

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to give a huge shoutout to our newest patrons, Callie, Alyssa, and Francis. Welcome to the team. Thanks to our amazing patrons, we've finally got new mics. We are so excited and we couldn't have done it without our patrons. If you want to join our Patreon team, head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice.

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And now, enjoy this final book episode covering Chapters 49 and 50 of *Sense and Sensibility*.

Wow, it's our last episode on *Sense and Sensibility*, the novel.

Becca: Yes, the novel is complete. Graham, the party music. [party music] Whoo! [00:01:00] Molly, how are you feeling?

Molly: I have no idea how to process my feelings, Becca. It has been a wild ride. This book has been full of ups and downs, twists and turns.

Becca: Well, we're going to talk about some of those ups and downs, twists and turns but first--

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

Becca: We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

Molly: We are here to talk about the final two chapters of *Sense and Sensibility*. Whoo! Whoo! Whoo!

Becca: Yay.

Molly: Listeners, if this is your first time with us, weird choice but okay.

[laughter]

Molly: I, Molly, have never read any Jane Austen before doing this podcast.

Becca: I, Becca, have read a lot of Jane Austen before doing this podcast. If you want to hear Molly read *Pride and Prejudice* for the first time, you can go listen to Season 1 of this podcast. But that is not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No. Today, we are talking about Chapters 49 and 50 of *Sense and Sensibility* or [00:02:00] Volume III Chapters 13 and 14, if your book is divided up like that.

Becca: Yes, and oh, boy, do we fast forward through a lot of time in these last few chapters.

Molly: Yeah. Jane Austen's a really big fan of the *Where Are They Now?*, isn't she?

Becca: She loves an epilogue.

Molly: She does love an epilogue.

Becca: Yeah. In this book in particular, she really crammed a lot into that epilogue. In the last book, everyone was married off by the end, and she was like, "And they were either happy or unhappy."

Molly: In this one, it's like, "By the way, two of the main characters are going to pair off three years after the fact."

Becca: Yes. [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. We should probably just get into it.

Becca: Oh, absolutely. There's so much to talk about and I love the way this book ends. So, I am very excited to convince you to do so too.

Molly: It's funny because I feel like, yes, we have only read one Jane Austen before this. But I feel like this is our first book where we've had very differing opinions about things.

Becca: [00:03:00] Yes, and I think that a lot of my opinions will make a little bit more sense when we watch the movies.

Molly: Sure. I think that a lot of people feel that way because I went to a friend's going away thing last night, and was talking about *Sense and Sensibility* with people, you know, as you do at a party. And other people said similar things about having seen the movie first and feeling attached to certain plotlines.

Becca: I should also be clear. There's something very specific I like about the way this ends. There's a couple things I like a lot about the end. One of the big ones is the Lucy Steele plotline. I think it's hilarious and fantastic, and I'll explain why as we go through.

Molly: It's totally funny. Okay, yes. Let's get into it. We'll just start right off the bat. Chapter 49, or Volume III, Chapter 13. The Dashwoods might not understand why Eddie is now free but they know that he is, and they assume that since he's already had one imprudent engagement behind his mother's back that lasted for four years, he probably won't have any problem having another [00:04:00] imprudent engagement behind his mother's back, i.e., he's probably going to propose to Elinor. Classic Eddie with his imprudent endangerment.

Becca: Yes, he is. Oh.

Molly: So, he had in fact come to Barton exclusively to propose, and the narrator doesn't explain how exactly his engagement with Elinor went down. Only that he walked around outside for a little bit, got

up the courage, and by 4 o'clock, they were engaged.

Becca: She does mention that he did knock out that asking her mother thing first.

Molly: Yes, he had her consent, they all sat down to dinner, it was lovely.

Becca: Yes. So, Graham will take the engagement sound effect. [engagement sound effect]

Molly: Whoo!

Becca: She got a ring.

Molly: She did. If you like it, then you should have put a ring on it.

Becca: And he did, finally.

Molly: At last, yeah.

Becca: Ah!

Molly: So, he's exceptionally happy because not only is his love reciprocated and his marriage proposal accepted, but also, he has been freed from an engagement that has so long formed [00:05:00] his abject misery, because he's been engaged to someone he doesn't love. And "elevated at once to that security with another which he must have thought of almost with despair as soon as he had learned to consider it with desire." This part really attached me to this man.

Becca: This is a chapter where you really get a sense of who Edward is as a person. We learned at the very beginning what he was like, humble, sweet, shy, human disaster, little boy, anxious, and super into being a try-hard worker. But this chapter, she does a little bit more showing and a little less telling.

Molly: Yes. She tells us how as soon as he realized he was in love with Elinor, it just brought him so much pain, because he knew he could never be with her, because he's been with Lucy Steele this whole time. Sweet, sweet boy tried to do right, did bad, didn't do great.

Becca: He's compost.

Molly: He's compost. Ultimately, [00:06:00] it helps the planet and we like it but it smells weird.

Becca: Yes. Ah, Eddie smells weird. [giggles]

Molly: I do have to say that in hearing all of these descriptions of Eddie as a little bit helpless in his whole situation, I do have to say, I do think that Hugh Grant is going to be phenomenal as Eddie, which I couldn't see at first because I thought of Hugh Grant as being just minorly douchey.

Becca: Hugh Grant is supposedly kind of douchey. But Hugh Grant in romcoms is famously floppy and disastered.

Molly: Yes, and he has this facial expression that he does where his eyebrows scrunch up a little, and his eyes look a little sad, and he looks a little bit like a wounded puppy.

Becca: Absolutely. I think of that scene in *Love Actually*-- not *Love Actually*. In *Notting Hill*, where he's offering Julia Roberts the apricots and honey.

Molly: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Becca: He's like, "Oh, would you like something to eat? Something to nibble?"

Molly: [laughs] Yes, exactly it's that.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: It's when in *Love Actually*, when he [00:07:00] realizes that he's been in love with What's-Her-Face the whole time and he goes like, "Oh, dear--"

Becca: Is it Natalie?

Molly: Natalie, yeah. He's like, "Oh, bollocks" or whatever. I don't know what but he says but it's so good and I think that he's going to be great. So, really excited for tonight when we watch the movie. So, he tells Elinor everything about Lucy with "the philosophic dignity of 24." He's able to look on it with retrospect now at almost 27 years old with no money and no prospects, I do not think that I had a lot of philosophic dignity at age 24 but I get it.

Becca: I was a law student at 24. So, my philosophic dignity was starting to form. But I still don't think I have any philosophic dignity. I'm pretty sure that's now reserved for turning 40.

Molly: Yeah, I'll be ready to make these retrospective claims to my life when I'm 45.

Becca: I was going to I said 40, but then I'm like, when I turned 40, I'm going to be like, "That's for 60."

Molly: [laughs] Yeah. [00:08:00] He explains that when he left his homeschooling with Mr. Pratt, he believed himself genuinely in love with Lucy. But he was 19, and he was young, and he was foolish, and he blames the fact that he wasn't allowed to choose a profession. We've talked about this many a times. He wanted to do one thing, his mom wanted to do another thing. But instead, he was just forced to sit idle, which I still don't really fully understand why he couldn't just do something. But in any event, he didn't have a job. So, he was stuck with his feelings doing nothing, but just going and visiting Lucy Steele. So, of course, he was going to think like, "Oh, this is it for me. I've found the one." He ends up with her in that way. And also, at that point, he hadn't really spent much time with women. So, he thought she was the gold standard.

Becca: Yeah. And we have to remember, as these two chapters really articulate, Lucy Steele is a master at charming people.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Especially foolish people. So, it makes a lot of [00:09:00] sense. I will say it is a curse of the upper classes in this era that there wasn't much work that was "worth doing" in terms of social class.

Molly: mm-hmm.

Becca: And basically, everything Edward wanted to do was considered too low class for him, and everything that his mother wanted him to do, he didn't want to do.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, his family was more content to just be like, "Do nothing," than to let him do what he actually wanted to do. So, he feels useless to society and doesn't like it.

Molly: Yes. Fair.

Becca: He is a good bean.

