

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to give a huge shoutout to our newest patrons, Margaret, Lauren, Bridget, and Yvette. Plus, a special shout out to Katie, who upgraded their pledge. If you want to be like these awesome people and get access to our notes, outtakes, and more, head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice to see how you can support us.

And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Part 2 of the 1995 adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility* with our guest, Vanessa Zoltan.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

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

Molly: We are here specifically to talk about the second quarter of *Sense and Sensibility* 1995 starring Emma Thompson, Hugh Grant, Kate Winslet, and Alan Rickman. We are joined here today by Vanessa Zoltan of Not Sorry Productions. Welcome, **[00:01:00]** Vanessa.

Vanessa: Thank you so much. It's so fun to be back.

Molly: We are just going to dive right in. If you want to hear all about Vanessa's Jane Austen hot takes, you should go back and listen to the first episode covering Part 1 of the 1995 *Sense and Sensibility*. But today, I think we should just dive right in. What do you guys think?

Becca: Oh, I'm in.

Vanessa: Yeah, don't get me started again.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: If you go back and listen, there's a hot take embedded somewhere in the middle of that episode. [laughs]

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: I don't even remember, but it's probably true.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Where we left off, the Dashwoods had just left Norland and we are arriving now at Barton cottage. Now, this was a good shock. The entire cast of *Harry Potter* is in this movie.

[laughter]

Molly: Because up rolls Cornelius Fudge and the Portrait of the Fat Lady just in a carriage with 15 dogs.

Becca: In my head, the way [00:02:00] I describe this part is it's Mrs. Jennings and Sir John Middleton approaching the Dashwoods with what can only be described as a waterfall of dogs going towards them.

Vanessa: Yes.

Molly: it makes 100% sense that they have 15,000 dogs and I was trying to catch the dog's names. I know at least one of them was named Casper, and I don't remember but they did name another one. I couldn't hear what it was. At first, I thought the dog's name was Thomas, but that's their servant.

[laughter]

Molly: They were like, "Damn, Thomas." But that's not what they said. [laughs] I just misheard it. The dogs are all running up. Cornelius Fudge is there. Marianne goes into the cottage while the Jennings are trying to get them to come over for dinner. It's just all in grayscale. I thought this was so well done. As she walks in, she's wearing a gray coat and her hair is all bright, but everything else is gray. She's just walking through, and it's like a beachy, washed-out kind of [00:03:00] feeling, and it's empty, and they're muted in the background. I thought this was just a stunning scene aesthetically.

Becca: If we're being honest, this house is actually real estate goals.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: Oh, yeah. I mean the "cottage," I'm like, "Please, God." Genteel poverty is fascinating.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: We're so poor, we can only afford two servants. One, there was so much labor that needed to happen just to run a house, like the firewood, and making candles. I'm not trying to say that having a servant would be the same as having live-in help now by any stretch of the imagination. And yet, genteel poverty, you suffer at a high level.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: It does remind me of I know some people, when they make a lot of money, get really stressed that they're not making enough money?

Vanessa: Yeah.

Becca: And it's very common to stress out about it. The more money you make, the more you're like, "Oh, but it's not enough to get this done, and this done, and save in [00:04:00] this way, and this way." There's a way in which genteel poverty in the Austen world really reflects that. It's not that to get everything you want and to be doing things fiscally correct way doesn't require a larger salary. It's just that there's a lot of people living on less than you, but I do digress. I think one thing that Molly said to me that I think is absolutely true is that this is exactly how the cottage is described in the book.

Molly: Yeah, they did a really good job with the set here. Speaking of their genteel poverty and the way

that they show this, Elinor and Marianne are sharing a room that night. They're cold, they're shivering. Elinor gets into bed, and Marianne says, "Your feet are cold," and Elinor has to get back out of bed, and put on socks, and get back in bed. Then, we jump to the next day, where Margaret is out playing in the dirt, and then Marianne is giving her a bath, and she's like, "You could grow a potato on the back of your neck. It's so dirty."

Vanessa: [laughs]

Molly: Margaret's like, "It's cold," and then Elinor comes in with hot water and she's like, "It's hot," and [00:05:00] you just see them struggling to make do with just them, and not their big house and their many servants.

Becca: It goes to also Vanessa's point about showing the inconveniences of living in this time period.

Vanessa: Yeah. This is a big adjustment for Margaret. She probably used to be able to wash in a tub, because they had enough servants to bring up basins and basins of water. And now, she's having to wash like this. As much as it is not horrible, it's a big change for a little kid.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Then, it's a meal at the park. This is one of the funniest scenes, I think. But it starts with Mrs. Jennings telling them about the Colonel and saying that he's such an eligible bachelor. He'd be really good for Elinor, but she thinks Elinor might have some guy back in Norland, and they're like, "Ooh, ooh, [00:06:00] do you, do you?"

[laughter]

Molly: Then this is where Margaret has her iconic moment of like, "Oh, yeah, he exists and his name starts with F." Then, they go back and forth being like, "Oh, what's his name? Fortescue? Featheringay?"

Becca: [laughs]

Vanessa: Fatheringay.

Becca: You imagine being like, "Yeah, this is my boyfriend, Fatheringay."

Molly: [laughs]

Vanessa: Yes, I can. I would be so proud.

