

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Suzanne, Sean, Kay, Jessica, Jam, and Ali Ray. And an extra big shoutout to our patrons who upgraded their pledges, Abby, Desiree, Joanna, Janae, Pia, Lauren, and my mom. Thank you all so much for your support. We had our first Discord watch party recently when our patrons got to chat along with me as I watched the 1996 *Emma* for the first time, and it was a blast and a half. So, if you want to be part of the next one, check out our Patreon at patreon.com/podandprejudice. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapters 52 and 53 of *Emma*.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: All right. Are we recording?

Molly: We are recording.

Becca: Okay. We are sitting farther apart. We are still experimenting in our new recording space, but this worked out well, because I just had surgery and I am sitting in a [00:01:00] comfy spot.

Molly: Yes, you have your arm elevated on pillows.

Becca: Yes, I do. For anybody asking, I am fine. I just had a minor surgery for a torn ligament in a finger, which just means that I get to be dramatic, and lie down, and elevate my hand for a few days. But honestly, it doesn't even hurt anymore. I'm not even taking Tylenol anymore. All is good.

But it did make for a funny moment, because honestly, I forgot. I didn't tell Molly I was having surgery, because it was very sudden. So, she came down to get me, so we would record, and she was like, "Becca, what the fuck happened?" Because my arm's in a sling and everything, [Molly laughs] and she was just like, "What happened to you?" And I was like, "Hey, remember how I vaguely fractured my finger?" And she was like, "Yeah." And I was like, "Oh, I turned out to need surgery. Anyway, it's done. I've had surgery. Surprise."

Molly: Because I feel like we've been talking.

Becca: Yeah, it just hasn't come up because I don't know, it's weird to be like, "Hey, [00:02:00] my hand's a lobster claw right now."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I didn't send out a blast to everyone being like, "Hey, y'all, having surgery today." It was fine. It was literally a 20 minutes' procedure. It's all good. They didn't even put me under, so to speak. They just sedated me and numbed the hell out of my arm.

Molly: I'm glad they numbed the hell out of your arm.

Becca: Yeah. I went to sleep. When I woke up, my arm was in the sling you saw, and I literally couldn't feel it, and it was the weirdest thing I've ever experienced.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: I could not move my fingers, and then I knew to start taking pain medication when I could start moving my thumb.

Molly: Okay. Wow.

Becca: Yeah. All that to say, this is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

Becca: We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

Molly: We are here specifically to talk about--

Molly and Becca: *Emma*.

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

Molly: And I, Molly, am reading her 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 [00:03:00] 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 III, Chapters 16 and 17 of *Emma*. Or, if your book isn't broken up into Volumes, that's Chapters 52 and 53.

Becca: And boy, are we in the final stretch now.

Molly: We only have two chapters left, listeners. That means there is one episode after this covering this book.

Becca: Now, don't you worry, because we are not straying away from *Emma* for a long time, because as we've said multiple times on this podcast, there are just an obscene amount of movie adaptations of *Emma*, and we have been getting a lot of inquiries. As of right now, we do intend to cover them all. [giggles]

Molly: Yeah. As many as we know about and can do, we will do them. So, get ready. We are going to start recording those next week, and we can't wait.

Becca: But for now, we still have book to get through.

Molly: Yes. So, let's remind the listeners [00:04:00] where we left off.

Becca: Yes. So, Knightley and Emma are in love.

Molly: They're in love.

Becca: They are in love. That's like a mic thing.

Molly: [giggles]

Becca: That when we're watching a movie and there's a romantic scene on the screen, I'll just go, "They are in love."

Molly: And that is what is happening here.

Becca: Yes, they are in love. So, they confess their feelings to each other. They get engaged. Meanwhile, Frank Churchill has put together an explanation and an apology for his actions in Highbury for the last year or so. So, here we are. Emma's in a good mood, because she's engaged to the love of her life. Frank Churchill and Jane Fairfax are engaged to each other and seem okay about that. And the only thing making Emma anxious is the fact that she has not resolved the fact that she just swiped her bestie's crush.

Molly: She did. And then she sent her bestie a letter being like, "I don't think we should see each other for a while, and we're dealing with the repercussions of that."

Becca: Yes. [00:05:00] Harriet and Emma in limbo.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: But everything else is going so well. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, everything else is great. She lost a friend or she's losing a friend.

Becca: They are taking space.

Molly: They are taking space, which is important sometimes.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: So, Emma has just sent this letter, and she hears back from Harriet, and Harriet agrees that they shouldn't see each other for a while. While she's cordial in her letter, Emma senses a little resentment, though she does admit it would take an angel not to resent her for the way she responded to hearing about Harriet's crush, which was-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Corny.

Molly: Oh, my God. Yeah, she was like, "You can't like him."

Becca: Which is either snobbery at its finest or jealousy.

Molly: Yes. And I don't think that Harriet's picking up on the jealousy necessarily, but I guess, we'll find out.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Harriet has been needing to see a dentist, which gives Emma an excuse to be like, "Isabella, can you take Harriet for a little [00:06:00] while, because there's a dentist in London?" And Isabella can't have anyone in tooth pain. So, she's like, "Absolutely, she should come stay with us for two weeks." Now that Harriet is gone, Emma can fully enjoy her time with Knightley, and she doesn't have that nagging sense of guilt that she always has when Harriet's around.

Becca: This is absolutely such relatable content, because this is how I am with things that give me anxiety. She's like, "I don't need to deal with this right now. Because of her toothache, she has to go to London, and I can just enjoy having Knightley here, not worrying that she's going to come around Hartfield and see us together."

Molly: Yes, it is very fair. Emma just sometimes says the thing out loud that none of us want to say out loud. You know what I mean? She's like, "It feels so good to have this problem that I was having just hidden for a little while." Like, "I don't have to think about it."

Becca: The thing is, she's not saying it out loud. She's thinking it to herself. We're just in her brain.

Molly: [laughs] So true.

Becca: Yeah. We are saying it [00:07:00] out loud. [giggles]

Molly: We're saying it out loud. Jane Austen's trying to make us look bad.

Becca: Exactly. [giggles]

Molly: But she does feel less guilty knowing that Harriet has things to occupy her in.

Becca: Like a toothache.

Molly: Yeah, like her toothache.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Also, she's going to be playing with the kids, and there's probably going to be some society for her to be had. I don't know.

Becca: Yeah. When you stay with someone in London, it's usually like a whole affair and it's nice for a young woman like Harriet to get to go to London.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: The last thing that's causing Emma anxiety is the fact that she hasn't told her father yet, and she doesn't really know how she's going to go about that. She's going to wait until Mrs. Weston is "safe," which on first reading of this Chapter, I didn't understand what that meant. Now I realize it means has her baby.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Because there's no guarantee of her being safe until she has that baby and pops out alive on the other side.

