

Molly: Hey everyone. Merry Christmas. Happy New Year. Happy holidays all around. Before we begin today, I do want to acknowledge that I am recording this standing in the closet of my childhood bedroom. So please forgive any sound quality funkiness. Now, I want to thank our patron, Rona, for upgrading their pledge over on Patreon. And remind you all that being that it is the holiday season, if you're feeling in the giving mood, you can head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice to see how you can support us. Or, you can just keep listening to the podcast, because we really appreciate you all so much for listening, and sharing and showing your support that way. We love you. Happy holidays. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering the first half of the 1995 classic *Clueless* with our guest, Kelly Schubert.

Becca: All right. Are we ready to talk about some *Clueless*, ladies? Or, one *Clueless* lady?

Molly: I think so. Are you ready, Kelly?

Kelly: Yeah. I'm ready.

Becca: All right. Let's do this.

[Pod and Prejudice theme] [00:01:00]

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: In a really 1990s way. Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many a Jane Austen book, watched many a Jane Austen movie, and have watched *Clueless* since I was a very small child.

Molly: And I, Molly, am doing all of that for the first time in this podcast.

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

Molly: No, today, we are, as you may have guessed, talking about the esteemed *Clueless*. And we are joined today by Kelly Schubert. Hi, Kelly. How you doing?

Kelly: Hi. Good. How are you, guys?

Molly: We're so excited.

Becca: So excited. Welcome to the podcast.

Kelly: Thank you.

Becca: Do you want to tell the listeners a little bit of your podcasting history?

Kelly: Oh, my podcasting history.

Becca: [giggles]

Kelly: It's very intertwined with the podcasting history of Mike Schubert, my [00:02:00] husband. So I have mainly just been involved in some of his podcasts, guesting on them, or I like to say I'm involved in some of the pre and post production bits, but really, I just show up sometimes to talk with my husband about books that we like. So [giggles] that's my podcasting history.

Becca: And we have had Mike, your husband, on this podcast, a couple times now. He's a great friend of the pod. We heard through the grapevine that you were a big fan of Jane Austen, specifically *Pride and Prejudice* and we were like, "Oh, it might be time to have Kelly on the podcast."

[laughter]

Kelly: I think Mike may have oversold my Jane Austen knowledge, [Molly giggles] but I am a big fan of a lot of Jane Austen things, and of *Pride and Prejudice* specifically.

Becca: Well, let's get into the brass tax of this. And by the brass tax, I mean, the usual questions we ask all of our guests, starting with, what is your relationship to Jane Austen?

Kelly: I grew up [00:03:00] mainly watching the movies adaptations of Jane Austen books. I didn't actually read my first Jane Austen book until long dramatic pause, because I can't remember.

Becca: [laughs]

Kelly: I think it was like 2019 that it was the first time that I actually realized I hadn't ever read *Pride and Prejudice*. I just knew all of the adaptations so well that it felt like I had read it. So that was the first time that I had read *Pride and Prejudice*. Loved it, have read it many times since then, and other *Pride and Prejudice* content, such as *Pride and Prejudice and*

Zombies and things of that nature. But I haven't read most of her other works. I have seen a number of adaptations. I read a lot of CliffsNotes.

Molly: [giggles]

Kelly: I completely forgot about the fact that *Clueless* was an adaptation of [Becca laughs] *Emma*, just because it's so 1990s. It's so 1990s. But that is my background with Jane Austen.

Becca: Yes. [00:04:00] We on this podcast are a fan of the idea that if you enjoy Austen content in any form, you are an Austen fan, so you're in the fan club, you're in the fan base.

Kelly: Excellent.

Becca: And on that note, speaking of, what is your favorite Austen content? We say this can be anything. It can be one of the books. It can be a movie adaptation. It can be a song lyric, whatever speaks to you most.

Kelly: I specifically like *Pride and Prejudice* related Austen content. But my very favorite thing is a game called Marrying Mr. Darcy. I don't know if you guys have talked about it a whole lot, and if I'm just giving knowledge that everybody already knows, but it is an incredible game, and I love to play it.

Molly: Yeah, we actually haven't played it. We've-- [crosstalk]

Kelly: [gasps] Oh, my goodness.

Molly: Yeah, we've heard of it. They've sponsored an episode of the podcast. We haven't actually gotten our hands on the game to play it. So that is something that is on our list.

Kelly: Oh, my goodness, it is so much fun. We have some house rules that you specifically speak in a British accent exclusively while playing the game.

Molly: Oh, of course.

Kelly: There are certain cards [00:05:00] that you have to pronounce them in a certain way. These are all just the house rules, which make it a whole lot more fun. But it is a hilariously fun, quick, lighthearted, but still fun game to play. It is really wonderful. You guys should give it a play at some point.

Becca: I have not played this game either. It is, for spoilers, for our listeners, on the radar of something that will probably be covered relatively soon on this podcast.

Kelly: Amazing.

Becca: I don't want to say promise too soon, but I have a group of friends who've played this game a lot. And one of the group of friends had never read *Pride and Prejudice* and was playing as Lydia. And according to them, through the game, just started getting more and more into the character of Lydia without realizing it. [laughs]

Kelly: Some of the *Pride and Prejudice* characters in the game have some of the best power-ups but aren't the best book characters. So, Kitty and Lydia have some of the best power ups in the game, and they're fun [00:06:00] to play as, even though you're just like, "I don't want to be kitty." But I want to be Kitty in this instance.

Molly: [laughs]

Kelly: So, they have some great power-ups in the game.

Molly: I love that. Justice for Kitty.

Kelly: Exactly.

Becca: Justice for Kitty.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: Very much maligned in the original book. So, question number three is, which Austen character do you relate to the most?

Kelly: So, I actually had to take to the internet to answer this for me. As I said, I haven't read all of the books, and so I'm not as familiar with all of the heroines in the Austen universe. So I took some quizzes online- [laughter]

Kelly: -to find out which character I am most like, and I got Elinor Dashwood as my person, which-- *Sense and Sensibility* is not one of the ones that I'm most familiar with. I've seen a movie adaptation of it. I have not read the books, and it's been at least a decade or more since I've seen it. But my snippet that it gave me as to why I'm like Elinor Dashwood, it says, "You are composed but [00:07:00] affectionate. Your strong sense of responsibility is only equal to your compassionate heart. You're exactly the kind of friend that everyone wants." I thought, "That's a very nice way to describe me. Sure. I'll be Elinor Dashwood." [giggles]

Molly: That's amazing. I love that. I've always wanted to relate to someone like Elinor Dashwood, but I am, unfortunately, just not that person.

Kelly: [laughs] The first time I took the quiz, actually, it told me that I was Elizabeth Bennet, and I was like, "All right, I'm not Elizabeth Bennet. [Becca laughs] I know this about myself. If I'm one of the Bennets, I'm not Elizabeth." So, I took it a second time.

Becca: So, which of the Bennets are you, if you're one of the Bennets though?

Kelly: I would say I'd be most like Jane. I think she's a much more relatable character.

Becca: That is how I know Elinor Dashwood is correct for you, because-

Kelly: Okay.

Becca: -they both have practical, introverted older sister energy.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And those two characters are two in my wheelhouse of top relates as well.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: So, it's a good pick for you.

Kelly: Excellent. Even though I'm not the older sister-- I am [00:08:00] an older sister, but I'm actually the middle sister. So, I'm not the oldest sister.

Becca: Also, me.

[laughter]

Becca: Right in that wheelhouse as well.

Molly: You have older sister energy.

Becca: Yes. Just everyone's older sister by accident.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: So last question to ask, and I promise this is a no pressure one. What is your hottest Austen take? This can be anything. One example we use a lot is that we think Lydia Bennet is a misunderstood tragic heroine and that her story is actually very sad.

Kelly: That's a great one. I also didn't know what my hot take would be. I was talking to Mike about it. He was like, "Oh, my gosh, well, do you think that the Keira Knightley adaptation is the best *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation?" I was like, "Yeah." He's like, "That's a hot take, because it's not true."

Becca: [laughs]

Kelly: And then we got into a very big discussion about that. So, I suppose that's my hot take. It might only be hot to him, but that's my hot take.

Molly: It's hot to a lot of people.

Kelly: I think that it is good casting. I [00:09:00] adore the music. I listen to the soundtrack all the time. I find it very soothing. I find the landscaping shots really beautiful. It's one of the movies I consistently have downloaded to my phone, so that I can either watch it on a plane or sleep to it on a plane, because it is, I think, relaxing and exciting, and that's a very interesting dichotomy in a movie. So it is my favorite adaptation, and I think that could be controversial.

Becca: It's controversial. It's not rare, necessarily, which is good. So, there's two schools of thought. The easiest comp I can give here is how, I guess, the *Harry Potter* fandom feels about Ron Weasley, which is like, half the fans really love him, and half the fans really hate him. We are 2005 lovers on this podcast, and also think that it's a very comforting watch. And I will say that no matter how everyone feels about the movie, it is definitely the soundtrack that everyone agrees is amazing. [giggles]

Kelly: [00:10:00] Yes. So, I guess it's a lukewarm take, but that's my take.

Molly: It's funny because I was on Instagram today, and someone just sent us a reel of someone saying that and that was their [Becca laughs] hot take and they were like, "Everyone who says that the 1995 is the best can sit down."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: They sent us this reel and they were like, "Is this a hot take or is this--? What does this mean?" [Kelly giggles] And I'm like, "Well, on our podcast, we believe that everyone should just love what you love, and that liking any Jane Austen content is amazing, and that we should all be friends."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: So yeah, it is a hot take in the world of Austen. But on this podcast, we support all content.

Kelly: Excellent.

Becca: We do support all Jane Austen content. We only 50% support the Gwyneth Paltrow adaptation of *Emma*, but that's only me.

