

Molly: Hey everyone, before we begin, we'd like to thank our newest patrons, Sarah and Steven. Thank you so much for your support, and welcome to the team. If you want to be like Sarah and Steven and get access to bonus content, like my notes, outtakes and even bonus episodes, head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice to see how you can support us. If you love the show but becoming a Patreon just isn't in the cards for you right now, just leave us a rating or send us an email. We would love hearing from you. Now, enjoy this week's episode.

Molly and Becca: Three, two, one.

Molly: Hello, everyone.

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

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

Molly: We're so excited to have you with us if you're here for the very first time.

Becca: If you are, I know that I, Becca, know a lot about Jane Austen.

Molly: I, Molly, know nothing about Jane Austen

Becca: Together, we're reading *Pride and Prejudice*.

Molly: Together, we make one whole human being.

Becca: One that's never read *Pride and Prejudice*, one that has read it many times.

Molly: We neutralize each other.

Becca: We make a really solid Gemini.

Molly: It's funny because what are you?

Becca: I'm a Virgo.

Molly: I'm a Capricorn, [00:01:00] Aquarius cusp.

Becca: Oh, cool. I feel together we have mostly just really pragmatic horoscopes.

Molly: I have to say I know nothing about astrology. I'm a really bad gay.

Becca: I know that Virgo's are supposed to be type A, that's kind of it.

Molly: That makes sense for you, I think, in some ways.

Becca: That's true. I feel like I wasn't really a Virgo until law school and then I was like a hyper Virgo.

Molly: Yeah, I'd say in high school, I can't name an astrological sign and assign it to you, but in high school, I feel like I met in college. [laughs]

Becca: [laughs] I was going to be like, "What do you know about me?" I was very chill in college and now I'm like-

Molly: You're a chill girl. You're a partier. You like to go out. You're just telling me how much you miss bars.

Becca: We miss bars, guys. We finally caught up recordings to quarantine, and I miss going to a bar. I want to have like a drink at a bar so badly.

Molly: Yeah. I want a beer, and I don't even like beer.

Becca: I know. Alcohol delivery services, please sponsor us.

Molly: Yo. We are using Drizly at my house and they're great.

Becca: Drizly is [00:02:00] clutch. Drizly has sponsored half my happy hours in quarantine.

Molly: Drizly, sponsor us.

Becca: Please do. Anyway, Jane Austen.

Molly: Today, we are discussing Chapters 4 and 5 of the Third Volume of *Pride and Prejudice* and things got dicey.

Becca: Things take a turn in these chapters. I would say, this has been another big thing I have been hiding from you for a while.

Molly: This is the big thing. My mom keeps saying because she's listening to the podcast and she keeps saying to me, "I only remember one thing from seeing the movie and I don't know if you've gotten there yet, you're like real time reading, and when this happened." I went downstairs, and I was like, "Mom, I think I know what it is, but you can't say it because if it's not it, if something crazier happens, don't spoil it. She was like, "Okay, but what is it?" I told her and she was like, "That's the only thing I remembered happening."

Becca: It's a high stakes moment in what has been a generally low stakes book. For the listeners who don't know what's happening, maybe we should discuss what [00:03:00] happens in these chapters because we are dancing around it.

Molly: Let's get into it.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Molly: Lizzie is still with her aunt and uncle in Lambton, which is where she had last seen Darcy and it's been flirty, but it's hard to explain--

Becca: It's been flirty as much as Darcy can flirt like a functioning adult.

Molly: Yeah, he's not great at it.

Becca: Last we heard from him was him dissing Caroline Bingley and calling Lizzie the most attractive woman in his circle that he talks to, is very cute.

Molly: Now, Lizzie is sitting here at Lambton thinking about how sad she is that Jane hasn't written yet. But then, on the third day that she's in Lambton, now all of that with Darcy happened in the first two days, it's just--

Becca: Yeah, exactly--

Molly: -no bad. On the third day she receives two letters from Lambton, the first one having been sent to the wrong address and Lizzie's not surprised because [00:04:00] she looks at the front of the letter and Jane has scrawled her address on there in a very un-Jane fashion.

Becca: I was going to say this is the one Jane flaws that she has bad handwriting.

Molly: Well, does she have bad handwriting or was she upset and unable to focus on it?

Becca: It's the first letter, so I'm going to say bad handwriting, go on.

Molly: Okay. We know right away that something is up, and the Gardiners leave to go for a walk and leave Lizzie to read her letters. We learn in the letter that Lydia has run off to Scotland with Wickham!

Becca: Dun, dun, dun!

Molly: The way that this revealed, I'm rendered speechless.

Becca: You're flustered.

Molly: I can't even, and it's been a few days since I've read these chapters, but I'm just getting flustered thinking about it, because the way that it's revealed is so-- you're on tenterhooks, because Jane is like, "I have some bad news." She starts out the letter's like, "fine," and then midway through the letter, she had taken a break and come back and she's like Lizzie, "Bad news. Lydia has run off with an officer and it's Wickham!" [00:05:00]

Becca: There's a collective Elizabeth Bennet, like hard drop to stomach moment with this.

Molly: Yeah, because that's the worst thing that could have happened.

Becca: I would like to point out that you predicted Lydia would run off with an officer, but you did not predict which officer, and I sat there trying to keep a straight face, and I was like, “Is she going to guess Wickham?”

Molly: You did a good job.

Becca: I try.

Molly: I forgot that I had made that prediction until I was typing out my episode notes, and I was like, “Oh, I got something right!” but I didn’t get it fully right. Here’s the thing, the reason I think I didn’t predict that it was Wickham was because I had stopped thinking of Wickham as part of the militia. I just thought when the militia left, Wickham would disappear.

Becca: His job is just pure douchery.

Molly: He’s a professional fuckboy.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I thought when the militia left, I didn’t think of the fact that he was going to Brighton with everyone. I just forgot.

Becca: Yup. Wickham is there. [00:06:00]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Not anymore.

Molly: No. There was a little footnote next to Lydia running off to Scotland, and I was really nervous to look at it because I didn’t want any spoilers. I looked at the footnote, and in Scotland, there are no laws against couples under the age of 21 getting married quickly and without their parents’ approval.

Becca: Basically, running to Scotland in this time is running to Vegas in our time, just really lax marriage laws.

Molly: Yeah. That is what she has done, we think, from the first letter. Jane wants to believe the best of Wickham.

Becca: Basically, from this first letter, Jane is like, “Lydia and Wickham are eloping.”

Molly: She hopes the best for them in their endeavors, which is a very Jane thing to do. She wants to believe the best of his character.

Becca: She is on brand here.

Molly: She is. She believes that he can’t be making this decision in his own interest since he knows Lydia’s family and that they don’t have enough money. They don’t have anything to offer him. She

thinks that maybe **[00:07:00]** he really loves her. Mrs. Bennet is upset about this mainly because Wickham is poor, so Lydia is not marrying up but at this point, she doesn't care. The facts that we know are that they ran off on Saturday at midnight and left a note for the Forsters not to worry and they'll send for their things when they're back in Longbourn. Letter number two.

Becca: Slightly more stressed.

Molly: Slightly more stressed Jane. Jane is worried that they haven't actually gone to Scotland at all. I wrote a quote down here, "Imprudent as a marriage between Mr. Wickham and our poor Lydia would be, we are now anxious to be assured it has taken place for there's too much reason to fear they are not gone to Scotland." Denny, TBC to Denny.

Becca: Yeah. Did you forget about Denny?

Molly: I forgot about Denny too, and my brother's best friend's name is Denny.

Becca: I'm sure your brother's best friend is a lovely guy, and Denny seems fine here but he seems a bit of a fuckboy.

Molly: Well, I'm confused about Denny's motives in this situation because on the one hand, is he Wickham's best friend?