Molly: Yes, absolutely. They'd make such a good team, those two, Mr. Middleton and Lady Jennings. Wait, Sir John Middleton, Lady Mrs. Jennings.

Vanessa: I was watching with my older stepdaughter, and she was like, "They're a really cute couple." I was like, "They are mother-in-law and son-in-law."

Becca: [laughs]

Vanessa: She was like, "I don't know why, but that bums me out."

Molly: Oh, my gosh.

Vanessa: She really loved the vibe of her being a little older than him, and not young and hot, and she was like, "I was super into them."

Becca: I was like, "Sorry, kiddo."

Molly: That's the best thing I've [00:07:00] ever heard.

Vanessa: I know. She's got some really great takes.

Becca: I love that. I love that. I'm into that. We actually had a conversation, not to pull us on a huge tangent, early on where we were like, "Why did Mrs. Jennings marry her daughters the way she did?" Because wouldn't Lady Middleton have made a good wife for Mr. Palmer and wouldn't Charlotte have made a good wife for Sir John?

Molly: But opposites attract.

Vanessa: Yes.

Molly: And as we learned in *Pride and Prejudice*, you need a little bit of the introvert and a little bit of the extrovert in every relationship.

Vanessa: Yes. Dr. House wants who he wants and he wants Umbridge.

Becca: Does he?

[laughter]

Vanessa: Let him have her. He's so mean to her.

Molly: Oh, my gosh, I can't wait to talk about him because their whole thing is so fascinating in this movie, and he's so good. But we'll get there. Marianne decides to cut off this Edward talk by asking to play the pianoforte. We go to her playing the piano forte, and [00:08:00] enter Brandon, at which point I had to get up and get on my knees in front of the TV so that I could fully experience--

Vanessa: Just so you know, I'm picturing you like in *101 Dalmatians*, the puppy that constantly is crawling up to the TV in order to look closely at the dogs. That is how I'm picturing you.

Molly: I need you to know that is exactly what I did.

Vanessa: Okay.

Molly: So, you would be correct.

Vanessa: You're a cute little dalmatian puppy wagon your cute little dalmatian butt. Good.

Molly: Oh, yeah, that's exactly it. So, you're correct in thinking that.

Vanessa: I'm a genius.

Molly: He walks in, and he hears Marianne playing, and he's watching her, and he is so immediately smitten with her. It's very obvious, and Elinor sees him watching her, and, man, I love him so much, and we've talked about this a bit in the last episode, but I just have such a hard time picturing this [00:09:00] as a romantic connection, and I do think that in the time period, it was much more common. We've talked about that throughout the book. However, seeing it is really weird for me.

Vanessa: It wasn't more common? I feel I still know a lot of couples like this.

Becca: That's true.

Vanessa: I'm in a relationship. My partner is significantly older than I am. We did not meet when I was 17. So, I feel there's a really big difference there.

Molly: There is a big difference. When I told my mom that I thought it was weird when I was reading the book, she was like, "Well, your grandpa's wife, who is--" I call her by her first name. I don't really call her grandma. But she is a comparable age difference and it's not weird, but that's because they're in their late 60s, and 80s, or 90s-- late 70s and 90s. It's like once you get past a certain age-- Also, the thing is though, in the book, he's supposed to be 30 what 35, 36 [00:10:00] and she's 17.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Molly: He looks like he's in his 40s to me.

Vanessa: He's in his 40s.

Molly: He's got to be.

Vanessa: I just looked it up the other night. He's in his 40s, but not significantly older than 35. The problem is that he is a fully formed adult, who has gone to India and back, and she is a child, right?

Molly: Right.

Vanessa: That is the problem is that he is in love with the postpubescent child.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: That definitely is a problem and I really respect people's issues with it. I think, for me, for example, it freaks me out less than Wickham and Lydia, who have a smaller age difference because

Colonel Brandon, to be fair, doesn't have interest in manipulating or infantilizing Marianne, and forcing her into decisions or taking control of her life. One thing that's pretty defining through the book and in the movie in my opinion is [00:11:00] that he is respecting her choices and how she's deciding to live her life.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Becca: I think treating her like an adult makes a big difference in how I feel about the romance. That being said, I'm also just such a sucker for Alan Rickman's performance in this, and I watched this movie so young that it has stuck with me for so long, that just the gentleness of his love and care for her that just is apparent in the first moment he lays eyes on her is something that for me drives the compelling story forward, and that makes me focus on the age difference less. I don't think it's not there and I totally do understand the take on that.

Molly: Yeah, I think that I agree with you on all of that. It's truly for me just the fact that she is actually cast as a 17-year-old and he is cast probably 10 years older-- or at least [00:12:00] 8 years older than the age that he's supposed to be. That just makes it just a little bit too weird, that I can't see the romantic attachment. In the book, by the end, I could actually see it. In this, I couldn't really. But that's all just to say, I still love his performance and I think it's beautiful.

Vanessa: I think that there's an argument to be made that Marianne falls in love with the father figure after she gets jilted in such a profound way by a peer, at least closer to a peer.

Becca: Yeah.

Vanessa: She wants a man who's going to take care of her and take control. That is fair, given that she has no access to any independence.

Molly: And that she just lost her father.