[laughter]

Kelly: That is one that I don't return to as an adaptation that I like to rewatch. I [00:11:00] recently saw the newer-- I don't think it's that new. Actually, the newer adaptation of *Persuasion* that's on Netflix, I didn't know that there was a newer adaptation of it and I watched that recently and just loved.

Molly: Oh, good.

Kelly: But some people love the adaptations, and some people like the older ones.

Becca: The one thing I'll say before we dive right into what is adaptation, very loose [Kelly laughs] adaptation is that when it comes to Jane Austen, some people, when they watch an adaptation, they want straightforward, just the book. That's why the miniseries are so good, because they always go straight for exactly the book. And then if you want the story in a more like two hours' streamlined version, then most Jane Austen books have lovely movie adaptations that are great to watch. And so it just depends on what you want in the moment.

Kelly: Yeah. I need some holiday adaptations, some Christmas versions of Austen books.

Becca: I think there's a *Christmas at Pemberley* [00:12:00] somewhere.

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: I don't know where. [laughs]

Kelly: Excellent.

Molly: Yeah. I don't know where you guys are based, but The Ripped Bodice in Brooklyn is a romance bookstore that has basically every Jane Austen adaptation you could possibly hope for and more, and they have a specific holiday section, and I'm sure you could find a Jane Austen holiday novel there.

Kelly: Wonderful. Oh, I've heard of this bookstore, actually. It's on my list of places I want to go check out.

Molly: I go probably far too often because of the amount of space I have on my bookshelves.

Becca: Which is none at this point.

Molly: None. Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. So, speaking of adaptation, we are about to cover what is one of the most famous Jane Austen adaptations out there. So famous, in fact, that most people don't know that it is an adaptation of a Jane Austen novel, and that is *Clueless*, written and directed by Amy Heckerling, starring Alicia Silverstone. Guys, this is Molly's first watch of *Clueless*. Kelly, what's your [Kelly laughs] [00:13:00] experience of the movie, *Clueless*?

Kelly: My experience with *Clueless*, I watched it as-- When did it come out?

Molly: 1995.

Kelly: 1995. So okay. It came out when I was young, too young to be watching it. So, I watched it a couple of years after it came out, [Becca laughs] suppose, because I have distinct memories of watching it with one of my best friends growing up. She loved it. She loved it so much. I loved that she loved it, and I remember thinking, "This is fine." I don't really know how much I'm enjoying some of these scenes, but I do remember her really loving it. We were probably 10 years or 12 years when we were watching it, and she really enjoyed it. And so we would watch it multiple times while we were at her house. And that is my history with the movie. This is the first time that I've rewatched it since the 1990s, 2000s when I first watched it, and I have [00:14:00] thoughts. [giggles]

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Oh, there's so much to say about this movie.

Kelly: Oh, my gosh. [laughs]

Becca: I will disclose that this movie was also on my list of watched a lot as a young kid and did not realize it was a Jane Austen novel when I first watched it. And then when I watched it later, like when I watched the 1996 *Emma* later, I was like, "Oh, this is *Clueless*." And then by the time I read the book, I was like, "Oh, *Clueless* is a pretty [Kelly laughs] accurate adaptation of *Emma*."

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: So yes. And Molly, let's get your initial thoughts before we dive right in.

Molly: Kelly, I think you said it's so 1990s. It is so 1990s. I felt like it was 1990s on steroids. It's also so campy. I don't know, there's the question of what is camp, right? But I think that this movie could be considered camp, and also, I loved it so much.

Becca: Well, this movie is, it goes by another sort [00:15:00] of aesthetic, I think, and that is really, really, really heightened satire. It is a huge satire of Beverly Hills, California and that class. I think that's why it works as an adaptation of *Emma* so well, because *Emma* is a satire of a girl living in an incredibly sheltered, wealthy life amongst the British aristocracy. And there are elements of this movie that I question and elements of this movie that haven't aged well. But I think that saturated aesthetic, and particularly Alicia Silverstone's performance as Cher AKA Emma in the main role are two elements that have aged very well and really do capture the essence of what Emma, the character is from the novel, which is ignorant, sheltered, but clever and good hearted.

Kelly: Yes, I [00:16:00] think she captures that very, very well.

Becca: Yes. So back in July of 2020, *theringer.com* posted an article titled '*Clueless*' Is Still the Best Jane Austen Adaptation, basically making the argument that for a modern audience, *Clueless* is the vehicle for which one can understand Jane Austen's world. And I just wanted to read a quick quote from it before we do some deep dive.

"Austen's second life in American popular culture feels both inevitable and unexpected, given the likability of *Emma*'s main character. Austen is, for one, an undeniable cultural giant—queen of the British literary tradition, and perhaps queen of all that a great, and I mean truly great, English novel can do. The efficiency and wit of Austen's literary voice helped invent and perfect a kind of close third-person narration that *Clueless* streamlines in Silverstone's perfectly pitched voiceover. The brilliance of Heckerling's adaptation is its flair for analogy: not just [00:17:00] between *Emma* and *Clueless*, but between Cher's contained universe and everything else.

Cher's inability to read the world beyond her narrow set of cultural references reflects the narcissism of the book's main character. As Austen's novel famously begins: "Emma Woodhouse, handsome, clever and rich, with a comfortable home and happy disposition seemed to unite some of the best blessings of existence and had lived nearly 21 one years in the world with very little to distress or vex her." I just wanted to share that little tidbit from someone who was much more articulate than me.

[laughter]

Becca: That would be Jane [unintelligible [00:17:32], by the way,

Molly: I love that. She really just captures who Emma is, but in a way, that's tailored to the modern mind.

Kelly: In a very 1990s vibe.

Molly: In a very 1990s vibe. So not necessarily [Becca laughs] a modern mind, but a 1990s mind.

Kelly: Yeah.

Becca: Well, it was modern at the time. It's now 18 years ago. No, 28 years ago. Oh, God.

Kelly: [giggles]

Molly: Anyway, Molly, are we ready to synopsise?

Molly: We are ready to synopsise. [00:18:00] So the movie starts with kids in America playing. But if you don't know the song, it just sounds pretty ominous, like, when it's coming in. I was like, "Am I watching the wrong movie?"

[laughs]

Molly: Because the music is just a little discordant. And then I'm like, "Oh, wait, I know the song." [Kelly giggles] And we get a Cher Horowitz is very cool montage and her voiceover saying, "I know what you're thinking. Is this a Noxzema? Commercial or what?" Noxzema being a skincare brand, which I had to google.

[laughter]

Molly: But no, she just has a regular, normal life. She's just like any other kid. She picks out her everyday clothes on a touch screen 1990s desktop computer. Now, if you were around in the 90s, which most of our listeners were, you know these computers are like the big box computers and definitely did not have touch screens. So, this is a movie ahead of its time.

Kelly: That is probably my favorite bit from the movie is that [00:19:00] clothes picking AI that she's got [Molly [laughs] essentially. And the fact that she needs it to scroll through to

pick out a matching plaid outfit for her and show her how it will look on herself, I, first of all, thought it was the coolest thing as a kid, if I could just have AI picking out my outfits. But at the same time, I thought I could have probably picked that outfit myself. [giggles]

Molly: Yeah. As it came in a matching set.

Kelly: Yes, it's a matching set.

Molly: I think it's funny because later on she says, she doesn't rely on mirrors, but she does rely on this.

Kelly: Yes. [laughs]

Molly: A much more expensive piece of technology.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: She's a woman of the future. Polaroids are also very expensive, if you take one for every time you look in a mirror.

Molly: Yeah. So, we find out that her dad is a litigator, and they are super-duper rich. And she comes downstairs, down their beautiful staircase, into this beautiful kitchen, [00:20:00] and she's trying to get her dad to drink his orange juice for vitamin C and reminds him the doctor is coming over, and so he better not sneak out. And he says, "Oh, and Josh is coming for dinner." And she says, "Why?" And he says, "Because he's your stepbrother."

Becca: Record scratch for everybody.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: Let's all just take a breath.

Molly: So, I'm going to talk about it a lot. I'm sure. But there are so many options for the relationship that they could have. They could have simply taken the one from the book, which is that he is her sister's husband's brother. So they're in laws, but once removed. And it's kind of weird, but it's not so weird. They could have been next door neighbors. They could have been-- Like, her dad could have had a law partner, and that could have been his son.

Becca: Family friends.

Molly: They didn't have to be stepsiblings.

Kelly: [laughs] I did appreciate the explanation that they gave afterward, which is [00:21:00] that they were barely married, and it was five years ago. And it's the one sweet thing that the dad then says in the entire movie, which is, "You divorce wives, you don't divorce children," which I was like, "That's actually very kind of you," but were you married to this woman for-- It sounds to me that he was married to this woman for about a month and therefore, this is now his son. So very weird. But they also then tried to back out of it as quickly as possible. It should have been a different relationship.

Molly: Yeah. The fact that they were only married for a little while is mildly better, but also something that is so important to their relationship in the book. And again, I know this is an adaptation and they're not going to be able to put everything in, especially because it's a different movie. But something that's really important is that they've known each other since they were very, very young. So, it does a little bit shortchange that relationship. As [00:22:00] much as I think that these two have amazing chemistry and they're both so hot and fun, I wish they had known each other a little longer.

Kelly: They do have the rapport of feeling like they have known each other for a very long time. A little too close, which we'll get to in my least favorite part of the movie very quickly. But they do have that energy of having known each other for a long time, even though the marriage was five years ago and very short. I don't know.

Becca: Yeah. My issue is really like-- Since we started this podcast, Molly's been like, "Do they have to marry their cousins? [Kelly laughs] Do they have to marry their in-laws?" And I'm like, "It could be weirder."