Becca: No, he's not Wickham's best friend. **[00:08:00]** Wickham doesn't have friends because Wickham sucks.

Molly: Wickham fucking sucks. But apparently, Denny has some intel.

Becca: I mean, yeah, because Denny is his locker room bro, they talk. Wickham is not a good person, so he doesn't get close to people in the same way. I think Denny is his bro in the military the way-- you know you have your work friends, who you're not close to, but you chill with?

Molly: Yeah. You'd hang out with after work or whatever.

Becca: I feel like this is low stakes for Denny. As far as he's friends with them both, but he doesn't really care what happens to them.

Molly: Sure.

Becca: We'll get there but this is a scandele!

Molly: A scandele!

Becca: A scandele! Graham, put some music under that-

Molly: Some noir.

Becca: Yes, it should be some noir music. Graham, this is very specific. One, two, three.

[noir music]

Molly and Becca: A scandele!

[laughter]

Molly: He's going to hate us. We like to make his job fun for him.

Becca: That's a really nice way of saying hard. We'd like to make his job hard for him.

Molly: Denny told the Forsters that he believes Wickham never intended to marry **[00:09:00]** Lydia and Colonel Forster then is like, "All right, I'm going to track them down." He goes off to find where they've gone, but he can't trace them past Clapham. That pronunciation better be correct.

Becca: Hey Siri, how do you pronounce Clapham?

Siri: Here's what I found.

Male Siri: Clapham.

Becca: Clapham.

Male Speaker: Clapham.

Molly: Clapham.

Becca: Clapham.

Molly: It sounds like a place in New Jersey.

Becca: That's not inaccurate.

Molly: Nice. What they did was, they got on a coach and at Clapham, they switched to a hackney-coach, which is a private coach for hire. He goes all around looking for them with no luck, and he comes back to Longbourn at that point, because he needs to tell them what's going on. Mr. and Mrs. Bennet are concerned. Jane, of course, says, "I cannot think so ill of him. Many circumstances might make it more eligible for them to be married privately in town and to pursue their first plan. Even if he could form such a design against a young woman of Lydia's connections, which is not likely. Can I suppose her so lost to everything?" Yes? **[00:10:00]**

Becca: We know he's a dick.

Molly: We know Lydia's kind of Lydia.

Becca: Also, side note, how old is Lydia?

Molly: 15, 16.

Becca: How old was Georgiana?

Molly: 15.

Becca: Wickham preys on children!

Molly: It's really gross. It's really, really so gross. I hate it.

Becca: It makes me so upset. Anyway.

Molly: Colonel Forster thinks that Wickham isn't to be trusted, which we know. Kitty is angry. My notes say, "Kitty is anger."

Becca: Kitty is anger is not a bad description of these chapters.

Molly: Kitty is angry, because she knew something was up with them and she didn't say anything before, so she feels bad and also angry. Jane begs Lizzie to come home, and hopes that maybe Mr. Gardiner can come back, and go with their dad to London to search for Lydia, because that's where they believe she's gone. Daddy Bennet is already there with Colonel Forster, but the Colonel has to go back to Brighton the next day, so they want Mr. Gardner to come help.

Before we get to what is about to happen, this is all bad, because it's bad for a girl to run off [00:11:00] with someone without marrying him.

Becca: I am so glad you brought this up. I was going to segue into it. This is in the study questions, but let's take a moment to evaluate what's happening here.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: We have a "elopement," which is scandalous. Remember when we talked about Georgie Darcy's almost elopement?

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Do you remember how that was really bad?

Molly: Yes.

Becca: You have this situation where there's possible elopement and that's why Jane is upset in the first letter, and you can see her being upset. It's shocking, but she's dealing with it. Lydia will be poor, but Lydia will be married. Whatever. What we have in the second letter is what happens if Lydia and Wickham don't get married? They did run away together. What do you think they're doing in the time away together?

Molly: Having sex.

Becca: Having a lot of sex, and even if they're not having sex, that's what everyone thinks they're doing. It's so clear in the way that Jane Austen wrote these chapters. Now, we do not have a woman who's making a [00:12:00] rash decision about her economic state because she loves someone. We have a loose woman who will give away her virginity to the first bidder.

Molly: There's no such thing as dating in this time period.

Becca: What you're reading is dating in Jane Austen.

Molly: You mean what we were reading before this, like standing six feet apart as all of the memes that people have been tagging us in this week?

Becca: Exactly. There's a reason that Jane Austen speaks to the quarantine dating life. It's because it's supposedly sexless. That's the reason the dancing is so charged. It's because no one can touch each other.

Molly: Can you imagine if we were allowed to dance with each other?

Becca: Oh my God. Don't. I like, oh--

Molly: You're not allowed to be upset.

Becca: I am not allowed to be upset. Listeners, I have access to my boyfriend right now and Molly is not in that situation, so I am not to be upset.

Molly: Becca says that really nicely, Molly is single and living with her parents right now. That's what happening. [laughs]

Becca: I am fine. I'm quarantined with someone who I get to [00:13:00] get out.

Molly: Yeah. We know.

Becca: Not elope with. [laughs]

Molly: Right.

Becca: In any case, what we have here is a situation where what Lizzie and Darcy is doing is "dating," what Bingley and Jane were doing was dating. That's why it's so crazy that he just left, because it was so clear. What we're seeing is something absolutely taboo and forbidden. Obviously, in the Jane Austen era, women did have sex, obviously. You can see Jane Austen's kind of being like, "Yeah, this happens. This literally happens," but it is not allowed. It will ruin a reputation more than ruining Lydia's reputation, this has the potential to be so damning, that it will ruin the reputations of all the Bennet girls.

Molly: Which Lydia has already started to do. This is what Lizzie was worried about.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: This is exactly what Lizzie is worried about.

Becca: This is the situation of having flirtatious sisters on steroids. Right now, Lizzie and Jane have problematic parents, and problematic [00:14:00] sisters that make them slightly less desirable as mates. If word of this gets out, the Bennets are done. No one will marry them. They will be socially toxic. Therefore, they will starve because, again, as I have not said in a very long time, their livelihood is tied to whether or not they can marry.

Molly: Indeed.

Becca: When we're talking about this situation, we are talking about the fact that Lydia has been so careless that her entire family could starve.

Molly: This is stressful.

Becca: This is very stressful. This is also why I said, Lydia would be someone who would be on spring break during the coronavirus outbreak.

Molly: Yeah. Fuck those bitches Am I right?

Becca: Oye, stay home anybody.

Molly: Stay home. At this point, Lizzie needs to go get her uncle, and tell them we need to leave now. So, she runs to the door and she reaches out her hand to open the doorknob, and the door swings open from the other side by a servant opening it, to reveal, Mr. Darcy!

Becca: By the way, can we just take a moment to say he is coming to see her [00:15:00] before she is going to see him that night. He is so thirsty. Go on.

Molly: He loves her. She immediately yells like, "I'm sorry, I've got to leave right now." He is a sweet baby boy, and he goes, "Good God! What is the matter? I will not detain you a minute but let the servant and go after Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner, you are not well enough, you cannot go by yourself," because she's flustered. Women really aren't allowed to get worked up.

Becca: The reason that women can't get worked up is they're prone to fainting. The reason they're prone to fainting is they're all wearing those fucking corsets.

Molly: Yeah. She feels like she might.

Becca: Lizzie's on the verge of a panic attack and wearing a corset. If you're on the verge of a panic attack and wearing a corset, you can't go anywhere.

Molly: This is very true, and he wants her to stay safe, the good boy that he is.

Becca: He's so soft.

Molly: Her knees start buckling. She tells the servant to go find Mr. and Mrs. Gardiner. Darcy asks if he couldn't get her anything that would bring her relief, perhaps a glass of wine. Same. She says no. She's just stressed, because something really dreadful has happened, and then she burst into tears, [00:16:00] which is the first time she's let him see her like vulnerable.