Becca: Yeah. It's the olden times, and they're not great with medicine, as we learned in *Sense and Sensibility*.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And also, [00:08:00] just generally.

Molly: Right. I have not had a child. Everything I know about childbirth sounds like war. And in this era, where they don't talk about their feelings, let alone their bodily functions, I can't imagine how they deal with childbirth.

Molly: Yeah. I don't know if I want to know, but I'm sure we'll get emails about it.

Becca: If people know how obstetrics were in the Regency Era, let us know. That sounds interesting.

Molly: One of you has to be an expert on this. Just tell us.

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But not in too much detail.

Molly: Yeah, tell us how they numbed the pain, and that'll be good.

Becca: Yes, absolutely.

Molly: They like swabbed whiskey on the vagina.

Becca: Would that numb any pain?

Molly: No.

Becca: I think it'd just make a vagina wet. [laughs]

Molly: Okay.

Becca: Ooh. Okay. Reset. [laughs]

Molly: Anyway, so, yes, resetting. Emma decides to go visit Jane, since they're now [00:09:00] both in happy situations, and she just wants to suss out the vibes. So, she's worried when she arrives, because last time she came, she was not welcome there.

Becca: Yeah, this is on the heels of the whole Miss Fairfax avoiding Miss Woodhouse debacle.

Molly: Right. But this time, she's immediately invited up, and Jane meets her on the stairs, and she's looking super happy and so much better, not pale and sick like she usually is. And

she's so happy to see Emma that she doesn't even know what to say. But then Emma hears Mrs. Elton's voice, and she's like, "Oh, shit, I can't talk about the engagement here. It's got to stay a secret."

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: They go in, and there's Mrs. Bates and Mrs. Elton. Miss Bates is out, and it says, which accounts for the previous tranquility, which at first, I was annoyed about because I was like, "Emma, stop being rude." But then I was like, "I guess, she just meant why there was no hustle and bustle when she arrived," or is she being snarky?

Becca: Probably a combo, but it's in her head at least this time.

Molly: Yes, this time it is in her head. Good job, Emma. [00:10:00]

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Emma's feeling in a patient mood, so she decides she's not going to be annoyed with Mrs. Elton for being there.

Becca: Augusta.

Molly: Augusta.

Becca: The thing about Augusta is that, she can pull out annoyance and irritation in any situation.

Molly: Oh, yeah. And she is being unusually gracious, and so Emma's like, "Hmm, interesting." But she soon realizes that this pleasantness on Augusta's side is actually smugness, because she's like, "I know something you don't know."

Becca: "Mm, you didn't know this secret. I'm just like Jane's bestie. And I feel so honored that she told me. Mm."

Molly: When you know that the only reason Jane told her is because she needed to not go to the Smallridges.

Becca: Exactly. Oh, we're going to talk about the chapter, but oh, it's so delicious.

Molly: It's so good.

Becca: Also, yet again, Emma being like, "I have to keep [00:11:00] this engagement a secret," and everyone fucking knows.

Molly: Yeah. There's so many moments in these two chapters where I'm like, "Mr. Weston."

Becca: Well, this one was probably Jane.

Molly: This one was probably Jane. Yes. Mrs. Elton is making a big show of folding up a letter, and she's like, "We can finish this some other time. I just wanted to show you that Mrs. Smallridge accepts our apology, and you really would have loved her if you had gone." She quotes a poem, which I don't even know if I want to talk about because I was like, "What is she even saying here?"

Becca: Well, once again, the Eltons prove themselves not very literate.

Molly: Yes. They don't have very good taste.

Becca: No.

Molly: The poem says, "For when a lady's in the case, you know all other things give place." And then, she's like, "But we won't say anything about that." I don't really understand.

Becca: Say it again.

Molly: "For when a lady's in the case, you know all other things give place." Does that mean when a lady's getting married in the case?

Becca: Honestly, [00:12:00] I'm not quite sure, because it's hard to say based on what this is, but it could be a slight ding on Jane for her.

Molly: Mm.

Becca: Like, "Mm, well, you had to. Had to get engaged."

Molly: Mm.

Becca: Yeah. It's not clear from the way it's phrased though. It's just purely bad poetry that makes no sense. Do you know people who are terminally online and they'll say something and you'll be like, "What?" And they'll be like, "You haven't seen that?" And I'm like, "No, because I sleep. I'm not on the internet at 03:00 in the morning."

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Yeah. That's what this feels like. It's one of those like, what your brain did something, I do not understand.

Molly: Yes, totally.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: At one point, Emma turns to look at Mrs. Bates's knitting and Mrs. Elton goes, "Oh, my God, am I not so good at keeping secrets? I'm not even saying anything about it."

Becca: "Don't you worry. Your secret is so safe with me. I know it's juicy and I'm just honored that you shared with me. I feel like [00:13:00] this just shows how freaking close we are. It would have been better, if you'd been going to my friends and you'd been in the help situation, because that would have been a little bit more appropriate. But it's just so nice that we're still friends. Mm."

Molly: Our listeners love your Augusta impression.

Becca: Listeners, I grew up in an area of the world where I meet a lot of girls who talk like this. I don't want to stereotype, but my goodness, Augusta is just that.

Molly: She is so that. She turns to Emma at one point and says, "Isn't our saucy little friend doing so much better?" And she's like, "Oh, my God, thank God for Mr. Perry." And then she turns to Jane and she's like, "I won't say anything about any assistance Perry might have had." And then she says that she hasn't seen Emma since Box Hill and she was like, "Wasn't that such a fun day? We should all go back. We should gather the same exact group [00:14:00] and go back again."

Becca: We should brunch.

Molly: We should brunch.

Becca: We should go to brunch.

Molly: Let's go back to brunch.

Becca: Oh, my God, brunch was so fucking fun.

Molly: She doesn't have any idea how traumatizing that day was for everyone else.

Becca: But you just also know there are people who like the idea of events so much that they erase that something was terrible and they're like, "Oh, my God, that was so lovely. We have to do it again. Let's go to brunch."

Molly: [giggles] Brunch sounds good.

Becca: I just had half a bagel.

Molly: I'm still jet lagged, so I was not hungry when I woke up because it felt like it was 06:00 AM, so I didn't eat. And now brunch sounds amazing. Then Miss Bates arrives, and she is so happy to see Emma, but she's being awkward because she doesn't know who knows and who doesn't know about Jane's. She doesn't really know what to say. She's like, "Oh, yeah, she's doing well."

Becca: Poor Miss Bates. Here's the thing. What if Emma didn't know in this situation?

Molly: Yeah, that would be hilarious.