[laughter]

Becca: Wait till we get to the 1990s. guess I think they do a lot to justify why it's okay that she's going to fall for her stepsibling, because it is obvious from this moment of the film that they're going to fall for each other. But it's like, they wrote themselves into a corner they didn't need to write themselves into for no reason, because it's not like they're justifying a relationship in the [00:23:00] book that was like that because they have a more appropriate relationship in the book. That being said, there's long documented things of me on this podcast being like, "I love *Clueless*, except one glaring caveat," which is why are they

siblings. [Kelly laughs] But yes, we'll harp on it like 8,000 more-

Molly: Yeah. Sure.

Becca: -times during this movie. But I do agree that, if you pull out the fact that they're technically stepsiblings or ex-stepsiblings, and you just look at them as family friends and he's under her dad's wing, it becomes a very charged, fun rapport.

Kelly: As a kid, that's how I looked at it.

Becca: [laughs]

Kelly: I didn't think too hard about it. That's how I interpreted it as a kid.

Molly: I was going to ask for you two, having watched this without knowing that it was based on *Emma*, did you, watching it for the first time, think at this point, having been introduced to her stepbrother that she's going to fall in love with him?

Kelly: I [00:24:00] think so. I think even though Paul Rudd wasn't Paul Rudd yet, we were just like, "Oh, that's the main guy right there." I think, at least for me, it was fairly obvious as a 10-year-old or whatever watching this that that was going to be the love interest.

Becca: Absolutely. I agree. I don't remember. I think maybe it was just one of those things where I always knew who the love interest was or it was on the back of the DVD, his face a billion times or something.

Kelly: Probably.

Becca: But I definitely think that if you watch the movie, it feels somewhat inevitable that she is going to kiss her brother.

[laughter]

Kelly: Yeah.

Molly: Okay. All right. So then, we see Cher in her very cool jeep driving or "driving," she can't really drive, and she goes to pick up her friend, Dionne. One of my favorite quotes is, "Dionne and I were both named after great singers of the past who now do infomercials."

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: And she goes, "We're best friends because we both know what it's like to have people be jealous of us."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Yes. Everyone in this movie [00:25:00] is incredibly rich. They all live in castles. And Dionne gets in the car and they're driving the school, and Cher blows through a stop sign. I think this is an important line because I've had people just say it at me after I told them I was watching *Clueless*, but Dionne's like, "Hello, that was a stop sign." And Cher's like, "I totally paused."

Kelly: Except she did it. She did not pause at all.

Molly: Oh, not at all.

Becca: I love the driving through the film as sort of a-- It is a perfect way to show us how delusional Cher is the entire time, because you cannot deny that she's just blatantly a menace on the road. [Kelly giggles] But the entire time she's living this easy, breezy, beautiful life in her gorgeous jeep that her daddy bought for her to practice on, where she doesn't have a licensed driver next to her in the. So, it is a great way to show like, "Oh, yeah, her world doesn't actually exist. She just lives in it anyway."

Molly: Yes. So, they get to school, and [00:26:00] Dionne is complaining about her boyfriend, Murray, and how he's paging her and why is he being so annoying. And then we meet Murray, who is played by Donald Faison from *Scrubs*.

Becca: I have to say, on one hand, I absolutely love Donald Faison. I think he is so funny. I have had a crush on him forever from this movie and from *Scrubs*. And I love Dionne and Murray as sort of the John and Isabelle of the story.

Molly: Oh, sure.

Becca: But also, the Tina Turner joke is a little rough. A lot rough.

Molly: There are a lot of things in this movie that did not age well. I'll say a lot of them did not make it into my notes because I was like, "Maybe we'll just skim over them." [giggles]

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: I think we can just acknowledge that this movie was made in a time when there was certain edgy humor and certain stereotyping that we can now look back at and think, "Mm, this is really [00:27:00] not ideal." But I think at the same time, from the perspective of this movie being too clever for its own good, it pulls those edgy humor bits in which sour a pot of

what is otherwise a very well-aged movie. That makes sense.

Kelly: I agree. There's definitely a lot of points in this movie where I cringed because of the language that they used. I don't even think the language was them trying to be edgy. I think that's just the way that some people acted in the 1990s and thought that they were cool by saying some of the words that they use, acting some of the ways that they did, stereotyping the way that they did was cool in the 1990s. We all look back on the 1990s now in a way as that wasn't cool, and there was a lot of things going on that should not have been going on. And language was important, and the way that we treated and looked at people was important, but the 1990s just didn't do it.

Molly: Yeah, absolutely. So, Cher walks away from Murray and **[00:28:00]** Dionne's argument, and her voiceover starts talking again about how high school boys are such dogs. And one of them comes over and is like, "Slobbering on her," and she pushes him away and she goes, "Oh, as if."

[laughter]

Kelly: I remember this being one of the things that made me really uncomfortable about this movie the first time I watched it as a kid. The way that boys treat her and women in general made me incredibly uncomfortable, which maybe there's a parallel between that and 1800s Austen world. But it just made me feel incredibly uncomfortable. The number of people who would come up and kiss her on the cheek or hug her like they had that kind of relationship, it just made me feel so uncomfortable with the way that men would treat her, specifically.

Molly: Yeah. Specifically, Elton, who can be seen at various points throughout the movie before he actually attacks her, **[00:29:00]** putting his arm around her, kissing her on the cheek after she does something good in class, it's so gross. I visibly went [makes cringing sounds] when he did it.

Kelly: Yeah. And it's not just Elton who we see later escalates his kind of sexual harassment of her. It's all of the guys. It's random guys in her debate class. It's random people walking by that feel like they can get in her personal space. I just remember being so massively uncomfortable with that, that was the main reason I didn't like this movie.

Becca: Oh, that's interesting. I think the way I read it is, with Elton, it's certainly a translation of sleaze from book to screen, because he is sleazy in the book, like in a crazy way. And I think with the other showings, I think it's an interesting point because I think it's a combo of a couple of things. One, I think you're right. I think there is something really gross to how the guys treat Cher in the movie and some of the other girls too, like Tai, for example, and we'll get to **[00:30:00]** Tai.

But I think also Emma is such a self-assured woman in a man's world because she has the privilege to be that. And I think there is a maybe I'm giving too much credit to Heckerling in her direction, but I think there is a way in which the grossness of the underlings around Emma and the sleaziness of them, her ability to keep her own self-assurance and her protect herself in those situations as a show of her like, "I will never marry being like, I will not date high school boys no matter how gross they are because I don't need to," like, gathering that energy up in it. But I take your point. I do think there are moments where it's gross, but I also think the movie is also going for a satirized, gross, touchy feely high school thing.

Kelly: That could be now knowing it is an *Emma* adaptation, which I didn't know **[00:31:00]** as a kid, [Becca giggles] it does feel like the way men treated women in the 1800s as objects that they could use or not use or discard in the way that they wanted to. And that is how the boys try to use her. And like you said, she's so self-assured and confident. She doesn't allow herself to be used.

Becca: Yeah.

Kelly: I hope it was a characteristic stylistic choice and not just, "This is what boys are like in the 1990s." Because that was what terrified me was, "Oh, my gosh, men are scary."

Molly: Men are scary.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: Men are very scary. [laughs]

Molly: One man who's not scary is Wallace Shawn, who teaches their debate class and is perfect. I love him so much.

Kelly: He's inconceivably wonderful.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I see what you did there.

Kelly: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: So, Cher is doing a debate. She takes her gum out, puts it on her finger, and holds it up throughout the entire debate, which is iconic. She gives this speech about how, "it does not say RSVP on the Statue of Liberty." And therefore, [00:32:00] the Haitians or the Haitians should be able to come to America.

Becca: So if the government could just go to the kitchen, rearrange some things, there'd be plenty to eat at the table.

[laughter]

Molly: Honestly, it may be unresearched, but it's not a bad argument.

Becca: No, we could say, share for president.

Kelly: I think it's a great example of her living in her sheltered world. But having a very compassionate and good head on her shoulders at the same time as being completely out of touch with everything.

Molly: Yeah, absolutely. And everyone cheers for her.

Kelly: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: They're like, "Yeah, we should open, like, knock down the borders." Everyone's there for it.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: And her opponent, Amber says, she can't argue with that. She didn't even do the assignment. She's just talking about some silly birthday party. And she goes, "Hello, it was a 50th birthday." Her intonations are phenomenal, and I'm going to try not to quote everything she says, but I might. [00:33:00]

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: Well, for me, it's when Amber shoots back the, "Whatever," and makes the W with her hands, that lived in my brain as a child. I just go, "Whatever," and hold up my little W.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: So, Mr. Hall, Wallace Shawn asks if anyone has any insights about what Cher has said, and someone who we learn is Travis says, "Yeah, I have some insights. The way I feel about The Rolling Stones is the way my kids are going to feel about nine-inch nails. So I shouldn't torment my mom anymore." And while Shawn says, "Well, tolerance is always a good lesson."

[laughter]

Molly: It's just beautiful. And all of the references are so 1990s.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Yeah. So, then they get their report cards passed out, and Travis tries to jump out the window.

Kelly: I think it's important to note that he tries to jump out of a first-floor window.

[laughter]

Kelly: So, you see bushes outside [Becca laughs] [00:34:00] at eye level, and the teacher says, "Let's cool it on the suicide attempts until next period." And I'm like, "Kid wouldn't even break his ankle jumping out of the first-floor window."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I read that as a bit that Travis is doing because the kid doesn't really care about his grades. Everyone's laughing, and you get the sense that he is this-- So Travis Birkenstock, who is iconically named Travis Birkenstock, is clearly set up as the class clown who's just trying to make everyone laugh and is very high, the entire time.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Kelly: Yup.

Molly: When I was in 8th grade on the last day of school, my whole class was like, "We want to jump out a window," just for fun. Not to injure ourselves. We were like, "We want to see if we could jump from the second floor," and the teachers were like, "We will escort you to this room on the first floor, and you can all have your fun and jump out the window," and we all jumped out the window into a courtyard. [laughs]

Becca: Was anybody wondering if Molly was cool in middle school?