Vanessa: Exactly. So, hooking up with a father figure make sense to me. I think what I find pernicious is the fact that he falls in love with her sort of at first sight and that she's this replacement for [00:13:00] Eliza, who he loved.

Becca: Yes.

Becca: Clearly, Eliza is frozen in his mind from before he went to India and Marianne is the age that Eliza was when he left. So, he's just getting a second chance at Eliza, even though she's dead. I find it really upsetting.

Molly: Yeah, come to think of it, it is. He was young when he was with Eliza. They grew up together but she died and he was-- When he left her, he was young, then he got frozen in time there. Not only was she frozen in time, but I think that maybe his growth-- It's a traumatic experience that caused him to not be able to fully move on. So, when he walked in, I think the movie did this really well. It's not something that I thought about in the book. But he walks in, and he sees her, and it's almost [00:14:00] like you can see in his eyes, he is seeing someone else there. Wow. Yeah, I hadn't thought about that in the book. Because in the book to me, it was like he has a type. She's similar to Eliza, but this, yes, he's

seeing something-- [crosstalk]

Vanessa: There's transference happening.

Molly: Yeah. Like a flash from the past.

Vanessa: God bless him, he knows it, right?

Molly: Yeah.

Vanessa: He really keeps the distance from her. I think Alan Rickman plays it all beautifully and he does not come on to her, he does not swoon over her all the time. He's just attentive and respectful. So, I feel he even knows what's going on.

Becca: Yeah. I think that of any character in this entire story, Colonel Brandon has the most self-awareness.

Molly: Definitely.

Becca: And that's a huge advantage to the character. All this to say that when he walks in, and you see him look at her, I love the way you put that Vanessa, for better or for worse, he does look at her immediately just become transfixed, and it's [00:15:00] mesmerizing to watch because I was watching him become transfixed with Marianne as I was watching Molly become transfixed with him.

[laughter]

Becca: It was magical.

Vanessa: It was like a little circle and Kate Winslet was staring at Molly, was like, "Oh, my God, Molly?"

Molly: [laughs] Oh, my God, I wish.

Becca: And it was a full circle.

Becca: Kate Winslet, if you want to come on this podcast? [laughs]

Molly: Anyway, [crosstalk] [laughs] I'm flushed.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: They're leaving now. We cut to them in the carriage, and Marianne is yelling at Margaret for revealing about Edward having the F name, and saying-- Margaret's like, "Everyone's talking about it. Mrs. Jennings was talking about it." Marianne is like, "Mrs. Jennings isn't everyone," and Margaret says, "I like her. She talks about things. We never talk about things." That is another instance, where Margaret acts as a lens for us to view this family's grief. Because this little girl wants to process stuff and [00:16:00] she can't, because nobody will talk about it because everyone's grieving in their own ways.

Elinor silently, Marianne through the piano, and Mrs. Dashwood crying all the time, but never actually talking about it. I'm sure Margaret's talking about not just their grief, but the way it comes out is very much like, "We weren't always this way. Why don't we talk anymore?" Which I thought was really beautiful.

Vanessa: And who doesn't love hanging out with gossips?

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: Gossips are the most fun people.

Becca: There was a point in time where we were talking and it was like, "Mrs. Jennings and John Middleton don't bother me, because they're loud, and vulgar, and gossipy." Then, I realized it's because we are loud, and vulgar, and gossipy. So, we are basically just Mrs. Jennings and John Middleton doing this podcast, shipping our little characters every week.

Molly: [laughs] Yes.

Vanessa: Yes, it's true. What are they doing with shipping? I am very fond of gossips. To quote Olympia Dukakis in *Steel Magnolias*, if you [00:17:00] don't have anything nice to say, come sit by me.

Molly: [laughs]

Vanessa: Let's just talk. I love that Marianne is a vision of the kind of old woman I want to be fat and gossipy. Relatable, Marianne.

Molly: Iconic. Speaking of, if you don't have anything nice to say, sit by me, Mrs. Dashwood tells Margaret, "If you don't have anything appropriate to say, speak of the weather," which later Margaret will do, which I thought was chef's kiss.

Vanessa: [laughs] We had very nice weather.

Molly: Yeah. [laughs] The next day, they're collecting reed, and Marianne struggling with a reed, and Colonel Brandon offers her a knife, and you can see that he doesn't linger. He gives it to her and disappears, but she looks mildly uncomfortable, like you know that she is catching on a little bit. But she doesn't care too much, but there's a hint of it in her eyes.

Vanessa: And just God bless the prop master, who lovingly put a little bit of Kate Winslet's black lace [00:18:00] bonnet wrap on the reed. Again. It's just this Ang Lee desire to show you that these are real people, who the knots in their aprons get stuck, and they're lace gets stuck on the reeds, and it's excellent.

Molly: The fact that she's wearing her mourning lace, her black lace of mourning while still trying to go on and do life things just shows where we're at.

Vanessa: Yeah, so good. It's so good.

Molly: So good, so subtle.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Molly: Then, we cut to Sir John and Brandon polishing their guns or doing whatever it is that men do.

Becca: [laughs]

Vanessa: I love that you think that they are polishing their guns. [laughs]

Molly: What are they doing?

Vanessa: Cleaning.