Becca: These are the moments, that are so key between Darcy and Lizzie, because she's really breaking a social norm here, like she was during proposalgeddon as well. She was furious with him. He was furious with her. They were yelling at each other. Here, it's different because she's showing how upset she is, which is not allowed in that time period, and he can't handle it.

Molly: He can't. He turns into the, oh, no blob, again which he has been before.

Becca: Please, stop crying.

Molly: Oh, no. I noticed that he was really the only person who could fully understand the gravity of this situation except for Jane, and if Georgie knew then Georgie. Lizzie decides to tell him that Lydia has run off with Wickham.

Becca: This is a big deal.

Molly: Yeah, to tell him the truth about it.

Becca: What we just said about this possibly ruining the reputations of all the Bennet girls.

Molly: She's telling the one guy who wants to marry her.

Becca: She is telling a suitor who is well above her socially, who she's already rejected, and who [00:17:00] also was pretty judgmental of her family. But this is a big deal, because if this thing gets out, it is toxic. So, the fact that he doesn't immediately write her off, partially speaks to his own personal experience knowing a young woman who has been taken by Mr. Wickham, but also speaks to how much affection he has for her, because he's genuinely concerned for her. He's not just thinking, "Well, fuck, she's dead in the water," reputation-wise.

Molly: He doesn't fucking care about her reputation. He said that before. He said, "Sorry, but--"

Becca: "I'm willing to embarrass myself and marry you."

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: So artfully put by Mr. Darcy, but the crux of it is that genuinely he likes her enough that he is willing to overlook certain parts of her reputation.

Molly: Lizzie explains the situation and says that even though Lydia has no money or anything-- the words exactly are, "They are gone off together from Brighton. You know him too well to doubt the rest. She has no money, no connections, and I think that can tempt him to. She is lost forever." [00:18:00] I don't know what his plan is here, Wickham's plan, just throwing that out there.

Becca: Well. I want to hear your theories, because this is part of my study questions, so we'll get there.

Molly: Well, think on it, but I really have no idea what's going on.

Becca: I have a few [unintelligible [00:18:13] to point you, don't worry.

Molly: Okay, good. Lizzie laments that she could have stopped it, had she told everyone from the get-go what a dick he is.

Becca: Do you remember our conversation about whether or not they should tell everybody?

Molly: I do, where we team defend Darcy or defame Wickham. I said I was Team Defend Darcy and you were Team Defame Wickham, and I realized now that we should have been Team Defame Wickham.

Becca: Oh, yeah. If you allow someone who is toxic to just go on being, then they can continue their toxic behavior with other people.

Becca: I know, and I realized that now.

Molly: Case in point.

Molly: Lydia

Becca: Yeah, exactly. Jane Austen's teaching the masses.

Molly: Still relevant. Darcy asks if she's sure what's happened, and she says yes. He asks what's been done to bring her back? She says there's no hope of saving Lydia. She only wishes that she had told them all about [00:19:00] Wickham, but she was afraid that she would say too much meaning revealing about Georgie, and this is what happens with Darcy at this point.

"Darcy made no answer. He seemed scarcely to hear her, and was walking up and down the room in earnest meditation. His brow contracted, his air gloomy. Elizabeth soon observed, and instantly understood it. Her power was sinking. Everything must sink under such a proof of family weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace. She could neither wonder nor condemn, but the belief of his self-conquests brought nothing consolatory to her bosom, afforded no palliation of her distress. It was, on the contrary, exactly calculated to make her understand her own wishes, and never had she so honestly felt that she could have loved him as now, when all love must be vain."

The first half of this paragraph, she's thinking now that he knows exactly how terrible her family is, there's no way he could love her anymore but he's not saying, "I told you so," here, and she notices in herself that she's so worried that he's [00:20:00] going to stop being in love with her, that she realizes that she must love him back, but he doesn't say I told you so.

Becca: No, he doesn't. I think this paragraph is very important as a self-aware queen, Lizzie is learning. Like I said, this is damning. This is completely reputation ruining. There is a sense to which if this pans out in any specific way, Darcy really cannot societally marry her. It would be a weird pick, like

a quirky pick otherwise. But now it's like, "Oh no, if you do that, you will sink your own social status." Lizzie sitting there understanding that he was the only person who would understand. She couldn't hold it in, but telling him dooms their relationship, and she didn't realize how much she wanted it until she was sure she could never have it. That's when she realized she's in love with him.

Molly: Yeah. Oh my God!

Becca: Also, so relatable.

Molly: It is very relatable. Her power was sinking, everything must sink under such proof of family [00:21:00] weakness, such an assurance of the deepest disgrace, that's Lydia. What is his self-conquest, his being proved right, everything that he said was right about her?

Becca: I think so. Read it in context again.

Molly: "She could neither wonder nor condemn, but the belief of his self-conquest brought nothing consolatory to her bosom, afforded no palliation of her distress. It was on the contrary, exactly calculated to make her understand her own wishes." Yeah, she's seeing, he's right, now she knows that there's no hope. That makes her see how much she loved him this whole time. A moment of silence.

Becca and Molly: [sighs]

Becca: Everyone, Graham, the mourning music for a second.

[mourning music]

Becca: Thank you, Graham.

Molly: Lizzie cries for a while, and eventually after Darcy just sits there watching, he says he's sure that she wanted him to leave a while ago and he has no excuse for staying except honest concern. He has no words of consolation to offer, and he says, "I will not torment [00:22:00] you with vain wishes, which may seem purposely to ask for your thanks," which is such a mood. When people are, like, "It's going to be okay," and you know it's not.

Becca: I hate that. I genuinely don't like it when people say, "It's okay," and it's not okay. When my friends are upset, I tried to say, "I know I can't say anything to make it better but I'm here."

Molly: Yes. That's what Darcy is doing.

Becca: I think that's better than it's okay, it's not that bad, because it's that bad.

Molly: Ugh. It is that bad, and he confirms that this means that she won't be coming to Pemberley that night, and Lizzie is like, "Yes, please apologize to Georgie for me, but don't tell her." She doesn't want him to tell Georgie why they're leaving. She doesn't want to--

Becca: Trigger her.

Molly: Yeah, and also she's sure that everyone will find out soon enough, but to hold it off for as long as possible. Then he leaves, and Lizzie starts thinking about how they may not see each other again on such terms of cordiality as much their meetings in Derbyshire. [phonetic pronunciation] Derbyshire.

Becca: [actual pronunciation] Derbyshire.

Molly: [actual pronunciation] Derbyshire.

Becca: [actual pronunciation] Derbyshire.

Molly: Fuck.

Becca: Zach Cohn will kill you.

Molly: I know.

Becca: It's [actual pronunciation] Derbyshire.

Molly: Our friend, Zach, texted us, I was like, "Thank you for looking up [00:23:00] Derbyshire, because it was going to kill me otherwise."

Becca: We get a lot of emails when we pronounce thing's wrong. We know we pronounce things wrong. It's probably more on me than on Molly, because I forget how things are pronounced in the movie, because they're passing lines in three-hour movies. Come on, guys.

Molly: Yeah, cut some slack. Also, keep emailing us. We've been getting a lot of good emails, and we will post content from said emails on our Patreon perhaps.

Becca: They're stellar, you guys have so much cool stuff to say. We love you and keep them coming.

Molly: Yeah. She thinks that they'll never be able to be cordial again basically. Then, she looks back on their whole relationship, and, "Sighs at the perverseness of those feelings which would now have promoted its continuance, and it would formally have rejoiced in its termination," basically being like, "Oh fuck!"

Becca: This is so relatable. Do you ever play a sad song in your head, and create a little movie of yourself with the person you like and set it to *With Or Without You* by U2 in your head?

