

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Joanna, Blaithin, and Sandhya. And a huge shoutout to Stephanie, Emily, Marines, Caitlin, Marie, Ivy, and Callie, who upgraded their pledges when we revamped our Patreon last week. Our new tiers include perks like a Discord community, the opportunity to submit study questions, early access to study questions, and an exclusive Zoom hang with us. If any of that sounds interesting to you, head on over to our Patreon at patreon.com/podandprejudice and see how you can support us.

And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapters 44 through 46 of *Emma*.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: Shall we?

Molly: We shall.

Becca: 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 books.

Molly: And [00:01:00] I, Molly, am reading 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 could listen to Seasons 1 and 2 of this podcast, respectively. But that is not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No, today, we are talking about *Emma*, Volume III, Chapters 8 through 10, or if your book isn't broken up into Volumes, that's Chapters 44 through 46.

Becca: Yes, indeed. Big chapters. And also, I have to say, we sound so good right now.

Molly: Yes, we do.

Becca: Coming at you from our new studio in Molly's new apartment.

Molly: Yes, we have done up the spare bedroom in my new apartment with our little foam panels. We've put up my nerd stuff on the walls. We have made it look like a real studio.

Becca: Well, we've been slowly graduating to more professional podcasting spaces, I should say, because we started-- Our first episode we recorded was completely unusable, and we just were like, "Oh, God, we just have to go from here." But then went through pandemic records, which were completely remote in closets, and then [00:02:00] we used to cover my apartment in comforters to absorb sound. And recently, we've been doing a little better on that front, but now we have graduated to a legitimate, actual studio space.

Molly: Ooh.

Becca: [crosstalk] professional podcasting.

Molly: I like that song.

Becca: Professional podcasting, ooh, ooh. By the way, listeners, if you haven't gone and listened already, we guested on Molly's girlfriend's podcast.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, check us out on North Coast Podcast, which came out two weeks ago at this point.

Molly: Yes, that is called the North Coast Podcast, and you can find it wherever you get your podcast. We were talking about Jane Austen and making up songs about it. Well, we were helping make up songs, but they were making up songs about it.

Becca: Oh, yeah, they're much better at that than we are. But if you want to hear a fantastic rap song about Mr. Darcy, that is the place to do it.

Molly: Honestly, that might have been one of my favorite adaptations of *Pride and Prejudice* that I've ever witnessed.

Becca: Unbeatable. So [00:03:00] good. Ah, so-- Yeah, they're very talented. We had a lot of fun. You should check it out. Back to you, another talented artist, Jane Austen.

Molly: Yes. On equal on par with-

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: -The North Coast podcast. Yeah.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Should we just get into it, because we've got a lot to discuss?

Becca: Oh, we have so much to cover. We'll start with a recap from last week.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, we were at Box Hill Gate, which would be when Emma puts her whole ass foot in her mouth and makes fun of Mrs. Bates. And also, Frank Churchill was in a rare form and just flirting up an absolute storm with Emma.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Everyone leaves the interaction upset. Mr. Knightley basically rips Emma a new asshole and is like, "How dare you be that mean to Miss Bates when she's never been anything but kind to you?" And it's like, "Really unfair." So, Emma's embarrassed. Harriet is grumpy. Frank Churchill's being a douche kebab. Jane Fairfax seems upset. That's where we end. So, everyone's upset after Box Hill gate, and we open on Emma in her [00:04:00] reliving cringe moments.

Molly: Yes. She is thinking about it, laying awake at night, staring at the ceiling, being like, "How could I be such an asshole to Miss Bates?"

Becca: Like, "What is wrong with me?"

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Am I the problem? Am I the drama?"

Becca: "I don't think I am the--"

Molly and Becca: Drama.

Becca: "Am I the villain? I don't think I'm the villain."

Molly: But she's got tears in her eyes as she's saying it.

Molly: "Am I the drama?"

Molly: [giggles] "Am I the villain? I don't think I'm the villain."

Becca: Quite honestly, it is the song, *Anti-Hero*, by Taylor Swift.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: It's me.

Molly: Huh.

Becca: I'm not paying for this song.

Molly: No, we're not. But I will be making a reel about it later.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: So, she's brooding. She's like, "Oh, fuck, that was a terrible day. I would have rather stayed home and played backgammon with my dad. At least then nobody could have said I had no heart." She "hoped no one could have said to her, "How could you be so unfeeling to your father?" Basically, she just hates how right Knightley was.

Becca: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Molly: She hates when Knightley's right.

Becca: Knightley is so right here. [00:05:00] But it's not even one of those circumstances where Emma's going to argue that he's wrong and then be like, "Fuck Knightley's right." Later, she's like, "He's unequivocally right."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: "Fuck my life. He insulted me with complete and dead-on accuracy."

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "I'm the problem. It's me."

Becca: Yeah, absolutely.

Molly: Yeah. So, she's planning to go over the next day and prove that she's turning over a new leaf and going to rectify all of the terrible thoughts that she's had about Miss Bates, which we talked about before. When we're reading this through her perspective, there's always shit about Miss Bates being so annoying.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But when we're reading it through Knightley's perspective, there's none of that.

Becca: Yeah, Miss Bates is unquestionably a chatterbox, but Emma is particularly annoyed by her and takes-- You notice, the way Jane Austen writes Miss Bates, it's from how Emma's hearing her talk as well. It's grading. We are graded by it as well.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: But from other people's perspective, they just talk about her chattering [00:06:00] on and then getting to the point.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, Emma's the one who's noticing every detail of the way Miss Bates talks.

Molly: Yeah. So, she's planning to go over the next day and she's hoping that she's going to run into Knightley on her way, but she does not. She really wants to be seen doing this good thing. I noticed, like, is she doing it to prove a point to Knightley or to really turn over that new leaf? I think she is doing it to turn over a new leaf. I know that she also just wants to

mend her friendship with Knightley and fix both things. But the way that it reads, it comes off a little bit like, "I hope someone sees me doing this good thing."

Becca: I think that's correct, but I also think that-- I agree with you in your instincts that I think Emma genuinely feels bad, because Emma's not always the most forethinking person. She's pretty self-centered. But when she is brought to understand another person's perspective, she is empathetic to that person. That's what makes Emma a good character is that [00:07:00] at bottom, she might be rude, she might be self-centered, she might be arrogant, she might be spoiled, but she has a good heart, and she does actually feel bad about how she treated Miss Bates, and not only because Knightley's mad at her.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's clear that she actually feels bad, because she hurt Miss Bates.

Molly: Yeah, totally. So, Emma arrives, and she comes upstairs, and the maid makes her wait at the door, and she hears there's some bustling going on the other side of the door. When she enters, it's a moment too soon and she sees Miss Bates ushering Jane into the other room and saying, "I shall say you are laid down on the bed and I am sure you are ill enough." Hmmm.

Becca: Mmmm.

Molly: Emma's sitting with Mrs. Bates, who doesn't really know what's going on. And then Miss Bates comes in and she's very happy to see Emma, but Emma notices that something seems off. Like, it doesn't seem like her normal "happy to see Emma" self.

Becca: Yeah. She's like, "What do you think that is?"

Molly: Hurt.

Becca: Probably also like a guard [00:08:00] as well.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Does anybody ever call to your attention a flaw, and then when they come back into your life, you're conscious to avoid being that way in front of them?

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Yeah. So, she's conscious of the fact that Emma finds her annoying and she's trying to not be annoying.

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Which parts of me does she find annoying? Which thing am I going to say that's going to bother her?"

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Ah, Miss Bates.

Becca: It's very sad.

Molly: I love her. Emma asks after Jane and this brightens Miss Bates up, as she knows it will, and she says that, "Oh, I figure you must be here to congratulate us, because Jane has accepted a position."

Becca: Funny how that happens.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: She's finally accepted a governance position.

Molly: Mm-mm, which we're going to hear all about.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Very interesting way that it came about. She says that Jane has been writing letters and crying all morning about this, and she's given [00:09:00] herself a headache, which is why she couldn't come see Emma.

Becca: Relatable content.

Molly: Yeah, I've done that before.

Becca: Cried so hard you've given yourself a headache?

Molly: Oh, yeah?

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. When *Ted Lasso* ended, I cried so hard. So, Jane was writing letters, crying all morning. Miss Bates says that she really wants Jane to lay down because she has a headache, but she's probably just pacing back and forth in the room, not actually laying down. Miss Bates, she tells everything.

Becca: Yeah. Honestly, she doesn't really have a filter on her, which we'll get to later, but certain people were not on notice of certain things, which makes a lot of sense when you see that Miss Bates is like, "Oh, yeah, she's so anxious. She probably can't even rest her head down. She's cried so hard that her head hurts," to someone who it is clear from these chapters Jane does not want that information disclosed.