Becca: She would [00:15:00] know something-- [crosstalk]

Molly: She would know something was up. Yes, it's so obvious. Miss Bates is also being super grateful to Mrs. Elton, and Emma thinks, "Oh, there must have been some resentment shown from Mrs. Elton," when Jane was like, "I'm actually not going." And now she's like, "Oh, my God, thank you so much forgiving us." [crosstalk]

Becca: Which, again, is very, very telling about what happened between her accepting the job, and this moment, and what Mrs. Elton was really thinking.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Mrs. Elton tells them that she's been hanging out for so long, because she is waiting for her lord and master.

Becca: Oh, this is like the vibes of a guy who calls his wife, the old ball in chain.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, no one needs to know about your sex life.

Molly: [laughs] Yeah.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: Yeah, it's very gross.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: And Miss Bates is like, "Oh, my [00:16:00] God, what an honor." And Mrs. Elton's like, "Yes, he is a very busy man, but he had to come and pay his congratulatory visit."

Becca: I know. It's like a very big burden on him, because he's just so busy, but he's not going to miss it. I guess it's a big deal.

Molly: Yeah. He's so important. She says that he would come as soon as he can, but he's with Mr. Knightley right now because he's Mr. Knightley's right hand, and they're in deep

consultation. I want to know what they're in deep consultation about and why it was so important that he visited Mr. Knightley today. But we don't know that.

Becca: No. Honestly, it's like town business and shit.

Molly: So, it's not important. Like, it seems unimportant that they're just blowing it up to be more important than it is?

Molly: Yeah. This is mostly Mrs. Elton being like, "Oh, my God, my husband is so important. Like Knightley, he's so important. They just do [00:17:00] so much boy stuff together."

Molly: Yes. And Emma's like, "Oh, did he walk to Donwell? It's really hot out." And Mrs. Elton's like, "No, he's at the Crown. It's a meeting. Weston and Cole will be there too." And I liked what she said about this. She was like, "But you know, people only ever talk about the important people that there were there, like Knightley and Elton."

Becca: Which is hilarious for so many reasons.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's like, "There's the [unintelligible 00:17:25] that are there, and then there's my hubby and Mr. Knightley."

Molly: Yeah. [makes scrunching noises]

[laughter]

Becca: Oh, my God, your forehead is gone insane.

Molly: [laughs] I'm just like crunching up my eyes.

Becca: Yeah, you're just like goes over Mrs. Elton and her Augusta antics, if you will.

Molly: Yeah. Emma's like, "Are you sure you haven't mistaken the day, because Knightley was just at Hartfield and he said that the meeting at the Crown was tomorrow?" And Mrs. Elton is like, "Definitely not. It's today." And she goes on to talk about how this is a very troublesome parish, and it was never like this in Maple Grove. And Jane, [00:18:00] zinger after zinger is like, "Well, your parish at Maple Grove was very small." And Mrs. Elton's like, "Well, I don't really know how big it was." And Jane's like, "Well, it had to be small. You told me there was only one school and it only had 25 children."

Becca: Oh-ooh. You know what I love about this? I love this moment because it tells you just a little bit about how oversold Maple Grove has been.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: She's always like, "Oh, just like Maple Grove. So grand, so beautiful."

Becca: So elegant. And also, we love our girl, Jane, snapping back against this patronizing motherfucker.

Molly: At long last.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: And then Mrs. Elton's like, "Oh, Jane, you're so smart. Look at you."

Becca: It's like, "Wow, Jane, you totally remembered that off the top of your head, didn't you?"

Molly: [laughs] And she's like, "With my liveliness and your solidity, we would make one perfect person."

Becca: "Although everyone already calls you perfect. Ha-ha."

Molly: She's like, "I'm not going to say that some people wink-wink, nudge-nudge don't think that you're perfect already." But I won't say who.

Becca: Argh. [00:19:00]

Molly: Yeah, this whole chapter is just Mrs. Elton is annoying.

Becca: It's so good that Emma is satisfied, romantically, spiritually, maybe sexually, probably not. But-- [crosstalk]

Molly: We wish.

Becca: Because you would have to be in a state of such a Zen to sit through this conversation.

Molly: Mm-hmm. And she really is. She's just sitting there. She's like, "I'm going to take it. It's fine. I'm not going to laugh." And throughout the whole thing, Jane is giving her little glances.

Becca: Yeah. The two of them are having their first little moment of like, "Ah, can you believe this bitch?"

Molly: Which I'm so glad she finally gets to do this.

Becca: I know. This is great. We'll talk about this a little in the study questions, but this is great for Jane, because how's she been with Mrs. Elton the whole book?

Molly: Just like letting her walk all over her.

Becca: So, buttoned up, so stonewalled, and now she gets to be sassy to her.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: [00:20:00] Sassy Jane has come to play.

Becca: Oh, yes.

Molly: Mr. Elton then arrives, and I love these little notes from Jane Austen. It says, "His lady greeted him with some of her sparkling vivacity."

Becca: Oh, God, you know they're the type of couple in the real world that would just kiss, attack each other and be like, "Hey, sweetie, [unintelligible [00:20:18]," and nose nuzzle-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -in front of everyone.

Molly: Mrs. Elton is like, "Oh, so cute of you to make me wait so long, because you knew that I would wait until my lord and master appeared." And she says that she was giving the ladies here a sample of true conjugal obedience, and some of them may need it soon. Who knows when?

Becca: Who's to say? I don't know anything. Wink-wink. Oh, my God, Jane, we have this little secret. It's so fun, especially keeping it from fucking Emma.

Molly: Yeah, she loves to keep secrets from Emma.

Becca: She is very purposely trying to make Emma feel bad for not knowing something right now.

Molly: And Emma's like, [makes simpering noises]

Becca: God, I love it. Because everyone else is playing chess and Mrs. Elton is playing [00:21:00] not even checkers. She's playing like--

Molly: Like jacks.

Becca: I was going to say Tic-Tac-Toe.

Molly: Oh, yeah, that's better. That's better. I don't know how to play jacks. So, that's much better.

Becca: Oh, jacks is super easy. So, you bounce a ball, and then you pick up as many of the little jacks as you can, and then before the ball falls and you catch it.

Molly: Oh, that is super easy.

Becca: You boom, and then you pick up all the jacks, and then you have to also catch the ball.

Molly: Nice. All right. Well, she couldn't do that. That's too much hand-eye coordination.

Becca: [laughs] It is a lot of hand-eye coordination.

Molly: Mr. Elton is super annoyed and grumpy because it's hot out, and he walked all the way to Donwell only to find Knightley not home.

Becca: First of all, he could use a little snacky snack.

Molly: Oh, he could use a little snacky snack.

Becca: Second of all, this is the most relatable Elton has ever been.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Because right now, New York is in a heat wave, and that is me walking anywhere.

Molly: Yeah. When we were in Portland, it was so nice. There was no humidity. It was like 1980s and just dry. [00:22:00] And then it was 06:00 AM when our flight landed, and we walked out of the airport and it was soup.

