

**Molly:** Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Laura, Hilda, Frankie, Jenna, and Joanne. Welcome to the team. If you want to be like these awesome people and get access to bonus content like our notes, outtakes, bonus episodes, and more, check out our Patreon at [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://patreon.com/podandprejudice). And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapters 31 and 32 of *Emma*.

If you have never used a Tushy or a bidet, I used to be afraid of them. I hate to start the episode with buttock talk again, but your butt will thank you.

**Becca:** When I used one for the first time, I was like, "Oh, okay, we are disgusting as a culture."

**Molly:** Right. Your butt feels so clean after you've done it.

**Molly:** Yeah. Just the ability to wash your ass immediately after pooping, it's such a journey. It's such a game changer.

**Molly:** And it really saves a lot of toilet paper.

**Becca:** It does. And not only that, you just **[00:01:00]** feel better. Like, you feel more hygienic. It's great.

**Molly:** Yeah. Okay, I'll tell you the story about the first time I used a Tushy, and then we will get right into the chapters.

**Becca:** Okay.

**Molly:** But the first time I used a Tushy was, like, maybe my third date with Mel is the first time going over to her house. I arrived, and we ordered food, and we were going to watch Star Wars, and she was setting up the food, and I had to go to the bathroom, and I was like, "Oh, my gosh, look, it's a Tushy." And she was like, "Yeah, you should try it." It was too early for me to poop at her house, obviously. [giggles] Obviously. So, I was like, "I'm not going to go poop." And she was like, "Just try it, anyway." And I was like, "Okay." I was like, "I'm scared. I'm scared," and I used it.

She was in the kitchen, and I'm in the bathroom, and I just screamed. I was like--

[screaming]

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Oh, no, we spiked so bad. Sorry, Graham.

**Becca:** Sorry, Graham. That was worth it though.

**Molly:** Yeah, I just screamed and she's like, "You okay?"

**Becca:** [laughs] Listeners, if you're wondering how **[00:02:00]** to snag a lady, Molly has just told you.

**Molly:** [laughs]

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

**Becca:** This is Becca.

**Molly:** This is Molly.

**Becca:** We are here to talk about Jane Austen, and not buttocks.

**Molly:** Yeah. [laughs] Literally, every episode we start with some sort of butt conversation.

**Becca:** There's a lot to talk about.

**Molly:** There really is. It's a complex thing.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, specifically, we're here to talk about *Emma*.

**Molly and Becca:** *Emma*.

**Becca:** Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen books through my lifetime.

**Molly:** And I, Molly. I'm reading Jane Austen for the first time through this podcast.

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

**Molly:** No, today, we're talking about Volume II, Chapters 13 and 14, or if your book is not broken up into Volumes, that would be Chapters 31 and 32 of *Emma*.

**Becca:** And we're going to call these 'Meet the Eltons.'

**Molly:** Yes, Meet [00:03:00] the Eltons. So, Becca, do we want to tell the listeners where we left off?

**Becca:** Sure. So, we were going to have the Blue Ball-Ball in Highbury. And then, Frank Churchill got called away by his aunt, who was sick and also being petty. And Emma and Frank said goodbye to each other. As they said goodbye, Frank and Emma shared a little bit of a tense moment leaving Emma wondering where she and Frank stand at this time.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. And Emma has decided that she's in love, and that's where we start this set of chapters.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** What?

**Becca:** I just love the beginning of this chapter. It's so good.

**Molly:** It's so good. And also, honestly, pretty relatable, just like the overthinking of it all.

**Becca:** Just also like the idea of, like, when anybody has a crush, it's one of those things where you're either the type of person who shoves it down and you're like, "No, I don't want that crush." Or you're the type of person you start putting on makeup, [00:04:00] you doll up a little bit and you're like, "Mm, I'm feeling good. I'm thinking about my crush. It's feeling good." You know what I mean?

**Molly:** Yeah. Where would Emma fall on that spectrum?

**Becca:** Oh, Emma's hardcore luxuriating in her crush right now.

**Molly:** She is, but she's also like, "But it's not so bad." She's like, "It's not the end all, be all crush."

**Becca:** Yeah. She's basically like, "Ooh, I'm definitely in love with him, but also could never picture marry him."

**Molly:** Yeah. So, basically, she's like, "Okay, I'm in love. But on the one hand, I can't stop thinking about him. On the other hand, I'm like, 'Fine. I'm fine now that he's gone. I am perfectly happy without him here.'" So, she starts thinking like, "I can see his flaws. I think

about a thousand different ways that I will see him again, but all of those ways end with me turning him down." So, she's fantasizing about turning him down.