Molly: Mm-hmm? So, Miss Bates says that, at first, when Emma arrived, they thought it was going to be Mrs. Cole. And Jane had said, "Well, she's going to come [00:10:00] eventually, so they might as well get it over with now." But then when they found out it was Emma, she was like, "No, I can't see anybody," and Emma's like, "Oh."

Becca: Which again, don't say that.

Molly: Yeah. But Emma, whose heart has been growing kinder towards Jane over these last couple of days or weeks, can see why knowing how she's been to Jane. She can see why Jane would be able to get herself up to see someone else, but not Emma. She can understand that now?

Becca: Yeah. I think, if you recall the last set of chapters, the I am fatigued moment with Emma-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -we really get to see Jane's level of struggle right now. If you think about the coldness with which she has been met from Emma, something that Knightley has dinged her on a thousand times.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: I think Emma realizes that she might not be the perfect person to talk to Jane.

Molly: Yeah, definitely. So, she says, "Oh, it must be hard. I thought Jane wasn't going to take a job until after the Campbells visited." [00:11:00] And Miss Bates says, "Oh, you are always so kind," which makes Emma uncomfortable. She doesn't think that she deserves that always. So, she asks where Jane is going to shift the focus away from her. We learn that she's going to a Miss Smallridge, who is friends with the Sucklings and the Braggés and

who lives only four miles from Maple Grove. She says Mrs. Elton is the best friend ever who would not take no for answer.

Becca: Definitely not the sign of being a good friend, as you saw.

Molly: Yes. She pressures Jane. She says she will not deny the job. Jane tells her over and over again, I don't want it.

Becca: But you can't get Augusta not to have her way on like, "Oh, you're going to work for my friend. It's going to be so cute. You're going to be in my life forever, but you're going to be servant class at that point. It's going to be so cute."

Molly: "You're going to have so much fun."

Becca: "So much fun. I would love it if you could be in our group, just officially. But at least I can get you a job where you can be waiting on my friend's [00:12:00] kids near me. That's going to be so great. And you know what? I will be in your life forever, because we are best friends, even though I am in such a higher position than you."

Molly: You think, "Oh, you're going to love it."

Becca: Ah, God, Augusta.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Not enough Augusta in these chapters for me to get too enraged.

Molly: Yeah. Miss Bates, while she's telling this, has a very smiling through her tears vibe. She's like, "Oh, yeah, she's the best, best friend. She just absolutely would not take no for answer." So, poor things. We learn that Mrs. Elton told Jane about this job the morning of the Donwell trip. She says that Jane told her over and over again, no, I don't want it. And Miss Bates was certain that nothing could change her mind, but "good Mrs. Elton, whose judgment never fails her, saw farther than I did." She said, she wouldn't turn the position down and she'd wait for Jane to change her mind.

By the end of the evening, Jane took Mrs. Elton aside and accepted the position. Emma's like, "Wait, you spent the evening with Mrs. Elton?" [00:13:00] And Miss Bates says, yes, while they were walking with Mr. Knightley at Donwell. Mrs. Elton said, "Oh, you must all spend the evening with me." And Emma's like, "Was Knightley there?" And she says, "No, Knightley declined, even though Mrs. Elton said she wouldn't take no for answer he didn't come," which I like, because he will not fall for that.

Becca: Oh, yeah. No, he is not Jane Fairfax. He is like, "No, you, woman, will not boss me around like Miss Augusta Hawkins."

Molly: "You can send your carriage. I'm not getting in."

Becca: Exactly. Also, this is one of those moments, like you find out that everyone had a sleepover after the party without you for Emma.

Molly: Yeah. "You all hung out after that?"

Becca: "Did Knightley hang out with you guys after that?" She's like, "Oh, no, he didn't come." So, it's okay, because it's only people that Emma didn't want to hang out with anyway.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But if Knightley had been there, it would have been like, "Ugh."

Molly: Yeah, she would have been [unintelligible [00:13:47]

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Miss Bates says that everyone seemed fatigued from the morning adventure and nobody was having fun except for her, and she was just happy to have been invited. Emma thinks perhaps Jane had been deciding on the [00:14:00] job all day, even though they didn't know it, and she hopes that it's a good family, and she ends up with a good situation. And Miss Bates says, "There isn't a better family in all Mrs. Elton's acquaintance." I find it interesting that they really-- After they met Mrs. Elton, they were like, "Yeah, it's going to be one of her friends."

Becca: Well, here's the thing. It's a matter of whether or not you can tell the difference between Mrs. Elton and somebody else. Miss Bates does not have that gene where she can perceive Mrs. Elton's class for what it actually is, which is new money gauche. But Jane has that, and Emma has that. So, Jane and Emma can feel the difference between Mrs. Elton and somebody else. Knightley obviously can as well, but Miss Bates, for her, it's like, "Oh, Mrs. Elton talks all the time about how important she is and all these people are super rich, so it's fine."

Molly: Yeah. I love her.

Becca: Miss Bates?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Oh, my God, you've turned such a corner with her.

Molly: I really have.

Becca: You and Emma both?

Molly: Yeah. So, she mentions the salary as much more than she would have expected. Emma says something very [00:15:00] sweet that if other children are anything like she remembers being as a child, she thinks that it's worth five times what she's ever heard being paid for that position.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: She learns that Jane is leaving within two weeks, and Emma asks if the Campbells are going to be sad that she got a job before they came back. Miss Bates says she's sure they will, but Jane just couldn't feel justified in saying no. She tells her that she was very surprised when Mrs. Elton first congratulated her on it, and she tries to remember if it was before or after tea. And then she remembers, no, it had to be after because something else happened before tea.

John Abdy's son, who is the hostler, which is, I believe, someone who keeps horses at an inn, comes to talk to Mr. Elton, because he needs some help caring for his sick father. And while Mr. Elton was telling them about this conversation with John Abdy's son, it got out about a chaise having been sent to Randalls to take Frank back to Richmond. Emma says she didn't know that he left back to Richmond, so Miss Bates goes on to share that they had heard from the hostler that [00:16:00] Frank received a message from his uncle that Mrs. Churchill was doing fine, and he didn't need to rush home, but could he come back the next morning. But Frank still leaves immediately. Emma thinks she's not really caring about Frank leaving, rushing off. But instead, she's thinking about the difference between Mrs. Churchill's and Jane's importance in the world and the difference of women's destiny.

Becca: It's a very potent point, isn't it?

Molly: It is.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Emma's really being like, "And dear reader, this is the point you should be taking from this."

Becca: Yeah. No, Jane Austen's turning over to us, glasses down and been like, "Yeah, Mrs. Churchill can do whatever the fuck she wants, because she has money in stature. Jane Fairfax is cabined in the world. She is confined to this little position where she has no control over her own life." Once again, Emma, Mrs. Churchill, Jane Fairfax not so much. Emma is much more in control of herself.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: Interesting stuff. [00:17:00]

Molly: Mm-hmm. While Emma's thinking about this, she spaces out, staring at the pianoforte, and Miss Bates says, "Oh, yes, the pianoforte. It's going to stay here until Colonel Campbell comes back." Jane still doesn't know who sent it. This all makes Emma think about how she and Frank were postulating about the pianoforte coming from Mr. Dixon, and this just all embarrasses her so much that she feels guilty and has to leave. The first point in this set of chapters at which I just wrote, why doesn't Emma just apologize for being a dick?

Becca: So, a couple of things here. One, this is Regency Era England versions of apologizing. Darcy at Pemberley, the way he treats Lizzie while she's there. It's not until much later, when he's having a very intimate moment with her that he actually fully apologizes for how he was. Instead, he's just kind to her [crosstalk] moment as a way to show that he's changed. So, Emma's doing a Regency Era apology.

[00:18:00] Second of all, the only thing Miss Bates knows Emma did wrong and doesn't even know Emma did wrong is making a mean comment about her in front of a lot of people, which was very embarrassing. But Miss Bates doesn't know that Emma spent months talking shit with Frank Churchill about Mr. Dixon and Jane.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, that guilt, Emma's feeling, about the way she was to Jane Fairfax, that is internal, she can't apologize for something that Miss Bates doesn't know she did.

Molly: Yeah, because that would actually make things worse.

Becca: Yeah, exactly.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, Emma's just overcome by how much of a dick she's been to the Bateses and Jane for the whole of this book, which has been very entertaining, but undoubtable.