[laughter]

Molly: [00:35:00] It was a very cool thing to do.

Becca: If all of your friends jump out of first floor window, will you do it too, apparently?

Molly: Apparently. So, Cher got a C, and she is like, "Oh, no, my dad's going to kill me." She goes home, and there's this giant portrait of her mom in the entry hall, who we learned died when she was a baby during a routine liposuction operation.

Becca: I also want to note the line, "Isn't my house classic? It was built all the way back in 1972."

[laughter]

Molly: The columns date all the way back to the 1970s.

Becca: It's just one of those moments-- This is what I mean. Again, it's like, clear Jane Austen, Amy Heckerling is making class commentary about California's elite, if you will. And it goes further like, "Wasn't my mama Betty? She died when I was just a baby. Freak accident with liposuction."

Molly: Yeah. So she's in her room and she hears what she [00:36:00] calls crybaby music, and she goes downstairs to find Josh in the kitchen, obviously played by Paul Rudd. And he, I wanted to note, calls her dad, dad, but we won't harp on it too much. He's drinking orange juice straight from the carton, which is very cool.

Becca: Can we also just really quickly acknowledge. Paul Rudd in this movie, 28 years ago. They're correct. He doesn't age.

Molly: No, he's a vampire.

Kelly: [laughs] My gosh, that was 28-- He looks maybe 10 years older maximum now. He did not age.

Molly: Yeah. Well, the new *Mean Girls* trailers and everything have come out, and Tina Fey also looks exactly the same as she did in the original *Mean Girls*.

Kelly: I have not seen the trailers. I have to watch them.

Molly: She just doesn't age. But remember, everybody, when you have a lot of money, you can afford to look the same. We shouldn't put that past Paul Rudd either. Like, he is in Hollywood and he probably does a lot to upkeep his appearance, probably.

Becca: Absolutely. I'm not saying [00:37:00] this is reachable for anyone. I'm just saying it is particularly notable that Paul Rudd seems immortal.

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: Maybe it's the fact that he has those piercing blue eyes and you just can't age out of them.

Molly: Yeah, he's beautiful. So they go to dinner, and Cher is notably eating asparagus with her fingers, and she tells her dad--

Kelly: We skipped over my least favorite part of the movie here, where he's drinking the orange juice out of the bottle and she's got her back to him, and he turns her around and goes, "Wow, you're really filling out." I just such ick. She has to slap his hand away from groping her. They immediately establish that he is not a brother to her. He is creepy. too close relationship to her. It is the one thing about him in this movie that I really didn't like. It was just major, major ick to me. I hated that. Hated it so much.

Molly: I also despised it.

Kelly: It was so [00:38:00] bad.

Becca: I would put that in top five bad moments in this movie. It's like, they want to establish that they're bickery. First of all, being bickery with an insult to someone's appearance in a very 1990s fat phobic way, never cool, and also, bickery in a grabbing way. If that's your kid sister, and you're a little kid, and it's like a grab in a towel kind of way, that's fine. But grabbing as adults, when you're not siblings in that area, mm-mm.

Kelly: I took it more as he was saying, "She had grown in her chest rather than she was filling out fat wise."

Molly: So, I thought that too.

Kelly: Yeah.

Becca: Oh. So, I took it the other way, because the whole interaction is so mean to each other.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Kelly: I thought it was ick like, “Your boobs have grown,” kind of thing. I was just like, “That is beyond just out of line for somebody to say, brother, [00:39:00] friend, anybody.” It’s just too much. That was how I interpreted it. I hadn’t interpreted the other way, which is--

Becca: Not good.

Kelly: Not good either. Yeah. [giggles]

Becca: The way I interpreted, it was like, you know when you’re insulting a girl in the 1990s and the easiest, most fun way to make fun of a girl is just call her fat because that’s an insult back in the day.

Molly: Yeah, because he grabbed her belly a little bit.

Becca: Yeah. That’s like the snippy like, “Oh, yeah, you’re getting fat.” And she’s like, “Oh, yeah, you’re gross,” like, teasing back and forth, which I thought was like, “Not, oh, your boobs are growing,” in a “gross compliment,” but more of a like, “Oh, you’re putting on weight,” in a gross insult way, which is also very bad.

Kelly: Yeah. These are both horrible.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: [laughs]

Kelly: I thought that she was slapping his hand away from her chest, and that’s why he only touched her stomach. Either way,-

Molly: So bad.

Kelly: -not good.

Becca: Yeah. I thought he was being like, “Ooh, your stomach is growing.” That’s also [00:40:00] very bad. But all this being said, that’s probably the low point of the movie for Paul Rudd, which is good news for the rest of the run.

Kelly: Yeah.

Molly: For sure.

Kelly: Although that being his opening, the second thing he says I think is not good. I immediately hated his character also knowing that he was about-- It’s very obvious he’s about to be the one that she falls in love with, and I hated that too. All contributing to my feelings of ick about this movie.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yeah. So, at dinner, Cher tells her dad that her teachers were trying to lowball her. And so, her report card’s not ready because she has to negotiate, which he’s very [Becca laughs] impressed by. He’s like, “Oh, okay.”

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: And then we get a montage of her telling her teachers that she needs them to lower her grades convincing them in various ways, like, telling her gym teacher she got her heart broken and her gym teacher, who is obviously a lesbian, telling her that all men are terrible.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Mr. Hall will not budge on her [00:41:00] grades. She is devastated. She feels “impotent,” and needs to regain her strength. So, she goes to the mall. While she’s at the mall, she and Dionne hatch a plan because they have to make Mr. Hall sublimely happy. And then we see him walking down an aisle of trees, which feels very Austen-esque. And her voiceover is talking about how she needs to get him a boink fest. Now, I like that her vocabulary goes from things like saying sublimely happy and brutally rebuffed to boink fest.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: Well, my favorite thing about Cher is that she’s using words like slightly incorrectly as well.

Molly: Like, sublimely happy is kind of redundant. Like, everything she says is a little bit redundant.

Becca: Well, no, it’s the, “I felt impotent.”

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: What do you mean, Cher? What do you mean?

Molly: Yeah. She just will learn later that she [00:42:00] picks out words and is like, “Let me use that in a sentence today,” which I can admire. It does highlight how young she is. And what I like about this movie is that she actually reads as 15 years, and her behavior is actually that of a 15-year-old, as opposed to some movies where they seem like full on adults. They all may look like adults, but at least her behavior and the way she just talks and

holds herself is very something like a 15-year-old would do.

Then we get her looking at the teachers in the teacher's lounge, trying to pick out someone for Mr. Hall. We are confirmed that, in fact, the PE teacher is gay. And they decide on Miss Geist, who is this like frumpy little woman in the corner who spills her drink on herself and has lipstick on her teeth. They write her a love letter, which is a quote from Shakespeare. And Dionne says, "Did you write that?" And [00:43:00] Cher says, "Duh, it's a famous quote." And Dionne's like, "Oh, from who?" And she says, "CliffsNotes."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Iconic.

Kelly: Which I found particularly funny because I read the *Emma* CliffsNotes before watching the movie-

[laughter]

Kelly: -just to refresh, and I was like, "Ah, yes. Being called out for my high schooler ways-

[laughter]

Kelly: -of reading the CliffsNotes." [giggles]

Molly: I love it.

Becca: Yeah. I also want to give shouts to Dionne's Dr. Seuss hats, which, this is the second

one. It's like giant and red and has yellow spirals all over it, and it's phenomenal.

Becca: We cannot talk enough about the fashion choices made in this movie. The costuming is like a revelation. It is heightened, full 1990s. It is almost its own style, the *Clueless* style. And from the yellow plaid suit she wears to sophomore year of high school, to Dionne's hats, to the fully exaggerated aesthetic of every boy on the campus [00:44:00] to-- We'll get it to it later. Her baby doll and empire waist dresses that are like homages to Emma Woodhouse herself. Like, the costuming in this movie is just, like, one of the best jobs I can think of in an iconic movie. I love it.

Kelly: It is so good. The costumes are amazing. And you're right. It's like an iconic style that is just the *Clueless* style. There's a hard way to describe it any other way.

Becca: Yeah. We'll send this to you, Kelly. But when we first started covering *Emma*, somehow it came up on the podcast, the yellow plaid, and we had a bunch of our listeners draw us Emma Woodhouse wearing a yellow plaid empire dress, and they are so good.

Kelly: Oh, amazing. That's amazing.

Molly: Yeah. It's beautiful.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, Miss Geist reads the card, the love letter, and she just lights up, which is very sweet. And then we see Mr. Hall giving the tardy roll call reading out how [00:45:00] many times everyone's been late. And Travis has had 38 tardies, and he's so excited that he gets up and gives this speech, which I thought was so funny.

Becca: Another moment from my brain that really stuck from childhood was the part where he's like, "Into the drive through window at McDonald's, because they take so long to make those tiny little egg McMuffins without which I would never be tardy."

[laughter]

Molly: So good.

Becca: I don't recall the name of this actor, but he is in *Rat Race*, and he is so good in this. He's so funny.

Molly: He's also in *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past* because I thought he looked familiar. And he's not really in-- I've seen *Ghosts of Girlfriends Past*, but that's pretty much it. And he plays the cheating brother in that. So fun little fact.

Kelly: I'm trying to figure out which movie I know him from.

Molly: His name is Breckin Meyer. Oh, he's also in *Josie and the Pussycats*, if either of you guys watched that movie growing up.

Molly: I've definitely seen it.

Kelly: I have not seen it.

Becca: That is another high aesthetic satire movie. And that one is aged like almost perfectly, like fine [00:46:00] wine. It is so good.

Molly: So, Cher has two tardies, and she's like, "I object. I was riding the crimson wave, and I had to haul ass to the ladies." And he says, "Okay, I'm going to let that one go."

