** Yeah. And have you not heard that my alcohol is 15.4%?

**Becca:** [laughs] Oh, our poor listeners.

**Molly:** Okay. The next day, Frank comes to Hartfield in the morning and tells her that they've come up with a solution and they just need her to approve it. He's decided that the ball will be at the Crown Inn. He says, "You were totally right last night. [00:12:00] There was not enough room for all those people. I just wanted to have a ball. You know how it goes." And she's like, "Okay, yeah, that's a good plan. Let's do it." So, she goes to her dad with the idea.

He thinks it's a terrible idea, because the inn is going to be damp, there's no proper air circulation like we've said. How would he know that the rooms have been aired out properly? And Frank says, "Actually, it's much safer than doing the party at Randalls." This is one thing I wanted to ask about. He says that, "Mr. Perry might be sad about the change, but nobody else should be." And Mr. Woodhouse says, "You're wrong to think Mr. Perry as that sort of man."

**Becca:** I think what he's saying is that, "We'll give Mr. Perry less business because none of us will catch colds." And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "How dare you? Mr. Perry cares deeply for the health of everyone in this community."

**Molly:** I get it. I get it.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** I thought he was saying that, like, Mr. Perry cares [00:13:00] about not getting sick, so he would be upset. I didn't really get it. I get it now. Thank you for explaining.

**Becca:** [laughs] He's saying, "Yeah, we're going to give the doctor some business." And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "The doctor doesn't want business. The doctor only cares about the health of the people here."

**Molly:** Got it. So, Mr. Woodhouse and Frank are going at it. I want to say that they are not getting along.

**Becca:** Well, I find this interaction interesting, because if you compare it to a Mr. Knightley or a Mr. John Knightley, it's different in that. I think Frank is almost amused by Mr. Woodhouse.

**Molly:** Yes. In the same way that he's amused by Miss Bates.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Which is a little insulting.

**Becca:** It's a little Logan Huntzberger.

**Molly:** Very Logan Huntzberger.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Like, he's going to steal something of Mr. Woodhouse's behind his back and then hold it up to Emma and be like, "Hey, Emma, look at this thing that I stole from your [00:14:00] grandpa," or her dad rather.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Then, she's going to be like, "Put that back." Then she's going to get in trouble for it, similar to Season 5 of *Gilmore Girls*, for example.

**Becca:** Spoiler alert.

**Molly:** If anyone hasn't watched *Gilmore Girls* at this point, I am sorry for the number of references that we make on this show.

**Becca:** It's because *Gilmore Girls* is about old-school, high-class people.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** And also, a bit of a class critique, although slightly incomplete one. But putting that aside--

**Molly:** That's another podcast.

**Becca:** Yeah, that's another podcast. But it has similarities in how people interact in the dynamics of the relationships. So, it's really easy to point to these Jane Austen characters would be like that's a *Gilmore Girls* character.

**Molly:** Yeah, exactly.

**Becca:** That doesn't happen as easily with any pair as like Logan Huntzberger and Frank Churchill.

**Molly:** Yeah, they're so similar. So, Mr. Woodhouse asks him, **[00:15:00]** "Why the inn is a better choice?" And Frank says, "Well, it's larger. So, we will have no reason to open the windows. So, there won't be a draft, because there will be good enough airflow already." And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "I was never thinking about opening the windows. I wouldn't even open the windows at Randalls. Who's opening the windows at a party?" And Frank is like, "Ah, we young people occasionally slip up and open a window."

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "Oh, I guess, I'm not in touch with what people are doing these days, but I would never."

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** He then says that if Mr. And Mrs. Weston would come over and talk this whole thing over with him, perhaps, he could be convinced. Frank is like, "Well, I don't really have the time." And Emma immediately is like, "No, there's plenty of time. It's okay. Well, we'll get them to talk to you." Here's the thing. We talk about Frank being amused, but if he's trying to court Emma, he needs to cater more to **[00:16:00]** Mr. Woodhouse. He needs to coddle him like how everyone else does. Even though it's annoying, he has to.

**Becca:** Well, what does it say about Frank that he's not doing that?

**Molly:** Either he's not trying to court Emma, which is one theory of mine, or he doesn't care, because he's Logan Huntzberger and he doesn't need her parents' permission. Although Logan does ask, but that's a whole other thing.