Molly: He is a bean. That night, Mrs. Bennet is just too happy. She can't sleep, she doesn't want to smother them with her love, but she also wants to smother them with her love.

Becca: There's a line Jane Austen writes where it's like Mrs. Dashwood went to sleep and she could not be more in love with Edward, she could not be more happy for Elinor.

Molly: Yeah. She's like she wanted to give them space but she also wanted to watch them together [00:10:00] the whole night.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Marianne is also very happy but she is shedding many a tear because she's feeling her regrets.

Becca: It's like a coma. She's happy and sad. It's like when you watch *Ted Lasso*.

Molly: it's like, you're happy and sad at the same time. That's an Olivia Rodrigo song, right?

Becca: I'm sure. I was thinking more just watching *Ted Lasso* with you, where we both are in our feelings and then you cry.

Molly: Yeah, I'm usually crying by the end of *Ted Lasso* mostly because it's so pure.

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: So, Elinor meanwhile, Elinor. How can we describe Elinor's feelings? Elinor is "oppressed overcome by her own felicity." Has she ever been this happy?

Becca: No. Here's the thing. Once she could stop holding it in, you see the progression of Elinor lose control of her own feelings. And now that she's getting everything she wanted and all the drama she went through is just erased, she can't hold back anymore. She needs to be in her feelings right now. Girl

is in it. We [00:11:00] love this.

Molly: Yes, we do love this for Elinor. I'm so happy for her. Eddie is invited to stay with him for a week, and he and Elinor just talk the whole time. It says, "For though a very few hours spent on the hard labor of incessant talking will dispatch more subjects than can really be in common between any two rational creatures. Yet with lovers, it is different." They could just talk forever and ever.

Becca: That's good stuff. Also, this is before lovemaking before the marriage was appropriate.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, these two are dealing with all their sexual tension by just having conversations until they get married.

Molly: Yes, which later on Elinor is like, "Okay, it's time to get married. We're not waiting for the house to-- [laughs]

Becca: She just really wants to bang.

Molly: She does.

Becca: Yes, Elinor.

Molly: Good for her.

Becca: Yes. Oh, this whole set of chapters just could be called Good for Elinor.

Molly: Yeah, honestly. So, Elinor wants to know all about how the whole Lucy and Robert thing came to be especially, because she [00:12:00] literally heard Robert saying that Lucy wasn't pretty, wasn't good for society, he didn't like her. Also, she was engaged to his brother and that engagement is what caused his brother to be disowned. So, Elinor is like, "What's happening here?"

Becca: I will say on a quick side note, this just goes to show that misogynistic guy who's talking about how ugly a girl is, 9 times out of 10, he still would bang.

Molly: Still would bang, still would bang.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Edward thinks that Lucy just flattered his brother out the wazoo and Robert is very susceptible to flattery because he is very vain. Elinor tells him then what Robert said about how he thought he could have stopped the engagement had he known sooner, which is something we drew attention to but I didn't realize what he meant by that. That he was going to go try to stop it or that maybe he had at that point already tried to stop it. I don't know. But he had said that, "If I had known half an hour earlier, I could have stopped this whole thing." Elinor was like, "Okay."

Edward says, "Yeah, that's [00:13:00] very like him. He probably initially did try to convince her not to

marry me but who knows?" He says he doesn't know how long it had actually been carrying on between them. This is where in my notes, I was like, "Wait, did she cheat on him?"

Becca: Yes. I mean, granted. It's the Austen times. So, it's not clear how much these upperclassmen are actually kissing this girl. You know what I mean?

Molly: Right.

Becca: But they might be. Again, we've learned from Willoughby that happens.

Molly: It does.

Becca: But not with Mr. Edward Ferrars, I doubt.

Molly: No, but maybe with Mr. Robert Ferrars.

Becca: Yes. But in terms of courting, very clearly, yes, cheating.

Molly: Yes. I want to say in case it's very noticeable that someone is leaf blowing outside. So, it does--
[crosstalk]

Becca: Yes. Sorry about this, listeners. We live in a very populous city, and sometimes, noises happen. We live in the back of the building but it doesn't mean we don't ever get any noise.

Molly: Yeah. So, just in case it's here but if it's not, I'll cut this but [00:14:00] we'll see. Anyway, I wanted to point it out. Basically, Lucy had been writing to Edward as if everything was normal. He was at Oxford at this point. He hasn't even been to Delaford yet. And then all at once, she sends him a letter saying, "I think you stopped loving me a long time ago. So, you won't mind that I've gotten married to your brother" essentially. She says she hopes that they will still be good friends. Her letter is just pretty slimy.

Becca: Oh, yeah. It's just Lucy Steele trying to justify to the world what happened in that girl mean way that only Lucy Steele can do. So, it's got this veneer of, "Oh sorry, oopsy, my bad."

Molly: Yeah. I think that Lucy honestly, we've been commenting a lot throughout the book about how she is very petty and girl mean, but I think it's more than that. I think that she is a political mastermind.

Becca: Oh, absolutely.

Molly: I want to read some of her [00:15:00] letter.

Becca: Yes, do it.

Molly: "Dear sir, being very sure, I have long--" I'm sorry. She has a Cockney accent but I'm not going to do it. "Being very sure I have long lost your affections, I have thought myself at liberty to bestow my own upon another and have no doubt of being as happy with him as I once used to think I might be with you. But I scorn to accept a hand while the heart was another's." Basically being like, "I knew you were

in love this whole time, you didn't fool me." "Sincerely wish you happy in your choice, and it shall not be my fault if we are not always good friends as our near relationship now makes proper. I can safely say I owe you no ill-will." She's turning it on him being like, "Oh, it's okay."

Becca: Yeah. You basically just see her say, "Oh, well--" Back through most of this book, she has been saying, "Oh, I'm so glad Edward sees you like his sister and you know him. That's so nice. I'm getting engaged. He's so in love with me," all this stuff. Now, she's taking that same relationship she's been very cognizant of [00:16:00] the entire time and being like, "Listen, you shouldn't hide from the fact that you're in love with Elinor Dashwood. So, I've made other arrangements. I'm setting you free. Don't you worry," which is accurate but not why she's doing it.

Molly: No, she's doing it for money.

Becca: Oh, absolutely.

Molly: So, the letter happens. Her postscript though, this had me cackling in my teeth.

Becca: [laughs]

Becca: "I have burned all your letters and will return your picture the first opportunity. Please destroy my scrawls. But the ring with my hair, you are very welcome to keep."

Becca: Ooh.

Molly: In my notes, I wrote, "But you didn't have to cut me off."

Becca: Great stuff but we're not paying for the song.

Molly: No.

Becca: Though the lock of hair makes yet another appearance for you. It's been a minute.

Molly: It has but they didn't forget.

Becca: Oh, no, no, no. Jane Austen tied up that loose end, that split end if you will.

Molly: Wow. Wow, wow, wow. Really good. Becca has this shit-eating grin on right now. Wow, dad jokes-- Okay.

Becca: Oh, boy.

Molly: So, Edward says that he's honestly embarrassed by how badly written and [00:17:00] messy this letter is because she has no ability to write a good letter. But the contents of the letter made up for him because it set him free. Elinor comments that his mother ended up getting exactly what she was trying to avoid. Well, she's got her punishment now because Robert married the very girl that she tried to disown you for. Edward sadly says that even though Mrs. Ferrars was more hurt by Robert marrying Lucy, she will probably forgive him faster because he's her favorite, which is sad.

Becca: Yes. It's very sad and also very emblematic of Edward Ferrars' whole experience of his family.

Molly: Yes, absolutely. Edward hasn't been home yet because as soon as he got the letter, he was like, "I'm going to Barton. I'm going to ask this woman to marry me."

Becca: Thirsty.

Molly: [sound]

Becca: Thirsty. He loves Elinor so fucking much.

Molly: A man with a plan. Even though he had felt jealousy about Colonel Brandon and he was nervous that maybe they would hate him, he didn't really think that they [00:18:00] would, he had it in the back of his mind that maybe he was still okay with the Dashwoods, but he had to go there and act very humble and be like, "I know that you probably hate me." I think that's probably why he arrived and didn't know what to do with himself.