Becca: Soup. Yeah, you're just walking into a bowl of soup.

Molly: Hot soup.

Becca: Yeah. Well, it's supposed to go down 10 degrees tomorrow.

Molly: Nice. All right, well, I'll be staying indoors for the rest of the day today. But Mrs. Elton's response to this is like, "Well, you were supposed to go to the Crown. What are you talking about?" And he was like, "No, that's tomorrow," which I think is hilarious.

Becca: This is the greatest bit, because I think we glazed over it a little bit, but Emma was like, "Aren't they supposed to be meeting at the Crown in tomorrow?" And she's like, "No, it's today. You just don't know. I know my husband. I know who's dating."

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "I could not have mistaken this."

Molly: Like, "I am 1,000% sure that I am correct on this and you are wrong, so you should feel stupid." And then Elton comes in and he's like, "Oh, yeah, no, that's tomorrow. I just wanted to talk to Knightley."

Molly: Yeah. Her response to it at first was not even like, "Oh, my God, weren't you supposed to go to the Crown?" It was like, "No, you went to the Crown, you silly goose," as if he doesn't know where he just came from. [00:23:00]

Becca: I love it. I love Augusta being embarrassed.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So good.

Molly: So good. He's complaining. He's like, "I called ahead and everything. I walked over the fields, which was even worse. And then the housekeeper didn't even know that I was coming." And he says that nobody could even tell him where Knightley had gone. And Mrs. Elton thinks that Knightley must have left a note with a servant, and the servant forgot it. Knightley would never not leave a note.

Becca: Always blame the help if you're Augusta.

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Oh, my God, the Donwell servants are so terrible, anyway." She's so rude.

Becca: They got in the way of her little apple picking moment in-

Molly: They did.

Becca: -Donwell, remember?

Molly: Mm-hmm. Wait, what happened with her apple picking moment?

Becca: Oh, no, she has this like-- [crosstalk]

Molly: She didn't like it.

Becca: No, she had a great time picking strawberries, not actually apples.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: But I call it the apple picking moment because it has the vibes of apple picking. And she decides, she's like the lady of the house for a day. She might have just pissed off the servants because they're like, [00:24:00] "We don't have a fucking mistress here. We have this lady who's pretending she's in charge of us."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: She's like, "They're so rude."

Molly: Yeah, she hates them. Elton says that he ran into William Larkins on his way in, and William Larkins was in a bad mood and said that he doesn't know what's come over Knightley lately. And in my notes, I wrote, "But he is in love."

Becca: They are in love.

Molly: They are in love. He's like, "It was very important that I see Knightley today." And Emma is like, "I think that's my cue to leave." She writes here that she doesn't want Knightley to sink any lower in his something or other with Elton or William Larkins. She does not want to hear them talk shit about Knightley anymore.

Becca: What's the exact line there?

Molly: "Emma felt that she could not do better than go home directly. Emma felt that she could not do better than go home directly. In all probability she was at this very time waited

for there, and Mr. Knightley might be preserved from sinking deeper in aggression towards Mr. Elton, if not towards William Larkins."

Becca: She just doesn't want to hear them talk shit about Knightley.

Molly: That's what I thought. [00:25:00] Jane walks her out and down the stairs, and Emma takes this moment to be like, "It's good there were other people there, or I might have started gossiping with you."

Becca: This is the best moment when you're in a group setting and someone is like, "Oh, let's go grab, like, a walk together" or something, and then you actually talk about the thing you've been wanting to talk about.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's so good.

Molly: This moment between them is so sweet like friends.

Becca: Let's go. Yeah, let's go bit by bit with it.

Molly: Yeah. So, Emma is like, "It's good there was other people around, or I might have asked you about a subject that might have been improper to bring up." And Jane blushes, and she's like, "That would have been the best thing that you could do, would be to show interest in it. The only danger would have been that I would have talked your ear off," because she's so happy.

Becca: She's so happy.

Molly: She says that she knows she's behaved badly. She doesn't have time to apologize for all the things that she would like to apologize for, and she says that it gives her comfort "to know that those of my friends whose good [00:26:00] opinion is most worth preserving are not disgusted to such a degree as to," and then she cuts herself. So, she counts Emma as one of her good friends now, or maybe she always has, but she just had to be weird about it for a while.

Becca: Gay.

Molly: Gay. Emma then takes her hand, and she says that she owes her no apology. She and everyone else that Jane thinks she might need to apologize to are just so happy for her. And Jane says that she knows she's been cold towards Emma, but she had to just act apart. And Emma says, "How about we just both forgive each?" Like, "I'm sure there's things I need to apologize for too." And she says, "I suppose that the next thing will be that you leave." She says, "I suppose we are to lose you, just as I begin to know."

Becca: Oh, it's very sweet.

Molly: Jane is like, "Let's not think about that. I have to stay here until the Campbells come." And Emma says, "It might not be happening right now, but forgive me, it must be thought of." And Jane says, "Yes, it has been thought of." [00:27:00] And She tells her that they are going to be spending three months with Mr. Churchill and mourning before going off to live together. And Emma is just super happy for her, and that's the end of that chapter.

Becca: They just have this beautiful moment where if you flash back to the beginning of this book, every time Jane Fairfax was mentioned to Emma, it was Emma's deep disdain played over and over again, and then Jane Fairfax was there in the corner, and Emma just hated her, thought she was cold, thought she was having an inappropriate affair with Mr. Dixon, all this stuff. As the book progresses, we have gotten to know Jane, even through Emma's

weird filter of her and having this little cherry on top of the end where it's just clear the two of them are going to be friends.

Molly: Yeah, it's really nice.

Becca: Yeah, it does read a little gay. I will be honest.

Molly: It reads super gay. The looks that Jane's been giving her through the whole time that they were sitting up there and Emma was like, "It's clear she just wants to talk to me." It was [00:28:00] clear that she just wants to talk to her. Gay.

Becca: Gay.

Molly: So, that brings us to Chapter 17 or Chapter 53. Mrs. Weston has her baby, and it is a girl.

Becca: Graham, I think we need a baby sound effect-

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: -different than the proposal sound effect and different than The Economics of Dating and Jane Austen sound effect. Just a whole new sound effect for a baby.

[baby sound effect]

Becca: Nice.

Molly: [laughs] So, Emma is daydreaming of one day setting this baby up with one of Isabella's sons.

Becca: Back on her bullshit.

Molly: She's back on her bullshit. But she is so happy that Mr. Weston is going to have someone to someday gossip with and Mrs. Weston will have someone to teach.

Becca: Yeah, this is definitely a couple that was suited to having daughters, not sons.