Molly: Yes. So, that brings us to Chapter 9, or Chapter 45, depending on your book. When Emma gets back to her house, she finds Harriet and Mr. Knightley there. Knightley pops up and he says, he's decided to go to London to see John and Isabella, and asks if [00:19:00] she has any message to send. And she says no. She can tell from the way he's behaving that he has not forgiven her. It's very brusque, if you will. He's about to go when Mr. Woodhouse asks how her visit to the Bates' was. And he says, "Oh, you're always so attentive to them." Emma looks at Knightley and gives this little shake of her head like, "Oh, God, this is so embarrassing. I know I'm not." Emma sees that this makes Knightley's opinion of her improve, as if "his eyes received the truth from hers". And now he looks at her with a "glow of regard." And then-- [crosstalk]

Becca: We need to read this part of the book.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: We need to read it because it's too hot.

Molly: All right.

Becca: It's too hot.

Molly: It's very sexy.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: All right, I'm opening it up.

Becca: Yes. Oh, George.

Molly: Yeah. Becca just almost took her shirt off. [giggles]

Molly: Well, okay. No, we need to be clear. I'm wearing a flannel over a crop top.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: The flannel almost flew off my body.

Molly: [laughs] Okay, let's see. So, she looks at Mr. Knightley. His eyes received the truth from **[00:20:00]** hers, and all that had passed in her good feelings for once, blah, blah, blah. Okay. "He looked at her with a glow of regard. She was warmly gratified and, in another moment, still more so, by a little movement of more than common friendliness on his part. He took her hand, whether she had not herself made the first motion, she could not say she might, perhaps, have rather offered it but he took her hand, pressed it, and certainly was on the point of carrying it to his lips when, from some fancy or other, he suddenly let it go. Why he should feel such a scruple, why he should change his mind when it was all but done, she could not perceive. He would have judged better, she thought, if he had not stopped."

Becca: Why did he change his mind?

Molly: No, I don't know.

Becca: Why did he change his mind?

Molly: I don't know.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: But she did not want him to change his mind.

Becca: No.

Molly: She wanted to feel his lips on her hand.

Becca: Ha-ha-ha-ha-ha.

Molly: Huh.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, he takes it up to his lips, and then he drops it.

Becca: Yeah. He's like, [makes squirming noises]. **[00:21:00]** He holds it for a moment, and then he's like, "No." Emma's like, "What the fuck?"

Molly: I think because it's very intimate. It's an intimate thing to do.

Becca: Definitely an intimate thing to do.

Molly: In front of her dad.

Becca: Certainly, yes. It's also not necessarily a sexy thing to do in the right context.

Molly: Yeah. But this is such a random-- Nobody knows what's passing between them except them.

Becca: Yeah. But it's the idea that he takes her hand, holds it, and then thinks the better of it, and puts it down.

Molly and Becca: Mm.

Molly: Because, if he didn't think anything of it, he would have just done it.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: But he thought something of it.

Becca: He thought something of it.

Molly and Becca: [make squirming noises]

[laughter]

Molly: This is like the dishiest Jane Austen book so far.

Becca: It's so fun, because the thing is, it's actually the most chaste for the first two-thirds, and then there's this.

Molly: You're like, "Oh, my God, he just grabbed her head and almost kissed it."

Becca: You're just like, [00:22:00] "Oh, [makes squirming noises]."

Molly: That's like hand flex times 15.

Becca: Oh, I know. And it's George Knightley.

Molly: Who's so hot.

Becca: So hot. Not to say Mr. Darcy is not hot, as we've discussed, but something about Knightley, something about how daddy he is.

Molly: He's so daddy.

Becca: oh, yeah.

Molly: Oh, okay. So, that happens. And then he just runs away.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Oh, he thought something of this of it all. She wishes she had left the Bates' 10 minutes earlier, so that she could talk to him about the Jane situation, and she learns that he has been there for half an hour waiting for her.

Becca: Just express that a little bit more for the listeners.

Molly: [makes squirming noises] Oh, you want me to say words?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: [giggles] So he's been there for half an hour waiting for her, so that he can-

Becca: Say goodbye.

Molly: -say goodbye?

Becca: Before going to London?

Molly: For a couple of days?

Becca: Yup.

Molly: I do have to say, [00:23:00] we don't ever get more of that, why is Harriet there? She doesn't say anything in this whole.

Becca: Harriet just hangs out there all the time.

Molly: But she didn't come with him, right?

Becca: No.

Molly: Okay. Just checking. Okay, so, yeah, he's been waiting for her for half an hour, and she's like, "Oh." Emma doesn't want her father to be sad about Knightley leaving and what's more, going on horseback, because you know how he is about people riding horseback.

Becca: Indeed.

Molly: So, she tells him all about Jane and he's instantly interested. He thinks that Mrs. Elton is so great for setting this all up, and he hopes that Jane has a good family in a dry area, so that her health will not be poorly affected.

Becca: To be fair to Mr. Woodhouse, usually he's a little over paranoid about these things, but Jane Fairfax does seem to have very delicate constitutions.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: So, it is actually like legit to be like, "I wish Jane Fairfax, healthy weather."

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: No, I agree. He mentions that Jane will be to this new family what Miss [00:24:00] Taylor was to them, and he hopes that she will not have to leave like Miss Taylor did. So, he hopes she never gets married.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: The next day, [giggles] they get news from Richmond that Mrs. Churchill is dead.

Becca: Yup. She just went on and died.

Molly: I feel like that hasn't happened in one of these books before.

Becca: No, this is, I think, the first legit death moment we have other than at the very beginning of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Molly: Yeah, the first-- *Sense and Sensibility*.

Becca: Which is a much more tragic death.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: This one, everyone's like, "Oh, no."

Molly: [laughs] Yeah, but it's sad. We'll get into it, but the way that she's talked about is sad, but it's just so random. But it's also not.

Becca: Yeah, because the whole book, I kept asking, "Is she really sick?"

Molly: Right. And they all were asking, "Is she really sick?"

Becca: And you were saying--

Molly: I didn't think so. But a lot of what's funny is in this, it says, at least now everyone finally believes her, that she was, in fact, sick.

Becca: Yes, indeed.

Molly: But tragic. [00:25:00] She has a seizure or something. I don't know, if they meant she had a seizure or she was seized by some sudden illness worse than what she had before, but something happens. She dies 36 hours after he returns back.

Becca: Yeah. Do we need a death sound effect, or is that in poor taste for a book character?

Molly: I think that might be poor taste. [laughs]

Becca: Okay.

Molly: Maybe like a womp, womp, womp.

Becca: No, poor one out for our homie, Mrs. Churchill.

Molly: Yeah. There's a quote about, "When disliked people die, all their faults are forgotten, and people talk well of them, all of a sudden." It says, Goldsmith tells us.

Becca: Oliver Goldsmith is an author of that time period.

Molly: Oh, okay. All right.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I'm glad you knew that.

Becca: I didn't. I googled it.

Molly: Oh, great. So, everyone feels bad now for not thinking she was really sick, and they worry about Mr. Churchill. Even Mr. Weston and Mrs. Weston are concerned about how this is going to affect Frank. Emma's thoughts, of course, immediately think of how Frank is going to be benefited by this, and how he is [00:26:00] free now to do what he wants. She thinks, now nothing can get in the way of him and Harriet, since Mr. Churchill is a pushover without Mrs. Churchill there to be her. All she needs now is for Frank to actually develop feelings for Harriet, which she isn't sure has happened yet, and I can agree that it has not. So, Harriet, meanwhile, betrays no feelings of hope at Mrs. Churchill's death, and Emma doesn't want to bring it up, and risk losing that propriety which Harriet has developed around this.

The propriety that Emma is perceiving just has to do with Harriet not having feelings for Frank. Frank writes to say that Mr. Churchill is doing better than could be expected, and they're leaving for Yorkshire, I think, on their funeral procession.

Becca: Well, they're also just going home.

Molly: Oh, yeah, that makes sense.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Okay. Their first stop on their way home is the house of a friend who Mr. Churchill had been promising to visit for 10 years, which makes me realize that he's also free.

Becca: Yeah. They were all tied down. May she rest in peace, [00:27:00] Mrs. Churchill. But it is crystal clear that everyone around her in her life was just focused on her and had to bend her will all the time. And so, now they actually do have a little bit more agency than they used to.

Molly: Yeah. In the meantime, while they're gone, Emma wants to focus on showing kindness to Jane and repenting for her years of being a dick. So, she sends a note inviting Jane to Hartfield, and a messenger is sent to refuse the invite verbally because Jane is not well enough to write. Mr. Perry comes by to Hartfield later and says that he visited Jane earlier. He notes against her consent and said that she has headaches and a fever so bad that it makes him think she won't be able to start with Mrs. Smallridge as planned. He thinks that she's been doing too much and that her current home is unfavorable to someone with a nervous disorder. Being in one room with Miss Bates, who, while he notes is lovely, is not the best partner [00:28:00] for a person who has a nervous disorder.