Edward explains that he had started to notice that he and Lucy were very different, that she had lacked a certain liberality in her opinions, I think is what it said. He thought it was just because she was uneducated, but when his mother had disowned him, he had given Lucy this option of continuing the engagement and he thought, because she said she wanted to continue the engagement, it meant she really did love him. Later on, of course, he would learn that she's just--

Becca: A political mastermind.

Molly: Yeah, and a thirsty bitch. At this point, Elinor says that she thinks Lucy probably assumed his mother might ultimately relent, and give him his inheritance back, and it would be better for her to be married at all [00:19:00] than to be single.

[clip-clop sound]

Becca: So, listeners, if this makes it into the episode, which it seems inevitable at this point it will, that is my fridge. We have a ghost but think of it as the clip-clopping of Edwards force towards Barton to ask Elinor for her hand in marriage after he's free from his engagement with Lucy Steele.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That is the sound you're hearing.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: Yeah. It's just the sound effect of Edward Ferrars wanting to satisfy his desires, both sexual and romantic, with the very hottie with a body, Elinor Dashwood herself. See?

[imitates clip-clop sound]

[horse neighs]

Molly: When his mother disowned him, he had given Lucy the option of continuing the engagement or not, [00:20:00] and he thought that because she wanted to continue it that she really did love him, and he doesn't understand in retrospect her motives for staying with him. Elinor thinks that Lucy probably thought his mother was going to eventually relent and give him his inheritance back, and also, it was better for Lucy to be married to him than to be married to no one at all for her status.

Becca: Absolutely, and Edward poor is still better than no man for Lucy Steele.

Molly: Exactly, and he's hot.

Becca: Oh, yeah. Edward's hot. Actually, I mean he's supposed to be cute.

Molly: That to me is hot.

Becca: Yeah, I know. I agree, I agree.

Molly: Yeah. Elinor, at this point scolds Edward for spending so much time with them at Norland because it gave them all false hope, because he knew that he was engaged. He says, and this part really did, this is where I turned and became an Edward stan because he thought that his heart was safe because it's like, "I'm engaged. I can be friends with these people and not risk falling in love [00:21:00] because I'm attached to someone else." He never would have expected Elinor to love him. He just thought they were all just hanging out genuinely as friends. It wasn't until he started comparing his feelings for Elinor with his feelings for Lucy that he realized he was in love with Elinor. But he continued coming because he really thought that he was only hurting himself. He didn't think that he could possibly be hurting Elinor.

Becca: And he's so in love. Ah, he can't help himself.

Molly: He really can't and he's a low self-esteem boy.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He doesn't think that he's worthy of her love, which he's not.

Becca: No one is worthy of Elinor.

Molly: No. He is excited to hear that Brandon is coming to the cottage. He feels at this point guilty for how he treated Brandon when Brandon offered him the living. Why did he resent Brandon for that?

Becca: Oh, it's because he thought Elinor and Brandon were a thing.

Molly: And he was like, "Oh, this is a charity case."

Becca: It's basically one of those [00:22:00] things where has someone you like ever dated another person and then that other person turns out to be perfect in every way and even helps you out?

Molly: No.

Becca: So, the show *New Girl* actually subverts the trope a little.

Molly: Uh-huh.

Becca: With Jess and what's her name? Reagan?

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Yeah. Spoilers for *New Girl*, a show that came out a decade ago. [crosstalk]

Molly: We're avoiding spoilers for books that came out 200 years ago. So, [crosstalk]

Becca: Yeah. So, when Reagan is dating Nick, they resist the urge to make just super jealous. But you could see a situation where Reagan was super nice to Jess. Say Jess trips over something, and falls and Jess comes over-- Oh, you know what this is? This is actually Dr. Sam stitching up Nick. If he falls and hurts himself when Nick is in love with Jess.

Molly: Right. When they're at the thing, the haunted house.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Actually, *New Girl* does this a lot because they all live together, they have to deal with it. But when [00:23:00] Janis from *Mean Girls* plays an ex-girlfriend who-- I'm forgetting her name-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Lizzy Caplan.

Molly: Yes. She plays an ex-girlfriend at one point, and Jess is super jealous of her, and they don't get along at all, and then she comes over one night and just gives her a cupcake, and she's like, "I don't trust you. You don't like desserts." Then, they become friends, and they are crying together, and it's like this--

Becca: Absolutely. All this to say that it really sucks when you are already resentful of a person and they end up doing something shitty like helping you out when you're down.

Molly: Yeah, so shitty. But yes, I get it.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So now, he's like, "Okay, I'm going to go be friends with Brandon."

Becca: Yes.

Molly: He hasn't yet been to Delaford. So, Elinor tells them all about the parish and in this sentence, they use the word 'glebe' which means land. So, she's just describing the grounds to him, which she's

heard about in great detail from her good friend, Colonel Brandon.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Her good friend. So, Elinor and Edward-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Now that you're stanning Edward, again.

Molly: [00:24:00] I know. It's complicated. I complicated feelings, which I'm sure we will talk about in the study.

Becca: Of course.

Molly: Elinor and Edward have one thing left to settle between them, which is that they need something to live on. They are so in love that they think £350 a year is going to be enough for them, unlike what Marianne was thinking at the beginning of the book.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Edward still hopes that his mom is going to forgive him, but Elinor doesn't think that she will and she brings back that she knows that she was the lesser of two evils with between her and Lucy. Then, Colonel Brandon arrives and since the cottage is now too crowded, he walks every night back to the park to stay with the Middletons, and then comes back in the morning by breakfast time. Are the Middletons there or are they still in London?

Becca: That's a good question I don't know the answer to.

Molly: I guess it doesn't really matter because they're not coming--[crosstalk]

Becca: I'd assume they're there if Brandon's sleeping over.

Molly: Or, they gave him keys, [crosstalk] keys.

Becca: That's possible.

Molly: So, he had been at Delaford alone for three weeks before this and it's said that "he had little to do but calculate the [00:25:00] disproportion between 36 and 17."

Becca: This reminds me of that scene in *Parks and Recreation*, where Andy's like, "Is 21 too young to date?"

Molly: Oh, I watched that one.

Becca: Yeah. I understood that reference.

Molly: I understood that reference. Ah, yeah. Here's the thing. It's, "I don't ship it yet. So, we're running out of time." It's okay. It's very sweet. I like him.

Becca: And you like her.

Molly: And I like her. Mrs. Dashwood tells Colonel Brandon all and he is doubly happy about what he did for Eddie since now it benefits Elinor. In my notes at this point, I also wrote, "Fine, I love their friendship," which I do.

Becca: That's what I'm saying. If you focus too much on whether or not they are going to bang, you miss out on this really, really solid bond the two of them have.

Molly: Yeah. It is so pure and I really do support them as best friends. It doesn't mean that I ship him with Marianne, and I will talk [crosstalk] more about that later [00:26:00] on but yeah, I think that I would have been happy if he didn't end up with anyone and just stayed just friends with Dashwoods at large.

Becca: All right, we'll get there.

Molly: We'll get there. Brandon and Edward become friends mostly because they're in love with two sisters, but also, because they've got a lot in common in their personalities, which is something that we've talked about a lot. Because we've talked about the way the two sisters love, and the kinds of things that they look for in a man, and they both are sensible, I don't know. Have we talked about it?

Becca: I don't think we have talked about it but it's not inaccurate. They're both pragmatic men who value the Dashwood girls, and are smart and capable. I think their distinction really comes down to the fact that Colonel Brandon has this deep, under-the-carriage pining. He's got his passions I would say in a way that Edwards not as deep dark, [00:27:00] poetic, angst.

Molly: I think, Edward might be underneath it all.

Becca: Edwards, he's a fumbler. God bless.

Molly: Yeah. I think he doesn't know how to put it but I think that he's got it in him.

Becca: He's all sunshine and marshmallows inside.

Molly: [laughs] Marshmallows.

Becca: Brandon's like, "Ah, yes, my dead lover."

Molly: Oh, poor Brandon. Speaking of poor Brandon, they start getting their correspondence from London, Mrs. Jennings writes them, and she gives everyone a good laugh because she's venting about how angry she is with Lucy and she's like, "Poor Edward must be so heartbroken by this."