**Becca:** You know how you always rehearse having conversations in the shower?

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** She is fantasizing [00:05:00] about the forbidden love conversation that she and Frank will have, where she's going to be like, "Ah, Frank, think I don't feel what you feel, but no, I will never marry."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** "Love me from afar forever."

**Molly:** I know. She wants him to want her.

**Becca:** Oh, yeah.

**Molly:** She needs him to need her.

**Becca:** Didn't she see him crying?

**Molly:** Didn't she see him crying? She thinks that, even though she knows she was already predetermined that she would not marry but she thinks that if the attachment was really strong, it would at least feel like a sacrifice to not marry him. So, she doesn't think she can be too in love just enough. She thinks, "This is a perfect level of being in love." There's something she says later where she says, "They say everyone's in love once in their life, and I'll have been let off easy," which I think is funny.

**Becca:** Yeah. She's like, "This is the ideal love of my life," because-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** She's like, "My happiness isn't too tied to it."

**Becca:** Exactly, which maybe tells her something.

**Molly:** Emma doesn't really get it yet.

**Becca:** [00:06:00] No, she does not.

**Molly:** On the other hand, she feels very certain that he is very in love. She knows that when they meet again, she'll have to be very careful not to encourage him. She thinks that he couldn't possibly have thought that she was encouraging him, because if he had, his behavior when they parted would have been different. My question is, didn't he try to say something and she shut it down?

**Becca:** Well, yeah, but he accepted that as well.

**Molly:** Sure.

**Becca:** So, she's basically saying like, "Oh, if he'd really loved me, he would have fought harder."

**Molly:** Emma. Oh.

**Becca:** This is some game playing.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** We were talking about this last night. This is like that very heteronormative guy pays on the first date dance that a lot of girls do on dates, where when the bill comes, everyone pulls out their wallet and the girl offers to pay. The idea is that girls are like, "I always offer to

pay. But if he lets me pay, that's a red flag," which is ridiculous. But men [00:07:00] are very confused by that, because usually, a lot of people do insist on paying on a first date, which is very nice. It's polite, it's very heteronormative, but whatever. But the fact that it's like, you have to offer to pay, but if the guy lets you, then it's a no-no. So, it's a false promise.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** But it's this type of thinking of like, "The etiquette of what I have to do, but the way you have to fight what I have to do is inherent" in the way Emma's talking about all this.

**Molly:** Yeah, and it's annoying and cringey.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** But funny. It's funny.

**Becca:** Oh, yes. Because Jane Austen is making a lot of fun of Emma in this part of the book.

**Molly:** Yes. Very much so. She does think it's possible that when he returns, he won't still be in love with her, because he's not the most consistent. The exact quote is, "I do not altogether build upon his constancy," which I think is a good way to sum up Frank Churchill. So, he writes a letter to Mrs. Weston, and [00:08:00] Emma gets to read it, and it gives her butterflies, and she's like, "Oh, crap." [giggles] It's a long, well written letter. I wanted to draw back our attention to the letter that Mr. Martin wrote Harriet, which was a briefer letter. And Emma thought that it was good, that it was brief. She was like, "We don't want a letter to be too long."

**Becca:** Especially if a man wrote it.

**Molly:** Yes. Like Mr. Elton's poetry, for example.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** She said, "Brief is good. Brief, succinct." Now, this is a long letter.

**Becca:** Well, if you notice, Frank Churchill has this thing where he gets away with not following etiquette, because he's so charming. That's another little quirk here where the letter is long, but Emma's like, "Oh, but it's so well written and it's so dreamy because it's Frank writing it."

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. She's a little blinded by her crush.

**Becca:** Also, just that's how Frank is. He's just the type of person-- That's why Knightley hates him. It's like, he gets away with whatever he wants to do.