Molly: Yep.

Becca: Or is that just me, guys?

Molly: No. That's not just, but I mean, there might be a reason why we're friends.

Becca: Exactly. We're just reading sappy [00:24:00] bitches under all this.

Molly: We are.

Becca: Which is why we like Jane Austen.

Molly: Exactly. Why you all probably also do that with the U2 song.

Becca: Exactly. *See the stone set in your eyes*. Yeah, we can't say any more of that, because then we have to pay for the song.

Molly: Anyway, if gratitude and esteem are good foundations of affection, then it makes sense that she's changed her mind about Darcy. Meaning, if you can form an opinion about someone based on their actions, then great, she should be in love with him. First impressions are correct, then she has nothing to say for herself. However, she notes that Wickham has proved that first impressions are not always correct.

Becca: Do you know that the original name of this novel was *First Impressions*?

Molly: What? Did I know that?

Becca: You might have. I've mentioned it in passing.

Molly: You have, but right now, it feels it's crashing down on me like a wave.

Becca: Yes, exactly. The first title of *Pride and Prejudice* was *First Impressions*, and it was later changed to *Pride and Prejudice*. It's pretty self-explanatory. *First Impressions* contrast Darcy's first impression [00:25:00] and Wickham's first impression. *Pride and Prejudice* contrasts Darcy's pride with Lizzie's prejudice. There's a lot of it on either side. It's all very complicated, but I think you can learn a lot about how Jane Austen perceived the story from looking at the first title of the story.

Molly: Yeah. She gets angry now at Lydia for ruining her relationship for her. I want to rewind to when Lydia ruined, "Jane's chances with Bingley."

Becca: Yeah. We'll get to this in the study questions, but Lydia's actions are extraordinarily selfish. Even if she's being an idiot, which she is, she is really playing with fire, and by fire, I mean the ability that her sisters have to have lives.

Molly: Lizzie doesn't believe that Wickham has any plans to marry Lydia at all. He couldn't be marrying her for money. She thinks Lydia is just dumb enough to fall an easy prey. This is the point in my reading, where I wrote down, "Is he trying to fuck?" Becca has now confirmed that indeed he is. I wasn't sure if they did [00:26:00] that in this time.

Becca: This is what I've been trying to tell you about Jane Austen this entire time.

Molly: Jane Austen fucks!

Becca: Instincts and the urges are human here and at the end of the day, people have been trying to fuck since people learned what fucking was.

Molly: Indeed.

Becca: No matter what society you are, and there's always going to be a fucking George Wickham, trying to fuck somebody.

Molly: Oh, she's so little!

Becca: I know, she is 16 years old. Let us also take note of how shitty George Wickham is by the fact that she is a 16-year-old girl.

Molly: Child.

Becca: The thing about Jane Austen that makes her really smart is she's commenting on her society, and her society likes to pretend that people are not having sex, that people are not trying to have sex. She doesn't shy away from the fact that there are people who are breaking the social norms. In conclusion, yeah, Wickham's trying to fuck.

Molly: In conclusion of this TED Talk.

Becca: Thank you for coming to my manifesto. This is why I have a podcast, so I can rant about sex.

Molly: [laughs] [00:27:00] Lizzie knows that she needs to go home and support Jane who's definitely got all of this coming down on her shoulders, because Mrs. Bennet is incapacitated by it.

Becca: There are so many images in films of *Pride and Prejudice* of this moment, but I'll say this scene gives whoever plays Mrs. Bennet real comedic license to go as over-the-top dramatic as possible.

Molly: I'm so excited. The Gardiners come back in alarm, because they assume that Lizzie has fallen ill, and they agree to leave immediately when she tells them what's going on. Mrs. Gardiner's first thought is to ask what they'll do about their plans that evening at Pemberley, and that she heard Darcy was just here. Lizzie says, "Don't worry. That is all settled." Mrs. Gardiner's like "Ooh, what does she mean by that?"

Becca: Mrs. Gardiner is all of us, and specifically my mother going things are beginning to grow in the lasagna.

Molly: In the lasagna. Yeah.

Becca: In the lasagna.

Molly: She like immediately takes this to mean that, "Oh, Darcy was here?" Lizzie settled something like she knows what's going on. She knows that she's got feelings. They [00:28:00] go around rushing to tell everyone that they're leaving, and then they leave, and then we move on to Chapter 5. Let's get right into it.

Mr. Gardner wants to believe the best of Wickham. He thinks that the temptation isn't worth the risk, which makes sense. I still don't know, what the heck his plan is, but this brightens Lizzie up a bit. At this

point, I think it's a trap. I don't know what it all means, but I think it's a trap. Specifically, I've got Admiral Ackbar in my head going, "It's a trap!"

Becca: It's a trap.

Molly: Here's my theory. Wickham is using Lydia to get to Darcy, to turn him on Lizzie's family perhaps. That's just my theory.

Becca: I'm not going to confirm or deny that.

Molly: Great, Mrs. Gardiner agrees that, "It is really too great a violation of decency, honor, and interest for him to be guilty of it," but I believe him fully capable, personally. They discuss the possibility that they actually did go to Scotland, but it seems unlikely, maybe they went to London because it's cheaper to get married there, if not as fast. But Lizzie brings up Denny, and says that Wickham knew she'd been easy [00:29:00] target. He assumes that her father would be as lenient about this as he is with everything else. Maybe this would be a good time to mention that we've gotten some emails regarding our love for Daddy Bennet, and pointing out that some emails and tweets from listeners, Lauren and Hava that maybe our love for daddy Bennet is a result of the patriarchy then and now. The differences between Daddy Bennet and Mrs. Bennet actually like, Mrs. Bennet cares deeply about a lot of her children, and something that stuck out to me in one of these emails was, I think it was Lauren, when Lauren said that Daddy Bennet ignores 60% of his children 100% of the time.

Becca: Yeah. I think we are not blind on this podcast to the flaws of Mr. Bennet. Obviously, we love him. We can thirst after him. We should point out a lot of that is a fun little joke we have going on. We don't actually think he's a flawless character.

Molly: No. In my mind, I just think that he's hot, [00:30:00] which is just wrong. I'm sure that it's just wrong, but in my mind, he is hot. The thing is that, in my attraction to Daddy Bennet, as it were, I think of him as the bad boy, when he does stuff. I'm like, "That's terrible, and it's hot."

Becca: It's so funny. It's written to be funny.

Molly: It's a product of the patriarchy. He totally is the patriarchy.

Becca: To an extent. I also think that part of the reason that we are more sympathetic to daddy Bennet than Mrs. Bennet, and I would like to point out, we started the show saying, caveat, Mrs. Bennet gets a bad rap. She's just trying to make sure all of her daughters are fed, but we're also hearing the story from Lizzie's perspective. It is crystal clear from the first moment of the story that Lizzie prefers her father to her mother.

Molly: Right. The thing is about Mrs. Bennet, and that we have been ragging on her a little bit more than we did at the beginning of the book is that I think she--

Becca: She did say, she wanted her daughter to die, so Bingley would regret his choices. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, but it's true [00:31:00] that she is under a lot of stress and also, we stan a woman who was just as awesome as Lydia even though we fucking hate Lydia but we fucking love Lydia.

Becca: It's the same dichotomy of like, yes, in the context of the story she's a nightmare. In our modern take, she's got some good shit going on.

Molly: Yeah. Mrs. Bennet, young and hot. That's my new canon.

Becca: We are going to continue to thirst after Daddy Bennet, I think.

Molly: We will.

Becca: But know that as we do that, we are aware that he is problematic. Don't worry.

Molly: Yeah. We can be better about calling him out on those moments and then saying that it was hot. We're the worst. [laughs]

Becca: Personally, I'm also kind of a dick, I just love when people are dicks and books, and Daddy Bennet is playfully cajoling his wife for the most part.