Molly: Yes, absolutely. She's talking about this to Knightley, and she's like, "Oh, she's going to do even better with her daughter than she did with me." And Knightley's like, "She will indulge her more than she did you." [00:29:00] And Emma's like, "Oh, no, what will become of this poor child?" And he says, "Well, she'll probably be disagreeable infancy and she'll get better with age." He says he can't be harsh on spoiled children anymore when Emma is his main source of happiness.

Becca: In love.

Molly: So in love. Emma says that she had his guidance in life to counteract the indulgence of other people, and she would never have gotten better otherwise. He says he thinks she would have. She had good sense and principles, and his guidance was just as likely to do harm than good. He says that she could have been like, "What right does this guy have to lecture me and not listen to him at all?" This part's a little bit weird, but [laughs] he says that the only thing was that he doting on her so much and as a result of having so much affection for her and for her flaws all these years, he's been in love with her since she was 13.

Becca: Okay. So, let's talk about this briefly. First of all, Knightley would be, will an adult by the time Emma's 13 years old.

Molly: Yeah. Like, how much older than her is? Someone emailed us about that-- [crosstalk]

Becca: I think it's 16 years.

Molly: So, he was-- [crosstalk] [00:30:00]

Becca: Probably in his late 20s. But here's what I'll say. I don't read this to be like, "I was sexually attracted to you or romantically wanting to be with you at age 13." I think what this means is, "I was endeared to you at that point in time."

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Which he was.

Molly: He says he can't think of her without doting on. Like, he's loved her since then-- Of course, he's always loved her.

Becca: Exactly. And we know Knightley has always loved Emma. Like, he's known her a whole life and he's always had a special place in his heart for her. Until recently, that has been sisterly love. It has not ignited into more until Frank Churchill came to Highbury.

Molly: Yes. And now, they are both adults.

Becca: Yes. They are now both consenting adults with a lot of money and the will to go into this marriage by themselves.

Molly: Yes, exactly. That's not an abnormal age difference when you are both consenting adults.

Becca: Yeah. Obviously, we've talked about the age difference in the last [00:31:00] few episodes. Now it is there and it's a little awkward that he knew her than when she was that young. But I don't take this to mean, "Yeah, I've wanted to bone you since you were a child." I take this to mean, "I have always had a special place in my heart for you," which is still creepy, but not quite as creepy. [giggles]

Molly: But it's not as creepy, because this love that they have has grown out of always having known each other.

Becca: Yes. There's a familiarity with the two of them and unmutual affection that has always existed and did not become romantic until they were both adults.

Molly: Right. Again, consenting adults-

Becca: Consenting adults.

Molly: -who, again, both have money and neither of them are needing this to stay.

Becca: Yes. This is a marriage not of convenience, not of necessity. This is a marriage where two people who have a lot of agency to decide they love each other and want to be together, which is very rare in this time period.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, I'm still on board.

Molly: Same. I'm still on board.

Becca: But I'm going to ding Jane Austen for this line, because you read it and you're [00:32:00] like, "Oh, that's not great." [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. There was one word I didn't know there, dint, which is a blower stroke typically made with a weapon in fighting. And he says, "By dint of having all this affection for you," or whatever, which I just took to mean over the years, all his affection has added up to being in love with her. So, he says that when she was young, she would always go around being like, "Mr. Knightley, I'm going to do this thing that my dad said that I could do that you hate, just to piss you off." She would just always be like, "Mr. Knightley, look what I'm doing. Mr.

Knightley, nah, nah, nah." And she says, "No wonder you love me so much. I sound so great." [giggles]

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: He says that she's always called him Mr. Knightley. Even though it doesn't really sound formal coming out of her mouth, it is formal, and he wants her to call him something else. And she says, "I remember I once called you, George, because I thought it would annoy you, but it didn't, so I never did it again."

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I love this.

Becca: That's great. I do [00:33:00] this with Mike all the time. I'll just find a thing that I'm hoping will irritate him a little bit and then it doesn't. And the trick to it is I have to just keep doing it in weird and consistent ways. I'm such a bully.

Molly: Oh, my God, I love it.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Knightley says, "Well, can you call me George now?" And she's like, "Absolutely not. I'm calling you nothing, but Mr. Knightley." But she does say, "I will promise to call you once by your Christian name. I do not say when, but perhaps you may guess where." Wink-wink wink. In my head, I was like, "Wink-wink-wink," and then I realized she's talking about when they get married.

Becca: I wish it were in the bedroom, wink-wink-wink, wink-wink-wink, but it is in the chapel. Less winking.

Molly: Less winking. She says, "In the building where N takes M for better or for worse," which is really sweet because neither of their names start with those letters, but she means Emma and Knightley, right?

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah, it's really cute. I will say, I don't know, is the Christian name George or is there like a middle name? Because I know that some people have a middle name like [00:34:00] Marie-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Christian name in this time means first name.

Molly: First name. Okay, great. Emma has one thing she wishes she could talk to him about and that would be Harriet, but she can't. Neither of them have actually brought up Harriet in a while, and she thinks that on his part, it's probably because he isn't thinking about Harriet, but she wonders if possibly he can tell their friendship is fading and he doesn't want to bring her up, because Harriet's in London, and normally under any other circumstances, Emma would be writing to her and hearing from her, but she isn't. Isabella writes that Harriet is doing well and hanging out with the children and they've actually invited her to stay for a whole month, which is great.

Becca: Even more procrastination for Emma. And also, Harriet gets to hang out in London. Win-win.

Molly: Yes, totally. Knightley, at this point, shows Emma a letter and says, "John doesn't even mention Harriet." And the letter is a response to Knightley's plans to marry Emma. Knightley, as he's handing this letter to Emma is like, "John isn't really one for compliments or flourishes."

Becca: So, he was basically like, "Ah, really okay." [laughs]

Molly: [00:35:00] Yeah. He's like, "Some people might interpret this letter to be not so nice, but I don't think that you will."

Becca: Emma's like, "I don't give a fuck. He's grumpy as anything."

Molly: Yeah. Emma says that it's clear that John thinks Knightley is too good for Emma, but it's also clear that he hopes he will soon think she is worthy of Knightley's affection. And Knightley's like, "Wait, no, that's not what I wanted you to read into." And Emma's like, "No, it's fair. I agree with him. You're too good for me." And Knightley's like, "No, Emma, no." But she's laughing and she's like, "It's totally fine. Just wait till my father hears about this. He's going to think that I'm way too good for you. So, don't worry about it."

Becca: And then he's like, "Well, at least John, we can convince. We'll never convince your father."

Molly: Yeah. At least they're on the same page about it.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He does say he was amused by part of John's letter. He's like, "See, look here where he says he's not surprised. What does that mean?" And Emma's like, "I think he's just not surprised you want to get married, not that you're marrying me." And he's like, "But I feel like I've been pretty normal. Why does he think that I've changed?" And then he's thinking about it and he's like, "I guess, I was [00:36:00] pretty down in the dumps when I was hanging out with them in London."