Becca: Yeah, we talked about this briefly and we'll get into this a little bit more as these chapters go on, but Jane is fatigued.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: We're, once again, getting a better picture into her life, which is living with her very overbearing aunt while she's just anxious mess. I don't think that is an easy situation for Jane to be in, especially as we learn nursing some romantic wounds.

Molly: Mm-hmm. And secrets.

Becca: And secrets that are plaguing her. And also, we'll get into this really a make or break for her prospects in life.

Molly: Mm.

Becca: Yeah. So, anyway.

Molly: So, Emma hears all of this and she's like, "I want to invite Jane to Hartfield again even just for an hour or two. It'll be good for a change of air and scenery." My thought was Jane should come stay at Hartfield and I thought that they were going to have a sleepover. That's not going to happen. But at [00:29:00] first, that's what I thought was going to happen.

Becca: Well, yeah, that would be a smart idea, but there are other factors at play.

Molly: Yes. Which we will learn about soon.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: So, Emma writes again saying that Mr. Perry thinks it would be a good idea for her to come to Hartfield. She gets a note back just saying, she's not well enough for exercise. Emma thinks she deserved a better response, but in spite of this, she gets in her carriage and she goes to the Bates' hoping she can convince Jane to come join her. But when she gets there, Miss Bates comes out and she's like, "Yes, it would be a good idea. I'll try." And she tries. She comes back and she's like, "Jane is unpersuadable. The idea of going out made her worse. She can't come."

Emma wants to go in, but before she can even ask, Miss Bates says that Jane made her promise not to let Emma in. Miss Bates says that Jane won't see anyone except Miss Elton refused to be denied, and then also Mrs. Cole and Mrs. Perry. Basically, everyone but Emma was able to get in.

Becca: Yeah. So, a couple of things on this. One, Miss Bates, why would you even say that?

Molly: It's like when you tell someone, [00:30:00] "Oh, we had a party."

Becca: "And you weren't invited."

Molly: Yeah. And you just think that's fine to say.

Becca: Yeah, it's just way too honest in that moment.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: The other is, you're getting a sense of Jane specifically avoiding Emma.

Molly: Mm-hmm. But Emma doesn't want to be like those people who forced their way in where they weren't welcome, and she's like, "Okay, is she eating? Can I send anything? What's her physical health?" So, she decides to send some arrowroot, and half an hour after she sends the arrowroot, it's returned with a note from Miss Bates thanking her, but saying that Jane couldn't eat it, she wanted it sent back, and she didn't need anything.

Becca: Yikes.

Molly: After that, Emma hears that Jane was seen wandering the meadows that same day that she said she wasn't up to any exercise. Emma realizes now, she puts all the pieces together a little bit late that Jane is just determined not to see or receive kindness from Emma, [00:31:00] specifically. Emma feels very sorry. She feels very bad. She's also mortified that she's given so little credit for proper feeling. And I have to say, one, she should just apologize if she feels sorry. I understand what she's trying to do, Regency Era and all that.

Becca: But she also can't see Jane in person.

Molly: Right. That's true.

Becca: Yeah, she can't apologize yet. [laughs]

Molly: That's true. But two, this is something I've been thinking about lately, because I work in theater and I'm around a lot of actors who have big personalities. If you find yourself constantly feeling bad for your actions and feeling like you need to repent, or apologize, or do things to make it up to people, then you should probably, instead of just apologizing and wanting credit for apologizing, you should think about the actions that you're doing instead and try to not do those things anymore.

Becca: Yes. There's a great quote from *BoJack Horseman* on this. I'm going to see if I can find it. [00:32:00] So, the concept of the show, obviously, it's about a horse, but he's a very flawed antihero character. One of the things the show deals with pretty heavily is the idea of, when you're bad, when you do bad things, what's the remedy? There's a really great quote from that where one of the characters, after he gets fucked over once again by the main character goes, "You can't keep doing this. You can't keep doing shitty things and then feel bad about yourself that makes it okay. You need to be better."

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: To be fair to Emma,-

Molly: She's trying.

Becca: -I think that is exactly what she's doing.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Like, she's not just trying to say, I'm sorry and continue her behavior. You can see an actual shift in how she's thinking about Jane, and the Bates', and her actions towards them.

Molly: That is true.

Becca: So, I think you're completely correct. I think when you are shitty, you can't just apologize and continue to be shitty.

Molly: Yeah, you got to do a Mr. Darcy.

Becca: You got to do a Mr. Darcy. I think these chapters exemplify the [00:33:00] fact that Emma is trying to pull off a Mr. Darcy here.

Molly: She is 75% of the way there, because she is-- Nobody's perfect. Everyone wants recognition for doing good things. But even the last sentence of this chapter is, she's at least comforted by the fact that Mr. Knightley, if he had seen this, would approve.

Molly: Which she's basically saying, "My comfort here is that I'm doing the right thing, at least."

Molly: Yeah, that's true.

Becca: We're entering a part of the book which could be called The Humbling of Emma Woodhouse, because these chapters are very humbling to Emma.

Molly: Yeah. No, she's definitely growing.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Growth.

Becca: Growth.

Molly: Yeah. I think there's a little remnant of like, but I want credit for it. But again, we all do.

Becca: Oh, yeah, she definitely wants credit, which she shouldn't, but certainly, it is being accompanied, I think, with, in my opinion, a genuine effort to actually change her-

Molly: Totally.

Becca: -her behavior.

Molly: Yeah. It's making me think, because like, [00:34:00] Darcy his, "I don't want credit for this" was paying for Lydia's wedding.

Becca: Emma simply has not been confronted with that high stakes of situation. [laughs]

Molly: Exactly. It's all very low stakes still.

Becca: Exactly. But she sent arrowhead.

Molly: Arrowroot.

Becca: Arrowroot.

Molly: She sent an arrowhead.

Becca: She sent an arrowhead.

Molly: [laughs] She's like, "I got you this spear."

Becca: [laughs] Fight your demons, Jane.

Molly: Yeah. All right, so this brings us to our final chapter. Chapter 10 or Chapter 46, the final chapter of this episode, I should say. 10 days after Mrs. Churchill's death, Mr. Weston comes by in the morning and says, he can't stay long. But can Emma come to Randalls because Mrs. Weston needs to talk to her.

Becca: First of all, never start a conversation with, we need to talk.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Because people will assume the worst.

Molly: Yes. And Emma does. She's like, "Is she sick? What's happened?" And he's like, "No, she's just agitated. She would have ordered you a carriage, but she needs to see you alone," and he looks at her dad. And she's like, "Oh, okay, I guess I'll come with you right now, but what's going on?" And he's like, "Don't ask any more questions. You'll know in [00:35:00] time."

Becca: Oh, boy.

Molly: Emma's tells her dad she's going for a walk. As soon as they're out, Emma's like, "Come on, tell me what really happened." And he says, "No. I promised I wouldn't. She'll break it to you better," Mrs. Weston. And Emma's like, "Break it to me? Break what to me?" She immediately is like, "What's happened at Brunswick Square?" which is where her sister and the Knightleys are. Emma's yelling at him, pissed. She's like, "You better tell me. I charge you by all that is sacred." And he says, "Upon my word, Emma." And she goes, "Your word? Why not your honor. Why not say, upon your honor that it has nothing to do with any of them? What can be broke to me that does not relate to that family?" He says, "Upon my honor, it has nothing to do with anyone of the name Knightley." And she's like, "Okay."

He says, he shouldn't have said broke. That was the wrong word. But actually, it has nothing to do with Emma. At least he hopes not. But though it is a disagreeable business, it could be worse. And so, she starts thinking, she's like, "Maybe it's money problems because Mrs. Churchill died. Maybe Frank has been cut off." There's something about six natural children and Frank not having anything. Does he have siblings? [00:36:00]

Becca: Frank doesn't have siblings, but the Churchills might have kids.

Molly: Well, yeah. Does he have people that were like his siblings, six of them? Or, is that she just postulating? Because I feel like if they had six kids, some of their children could be constantly taking care of Mrs. Churchill, not Frank.

Becca: Well, Frank's the favorite.

Molly: Right.

Becca: I think-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Which sucks for their kids.

Becca: Let's see. Oh, she's just pontificate. She's just wondering.

Molly: Okay, got it.