[laughter]

Molly: And Emma, I keep calling her Emma in my notes too. I would like, "I thought Emma.

Becca: She is Emma.

Molly: She is. And Cher says, "Miss Geist was right about you." And he's like, "Oh, what'd she say?" And she said, "You were the only person with any intelligence at the school." And then he smiles, and it's very sweet. Then we cut to Cher's dad calling her in to his office, because she's got a second notice on some outstanding tickets. And one of my favorite parts is when she's like, "I don't remember getting a first notice." And he was like, "The ticket is the first notice."

[laughter]

Molly: I wanted to note that here, it's not that she's a brat. I feel like a lot of times, this stereotype can be played off as bratty and wanting to get what you want and all this, but she really [00:47:00] just doesn't understand, which we've said already, but she's just living in a world that doesn't exist. She's just like, "Oh. Yeah, okay, I can have a licensed driver with me at all times." And then she goes to find Josh reading Nietzsche by the waterfall.

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: A licensed driver with nothing to do? Where would I find such a loser?

[laughter]

Molly: So she asks Josh to be her supervisor in the car. They're driving around, and he's like, "Can you drop me off at my tree people meeting?" which is, I guess college students planting trees.

Becca: Yeah. I think this is so back in the 1990s. I don't know if colleges still do this. I don't think it was a big thing when we were in college, but this was like being an environmentalist back in the day was like planting trees.

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: That was how you saved the environment. Now we're all protesting and lobbying and trying to get legislation done and obviously recycling and competition, a lot of things. But I think planting [00:48:00] trees as your form of environmentalism has gone a little out of style. But I think that's the implication here is like, Josh is trying to save the environment. So he's in a little environmental activism group that's planting trees.

Molly: Maybe we should be planting more trees though, because they help make oxygen.

Becca: Yeah. I'm not a scientist, but I do believe planting trees is net good for the world.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: So yes, we should be planting more. There's a lot to do. [laughs]

Molly: Bring it back.

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Kelly: I recently, because a lot of Christmas trees are popping up for sale on the sidewalks of New York, I recently was just talking to Mike about, "Is it a good thing or is it a bad thing? We've created this industry for growing trees, and they replace them because they need the future income as well. However, we're also cutting them down. So, is it good? Is it bad?" Then I started wondering, "What is the tree collection system? Does the used tree at the end of the [00:49:00] season go towards composting or go towards other things that might be environmentally friendly, or do they end up in a landfill? Is it net good? Is it net bad?" And I feel like I need to do more research now into the trees, but in a way, it's an industry created by planting trees.

Molly: Yeah, that's super interesting. I've never thought about that. I don't know if it's net good or net bad.

Becca: I did do a little research on this. Not too much, but I did google which is better, fake tree or real tree for the environment a few years ago, because I was like, "I want to do whichever one of these is not as bad." I'm happy to hear that I was wrong on this. According to the internet, it is better for the environment to have a real tree than a fake tree, because fake tree is a bunch of plastic nonsense and real tree, they regrow it. Yeah? Is that wrong?

Molly: No, it's not wrong. It's just that it's the time of year again where I get to talk about *Spirited*, the movie on Apple TV. [00:50:00]

[laughter]

Molly: The whole plot of the movie-- Well, not the entire plot of the movie, but a lot of the plot of the movie revolves around the argument between the tree growers and the plastic tree sellers. There is an entire song where-- What's his face? Bradley Cooper?

Becca: Ryan Reynolds.

Molly: Ryan Reynolds.

[laughter]

Molly: Makes them up all the time. There's an entire song where Ryan Reynolds sings about why you should have a real tree versus a fake tree, and keep the tree industry alive to a room of tree growers who all cheer at the end. So watch *Spirited* on Apple TV. Not sponsored.

Kelly: I feel like I should watch this. I also am devastated because a few years ago, I had this internal debate, and I landed on the side without doing any research that I would get an artificial tree. [crosstalk] And so I have an artificial tree, but I think as long as I never throw it away or replace it with another one. It's [00:51:00] small too. I bought it in January on mega sale from Ikea. So, I'm just going to assume that it was going to be thrown away by Ikea and I saved it--

Molly: You saved the tree.

Kelly: --from a landfill. And as long as I never throw it away, I'm never contributing any plastic to--

Becca: I love that.

Kelly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Kelly: Oh, I'm slightly devastated to learn this.

Becca: Listen, I could be wrong, but I googled it because I was like, "I want to do the better thing."

Kelly: It makes sense.

Becca: [laughs]

Kelly: It is made out of plastic, but I'll just never throw it away. Now I have to find a second life for it if I'm ever done with it.

Molly: Yeah, it's going to become a family heirloom.

Kelly: Exactly.

[laughter]

Kelly: My \$10 Ikea tree.

[laughter]

Molly: So, tree people, we're all tree people, shares like, "I contribute to society too. When I get my license, I'm going to break for animals and I'm helping two lonely teachers find love."

Becca: I also donate many an old outfit to Lucy, which is great because Lucy's their maid. And also, Cher wears thousands of dollars' worth of [00:52:00] clothes every day. And Lucy is played by a very small, stocky woman, and Cher's the opposite, body type to her. So what use is that going to be? [laughs]

Molly: I really hope that Lucy sells those clothes and she's actually rolling in it, and she's just like, "All right. Yeah, I'll clean your house in my free time."

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: She has a thriving consignment store on the side.

Molly: Yes.

Kelly: Love it.

Molly: So, Paul Rudd says that she's probably getting a lot more out of this matchmaking than the teachers are. And if she ever did something that wasn't 90% selfish, he would die of shock. We can see that this really gets to Cher, because at lunch the next day, she asks Dionne if she thinks that she's selfish. And Dionne's like, "Well, maybe a little bit."

Becca: She says, "No. Not to your face."

Molly: Yeah, not to your face. Then they accost Miss Geist in the teacher's lounge and take her glasses off and fix her hair to make her more appealing to Mr. Hall. And [00:53:00] Miss Geist is very frazzled by this. And then we see Cher complaining about all this food she's eaten that day, which was another moment where I was like [makes squirming noises]. But that's what she's doing when they see Miss Geist and Mr. Hall sitting on a bench together. Did I skip the coffee? I skipped the coffee. They've given Mr. Hall a thing of coffee and said he should share it with Miss Geist. So that is what the matchmaking here is. They see him [Kelly laughs] on a bench, him giving her the coffee and sitting very close together. Then everyone's grades improve. This is one moment where Elton keeps hugging Cher. He's like,

“Yeah, you did it. Our grades are improving.” And I was like, “Get off her.”

Becca: Every minute, she's on her back, but she's like, “Yeah.” Ugh.

Molly: Yeah. Everyone in the courtyard applauds Cher as the matchmaker here, as she sips Diet Coke with a [00:54:00] straw and is wearing the most magnificent red plaid coat and skirt set that I want.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Molly: This outfit is so good. And especially just with the Diet Coke, she looks like a Diet Coke ad.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: She comes home with her new report card, which I only got one report card. I guess it's semesters, but I would only get one per chunk of school. So, I do think it's odd that they've gotten so many report cards.

Becca: I think the implication is that Cher went back and argued to her teachers.

Molly: Oh, this is her new report card.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I understand.

Kelly: You can see that it's written over the old grades.

Molly: Oh, see. Okay. So her dad's like, “What's this?” And she's like, “Well, that's my report card.” He is so shocked that she was able to argue her way from a C to an A that he's so happy he couldn't even be happier if they were real grades.

Kelly: [giggles]

Molly: Because he's a litigator, which means someone who argues--

Becca: A litigator is literally just a lawyer who deals [00:55:00] with the court system in some regard. There's transactional lawyers who do contracts, and real estate deals and stuff like that. And then a litigator is a lawyer who deals with lawsuits or criminal trials. That's literally all it means.

Molly: Got you.

Becca: So when she says that—So first of all, this movie is hilarious parody of lawyers. Second of all, her saying, daddy's a litigator, those are the scariest kinds of lawyers is another fantastic example of Cher taking a word that she doesn't know what it means and being like, “Daddy is a litigator.”

[laughter]

Becca: It means nothing.

Molly: Yeah. So then, we go to gym class. When it's Cher's turn, she gives this speech on how PE in their school is a joke. I wanted to note that they're not in school uniforms, but they are all wearing various forms of black and white athleisure.

Becca: Can we even call [00:56:00] it athleisure? They're in some like motif. It's hard to explain. But there's no leggings or sports bras. It's just-- [crosstalk] [laughs]

Molly: Just camp. It's perfect.

Kelly: I think Cher's shorts are technically like some sort of spandex athletic material, but it certainly doesn't look like that. She just looks super fashionable.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. She's wearing a t shirt and then a tank top, like a cropped tank top over it. When Amber is called up, she says that her plastic surgeon doesn't want her doing any activities where balls fly at her face, and Dionne's like, “There goes your social life.”-

[laughter]

Molly: -which is phenomenal.

Kelly: Oh, my gosh.

Molly: And also hints to the fact that we don't like Amber, and we'll find out why later.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Well, part of it is that she is Mrs. Elton [crosstalk]

Molly: Yes. But I didn't realize that at this point, I thought she was one of their friends.

Becca: Oh, no. She's the worst.

Molly: But it makes sense because her outfits are all so unhinged, just like a little bit too over the top, which is very much like Mrs. Elton being gaudy.

Kelly: Wasn't her hair the one that was styled into almost like--?

Becca: [00:57:00] Pippi Longstocking?

Kelly: Yeah, Pippi Longstocking, like, wired braids or something.

Becca: Yes.

Kelly: I saw that, and I was just like, "Are we going into a Dr. Seuss motif now? What is happening?"

Becca: Amber is bringing Dr. Seuss chic to Beverly Hills.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: She's like an Oompa-Loompa.

[laughter]

Molly: But a tall one.