Becca: Did you notice she called her a hussy?

Molly: Yes. She did. She called her a hussy.

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: So good. She tells them that Lucy's stole all of Anne's money when she left and left Anne by herself with nowhere to go and no way to get anywhere.

Becca: Absolutely brutal on the part of Lucy Steele.

Molly: How dare she? That's her sister.

Becca: Oh, yeah. She's probably still pissed off.

Molly: Oh, that she revealed [00:28:00] everything?

Becca: Well, here's the question. Would Lucy have married Edward if he hadn't been disowned?

Molly: Yes, absolutely.

Becca: Yeah, that's the thing. Anne sent Lucy scrambling for a plan B.

Molly: That's true.

Becca: So, she's like, "You know what? You get nothing." [laughs]

Molly: Yeah. So, Anne and shows up at Mrs. Jennings' doorstep like, "I'm too afraid to go anywhere. Mrs. Ferrars is going to get me." Mrs. Jennings gives her some money and tells her to go find the Burgesses, who I guess live near the doctor, and she wants her to go fall in love with the doctor again. So, that's good for Anne, I guess. She talks about how Edward must be so sad again and then she says Marianne must try to comfort him. Why Marianne?

Becca: Because she still thinks Elinor and Brandon are an item.

Molly: So, she's trying out-- [crosstalk]

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: I thought that it might be what it was saying but it's too late. [crosstalk]

Becca: [laughs] Oh, God. I love Mrs. Jennings for how completely oblivious she is to actual connection and how badly she wants to set up everyone.

Molly: I know. She is just a [00:29:00] matchmaker. She's a Yente.

Becca: She's a Yente but a really bad one. Because she always is trying to connect with the wrong people.

Molly: Well, to be fair, did Yente do so great?

Becca: I actually haven't seen Yente.

Molly: No, yente. Yente. Yente, not yental. Yente in *Fiddler*. No! Oh, my god! Becca has not seen *Fiddler on the Roof*. This is a recurring theme.

Becca: Honestly, it's probably enough to cancel on my bat mitzvah but-- [crosstalk]

Molly: I can't believe I just made a *Fiddler on the Roof* reference for getting that Becca hadn't seen it. Yente tries to match up someone with Lazar Wolf, who is an old man and means well, but damn. Anyway, where were we? They also get a letter from their brother, who writes to say how Mrs. Ferrars and Fanny are suffering, and how terrible it all is, and how he would rather Edward have married Lucy over her spreading the misery even farther like, how Lucy dared to get together with Robert and just destroy their family, and blah, blah, blah, blah.

He is surprised that Edward hasn't written and [00:30:00] he hopes that Edward will write and beg for forgiveness, basically. Then he says, "For we all know the tenderness of Mrs. Ferrars' heart and that she wishes for nothing so much as to be on good terms with her children."

Becca: Yeah, that's really all Mrs. Ferrars wishes for.

Molly: Edward at this point stands up for himself. I was so proud of him. He says he's not going to write a letter of condolences. He is not sorry for what he did. And Elinor is like, "Well, maybe you can say that you're sorry for ever having been engaged to Lucy because that's true." He's like, "Yeah, I guess, that is true." Elinor says maybe that will soften the blow when he reveals that he is now engaged to another person who she disapproves of. He decides that he's going to go do it in person. So, he and Brandon leave for Delaford together. I really love this friendship in particular.

Becca: This is a bromance for the ages.

Molly: And then, he's going to go to London from there and that is the end of that chapter.

Becca: All right, Chapter 50.

Molly: Chapter 50, the final countdown. Edward is permitted at last to see Mrs. Ferrars after some resistance [00:31:00] from her because she doesn't want to appear too amiable. This is funny, so I have to read it. "Her family had of late been exceedingly fluctuating. For many years of her life, she had two sons. But the crime and annihilation of Edward a few weeks ago had robbed her of one. The similar annihilation of Robert had left her for a fortnight without any. And now, by the resuscitation of Edward, she had won again."

Becca: This woman is the worst. That's the thing that's so satisfying. This is what I love about the end of this book is just the scrambling of the Ferrars family.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Fanny is just a fucking wreck and Mrs. Ferrars has to just slowly pull Edward back in and accept Elinor. [makes kiss sounds]

Molly: At long last.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yes. So, he tells her about Elinor and at first, she's like, "Well, Miss Morton would be much better choice." I'm proud of him. He really played the right strings. He was like, "Yeah, you're right. She would be, but I'm not going to marry her." Like, you're right but no. At last, Mrs. Ferrars relents [00:32:00] and says that she will consent to Edward marrying Elinor. She even says she's going to give them some money. I wasn't sure if she's giving them more money than initially promised or just back to his initial inheritance?

Becca: Oh, no, no, no, no. Basically, she left him destitute and she irrevocably placed the living, like the estate on Robert. That means she can't take it back.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: So, Robert Ferrars is not facing any consequences for his actions monetarily, just his family's mad at him. Edward on the other hand, still destitute. So, what Mrs. Ferrars is doing here is basically giving him a little bump, little boost, so they still need to live in Colonel Brandon gave. But if you remember the living that Colonel Brandon gave, you could grow it, but it wasn't much yet.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And Elinor has a tiny amount of money herself.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And Edward has a tiny amount of money himself. And now, with this boost from Mrs. Ferrars, it becomes pretty much like a middle-class lifestyle.

Molly: Right. It said in the book that they [00:33:00] both were more than thrilled with this, because they don't want to be rich and it said Mrs. Ferrars was the only one surprised of her not giving them more.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: It's like, "I want to be stingy but--"

Becca: Yeah, and she's like, "Ah, he still deserves punishment. But I will give him a little bit" because she doesn't want him to be like, I guess, starving on the street now that he's her son again.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And you might remember really early on in this book, there was a conversation between Marianne, and Elinor, and Edward where they were talking about what kind of level of wealth they could withstand. Elinor and Edward both like, "I don't really need that much." Now, Marianne was like,

"Me neither. I just want this super wealthy lifestyle."

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, basically, Elinor and Edward are getting what they wish. They're trading in more riches that they could have in favor of a life together with the person they love and a little less money, but a lot of fulfillment.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, look at Jane Austen taking The Economics of Dating [The Economics of Dating stinger] in Jane Austen and saying "Suck it, this is a love match."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. Love's more important than [00:34:00] money but you still need to eat.

Molly: Yes, you still need to eat. Meanwhile, Brandon is making improvements to the parsonage so that Elinor will be comfortable, and they had planned on waiting till all the improvements were done. But Elinor is pretty anxious to get married and she says, "Let's just get married."

Becca: She wants to bang.

Molly: She does want to bang.

Becca: She wants to bang.

Molly: There was a word used in this paragraph that I want to say. They were talking about the dilatoriness-- dilatoriness, dilatoriness? Of the workmen who were working on the parsonage. That means procrastination.

Becca: Maybe that the same guys who work on the New York subway system.

Molly: Yeah, probably. So, they get married and Mrs. Jennings' prediction that she would be able to visit Edward and his wife at the parsonage by Michaelmas came true, because now he's married to Elinor.

Becca: And she also said her hope of seeing Elinor happy and married at Delaford was also true.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: Mrs. Jennings really predicted this whole thing, didn't she?

Becca: Guys, is Mrs. Jennings the protagonist of the book?

Molly: I think so.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: Now, [00:35:00] she's hoping for the future marriage of Brandon and Marianne. This is when everyone starts shipping Brandon and Marianne. Everyone comes to visit them, even Mrs. Ferrars. Their brother, John, comes and says to Elinor that he isn't disappointed, but it would have given him pleasure to call Brandon brother. While he thinks that Marianne isn't necessarily Brandon's type, because he's the least perceptive person in the world, he hopes that Elinor will invite Marianne over often so that she can spend time with Colonel Brandon.

Becca: It feels important to say he believes that Colonel Brandon would be a great brother-in-law because of his estate and his money.

Molly: True.

Becca: He doesn't really like Brandon that much as a person. It's just that he's rich.