**Molly:** So true. It says that there were [00:09:00] no suspicious flourishes of apology or concern in the letter. Now, shouldn't there be a little bit of like, "I'm sorry I had to leave soon and I hope everyone's okay," because it sounds like he didn't really do that? [giggles]

**Becca:** No, I think he just was basically saying like, "Oh, God, I miss you, stepmother. You're so much more fun than being at my aunt's house."

**Molly:** Complain, complain, complain.

**Becca:** But, like, polite complain [crosstalk] that point.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Jane Austen makes a point of saying, like, he refrains from saying too much-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** For sure.

**Becca:** Although that's Emma's reading of it. So, take that with a grain of salt.

**Molly:** Unreliable narrator.

**Becca:** But basically complimenting Mrs. Weston and how lovely her home is, and then also dropping in little things about Emma in a letter to Mrs. Weston, which Frank would probably know that she would share with Emma.

**Molly:** Right. She's counting how many times he said "Ms. Woodhouse" in the letter. And the best part of the letter to her was that he mentioned [00:10:00] he hadn't gotten a chance to say goodbye to "Ms. Woodhouse's beautiful little friend."

**Becca:** Emma's little fucking matchmaker switch just goes--

**Molly:** To be fair, so did mine. I was like hmm, hmm, because you know how I've been like this whole time? I've been like, "Does he really like Emma or is she misreading the situation?" I see where this is going, but I also see an alternative path where he liked Harriet the whole time, but he's actually a mess, and he was trying to get close to Emma to get close to Harriet.

**Becca:** Like a reverse Elton.

**Molly:** Yes, like a reverse Elton. So, this turns on Emma's matchmaker brain and she's like, "Hmm, interesting." So, at the end of the letter, Emma still feels like, "You know what? I could do without Frank. I still love him, but I'm fine also and I just want to make sure he's happy in the future, and I know that [00:11:00] won't be with me." She knows she shouldn't try to matchmake them, but she also is like, "Mm, Frank thinks that Harriet's beautiful and Harriet has the "probability of connection," meaning that she could be well connected, potentially. For Harriet, this is obviously a great match. For Emma, it would firmly friend zone Frank, so she wouldn't have to worry about it anymore.

**Becca:** Yeah. The idea of, "Oh, I have a baby crush on him. But you know what I should do? Set him up with my best friend."

**Molly:** This, to me, was like, "At least, my dear, Elijah's, his wife. At least I keep his eyes in my life."

**Becca:** It's a little less self-sacrificing though, because Emma has made it so clear how not even for a second does she want to marry Frank Churchill.

**Molly:** For sure. Yeah. So, she wants to wait to do anything about this, because Mr. Elton's wedding date has been named, and Harriet's a wreck, and everyone's [00:12:00] talking about, "Oh, Mr. And Mrs. Elton, Mr. Elton and his wife," blah, blah, blah. And Harriet's just like [cries] So, she doesn't think that's the best time to start matchmaking-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Time and a place.

**Molly:** Yeah. Emma spends all of her time comforting Harriet, and I really loved this quote. It says, "But it was heavy work to be forever convincing without producing any effect, forever agreed to, without being able to make their opinions the same."

**Becca:** You know when your friend doesn't hate her ex?

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Oh.

**Molly:** [giggles]

**Becca:** Because then she's like, "Ah, he just doesn't love me." "Oh, God, what if he doesn't have any feelings for me anymore?" And you're just like, "It's irrelevant whether or not he has feelings for you, because he's a turd monster."

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** "Stop caring."

**Molly:** Right. So, being the person who always needs convincing but never is convinced. For me, this made me think of like, "You know how I'm a hypochondriac?"

**Becca:** Yes. [laughs]

**Molly:** So, I'll be like, "But I feel a tickle in my throat," and Mel's like, "But you haven't seen anyone in the last week." [00:13:00] And I'll be like, "No, I know. When I took a COVID test and it was negative," but still like, "What if I have COVID?" And she's like, "Well, you don't have COVID. You just took a COVID test, and you don't have it." And I'll be like, "But what about this tickle in my throat? No, you're right, you're right, you're right." And then I'll call my mom and I'll be like, "Mom, do you think I'm okay?" Mel's like, "I just told you that you were okay."

**Becca:** [laughs] This is so me and Mike as well. I am the Mel and he is the Molly, and the situation-- I think this is maybe, listeners, tell us if this is a universal couple thing. But Michael just be like, "I just feel like death this morning. What if I have COVID? I don't want to be sick, because I got to run this week and all that." And I'm always just like, "Honey, you get headaches when the air pressure changes outside, and you have allergies. Remember these things before you jump to conclusions."