Becca: But she thinks basically Frank has lost his money from the Churchills.

Molly: So, she doesn't bring this up yet, but she sees someone on horseback, and she says, "Who's that on horseback?" And Mr. Weston says, "Well, it isn't Frank. He's halfway to Windsor by now. And she's like, "Oh, has he been with you then?" And he says, "Oh, yes. He was just by to ask us how we were doing." [laughs]

Becca: The Westons are so shady here.

Molly: [00:37:00] Yeah, it's unprecedented. They get to Randalls and he leaves her with Mrs. Weston saying that he hasn't told her anything. She has no idea.

Becca: So ominous. Oh, my God.

Molly: Yeah. Mrs. Weston does not look good, and Emma comes in and she's like, "Come on. I'm in terrible suspense. You know, we both hate suspense. So, tell me what's going on." And Mrs. Weston's like, "You really have no idea." And Emma's like, "Well, I'm guessing it relates to Frank somehow?" And Mrs. Weston says, "Yes." She appears to not want to make eye contact. It says, she returns to her work, so she's sewing and not looking at Emma. She tells Emma that he came by to announce an attachment. No, an engagement to Miss Fairfax.

Becca: Boom.

Molly: Mic drop.

Becca: Record scratch. Give us some thoughts.

Molly: Well, okay, so my first thought was, I knew it.

Becca: Yeah, you called it.

Molly: I knew there was something between them.

Becca: You called it.

Molly: They had some sort of love attachment. But it says that they've been long engaged. So, I knew there was something between them, but I didn't think that they were currently **[00:38:00]** engaged this whole time. Oh, yeah, they've been engaged-- [crosstalk] while he's been flirting with Emma-

Becca: Yup.

Molly: -in front of her.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: What the fuck?

Becca: Yup.

Molly: What kind of weird dynamic is that for fiancé?

Becca: Bad one, obviously.

Molly: Do they get off on pain?

Becca: [laughs] Well, it's such a good question. We will get into it more in the study questions.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: I wanted your initial impressions of the plot twist.

Molly: Well, I can read you directly from my book, what I wrote.

Becca: Oh, please do.

Molly: We've got to announce an attachment. And then I go, ah, blah, blah, blah. "An engagement, a positive engagement. What? Miss Fairfax, nay, that they have been long engaged." Knew it. "Emma jumped with surprise, and horror-struck, exclaimed," and I go, huh. And then Jane Fairfax, "Good God! You are not serious? You do not mean it?" And then I went, long been??? And then blah, blah, blah. " There has been a solemn engagement **[00:39:00]** between them ever since October." And I said, knew it. I don't know, just that they met at Weymouth.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: The love was there.

Becca: They have been engaged since they met at Weymouth.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, every time we have seen Frank Churchill, he has been engaged to Jane Fairfax.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yup. So, yeah, we're going to get into it, but oh, boy, Frankie. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, it's not a good look for our guy.

Becca: A tough look for our guy, Frank Churchill.

Molly: Yeah. Emma is shook. She cannot believe this.

Becca: If you're Emma, what are the first few emotions you feel here?

Molly: Absolute, what the fuck? I mean, if that's an emotion, what the fuck? Confusion, guilt, probably. Anger, embarrassment.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: A lot of it.

Becca: Yeah. Oh, yeah. [laughs]

Molly: She learns it was a secret engagement. They didn't tell anyone, not the Campbells, neither of their families. Mrs. Weston says, I thought I knew him. [00:40:00] I realized that she's also hurt that he didn't tell her. Like, they had a whole thing going on friendship wise. Like, she's his mom, basically.

Becca: Yeah. Literally, nobody knew about this. Not even the Dixons.

Molly: Yeah. Emma, meanwhile, is thinking about all her conversations with him, talking shit about Jane.

Molly: Yeah, this is for me, where if I'm Emma, my cringe just eats me alive.

Molly: But it's cringe on her part. But also, he initiated half those conversations.

Becca: Oh, the cringe does not excuse Frank's behavior at all.

Molly: At all.

Becca: But if you're Emma, you have put your foot in your mouth already so many times with the Bates family.

Molly: Her mouth is really stretched out.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: To think about the fact that she just spent most of the last few months talking ever loving shit about Jane Fairfax to her fiancé.

Molly: And to find this out, after she started to like Jane.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: It's bad. It's not good. It's [00:41:00] like they just became friends, sort of. Not really.

Becca: They're not friends.

Molly: In her mind, they were friends for a minute, but then she realizes that Jane hates her.

Becca: Oh, yeah. No, Jane is clearly not on the friend train right now.

Molly: Yeah. She's also thinking about Harriet, poor Harriet, who she thinks is in love with Frank, which is just totally a non-issue in my mind. Emma can't comprehend this. Mrs. Weston says that there are some parts of his conduct, some parts she looks at Emma that they cannot excuse. Meaning, the flirting with Emma. And Emma says, "Okay, I see what your worry is, but I can assure you that his flirting had no effect on me. I'm fine."

Becca: So, yeah, just to bring this back a little bit, you recall when we got that Knightley chapter, everyone other than Emma thinks that there's an attachment between Frank and Emma.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, everyone thinks that Emma is going to be the scorned lady here.

Molly: Right. But Emma's like, "I don't care."

Becca: Emma's like, "Oh, no, I don't give a fuck. It's fine."

Molly: To convince Mrs. Weston, she says, "There was a time at the beginning when I really felt myself attached to him and I did like him. But for at least three months now, I felt absolutely nothing, I swear." And Mrs. Weston starts [00:42:00] crying tears of joy. She's like, "You can see how nervous we were that you were going to be heartbroken from this and that your life was going to be--"

Molly and Becca: "Ruined."

Molly: Emma says, "Yeah, I'm grateful to have escaped that, but this doesn't make what he did any less bad. This does not excuse him."

Becca: Yeah, it's pretty bad behavior on Frank's part.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Our boy, Frankie. Oof.

Molly: Not good.

Becca: Oof.

Molly: She says, "What right had he to come among us with affection and faith engaged, and with manners so very disengaged? How could he tell that he was not be making me in love with him? Why was he flirting so hard with me?" I have the same questions, Emma. Mrs. Weston starts to say something that sounds like, it's going to be in his defense, but Emma, she barrels on she's not listening. She says, "How could Jane bear to watch him flirt with her without resentment?" I was like, "Is it without resentment?" Because it seems like she really hates you right now. "But she just can't comprehend or respect that level of placidity to not show her anger at Frank." [00:43:00] Again, I don't understand the dynamic there, but we'll get to it.

Becca: Yes, we will.

Molly: Mrs. Weston then says, there have been misunderstandings between Jane and Frank that may have arisen from his misconduct and led to this current crisis. I want to know what the current crisis is. Is that Jane's health? Is that Frank--?

Becca: Well, I think the current crisis is the scandal of the breaking of the proposal and also the fact that Jane accepted a governess position.

Molly: Has the proposal broken?

Becca: Frank broke the news to-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Oh, broke the news-- The breaking of the news.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But are they getting married now because he asked for permission from Mr. Churchill?

Becca: He's gotten permission from Mr. Churchill. He's gotten the blessing of his father and his stepmother. So, now they are telling everyone. They got really lucky with the timing of Mrs. Churchill's death. But this has all happened after Jane has-

Molly: Accepted a job.

Becca: -accepted a job.

Molly: Which is bad.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: We'll get into [00:44:00] this a little bit, but you can imagine the state of mind Jane had to be in to accept a job when this proposal was on the line.

Molly: This is a question I had. I'll ask it in a second. Emma says that he's totally fallen, in her opinion, and Mrs. Weston is trying to defend him saying he has many good qualities. Emma's not listening. She's like, "Oh, my God, he let his fiancée become a governess. And this is where I'm going to ask my question. Was Jane accepting that position, because she thought that he didn't love her anymore because of the whole thing with Emma?"

Becca: That is a good question.

Molly: I feel like that's part of it. But they just haven't talked to each other because of the secret.

Becca: Have they not?

Molly: Have they not? I don't know.

Becca: Have they or have they not?

Molly: I don't know. Well, they haven't, because we learn that he didn't know that she had accepted a governance position or that she was even considering it until yesterday.

Becca: And then he was like, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no, no, no."

Molly: "No, we're going to get married."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, it seems [00:45:00] like they hadn't talked.

Becca: Well, there's a lot of questionable things happening right now. There's a lot in the air. We don't have their perspectives yet.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Yet.

