

Molly: Hello everyone and happy September. What the heck? Where did the time go?

Before we begin this week's episode, we wanted to take a minute to thank our newest patrons, K and Emily, welcome to the team. If you want to be like K and Emily, and get exclusive access to content like our notes, screenshots of our group chat, bonus episodes, outtakes and more, you can head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice to see how you can support the show.

And now enjoy this week's episode covering the second half of Episode Two of the 1995 BBC version of *Pride and Prejudice* starring Colin Firth and a Jennifer Ehle with our guest, Evan Tess Murray.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Molly: Just getting ready for the ball scene is peak. Hilarity. It's amazing. First, we have Mrs. Bennet complimenting Lizzie's look and saying, "She'll never be as pretty as Jane, but she looks very well indeed." And Lizzie is just like, "Thank you, mother." **[chuckles]** She's so used to it.

Evan: And this is the kindest you've ever been to me, so **[00:01:00]** sure.

Molly: Yeah, I'll take it. Then, we have Lydia running around in her slip, which actually, we've talked a little bit about the dresses that they wear and how they kind of look like pajamas. And are they wearing corsets underneath? What's the deal? And it looks like they were these slips that hold up their boobs. But otherwise, it seems like it's pretty free and flowing.

Becca: I'm pretty sure there's a corset underneath that.

Molly: Yo, what the fuck was up with people in this time period? Why do you feel the need?

Evan: There might even be shimmies under-- The whole thing has many, many layers. So, there's an undergarment of linen that doesn't have any shape at all. And then something over that to give it shape and then something over that, etc.

Becca: It's very important to emphasize the corsets here because in Austen and in many other period pieces of this time, you will see women be faint or lose their-- not being able to tolerate being indoors for too long and just being sort of have a gentle constitution. And it's not that women are weak. It's that they're wearing fucking corsets, **[00:02:00]** and they cannot breathe.

Molly: Yeah. But walking around in your slip would be considered naked, I guess, because Lydia's running around. And her mom is like, "Dress yourself!" and she's like, "I have to ask Lizzie about my dress." And she asks Lizzie about her dress and they have this moment of Lydia being like, "You look very pretty. Don't hog Wickham to yourself all night." And Lizzie's, like, "Even if I wanted to, I couldn't, I have to dance too with Collins first." And then, they roll their eyes about Collins followed by Lydia running out into the hallway, bumping into Mr. Collins. She's in the nude essentially. She holds up her dress.

Becca: This is a priceless moment.

Molly: It's so good.

Becca: Because Mr. Collins loses his absolute mind.

Molly: He's like [stuttering].

Evan: Yeah, he just like explodes/dies and she just giggles like mad and that kind of tells you everything you need to know.

Molly: Exactly. What was funniest about this is that she runs out to go back to her room and then she runs into him. She goes back the way that she came instead of continuing on her way. But in any event, he's going down the stairs [00:03:00] and he hears her scream-laughing about it and he's just so embarrassed.

Becca: This is also the moment when-- the last take I have from this episode was that Collins is the campus libertarian from college, the one who wears flip-flops in winter?

Molly: Oh, yeah. We had one of those. His name was Barefoot Guy.

Becca: Yeah. Was he a libertarian?

Molly: I don't know. We went to the same college, Becca, you remember Barefoot Guy?

Becca: Yeah, I don't-- vaguely. It's been a minute.

Molly: Okay. Yeah, that's fair. It's been three years for me. So, it's been like five for you. But we had Barefoot Guy. I think he was actually called Barefoot Jesus because he had hip-length hair too.

Becca: Oh, yeah. No, no, not like Barefoot Jesus. Barefoot Jesus was like a chill hippie dude. I'm talking about the guy who he was giving the hot takes in history class.

Molly: Got it.

Becca: Yeah. And I feel that is absolutely Mr. Collins.

Molly: For sure. So, then we get to the ball. [hums a tune]

Becca: Taking a moment to clock everyone's outfits here. [00:04:00] First of all, I've noted that this costume designer likes to put Jane in pinks, which I think is really nice, like softer pinks. And Lizzie is often wearing a nice white, an off-white. And you see Caroline and Louisa, again, far more overdressed than everybody else.

Molly: Yeah, question. I recognized a lot of dresses from the first episode. Was it just the color scheme or were they wearing the same dresses?

Becca: Louisa and Caroline were not wearing the same dresses. It's possible some of the other background people might have been and that might have been a choice.

Molly: Charlotte was wearing the same dress.

Becca: And that would be a choice for people who are country bumpkins who don't have tons of fancy outfits.

Molly: Yeah, that makes sense.

Evan: So, I didn't remember Charlotte's dress from the first episode, but I just wrote down Charlotte's dress is good just because it's so different. Everyone else is in creams, pinks, occasional browns and these really muted color palettes and then she comes in in this lilacy blue.

Molly: Yeah.

Evan: And I think it also makes her stand out in a bad way. It's way simpler than everyone else's. It's not in style, [00:05:00] but I was just like oh, no-- I loved that she had that and that it was different.

Molly: It makes it very clear her social status in comparison to the others that are at this ball, for sure.

Evan: But it's also much more flattering on her than pink would be. So, I was just like--

Molly: Oh, yeah, it's her color.

Evan: --no, we should always wear that color.

Becca: While we're on the subject of this ball, how is this ball different than the first ball?

Molly: It's bigger. Physical bigger space. It's a private ball as opposed to a public ball. So, that would mean that the guests are more select. There's nobody outside getting drunk in the streets, which was a thing in the first ball.

Becca: It's significantly fancier too. Our main characters are more dressed up. You get the sense that richer people are at this ball as well.