Becca: Of all the costumes in this whole movie, I think Amber's tell most of the story. Obviously, Cher's are iconic, but you learn so much about Amber from how she's trying to capture that heightened aesthetic that Dionne and Cher are doing and just doing a bad job of it. It's hard to explain, but Dionne and Cher look iconic, and Amber does not.

Molly: Yeah.

Kelly: Yes.

Molly: So then someone, maybe the principal, brings in a new student, Tai Frasier, played by a baby Brittany Murphy. May she rest in peace. And she's got dyed red hair and a graphic tee and baggy jeans and a flannel. My first thought was, "Oh, my [00:58:00] God, she's just a little stoner," which I think is so fun for the Harriet character to be like, she's cool in her own way.

Becca: She absolutely is.

Molly: And as they say, she is so adorably clueless.

Becca: Is that the first clueless of the movie?

Kelly: I think so.

Molly: Yeah, I think so.

Becca: They say it a lot.

Kelly: They do. They really do.

Molly: So, Cher decides to take Tai under her wing. One thing that I wanted to note was that, at first, Dionne's like, "I don't want to." And Tai is like, "Don't you want to use your popularity for a good cause?" which is exactly what Josh said to her when they were in the car. So, Tai says she's freaking out and could use some herbal refreshment. It just goes over her head, and they're like, "Oh, well, we don't have any tea, but we have coke." And Tai is like, "No shit. You got coke here?" And Cher is like, "Yeah, this is America."

Becca: This is a joke that went over my head when I was a little kid.

Kelly: I think all of the drug and [00:59:00] sex-based humor went over my head as a kid, which is maybe why I didn't find it so funny then, because I was just like, "What are they talking about?"

Becca: I was like, "Wow, they really didn't have Coca-Cola where Tai went to school."

[laughs]

Molly: That's so funny. So, at lunch, Tai meets Travis in line for food, and he compliments her drawings, she compliments his skateboard, and he's like, "Oh, I want to do Marvin the Martian right in the middle. And she's like, "I can do Marvin the Martian," and she shows him, and he goes, "Wow, you didn't trace this?" which I thought was just really pure.

Becca: This immediately reveals Travis as our Robert Martin character, our little farmer for Harriet. I just think these two have really sweet chemistry.

Molly: Yeah. She goes to tell Cher and Dionne about him, and she's like, "Right away, he offered me some smoke." And Cher is like, "Okay. How old are you?" And Tai's like, "I'm going to be 16 years in May." And Cher says, "Well, I'm going to be [01:00:00] 16 years in April, and I'm older than you. Can I give you some advice?" which I thought was iconic because that's exactly what you would do when you're 15 years going on 16 years like, "Well, I'm two weeks older than you, so I'm pretty wise."

She tells her that she can do drugs and stuff at parties, but she can't go around being high all day. That's not respectable. They decide they have to do a makeover on Tai. We get this makeover montage where they take the red out of Tai's hair, and they do her makeup, and they curl her hair using a coke can, which I didn't notice the first time I watched, but there's just a coke can on top of her head. And then we see Cher and Tai working out as part of her reformation, and Tai says, "My buns, they don't feel nothing like steel."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Cher sits her down and she's like, "Listen, we need to improve your accent and vocabulary. Pick out a word, try to use it in a sentence." [01:01:00] And then Josh comes in. And Cher calls him the dreaded ex, which is just not what you call your ex-stepbrother.

Kelly: So weird. It's so weird. [giggles]

Becca: Molly paused the movie when we were watching it and she just went, "Did they date already?"

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Right. Like, at least say the dreaded ex stepbrother. Like, finish the sentence.

Kelly: In my delusional brain, what I am assuming she's doing here is she's subtly staking her claim to tie by leaving it ambiguous. That's what I'm going to assume. I think it's just weird wording though, [Becca laughs] but I also like to think it's a subconscious. I'm going to leave this open ended so she doesn't go after my man.

Molly: That's interesting, because she does always know that she's in love with him in her heart of hearts, maybe.

Becca: It doesn't work to deter Tai, but we'll get there.

Molly: For sure.

[laughter]

Molly: So, Cher follows Josh into the kitchen while he's making a sandwich, and she- [crosstalk]

Becca: The ugliest sandwich I've ever seen in my life, [01:02:00] by the way.

Kelly: Yeah. [giggles]

Molly: One piece of turkey, a little mayo slapped together.

Becca: On wonder bread. It is bleak.

Molly: Yeah. And she says, "Aren't you impressed with what I'm doing here? I'm doing something good for the world." And he's like, "You never had a mother, so you're acting out and trying to mother Tai," which I thought was harsh. Way harsh even.

Becca: Molly just bugged her eyes. But we're not there yet, Molly. We're not there.

Molly: So sorry. So sorry. So, they go back into the living room, and this is potentially my favorite part, but I've said that a lot. Tai is sitting on the couch singing along to the Mentos theme song.

Kelly: Oh, my gosh, yes. [giggles]

Becca: It's so pure.

Molly: I really relate to Tai, and I really relate to Harriet Smith, and this is exactly how-- You're sitting alone in this house of your rich friend, you're watching the Mentos theme song and you're like, [singing] "Fresh goes better with Mentos, so fresh and--"

Kelly: [giggles]

Molly: Whatever. I don't know. Anyway, yeah.

Becca: Mentos better. Mentos [01:03:00] fresher. Fresh goes better. Not paying for it.

[laughs]

Kelly: They use a lot of opportunities to showcase her really good singing voice too, which I was wondering if is this just another opportunity to show that she could sing? Because she really can.

Molly: She really can. Especially when she says, "*Roll in with the homies.*"

Kelly: Yeah, exactly. [giggles]

Becca: Yeah. I think part of it might be that this is, I believe, introducing Brittany Murphy as an actor. This might be her first movie. So, they might just be like, "Yeah, look at this dynamic new performer we found." One could also read it as another way in which Tai was cool before Cher.

Molly: Yes, Tai is cool before Cher.

Kelly: I also, at this point-- Sorry, slightly off track. But at this point, I started feeling like this was just a different version of *Mean Girls*, where it's rich, superficial girl takes new girl under her wing, who new girl is already cool in her own way, turns her into something else, drama ensues, and then they go back to being themselves. At its [01:04:00] heart, I feel like it is if *Mean Girls* was nice girls with good intentions, but doing it wrong. But I just felt like *Mean Girls* maybe was a modern adaptation of *Clueless*, which is an adaptation of *Emma*.

Molly: Yeah. I would say that that's accurate. Actually, because I was down a rabbit hole

today looking at the *Mean Girls* posts for the new adaptation or the new movie version of the musical, so it's a movie based on a musical based on a movie which is based on a book.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: But there were comments where people were talking about *Clueless*, like, some people not realizing that this was different than *Clueless*, which I thought was interesting.

Becca: Well, I recall at a certain point, recording, you were like, "Are you sure *Mean Girls* isn't an adaptation of *Emma* when we were reading the book?" And I was like, "Mm, there are similarities." It's one of those Jane Austen moments where it's comforting to know that there has always been--

First of all, there's always been female friendship, TM. But there's also [01:05:00] always been this dynamic of a mean girl who's higher up, befriending a girl who's lower status than her to try to build her in her image, and then it becoming a bad circumstance and creating a monster. I guess that's something that was happening hundreds of years ago, and that's I guess why Jane Austen persists today as a cultural icon. She knew what people were doing.

Molly: Totally. So the next day, Tai is wearing a very Cher-esque outfit, and everyone's staring at her as they walk into school. Cher and Dionne are like, "Oh, my God. Yes, we have succeeded in making her hot."

Kelly: [giggles]

Molly: Travis comes up and gives Tai a flyer for a party, and Cher's like, "Well, that's in the valley. It's going to get busted within an hour." And Tai says, "Do you think Travis will be there?" as if he didn't just give her the flyer for the party.

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: [unintelligible [01:05:54]]

Molly: I thought it was so cute. They tell her that she can do better than [01:06:00] Travis because she has something no one else has and Tai is like, "Oh, I'm not a virgin." And they're like, "No. Mystery. You're new. You could be the coolest girl at your school, for all they know," which I think she might have been. Then they suggest that she try to go after Elton, because he just went through a breakup. We start to see Cher trying to push Elton and Tai together. She's doing a photo shoot of all of the friends, and this is where we get Amber's pippy, long stocking hair, which I despise.

Kelly: [giggles]

Molly: We have Cher taking a picture of Tai with a rose, and Elton comes over and is like, "Can I get a printout of that?" which would lead me to believe that he wants a picture of Tai. Like, that's reasonable.

Kelly: Mm-hmm. Very misleading of him, honestly.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah, he sucks.

Kelly: Yeah, he really does. He's the worst.

Molly: [giggles]

Becca: I do think he's a perfect Elton though, because the actor is really handsome, and it takes someone as odious as the character of Elton to make an actor who is handsome come off really gross.

Molly: [01:07:00] Mm-hmm.

Becca: Yeah. I think that's the talent of playing Mr. Elton.

Molly: Well, there are a lot of really gross, handsome men out there.

Becca: Yes. And that's the lesson all women should learn.

Molly: Yes. So, at dinner, Tai is over, and Cher introduces Ty to her dad. And the first thing he says to her is, "Get out of my chair."

Kelly: I actually love the dad. Dad's wonderful.

Molly: Me too.

Becca: He's fantastic. So Kelly, I don't know, if you recall this from watching *Emma* adaptations, but Mr. Woodhouse in *Emma* is like a doddery old man who's anxious about being sick all the time.

Kelly: I do not remember that.