Molly: Right. You're right, you're right. Mrs. Ferrars, meanwhile, has forgiven Robert because Lucy has weaseled her way into her heart.

Becca: This part is one of my favorite passages in the book.

Molly: I had a feeling it was. They want to tell us now how this all came to be. Initially, Robert did go to Lucy to dissuade [00:36:00] her from marrying Edward. However, Lucy plays him like a violin.

Becca: She basically just keeps giving little crumbs of, "Oh, maybe but I'm not sure. If you have anything else to say about it, you can come back tomorrow." And then, she comes in and she's got her top on that pops up the cleavage and she's got little snackies and she's like, "Oh, oh, you still don't want me to marry, Edward? Well, I'll have to think about it. Could you come by tomorrow again?" It keeps going, and going, and then suddenly, she's got him talking about himself, and she's got her boobs pushed up, and she's like, "Wow, so interesting." Suddenly, Robert, even though he professed Edward was a fucking idiot for falling into this, does the exact same thing.

Molly: Yep, exactly.

Becca: There is no consequence-- [crosstalk]

Molly: Robert is a weenie.

Becca: Robert is such a weenie and he faces no consequences because of his sweet spot position as the favorite and the second child.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Second son, at least.

Molly: Fuck him. It does say that he is excited to be going behind his mother's back, which I thought

was a little out of [00:37:00] character for him because he seemed like such a mama's boy throughout the book.

Becca: Oh, yeah. But he's also just an adventurer. He doesn't really think about things for how they will affect other people. He likes the idea of doing something fun and crazy for the heck of it. You didn't get that sense from him in the book?

Molly: I guess. Yeah, but we did talk about him being like a frat boy, finance bro, etc.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, I can see how he's like. "Oh, yeah. The thrill of the chase." I don't know.

Becca: Yeah. This whole like, "Oh, man, that would be fucking sick to talk about later y'a'll.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: "Oh, man. That was crazy, man. That was a crazy experience. I went and I married this girl and now, I guess, the fuck what? I am a husband."

Molly: Yeah. [laughs] And then, Lucy goes into Mrs. Ferrars' life and she's like, "Yeah, it was terrible of us to go behind your back but oh, my God, you're the best," and just warms her up, and butters her up, and then Lucy somehow becomes [00:38:00] Mrs. Ferrars' favorite. She's like her favorite daughter.

Becca: Oh, yes.

Molly: Poor Fanny. [giggles]

Becca: Here's the thing. If you notice in this book, who is the one member of the Ferrars family other than Edward who doesn't forgive?

Molly: Fanny.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Oh.

Becca: She never forgives, she never forgets.

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: It's almost as if it's very subtle, but Fanny has been punished for her crime so much in this book that she's almost learned a fucking lesson. Almost.

Molly: Almost.

Becca: Not quite, but almost.

Molly: Everything works out well for the Ferrars', which is annoying. Basically, Lucy and Mrs. Ferrars become best friends. Edward was never cordially forgiven for having once intended to marry Lucy, and Elinor, the superior to her unfortunate and birth, was spoken of as an intruder. She was an everything considered and always openly acknowledged to be a favorite child. Meaning, Lucy was the favorite child. They settle down in town. They get a lot of assistance from Mrs. Ferrars. They're on the [00:39:00] best terms imaginable with the Dashwoods. And setting aside the jealousies of ill-will continually subsisting between Fanny and Lucy, in which their husbands of course took apart as well as the frequent domestic disagreements between Robert and Lucy themselves, nothing could exceed the harmony in which they all live together.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: So, I guess everything doesn't totally work out.

Becca: Yeah. Clearly, Fanny still has issues and I love that.

Molly: And also, Robert and Lucy aren't super happy.

Becca: Yes. Of course, they're not. They're both terrible people.

Molly: Yes. So, like, how could they be happy?

Becca: Of course, not.

Molly: So, Elinor's mother and sister spend a lot of time at Delaford, and Marianne and Brandon do end up spending some time together. Everyone is shipping them. So, what could she do? it says. I wanted to read-- I have feelings about this whole passage.

Becca: Okay.

Molly: So, the way it's described-- and I'm sure I'll get to this more in the study questions. So, I'll just read the first part for now and then I'll come back to it later. It says, "With such a confederacy against her," meaning everyone shipping her and him, "With the knowledge so intimate of his goodness, with the conviction of his fond attachment to herself, which at last, [00:40:00] though long after it was observable to everybody else burst on her, what could she do?" What could she do? But get married to him. So, they get married. And that's good, they're happy. I guess, it's been some time, two years-ish.

Becca: It's been two years. Yes.

Molly: So, Colonel Brandon is so, so happy, and Marianne is satisfied at first because she definitely likes him as a friend a lot, and it says, "Marianne could never love by halves, and her whole heart became in time as much devoted to her husband as it had once been to Willoughby."

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Which is great. I am happy that she has learned to love him. I still--

Becca: Don't see it?

Molly: Well, here-- the next part that I wanted to read-

Becca: Go for it.

Molly: -was right after what could she do. There's a whole paragraph and I'll just read it. "Marianne Dashwood was born to an extraordinary fate. She was born to discover the falsehood of her own opinions and to counteract by her conduct [00:41:00] her most favorite maxims. She was born to overcome an affection formed so late in life as at 17," LOL, "And with no sentiment superior to strong esteem and lively friendship voluntarily to give her hand to another. That other, a man who had suffered no less than herself under the event of a former attachment, whom two years before she had considered too old to be married and who still saw these constitutional safeguards of a flannel waistcoat."

The fact of the matter is that when Marianne marries him, she is not in love with him. I know that the whole of Jane Austen essentially is like, "Do we marry for money or do we marry for love? Do we marry for comfort or do we marry for love?" I'm not saying that what Marianne thought before was correct, because that was an extreme. Obviously, she was right to not marry Willoughby. But Brandon loves her so passionately. He has been obsessed with her since day one, which again, a little bit weird. I don't fully see why because he doesn't [00:42:00] know her very well, but fine. He loves her so much and this is everything to him. She's just like, "Okay, you're here." Yes, she does grow to love him and that's great. It's not the best though.

Becca: I read it quite differently than you. For one thing, that's how a lot of people have read it for years that this book is just serving as a lesson for Marianne. It's a cautionary tale about getting too up in your own feelings, and then walking off, and finding a sensible older gentleman who you're okay with and settling down for life. That's really what makes happiness. You've read only one Jane Austen book but do you really think that's how Jane Austen feels about the whole situation?

Molly: No. I think the Jane Austen is a big fan of marrying for love, which is why I'm surprised.

Becca: Well, for one thing, I think what's powerful about this book in a lot of ways is that I don't necessarily read this happening in the book itself. [00:43:00] This is something that happens after the fact.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: This is an epilogue note at the end. I see at the end of the book, Marianne is in her own world getting to know herself.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Spending time and growing up a little bit.

Molly: Yes, which I really liked for her.

Becca: I don't see it as black and white as you do, about her being indifferent to him and then learning to love him because he's what's there. I see two years transpire where she's, quote, from Jane Austen, "there more than she is at her own home." In that time, it is not as though it is the same Colonel Brandon pining and Marianne ignoring him situation. That's not how it's going.

Molly: No, they're becoming friends.

Becca: They're becoming very close to each other and close friends. When I read this passage, I don't read that she was indifferent to him or forced into the match. I read that [00:44:00] something started to grow that she saw as potential, the conviction of his character, the knowledge of him as a friend. She is surprised by it, and she sees last of all that he's in love with her, and she takes him up on it. From that, finds more happiness and growth in her relationship than imaginable. We talked about this really early on in the series about how love is a journey, not a destination, and what she does is she chooses to act upon that compatible match, and finds a love as satisfying and beautiful as the one she thought she had with Willoughby. Well, Molly's crying, guys.

Molly: That was unexpected.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Oh.

Becca: I'm so sorry.

Molly: No, it's okay. Yeah, it was-- Wow. I see where you're coming from.

Becca: [laughs] [00:45:00] Wow, I really just shifted you a little.