Molly: [laughs]

Vanessa: Polishing is something you do for a shot. I love it. They just want their guns to be shiny. They are accessories.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: You're so right.

Becca: I don't know if you can tell by the everything about us, but we are two girls who know very, very little about hunting rifles. [00:19:00] [laughs]

Vanessa: I live in Boston, Massachusetts, and I'm a Jew from LA.

Becca: [laughs]

Vanessa: I just live in the world.

Becca: [laughs]

Vanessa: Sorry, I need to go put down my hunting rifle.

[laughter]

Vanessa: I named it Jim. I take it out on Sunday.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Listen, you never know because one of my dearest friends is a costume designer and very artistic, loves pink, spends all of her time drinking rosé, watching *Sex and the City*. She grew up in a country and she's quite the little hunter. So, you never know. Sometimes, people can surprise you.

Vanessa: Except I told you that I'm from the San Fernando Valley and love *Clueless*.

Becca: It's fair.

Becca: True. You never know, but have you seen *Clueless*, no hunting rifle.

Becca: That's true. That is a movie very, very bereft of hunting rifles.

Vanessa: Famously so.

Becca: That's what everyone says about *Clueless* is that, it has no hunting rifles in it.

Vanessa: Based on *Emma*, written by Amy Heckerling, [00:20:00] no hunting rifles.

Molly: [laughs] But you know, movie does have hunting rifles in it.

Vanessa: There it is, Molly. Look at you, the pro.

Molly: *Sense and Sensibility* with the segue.

Vanessa: And we're polishing some guns.

Molly: And they're polishing their guns. John is like, "You know the word on the street is you've got your eyes on Marianne Dashwood," and Colonel Brandon says, "Marianne Dashwood would no more think of me than she would have of John and the better for her."

Vanessa: Such a burn to imply that is so farfetched that Marianne would think of John. It's like, "You're ugly and that's how little she thinks of me. She acquaints the two of us and we both know we're totally in different leagues."

Becca: [laughs]

Vanessa: But she can't even see that. It's such a burn. But I love Sir John because he handles it so well. He's like, "Do not think of yourself so meanly." He leans into the joke. God bless him.

Molly: Very pure. It just bounces right [00:21:00] off him. Sir John can get it. I'm sorry that was not-- I didn't know I was going to say that. I don't think that.

Becca: No, leave it in, leave it in. Oh, leave it in.

Molly: [laughs]

Vanessa: He's very charming.

Becca: Is he?

Molly: Oh, man.

Becca: He has great dogs.

Vanessa: Oh, I find him very charming. He's like, "Come live in my cottage for free." When they try to thank him, he's like, "None of that, none of that." I think he is a deeply good, kind person.

Becca: Absolutely.

Molly: You know what? You're right. I want to reinforce my statement that Sir John can get it.

Vanessa: Yeah, he can get it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: We're going to have to put a poll on our Instagram. Would you go for Sir John? Would you not?

Molly: Can Sir John get it? Yes [crosstalk]

Becca: But you know who can get it? This movie.

Molly: Yes, Colonel Brandon can get it. He says it's all the better for her. He really thinks that he is not good for this girl and we appreciate that in this house. Then, we cut to Mrs. Jennings and Elinor watching [00:22:00] the others play a game of something. Horseshoes?

Vanessa: They are bowling, garden bowling.

Molly: Garden bowling, not horseshoes at all. Garden bowling.

Vanessa: How many times have I seen this movie? Jesus.

Molly: I'm guessing a lot of times. I have to say how dare they-- and this is the one thing that I had a problem with in this movie. I don't care that much, but I do, that they took the opportunity of telling the story to Elinor away from Colonel Brandon himself and put that on to Mrs. Jennings. I understand why they did it, because this Colonel Brandon is-- Actually, let me get into it. I understand why they did it. The Colonel Brandon and Elinor friendship that is present in the book is very, very, very important to me as someone who is a Brandonor shipper. They completely erased that in the movie and I think that that starts with-- not completely, but [00:23:00] they really diminished that in the movie, and I think that that starts with this, because this is supposed to be Colonel Brandon telling Elinor his tragic story. Instead, they have Mrs. Jennings tell it which makes sense. But it's taking away this moment of bonding between Colonel Brandon and Elinor.

Vanessa: Yes, I think that the performers carry the friendship through their little moments anyway.

Molly: Sure.

Vanessa: Emma Thompson and Alan Rickman, and I think it's because they cut the last miscommunication between Edward and Elinor in the movie. So, Edward never thinks that she's with Colonel Brandon. And because of that, they just cut the intimacy between the two of them. I think it was

smart streamlining. I agree, I love watching Elinor and Colonel Brandon together. They have some great little moments.

Molly: They do. They totally do. I think the movie diminished that friendship, because they [00:24:00] didn't want to have happened what happened to me, which is that I got so focused on shipping Colonel Brandon and Elinor that I lost track of the plot and Becca had to reel me in.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Becca: It was the first time I had to give Molly a major spoiler on anything on the podcast, because she literally couldn't focus on the actual book, because she was like, "And this is how Elinor and Brandon are going to get together." I was like, "Okay, you're just really, really often I need to set you right."