Becca: Yeah. So, this is fantastic. So, one of the through lines of both *Clueless* and *Emma* is that she is taking care of her father, and Emma's taking care of her father. But in the book, it's that Emma is the mistress of the house of her father's home, and her father doesn't want

her to leave or get married, because he's like this massive hypochondriac who's also anxious king who never wants to leave his house and [01:08:00] is always very, very concerned that someone's going to catch a draft. And so to change him into this furious litigator that she still has to take care of is such an iconic twist of the story. [laughs]

Molly: I do love it. I think it shows how "clueless" she is. Because if he was my dad, I would be fighting with him all the time. I would be afraid of him a little bit. I would be like fighting with him. She just was like, "Okay, daddy. Everything's okay."

Kelly: She's so sweet, and he's so gruff. I love that difference between them. It's so funny because she's like, "Hi, daddy. This is Tai, my defriend from school." "Get out of my chair." [laughter]

Kelly: It's so good.

Molly: And he's like, "What did you do today?" She says, "I broke in my new clogs."

Kelly: [giggles]

Becca: And then as they're sitting at the table, Cher gets a call and her dad's like, "No phones at the table and have dinner as a family."

Molly: [giggles]

Becca: And then he gets a call, and he goes, "No."

Molly: Yeah. He [01:09:00] takes the call. And then, of course, as he's on the phone, she gets to call Dionne. We learn that Elton has the picture of Tai up in his locker, and everyone's going to the party in the valley, so I guess they have to go too. Then we get them driving to the party, and Murray is trying to get Dionne to read a map, and they're just having this back and forth. That's so funny. He's like, "Look at the-- What are the numbers on the top stage?" She's like, "There's no numbers. There's letters." And he just screams into the--

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: They get to the party, and Amber is wearing the same dress that Cher was wearing yesterday.

Kelly: She's been shopping at the Lucy consignment store, is what that means. [laughter]

Molly: Yes, exactly. Oh. But Amber says, "As if I would ever shop at the same places that you shop." I thought that was interesting that she chose to use Cher's signature line against her. Then Travis spills beer on Cher's [01:10:00] satin shoes, and Cher is livid. And Travis offers her some weed to make it up, and she's like, "Ah, fine. It's the least you could do."

Becca: My absolute heart though for Travis, this entire party, just as setting the story, you can feel how sweet this character is, and you can also feel how much Cher is doing the mean girl thing to him, where he's in the group, but he's not in the group with.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And oh, I have a real soft spot in my heart for Travis Birkenstock as a character.

Molly: Me too. I have a soft spot in my heart for Robert Martin as well. So it really works. They start playing suck and blow, which is that game that one might play in middle school with a little piece of paper, and you suck on it to make it stay aloft, and then blow to push it to the next person's mouth. It's supposed to be funny if the paper falls and you kiss someone. It's a very gross game. [01:11:00] Made even grosser by the fact that Elton intentionally drops the paper and attacks Cher's face with his face. And she yells, "God, Elton, can't you suck?" which I thought was [Becca laughs] apt because he does suck.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Then they hear Dionne screaming, and so they run to go see what's happened. We get a beautiful close up on Murray's braces before we see that he's shaving his head. And his comedic timing, even I don't know how old he was in this movie, but he's so funny. Like, she's yelling at him and he's like, "I'm keeping it real. I'm keeping it real." I just think it's so funny.

Becca: This is also such a teenage boy thing to do to think an iconic idea to sneak into a bathroom during a party and just shave your head.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And my favorite part is when Dionne goes, "And with yearbook pictures coming up, what am I going to tell my grandchildren?"

Kelly: [laughs] Yes.

Molly: She is so overdramatic, and I love it for her. She threatens to call his mom and then locks herself in the bathroom. And [01:12:00] Cher and Tai are like, "Okay, let's get out of here," "and they go to bump into people." And Tai bumps into Travis and Cher's like, "No, come with me." And then Cher and Tai share a very charged dance, [Becca giggles] like, charged between the two of them.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Cher goes down one knee and holds up her hand, and Tai very sultry walks in a circle around her, and I'm like, "A little bit gay? Uh-huh?"

Becca: Not to spoil for later in the movie, but you finally got actual gay people in a Jane Austen adaptation.

Molly: Finally.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Oh, yes.

Becca: [laughs] She's been waiting.

Molly: I've been waiting.

Kelly: [laughs] Honestly, I need to finish watching the movie. As soon as we're done recording, I'm going to go finish watching. I have seen it before, obviously, but I was rewatching it. I was like, "You know, I'm going to stop here where we're stopping for the episode and then I'll keep going." So actually, I don't remember the characters you're talking about.

Molly: Yeah, I won't tell you.

Becca: Oh, you're going to have fun with it then.

Molly: [01:13:00] Yes. I'm also going to go finish watching it as soon as we get off because I was like, "I'm going to keep it fresh just the first half, so I won't go too far off the deep end, what happens later." So, Cher and Tai share a very sexually charged dance between the two of them, but then a shoe hits Tai in the head and she is potentially concussed. And so, Elton and Travis both come over to help her, but Cher shoos Travis away and she's like, "Tai would have wanted you to enjoy the party," like, as if she's dead.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Poor guy. He goes away, and Cher tells Elton to ask her questions and he's like, "What's seven times seven?" And Cher goes, "Stuff she knows."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: And then Tai and Travis have this little moment where he's like, "Can you do this? Rollin' with the homies?" And she goes, "Rollin' with the homies." And they go to dance together. Cher goes outside and she's like, "Love is everywhere. Someone's throwing up in the pool." But she's like, "I'm so happy." Poor Tai.

Becca: It's a very graphic throw up in the pool moment. I [01:14:00] remember that from childhood.

Kelly: It's so bad.

Molly: Yeah. I hate watching people throw up. It makes me want to throw up, so I closed my eyes. Also, nobody ever talks about the helicopter that's just flying overhead during this whole scene.

Kelly: I thought that meant the party was about to get busted, which it didn't.

Molly: Right.

Kelly: Yeah. It's just flying overhead for the heck of it.

Becca: Maybe it's a valley reference that we as East Coasters don't understand.

Molly: Maybe. I don't know. It was odd. Then her dad calls and he's like, "You got to get home. What are you doing?" And so, she brings Tai to leave, and they run into summer, who is also leaving, and Elton, who is leaving.

Kelly: Her dad on the phone says, "Everywhere in LA takes 20 minutes." That's not true at this point in time either, right?

Molly: It can't be.

Kelly: Everywhere in LA takes like an hour at least is what I always imagined. She says, "Oh, I think it'll take me a little longer than 20 [01:15:00] minutes, daddy." He says, "Everywhere in LA is 20 minutes away." And I was like, "That's not true."

Molly: Right. Like, isn't LA famous for its traffic?

Becca: Yes.

Kelly: Right. I'm like, "Everywhere in New York is maybe 20 minutes away. Even then maybe 30 minutes away. But in LA, I'm pretty sure it's one to two hours to get anywhere," from my experience.

Molly: Yeah. In New York, everything takes me an hour because I cannot for the life of me get the trains right.

Kelly: Oh, no.

Becca: Molly, you've lived here for years.

Molly: Oh, yeah. But still, it's not because I don't know how to do the trains. It's because I leave for work without checking when the trains are coming. I will inevitably get there just as it's pulling away, and I live off the B, which is terrible.

Kelly: Oh, no. Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. So, it comes like every 15 to 20 minutes.

Becca: I got you.

Molly: But that's a personal problem.

[giggles]

Becca: Well, listeners from LA, let us know if you are going to rewrite the slide from Mr. Horowitz and say, "Everywhere in LA takes blank minutes," I want [01:16:00] your actual calculation of how long it takes to get anywhere in LA. Not from the valley, just in LA.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Okay. Thank you.

Molly: So, they get outside. Summer and Elton are both driving home, and Elton and Cher have this fight about who's going to drive home with who. He's manhandling her and is like, "No, she's going to go with Summer, you're going to come with me," and they're pushing back and forth, and it's disgusting.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Molly: They get in the car. Cher loses the battle, obviously, and she's in the car with Elton. This is the famous Mr. Elton terrible proposal scene in *Emma*. In this, it is him parking in an empty lot and attacking her physically, which earns him a really big as if.

Kelly: Yes. [giggles]

Becca: Yes. I will say two things about this scene. One, that are not related to the fact that it's disgusting, which it is. One, it's an almost perfect adaptation of what happens in the book. Except in the book, it's like the Regency, so there's better social norms that [01:17:00] were protecting her in that moment that are not protecting her hair. But it is like a very book accurate scene for that reason.

Two, in one moment, she's like, "You had the picture of Tai in your locker?" And he goes, "I had the picture you took in my locker." And Cher just goes, "Oh, I'm having one of those *Twin Peaks* moments." And Mike, who's a huge fan of *Twin Peaks*, just turned around and went, "Oh, my fiancé Mike. Not your husband, Mike."

[laughter]

Kelly: I figured.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: yeah. When that happened, we were all watching it together. And as she said that, me, Becca, and Sequoia all whipped our heads towards Mike and he looked, he whipped his head towards us and we're like, "It's your thing."

Kelly: [laughs]

Becca: And he's like, "It's *Twin Peaks*. It's the 1990s."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: He was very excited about that.

Becca: Yes, he was.

Molly: After the disgusting interaction, he leaves her in this parking lot, and she tries to call a cab and gets robbed at gunpoint, which is way more dramatic than I was expecting this to get. [01:18:00] She gets down on the ground, she does the whole thing. He asks her to count to 100 and she counts to 3 and then gets up, which I was like, "Girl, you need to let him get farther away."

Becca: We need to talk about the fact that he asked her to get on the ground, and she goes, "Oh, no, this is an Alaia."

[laughter]

Becca: Basically, I looked up Alaia as a brand of dress. My guess is that that dress rang her up like \$3,800.

Kelly: In 1990s money too.

Becca: Well, that was what today's money was, [crosstalk]-

Kelly: Ah I see.

Becca: -dress is. So maybe it was more like \$2,000. It's been a while. But I have not adjusted for inflation, but it is an expensive dress.

Molly: Yeah.

Kelly: It was a very cute dress. I actually really liked that outfit as well.