Molly: Well. I went back to our first episode where we talked about how hot their banter was, and in general, I think that they both have positives and negatives, and I think that how they are perceived by the people who read this book, [00:30:00] and by society as a whole is definitely a product of the patriarchy and societal norms, and all of that.

Becca: I do want to reiterate, it is also a product of how Lizzie sees her parents.

Molly: That's the biggest one.

Becca: We could do a whole episode on just the Bennets.

Molly: Maybe we will.

Becca: I do think certain plot points are just geared to make you like Daddy Bennet more when he does make her marry Mr. Collins.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I do think that this piece of the story is the Daddy Bennet reckoning. I was waiting to get to this piece of the story, because we talked about this. Remember when we talked about how Mr. Bennet ignores his children-

Molly: We did.

Becca: -and how that's a problem? That's a fair critique of him. This is the consequence.

Molly: Yeah. I was not happy to critique him. Now that I'm seeing how much it actually has an effect like, "Yeah, he needs to pay more attention." Then, Mrs. Gardiner asks if Lizzie thinks that Lydia is dumb enough to agree to live with him on any terms but marriage, basically is she dumb enough to just

go fuck. [00:33:00] Lizzie says “Yes,” and points out all of Lydia's many flaws specifically since the militia were in Meryton, she did nothing but flirt, she's given greater “susceptibility” to her feelings.

Mrs. Gardner says that, Jane doesn't think ill of Wickham, and Lizzie and I have the same reply to that which is, does Jane ever think ill of anyone? Then Lizzie says that she and Jane both know that Wickham has been profig-- profligra-- profi-- Can you say this word please?

Molly: Profligate?

Molly: Yeah, that.

Becca: Profligate.

Molly: We know what it means, because we looked it up. It means excessive in every sense of the word. “Uh-oh, she's about to spill some tea,” and Mrs. Gardiner, of course is like, “Ooh, say more please.” Lizzie says they all know how shitty he was to Darcy, and “There are other circumstances from which I am not at liberty, which it is not worthwhile to relate,” and in general, he's rude. For the way, he spoke about Baby Darcy, she was expecting an asshole, but actually Baby Darcy is the opposite of that.

Becca: Same as your experience.

Molly: Exactly. [00:34:00] They all wonder then how Lydia didn't know all of that, and Lizzie says she was ignorant of the truth herself, though can't, and she didn't think it necessary to tell anyone, because she didn't think it would do any good. Even when Lydia was going to Brighton, it didn't cross her mind. It also did not cross my mind. She didn't see any fondness between Lydia and Wickham, and she especially notes here that their family isn't wealthy enough for him to be fond of her.

Becca: I want to point to one thing over here.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: We have another example of Lizzie being a slightly unreliable narrator, because we were in plenty of situations where Lizzie and Lydia and Wickham were all in the same place. Even in the first instance, that we met Wickham, what we saw was Lizzie was sitting by the hot guy, and Lydia was sitting by the hot guy, and Lydia eventually became distracted, so Lizzie thought she won the battle.

Molly: Right. There were all those times when Lydia just wouldn't shut up around him.

Becca: Also, Lydia specifically mentioning that he was no longer chasing Mrs. King.

Molly: So, he was available. Yes. [00:35:00] I remember that. It's all coming back to me now.

Becca: All I'm saying is that, again, this is going to be something that we tackle more in the study questions, but there are definitely incidences here where you can see at least Lydia thirsting after Wickham for sure. Also, we know Wickham is hot, and Lydia's thirsty, and the combination means they go fuck.

Molly: It makes her an easy target, which is what we keep coming back to. Then they arrive to Longbourn by dinnertime the next day. First, the baby Gardiners come running out, and then they see Jane. Jane and Lizzie are crying. Lizzie asks Jane if they've heard anything else of the fugitives, and Jane says no. Daddy Bennet told them that he arrived safely in London, but that he's not going to write anything else until he has something to share. Then, she tells Lizzie that Mrs. Bennet doesn't leave her room. Mary and Kitty are well. I miss Mary and Kitty, so that's exciting. We're going to get to see them, hopefully.

Becca: It's nice you did. I don't know if Lizzie did.

Molly: Lizzie definitely did not. Jane says that she's fine, and she welcomes the Gardiners back with tears in her eyes. **[00:36:00]** My notes just say, "I want Bingley to come back."

Becca: Jane deserves happiness so hard.

Molly: I really just want Jane to be happy, and Jane has, "The sanguine hope of good in Wickham," which she still expects to end well, and for them to get married. I looked this up, because sanguine or sang-wine, sanguine, sanguine? Sanguine? I don't know. Optimistic or positive, especially in an apparently bad or difficult situation, but my understanding of the term was Shakespearean, meaning having to do with blood.

Becca: Blood.

Molly: That was interesting.

Becca: I also immediately think blood when I see that word and, Zach, this is a specific call out to Zach, if you can explain how that turns into optimistic in a pessimistic situation-

Molly: We would love it.

Becca: --we would love it, because I don't understand how those two ideas connect.

Molly: Yeah. In Shakespeare, it's the whatever number of humors, and there's bile which is the "urrr" humor and blood. I would have thought it was the angry one, but **[00:37:00]** there's so-- yeah, Zach, we want to hear what you have to say.

Becca: Please let us know. You know where to find us.

Molly: Yeah, moving on. Mrs. Bennet is Mrs. Benneting when they arrived home.

Becca: She's keening, Mr. Collins levels of upset.

Molly: Yeah. She's crying, lamenting, with invectives, which I looked up, insulting, abusive, highly critical language against Wickham, Wicked Wickham, complains of her own suffering, blaming everybody, but the person to whom is ill judging indulgence the errors of her daughter must be principally owning. Is that her or Mr. Bennet?

Becca: I think it's referring to her in that moment.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: I think we can talk about the reason that both Bennet parents failed. I think we have talked a little bit about why Daddy Bennet failed, which is that it's pretty obvious that he let Lydia do whatever she wants to, "Get it out of her system." Literally, you see Lizzie say, "Hey, Dad, she's ruining the reputations of all of us," and her dad's like, "Oh, honey, did you lose out on a suitor because of what your sister did?" But now, we have a situation where, yeah, [00:38:00] his daughter's might all be destitute, because one of them was not properly cared for. I think on the other side, you have Mrs. Bennet, who loves Lydia the most out of her daughters and doesn't really hold back from making that clear the way Mr. Bennet doesn't hold back from the fact that Lizzie is his favorite.

She relates to Lydia. She likes flirting. You find out she got Mr. Bennet because she was that loud, bold, and flirtatious. You see her impressing upon her daughters the importance of flirtation, the importance of seducing men, but not understanding the difference between what Lizzie and Jane do with men, which is present themselves well in society in a way that makes them desirable to high up men and Lydia, who like pushes her boobs up, and is like, "Hey, I'm out here to party." That's really the failings of the part of both parents. Right now, I think it's prodding at Mrs. Bennet's lack of self-awareness that she's blaming Wickham.

Molly: She's also blaming the Forsters for letting Lydia out of their sight. She says that Lydia [00:39:00] isn't the kind of girl to do such a thing, but she is. Mrs. Bennet is certain that Mr. Bennet will fight Wickham and be killed.

Becca: Seems unlikely.

Molly: Highly, but anyway, and then the Collins will turn them out of house at home. This is very *Three Sisters*.

Becca: Yeah, it's definitely got that edge to it, doesn't it?

Molly: Wait, no, not *Three Sisters*. It's very *Cherry Orchard*. No, it's very *Three Sisters*. At the end of *Three Sisters* when Tuzenbach gets shot by Solyony, that's what she's thinking that Mr. Wickham is about to do, and in *The Cherry Orchard*, it's like when the Lopakhin comes and he buys the house and turns them all out of it. Even though, he says he's going to buy it for them, he buys it and kicks them out.