**Becca:** Yeah. And it is also important to remember that Frank is not as polished as he should be all the time.

**Molly:** Right. He doesn't know societal.

**Becca:** He might know them, but he shirks them.

**Molly:** Yes, noted.

**Becca:** [giggles]

**Molly:** Emma points out that the inn is close for the horses to the stables. So, that'll be convenient for the horses. And Mr. Woodhouse says, "Well, I can't trust Mrs. Stokes," who I'm guessing is the innkeeper, "Because I don't even know what she looks like." Like, "How can I be sure she's airing out the rooms properly?" And Frank **[00:17:00]** says, "Well, don't worry. Mrs. Weston is going to take care of everything." And Emma says, "Oh, Papa, that must convince you, because Mrs. Weston is the most careful person we know." It's such the vibe of like, "Oh, if my friend who's so careful is going to this thing, I can go to that thing too."

**Becca:** Oh, we all had that friend where, like, if they were going to the party, your parents were cool with you going to the party?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Were you that friend?

**Molly:** Me? Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah, me too.

**Molly:** Yeah.

[laughter]

**Becca:** Being the friend, that's like, "Oh, she's a nice girl. Yeah, I'd go with her."

**Molly:** "Yeah. But you won't be drinking if Molly's there."

**Becca:** Yeah. It's like, "Oh, yeah, you'll get home safe if Becca's around."

[laughter]

**Becca:** This is what it means to be parent bait.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, Mrs. Weston parent bait.

**Becca:** Yes, absolute parent bait. Or, Miss Taylor, we should say if we're Mr. Woodhouse.  
[laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah, he keeps doing that. He'll in the middle of sentence, "Be poor, Ms. Taylor, that was."

**Becca:** It's like parentheses always. It's like, "Oh, Mrs. Weston. [00:18:00] We should say, poor Ms. Taylor."

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. It's great. I love it. Mr. Woodhouse then starts reminiscing about the time that Emma had the measles, because that was when Mrs. Weston, Ms. Taylor was taking care of her. He says, "Mr. Perry came over four times a day during that time" and blah, blah, blah. And then Frank is like, "Okay. Well, the Westons are actually at the Crown now and Emma, can you come and give them some advice and talk to them?" He knows just how to butter her up. He says, "They can do nothing satisfactorily without you." And she's like, "Okay, yeah, I guess I'll come." And so. they go to the Crown Inn and they find Mrs. Weston stressed and Mr. Weston just loving everything about it. Mrs. Weston is complaining that the wallpaper is peeling and stained and dirty, and Mr. Weston says, "No one will be able to tell by the candlelight." Then we get Jane Austen in her rocking chair again saying, "That the women probably looked at each other and gave a look that says, 'Men never know when things are dirty or not.'"

While the men probably think to [00:19:00] themselves that, "Women are so nonsensical with their little trivialities." But the main problem with the Crown Inn that they're finding is that there is no supper room, only a card room, and they're going to need that for cards. Or, if they don't play cards there, it's still too small for a proper supper. So, they think, "Well, there's a bigger room, but it's on the other end of the house and it's connected by a long passageway." And Mrs. Weston is opposed to that, because the passage will cause a draft for the people.

Emma and the other guys are opposed to the card room because it's going to be too small and they'll be crowded. So, we're at an impasse. Mrs. Weston says, "Well, what if we just have sandwiches?" And they're all like, "That's a terrible idea."

**Becca:** Which I feel like is the most universal thing one could possibly say, "Have you ever been on a trip?" And everyone's like, "Where should we have lunch?" And someone's like, "What if we just packed sandwiches?" And you're like, "No."



**Molly:** Yeah. You're like, "No, we want to go out."

**Becca:** "I don't want some crappy piece of bread with a little bit of [00:20:00] Swiss cheese on it," or whatever. I mean, you're vegan.