Vanessa: [laughs]

Molly: I think the movie wanted to avoid that happening on a mass scale, because with movies, people ship harder, I think. When it's a movie, people put the pictures of people together and put it on their Facebook profile page. You know, that's what I did when I [crosstalk]

Becca: I also think that it's a matter of just time. This movie is 2 hours 15 minutes. When they are making this movie, as Vanessa said very cleanly, they had to streamline the plot. One thing that [00:25:00] Emma Thompson did in her screenplay was flesh out the romantic relationships a little bit more than they are fleshed out in the book. Where the book favors primarily the Elinor and Marianne sisterhood, and the Colonel Brandon and Elinor friendship over some of the fleshing out that's done, say between Edward and Elinor at the beginning, and Colonel Brandon and Marianne at the end, there's reasons Jane Austen wrote it that way for sure. But I think for the purpose of telling a cohesive story, it's better to get the romance element. If they're going to give more time to one of those two relationships, I would greatly prefer it be Elinor and Marianne, just for how I read the book. I agree with Vanessa that that two actors really do carry of warmth and friendship together through the movie, which is very important. That comes from the fact that those two actors are very good friends in real life. [00:26:00] May Alan Rickman rest in peace.

Molly: May he rest in peace. I saw someone had-- when I was googling the cast.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Which I wasn't supposed to be doing that [crosstalk]

Becca: What? One thing I asked you not to do.

Molly: I know. But I was looking at an article about *Red Nose Day Actually* or whatever that *Love Actually* 10-minute sequel was. It came out several years after the fact. Emma Thompson didn't appear in it, because she said she couldn't bear to appear in it without Alan Rickman, and that broke my damn heart. Anyway, yes, I agree with what both of you have said, and I totally again understand why they had to do it. It hurt me but it was okay in the end.

Vanessa: [laughs]

Molly: Mrs. Jennings tells Elinor the whole story, except they take out the part where Eliza was married to Brandon's brother and that he treated her badly. I don't know why they did that. I guess more streamlining, [00:27:00] but it was just a slightly more simplified story. Then, Marianne and Brandon are walking towards the two of them and you can see them smiling and laughing together and being friends, which is nice. Mrs. Jennings tries to get them to play a duet together. She's like, "Oh, Brandon shares your passion for music," and Marianne is like, "Shut it down. I don't know any duets."

Vanessa: [laughs] And then, she is properly embarrassed for having to shut down Brandon. She's like, "I'm sorry, Colonel." But she clearly is also just pissed right at Mrs. Jennings, which leads to the next scene's first line, right?

Molly: Yeah.

Vanessa: We're never to have a moment's peace.

Molly: Yeah. She's like, "Why are they following me around? Why are they trying to get me to date him? He's old. He's got rheumatism."

[laughter]

Molly: Meanwhile, they receive a package and everything comes screeching to a halt when it's the Atlas, [00:28:00] because Edward was supposed to bring that himself.

Becca: I believe we can get a record scratch in there.

[record scratch]

Molly: Yeah, record scratch, Graham, like a sad record scratch. [sad record scratch] Graham's our audio engineer.

Becca: He gives us sound effects. [laughs]

Vanessa: It is very sad.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. Margaret's really disappointed like, "Why didn't he come?" Marianne is like, "Come on. I'm going to take you for a walk." Margaret's like, "No, it's going to rain," and Marianne's like, "It's not going to rain," and Margaret's like, "You always say that and then it always does."

Becca: I just wanted to say really quickly. You wrote in your notes, did this happen in the book? And I wanted to point out this is actually another major plot point you didn't notice that they cut which was Edward coming to visit them in Barton Cottage.

Molly: Wow. They really played it off very smoothly, didn't they?

Becca: With the ring of hair, come one.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Right. Okay, one big thing that they cut [laughs] was that there's no hair play. There's no back and forth with the freaking hair.

Vanessa: Oh. Hair [00:29:00] play. I'm so sorry that I heard that.

Molly: I know. I'm sorry that I said it.

Vanessa: Thank you. I don't forgive you but I will eventually.

Molly: Thank you. You know what? I'll take that, in time. We'll get past this. Yeah, there's none of that. I'm upset about it, because that's why I thought that Elinor and Edward knew each other already, because in the book, it gives them a lot of time. In the movie, they had this week together. It's probably longer than that but they just had a little time, where they fell in love really fast, and then nothing, nothing, nothing and then all of a sudden, something. Somehow, I still believe it. They do a good job, because the actors have chemistry and they do a good job with it. But yeah, I was missing that for sure, but I do like this him not coming thing. Can't believe I forgot that. I will say that the fact that Becca had to point me back to the notes, I always write my notes in such detail, literally moment by moment, thinking [00:30:00] like, "I'm never going to be able to remember all of this. So, I have to write it all down." Then, I just put my notes aside and I start quoting the movie word for word, because I've seen it so many times by this point.

Vanessa: It's dangerous, but it happens. Yeah.

Molly: So, they go for a walk, and it is raining, and Margaret is complaining about how she's going to catch a cough, and Marianne's like, "No, you're not." Foreshadow, foreshadow, foreshadow. She's like, "Just over that hill, there's going to be some rabbits," and Margaret's like, "I don't want to look at the rabbits," and Marianne's like, "Yes, you do." I love this, because it was all kind of background talk with the rain coming down and the wind.