Molly: Someone took their coats.

Becca: Exactly.

Evan: Yeah, it's very fancy.

Molly: They all go into the ball. First, they get out of the carriage actually and Darcy is staring at them from the window, very well placed there, and he makes eye contact with Lizzie and [00:06:00] walks away. Then, we go into the ball and Caroline and Louisa are greeting everyone at the door. And they're like, "Oh, and all of your children are here." And Lizzie is looking around checking for Wickham, but she doesn't see him. So, Bingley walks her and Jane into the ball together, which is very just a good-- he's just a good boy. He's a curly fry.

Evan: Kate stopped it that point and said, "Is he really a nice one?"

Molly: I have that problem too. At first. I was like, "Wait, what is Bingley up to?" Ah, he's so good.

Becca: He's just up to falling in love with Jane Bennet.

Evan: He's just Jane, only a boy.

Molly: Exactly.

Evan: Just so nice.

Molly: What I love about this actor is that he's always smiling even when he's uncomfortable, it turns into an uncomfortable smile.

Becca: Oh my God.

Molly: It's so good.

Evan: Yes, he's got uncomfortable smile, board smile, sad smile, but they're all like trying to have a smile. Yes.

Molly: Yeah. In the first episode, he stands up to Darcy about something. He's like, "I don't know why you're always determined to hate everyone." And he's like giving just a big smile. I love him. I love him so much.

Becca: Also, I think [00:07:00] what's really masterful is also Colin Firth has mastered the art of staring and grimacing in a lot of different emotions in this film.

Molly: Like the in-love staring and grimace, the angry staring and grimace, the awkward--

Becca: Amused staring and grimace.

Molly: [crosstalk] --so many different versions of staring and grimacing. Oh, and I also noticed that Lady Forster is wearing the same dress. Anyway, we get into the ballroom, and Lizzie still looking for Wickham. She sees Darcy staring at her longingly. Longingly staring and grimacing. And then, Denny comes over to her and tells her that Wickham is not coming because he was pulled away on some business. And Lizzie looks very disappointed, and then that's when we get Denny saying, "I don't think his business would have been so urgent had he not wished to avoid certain people." And then, he looks at Darcy very meaningfully, which is leaving it right out there in the open for us.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Evan: Denny's not subtle.

Molly: He's not subtle. I really like Denny. I think he's cute.

Evan: [laughs] [00:08:00]

Becca: Denny's like a Kydia, he's just cute and having a good time.

Molly: Exactly. Oh, so then Lydia and Kitty run over with another soldier whose name I don't know. And they're like, "Denny, Come dance with us." And that other soldier is like, "I [unintelligible 00:08:13] the intrusion. I would dance with both your sisters if I could, but you know, as it is." And what?

Evan: Yeah, I don't know his name. But that was the moment when I was like, "Oh, he's a kid too."

Molly: Yeah, they're like kids.

Evan: He's 17. He's being a sweet, bumbling kid. And yes, he has signed up to be a young officer or whatever. But, yeah, he felt so completely harmless to me that it actually made Denny feel more harmless to me.

Molly: Yeah, I really like the-- I guess we'll see how harmful the flirtationship is later on. And we do even get some of that in this episode in another scene, and I think the next scene. But right now, it just really seems fun. [00:09:00] And they're at a ball. Of course, they're going to party! It's a party!

Becca: Yeah. I think that's what's so great about it is, it really does feel relatable. But you also do get the sense that Kidia is somewhat notorious because they're having a ball and they're having a great time. But you can see how everybody else is interacting around them.

Evan: And they should so not be there! It should just be like-- Really, it's only the oldest two that should really be there, end of story. Only one of them is even out in the out sense. And then, they could maybe make a case for Mary. But Kitty and Lydia should not actually be at this thing at all.

Molly: Right. And we got a sense of that because Caroline looked surprised that they were there.

Evan: Yeah.

Molly: And we'll get into this in the dinner scene. But in terms of their notoriety, this is the family that has the five girls, and people know that. And having five girls means five opportunities for marriage, but they're so loud and out there, and it's such a mixed bag. [00:10:00] Some people are like, "Yeah, those are the five girls." And some people are like, "Oh, those are the five girls."

Becca: Absolutely. And I think it's also dependent like who knows them from town? Who's of their same social standing? Who has the same connections? Who has superior connections? You see how people interact with those facts in relation to the Bennet Sisters.

Becca and Molly: [in tune] Bennet Sisters.

Becca: Oh my God.

[laughter]

Molly: Ah, we're theater kids.

Evan: That was adorable.

Molly: Thank you. Lizzie sees Charlotte across the room, and she goes to talk to Charlotte but Collins swoops in there. This is the first Collins-Charlotte meeting, and Lizzie introduces him. And he immediately pulls her away for their first dance, which is disastrous.

Becca: Friendly reminder that the dances in Austen are all a metaphor for sex.

Evan: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Yeah. I know they're a metaphor for sex. This dance is like the opposite of sexy, I mean, in this case.

Evan: Is correct.

Molly: Good. Collins is bad at sex. Yeah, he goes the wrong way. He slams into someone. It's very anxiety-producing [00:11:00] and Darcy is watching Lizzie so bemusedly, and she sees him, and she is furious the whole time.

Evan: Because from her perspective, he's the whole reason Wickham is not here and at least if Wickham was here, yes, she'd still have to dance with Collins, but she could look forward. I wrote down Lizzie is in the worst of all possible timelines. She's just so miserable here!