Molly: Me too.

Kelly: It was a very nice dress.

Molly: We forgot to mention that the party was a Christmas party. So, you got your Christmas movie.

Kelly: Oh, you're right. This is a Christmas movie now. It's a movie.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yes. And it's very festive.

Molly: It is. So, she [01:19:00] uses the payphone to call Josh, which she just gave him all her money. So, I don't know how she had money for the payphone, but she did. She calls Josh. He's having a little make out sesh, but she cries into the phone. She's like, "Can you come pick me up?" And it again highlights how young she is, and it really feels like she is a high schooler, and she just got herself in over her head.

The girlfriend that Josh was with comes with him to pick her up. And in the car, she's whining about something intellectual and she says, "It's just like Hamlet said, to thine own self be true." And Cher is like, "There's no way Hamlet said that." And the girl's like, "Well, I remember Shakespeare accurately." And Cher says, "I remember Mel Gibson accurately," and he didn't say that Polonius guy did, which I thought was an excellent serve on Cher's part.

Kelly: So funny.

Molly: Josh loves this as well. He does a little smirk in the rear-view mirror, which is cute, I guess.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: But Cher is devastated by this whole ordeal. She doesn't know what to say to Tai, even her masseuse says she's tense. And when [01:20:00] they tell Tai, she is absolutely devastated, and Cher is like, "Listen, let's go to the mall. We'll go to the mall. We'll objectify men." And so they do. They're watching people walk past and saying, "Okay, what's the verdict on this guy? Is he doable?" And Tai says she doesn't care what men look like as long as their you-know-what isn't crooked. She holds up this pretzel or pizza crust that's shaped like a crooked penis. This is where we learn that Cher is "hymenally challenged" or saving herself for the right guy. And Dionne is technically a virgin. And so Tai is like, "What? You guys are all virgins here in this California?"

Then Tai and Elton's song comes on, and she starts crying. Their song, of course, being *Rollin' With The Homies*.

Becca: Before we get there, I do want to just highlight the scene as well because I think it's another good example of the Emma will never marry trope in *Clueless* adaptation. And [01:21:00] the line where she says, "I am just not ready until I've met the right person. You've seen how picky I am about my shoes and they only go on my feet."

Molly: Iconic.

Kelly: I actually think that is an incredibly great argument to make to young women.

Molly: Yeah.

Kelly: It brings it down to a level that a high schooler could understand. It is a very poignant argument as well.

Becca: Yeah. I think it captures the same energy of Emma in her time period being like, "I will never marry because I don't have to. I have my own wealth. I don't need to." I think Cher just being like, "Yeah, I know my value, and I don't have to settle for a guy who I think will be wrong for me."

Molly: Yeah.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Molly: She's an icon.

Becca: She's an icon. She's a legend, and she's hymenally challenged.

Molly: Yeah.

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: Cher decides that she needs to find someone to take Elton's place in Tai's life. And that is the first half of this movie. We did it.

Kelly: Ooh.

Becca: Yes. So much to say about 45 minutes of a film. But what a thrill to do so. And that brings us [01:22:00] to Becca's study questions. First one, funniest quote or favorite line delivery?

Molly: Kelly, you want to kick us off?

Kelly: One of my favorite deliveries is actually all the way back at the beginning when she's having her debate about her dinner party analogy to the Haitians, which I think is just the funniest delivery with the gum on the finger, and then she pops it back in, and then "It was his 50th birthday," [Molly laughs] is just the best-- I think it's so funny. It's just a hilarious opener.

Becca: Ah, it's so good.

Molly: It's so good.

Becca: I have a top three, and they're all for different characters. One is Josh going, "Hey, James Bond. In America, we drive on the right side of the road."

[laughter]

Becca: Number two is Dionne and Murray in the shaving scene when she goes, "All right, that's it." And he's imitating her and she goes, "You want to play games? I'm calling your mother."

Molly: A very good one.

Becca: And then number three is also from the [01:23:00] party when Cher is walking by the girl throwing up and goes, "I had to give myself snaps for all the good deeds I was doing."

[laughter]

Molly: Yeah, give yourself snaps, girl. Okay, I'll narrow it down to two. This is Dionne saying after they decide to give Tai a makeover, Dionne says, "Cher's main thrill in life is a makeover, okay? It gives her a sense of control in a world of chaos."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: It's just like it hit out of nowhere. And then Tai saying, "Shit, you, guys. I've never had straight friends before."

Kelly: [laughs]

Molly: I just love it.

Becca: Yeah. And I also just one more time have to shout it out, even though we've said it before, "Oh, no, this is Alaia. It's like a totally important designer."

Molly: [laughs] So many good ones.

Becca: An eminently quotable movie.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: All right. Notable changes from *Emma* to *Clueless*?

Molly: I think the biggest one has to be that they're stepsiblings.

Kelly: That actually was the only one that I knew, and so [01:24:00] [Becca laughs] that was going to be my biggest difference. I was like, "I don't know, maybe there's other bigger ones. I feel like that is a huge difference."

Molly: Yeah. No, it's pretty book accurate otherwise. There's obviously it's in a different era, but in terms of changes to the plot in this half, that's the biggest one. There's a pretty major one in the next half that I won't spoil for you, Kelly, but this is a big one.

Becca: Yeah. I will give it to a couple things. One, as I said, Mr. Woodhouse being a vicious litigator, a scary kind of lawyer instead of a feeble old man who inherited his wealth. And two, there's like a swapping around of different character traits for different characters. Like, for example, you have Dionne as Cher's best friend, which you could say is Mrs. Weston, but also could go to Mrs. Geist, who's the older lady she's setting up.

But I think that also Dionne and Murray really are emblematic more of John and [01:25:00] Isabella. And Emma's not as close to her sister as she is to Mrs. Weston in the book. So

there's just like some swapping around of character traits that gets a little fuzzy. But I think it works to make Cher have a teenage best friend and an older lady that she's setting up separate from everything else going on.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: Least favorite part of this adaptation?

Kelly: Mine is the "you're really filling out" bit that Paul Rudd does. Whichever interpretation they were going for, they both suck.

Molly: They both really suck. I think for this half of the movie, it's just there was a lot of fat shaming, and casual ableism and stuff that I didn't like that didn't age well. And yeah, that's my least favorite.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Yeah. I'm going to give it to the Tina Turner joke. It's pretty dark. It's not a funny thing to joke about because basically Cher compares Dionne and Murray to Ike and Tina Turner, and that is not a fun comparison to make for any relationship. [01:26:00] I will also give it to multiple uses of the R word.

Molly and Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Heavily used in the 1990s, not so used now for good reasons.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: All right. Best part of the movie so far?

Kelly: My broad, broad answer is that the best part is all of Cher's voiceovers. I think that her inner monologue and her commentary are so funny and witty, out of touch, but really genuine. I think it's the saving grace of this movie and what has made it still a fun movie to watch today. Like we said, there's so many things that haven't aged well about it. This is something that a lot of her commentary and voiceovers really just are still hilarious and still very fun to watch.

Molly: Absolutely. I think that my favorite part would be sort of the switcheroo that happens in the fact that Cher, being the popular girl, is actually pretty strait laced and doesn't [01:27:00] do a lot of drugs, is a virgin, and Tai is a stoner and kind of like a party girl. I really like that. Also, honorable mention to Wallace Shawn as Mr. Hall.

Kelly: Yes.

Becca: Incredible. Yeah. Oh, God, everything is so good about-- Everything that's good about this movie is so good. I will say the best part of this movie for me and I think it ties in with Kelly's is really Alicia Silverstone's performance of Cher, I think it is one of this iconic film performances. She is so quotable, so memorable, incredibly charming, and also so cringey at the same time. It is a dynamic performance. It is a complex performance. She is the moment. Like, oh, I can't think of another performance in a movie I watched growing up that was so pitch perfect for the aesthetic and the vibe of the movie that was happening.

Anyway. Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And [01:28:00] who wins the movie?

Kelly: Costume designer.

Becca: The costume designer.

Molly: I was going to say the same thing.

Kelly: Whoever did Cher's outfits, so good. It's so good.

Molly and Becca: Yeah.

Molly: We are agreed.

Becca: It's a perfect, perfect costume design. It tells you every single thing about every single character at every single moment. And even though it's a time capsule, I think it was a trend setting movie in its own right.

Kelly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Oh. Yeah. All right. So listeners, this concludes the first half of *Clueless*. Kelly, thank you so much for joining. Do you want to tell the people where they can find you/do you have anything you want to plug?

Kelly: Oh, man. I don't even remember what some of my social media handles are.

[laughter]

Kelly: What are they? Who am I? What do I do? Yes, you can find me on Twitter. I'm @voteformeKellyb. I'm on there, obviously, very sporadically, as Cher might say.

Molly: Nice use of the word.

Kelly: Yeah, thank you. But every now and then, also sporadically, **[01:29:00]** you'll find me on The Newest Olympian, Mike's podcast or on Potterless, Mike's podcast. Mike always likes for me to plug that. I have a Etsy store where I make BTS inspired merch called Magic Shop Patches. So you can check that out or find me there.

Molly: I love that.

Becca: I love that. All right. Well, listeners, next time, you can watch the second half of this movie, *Clueless*, and we are just having a good time discussing what I think is probably the most famous Jane Austen adaptation that no one knows is the Jane Austen adaptation. I think that's probably the way to put it. So thank you so much for being on.

Kelly: Thanks for having me. This was a blast. I had a lot of fun. I had a lot of fun talking about *Clueless*/Jane Austen.

Becca: Oh, us too.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Talking about Jane Austen is just inherently fun for us.

[laughter]

Becca: So that's why we had a podcast about it. So, until next time, stay proper.

Molly: And go plant a tree.

Becca: Do it.

Kelly: **[01:30:00]** [laughs] I love it. It's great.

[music]

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

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