Vanessa: Yes.

Molly: But you got their sisterly vibes going on. Then, we go to the field of rabbits, and Marianne is like, "Look, there's a patch of blue sky. Let's chase it." She starts running down the hill, and this is where she trips and falls down the hill, and I just have to say, with so much respect to Kate Winslet, that [00:31:00] she starts running down the hill, and you can tell that this is like a stage combat fall. She starts to go for it. This is [laughter] and then she does it again, and rolls down the hill.

Vanessa: I am going to push back on that, because I do not think Ang Lee would let an imperfect shot into the film.

Molly: Okay, fair.

Vanessa: I think sometimes you are starting to fall and you're like, "No, I caught myself." Then, you're like, "No, I fricking didn't," and you biff it. I agree the choreography is as you describe, she skips and it looks wobbly, but then she's fine, and then she's not again. But as someone who falls far too frequently for my age, I think this is a recognizable form of fall to me.

Molly: All right, I'll take it. I'll take it.

Vanessa: I hate to push back.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Really quick on the Ang Lee being a perfectionist thing, one fun interview from this movie is that Hugh Grant was talking about being directed by him in this movie, and he says, "Yeah, I was doing a take and then Ang said cut, and he came over to me and [00:32:00] was like, "Ah, could you do it again but be good this time?"

Molly: [laughs]

Vanessa: That's brutal, that's brutal.

Becca: I know.

Molly: It is brutal out here, as Olivia Rodrigo would say.

Becca: Listen, whatever he did, it worked because one thing you absolutely cannot clock on anybody in this movie are the performances.

Vanessa: Yeah, no, absolutely.

Molly: So true.

Vanessa: Oh, that sucks though.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Yeah, it does. Margaret goes to get help, and enter Willoughby on a horse that almost tramples the poor girl. The cinematography on this moment was great, because Margaret's running and Marianne is like, "Margaret, look out!" Margaret turns completely in the wrong direction and spins back around, and sees the horse coming, and screams, and then he's completely on a different side of her. It was very good. It was disorienting a little bit, like can't tell how close this call actually was. Willoughby comes over to help Marianne [00:33:00] and he's like, "Can I ascertain if there's any--?" We love consent in this house. "May I have your permission to ascertain if there are any breaks?" and then slowly stripping off her shoe, and rolling her foot around, and he's very hot.

Vanessa: Yes.

Molly: He scoops her up, he carries her back, he's so kind to the family, and as he's leaving, Mrs. Dashwood is following him out and Marianne whispers, "His name! His name!" It's just so good. They get his name, and then Elinor tells Marianne, she needs to change or she'll catch a cold. This was one of my favorite moments. Marianne goes, "What care I for colds when there is such a man?" Elinor says, "You will care very much when your nose swells up." Marianne, without skipping a beat, goes, "You are right. Help me, Elinor."

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: She helps her upstairs to change.

Vanessa: I love the honesty of siblings in that moment.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Oh, it's so true.

Molly: Yeah, that is a great moment between them. Especially when Mrs. Dashwood is like, "Tell me if I'm hurting you," and Elinor is like, "You're not hurting her. She's fine." [00:34:00] [laughter]

Vanessa: I do not think she feels pain, mama.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: I mean, he does walk in just chiseled, and dripping, and gallant.

Vanessa: Oh, and I love the way he says, if we're going to talk about a great line read, the way he says, "Well, let's get you up and I'll get you home. This isn't an inconvenience. It's my pleasure to help you." It is a great meet cute.

Molly: Oh, yeah. He is very smooth. Very, very smooth. Well, speaking of good line readings, does that bring us to Becca's study questions?

Becca: It does. Listeners, we have made it to the study questions. So, here we are. We have a couple. The first question, and everyone has to answer each one, is what is the best line delivery in the movie so far?

Vanessa: I think it's Hugh Grant saying, "Maybe Margaret is right. Piracy is the only option." Is that also yours, Molly?

Molly: That actually, it's on my list but it is not mine. I think mine [00:35:00] has to be also Edward saying, "Right. Where the coffee beans come from."

[laughter]

Molly: It's so good. It's subtle and the way that he's trying so hard to not sound like he's being funny, but they're having this moment, chef's kiss.

Becca: Oh, so perfect.

Vanessa: Yeah, amen.

Becca: Shouts to Hugh Grant for just making Edward into a dreamboat in this movie.

Molly: Oh, yes.

Becca: All right. I have two. One is, "Care I for clods when there is such a man?" Then, Elinor saying, "You will care when your nose swells up," and she goes, "You are right. Help me, Elinor."

Molly: That was also on my list.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Becca: Then, number two is, when Margaret asks Colonel Brandon, "What the West Indies are like?" and he goes, "The air is full of spices."

Molly: Spices. Can I add one to my list? I also have, "Is love of fancy, or a feeling, or affairs.? I do not deny that I think very highly of him that I esteem him, that I like him."

[laughter]

Becca: Specifically, when [00:36:00] Kate Winslet says it, not when Emma Thompson says it.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Molly: Oh, yeah. When she says-- specifically, I think vai-- She doesn't say very, she says vai. "I think vai highly of him."

Vanessa: No, she does a great priggish Elinor mocking voice for sure.