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: She is. And she's not even a person who lets a night get her down usually because you sent her trying to have good time there even though she's kind of disappointed, but then she has to dance with Collins and then eventually she has to dance with Darcy. And she's just like-- her night keeps devolving and devolving. I think worst possible timeline is totally accurate for this scene.

Molly: Yeah, this is a disaster ball. Then, after the dance, Lizzie goes back to talk to Charlotte at long last. She is ranting, she's getting into it. She's like, "Darcy is the worst! I hate him so much!" And then, Darcy pops up and Charlotte's like, "Lizzie, shh!" And Darcy asks her to dance, [00:12:00] and she has the best response in the world. I don't know if this is how it was in the book, but she says, "Why I-- had not-- thank you, yes"

Evan: [laughs] And then she's like, "Why could I not think of an excuse?"

Molly: As soon as he walks away, she's like, "Ugh," so mad at herself. Oh, my God, it was perfect.

Becca: And then, we get such a good delivery from Charlotte being like, "Well, you should be flattered because he's well above you. And also, it's probably for the best that you didn't reject him because--"

Molly: He's 10 times Wickham's consequence.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Then, she has to go dance with Darcy. And it's their first real conversation, first of all. Second of all, it's the one where she's like, "You need to say something, maybe comment on the dance and I'll say how many couples there are." And he's like, "Do you always talk when you dance?" And she's like, "Yes, it's better that way. We can have the advantage of saying as little as possible." Now, comment on the dance. This is not what I pictured. And I knew that the dances [00:13:00] were like this, but when I pictured their dance, I pictured them standing close to each other, holding hands, having to slow dance like how you do, but that's not how you do.

Becca: Nope, that is not how they did in that time. So, it is a historically accurate dance. But they convey this dance being different than the Collins' dance, you see, like the close shot of their hands touching, brief glances up and down that they do when their bodies meet.

Molly: And that each line has to be delivered when they're facing each other. And they aren't often.

Evan: I wrote down, "Oh my God, these actors!" because they had to learn the dance and then get the lines timed with the right bits of the dance and then they probably do it 7,000 times.

Molly: Oh, absolutely.

Becca: And all the time just like breathing in each other's sexual tension.

Evan: Yeah. So, super impressed. And also, it's just a hilarious little exchange where she's basically trying to give him a tutorial on small talk. Like, "Come on, come on, do something," and he is just like, "Hmm." [dull] [laughs] [00:14:00]

Molly: Something that I noticed in the background is there is this one girl that's been at all the balls so far who has a very distinctive face and a yellow dress, and her eyes are always bugging out. And I think she might have just been a young actor who was in love with Colin Firth, because she gets to hold his hand when there's two couples in a line. And she's like frozen, staring up at him so nervously and it's adorable, and she's been at all of the balls so far, so I'm keeping an eye out for her. She just looks terrified.

Becca: The other thing I noticed is a guy who has a bit of an unfortunate haircut, but also his face the entire time, it's just like, "Save me!" I don't know if you can see it from my phone.

Evan: Oh, him!

Molly: Oh my God!

Evan: Yes. I noticed him too.

Molly: You'll have to post that on our social.

Becca: Yes, absolutely. He's just very important to me. And the way he's staring at Jennifer Ehle in this photo.

Evan: Yes. Oh my God.

Molly: So, then their conversation shifts from the [00:15:00] small talk tutorial to being about Darcy himself. Or he tries to make small talk first of all, by saying, "Do you often walk into Meryton?" And that's when she says, "Yes, we had just met a new friend when you saw us there last," which, of course, brings them to the topic of Wickham. Darcy starts saying that Wickham sucks. Lizzie is like--

Evan: Well, maybe you suck!

Molly: Maybe you suck! And they pause for a moment. Sir William comes over embarrasses her by saying that he hopes that this pleasure of seeing these two wonderful dancers dance together will be often repeated when Jane and Bingley get married, which is embarrassing for many reasons.

Becca: You practically see Jennifer Ehle when doing this thing where she's like, "[unintelligible [00:15:44] Don't do it! Don't do it!"

Molly: That's like the whole ball for her.

Evan: It is. Yeah, she just wants everyone to stop being embarrassing.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: And this is where she says the thing about, "You once mentioned to me that your resentment once created was [00:16:00] permanent. So, you must be very careful in choosing who you resent." And he's like, "Yes." And he asks her why she's asking these questions and she says she's just trying to figure him out. The ball ends. He says he wishes that she would not because it wouldn't reflect well on either of them at this point. And Mrs. Bennet is in the frame this whole time, staring at them, trying to figure out what they're talking about. And she says that it gives her great joy to try to figure him out, basically, and he says, well, he would never try to take away any of her joy, and then he walks away. And she is distressed. She is verklempt as Becca would say.

Becca: Oh, actually, the word is ferklempt.

Molly: Oh, my God. [laughs]

Evan: Ferklempt.

Molly: I said it wrong. I'm a bad Jew!

Becca: It's okay. You don't need to know Yiddish phrases. It's just helpful for evoking my Judaism.

Molly: Oh, we also got the first moment where she says you would never be yourself allowed to be blinded by prejudice.

Becca: It's in the title.

Molly: It is in the title. **[00:17:00]** Also, when she says that I became very aware of the fact that she is blinded by prejudice as she's asking him if he's blinded by prejudice. They're both blinded by prejudice.

Becca: And they both are very--

Evan: Prideful.!

Molly: Yep.

Evan: **[laughs]** Yeah, I absolutely loved the delivery of, "I would by no means suspend any pleasure of yours," bow, flee. It was beautiful.

Molly: All of Darcy's lines kind of end with bow, flee.

Evan: I know. It's why I identify it so strongly.