Molly: Right. Yet. Emma starts paying attention when she learns that he didn't know about the governance thing. And Mrs. Westing goes on to say that, he said he was going to write to her and explain everything further when he wasn't so rushed. She doesn't want them to be in a hurry to condemn him yet, and she really hopes that it's all going to turn out well. She says, "They must both have suffered a great deal under such a system of secrecy and concealment." And Emma says, "Well, his sufferings haven't done much harm. He seems fine."

Becca: Yeah, exactly. It's like, "Oh, poor Frank. He got to flirt with me and run around town pretending he was single."

Molly: Yeah. She asks how Mr. Churchill took it, and apparently, he gave his consent without much-- [crosstalk]

Becca: You mean, he didn't give a shit. [laughs]

Molly: While Mrs. Churchill lived, "There could not have been a hope, a chance, a possibility." Do we think that part of the reason that [00:46:00] he was acting single and that they weren't telling anyone was, because they thought there was no chance of them getting married?

Becca: Oh, it's such a good question, isn't it? We don't have Frank's perspective yet.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yet.

Molly: Mm. Yet. Emma thinks that Mr. Churchill probably would have approved of Harriet as well, but again, a non-issue. It was all settled last night, and Frank left Richmond first thing in the morning to tell them, stopping first at the Bates'. The reason he was so agitated when he came to Randalls was because he had found Jane in such a poor state. He didn't know she was sick. Emma asks, "If really nobody knew, not the Campbells or the Dixons," and not the name Dixon, of course. She's like, "Fucking shit." Such an asshole about the Dixons.

Mrs. Weston says that nobody else knew. Emma thinks that, eventually, she's going to wish them well, but right now she's pissed. She thinks he is a deceitful hypocrite, he has duped them all, and there were two people in their midst judging them all. It says, "Two people in the midst of us who [00:47:00] may have been carrying round, comparing and sitting in judgment on sentiments and words that were never meant for both to hear. They must take the consequence, if they have heard each other spoken of in a way not perfectly agreeable." Does she think they were in on it together, first of all?

Becca: Well, Emma's reading this from Emma's perspective right now, which is that she's been putting her foot in her mouth in front of them the whole time. So, in her mind, they're like, "Oh, they're just sneaky talking behind my back."

Molly: Right.

Becca: Yeah, they've been lying to all of us.

Molly: My thoughts when she said that were, "Emma, maybe you shouldn't talk so much shit."

Becca: Huge point in favor of Emma stopping talking so much shit. But also, I think it's a very limited way to look at it, and we'll get into this in the study questions a little bit because that's from Emma's perspective. Frank and Jane have their own reasons to be doing what they're doing.

Molly: They're the main characters in their own story.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Emma's not the main character in their story.

Becca: Emma's barely the main character in this story if you really look at it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's interesting.

Molly: Emma's just watching. [00:48:00]

Becca: Yeah. And Emma's-- We'll save for the study--

Molly: Okay.

Becca: I got a lot of feelings on this.

Molly: I will say, this has vibes of like, when you're talking shit about an actor in a play and their mom is sitting behind you or something.

Becca: Oh, my God.

Molly: I didn't really like that. That's why you always wait until you're 10 blocks away from theater.

Becca: Oh, yeah. No, you want to be really careful.

Molly: Yeah. So, Mrs. Weston says, "Well, I'm safe from those worries because I never talked about one of them to the other one of them."

Becca: Womp, womp.

Molly: Emma's like, "Yeah, well, there was that one time when you thought that Knightley was in love with Jane." And Mrs. Weston's like, "Yeah, but I never said anything bad about Jane." And Mr. Weston then appears outside and like, "The idea that he's been pacing back and forth outside--"

Becca: He's like, "Is he okay?"

Molly: Like, "Is it time for me to come in yet?"

Becca: They both love Emma.

Molly: I know.

Becca: It's so clear in this, because they're devastated that they misread the situation, and they are really concerned, they hurt Emma.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: They're lucky. Emma's like, "No, I'm fine."

Molly: Emma's like, "I'm fine." So, they beckon him in, and Mrs. Weston tells Emma, "Listen, let's make the best of this [00:49:00] and just tell him you're okay. We want him to be happy about this engagement, because it's not so bad a thing." What does she say? She says, "It

is not a connection to gratify. But if Mr. Churchill does not feel that, why should we?" What does that mean?

Becca: Graham, we're going to need a sound effect for The Economics of Dating in Jane Austen. [sound effect]

Molly: Mm.

Becca: Yeah. So, this is basically just the Frank nature of the times. It's that Frank is wealthy, and he has the power to marry where he wants. But this is not a particularly favorable connection-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Right, because she is poor.

Becca: Very poor. She has accomplishments and everything, but she does not have money. She has no dowry.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, Frank is making a complete, total love connection here, not one that has any economic benefit to him.

Molly: But where is the love? Where is the love?

Becca: That is such a good question that we'll get into. The short answer I have is that, just because things are fraught, [00:50:00] it doesn't mean that there isn't genuine feeling there. I think there's unquestionable-- Actually, I am pulling up a piece of the book that I would like you to return to from Box Hill gate.

Molly: Ooh.

Becca: So, pull up Box Hill chapter towards the end. So, we want to get to the Eltons getting up and walking away.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: We're going to start with the fact that the Eltons offer Jane to go on a walk with them. Jane declined it, however, and the husband and wife walked off. "Happy couple!" said Frank Churchill, as soon as they were out of hearing, "How well they suit one another! Very lucky marrying as they did, upon an acquaintance formed only in a public place! They only knew each other, I think, a few weeks in Bath! Peculiarly lucky! for as to any real knowledge of a person's disposition that Bath, or any public place, can give it is all nothing; there can be no knowledge. It is only by seeing women in their own homes, amongst[?] their own set, just as they always [00:51:00] are, that you can form any just judgment. Short of that, it is all guess and luck and will generally be ill-luck. How many a man has committed himself on a short acquaintance, and rued it all the rest of his life!

Miss Fairfax, who had seldom spoken before, except among her own confederates, spoke now. "Such things do occur, undoubtedly." She was stopped by a cough. Frank Churchill turned towards her to listen. "You were speaking," he said, gravely. She recovered her voice. "I was only going to observe, that though such unfortunate circumstances do sometimes occur both to men and women, I cannot imagine them to be very frequent. A hasty and imprudent attachment may arise but there is generally time to recover from it afterwards. I would be understood to mean, that it can be only weak, irresolute characters, (whose happiness must be always at the mercy of chance,) who will suffer an unfortunate acquaintance to be an inconvenience, an oppression for ever.

Molly: [00:52:00] Okay.

Becca: So, take that little bit by a little bit. He's saying, "Well, the Eltons are such a happy couple. That's really lucky, because they met by happenstance and fell in love after only a few weeks."

Molly: On vacation.

Becca: On vacation. "It's so lucky they're well suited to each other, because a lot of people on a whim fall in love on a vacation and enter a hasty attachment."

Molly: So, from his first part, what I was gathering is that, they met at Weymouth when neither of them were in their own home and fell in love-

Becca: Hastily.

Molly: -hastily. Just from this first half, he wanted to come see her in Highbury to see her amongst her own set, in her own home, to see how she really is, which I think isn't fair to her, because she has two very different worlds that she's in.

Becca: What I think you are also gathering here [00:53:00] is this is a slight at Jane. He's saying, "Oh, man, I didn't really know you until we were here."

Molly: Oh, I didn't gather that.

Molly: Yeah. He's saying, "I didn't really know who you were until we were here. This is where I'm really starting to know you. And man, it can be tough to get stuck in an engagement with someone you thought you knew." And Jane says, "Oh, don't worry. You don't actually have to be stuck in an imprudent engagement, because if you have any balls on you, you just end it."

Molly: Oh.

Becca: Then after that, we have Emma and Knightley fighting each other, and Emma just focusing on the mean things she said to Miss Bates. But this is really in the set where Frank turns to Emma and says, "Can you find me a wife? I want her to be just like you," in front of Jane.

Molly: So, they fell in love on vacation. Then, he met her at Highbury and decided he didn't like her anymore.

Becca: Well, I think what we're gathering here more than anything is just that this is a pretty public fight in the [00:54:00] book that you don't pick up on the first time you're reading it. But if you turn back to it later and you see, they're actually having a fight in front of Emma, and she's noticing.

Molly: What I initially took Jane's statement to mean was that she was the strong person who was putting an end to things. But now I see that she's saying that he needs to do that.

Becca: I don't know that it's saying that Frank has to be the one to end it. I think what she's saying there is like, "Oh, if this engagement is so bad, you can just end it."

Molly: Right.

Becca: Which is to say, I think either, "Come on, Frank, if you hate it so much, just end it," or, "Well, if it's so bad, then I'm ending it."