Becca: Notable additions to story via the movie.

Molly: Margaret.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah. Everything about Margaret, it's all so good. Margaret with her treehouse and her love affair with Edward, it's fantastic.

Molly: Justice for Margaret.

Vanessa: And you just watch Margaret fall in love with all of her sisters' suitors, which I feel as a younger sibling, that's what you do, right?

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. [crosstalk]

Vanessa: Oh, it's very relatable.

Molly: Also, the fact that this story, it's about sisters, and we always talk about Elinor and Marianne, the original title of this book, but Margaret's there too.

Becca: Yes, I would totally agree that this movie [00:37:00] does real justice to Margaret, a very underrepresented character. I will also give shouts to my boy, Eddie, who I think it's a much better portrayal in this adaptation than in the book. You really get to see all of that shy sweetness that Jane Austen talks about actually play out in an utterly charming, floppy Hugh Grant performance.

Molly: So floppy.

Becca: So floppy. Best and worst aspects of the film so far? Best first. Or, let's do worst first and then end on a positive note. [giggles]

Vanessa: I'm going to just say the casting. Really, I want to see 21-year-old Elinor Dashwood.

Molly: Yeah.

Vanessa: That's it. That's my only criticism of the movie. But I wish that we could go back in time and have Emma Thompson be 21 when this movie gets made. I don't know what we would have done with-- I guess Baby Kate Winslet's could have played Margaret, but I just find it so distracting that does middle-aged woman [00:38:00] is in this situation.

Molly: Yeah. I think I'm going to have to agree both with-- it's hard because overall, I want to say-- I think the casting is perfect. However, they're just in the wrong time. They're in the wrong ages.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Molly: Because Brandon should be 10 years younger, Elinor should be 10 years younger, and everyone else is perfect, and also, they play the characters so well. So, it's so hard, because I can't say that they are wrongly cast, but I can't say that they're well cast either. So, that has to be a criticism of mine as well. Everything else, it's just so good so far.

Becca: I would agree. I think I want to be really clear and I think you guys have been really clear as well that Emma Thompson's performance in this is a treasure, Alan Rickman's performance in this is a treasure. It's just distracting as far as they're playing much younger than they actually are. [00:39:00] If it were a play, we wouldn't care. [laughs]

Molly: Well, yeah. I haven't seen it but the movie version of *Dear Evan Hansen*, for example, a lot of people have said-- which is funny because that actor's the same age as some of the other actors playing high school students in that movie but he just appears older than them. Becca, have you seen it or you--?

Becca: No, I'm just horrified. I'm reeling that you compared Emma Thompson's performance in this movie to Ben Platt's performance in the movie, *Dear Evan Hansen*. [laughs]

Molly: Well, I didn't say-- First of all, I love Ben Platt. Second of all, I have not seen him in the movie. I just think the age thing is something that distracts people from the story and this is distracting from the story. But other than that, I have no complaints, honestly.

Vanessa: Yeah, me neither.

Becca: Okay. Best thing in the movie so far?

Vanessa: Just to talk about something we haven't talked about yet. I think that the music in the movie is amazing. You have [00:40:00] some background soundtrack like dropped tracks, but for the most part, it is in the 10 rules [unintelligible [00:40:07] movie world of music that is actually being played. That is most frequently the music Marianne is playing the piano, someone else playing the piano in the background, and I always think that's a really lovely touch. It's just gorgeous piano music.

Molly: Yeah, I really love the music. Seeing all of the dogs has [crosstalk]

Vanessa: Yeah, the dogs are amazing.

Molly: I remember early, early on when we first started *Pride and Prejudice*, I was like, "Do they have any animals?" Becca was like, "Don't worry. We'll get there."

Becca: I said something along the lines of, "Assume there are always dogs there."

Vanessa: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. This movie really gets plays into that, especially, especially at Barton, because they're just dogs, and dogs, and dogs. There's one scene that I really like that I think might be one of my favorite moments, even though nothing's happening in it. It's after Brandon said, [00:41:00] "And all the better for her." Then, he's walking away with his gun and with his whip thing, and he's walking, and his dog is next to him, and he's wearing that hat.

Vanessa: Well, the dog is carrying an animal. That dog has had a good day.

Molly: And the dog is staring to the dead animal.

Vanessa: The dog is like, "I did it. I found the dead animal." I'm like, "I'm a vegetarian, but I'm happy for you, dog." You crushed it.

Molly: Yeah. I'm vegan and that was weird for me, but I also was so into it.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Becca: I think it's so hard to pick because I love this whole movie, but I'm going to give shouts to specifically the relationship between Edward and Margaret is special. We've talked about it a little bit.

But taking an interest in Margaret and giving her joy after her dad dies is really something that makes him pretty forgivable throughout a movie, where he needs a little bit of forgiveness.

Molly: Sure.

Becca: Okay, that leads us to the [00:42:00] last note and this is a little different from best thing in the film. Who wins this part of the film?

Molly: Who or what? It could be a moment, it could be a person, it could be a set piece, it could be a dog. I think I want to give my win to Gemma Jones. She didn't do anything nothing in particular that was like this takes the cake, but I was so excited to see her there. I was so excited by her portrayal of Mrs. Dashwood. I think the range on this woman is incredible and I think she's just the perfect casting. I think it's going to be a tie between Gemma Jones as Mrs. Dashwood and Edward and Margaret sword fighting. Those are my two big takeaways from this half of the movie.