Molly: You did just shift me a little because I guess I was thinking, in Jane Austen's words, what could she do? I guess I was reading it as what could she do but give into the pressure, what could she do but settle? No, I never thought that she was settling for Colonel Brandon because he is a catch.

Becca: He is a catch and a half.

Molly: And a half. But he loved her so much more than she loved him, and I think what I was talking about when I was really hardcore shipping him and Elinor was, "What if we were just friends, but we decided to get married because we love each other as people." Now, I see that, that is what Marianne did.

Becca: Yeah. Here's the part that I get so excited about. You see that as the natural path for Elinor, and you see the path of forbidden but uncontrollable soulmate love for Marianne-

Molly: And it's the other way around.

Becca: -and they swap.

Molly: I love that.

Becca: They swap their paths of [00:46:00] love, and what they think love is, and what is desired by each girl, and they realize that the other one was right.

Molly: Oh, my God! Oh, my God! Oh, my God!

Becca: Yeah. I just blew your mind, right?

Molly: I love this book.

Becca: I know, right?

Molly: Wow.

Becca: You know, well, how listeners will disagree? I read this in a very specific manner but that is how I read what Jane Austen was trying to say and do here. Because Jane Austen is not a fan of leaving her heroines in destitute states.

Molly: No.

Becca: She's not a fan of creating a binary of money match or a love match. She gives you all this depth and complexity to these relationships and it's very simplistic to think, "Oh, yeah, Marianne learned her lesson and now, she marries this stuffy old guy." Because that's not who Colonel Brandon is.

Molly: No, he's hot.

Becca: Yeah, exactly. It's not who Marianne is. Certainly, you can see that partially through their interactions with Elinor and the fact that Elinor exists in the book offering a foil to Marianne, and the fact that Marianne [00:47:00] exists in the book offering a foil to Elinor. That's why the book is about both of them.

Molly: It's about Elinor and Marianne.

Becca: It's about Sense and Sensibility.

Molly: I predicted at the beginning that they were going to have to take a little of the other person sense, like one of them was going to have to take some sense and the other one was going to have to learn some sensibilities. It's exactly what you just said. They swapped. They swapped paths.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Oh, oh.

Becca: That's how I feel about the end of this book.

Molly: Okay. I feel a lot better about it now that we've discussed.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Speaking of though people ending up in not the best situation, Willoughby, over in his corner is sad and his punishment for all this, I had to ask about this. It says that his punishment was complete when his wife forgives him. They stay together, right?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Okay. [crosstalk] her for a minute. Maybe she loved him but she forgives him, and then he's like, "Oh, shit. I'm with a woman of good character. So, it's even worse that I was in love with Marianne the whole time because I have a better option all in all over here and I'm just a bad person." [00:48:00]

Becca: Oh, yeah. In case you can't tell, what kind of is interesting about Willoughby is the amount that he feels how much of a bad person he is?

Molly: Yeah, and but still fine.

Becca: Well, I mean, he's fine. In terms of his circumstances, he ends the book wealthy, married to a good woman, and probably cheating on her from the way they speak in this book.

Molly: Yes, absolutely. But she forgives him.

Becca: Yeah. So, clearly, Willoughby has not become a better person. But Willoughby's punishment is not material in that way. Willoughby's punishment is to spend the rest of his life tortured over the loss of Marianne and the knowledge that Marianne married Colonel Brandon.

Molly: Yes, and Marianne married Colonel Brandon, which in a way makes them forever connected because her daughter, stepdaughter has a baby who is belonging to our good friend.

Becca: Yep. Well, not our stepdaughter necessarily. His ward who he is close to.

Molly: [crosstalk] of his daughter.

Becca: It's a [00:49:00] fair reading.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: His daughter but not by blood. His adopted daughter.

Molly: It does say that Willoughby does not die of a broken heart. Instead, he raises dogs and horses, and has enough domestic felicity to be fine, and I like to imagine him as an old cat lady just with his animals.

Molly: Yep. The way he builds her up, my God. For Marianne, however, in spite of his incivility in surviving her loss, he always retained that decided regard, which interested him in everything that befell her, and made her his secret standard of perfection in a woman, and many a rising beauty would be slighted by him in after days as bearing no comparison with Mrs. Brandon.

Molly: I loved that.

Becca: That is his punishment.

Molly: That is his punishment and also why we should never hold anyone to a gold standard, because the way that he thinks of women is creepy and gross.

Becca: Oh, super creepy and gross. He doesn't learn and that's why he'll never be with Marianne.

Molly: And he'll never be happy.

Becca: And she is happy. That's how [00:50:00] this book ends. Marianne is happy.

Molly: Marianne is happy.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Meanwhile, Mrs. Dashwood stays at the cottage, and now, Mrs. Jennings and Sir John have Margaret to turn their attention to, because she is now of the dancing age and the marriageable age. So, they get to matchmake with her. Everyone lives happily ever after, especially our girls, Elinor and Marianne.

Becca: May I read the last paragraph in this book?

Molly: Please do.

Becca: "Between Barton and Delaford, there was that constant communication which strong family affection would naturally dictate. And among the merits and happiness of Elinor and Marianne, let it not be ranked as the least considerable that though sisters and living with an almost sight of each other, they could live without disagreement between themselves or producing coldness between their husbands."

Molly: And they all lived happily ever after.

Becca: That's the end of the book. Fireworks.

Molly: Record scratch. Wait, no record scratch, no record scratch. [laughs]

Becca: No, don't give us a record scratch. Give us fireworks and some dancing music.

[mimic dance music] [00:51:00]

Becca: Yeah, we finished this book and that brings us to my last study questions.

Molly: The last study questions of the novel.

Becca: Oh, we have a few, we have a few. We actually, fully addressed one.

Molly: That's great. That's fun.

Becca: But first, let's talk about Lucy. Is she a villain or is she an antihero?

Molly: What do we mean by antihero before I answer?

Becca: I kind of respect Lucy-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -for how good she is at what she does.

Molly: Yes. Like we said, I do think that she is a political mastermind. She was always out for her own success and she was going to do whatever was necessary from the get go. So, she was going to marry Edward. Like we said, if he had not been disowned, she would be married to Edward. But the fact that a wrench got thrown in those plans, one, she's going to toss her sister out the window. Two, she's going to marry the next best thing. So, she really landed on top [00:52:00] in this situation.

Becca: Not easily though. Honestly, here's the thing about Lucy Steele, is we talked about this last episode a little bit. She is from nothing and she made herself into an heiress. She gave herself a life that many women of higher stature than her could not hope for. That is impressive and it takes a cold, calculated ruthlessness and a genius on her part. She had the capacity to seduce Eric.

Molly: [laughs] You've done that twice now in this book.

Becca: I don't know how that happened. She had the capacity to seduce Edward based on his childhood, boredom, and angst. She had the capacity to subdue Elinor as a threat entirely, entirely as she kept her claws into Edward because she wanted his money. And then when he loses his money, she ends up seducing [00:53:00] his brother who had massive disdain for her and the brother that she just helped get disowned.

Molly: It's like people meet her and their brains just, poop!

Molly: Well, what happens is that. she happens to be uncannily good at knowing how to control the other people around her. Even Elinor, Elinor understood very quickly about her that she was a flatterer and a social climber. But she still read Elinor like a book and was able to keep Elinor down the entire book. And she ends up in a situation where not only was she able to figure out how to play everyone [unintelligible [00:53:35] end up on top and not give a shit. She still ends up on top of the people she shat on the most.

Molly: That's true. So, to your question like, is she a villain or an antihero, yes, she did good. She did all of that. But I feel like she just doesn't care about anyone. I mean she's a good villain.

Becca: She is a delicious villain. [00:54:00] *Sense and Sensibility* has some of the best villains in Austen.

Molly: Fanny Dashwood, who I do think that Fanny--

Becca: No, Fanny is totally a villain even if she hasn't learned anything.

Molly: She's the villain. I think the difference between her and Lucy Steele's that Fanny is just mean but she had ulterior motives, but she wasn't going to destroy someone's life. She did destroy people's lives. Okay. It's hard though, because I feel like she wasn't as calculated.

Becca: See, the thing about Fanny Dashwood is it's a much lower stakes game for her.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Because-

Molly: She's already rich.