Molly: Right. She's basically saying, "If you think we're not suited together, we don't have to be together."

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Do you think that she still wants to be with him?

Becca: Well, that's the question, because here we are later, and he is publicly announcing it, and he did go see her, and it is pretty clear that since Box Hill gate, Jane has been unwell and upset.

Molly: [00:55:00] Whoa.

Becca: That's all we know so far.

Molly: Yeah, ooh, there's so much. So much.

Becca: There's so much. But that passage during Box Hill is so funny, because you don't focus on it when you're reading the chapters. You focus on Frank being a little bit of a tool the whole trip. You focus on Emma acting horribly. And you focus on the Knightley-Emma fight. You're not focused on the fact that Jane and Frank are having a fight in front of everyone.

Molly: Yeah. I did underline it, and I did think something is amiss, something's afoot between them.

Becca: Yeah. But now in the context of knowing that they were engaged while having that conversation.

Molly: Yeah. Oof.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Oof. All right. So, okay. Ooh, wow. Anyway, that's basically the end. Mr. Weston comes in, and Emma tells him that, she was like, "That's a really funny trick you played on me acting something bad had happened, when really it was cause for congratulations. Oh, my gosh, I'm so happy for you. You've got such a great person for your new daughter."

Becca: Mr. Weston's like, "Oh. What? Yeah, I'm so happy."

Molly: Yeah. He's like, "Oh, great." By the time [00:56:00] he gets her back to Hartfield, he's convinced that this is the best possible--

Molly and Becca: outcome.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. Which is the end of the chapter.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Oof.

Molly: Oof.

Becca: Which brings us to Becca study questions. We'll start with a few non-Frank and Jane questions, but very quickly-- We talked about this already, but what's changing in Emma, and what is causing this repentance?

Molly: Good question. Growth.

Becca: Growth.

Molly: It's really spurred on by Knightley drawing attention to her flaws, because she obviously, for some reason, really cares what he thinks about her-

Becca: Hmm, some reason.

Molly: -and that keeps popping up again and again, but she just wants to make him like her. She just wants to make sure that he approves of her actions, and also her feelings. She's noticed that, even though she doesn't always talk shit about Miss Bates, she's always thinking shit about Miss Bates, for example. And same with Jane. She's like, "Oh, actually, this person's not so bad. Maybe I've just been clouded my judgment." [00:57:00]

Becca: I think we can say pretty seriously that Emma's been jealous of a lot of what Jane has in the book. I think it has not occurred to her to feel bad for Jane until very recently. Because all she's focused on is the fact that Jane Fairfax is so much more accomplished than her, and everyone talks about how much they love Jane, and Emma's not the center of attention when Jane comes to town anymore.

Molly: Right.

Becca: It doesn't occur to her that Emma has everything and Jane has nothing.

Molly: Right. Jane has a hard life.

Becca: Jane's life is very hard, as we've learned in the last few chapters, really heavily.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Which brings me to my second question. Why is Jane avoiding Emma?

Molly: Why is Jane avoiding Emma? My first thought is because at Box Hill gate, Frank was like, said this asshole thing to Jane and then turned to Emma and was like, "I want my wife to be just like you," and flirted so hard with her in front of Jane. He's been flirting with Emma in front of Jane, the whole book.

Molly: But it was different at Box Hill.

Molly: Exorbitant.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, [00:58:00] I think that's part of it.

Becca: All right, let's talk about the engagement. Graham, we need a proposal sound effect here. [proposal sound effect]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah, I guess it's got to be like a one in the distance-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Yeah. It's like, this happened in October.

Becca: So, can we get a really far in the distance proposal sound effect? Thanks, Graham.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Okay. So, let's talk immediate thoughts. We've already really dug into this a little bit, but this engagement is a fascinating portion of a book. We spent the whole book with Emma. Actually, wait, you talk first.

Molly: Yeah. Well, like I asked before, do they get off on pain? But now, after talking about it a little bit, I'm like, "Okay, this engagement is falling apart." It's doomed from the beginning, a little bit.

Becca: It's still intact.

Molly: But it is still intact.

Becca: They're announcing it publicly.

Molly: Yes. Well, Frank is.

Becca: But he saw Jane.

Molly: He did. Do we think that she agreed or do we [00:59:00] think that he's just going for it?

Becca: Well, that's the question.

Molly: That is the question. Yeah, I don't know. Again, I knew that something had happened between them. I knew there was an attachment there. I thought that Jane had spurned him and that he was angry about that, but it seems that she never did and she still loved him probably. Anyway, I don't know their whole story. I'm sure we're going to get it, but the fact that the engagement is on after all that is a little weird.

Becca: Well, why would they keep it a secret?

Molly: I think they were keeping it a secret, because there was no chance for them to get married.

Becca: Why?

Molly: Because of Mrs. Churchill.

Becca: Why?

Molly: Because of money.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Because of The Economics of Dating in Jane Austen.

Becca: Graham, the sound effect. [The Economics of Dating in Jane Austen sound effect]

Molly: Because Jane's poor and he's rich.

Becca: But he's not just rich, he's rich with strings attached.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, Jane has no money. Frank comes from not much money, [01:00:00] but has lived his whole life privileged and getting the opportunity to have a ton of money if he follows the rules of the road.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, his aunt set those rules really crisply, as we can see. So, a Jane Fairfax, a woman he loves, might be something to lose him his inheritance, much like our guy, Edward Ferrars, but the connection is a bit more genuine.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, it's something to think about. Yeah, and the other thing I want to talk about is love in this book, because we've gotten very little explicit love from this point in the book. We have had the disaster of Mr. Elton from both Harriet and Emma. We have had Emma thinking she was in love with Frank Churchill but deciding against it.

Molly: TBD.

Becca: Yeah. We have seen secretive attachments, but generally, [01:01:00] this has been, for a Jane Austen novel, pretty light on the genuine romantic connection. Here we have,

under our noses the entire time, a very intense love story that has just gone completely under the radar, and one that has been very *Sense and Sensibility* level fraught.

Molly: Very fraught.

Becca: You can only tell that from just the outside perspective of how they're both acting.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: The illness in Jane, the quiet in Jane, the strain on her life, the outlandish behavior of Frank towards Emma and everybody around him-- [crosstalk]

Molly: And spreading rumors and talking about Mr. Dixon with Emma.

Becca: Yeah, spent a good chunk of the book talking shit about the woman he loves.

Molly: It doesn't make any sense. I had to ask if he was flirting so hard with Emma and making these rumors about the Dixons, because he was trying to keep his relationship a secret as part of the coverup.

Becca: Who's to say?

Molly: Whomst? [01:02:00]

Becca: We haven't gotten Frank's perspective.

Molly: We have not.

Becca: We haven't gotten Jane's perspective.

Molly: No.

Becca: All we know is that they were engaged this entire book, which brings me to my next question, what does Austen do to the story, engaging the two, and how does it affect Emma?

Molly: Well, it affects Emma because everything she knows is a lie.

Becca: Yes. Again, this is the deep humbling of Emma Woodhouse.

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Oh, he never loved me at all."

Becca: "Not only did he not love me, but I spent most of this story talking shit about his love."

Molly: His fiancée.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Which Emma is rightfully angry about for a lot of reasons.

Molly: He made her look bad.

Becca: He made her look bad. But also, Emma's angry on Jane's behalf.

Molly: She is.

Becca: She's embarrassed, but she's also like, "He let me say horrible things about her all the time."

Molly: Yeah. Emma also seems a little bit angry at Jane. She was talking about them judging everyone. Is she just talking about him or is she talking about her too?

Becca: That's a good question. I think that Emma's anger here is a little bit pointed at Frank, and I think rightfully so.

Molly: But she says she can't get behind [01:03:00] Jane being so placid about the whole thing.

Becca: Yeah, but that's different.

Molly: That's Emma. That's like Emma would be angry.

Becca: That's what she's saying is she's like, "Why isn't Jane having a meltdown over this? Why isn't Jane freaking out? He's been horrible to her."

Molly: Well, to be fair to Jane, she is.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But it took a while.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And I also think there's another element to this which we touched on, and I'm going to go deeper into this. I have talked since the beginning of this book, and I've planted the seed, which we've returned to a few times, but not entirely about Frank Churchill, Jane Fairfax, and Emma Woodhouse being these three children of Highbury, these three very high up centers of attention. They're all around the same age. They are all born to families of Highbury. They are all beloved by the entire town. And they all have very different lives. Frank and Jane have lives defined by [01:04:00] tragedy and lack of means, whereas Emma's life, while she did lose her mother, is defined by the privilege and comfort that comes from having an incredibly wealthy father.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: We get the whole book from Emma's perspective, who is the main character in what is mostly just petty gossip around the town. But this chapter serves to show us that the entire time, there was a *Sense and Sensibility* level story happening on the side with the characters who are actually driven by the means of their situations, and the love story that they are trying to hold on to despite those means.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, it makes the reader feel like we've been following the wrong book.