Molly: Yeah.

Evan: I would also flee.

Becca: That brings us to dinner, right?

Molly: Yeah, that brings us to the dinner scene. Now, there was a moment in Episode 1, where I said, "This isn't as bad as it was in the book." That's because it wasn't the moment. The moment is now. I was talking about Mary at the piano in the first ball.

Evan: **[groans]**

Molly: And we're at the party of the Lucas's and I was like, "Oh, that wasn't so bad." No, it's this scene. And it is worse. It is worse.

Evan: It's so bad.

Becca: The scene in this movie is so good at **[00:18:00]** capturing why this ball is such a disaster for the Bennets.

Evan: Oh, it just piles it all up. So, it's all happening at once.

Molly: All at once. Caroline and Lizzie get to have a conversation. Caroline tries to turn Lizzie against Wickham, and Lizzie is simply not having any of it. She's like, "I already knew that he was the son of a steward. That's not a fault in my mind. So, leave it." And Caroline's like, "Well, I meant it as a friend."

Becca: Sure.

Molly: Yeah, sure.

Evan: But this is brilliant because Caroline's a snob and we know that and she's not very nice, and we know that. And she's right, and we don't know that. So, Lizzie is going to take anything she says, and it's just going to reinforce Lizzie's own prejudices, like, "Oh, well, if you don't like him, he must be fine." When actually, Caroline has a little more information than Lizzie does here.

Molly: Yeah. This moment reminded me, again, with another one *Harry Potter* [00:19:00] reference, but it's the moment where Malfoy says to Harry, "Now's the time for you to start hanging out with the right sort of people," and extends his hand in the first book, and Harry is like, "I can tell the right sort for myself. Thanks." And then doesn't take his hand. Now, we know that Wickham sucks, but this is the moment where Lizzie loses all favor with Caroline because there's no way that they're going to be friends now. She just snubbed her.

Becca: Yeah, and I also think that Caroline's trying that thing where she's trying to just embarrass Lizzie and she does this so often with Wickham in particular, where she's like, "Oh, sweetie, I'm looking out for you!" That's like such a *Mean Girl* tactic. Like, [in a girly voice] "I'm trying to do you a favor because I thought we were friends. I thought we were friends." Caroline doesn't think they're friends. Caroline wants to make Lizzie feel embarrassed. And that's why she's doing this.

Evan: Oh, yeah. I just think it's sort of masterful in both directions. It doesn't make Caroline look good but it does entrench Lizzie in her perception of [00:20:00] what's going on in a way that otherwise maybe she would start to question because she just had this interaction with Darcy that was not horrific, also not great.

Molly: But not horrific.

Evan: No. He could not appear to be a monster.

Becca: Tense but sexy.

Evan: And they made a lot of important eye contact.

Molly: Very important eye contact. Then, we get Jane and Lizzie having their conversation. And Jane saying that Bingley said he fears Wickham is not a respectable man. And Lizzie says she thinks he's just getting that from Darcy. And the framing of this is great because Jane swoops around the other side of Lizzie so that Darcy can be framed right in between them at the table, and they're talking about him. And Lizzie says she doesn't blame Bingley for thinking that because, of course, he would trust his friend. Now, that's foreshadowing for a lot of things because Bingley needs 12 opinions, most of them Darcy's.

Even Tessa: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: [chuckles] And then we have Bingley asking for music. And he says Caroline, "Can we persuade you?" But before he can say that, Mary shoots up, [00:21:00] runs to the piano with her music in her hand.

Becca: And Bingley is like, “Oh, I guess, Mary Bennet, ladies and gentlemen.”

Molly: Yeah, and he has the uncomfortable smile.

Becca: Yeah.

Evan: It's so bad, the poor boy.

Molly: It's so bad. I can't even begin to describe. So, Mary starts playing the piano, and it's like fine at first, I'm like, “Alright, she's going to play badly, but it's fine.” She sings.

Becca: And you know what I mean when I said-- I said early on, that it's when a musical theater girl who doesn't have a terrible voice and wants to sing a song but then isn't breath supporting properly and then gets a little flat and no one asked her to sing in the first place?

Evan: Yes, if she were singing in her living room, we would not be having any real problems with this, but this isn't a performance piece.

Molly: With a lot of rich people.

Evan: Yeah.

Becca: And I think that two things in particular make it extremely devastating. One is the dog howling along with her outside.

Evan: Yes.

Molly: Yes. I love that dog.

Becca: And I think what [00:22:00] really drives home how bad this performance is, is that Louisa comes in after and starts playing flawless Beethoven.

Molly: [mimicking Beethoven]

Evan: Beautifully, and everybody is like, “Oh good,” and you can see everyone's shoulders go down and they go back to their conversation.

Molly: Yeah, exactly. While Mary is playing, Daddy Bennet is buried under his arms. He's so embarrassed and openly embarrassed. At least, Mrs. Bennet in this moment is pretending to enjoy it but nobody else is.

Evan: Now, Lizzie and Jane are trying to not be seen/it's very painful for them. Half of the rest of them are like, “I will go get a drink now.”

Molly: Yep. Meanwhile, this seems to be a good time to continue embarrassing the Bennet family. So, Collins gets up and goes to Darcy and tells him that he's just found out that he is Lady Catherine de

Bourgh's nephew and he has the ultimate pleasure of assuring Darcy that Lady Catherine de Bourgh was in the best of health eight days ago.

Evan: He actually glances up [00:23:00] into the side while he calculates the number of days.

Molly: Like that's how long ago he saw her, and he can't wait till he sees her again. And Darcy is like staring at him and then he just goes, "I'm glad to hear it."