Becca: Yeah, we talked about this. He was in his Mope drama era, and he was hanging out with Isabella and John famously, like, the worst people to hang out with when you're upset. And so, I'm sure John was just like, "Dude." [laughs]

Molly: Like, "This guy's in love."

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Yeah. Emma decides she has to tell her father and then she's going to tell the Westons, like, the time has come. She makes plans to tell her dad when Knightley is not there, and then Knightley's going to come and talk to her dad afterwards. She's like, "I got to tell him in a cheerful manner. I can't make it seem like this is a bad thing." And she prepares him that this is going to be very strange, but she thinks it's going to be good for everyone, especially since Knightley will be there all the time now. And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "Wait."

Becca: Yup.

Molly: He's like, "Don't do it. You always said you would never marry. Think of poor Miss Taylor and Isabella." And Emma says, "Well, they all had to leave Hartfield when they got married, but I'll stay right [00:37:00] here."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: "Again, Knightley's going to be here all the time. Don't you love Knightley? And isn't Knightley so helpful and patient and knowledgeable and wouldn't it be great to see him every day?" And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "Well, yeah, but we see him every day anyway."

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: Like, "Why do you have to get married?"

Becca: He's like, "If that's the case, why don't you just not get married and see him all the time." [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. Oh, Mr. Woodhouse. I just want him to be happy for her. He'll get there.

Becca: I will neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: Yeah, sure. Later, Knightley also talks to him, and then Isabella writes to him and she's approving of the match. And Mrs. Weston writes to him and she's approving of the match. And eventually, he comes around to think that perhaps in a year or two, the marriage might not be the worst thing ever. He's not there yet, but he knows that one day it will be fine. Mrs. Weston, when Emma tells her, is surprised by it, but she's very happy.

Becca: This is perfect because she's like the in between bestie a little.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: She's like, "Oh, my God, you two are into each other. [00:38:00] I'm furious at myself that I never thought about that."

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Wait, all this time I've been trying to set you up with Frank and I could have been trying to set you up with Knightley." That makes so much more sense.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. She loves Knightley. She is especially impressed that he's going to move to Hartfield with her to keep her near her father, because the one thing that she and Mr. Weston, when they were gossiping together and trying to figure out how to get her together with Frank, they were like, "What are we going to do about her father, and this is the perfect solution."

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: It says that she's so happy. The only thing that can make her more happy is when her baby outgrows its first set of caps. I tried to google what a set of caps is, and I couldn't find anything. Is it just a bonnet?

Becca: I think it's bonnets.

Molly: Okay. I thought at first it was teeth, but that can't be right.

Becca: No, because the baby does not have teeth yet.

Molly: Yeah, I got it.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Mr. Weston was also surprised when he found out, but by the end of an hour, he was like, "I've always thought this," in classic Mr. Weston fashion.

Becca: Ooh, I also had a line from Mrs. Weston's thinking about the match that I thought was [00:39:00] great, "But here there was nothing to be shifted off in a wild speculation on the future. It was all right, all open, all equal. No sacrifice on any side worth the name. It was a union of the highest promise of felicity in itself, and without one real, rational difficulty to oppose or delay it."

Molly: Ah.

Becca: Ideal.

Molly: Yeah, it's truly a perfect match.

Becca: Yeah, it's not only just like they're in love with each other and they are doing this because they both want to. It's so sensible too. We love an easy love story.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: The only thing that was in their way is that they were both fucking idiots for years.

Molly: They were really dumb.

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: They were dumb and stubborn.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: The next bit I wrote is my funniest quote. What is--? Oh, yes. This next part I'll get to the funniest quote part of it when we get to funniest quote. But basically, Mr. Weston knows and he's like, "This must be kept a secret. Let me know when I can tell everyone." And then his first thing that he does is tell Jane, even though nobody told him he could tell Jane yet. And Miss Bates was also there. So, therefore, Mrs. Cole, [00:40:00] Mrs. Perry, and Mrs. Elton all find out as well. Emma and Knightley were completely expecting this. They were like, "Yes, when we told Mr. Weston, we knew were telling the whole town."

Becca: Oh, yes.

Molly: "This is exactly what we planned for." They thought of themselves with sagacity, which means that they think they are sagacious, which means wise. I had to look that up. I know, I've looked it up before, but yes. The only people who aren't here for it are the Eltons. Mr. Elton is telling himself that Emma always wanted to catch Knightley if she could, so that's why she rejected him.

Becca: This is like quintessential boy behavior, which is like, "Oh, the only reason you didn't want me is because you want another dude."

Molly: Yeah. He's like, "Well, better him than me."

Becca: It's like, "Yeah, well, fuck. She sucks anyway. I don't need her. I got my wife. She's cool as fuck."

Molly: Yeah. And his wife is like, "Oh, poor Knightley. His social life is over now."

Becca: "I will no longer be able to invite myself to host parties at his house."

Molly: Yes, that's exactly the only thing she cares about.

Becca: "This is [00:41:00] so sad. I just feel like, she's just going to take up all his time. She's going to be so fucking possessive over him when we just want to be his friend."

Molly: Yeah, which is funny, because who's really like that? Mrs. Elton?

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: She says that she knew a couple who lived together once, and they broke up within a few months. Does she mean before marriage? She says, it's so weird that they're going to live together. Like, she lives with her husband.

Becca: I'm not quite sure, but I think she's just--

Molly: She's ready to shit on whatever they do.

Becca: Yeah, I think she's just ready to shit on whatever they're going to do. I think she is talking about the fact that Knightley's moving to Hartfield.

Molly: Right. And I guess, he's moving there before they actually get married and he's going to come right away.

Becca: Yeah, it seems like it.

Molly: Yeah. Well, that's the end of that chapter.

Becca: Yeah. That brings us to Becca's study questions. We only have a few because these chapters are light, but there's some fun stuff to talk about here. All right, so I would posit there's a theme to these chapters that changes that that I would ask you to guess on and pontificate on before I [00:42:00] give you my thoughts on it.

Molly: The theme of the first chapter, to me, is like happy endings for Jane. Theme of the second chapter is like it's starting to wrap things up. Like, secrets being brought to light, I guess would be theme that I would put my finger on.

Becca: I would say there is a theme of shifting dynamics in these chapters, in terms of stature and class and power, I suppose. I think you can see it specifically in these first chapters, the dynamics between Jane and Mrs. Elton and the dynamics between Emma and Jane have really shifted. And then in the other realm, you have the dynamics between Harriet and Emma shifting off screen, and you have the dynamics between Emma and Knightley shifting. [00:43:00] You have the dynamics of Mrs. Weston and Emma shifting as they both move into different life phases, and you have the dynamics of everyone's life shifting around Mr. Woodhouse. So, you can see how this is setting up our ending just to still be in Highbury, but also to be changing a little from the way it was at the beginning of the book.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Does that make sense?