Becca: Yeah, that's exactly what's going to happen when Mr. Collins inherits. He's just going to live there, and they aren't not going to live there.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: She's basically saying, here's what Mrs. Bennet is seeing happening, and it's not unrealistic at this point in time. Well, some of it's unrealistic, because Mr. Bennet's not going to die. If Wickham kills Mr. Bennet, then immediately Collins [00:40:00] inherits, and he inherits the house and all their money,

and then immediately all of her daughters get turned out and none of the daughters have any prospects to marry because of what Lydia did. That is the train of thought that Mrs. Bennet is going down.

Molly: Yeah. She goes down this train of thought and everyone in the room is like, “Oh no, no, don't do that,” and Mr. Gardiner says, “Do not give way to useless alarm. Though it is right to be prepared for the worst. There is no occasion to look on and as certain.” He says he'll bring him home to Gracechurch Street, and Mrs. Bennet begs him to force Lydia and Wickham to marry. She says to tell Lydia not to worry about the clothes yet, she can have as much money for them as she wants after they're married, but don't make any plans about clothes before consulting her, because Lydia doesn't know which are the best stores. This woman clearly has her priorities straight.

Becca: I get it. She's like, “Let her elope. If she wants a ceremony, we're going to get her a ceremony. Don't worry about it. I know where we're going to get the right flowers. Don't worry, that'll all happen. She just has to get married.”

Molly: Then, they all go down to dinner and leave Mrs. Bennet with the housekeeper so that she can continue [00:41:00] complaining to her. The Gardiners don't think that she needs to stay in her room, but they don't want all the servants to know what's going on. So, they think it's best to leave her with one.

Becca: I get the sense that the housekeeper is discreet, and Mrs. Bennet is going to yell all this, and if the servants know, then all the other servants in town will know, because they'll talk of the market and then all the upper-class people will know, and then the Bennets will be ruined.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: It is a huge deal that this stay silent.

Molly: Mary and Kitty are largely unchanged. Kitty is minorly stressed, and Mary says, “Oh, this is great.” Mary says the following.

Becca: Yeah, Mary has a moment here.

Molly: They're at the table, and Lizzie is talking to Mary. Mary says, “This is a most unfortunate affair, and will probably be much talked of, but we must stem the tide of malice, and pour into the wounded bosoms of each other the balm of sisterly consolation. Unhappy as the event must be for Lydia, we may draw from it, this useful lesson, that loss of virtue in a female is irretrievable, that one false step involves her in endless ruin, and that her reputation is no less brittle than it is [00:42:00] beautiful, and that she cannot be too much guarded in her behavior towards the undeserving of the other sex.”

Becca: Yikes!

Molly: She is a product of her time.

Becca: Yeah. I think we talk a lot about how Mary reads her Bible verses, and everything yet. Mary's like very chaste.

Molly: Conservative.

Becca: Mary's also gay and doesn't understand why anyone would want to be with a man.

Molly: The undeserving of the other sex to her is all of them, because she doesn't want any of them.

Becca: Exactly. It does just point to Mary's out of step in some ways, because she's not really going for the human side of this, but Mary also voices were basically is going to be said about the Bennets-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Exactly. What she just said was the common opinion of the time. Yikes, but there it is. Then Lizzie and Jane get a chance to chat after dinner. Lizzie asks for more details, and Jane says that the Colonel sends some affection between Lydia and Wickham, but no cause for alarm. She says [00:43:00] "It isn't really his fault." She mentions Denny, and she said that when Mr. Colonel [laughs] Mr. Forster--

Becca: Mr. Colonel.

Molly: When Colonel--

Becca: I'm just thinking of fried chicken now.

Molly: Yeah. When that guy-- Colonel KFC, Colonel--

Becca: Sanders.

Molly: Colonel Sanders. What? Is that his name?

Becca: Colonel Sanders of KFC. Yeah.

Molly: When Colonel Sanders question Denny, Denny denied actually having ever known anything. That's confusing. He told them one thing, and then the next moment told them something else. In any event, Jane is hoping that he just was misunderstood. I don't know why. Well, Becca is being very quiet right now about Denny, so I'm assuming that we get to hear more about him later. She's going to neither confirm nor deny. [laughs]

Becca: I'm not going to confirm or deny this.

Molly: Jane tells Lizzie that Kitty knew in advance of their plans to marry that they'd been in love for many weeks, supposedly. Colonel Forster doesn't like Wickham, and thinks he's imprudent and extravagant that he left Meryton in debt, which is interesting, what was he doing? [00:44:00] Gambling?

Becca: Gambling, and drinking and I think the other thing-- I think of Wickham is the guy who just indulges in everything. This is very lightly implied. I don't even think it's totally implied. But if I had to guess, the time period means gambling, alcohol, opium, and prostitutes.

Molly: Yikes.

Becca: Opium was a big deal then. There are certain Jane Austen characters who are more explicitly addicted to opium, but it's a thing in the time.

Molly: Yeah. Lizzie laments, again that they had kept his true character secret. Jane points out that they acted in what they thought were the best intentions for everyone, and then we get to read Lydia's letter to Lady Forster. She writes that she's going to Scotland with the one man in the world that she loves, who is an angel. There's no reason to tell her family yet because it will be so funny when she writes to them and signs her name Lydia Wickham, and then she says that she will send for her clothes when she gets home as the Forsters made to mend a hole in a dress of hers. That's it. She sucks. I love her.

Becca: She is such peak dumb. She is so dumb.

Molly: She's so dumb. [00:45:00] She does not have any idea what this could mean for everyone else.

Becca: Also, just like girl, eloping is not good for anybody.

Molly: No.

Becca: Worst of all, to have some sense that he's actually going to elope with you. She's so dumb.

Molly: She is so dumb. It assures them at least that Lydia had no schemes of infamy. Their father couldn't speak, when he found out, their mother immediately took ill, and all the servants probably heard. I'm wondering if this thing about the servants hearing is going to be important later. Maybe they are the reason it gets out. Like you said that would happen probably, but I don't know. We'll find out.

Lizzie points out that, it has all been too much for Jane. She doesn't look well. Jane says, Kitty and Mary would have been more help, but she didn't think that they could handle it since Kitty is frail, and that brings back my theory about Kitty being sick in some way. Is she sick? Who knows? Mary studies too much to have room in her mind for anything else.

Becca: I did see that Kitty was frail. I was like, "Oh my God. Did I forget that--" Kitty is delicate. I'll give you that.

Molly: Which in this time period, [00:46:00] maybe sick. Maybe I was right about something else.

Becca: I bet a bit wrong. Who's to say.

Molly: Who's to say. Someone is probably going to email us. So, that's exciting. Then, Jane mentions that Mrs. Phillips has been stopping by a lot, and I do wonder what Mrs. Phillips would have to say about all of this, because she was another bad influence in Lydia's life.

Becca: Again, I think she probably is just there to comfort Mrs. Bennet, and is probably like not so self-aware.

Molly: Who's not there to comfort Mrs. Bennet? Lady Lucas keeps coming by, and Lizzie thinks in her mind and says out loud that she wishes that nobody would come by, because they could only be rubbing it in their faces.

Becca: That's very on brand for the dynamic between Lady Lucas and Mrs. Bennet. It's really that like, "Oh, so hard for you. Hmm. Luckily for me, my daughter is married. Oops."

Molly: Exactly. Lizzie says, "Let them triumph over us at a distance, and be satisfied." Then she asks about daddy Bennet's plans to recover Lydia. Jane says, "All that she knows, but she doesn't know much else, because he [00:47:00] was in a hurry to leave," and that is the end of these two chapters. Which brings us to-

Becca: -Becca's study questions. These have been intense chapters. This is a lot going on. It is a plot twist.