[giggles]

Evan: And then he says, "What is your name?" because they haven't been introduced.

Molly: Yeah. And then he tells him his name. And Darcy just turns and walks away without even saying, "All right, nice to meet you."

Becca: This is a perfect juxtaposition against how Wickham is with Mr. Collins because is Wickham is doing his sleazy, charming thing and amused. Whereas Mr. Darcy is like, "I'm not doing this." He just walks away.

Molly: It's like what you said earlier, he doesn't know how to lie.

Evan: No, he can't say, "Well, it's very nice to meet you," when he's thinking, "Goodness, you're terrible. I don't wish to have this conversation. So, I will walk away now." **[chuckles]**

Molly: Exactly. That's what he does all throughout the book. Whenever he gets uncomfortable, it's time to walk away. Then, he goes to gossip with the sisters. That's where Darcy goes. And Lizzie and Jane see this whole thing and they're mortified. Meanwhile, Mr. Bennet, [00:24:00] I wish the listeners could see me because he keeps lifting up his hands like he's ready to clap, like it's the end of the song, and then it's not the end of the song. So, he has to put his hands back down. And he is all of us in that moment. Finally, Mary finishes her song, and everyone is politely clapping. She launches into another one.

Becca: And Daddy Bennet is like, "Nope, nope, nope, nope."

Molly: And this is where he says, "You've delighted us long enough, child, let other people have a turn." And it's super embarrassing, and poor Mary.

Evan: Yeah, it's painful in multiple directions.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Yeah. Then, Collins gets up like he's about to play. And he says, if he could sing, oh, how he would love to delight them, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. And that's when Louisa swoops in and plays the Beethoven.

Becca: And I think it's particularly excruciating that Louisa is excellent at the Beethoven.

Evan: It doesn't look like she was planning on playing. She saw Collins heading for the piano and she was like, "No, we can't survive another one of [00:25:00] these," and she just bolted.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: And she plays it unnecessarily fast too.

Evan: Yes.

Becca: And she's like, "Argh, just getting all the Bennets out of here."

Molly: And then, Mrs. Bennet starts loudly talking with her mouthful about how Collins likes Lizzie, and he first liked Jane, but Bingley swooped in there first. So, that'll be a great marriage and it will put the girls into the path of other rich men. And she's just saying this all so loudly and you see Bingley and Jane hear her and turn bright red, and Lizzie hearing her and turning bright red. And then, Lydia runs through with Denny's sword. And she's like, screaming and laughing and he's like, "Lydia, give me my sword back." And then, she goes, "Lord Denny, fetch me a glass of wine. I can scarce draw breath, I'm so fat." And it's phenomenal. I love her. I love Lydia, but you can see how this would be very embarrassing for everyone else.

Becca: Yeah. So, just a Becca study question at the end of this. What do you think it is about this scene that's-- because it's almost exactly what happens in the book [00:26:00] to a tee. But why is it so much worse to see it?

Molly: Because you can see everyone's reactions around them.

Becca: Yes! That's exactly why!

Evan: Yeah, that really is it. I had so many empathetic cringe moments that is legit hard to watch.

Molly: The Bingley Sisters, for example, it is every other guest at this ball. It is seeing how in such close quarters they are at dinner. They're all sitting, and the tables are next to each other. And you can hear Mrs. Bennet shouting about Jane and Bingley and you can see Lizzie standing in the corner trying not to be noticed or associated with Lydia running through with a sword and this is their family taking over this other family's space and being obnoxious and everyone's noticing.

Evan: I guess I also felt like-- and I could be misremembering this, but I feel like in the book, yeah, Lizzie is like recounting all of this, but this is her family and she's used to them. [00:27:00] And so, in the book, it feels like embarrassed, sure, but this is what she expects. When Mary plays, Lizzie is doing more of an eyeroll than a mortification. I don't know if that is my interpretation of Lizzie in that part of the book, but it feels she's not as mortified in the book or it's not as emphasized.

Molly: I think you're right because I remember not picking up on it in the beginning. I didn't really pick up on it until Darcy pointed out to her later on in the book when he writes her the letter and is like, "Your family is a disaster." And I was like, "I guess they kind of are a disaster, but we love them." But here we get to see actually what Darcy is seeing.

Becca: I think what it is, is I do think she is embarrassed at this point in the book. She does ask Daddy Bennet to go stop Mary from [unintelligible [00:27:46], but I think it's not made distinctly worse than any other moment that her family has been embarrassing. There's a scene at Netherfield where Mrs. Bennet yells at Darcy and Lizzie is embarrassed there and she's like, "Oh God, my family." [00:28:00] I think it translates to the same way at the Netherfield ball, like, "Oh God, my family." She sees that her family's being embarrassing and she's embarrassed, but it's not like, "Oh, this is like ruin lives embarrassing." Do you know what I mean?

Molly: Right. Because she doesn't at this point feel that her life is going to be ruined by it because she's not in love with Darcy yet.

Becca: Oh, also, I think the one other thing is, it's clear Bingley is in on it in this piece. And the big fear is that Jane will be embarrassed.

Evan: Right. Also, this is the ball where Darcy just in the book is constantly popping up near her and then when she tries to talk to him, bowing and running away, right?

Molly: I think so.

Evan: They translated that in the film into he is just always staring at her and it comes across as so creepy, Creeper Darcy.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: And she notices it and she clocks it and she also is like annoyed by it. Like, [crosstalk] "Stop staring at me."

Evan: Yeah. And in the book, I think he's just literally always standing near her not talking to her and driving her nuts.

Molly: Like a vampire.