**Molly:** Yeah. It's like I can never breathe out of my nose, but I always will be like, "I can't breathe out of my nose." And Mel's like, "You can never breathe out of your nose." And I'm like, "But what if I'm sick?" [giggles]

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, maybe that is a universal couple thing, where one is a hypochondriac and one is fine.

**Becca:** Yeah. And one is like, "You're not sick."

[00:14:00] [laughter]

**Molly:** Yeah. Anyway, so, relatable content. Then, Emma changes tactics on how to convince Harriet and she's like, "Harriet, you being so sad about Mr. Elton getting married is an attack on me, because I know it's my fault and you don't have to rub it in." And Harriet is like, "Oh, my God, what? Be mean to Emma. How dare I?"

**Becca:** Fall on her own sword rather than even make Emma slightly uncomfortable.

**Molly:** But what's wild is that Emma then is like, "I'm not saying you should talk about him less for my sake." And he's like, "You did just say that, but now you're just trying to make it seem like you didn't."

**Becca:** Honestly though, I sympathize with Emma here, because whatever tactic you get to where you can move someone forward past obsessing about something is, it's a decent tactic.

**Molly:** Fair. It does work in this case.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Because Harriet is like, "You, who have been the best friend I ever had in my life, want gratitude to you. Nobody is equal to you. I care for nobody as I [00:15:00] do for you." gay.

**Becca:** Gay. Also, I love the next section where Emma talks about how sweet Harriet is.

**Molly:** Yes, it is very sweet.

**Becca:** It's really nice, because she compares Harriet to her sister and her father, and it's just like she just loves herself some sweet people with empty heads.

**Molly:** Yeah. She says that she thinks that there's no charm better than tenderness of heart and she says, "I would not change you for the clearest-headed, longest-sighted, best-judging female breathing. Oh! the coldness of a Jane Fairfax! Harriet is worth a hundred such."

**Becca:** Why drag Jane into it again? [laughs]

**Molly:** Emma's always thinking about Jane, because gay?

**Becca:** Gay.

**Molly:** But she says, "I mentioned no names, but happy is the man who changes Emma for Harriet."

**Becca:** Mentions no names. Okay, Emma.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, that's the end of that chapter.

So sorry to interrupt, but it's time for a special segment we like to call the Economics of Podcasting about Jane Austen. [00:16:00] Graham, the sound effect, please. [Economics of Podcasting about Jane Austen stinger] I know I've only read three Jane Austen books, but from my very limited experience, it seems like there's some sort of weirdness around hair in every novel. But hair weirdness should be kept in the books. When my hair started randomly falling out, I was terrified. I fell down Instagram rabbit hole after rabbit hole trying to find a treatment that would work for me. Thankfully, I had Zocdoc. I downloaded the app, plugged in my insurance, and immediately found a specialist who was able to prescribe me exactly what I needed to keep my hair just as long and luscious as Marianne Dashwood's before Willoughby chopped it off.

Zocdoc is the only free app that lets you find and book doctors who are patient reviewed, take your insurance, are available when you need them, and treat almost every condition under the sun. I love Zocdoc because it takes the guesswork out of finding the right doctor for my needs and for my busy schedule. If that sounds good to you, go to [zocdoc.com/whomst](https://zocdoc.com/whomst) and download the Zocdoc app for free. Then find [00:17:00] and book a top-rated doctor today. Many are available within 24 hours. That's Z-O-C-D-O-C dot com slash whomst, W-H-O-M-S-T. That's [zocdoc.com/whomst](https://zocdoc.com/whomst).

**Molly:** Which brings us to Chapter 14, the arrival of Mrs. Elton.

**Becca:** Oh, and here she is, Augusta herself.

**Molly:** Emma decides that she doesn't want to be the last person to visit, and she wants to bring Harriet with her. Now, I know that she wants to get it over with, but I just feel like that is setting yourself up for something very awkward.

**Becca:** She has to for etiquette's sake.

**Molly:** I know, but why?

**Becca:** Oh, I don't know. I would definitely procrastinate it. I'm thinking about, like, if you're in a class with someone, and it's the first day of school, and it's awkward because you've fought or something, do you break the tension early or just ignore them and go sit on the other side of the class as long as you can?