Molly: Plot twist.

Becca: I want to talk first about Lydia, why she did it? A little bit about Lydia's character as well. I maintain my stance of Lydia, feminist icon or annoying twat.

Molly: I wouldn't go so far in either direction.

Becca: I think that's the correct way to look at this. Again, I do think that we have a little bit of Austen's own biases coming out towards a woman who is in touch with her sexuality.

Molly: Indeed.

Becca: As a function of the story, Austen is correct that a sister acting like this would ruin the lives of her entire family. I think, I stand Lydia for following her sexual urges-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -and being bold and knowing what she wants at a young age. On the other hand, [00:48:00] she's a flighty south beach idiot who is not aware that her actions are going to hurt everyone in her life. I have a tough time with Lydia.

Molly: Yeah, I think that she's got some stuff that she needs to learn. I think that she's learning it the hard way. She's got to learn it the hard way, and whatever happens to Wickham, because I don't see any outcome of this, which is, they end up happily ever after. She's going to learn some hard lessons. I think that she needs to, because on the one hand, she is great, and we stan it, and on the other hand, like you said, it's harmful. So, agreed.

Becca: I do think we're lucky now we live in an era that's a little bit more forgiving to the mistakes of teenage girls.

Molly: Oh, yeah. I mean, what she's doing now wouldn't be a mistake nowadays, because she would--

Becca: It would still be a mistake to run away with a guy who was 30 and trying to be love with him, and also just have a lot of sex, would still be a mistake today. I would want to see a society become even more forgiving to 16-year-old girls, but [00:49:00] we are lucky that it is more forgiving to 16-year-old girls now than it was back then.

Molly: Yeah. I guess I forgot that he was twice her age.

Becca: It's so gross. Wickham is so gross. This is not a spoiler. It might be a spoiler. It's a vague spoiler. There are couples in Austen with age differences.

Molly: Mrs. Bennet and Mr. Bennet have an age difference.

Becca: Exactly. It's not across the board gross, but here it feels really gross.

Molly: Well, she's under 17, which is statutory.

Becca: Yeah. It also, is it across the board gross, I'm going to take that back. I will put it aside in other circumstances where I will not hear. The next question I have is the societal implications. We talked about this already, but why everyone is so freaked out. Lizzie had her moment of a 180 on everything that her family does. Why is this moment the 180 for everybody else?

Molly: Well. For Jane and Lizzie, it's because this guy is the guy they know has a track record, and seeing Lydia fall into the trap of same thing [00:50:00] that has happened to other girls before her who maybe they could look down, and think like, "Well, that would never happen to me," but then it does. There's that. I think the reason it's 180 for everyone else is, because now it's actually happening. Before it was just flirting. It's like, "Oh, it's funny when they're flirting with the officers." Even Mr. Bennet said, this conversation that Lizzie had with Mr. Bennet saying that Lydia shouldn't go to Brighton, was so important. Lizzie was like "She's been flirting with all of the officers. It's going to make people look down upon us, blah, blah, blah." He said, "She's not rich enough for any of them to want to marry her anyway." He said that, he blatantly was wrong.

Becca: He just believed enough of the officers that none of them would ruin her reputation, which was foolish.

Molly: Dumb.

Becca: It shows a huge amount of trust in a bunch of dudes to not want to have sex without available partner.

Molly: Now, it's happening, and I think it's made everyone slap themselves in the face. Mrs. Bennet's slapping everyone else in the face, but everyone else is like, "Fuck.

Becca: Great. [00:51:00] I think we're going to move to the next study question, which is about Wickham's motives. I have a couple things I want to say about this. First of all, I don't think it can be said enough, fuck Wickham.

Molly: Fuck that guy.

Becca: We're talking a lot about where Lydia's blame is, we're talking a lot about where daddy Bennet and Mama Bennet's blame is, we're talking about the blame of the Forster, and Phillips. What we're not talking about is the fact that at the end of the day, there's really one villain here. There's really one person who did something really wrong.

Molly: George Wickham.

Becca: George Wickham. You could wipe the rest of the blame away from everybody else, and just blame Wickham for being shitty.

Molly: We don't like him.

Becca: We do not like him. We do not stan a fuck boy.

Molly: We do not like him, same I am.

Becca: There's a couple of ways you could look at this. I think you touched on one option.

Molly: The revenge.

Becca: Yes. Well, here's the other thing. Revenge on whomst?

Molly: Well. My first thought was, he was doing it to get back at Lizzie, but then I was like, "For what? What did she ever do to him?" Remind me if there's something big.

Becca: I think this touches [00:52:00] on a societal thing, but Lizzie rejected him.

Molly: Well, not outright.

Becca: Yeah, but you remember--

Molly: They were flirting, and then what happened? Then she was rude to him at dinner.

Becca: She made it clear that Darcy told her the truth.

Molly: Oh, yes. He's butthurt by that, and nervous about it. I'm sorry, that would be a dumb revenge plan Wickham because you're just doing the exact thing that she knows that you did to Darcy's sister, to her own sister.

Becca: Of course. It would entirely ruin her entire reputation.

Molly: Right. That's one option, but my thing that it goes deeper, because Lizzie didn't ask for that information to be told to her, and Darcy is the one who revealed it. I think ultimately, it's revenge on Darcy, because Darcy's the one who hates the most, yeah.

Becca: That's very fair. He definitely hates Darcy more than everybody else. The reason I think the Lizzie plot is interesting, is because I think it does speak to a phenomenon that I still see today, through [00:53:00] a pathology of a fuck boy who gets rejected, and the need to ruin the woman who--

Molly: Is like, "Fuck that girl."

Becca: "Fuck that girl. Let me ruin her. If I can have her, no one can."

Molly: You know why this is trashy, because they were like bros, and they were friends, and they were hanging out and flirting, and then she left for a little bit, and he got together with someone else, Miss King. When Lizzie was in London, right? and they were talking about Miss King, and she was like, there's someone else, and she was all upset about it, but then she was supposed to be fine with that. When he was clearly flirting with her.

Becca: Of course. I think that's the thing is that Wickham just wants everything. We've seen that Wickham wants everything.

Molly: He wants everyone.

Becca: The thing is that Lizzie doesn't have money, and he wanted Lizzie-- I personally think that he wanted Lizzie. Actually, wanted Lizzie so you could take that as revenge on Darcy, you could take that as revenge on Lizzie. For me, there's something to the thought of like, "Oh, this thing I wanted doesn't want me anymore. I'm going to ruin her life." The other thing that you could say, and I think this is also an option [00:54:00] here is that Wickham has no impulse control. Wickham's a piece of shit. Wickham saw unavailable girl who wanted him and could have just taken it. That is the other thing.

Molly: That's possible.

Becca: We've seen that Wickham is not only vindictive, he's also extraordinarily self-indulgent and narcissistic. He could just not be thinking ahead. He wasn't thinking ahead when he went to "law school," I used around law school, neither was I, but here we are.

Molly: The thing is about that is that if it was just any girl, it could have been any girl but it's too specific. It was too specific when it was Georgie Darcy and it's too specific now.

Becca: That is great point. The only thing I'd say against that, is that you could argue that Georgie Darcy is way more specific than Lydia Bennet, because Lydia Bennet, is there and willing and very few women would be that willing.

Molly: That's true. If he was really trying to go for it-- Well, he couldn't go for Lizzie. He wanted to go for Lizzie. He didn't go Lizzie, because [00:55:00] she turned him down.

Becca: Exactly. This is a real tension in the book. Is that revenge? Or is it impulse? That is tricky to parse out. I mean, I'm not going to say what happens going forward, but--

Molly: I'm on team revenge.