**Molly:** Yeah, I don't want soggy hummus.

**Becca:** Oh, there is nothing worse than the vegetarian option when the sandwich is provided.

**Molly:** Yep/

**Becca:** Ah, this is universal. It's always a fucking pile of roasted peppers with some hummus and nothing else.

**Molly:** Yeah. Occasionally like a spinach leaf.

**Becca:** Yeah, and that's if you're lucky.

**Molly:** Yeah. The hummus is soaked through the bread. So, when you pick it up, it's just squidgy in your hands.

**Becca:** It's also usually a wrap, like a dry wrap. It's usually soggy peppers and hummus in a dry wrap and they're like, "Yeah."

**Molly:** The hummus has leaked out of the butt and it's just like in the Saran Wrap.

**Becca:** It's so true. It's like the universal, "Oh, we ordered sandwiches for everyone" situation where you're a vegetarian and you're just like, "No."

**Molly:** You're like, "I'll be eating potato chips for lunch. Thank you."

**Becca:** It's like, "Yes, thank you for the potato chips and the small apple."

**Molly:** Maybe a cookie.

**Becca:** [00:21:00] Oh, if you're lucky.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** The thing is, there's great vegan sandwiches out there. Not even putting aside the fake meat once with veggie burgers are Satan. If you have not had a chickpea salad sandwich, you are missing out.

**Molly:** So true. And put it on a baguette.

**Becca:** It doesn't even need to be a baguette, but give me a sprouted bun. Live your life.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Oh. Sandwiches are delicious, but packed beforehand sandwiches where everyone else gets their roast beef or their turkey and you get soggy and that's just it. That's the noun of what you get. It's just sag. I don't know the word. Because sag is actually delicious, but that's different.

**Molly:** Yeah, that's different. And I also-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** That's Indian food.

**Molly:** Oh, wait, no, I can't eat the paneer.

**Becca:** Yeah, you can eat sag, right?

**Molly:** I can eat sag with tofu.

**Becca:** Ah, and it's delicious.

**Molly:** Oh, yum.

**Becca:** But soggy sandwiches, just awful.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, I relate to everyone being like, "No, we're not doing sandwiches. How dare you?"

**Molly:** They are [00:22:00] like, "We want a real dinner."

**Becca:** Yeah, exactly.

**Molly:** So, then Mrs. Weston is like, "Okay, well, this room isn't so small." And Mr. Weston, meanwhile, goes to the passageway and he's like, "Actually, this passageway is not too drafty. It's actually quite short." So, they're like, "Okay, maybe we could do either of them." And Mrs. Weston is conflicted, because she wants to know what the guests would want. At this point, Frank suggests, "Why don't they go get Ms. Bates, who is a woman of the people and she'll know what the people want?" Emma says, "Ms. Bates will be so grateful to be asked for her help that she won't even listen to the questions."

**Becca:** Yeah, that's probably true.

**Molly:** Very true. But Frank still wants to ask her, because she's so amusing. He wants to be amused by her. And then he adds to Emma, "I don't need to bring the whole family," because he knows that she doesn't want Jane coming. Mr. Weston thinks it's a great idea. He says, "Oh, she is a standing lesson of how to be happy," which I really [00:23:00] liked for Ms. Bates.

**Becca:** But it's also kind of a read, because it's like, "Man, her life is terrible, but here she is."

**Molly:** So true. She is happy anyway.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Then Mr. Weston tells Frank to bring them both, and Frank is like, "The old woman? We can't bring Mrs. Bates. She'll never get out the door." And Mr. Weston says, "No. You blockhead, Jaden Fairfax." Now, I'm so sorry, but I cannot help but think that Frank had this as his intention all along. Because he says-- Oh, right. I did not immediately recollect saying, like, "Oh, I forgot that she was even there." That's a bold-faced lie.

**Becca:** 100%, because he just joked about it with Emma.

**Molly:** Yeah. He said, "I don't have to bring the whole family." He just said that.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** Okay. So, he goes. Before he comes back, Mrs. Weston goes into the passage, realizes it's not too long, not too drafty, and they're like, "Okay, so we can use the room on the other side. It's fine." They basically [00:24:00] solve the problem. By the time Ms. Bates gets there, they've fixed it and they just need her to approve of it, and she does, which she's good at just approving of everything that everyone does. Before they leave, Frank is sure to secure Emma for the first two dances, and Emma overhears Mr. Weston whisper to Mrs. Weston, "He has asked her. I knew he would."