Becca: -she's already rich. Lucy is playing for the win because if she loses, she's destitute.

Molly: And you're right. She did really come out on top with the people that who she destroyed.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: And they still somehow like her.

Becca: That's a good question, though. Of the three villains, I would characterize Fanny Dashwood, John Willoughby, and Lucy Steele, who is your favorite of the three?

Molly: My favorite or my least favorite?

Becca: Give me favorite in terms of the most compelling.

Molly: Okay. Favorite most compelling would have to be Lucy [00:55:00] Steele because she's got the most complex-- we don't know what she's doing. She's operating completely undercover.

Becca: She is a good villain. See, I think it's a tough handoff. She might be my favorite villain. It might be Willoughby.

Molly: Well, for Willoughby, he's just a douchebag, but ah, but he in love. Hmm, that's hard.

Becca: That's why it's so hard because Lucy is deliciously unemotional, heinous, and ruthless. Just leaving her sister for dead.

Molly: She's selfish.

Becca: Oh, unquestionably, but so is he. The difference is that Lucy doesn't give a shit about anyone but herself. Anyone. She will do whatever it takes to get to the top, and she's playing a very high stakes game because if she doesn't, she dies. Because she's super poor.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Willoughby, on the other hand is a selfish piece of shit. [00:56:00] But Willoughby has no love. So, Willoughby is tortured and Willoughby has the sensations of immense regret and pain that Lucy will never know because Lucy doesn't give a shit.

Molly: Right. But we've talked about Willoughby being a selfish lover, and in my notes I--

Becca: Pillow princess.

Molly: Yes. He is a pillow princess. In my notes, I had written that I don't think that he actually-- I almost wrote he doesn't have the capacity to care about anyone or I almost wrote he doesn't have the capacity to love but he does have the capacity to love but because he's a selfish lover, I don't actually think that he cares about the people that he loves. He loves Marianne as an idea. Long after they've broken up, he holds her on this pedestal. I don't think he's known real, true love. I think he's known an infatuation with this person and it's a kind of love, but he doesn't care ultimately, what happens [00:57:00] to her except outside of how it relates to him.

Becca: Here's a question. Do you think you can be a bad person and feel real love?

Molly: Yes.

Becca: I think Willoughby is a bad person who feels real love for Marianne. I think that his incapacity in terms of his character bastardizes that love--

Molly: Right.

Becca: -in a lot of ways.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But I make this point all the time, which is, "Don't underestimate how powerful love can be even when you're a bad person." Again, one day, we will read *Wuthering Heights* and you will see what I mean when I say it's my favorite book. But I think John Willoughby is a really great encapsulation of how true love when you are not up to the task of it is a bitter, fangled, thorny, toxic thing that ruins his life, even though his life is fine.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: That's why I think Willoughby's interesting. I think it's actually a really tough tossup and I think at the end of this book when this goes up, we should do a [00:58:00] poll for our listeners and ask them who they think is the better villain, Lucy Steele or John Willoughby. Here's the thing, Fanny Dashwood, not even in the equation because she's bad, but she's just shitty.

Molly: She's just a bad person but ultimately, she gets trampled on enough by her own bad morals that she--

Becca: She's punished.

Molly: Yeah. We don't need to talk about her.

Molly: All right, that brings me to my next question and it's quite relevant. What do you make of the end of the Ferrars and how Lucy plays into that?

Becca: Well, it makes sense because they talked about-- Edward was hypothesizing about how this came to be and he says that the vanity of one was so played on by the flattery of the other that whatever. His whole family is vain, and Lucy can see that, and she plays right into it, and she makes them all forgive her except for Fanny Dashwood and obviously, Edward Ferrars.

Becca: Yeah. I mean, with Fanny, it's probably an outward forgiveness but an inward ugh.

Molly: Yeah. Like Fanny's there and she [00:59:00] doesn't super care, but she's like, "Ah, whatever." But Mrs. Ferrars is the big one. She's always been set in her ways and she's always had a favorite in Robert, and the fact that he did exactly the same thing as Edward and married Lucy Steele, and Steele gets forgiven, it says, "And from thence returning to town procured the forgiveness of Mrs. Ferrars by the simple expedient of asking it, which at Lucy's instigation was adopted. The forgiveness at first indeed as was reasonable, comprehended only Robert and Lucy who had owed his mother no duty and therefore could have transgressed none still remains some weeks longer on pardoned. But perseverance and humility of conduct and messages in self-condemnation for Robert's offense and gratitude for the unkindness she was treated with procured her in time the haughty notice which overcame her by its graciousness and led soon afterwards by rapid degrees to the highest state of affection and influence."

Basically, Lucy shows up and she's like, "I know this was [01:00:00] terrible. I'm so sorry. Yeah, I totally deserve you being so angry with me. I totally deserve it." Then, Mrs. Ferrars notices her and then she's like, "Oh, my gosh, you're being so nice to me." Then, Mrs. Ferrars is like, "Ah, okay."

Becca: So, here's a question. What's Austen saying with this whole situation?

Molly: That negative Nancys will gather together.

Becca: I love that. Negative Nancys will gather together. Lest we not forget, even though this is a romantic book and a book about sisters and a seaside tale, Austen is also an incredibly astute class critic.

Molly: It's about rich people.

Becca: It's about the structures of class in England and how fabricated they are, because the people at the top are so vain and so upon themselves that someone who does not belong can get in there and make the class system fall all the way away [01:01:00] by just working on the egos of the rich people.

Molly: Oh, I love that.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Mm. Mm, yes. We've talked about class a lot throughout this book and we've talked about how we were worried that Jane Austen might be making the poor person, the villain. But I love that. Yeah, I love that. She comes in there, and just topples their expectations, and makes them forget that she's poor, and she's like, "Listen, this is all fake. It's all appearances." I love that. I also will once again say Jane Austen, champion of the working class, Edward and Elinor are the happiest and they are the ones with just enough money to satisfy their needs.

Becca: Yes. And it grows with time because Edward likes being a priest.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah, I think that's correct and I see Lucy in this book, she is a bad person, she is a villain, and you could read that as very [01:02:00] classist instinct on Austen's part. It's not the most sensitive characterization of a working-class girl.

Molly: Because she did the same thing with Wickham, which is something we've talked about before.

Becca: Exactly. But I also think at the same time, Lucy serving as a mirror to the upper-class people around her and Elinor is observing her transcend class just because of the arrogance of being at the top and the arrogance of your surety in the class system is a foil to a very astute member of the lower classes, and she shows just how stupid these people are, and just how vain they are, and just how greedy they are, and her presence and her capacity to have a sense of how vain, and stupid, and greedy they are. Does that make sense?

Molly: Yeah, it does.

Becca: Yes. So, it is very fascinating. Lucy Steele, she is a terrible person and reading her slowly through this book could be excruciating because she's so [01:03:00] awful. But she is so interesting and such a cool piece of Austen's literary canon. I will leave it there.

We talked about Marianne's ending. Do you have anything you want to add as you've given your sense of it and I've given my sense of it and I've made you cry?

Molly: Yeah. For me, this was what I was waiting on. For me, I understood that Edward and Elinor were going to be happy once they could put everything else aside. I knew that that was going to happen. I was curious as to how and I love the way that it came to be. Meanwhile, I had no idea how this was going to pan out with Brandon and Marianne. I think I went into it thinking I was going to be unsatisfied with the ending because I knew we were running out of time and mostly, I just believe that Colonel Brandon deserves an explosive love. I want him so badly to have this thing because he's such a passionate [01:04:00] man, but also, he's a sweet, kind, quiet man, too. I think that, I wanted the best for him and I don't know what I thought that was. I think that I thought it was, you know--

Becca: Elinor?

Molly: I thought it was Elinor.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: And then, I thought, at one point, I was thinking they are such good friends, like, in this time period, maybe that's enough to just settle down, and start a family, and just be happy, and be best friends. Because they do say like, "Marry your best friend" sometimes. Unless, it's genuinely just your best friend and then don't marry them. But like be best friends with the person that you're marrying. So, I thought that that's what I wanted for him, but I thought it was going to be-- Ah, the more I say it, the more that what happened is what I thought I wanted for him. So, I'm torn but I think that I wanted Marianne to love him as much as he loved her for it to be an even playing field, like equally they love each other this much.