Molly: Yeah, that makes a lot of sense.

Becca: Yeah. So, I think grouping these two chapters together made sense as we were nearing the end of the book, because we're building up to two final chapters where we're going to resolve everything. Unlike some of our other books, where we're three chapters away from the end, and you're like, "How will this fadge?" A lot of stories have been resolved at this point.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, there's only a couple loose strings to tie. [crosstalk]

Molly: Oh, my God, I hope Harriet comes back married.

Becca: I will neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: That would be hilarious. Okay, continue.

Becca: So, what we have here is just [00:44:00] setting up what is this town going to look like when this book is over, when this story is finished? We see in these chapters how things are going to play out.

Molly: mm-hmm.

Becca: All right, second question. Why is Mrs. Elton acting the way she does in these chapters?

Molly: I think she doesn't like-- Well, first, she loves being in the know, obviously. And then she doesn't like being wrong. So, she likes to make everything seem like it was her idea or it was-- She's like, "Oh, yes, my apology to Mrs. Smallridge went over very well." Like, "We're good." She's acting snooty because she thinks that Jane shared something with her. When she finds out that Knightley and Emma are in love, she doesn't like that because that shows that he likes Emma more than he likes her, obviously.

Becca: And she despises Emma.

Molly: She hates Emma. She really [00:45:00] hates Emma. It's always been clear that she doesn't like Emma, but the way that she makes it so clear that she doesn't like Emma, when she finds out that he's getting married to her with the straight up like, "Oh, my God, that's so sad for him. That's so rude." But yeah, I think it's just that she likes to be everyone's favorite, or at least have people pretend that she's their favorite, and so she thinks that, "Oh, she's in the know with Jane and then she thinks yeah."

Becca: Yeah. I would also say that Mrs. Elton is losing a lot of her power in these chapters.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, one of the big dynamics between her and Jane was that in her brain, she was this married rich lady who's helping this poor girl.

Molly: Oh. And now Jane is no longer [crosstalk] married poor girl.

Becca: So, this was always a bit of a misconception on Mrs. Elton's part and a very insulting misconception towards Jane that she just had to bear the entire time.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, [00:46:00] that has been very draining on Jane through the entire book. Now, Jane is now revealed to be engaged to someone who is above Mr. Elton's stature by quite a bit. So, she is not only more refined and accomplished and of better birth than Mrs. Elton, she'll probably be wealthier than Mrs. Elton, and she'll have a higher status in the world. So, Jane went from her poor friend, who she was giving charity to and just adored as this sweet little thing who was going to be the help to her family, basically, she went from that to someone who is now above Mrs. Elton.

Not only that, but Mrs. Elton very much weaponizes the fact that she is married to show her status in society, "Jane is now engaged. She will not be a governess." So, all of that freaking patronizing that was happening from Mrs. Elton, from Augusta towards Jane Fairfax just disappears. And now Mrs. Elton is holding on to any little piece of power she can get over [00:47:00] Jane.

Molly: Yeah, that's really good.

Becca: Then if you add into that dynamic the fact that clearly she and Elton have been spending the entire fucking book grubbing at Knightley, sucking up to Knightley. We talked about Elton going to see Knightley twice, but he's been going the whole book to see Knightley and suck up to him. He's a class climber. We know this about him.

Molly: And now they're going to have to suck up to Emma.

Becca: Not only that, but Mrs. Elton thought she was besties with Knightley and that they were like the high-status people in society, and she was trying to put down Emma for that reason. But now it has been revealed that Knightley is going to be hanging on to Emma, and

also that Emma is now unquestionably above her, not only because she is getting married, but she is getting married to the person that the Eltons have been sucking up to the entire book.

Molly: I love this.

Becca: It's beautiful.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: Yes. I would take these chapters as a subtle revenge plot on our girl, Augusta.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Oh, I love it. I love it so much.

Becca: [00:48:00] Yeah, it's beautiful. It's almost as good as if I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more.

Molly: [giggles] I just stopped crying about that. Now, you're going to bring it up again?

Becca: [laughs] Well, instead of that, now we have the humbling of Augusta. All right, next. Are Emma and Jane friends now and what do we make of that match? We've talked about how gay it is.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: But let's talk about the friendship.

Molly: Yes. They are friends now. Part of me thinks that maybe, and this might just be me projecting, but the vibes that I'm getting is that Jane has always thought of Emma as someone she wants to be friends with and has always even thought of her as a friend. When she came back, I think it was giving her a great pain to not be acting like friends with Emma, because this is almost immediate. As soon as she's getting married, she's like, "Oh, my God, I'm so glad we can finally talk about this."

Emma has always hated Jane because she was so nice and so perfect. [00:49:00] I think I assume that Jane would come back and be very cordial with Emma and want to hang out, and Emma was the one not befriending her. So, that's just the vibes that I'm getting. I think that Jane's always wanted to be friends and that it's finally happening.

Becca: Yes. You also might recall that Knightley was really shipping these to his friends and had said when Jane started hanging out with Augusta all the time. Well, she doesn't have a lot of other options. Like, there are people who would be appropriate friends for her in this town who are cold fish to her. And so, you get the sense that Jane has always known that she and Emma would be a good match, and never gotten the opportunity, and that she in the particularly the last few months has been closed off because she had this big secret, and Emma's been flirting with the guy that she's engaged to the entire time. So, it's a combination of weird factors. But having resolved the frank of it all and Emma maturing into the type of person who understands that it's not always about her [00:50:00] has made the two of them-- It is revealed the fact that the two of them are actually a very natural fit as friends.

Molly: Yeah. Just to also bring up that Knightley also didn't want Emma to befriend Harriet, and he was like, "Why are you befriending Harriet, not Jane?"

Becca: Yes. I think that that portion of the book is something we're going to talk about even more in the next two chapters.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: Not give too much away, but this swap of being estranged from Harriet a little bit and being so much more comfortable around Jane speaks to how Emma's learned through the book and also speaks to, maybe in the less flattering light, who would be the more appropriate friend for Emma to have, Jane or Harriet. I think unquestionably, it's Jane by this society standards, but that's fucked up.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: Yeah. All right. Yes. We hear a little bit about Knightley loving Emma in these chapters. What do you gather outside of the weird comment about 13 years old, which we're just [00:51:00] going to have to sidestep briefly?

Molly: Yes.

Becca: What do you make of why Knightley fell in love with Emma?

Molly: Okay. Well, he says he loves her flaws and all. He loves her flaws. The only reason he always was trying to correct her was because he had so much affection for her and wanted her to do better. Like we said, wanted her to do better. But why did he love her in the first place? This is always the question, isn't it? Like, what is love?