**Becca:** It's literally him going over to Mrs. Weston, being like, "Things are beginning to grow in the lasagna."

**Molly:** Oh, my God. Yeah.

**Becca:** Mr. Weston is also playing matchmaker, heavy.

**Molly:** Yeah. And that's the end of that chapter, which brings us to Volume II, Chapter 12 or chapter 30. Emma does not want to get her hopes up too much for this ball, because they had to schedule it after Frank's two weeks are up, and she does not think the Churchills are going to agree to let him stay. However, when Frank writes to them asking to stay, "Well, Enscombe is not happy about the decision," they do agree.

**Becca:** They're just so [00:25:00] passive aggressive about it.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** They're like, "Yes, of course, you can." But they make it really clear that they don't want him to stay.

**Molly:** Right. So, now Emma is annoyed at Knightley, because he's so indifferent to the ball. Emma thinks that he's feeling left out, because they made the plans for the ball without him, but also, he doesn't dance and doesn't really enjoy balls. He tells her that he had to say yes to the invitation, but he would much rather stay home and get work done.

**Becca:** I love him.

**Molly:** I love him so much.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** He's like, "I'd rather read over William Larkin's report."

**Becca:** He's like, "I have things to do and you're dragging me to go dance at this ball. I'm not even going to dance. I'm just going to watch people dance."

**Molly:** He's like, "I hate watching people dance." He says, "You might think that you're the center of attention and people are enjoying watching you, but actually, they're always thinking about other things. You're not that special." And Emma is like, "Argh."

**Becca:** [00:26:00] She's like, "Oh, that's a slight at me."

**Molly:** Yeah. She's like, "Okay, I see how we're playing." That's pointed.

**Becca:** Which is also perfect, because we are privy to some of Emma's thoughts. She had the thought that having a ball would be fun because people would see how good she is at dancing.

**Molly:** People were going to talk about her dancing.

**Becca:** So, Knightley knows her and reads her like a book.

**Molly:** You're so right. We literally had her think that and then he called her out.

**Becca:** Exactly.

**Molly:** However, she's nervous that he doesn't want to go to the ball, because he thinks that Jane doesn't want to go to the ball and he's doing it for Jane, blah, blah. But then she talks to Jane and Jane is so excited about the ball and she's like, "Okay, good." Knightley doesn't want to not go to the ball because of Jane. So, I think that Mrs. Weston is wrong about that whole thing. Again, "The lady Doth protests too much." She cares way too much.

**Becca:** Also, just the idea of Jane being like, "Oh, I'm so excited. Thank you for throwing a ball. I'm so excited to be there." [00:27:00] It's just very cute.

**Molly:** It is very cute. She's like, "Oh, I hope nothing's going to get in the way of the ball happening."

**Becca:** She's like, "I'm just so excited. I'm going to wear a nice dress. It's going to be lovely." And it's like, "Oh, Jane, you, pure animal."

**Molly:** [giggles] Alas, there was soon no leisure for quarreling with Mr. Knightley. I just really liked that, because she loves quarreling with him. But soon, she has no time to do that because a letter arrives from Mr. Churchill saying his wife is sick and she was suffering so much when she wrote him the other day, but she didn't want to worry him. She never thinks of anyone but herself and all of that, but Frank must come home immediately.

**Becca:** #manipulative.

**Molly:** So, here's the thing. One, I agree. But two, I don't know who to believe, because he says, "Oh, your aunt never thinks of herself," and blah, blah, blah. But he's saying that because he's also a terrible person. He's not telling the truth and Frank's not [00:28:00] lying, right?

**Becca:** I will neither confirm nor deny.

**Molly:** Okay. Yeah, I figured you'd say as much. I just think that we don't know yet if we can trust Frank's account of the Churchills that they are selfish and all this stuff. I guess, Mr. Weston has said it too and we can trust Mr. Weston. But is there a possibility that actually Mrs. Churchill isn't the evil stepmother that we all think she is? I don't think that there's a possibility of that, but when I was reading this, I was like, "I don't know who to believe 100%." Just putting that out there.