Evan: Yeah, exactly. [chuckles]

Molly: So, that brings us [00:29:00] to scene seven, which I believe is the last scene in the episode. It's the big one.

Becca: The neg proposal.

Evan: Oh.

Molly: So, we start out with Kitty and Lizzie discussing the ball when Mrs. Bennet runs into tell Lizzie that Collins needs to speak with her alone. And Lizzie is like, "Please don't leave me, please." And Mrs. Bennet is like, "Lizzie, you will stay here and talk to Mr. Collins." And then, she and Kitty leave her. This is the proposal, and it is worse than I had imagined it because he literally-- she tries to say something and he puts his hand up to stop her. Like, "No, it is my turn now," and I was furious with him.

Becca: First of all, Lizzie playing with the flowers and her discomfort is the funniest thing I've ever seen.

Evan: Yeah.

Molly: Big mood.

Becca: It's hard to perceive that Lizzie is not sitting there amused at absorbing the proposal. She's actively from the beginning being like, "No, this is not necessary." And he's like, "No. Please. I know you're [00:30:00] being modest in my presence. But I know you want me."

Molly: It's so gross.

Evan: There's so much of that. There's so much of him telling her who she is, what she wants, and what she's thinking, and it's just disgusting.

Molly: So gross. And you can see across her face it's playing out like, "He's saying something nice about me. I'll accept that compliment." "Oh, wait, he's saying something gross. What?" And it's all just like crossing her face as he's speaking. And it's disgusting. Finally, she's like, "Mr. Collins, slow your roll. I have not said yes. And I'm not going to. I really accept that it's an honor that you're proposing to me. I'm very sensible of the compliment, but it would be impossible for me to accept your proposal." And he will not take no for an answer.

Becca: The line where he's like, "You can't possibly be rejecting me. I know this is a sweet little game you're playing."

Evan: "There is no way to guarantee that you will ever get another proposal of marriage." That was not just terrible, but I think [00:30:00] that's when it crossed the line for her as well. Just like, "Oh, wait a word. Hello? How dare you?" [chuckles]

Molly: She's like, "I'm hot. Okay?"

Evan: Legit cash. Not old yet. What are you doing?

Molly: Right. At some point she's like, "I am not trying to trick you. I literally just don't want to marry you." And he keeps talking, so she just gets up and walks away from him. There is a moment where I felt bad for him because he kept talking, she was gone.

Evan: Right at the end, and then it trails off and then he mops his brow.

Molly: Yeah, he mops his brow and it's pretty gross.

Evan: He was very stressed about it all.

Becca: His upper lip was like glistening. It was disgusting.

Molly: It was really gross. He was exerting a lot of energy. He was exerting a lot of energy doing this proposal, and it's failing.

Evan: Doing it so badly. Lizzie goes upstairs and Mrs. Bennet comes up screaming into Mr. Bennet's room saying, "You have to talk to Lizzie." This is peak Mr. Bennet because he is so unconcerned. He's like, **[00:32:00]** "I don't know what you're talking about."

Becca: The way he says, "Seems a hopeless business," and then just flips open his book, I was like a mood.

Molly: That was a whole mood. This is the moment where he says, "Well, Lizzie, your mother will not see you again if you do not marry Mr. Collins and I will never see you again if you do." Brilliant. He even says, **[lip-smacking noises]** "And I will not see you again if you do." And Mrs. Bennet, her face just falls and she's like, "Oh, Mr. Bennet."

Becca: She makes an inhuman sound.

Evan: Yes, she's just so-- I don't know why she expected him to back her up as he has never backed her up.

Molly: Ever.

Evan: But she did. In this moment, she has a point, this is important. It could actually mean that one of their daughters is going to be okay. But also, he has never backed her up. He'll always take Lizzie's side. Lizzie is his favorite. What was she thinking? And she still looks so betrayed.

Molly: I know, but she's a very trusting woman.

Becca: She is, and I do think that Mr. Bennet is actually a little bit revolutionary here **[00:33:00]** because he is acknowledging that his daughter should have some agency over who she should marry, which in this time period is like a clutch move on the part of Mr. Bennet.

Evan: Also, he can't stand Mr. Collins. So, if Mr. Collins had come to him-- and I assume he did come to him at some point, although I don't know because he said like, "I will get your parents' approval and then you'll have to say yes," so maybe he didn't yet.

Molly: I don't think he did. I think he was like going to go talk to them about it, but he mostly talked to Mrs. Bennet about it, it seems, because she's the one who's like, "Wait, Mr. Collins, come back."

Evan: It just feels to me Mr. Bennet would have been like, "Nah, you can't have Lizzie. Mary, Kitty, sure, but not Lizzie. You're not good enough for her."

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: What's interesting also that I'm thinking about now is that him marrying one of the daughters would be the only way to ensure that they can continue living there when he's dead.

Evan: That's the whole idea really.

Molly: That's bold on Mr. Bennet's part because yikes, but also good.

Becca: Honestly, all this could have been avoided if Mr. Collins was into **[00:34:00]** Mary.

Molly: Yeah.

Evan: Yeah. Or if he was just not gross.

Molly: If he was just not gross too. If he had asked instead of telling her they were going to get married.

Evan: If he'd been socially reasonable and shown up and been like, "Hi, I know I'm a little awkward, but also I'm going to inherit this, and I feel weird about it. So, I'd like to marry one of you. Anyone up for that? There's five of you. Would one of you like to entertain that thought?" It would have gone very differently.

Becca: Mary would have stripped down to her beautiful little slip pinafore. And then like, "I'm ready."

Molly: Yeah.