Becca: Well, there's just this chapter at the end of *Pride and Prejudice*, where Darcy talks about what made him fall in love with Elizabeth.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: This serves as an equivalent, parallel chapter in this book.

Molly: Yeah. Let's see. "Nature gave you understanding. Miss Taylor gave you principles. You have done well. My interference, it was very natural for you to say, what right has he to lecture me? and I am afraid very [00:52:00] natural for you to feel that it was done in a disagreeable manner. I do not believe I did you any good. The good was all to myself, by making you an object of the tenderest affection to me. I could not think about you so much without doating on you, faults and all."

Becca: So, what I gather from that, Knightley seems predisposed to just fucking nag, and he seems very transparently aware of Emma's flaws and who she is as a person. What I take Knightley to love about Emma is that, for her time, she is a woman who is so confident, so sure of herself, so independent. There is a narrative about the book that I don't personally buy into, where the idea is that Knightley "shaped Emma into the wife he wanted," which I think is a complete misreading of the book, personally.

Molly: Yeah, I know. I agree with you. I don't think that at all.

Becca: What I read instead is that Knightley could not help himself nagging Emma, because he was very focused on her. But what he found lovely about her is that she took the nagging and then just didn't really do much with it, because she was like, "I don't need it." She took it in stride and then did her own thing. So, I take Knightley to love the fact that Emma's like a woman of her own ideas, who marches to the beat of her own drum and insists on doing things her way, even if her way is wrong.

Molly: Yes, she's her own person. He even says that a spoiled child will be annoying as a child, disagreeable as a child, and will grow better with time. He doesn't think that he did that for Emma. He thinks that she did that on her own. She just grew and matured.

Becca: Yeah, he thinks she's just the type of person who is always strong willed and independently minded. And that as a child, that made her a brat. As she's grown older, that

has made her an incredibly endearing woman, especially as she held onto good principles and good sense.

Molly: [00:54:00] Mm-hmm.

Becca: So, I think I read Knightley to love Emma because she is this overconfident himbo who does the stupidest shit in the world, because she takes risks, learns for herself, and doesn't listen to others too much.

Molly: She does. She never would not take a risk.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: He's like, "Don't befriend that person. What are you doing? Why are you befriend--?" And she's like, "Well, I like her. Of course, I'm going to befriend her."

Becca: Because he makes a big point at every point in the book to talk about the fact that he nags her incessantly and he can't help himself. But what he loves about her is he's like, "You just take it." He's like, "You take it on the chin, And then you're like, 'All right, whatever. You're being dumb,' and then you walk away from me." Most women would have cut me out of their lives for all I do.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, it doesn't, to me, strike me as him trying to shape her into a specific person. He's expressing frustration with her levels of immaturity and her messing with other people's lives. But what he likes is that she is the type of person who will make her own decisions about [00:55:00] things and come to her own conclusions and not listen to him all the time, because he blathers on nagging her.

Molly: Yes. When she realized how much she cared about what he thought about her, that's when she realized she was in love with him.

Becca: Yes. Oh, poetic cinema.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Okay. So, last question. This occurred to me as I was reading these chapters, because, like I said at the beginning of the book, I forgot that Mrs. Weston had a baby.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: But what is the significance of Anna Weston, the new baby?

Molly: I think it's bringing things full circle, because Emma is now grown up and Mrs. Weston is getting this new baby that she took care of Emma through her whole life, and now there's this new baby for Emma to witness what that's like from the outside?

Becca: So, Anna Weston is born to Mr. Weston and Mrs. Weston. Mrs. Weston was the mother figure [00:56:00] for Emma through her whole childhood, a young girl who was doted upon as the crown jewel of this little town of Highbury, who was born to an older father in a comfortable life. And so, you can see the story. You're right. It's a reset. It's a restart. And this part of the book is telling us that Emma's story is concluding. We're getting a new story in Highbury, a new young girl who's going to be spoiled rotten by Mrs. Weston and her older father. I don't know, it's a beautiful way to tie things up.

Molly: It gives Emma an excuse to one day get back on her matchmaking bullshit.

Becca: Yes. It gives Emma an in to get back on the matchmaking bullshit. Like, all those heist movies where it's like, the one last heist and then there's a little in at the ending to get right back on there.

Molly: Yup.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Sequel.

Becca: Sequel. All right. What do you think of Emma?

Molly: Well, now, [00:57:00] she is in love.

Becca: She is in love.

Molly: And she's grown. I think that it would have been good for her to be able to befriend Jane. Well, actually, she couldn't have possibly befriended Jane throughout the rest of this book, because Jane was giving her the cold shoulder, because Jane was acting apart. But I think it's good that she has slowly been able to see that she doesn't need to have a competition with Jane. Like, they can be friends. I just want her to show the same level of maturity with her relationship with Harriet and figure that out. But I'm proud of her.

Becca: We'll have to see.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Funniest quote?

Molly: Okay. So, this is going back just a little bit to Mr. Weston learning that Emma and Knightley are together. [00:58:00] "It is to be a secret, I conclude," said he. "These matters are always a secret, till it is found out that everybody knows them." Why do they know him? I don't know. Only let me be told when I may speak out. I wonder whether Jane has any suspicion." He went to Highbury the next morning, and satisfied himself on that point. He told her the news."

Becca: Questions moving forward.

Molly: Will Harriet come back? And will Harriet come back married? Because I suddenly am like, "Wait, she was in London." Like, "She's going to come back married." I don't know. Maybe that's my prediction. Will Emma and Harriet repair their friendship, or will they decide to go separate ways and just live in peace with each other? Will Emma and Knightley get married before the end of this book? Will we have that concluding chapter where it's like, "And the next year they were married and had a baby." So, that's what I want to know.

Becca: Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Jane.

Becca: Yeah. I think we could give it to Jane.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: She could finally got a one-up on Augusta.

Molly: [00:59:00] Yeah, she really did.

Becca: Oh, incredible. All right, listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. Next week, you're going to read the last two chapters of *Emma*.

Molly: Yay.

Becca: So, in a volumed book, that would be Chapters 18 and 19 of Volume III. If you are not in a volumed book, I believe that is Chapters 54 and 55. Molly, are you ready to finish this book?

Molly: I cannot wait to finish this book and start watching the movies.

Becca: Oh, it's going to be so much fun.

Molly: So, then, until next time, listeners, stay proper-

Becca: -and demean the fuck out of your demeaning friend.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Suck it, Augusta.

Molly: Suck it.

[music]

Molly: Pod and Prejudice is edited by Molly Burdick and audio produced by Graham Cook. Our show art is designed by Torrance Browne. Our show is transcribed by SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription. For transcripts and to learn more about our team, check out our website at podandprejudice.com. To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, **[01:00:00]** Instagram, and Facebook, [@podandprejudice](https://www.facebook.com/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.

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