Becca: Okay. Cool. We have Mary's quote on sexual activity in the Austen era. I feel like this is the correct time to talk about sex in the Austen era. We've talked about build up. We've talked about flirting. We've talked about reputation. We've talked about emotions and love and romance. This is explicitly sex that we're dealing with, and it is dealt with, in a way that we deal with very differently today.

Molly: Yeah. When I was reading it, I was like, "What's going on? What are they talking about?" I thought, in the back of my mind, I was like, "Wickham trying to fuck?" Then, Mary said the thing and I was like, "What?" Then I guess I just like, "Of course, they were having sex back then, but I guess I just thought that nobody was having sex before marriage.

Becca: You might have thought that [00:56:00] Jane Austen was not going to talk about it.

Molly: I thought that Jane Austen wasn't going to talk about it, and yet here we are talking about it. For anyone out there who thinks this is a book all about staying buttoned up, and standing six feet apart, maybe it's not so much.

Becca: Exactly. Jane Austen knows that beneath all of this glancing, and witty repertoire and yearning is raw sexual energy that everyone is just this close to go in one way or another on it. Just this close to giving in on these instincts. Here it is. This is what happens when someone says the quiet part out loud or does the quiet thing aloud.

Molly: Or does the thing. Yeah. It's like everyone's like, "Oh, fuck." "No reputation." Yeah.

Becca: This is life ruining. This is life changing for these women? Obviously, fuck the patriarchy. This is all not okay. I think Jane Austen even glances on the fact that it's not okay in her own special way, because she's talking about what's happening, [00:57:00] and you have Georgie Darcy, who is in a similar circumstance to Lydia Bennet, and Lydia Bennet is not the most sympathetically written character.

Molly: We do like her.

Becca: Of course, we love her, but I'm not sure Austen did. We stan Lydia.

Molly: No, Austen [crosstalk] I have a lot of sympathy for Lydia, because all of these urges that she has, she hasn't been allowed to act on them, and it's a problem. I feel bad for her almost as bad as I feel for Georgie, but not as bad.

Becca: Yes, she is partially the creator of her own doom, but also in a way that as women who have been allowed to explore their sexualities in ways that would never have been allowed in the Austen era. I can't imagine what it would be like to repress that much. That's just my point on slut shaming, Lydia. The last thing I want to do is tie this back to the beginning before we go into the standbys, Darcy's reaction to the whole thing. What do you read on it?

Molly: What I found most interesting actually was, when [00:58:00] Lizzie said that she wishes that she had told everyone, what a dick he was. He didn't have anything to say to that. He just asked if she was sure, like after she was okay. If she had told everyone, I don't know if he would assume that she meant everything, because that would have been a big blow to his trust.

First of all, that's the one side of it. The flip side of it would mean if she had told everyone, it would have cleared his name, because everyone would see that Wickham had been lying about Darcy, and that Darcy was actually an okay guy. She didn't choose to tell everyone. All in all, he didn't have anything to say about it. It was his big secret. His big secret was about Wickham, and about Georgie and Lizzie didn't tell anyone, which is what he asked, but then she says, "I wish I had told everyone," and he's like, "Are you okay?" I don't know. It's sweet.

Becca: Yeah. I think I want to be clear. I think she's not saying, she wished she told everyone about Georgie but about the other parts of him.

Molly: About Wickham being a dick. Yes. I think would Darcy have wanted her, too? **[00:59:00]** Maybe, I mean, but he doesn't really care what people think about him. Does he? Does he? Yes, pride, right? I think that either way, her bringing up the fact that she didn't tell anyone that Wickham sucks. I don't know if what I'm saying makes sense anymore, but his reaction is like, he just cares about her at this point. All right, let's backcheck.

We talked about this a little bit already. If Lydia follows through with this, he will not be able to marry Lizzie, and he's sad. He doesn't say like, "It's going to be okay." He just wants to make sure she's okay. Oh, my God. Will he ever see her again? You say some things because I'm having a hard time.

Becca: I think there's clearly concern for Lizzie, but also like, this is kind of triggering, because--

Molly: It's Wickham, we're talking about.

Becca: He's been through this all again, and he's obviously a sore spot. Yeah, I think this is really high stakes, because I do think this actually really changes whether or not the Bennets exist in the society anymore **[01:00:00]** like they could be destitute, because of this, and that would push Lizzie out of his life forever. This also really has high stakes for him in a lot of ways.

Molly: Yeah. I think that maybe this makes him love her even more, because now her little sister is going through what his little sister went through. Now they have this thing in common.

Becca: A shared trauma. We love it.

Molly: We hate it, but we love to see it.

Becca: We love it for the sake of romance novels in angst obviously. Finally, how will this fetch?

Molly: I don't know.

Becca: Throw out some predictions.

Molly: Prediction. Maybe they'll find Lydia. We got to get rid of Wickham. We have to get rid of Wickham. I mean, there's no way that Lydia and Wickham are going to stay together. Darcy is going to follow them to Longbourn, like the sweet little vampire stalker that he is.

Becca: I love that description of him. I was going to say puppy, but vampire stalker is so much more accurate.

Molly: Bingley is a puppy. Darcy is a vampire stalker.

Becca: [01:01:00] Funniest quote.

Molly: All right. This is Mrs. Bennet, when she's wailing in her room, "And now here is Mr. Bennet gone away, and I know he will fight Wickham wherever he meets him, and then he will be killed and what is to become of us all? The Collinses will turn us out before he is cold in his grave. If you are not kind to us, brother, I do not know what we shall do."

Becca: Perfect. I was actually thinking that would be the funniest quote, and also you should definitely do that as a monologue someday. It's great.

Molly: Yes. I will.

Becca: Questions moving forward.

Molly: Will Darcy overcome the obstacle that is Lydia being Lydia. Will Lydia and Wickham be found by Mr. Bennet and Mr. Gardiner. I'm still hoping that Bingley comes back. Where the heck is he? I guess he's still with Darcy in Pemberley.

Becca: Yeah. He wouldn't know about this.

Molly: Oh, right. Oh my God. Oh my God. Yeah, I want to know so many things, because Georgiana, and what's going to happen now?

Becca: How will [01:02:00] this fetch?

Molly: How will this fetch?

Becca: Who wins the chapter?

Molly: Um, Darcy, [chuckles] because he was so sweet, when Lizzie was in distress.

Becca: We could give it to Darcy.

Molly: Who would you give it to?

Becca: I think I would give it to Darcy. I was going to give it to Lizzie just because we haven't given it to her in a while.

Molly: It's true. We forget about her, because she's the narrator.

Becca: Exactly. We also have been yelling at her for being dumb for a while.

Molly: Yeah, but she was good in this chapter.

Becca: I feel she's doing a good job holding her shit together. Can we give it to Dizzy?

Molly: Let's give us a Dizzy.

Becca: All right. We're giving it to both Darcy and Lizzie this round. Also, I want to say congratulations Lizzie, for realizing the obvious.

Molly: That you love Darcy.

Becca: You are in love Mr. Darcy. We've known this since like, what Chapter 8?

Molly: Something like that, but I was really excited that it finally was announced and in such a beautiful way.

Becca: At this point in time, that is the end of our episode of Pod and Prejudice. Before we go just, as of right now we're recording this, we're still in quarantine, **[01:03:00]** and I'm sure when this comes out-

Becca and Molly: We will still be in quarantine.

Becca: I hope you're staying inside, and taking care of yourself. Stay healthy. Stay proper-

Molly: -and find yourself someone to quarantine with.

[music]

Molly: Pod and Prejudice is edited by Molly Burdick and audio produced by Graham Cook. Our beautiful show art is designed by Torrence Browne. To learn more about our show and our team, you can check out our website at podandprejudice.com. To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook @podandprejudice. If you like 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 review wherever you listen to podcasts. Thanks for listening.