Evan: **[laughs]** He just comes into it thinking it's his job to choose one of them with his complete inability to judge what other people are thinking or feeling, ever.

Molly: Right. He doesn't understand that they might not want to marry him. And he goes into that in the proposal, he's like, "Well, my connections with Lady Catherine de Bourgh, my inheritance of the estate, these are all greatly in my favor." And it's like, your personality is not in your favor, dude.

Evan: And she actually says, "You would not make me happy and I cannot imagine that I would make you happy." **[00:35:00]**

Molly: Exactly. They would be very not suited.

Evan: She would just kill him in his sleep. That's all.

Becca: Oh, yeah, absolutely.

Evan: Not be long.

Becca: She did them both a favor, for sure.

Molly: She does them a big favor-- Well, someone does have a big favor. So, then Kidia is going outside and they run into Charlotte. And they tell Charlotte what's happened, and Charlotte is like, "Oh, maybe I should invite him to dine with us tonight." And Lydia has a great liner. She's like, "Oh, please do. Take him away and feed him. He's been in high dudgeon all morning." Because he's like running around the house wailing and Mrs. Bennet's wailing and it's just a disaster. Charlotte goes in, invites him to dinner. And then, he tells Mrs. Bennet that he's leaving and it's all for the best, and he'll see her

tomorrow. And then, he goes off with Charlotte to dinner, which is where this episode ends. And we know a big cliffhanger is coming because we know what happens with him and Charlotte.

Evan: Yes.

Becca: Two things, I was going to say. One, you can see the wheels turning in Charlotte's head at this very moment. [00:36:00]

Molly: Question about that. Does she want to marry him? Because she says, "Should I invite him to dine with us?" And then, we zoom in on her face and she thinks about it for a second.

Becca: Yeah, she's basically like, "Oh, we have an available man looking for a wife. He has a living."

Evan: Isn't she 25? She's older than Lizzie.

Molly: She is 27.

Becca: 27.

Evan: 27, yeah. And she doesn't have any other means of support. She was already looking at him like, "Okay, I could make this bargain." But she wouldn't have, "Well, he was interested in Lizzie." As soon as she finds out that Lizzie is absolutely saying no, she's like, "Okay, well, then I'm not stepping on anybody." I guess I get this one.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Huh.

Evan: Charlotte knows what bargain she's making.

Molly: Yeah, because I hadn't thought of it in the book. I didn't think of it as she wanted to marry him. I thought of it as he proposed, and she accepted.

Becca: Oh, no, no, no. This is a move on Charlotte's part.

Molly: Fascinating.

Becca: For sure.

Evan: I'm sure she was finding a way [00:37:00] to get alone with him and say, "I'm so sorry about the way that Lizzie has treated you." I'm sure she did that. Yeah.

Molly: I know. I feel that didn't happen in the book. I thought that Charlotte would have wanted to do better for herself, but I guess he's doing pretty well. She just wants a marriage of money.

Becca: She just doesn't want to be a burden to her family.

Evan: She'll take anyone.

Molly: I forgot she has sisters.

Evan: She's also the one who was like, "Listen, don't snub Mr. Darcy. He's worth a lot of money." I like her. She's just pragmatic. And part of that is that she is past the age where they're supposed to be getting a lot like-- She went through that bit, didn't find that match, and knows what it's like on the other side of that and knows what it would be like to be a burden on her parents for the rest of her life, and doesn't want that for herself. Yeah, I've always loved that Charlotte makes that call and then just manages the hell out of Mr. Collins for the rest of their lives.

Molly: She does.

Becca: And I think it's really important that we see that next to Lizzie, who's got this [00:38:00] ideal love story. Instead, you have Charlotte who's like, "Well, actually, I don't have a way of making money for myself. I don't want to be a burden on my family. This man is not evil, and he can provide for me. So, I guess, I'll take this marriage."

Molly: Right.

Evan: And he's really just odious and annoying.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Point two is, cutting it off here, what does that give to like the viewership at this point in the story? Where do we end the story now?

Molly: It's a cliffhanger. It's going to give the illusion of time passing in between Charlotte going off with Mr. Collins, and Mr. Collins proposing, which in reality, it's only like a day, but having a full episode break in between is definitely going to give the illusion that they were able to get to know each other.

Becca: Yes, totally.

Evan: It also ends the episode on the Mr. Collins' mortification and distracts from all of the family embarrassment that was the scene immediately before that. So, that stuff is in your head, but what you're going to remember moving out of the episode is [00:39:00] while Mr. Collins was terrible and Lizzie just put him in his place and doesn't have to marry him, and is that like, yay, right?

Becca and Molly: Yes.

Evan: It lands on a moment of its triumph in the sense that Lizzie doesn't have to marry someone she strongly dislikes. In the reality of the world Austen has created, it's also a really bad decision on Lizzie's part, practically speaking. It lands in that spot where you as the audience are just so on Lizzie's side, you're like, "Yeah, no, don't marry that dude. He's terrible."

Becca: I echo everything [crosstalk] totally nailed that question. That brings us to our standby study question. First, best line delivery or moment.

Molly: I had several options. I think my favorite is probably Lizzie's response to Darcy asking her if she wants to dance, which goes along the lines of, "Why I-- Had not-- Thank you, yes. Why could I not think of an excuse?"

[laughter]

Becca: Excellent [00:40:00] choice.

Evan: What I actually ended up with for my favorite line delivery was the first Lady Catherine de Bourgh. I listened to a lot of them. And the first one is at that dinner scene when he's like, Lady Catherine de Bourgh, and it's the most worshipful name anyone has ever said. And I was just like, "Oh my God, you nailed it," because then he says it eight million more times, but every time you're like, "Oh, right."