It didn't seem to me [01:05:00] reading it that, that was the case. But you pointed out that two years have gone by, she's 19 By the time that they get married, and he's 38. The age difference is like a little weird. But I'm not upset about the age difference. I was upset about the love match and I think going back to what we said, which is Marianne has become very close to him and isn't settling necessarily but has learned to love him as a person, I'm seeing the montage scene in my head and I know that you said that a lot of your opinions on this are colored by the movie. So, I definitely am excited to see it played out but I am picturing in my head a montage of years passing, and then going for walks together, and falling in love, and she might not think of it as love because she's used to exciting fireworks love all of a sudden, like sparks fly when your [01:06:00] fingers touch in the popcorn bowl, etc. But it's a more quiet slow burn.

Becca: And eventually is just as much of a firecracker.

Molly: Yeah. So, yeah. I am happy with the ending now that we've talked about it. I feel a lot less angry about it. I am happy for Colonel Brandon and I do really love the juxtaposition of how Elinor's story panned out versus how Marianne's story panned out. Yeah, I'm satisfied.

Becca: Yes. ultimately, if I had any critique of this story in terms of the way Jane Austen writes it, it's that she does a lot of showing and a lot less telling when it comes to the formation of the bond between Edward and Elinor, and the formation of the bond between Marianne and Brandon, and she tells us those things happen. But she doesn't do as much of the showing of it happening. I think that is a valid critique of [01:07:00] this book. That being said, I still think the story stands on its own and gorgeously.

Molly: Well, yes, something I was going to say and then wanted to retract it immediately, so I didn't say it. But I'll say it now is that I was wishing that instead of it all being crammed onto the last two pages between Marianne and Brandon, it had panned out more and that we had gotten to see it. But it's true if we take the end of the chapter before this, and we see Marianne ends the book working on herself, and then gets a little epilogue after the story is over, she and Brandon do fall in love and do get married, It actually stands with what we've said this book is about the whole time, which is Elinor and Marianne.

Becca: Which brings us to our next question. What makes this ending so happy?

Molly: This ending is so happy because everyone ends up happy. Elinor and Marianne are living out their dreams, living near each other, but having their own separate lives and getting to visit each other every day, and they've both learned from each other, and they've [01:08:00] both grown, and years have passed, and they've gained a little bit more sense and sensibility.

Becca: Respectively.

Molly: Respectively. It's in the title.

Becca: It's in the title.

Molly: I think that what makes it so happy aside from the Fer-- Well, the Ferrars are going to be Ferrars. They're going to be the same there. They didn't grow. Their lives have been shifted but they didn't grow. The people who we are rooting for, the people who we care about, and who care about each other ended up with the good life.

Becca: They did. I think I can't stress enough the fact that the last line of this book is about the fact that these two sisters get to live together happily for the rest of their lives.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That to me is the happy ending Jane Austen is putting on. I think that's why she half-asses the ending with the romance a [01:09:00] little bit. Because it's just so clear from the story that what's so wonderful here is that, these girls have found their men and their family together, and that they have a deeper understanding of the other one and have gone through so much together, and in the end, they just get to see themselves and each other happy together for the rest of their lives.

Molly: It's especially happy because this book started with their lives and their family being completely uprooted. Like, they were living happily, their dad died. And instead of getting to stay at their house, they got kicked out by their own brother and his stupid wife, and they have to uproot their whole lives. Their family is the most important thing to them and that's always been the case. Marianne, when she's jilted by Willoughby, is like, "I'm going to just-- family first from now on. It's only you guys. I don't care about men." They are a tight knit group. I would say even tighter than the Bennets, they love each [01:10:00] other unconditionally, and they're so happy. When Margaret comes back and it's like a whole thing. The fact that they all get to just be within easy distance of each other and everyone's happy, and everyone's helping each other out, that's happy.

Becca: That's a happy ending.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I am just going to say we're going to end the book talking about themes you pulled from it, things insights you have reflections on the book. I put down a few themes. I said, love, what heartbreak is, choice, inheritance, and the pressures on men in the society. Do you have any reflection, things that we haven't talked about in this podcast that really jump into your brain?

Molly: Gosh, themes of this book. Love is a huge one. Sisterhood is a huge one. Friendship, as much as I talked about rooting for Elinor and Brandon for the whole time, like platonic friendship.

Becca: We stan. It's ahead of its time.

Molly: It is [01:11:00] ahead of its time. Because so much of Austen so far that we've read, as in the one

book, was just about love, friendships, except for Lucy and Colonel Fitzwilliam.

Becca: I was also going to say Lizzie and Bingley seemed to have a bromance going on there that was cute, but it was not as much in the book. It was just what I wanted to be.

Molly: Right. It wasn't featured and genuinely discussed by Austen. So, I think that this platonic friendship thing that is happening between men and women is really important and is a huge theme, and that plays into different kinds of love, and what are the different kinds of love, friendship love, romance love, lust love, obsession love, all of these different kinds of love are huge themes. Class structure, motherhood, got lots of mothers.

Becca: Oh, and I think morals are a big theme in this.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Because we have some characters that really, really take a hit on morals. I think also duty and loyalty [01:12:00] are huge themes. You look at the Edward versus Willoughby path when it comes to women from their past who were beneath them. You really see how these things form the story for these girls.

Anyway, I've been thrilled to share this book with you. It has been such a joy. I have been fangirling the entire time I've pulled stuff out of this book that I haven't gotten out of it before. I love this book, I love being an Elinor, I love you being a Marianne-

Molly: And a Brandon.

Becca: -and a Brandon. So, all I really have to say is funniest quote?

Molly: I think my first one is the only one I didn't read out loud because there was a few that were funny to me that I read out loud. So, I'll just read it. It's in the first paragraph. So, Edward is free, blah, blah, blah. And to what purpose that freedom would be employed was easily predetermined by all. For after experiencing the blessings of one imprudent engagement contracted without his mother's [01:13:00] consent as he had already done for more than four years, nothing less could be expected of him in the failure of that and the immediate contraction of another.

Becca: Fantastic choice.

Molly: Thank you.

Becca: Questions, not moving forward in the book, but just generally and, I guess, for the movies.

Molly: Oh, man. Questions for the movies. I am so excited to find out who plays everyone. I know my main people, but I'm really excited to see that. I think I might have seen a spoiler and tried to immediately forget it. I don't know who this person plays, but I did find out another person who is in it. So, I'm not going to say anything. But I am curious about particularly the 1995 movie that we are covering next, is how are they going to get this entire story in there? Who's going to have to go? Because based on the 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*, some characters were going to have to get cut.

Becca: I'll say this as we walk in. It's a two-and-a-half-hour movie, and you know in any sort of thing like [01:14:00] that there's going to be changes around the periphery of the story.

Molly: Yeah. So, I'm wondering if I will be upset about any of those, like if anything that is near and dear to my heart is going to get cut, I'll be-- Whomst? I don't know. So, that's what I'm most curious about, and I'm just really excited to get into this next chapter, so to speak, of the pod.

Becca: Who wins the book?

Molly: Oh, man. Overall, it's got to be Elinor and Marianne.

Becca: I agree. I think it goes to both girls.

Molly: Yeah. They both had growth in different ways and I think they both came out the absolute top of what their story could have come out.

Becca: I agree. Listeners, that concludes this reading of *Sense and Sensibility*. If you tune in next time, we're going to be covering the 1995 movie version of this starring Emma Thompson, Alan Rickman, Hugh Grant, and Kate Winslet.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: You should definitely watch [01:15:00] the whole thing. We obviously will not cover the whole movie in one episode. Quick little side note as well. We've been getting a lot of questions about whether or not we're covering the 2008 mini-series. We will absolutely be covering that. That will come right after the 1995. I just wanted to put that out there so we can put all your minds at ease. But first, 1995, you will see we have some really stellar guests lined up for this. We're so excited to share that with you. But until next time, stay proper--

Molly: --And find yourself a husband.

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