Vanessa: Yeah. I think that I just like in order to keep everyone on their toes, I do want to give Colonel Brandon a big shoutout. His walk softly and [00:43:00] carry a big stick way with Marianne is very endearing. The way that he to your point engages immediately in a game of improv with Margaret, like seeing the delight in her face when she's like, "What's India like?" Playing with her, but really the moments where he's just never creepy with her. For an older man smitten with a young girl, you get some points for resisting the creep.

Molly: I feel I need to change my answer because I immediately made my phone background Colonel Brandon and I didn't give him the [crosstalk]

Vanessa: I did it for you. We're a team.

Molly: You're right, you're right. I just want to like-- to Alan Rickman, wherever you are. In my heart, you are a winner [crosstalk].

Vanessa: You inspired me. I have your back. Don't worry, Molly.

Molly: Thank you so much.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Becca: I am going to give my win to somebody else. We just criticized Emma Thompson because not only is she playing the wit, and practicality, and [00:44:00] vulnerability of Elinor very beautifully, but this script is no easy feat. I've seen many Austen movies, where there's a lot of really rushing to get everything into the two hours and things don't go totally correct. But the way this movie just sings through the plot, and cuts where it needs to, and make sacrifices where it needs to, but also tells its own cohesive story is really masterful. Emma Thompson is not seen as a screenwriter as often as she is seen as an actor, but I think this movie is really a masterclass for her. So, kudos to Emma Thompson.

Molly: Absolutely.

Vanessa: I'm not going to be on the pod for my favorite part of the movie. So, can I pre-shoutout?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yes.

Vanessa: The best part of the movie is Emma Thompson's performance when she is praying over Marianne.

Becca: Yes.

Vanessa: That line of, "Please don't leave me alone," it's just the best thing in the film. [00:45:00] I just like to say that now.

Becca: I would probably agree with you on that. When she says, "I can bear all the rest, but I can't bear this." Oh, I cry every time. We all three were crying when that was happening.

Molly: Yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. That part broke me and I am sure that we will talk a lot about it. But I'm really glad you brought it up now because, gosh, it was so good.

Vanessa: Yeah. What else does the soul say, more than anything than the people we love? "Just please don't leave me," right?

Molly: Yeah. She's been through so much by that point. Everything is happening, and she's just been burying it and burying it, and in that moment, she's like, "I can't take this too."

Vanessa: Right. She's like, "Apparently, you are the only thing I need."

Becca: Oh.

Molly: Yeah.

Vanessa: Yeah. It's so good. So, enjoy, whoever you're talking about that part with.

[laughter]

Becca: We will make sure to say, listen, Vanessa [00:46:00] wants-- Well, you know what?

Vanessa: Thank you.

Becca: Just write something down, we'll read it out when that person comes on.

Vanessa: [laughs] Thank you and [unintelligible [00:46:08] know-- No, I've said my piece. This is in fantastic people's hands, brilliant people's hands. I have no doubt that you will give the moment its due. I

had to be on the record that that is objectively the best part of the film.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Absolutely.

Becca: Vanessa, this has been such a delight, such a treasure. You're a wonderful person to talk to.

[laughter]

Vanessa: Well, thank you and likewise. Really, if you need a list of *Pride and Prejudice* adaptations, I will send it, and read them all, and have me back on. But while you're on *Sense and Sensibility*, read *Jane of Austin*, the Austin Texas retelling of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Molly: I can't wait to read that. I am so excited.

Vanessa: It has a Bernie Madoff type dad. It's so well brought up to date.

Molly: Wow.

Vanessa: Willoughby is a [00:47:00] guy who wants to be a rocker in the Austin music scene.

Becca: Ooh, yeah, that'll do it.

Molly: Wow.

Vanessa: I cannot recommend it more highly.

Becca: That sounds fantastic. The only modern adaptation I've heard of *Sense and Sensibility* is *From Prada to Nada*, which is famously I hate watch. [laughs]

Vanessa: Well, read *Jane of Austin*. It's fantastic.

Molly: Definitely. Well, thank you so much for coming. Do you have anything you want to plug to our listeners? What shows you're on, social media if you want them to follow you, or websites, or anything?

Vanessa: Yeah, you can follow me @vanessamzoltan on Instagram and Twitter. It will say that. Buy my book. If you like spending time with me, I have a book called *Praying with Jane Eyre*.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: It is me even more edited than Molly's going to make me.

Molly: [laughs]

Vanessa: So, Molly made me even more charming than I am, and then my editor did that again.

Molly: Nice. All right. Well, listeners, it's been [00:48:00] real. Vanessa, again, thank you so much. This is such a delight, and until next time, stay proper--

Vanessa: --And carry that dead animal in your mouth with pride.

Becca: I love that.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Vanessa: Tail up, ears perked.

Molly: Tail up, ears perked.

Becca: I was going to say, find someone to polish a gun with.

[laughter]

Vanessa: That works, too.

Molly: It's a message. That's a euphemism.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I ever heard them.

Vanessa: [laughs]

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.