**Becca:** Well, we're going to talk about it more in the study questions.

**Molly:** Oh. Great. So, Mrs. Weston tells Emma about this letter and she says that, "Frank isn't really worried about his aunt." He says that her illnesses always arise when they're convenient to her. Basically, she's making it up, so that he has to come home, and he has to go, no matter what. She tells Emma that he only has time to come to Highbury to say goodbye to a [00:29:00] few friends, and so she should expect him soon. Emma is sad. She is really feeling her feelings.

**Becca:** Yeah, that heart has dropped to the stomach.

**Molly:** Yeah. She was really enjoying their time together and she's going to be more sad about it later. So, we'll talk about it then, but she is pretty sad. Meanwhile, Mr. Woodhouse is mostly concerned about Mrs. Churchill and he's like, "I wonder what she has. They should really send Mr. Perry over there."

**Becca:** Imagine you just, like, you are Mrs. Churchill and you're not feeling well, and then this doctor comes in and he's like, "Don't worry, I'm Perry. I will take care of you." [laughs]

**Molly:** She's like, "Who are you? How did you get in my house?"

**Becca:** He's like, "I'm Perry. Don't worry." That is a t-shirt, "I'm Perry. Don't worry."

**Molly:** I mean, don't tempt me.

**Becca:** Oh. [laughs]

**Molly:** Perry the Platypus, but in doctor's garb.

**Becca:** In Regency Era garb.

**Molly:** I will do it.

**Becca:** Perfect. So, Perry the apothecary shows up for Mrs. Churchill and it's just like, **[00:30:00]** "Don't worry, I'm Perry. I'm here." [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah. He puts a platypus arm on her and says, "It's okay."

**Becca:** "Don't worry, I'm Perry. I'm Perry."

[laughter]

**Becca:** I don't know why that tickles me.

**Molly:** I think we need to put that on a t-shirt. Perry the Apothecary.

**Becca:** Listeners, if you want the "Don't worry, I'm Perry" shirt, just let us know.

**Molly:** So, Frank arrives at Hartfield and he seems depressed. Emma thinks, "Oh, shit, he's really sad to be leaving." Emma wants to know if he's ever going to come back, and he says, "He's going to try, but he's not sure he'll be able to." And Emma says, "Well, if you're not coming back, we'll have to give up on our ball." And Frank says, "Oh, why did we wait? Why are you always right about everything?" And Emma loves that.

**Becca:** Oh, yeah.

**Molly:** But she says in this case, she wishes she had been wrong. He says, "If I can come back, then we'll have the ball." And he says that he's had the two best weeks. He says, "Every day he spent there makes him less fit to go live anywhere **[00:31:00]** else." Just a sweet sentiment.

**Becca:** This part is an interesting part. I have portions of this highlighted coming up.

**Molly:** Oh, yes.

**Becca:** But yes.

**Molly:** Emma asks, "If we at Highbury exceeded his expectations." At this point, I like leaned forward in my chair, because she's calling him out that he's never come before. And she says, "You would not have been so long in coming if you had a pleasant idea of Highbury. So, did you have a negative idea of us and have we exceeded that?" He laughed uncomfortably, but Emma knows from his laugh that she's right. Emma asks him, "If he has to leave this very morning?" And he says, "Yes, my dad is going to pick me up from Hartfield and we'll go directly." And Emma says, "Well, it's too bad you didn't get to say goodbye to Ms. Bates and Ms. Fairfax." And he says, "Actually, he already did." He says, "Ms. Bates is the type of person that you must laugh at, but that you wouldn't want to slight." So, he wanted to visit them first **[00:32:00]** and then he walks to the window and says, "I think you can hardly be quite without suspicion..." meaningful look.

**Becca:** Then this is where I highlighted-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Oh, right. Share it.

**Becca:** He looked at her as if wanting to read her thoughts. She hardly knew what to say. It seemed like the forerunner of something absolutely serious which she did not wish. Forcing herself to speak, therefore, in the hope of putting it by, she calmly said, "You are quite in the right; it was most natural to pay your visit, then"-- He was silent. She believed he was looking at her; probably reflecting on what she had said, and trying to understand the manner." What is that?