Molly: Right. It really does.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: It makes Emma certainly feel like she's been out of the loop the entire time.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: But it's interesting that Jane Austen chose to focus on Emma and her life as [01:05:00] opposed to Frank and Jane and their story, which is something that falls completely by the side of this story.

Molly: Yeah, it's a way to tell a story for sure of like, we're following it from the outside. It's told through Emma's perspective this whole time. We don't pick up on necessarily what's happening. And now we're having the same experience as Emma of like, we are feeling suddenly out of the loop. We didn't notice before. So, it's an interesting literary device, for sure.

Becca: Yes. I also would say, why did Jane Austen focus on Emma?

Molly: Well-- [crosstalk]

Becca: What's compelling about Emma's story?

Molly: Emma's an interesting character, as we've discussed.

Becca: Oh, my God, yeah.

Molly: We've said she's complex at the end of every episode. But she's the first heroine, at least in the books that we've read, the first heroine who doesn't need to marry and who has it all and gets to. **[01:06:00]** If she wants, she gets to marry for love, but she doesn't have to and she doesn't want to. So, she can really focus on other people's lives, and she's been focusing on the wrong people.

Becca: Yes. And I also think Emma serves to show the importance of learning about those outside of yourself as well. I've been saving this quote, and I think it's time to bring it, but it's a Jane Austen quote about the character, Emma.

Molly: Ooh-ooh.

Becca: I'm going to take a heroine whom no one but myself will much like.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: That's it.

Molly: That's it. Yeah, it's interesting to get this character who, for most of the book, I've been annoyed at and running my head into a wall like, "Emma, why are you so dumb and not paying attention? Why aren't you paying attention to other people and why are you so self-centered?" And getting to watch her slowly open herself up **[01:07:00]** to the possibility that other people's lives are not like hers.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: And I'm wondering when she's going to do that for Harriet.

Becca: Such a good question. Who's to say?

Molly: Whomst?

Becca: Okay, last question before the standbys. I want to return to this question. That's my caveat, but I want to talk about whether or not Frank is the villain in this one.

Molly: Is Frank the villain?

Becca: Is Frank the villain? Is he the drama?

Molly: He is the drama.

Becca: For sure. But is he the villain? Because this is a fought over concept. Is Frank Churchill the villain of this book?

Molly: There are a couple of villains, Mr. Elton being one of them-

Becca: And Mrs. Elton, Augusta.

Molly: And Mrs. Elton being the another. Yeah, Augusta is another one. Is Frank the villain? Right now, yes. But I think that we have to get his side of the story and we have to get Jane's side of the story to know how much of an asshole he's been to her, because I think he might be the villain.

Becca: Well, here's another question. How does he compare to some of our other male villains in Austen books? [01:08:00] How does he compare to a Willoughby or a Wickham?

Molly: Well, his name doesn't start with W.

Becca: Well, he's technically a Weston.

Molly: Oh, yeah, [Becca laughs] he sure is. Similarly, to both of them. He makes you love him.

Becca: And he's handsome. He's hot.

Molly: He's hot. He makes you love him, and then he has a big secret or does something bad, and it all comes to light. But his is for love, potentially.

Becca: Well, it's an interesting question, because Willoughby is also someone who loves deeply.

Molly: He does.

Becca: So, the real question I have, and we will talk about this later on in the book as well. I just want to draw attention to this. But if you look at, objectively, the actions of Frank Churchill versus the actions of a Willoughby or a Wickham, clearly not as bad as either one of them, because he's not a predator.

Molly: For sure.

Becca: But there is aspects of his behavior that [01:09:00] seem consistent with them. For example, shirking along our heroine, which is something Wickham and Willoughby both do. In both the case of Wickham and the case of Willoughby, part of the reason that their villainy is so effective is that they both cause harm to the families who care about the Bennets and the Dashwoods. Frank has acted very poorly, and he got kind of lucky-

Molly: He's very lucky.

Becca: -that Emma didn't care and Emma's protected. There's questions, and I will not answer them yet as to whether or not there was an intentional use of Emma because of her level of class and her protection, or whether or not he was just simply fucking careless.

Molly: Yeah, I think it all depends on his motives.

Becca: It does. And it also depends [01:10:00] on-- But the question I think is a little interesting is, is he less of a villain because he caused less harm too?

Molly: Well, it really depends if he was trying to cause harm or not.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Right now, I can say I hate him. He's a villain right now, and he caused less harm, but what Emma says is true. How could he know he was causing less harm? She gave every sign that she was in love with him. Everyone else thought she was in love with him.

Becca: Yeah, and everyone else thought he was in love with her.

Molly: Yeah. So, he could have caused great harm if Emma hadn't decided she didn't love him.

Becca: Another question being, is he a villain to Emma or to Jane or to both?

Molly: Both. Again, Emma is fine and her reputation is, like you said, safe because she doesn't need to marry. It's not a whole thing. She's going to be fine, no matter what. People might be like, "Oh, poor thing," for a little bit.

Becca: There could be some talk of impropriety, but who [01:11:00] cares? She's rich as fuck.

Molly: Right. She doesn't care. Except for Knightley, who cares if she's proper or not. So, if she's fallen in his esteem at all, that would suck for her. But yeah, he's obviously driven Jane to be very ill and depressed, and he could have really hurt Emma's feelings too. So, right now, we are not fans.

Becca: Okay. So, I will save my own perspective on Frank Churchill for later on in the book, because, again, all we know right now is the bare facts of what happened, and they do not look good for Frank Churchill.

Molly: They do not look good. But again, he's a Logan and-

Becca: He's such a Logan-- [crosstalk]

Molly: -everyone hates Logan. But I love Logan, so I see that there could still be some room for redemption for him. But right now, we hate him.

Becca: Okay. What do you think of Emma?

Molly: Oh, man, she's really going through it. She's growing.

Becca: Humbled.

Molly: She's humbled. She is like, I said, 75% [01:12:00] earlier, I think I'm going to say 89% of the way there to being fully reformed.

Becca: Good for her.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Funniest quote?

Molly: Gosh, there wasn't really a lot of funny bits.

Becca: Yeah, this was all high drama for once.

Molly: I had one marked out. Let me-- Okay, it's not really funny just in terms of context, but I'll read this one, I guess. So, Mrs. Churchill dies, and we hear, "It was felt as such things must be felt. Everybody had a degree of gravity and sorrow; tenderness towards the departed, solicitude for the surviving friends; and, in a reasonable time, curiosity to know where she would be buried."

"Goldsmith tells us, that when lovely woman stoops to folly, she has nothing to do but to die; and when she stoops to be disagreeable, it is equally to be recommended as a clearer of ill-fame."

"Mrs. Churchill, after being disliked at least 25 years, was now spoken of with compassionate allowances. In one point she was fully justified. She had never been admitted before to be seriously ill. The event acquitted her of all the fancifulness and all the selfishness of imaginary complaints."

Becca: That's pretty fucking funny. [01:13:00]

Molly: Yeah, it is. [laughs]

Becca: Questions moving forward.

Molly: Why was Frank flirting with Emma? I really want to know his side of things. I want to know if he was using her as a cover up. I want to know if he was using her to make Jane angry, to hurt Jane. I really want to hear both of their sides of it.

Becca: Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Emma?

Becca: I think we can give it to Emma. She's been humbled.

Molly: She's really been humbled and she's taking it pretty well. She's not taking this well, but she-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Actually, she's taking it decently well.

Molly: She's taking it decently. She is able to see that one day, she'll be happy for them, but right now she's just pissed. So, she's taking that well. She's trying to better to the Bates', trying to better be to Jane, even though Jane hates her right now. So, we'll give it to Emma.

Becca: All right. Listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. Ooh, for next week, we are going to be reading Chapters 47 and 48. Or, if your **[01:14:00]** book is Volumes that's Chapters 11 and 12 twelve of Volume III. Molly, are you doing all right with all this?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's a lot to chew on.

Molly: Yeah, I'm fine. I'm fine. I don't know why it's coming out a lot and squeaking, because I'm fine.

Becca: All right. So, until next time, stay proper-

Molly: -and if you're engaged to someone, don't flirt with someone else right in front of them like an asshole.

Becca: Yeah, that's a good piece of advice.

Molly: Yeah.

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