Molly: Yeah, that first one really encapsulates his reverence for her.

Becca: Absolutely.

Evan: I was floored by it.

Becca: If I'm going to pick one, it's going to be Mr. Bennet saying, "Seems a hopeless business," and then opening his book.

Evan: The book. **[laughs]** Yes, also very good.

Becca: Just an incredible, an incredible showing from Daddy Bennet. Okay, then, the next one is notable additions to the story via the movie.

Molly: Mary.

Evan: Yeah.

Becca: Mary's thirst.

Molly: **[crosstalk]**

Evan: And Kitty, they gave Kitty more to do which distinguished her from Lydia. I [00:41:00] think they gave her a bunch of Lydia's lines from the book, which gave her something to say.

Molly: Also, she's likable. Lydia is a lot. And you can see that Kitty follows her. Even though Kitty is older, Kitty follows Lydia's lead, but you can tell that there's a personality brewing under there.

Evan: She has a couple of brief scenes with other people. And you can see that she actually likes her other sisters too. They make Kitty slightly more of a person, so it was a bit less Kidia.

Molly: Exactly. I feel weird saying Kidia in this except for when they're standing together. But otherwise, they definitely have their own personalities, which is kind of cool.

Becca: They absolutely do. I agree with both of those picks. I'd also add on the set up of the Lydia and Wickham stuff earlier on.

Molly: Yes, for sure.

Becca: That's really well done. And best and worst aspects of the film. You don't have to give both. You can give one or the other.

Molly: I think it's got to be something with the ball for the best.

Evan: I want to jump off that a little bit. One of my favorite things that I thought they did incredibly well, it was at the ball, but the framing of **[00:42:00]** all these shots showing you, not just what's happening in the foreground, but who was in the background of each shot was also important. There were always a lot of people. So, there's this opulence and that feeling, but also just, if you watch it more than once, you start noticing, "Oh God, that person's reacting and I didn't even notice they were in this shot the first time," which I thought was a cool way to represent the 8 million, billion layers Jane Austen puts in what she writes.

Molly: Yeah, like Mrs. Bennet watching Darcy and Lizzie interact, or Jane and Bingley dancing directly behind them, or Darcy being in the background of that shot between Lizzie and Jane. Yeah, so many little moments like that. I also think that the dogs are always good. I love a good dog. And I mentioned this a lot, but like the close quarters of everything, it's all a lot smaller than I had imagined. And I think that adds an awesome layer of being able to hear everything when Mrs. Bennet's at the ball talking loudly about Jane and Bingley for example. You can **[00:43:00]** see everyone reacting to that because they can all hear.

Becca: Excellent choices. I'm going to shout my favorite aspect of this episode of the film, which is the performance of the guy who plays Mr. Collins. It's one of the best comedic performances in BBC Masterpiece and I just felt like I wanted to like shout it because it's just so funny.

Molly: He's very good.

Evan: I may have something to say about that myself in a moment.

Becca: So, who wins the episode?

Evan: Well, I think it is the actor who plays Mr. Collins, which I know is a little bit of a stretch. But for real, he was just amazing. Being that unlikable in so many millions of ways and just the incredible details of the performance, which is beautiful. Probably the moment that really drove it home for me was when he asked Elizabeth for the first two dances. And the face he makes in that moment, it's just like, "My God, man!" I looked him up and David Bamber is his name, I think. I was just like, "Oh my God," because this is Mr. Collins' episode. This is his moment. We see him later, but this is his moment. He just ran with it.

Molly: Yeah, I'd have to agree with that. He embodies simpering. Whenever I read the word simpering, it's like **[simpering sounds]** and that's what he does all the time.

Becca: Yeah, that's exactly correct.

Molly: Now that I've said that, he also embodies simping. Isn't that excessive chivalry?

Evan: For Lady Catherine. He's simping for Lady Catherine the entire time.

Becca: Oh, fully.

Molly: Yeah. While I hate him, it has to be the actor, obviously not Mr. Collins himself because fuck Mr. Collins, but the actor for sure wins this.

Evan: He's got the ducked head and looking up thing and it's just like--

Molly: Yeah. **[chuckles]**

Becca: The bangs. Ugh.

Evan: And halfway through, I was like, "Of course you need a wife. Someone needs to cut your hair." That haircut!

Becca: According **[unintelligible [00:44:55]]**.

Molly: We all need a wife to cut our hair right now.

Evan: **[laughs]**

Becca: Thank you, David Bamber, **[00:45:00]** you've won this episode. Your performance of Collins is masterful.

Molly: Masterful.

Becca: That concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. Evan, thank you so much for joining us. Do you have stuff you want to plug for our listeners if they want to find your other places in the pod world or on social media?

Evan: Sure. My main show is called *This Planet Needs a Name*.

Molly: It's so good.

Evan: Thank you, Molly. It's [@NeedsANamePod](#) on basically everywhere, but we're more active on Twitter. So, feel free to look us up there. I'm Evan Murray and I am just the only person with that selection of names, so if you want to get in touch, Google me, I'm really easy to find. And I'd say if my show and myself if we are nothing else, it is deeply invitational. So, if anyone wants to say hi, I'm always happy to make a new friend.

Becca: Well, you've made a new friend today.

Molly: Yes.

Evan: Yay!

Becca: So, thank you, guys, so much for joining us. Until next week, stay proper.

Molly: And find yourself someone to cut your hair.

Evan: [laughs]

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: Bye, guys.

Molly: Bye.

Evan: Bye.

[00:46:00]

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