**Molly:** I don't know. I had to read it three times.

**Becca:** Let's break it down.

**Molly:** I'm also going to pull mine out, so I can look at it.

**Becca:** Read it again. Read it again. It's a great passage. Jane Austen writes with so much subtext here.

**Molly:** So, [00:33:00] "In short," said he, "perhaps, Miss Woodhouse--I think you can hardly be without suspicion." This is all after he said that he visited the Bates' first, because he wanted to give most of his time to Hartfield. It says, "He looked at her as if wanting to read her thoughts. She hardly knew what to say. It seemed like the forerunner of something absolutely serious which she did not wish. Forcing herself to speak, therefore, in the hope of putting it by, she calmly said, "You are quite in the right; it was most natural to pay your visit, then. And he's silent. He's reflecting on what she had said and trying to understand the manner. She hears him sigh. It was natural for him to feel that he had cause to sigh. He could not believe her to be encouraging him. A few awkward moments passed, and he sat down again; and in a more determined manner said, "It was something to feel that all the rest of my time might be given to Hartfield. My regard for Hartfield is most warm."

"So, he's trying to tell her he wanted to spend more time with her," [00:34:00] she thinks. And she thinks that he's trying to figure out why she's not acknowledging that.

**Becca:** This is a profoundly charged moment.

**Molly:** Yeah, there's a lot of tension.

**Becca:** There's a lot happening here. Whatever it is that they go very English on it and they avoid talking about it entirely. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** But it's one of those moments, Jane Austen writes, where you feel it with the characters as it's happening. We're in Emma's mind right now. So, whatever's happening, part of her really wants to be there in the moment and hear him confess these things to her. But instead, she glances off of it, rebounds it, and says, "Let's go back to just talking about the pleasantries of the town of Highbury for a moment."

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** And what is unreadable and Frank is exactly how and what he was going to say in that moment.

**Molly:** Because he was going to say something.

**Becca:** He was going to say something.

**Molly:** And she just [00:35:00] cuts it off.

**Becca:** And she cuts it off, because that's not where Emma is in life right now. In fact, why does she cut that off? Why doesn't she want to hear it?

**Molly:** We'll get to this later. But she knows that if he were to confess his love to her, she'd be gone and she doesn't want that, because she's Emma and she has her life that she's settled into that she doesn't-- Her life, that's enough for her, that she's said like, "I don't need anything more than this." If she risks it to fall in love with someone, she's afraid of getting hurt, of shaking things up, and then being unsatisfied when she comes back to her regular life or being let down by what she does get out of love and not being as good as her regular life.

**Becca:** Juicy.

**Molly:** Really juicy. Huh, wow. Come on, Frank Churchill, giving us the deep moment.

**Becca:** Yeah, it's been a minute since we've had a charged moment, because *Emma* has so far been such a light [00:36:00] book, because Emma doesn't have problems as we've discussed.

**Molly:** But she doesn't have problems, because she doesn't let herself have problems. She could have a big problem.

**Becca:** Yeah, Emma is bad at opening herself up to these things.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, he tells her that his regard for Hartfield is most warm. He's pacing back and forth, and Emma thinks to herself that he's more in love with her than she had thought. But at that moment, her father comes in and puts a damper on the moment and puts it to an end. Frank Churchill composes himself. Mr. Weston arrives. It is time for him to go. And he then tells her that he made Mrs. Weston promise that she would keep him in the loop about all the goings on, so he was going to hear about them. Frank says goodbye. He goes and Emma is devastated. She is afraid of feeling too much. She says that she has to tamp it down. [00:37:00] She had gotten so used to seeing him every day. She's heartbroken about the idea of going back to her old routines, like, what were just talking about like, "Why she doesn't want to fall in love?" She thinks to herself that he almost told her he loved her and then she thinks, "Oh, shit, am I in love with him?"

**Becca:** Such a good question, Emma.

**Molly:** She's like, "I must be or I wouldn't be this sad that he's gone." She thinks to herself, at least, Knightly will be happy that we're not having a ball. But actually, Knightley says he's sorry "for that she won't get to have her ball." A few days later, she sees Jane and Jane is very composed about the whole thing. However, I will note that Jane was sick with a headache for a few days. Miss Bates says that had they even had the ball, Jane wouldn't have been able to go because she was so sick with a headache.

But I just want to note, because I have my little theories about Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill, that Jane Fairfax was sick with a headache [00:38:00] for three days after Frank Churchill left, and she was similarly sick with a headache after Mr. Dixon moved to Ireland. So, I'm just throwing that out there. I don't know what it means, but that's the end of that chapter.

**Becca:** That is the end of that chapter, which brings us to Becca study questions. We don't have many, so we'll go through them quick. So, what does having a ball mean to Highbury?

**Molly:** Highbury doesn't have a lot of balls, because they're not "of the mind of dancing or whatever it is that they say." In Highbury, I feel like all of the young people have some sort of beef with each other. [laughs]

**Becca:** It's a small town.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, there's always going to be drama. It's mostly a chance for the young people to get together, I think. It seemed like the people they were inviting were all of the sons and daughters, not like the parents.

**Becca:** Yeah. There's a way in which the society in Highbury is like a little lacking in terms of the social life that one might get in like a [00:39:00] London. You can feel that here. You see it in some of the other Jane Austen books we've read. The excitement of the Netherfield ball was very palpable in *Pride and Prejudice*. And in Barton, you can see that they do not have more than dinner parties and to go to party parties, they have to go to London. And so, here in Highbury, having a ball is like a real time for society together. And frankly, it's a tinder situation for anybody who's single.

**Molly:** Mm. So true. That's why they were matching people up. They were like, "We have to have this many men, this many women."

**Becca:** That's also about who can dance with whom as well.

**Molly:** Sure. Yeah.

**Becca:** Because the men have to dance with the women, and they all have to-- We've all seen the movies. We know what the dancing looks like. It doesn't look sexy. I promise it's sexy. It's about the yearning.

**Molly:** I have to say I know that now that I know more about Jane Austen, this podcast has shifted in tone ever so slightly. But [00:40:00] nothing will ever beat me reading *Pride and Prejudice*, not knowing what the dances were going to be like [Becca laughs] and then watching *Pride and Prejudice* and being like, "Oh."

**Becca:** Listen, you have surprises to come. Don't count yourself out.

[laughter]

**Becca:** Listen, no matter how much you knew about Jane Austen, if you have not seen 2005 the *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation, you're not prepared for the amount of pig testicles that will be on your screen.

**Molly:** Oh, the pig testicles. Oh, horrible.

**Becca:** Yeah, awful. All right, do we believe the Churchills/do we believe Frank about the reason for leaving?

**Molly:** I don't know. I believe that he got a letter from them, and I believe that's what the letter said. Hmm. Well, actually, that's a good question like, "Do I believe the letter? Do I believe that he got a letter that said that because he seemed too willing to go for what he knows about?" [00:41:00] He's like, "Oh, yeah, she's fine, but I still have to go."

**Becca:** Well, what would compel him to go, generally?

**Molly:** Money. He's not going to get anything from them, if they turn him out of house and home, because he doesn't do what they want. Sure, he would go and do what they say, but I don't know. What if they're really nice people and she's actually sick? I don't know. I don't think that's what's going on here, because I worry that he's too much like them. I don't know. That whole thing is mystifying to me.

**Becca:** Something is afoot.

**Molly:** Something's afoot, for sure. I just don't know why he went. He was sad about it and Emma said she sees that he's sad about it, but I don't understand why he was like, "Yeah, well, she's fine, but I still have to do it."

**Becca:** Next question. Does Frank love Emma?

**Molly:** So, the first time I read this, until we had our conversation about the deepness of that moment and the [00:42:00] charged nature of it, I thought that Emma was misreading it.

**Becca:** What did you think her misread was?

**Molly:** I thought that maybe-- Now, again, I have my little theories about Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax. I thought that he went to Jane's house first, because he likes Jane more. And this whole time, it's been about Jane and Emma's just misreading the whole thing. In that, what he was trying to say like, "You must know by now." She's like, "Yes, that you're in love with me," but he's like, "That I'm in love with Jane." I don't know. That could be completely



wrong, because after we've talked about how charged that moment is for Emma, I feel like it must be similarly charged for Frank. But I don't know. I feel like she's a pretty perceptive person and she's much more self-aware than we give her credit for sometimes.

So, I don't know if he loves her, if he was going to tell her that he loves her, but he might have been about to tell her that he likes [00:43:00] her or that he likes someone. Huh, I want to believe that he loves her, but I don't know. I feel like, honestly, Emma could use a bit of a just punch her down a few notches.

**Becca:** An ego check. [giggles]

**Molly:** Yeah. She could use thinking someone's in love with her and then finding out that they're in love with someone else that, like, I think that she could use that.

**Becca:** Fair enough. Does Emma love Frank?

**Molly:** Honestly, maybe, just because she's never even really had a crush on anyone before. I don't think he's her end all, be all, but I think that she could very easily have a thing for him and maybe be a little bit in love with him or at least in love with the idea of him, which she has been for a while. But I think that she has never caught feelings the way that she caught feelings for him. She got it in a very intense way. They were [00:44:00] at summer camp together, essentially. Like, you're with someone for a couple weeks.

**Becca:** Oh, man, that is the most intense crush, the ever.

**Molly:** You're like, "I'll love you for the rest of my life." And then, three weeks after summer camp is over, you're like, "Oh, right, that was just summer camp." But I think that it's a little bit like that where she's like, "Oh, my God, I saw him every day. What am I going to do without him?"

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Are we going to see Frank again?

**Molly:** God, I hope so.

**Becca:** Okay, I'll leave it at that.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** What do you think of Emma?

**Molly:** She's honestly at her most relatable right now, because she is realizing right after she totally shut someone down that she actually potentially in love with them [Becca laughs] or at least has a crush on them.

**Becca:** Very relatable content from our girl, Emma Woodhouse.

**Molly:** Yeah. "We want what we can't have." So, even when we don't want it, we're like, "Mm, but was that the wrong choice?"

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Funniest quote?

**Molly:** "The party did not break up without Emma's being [00:45:00] positively secured for the two first dances by the hero of the evening, nor without her overhearing Mr. Weston whisper to his wife, "He has asked her, my dear. That's right. I knew he would!"

**Becca:** Oh, I love Mr. Weston.

**Molly:** I love their dynamic.

**Becca:** So pure. Questions moving forward.

**Molly:** Again, I'll repeat your questions back at you. Does Emma love Frank? Does Frank love Emma? Will Frank come back and will they have this ball after all? Does Knightley have a crush on Jane? Who is Jane secretly in love with?

**Becca:** Whomst?

**Molly:** Is Harriet okay?

**Becca:** No, Harriet is not okay. I'll answer that one for you.

[laughter]

**Becca:** Yeah, Harriet is not doing well.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah, those are my questions.

**Becca:** Who wins the chapters? I do feel like most people lost in these chapters.

**Molly:** Most people lost, but I think I either want to say the Westons for really going full on to support Frank and having this party, [00:46:00] or Emma for just like she could use a win right now.

**Becca:** So, Team Churchhouse, generally?

**Molly:** Team Churchhouse. Yeah, I think so. I don't know. What do you think?

**Becca:** Oh, man, it's hard with these chapters. One could give it to Mr. Woodhouse because the ball isn't happening. Thank goodness for him.

**Molly:** So true. He really [Becca laughs] wins in terms of like, "Who comes out with what they want?"

**Molly and Becca:** It's Mr. Woodhouse.

**Becca:** The ball is canceled. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah, you're so right. Yeah, let's give it to Mr. Woodhouse.

**Becca:** All right, listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next week, you want to read Volume II, Chapters 13 and 14. Or, if you're following along in a non-Volumed copy of *Emma*, that would be Chapters 31 and 32. Is that correct, Molly?

**Molly:** Yes, I was just checking.

**Becca:** Oh, I'm amazing.

**Becca:** Yeah, you're amazing.

**Becca:** All right, then, since I'm amazing, Molly, stay proper-

**Molly:** -and make sure to open all the windows [00:47:00] at your next party.

**Becca:** Or don't. There'll be a draft.

**Molly:** [laughs] But we love a draft.

**Becca:** We love a draft.

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

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