**Molly:** Well, I know that Emma has [00:18:00] to go. Emma has the self-

**Becca:** Possession?

**Molly:** -possession, thank you, to go and do it without feeling too much about it. Even though when she goes there, she's like, "Oh, my God, I can't help but remember every little thing that happened here." But bringing Harriet, who she knows is going to stand there frozen for the entire time and then go home and cry for three hours.

**Becca:** Well, the thing is that because of where they live, Harriet is going to run into the Eltons anyway. So, I think-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Better to do it on her own terms.

**Becca:** Emma is like, "It's better to do it when I'm there, break the ice soon, and then Harriet can just live her life and just ignore them. We'll have taken away the first sting," which remove the sting from-- I'm going to make a lawyer reference here. So, there's a tactic in lawyering at trial, where if you have bad evidence that you know it's going to be presented by the other side, you [00:19:00] present it first on your own terms to remove the sting of the bad evidence. And so, that when the other side brings it up--

It's not the first time the jury is hearing about it. So, they're not getting it first from a shocking perspective of the other side. They got the context from the side you want. So, Emma's saying, basically, "I want to remove the sting. It's going to be awful no matter what, but at least this way it can be a short visit. It's polite. It's the right thing to do, like, society wise, and then we can just get Harriet out of there, and next time she sees them, she'll have already seen them."

**Molly:** Right. It's not like she's just going to run into them at the store like she did with the Martins.

**Becca:** Exactly.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, Emma decides that she does not like Mrs. Elton. She says, "I won't hurry to find fault with her," and then she starts naming things. "She lacks elegance, and she thinks that Mr. Elton, on the other hand, is super awkward." But Emma gives him the benefit of the doubt, because he's in a room with the woman he just married, the woman he wanted to marry, [00:20:00] and the woman who wanted to marry him.

**Becca:** My favorite line of this entire thing is Emma talking about the flashback she's going to experience in this house.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Let me see if I can find the line. I highlighted it because it was so funny.

**Molly:** Yeah, this whole section is very funny.

**Becca:** "She could not enter the house again, could not be in the same room to which she had with such vain artifice retreated three months ago, to lace up her boot, without *recollecting*." And Jane Austen italicizes *recollecting*, and it just feeling Emma's own ick for her own actions, feeling her cringe on everything she did is so funny, because we cringed when she did it when it happened.



**Molly:** Yeah. From now on, when I'm cringing about something that happened in the past, I'm going to say I'm recollecting.

**Becca:** Could not help. Recollecting.

**Molly:** [laughs] Yeah. No, she's having a time.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, this is just like a mess all over the place.

**Molly:** She also pre-decides, basically, how she's going to feel about Mrs. Elton and what she's going to say to Harriet as she's meeting her. She's like, "I'm not going to say too much. [00:21:00] I'm just going to say she's very nicely dressed. That's going to be what I've decided about her in advance." So, they leave, and Harriet asks Emma what she thinks about Mrs. Elton, and she says, "As she planned to, she's very pleasing and very nicely dressed." And Harriet's like, "It's no wonder Elton fell in love with her." And Emma's like, "No, she has a fortune."

**Becca:** She's like, "Yeah, of course, he fell in love with her. He fell in love with the pile of money they sleep on now."

**Molly:** Right. And Harriet's like, "Well, it's obvious that Mrs. Elton is attracted to Mr. Elton." And Emma says, "She thinks she was attracted to his home and that he was going to give her a good home."

**Becca:** She's so sassy. She says something along the lines of like, "Some men aren't meant to marry women who love them. Sometimes, women just want a man who will take care of them."

**Molly:** Yeah. Basically, she's saying that these two are resigned to a life without love.

**Becca:** Essentially.

**Molly and Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Harriet says, "She hopes that they're going to be very happy, and now she can be around them without being sad, like you were saying. [00:22:00] To me, this is very Jane Bennet, 'I'm fine.'"

**Becca:** "This is fine. I'm fine."

**Molly:** "I'm fine."

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** It's like that I did a reel with this a while ago is like Ross's voice. "I'm fine. I don't know why I came out all squeaky like that, because I'm fine."

**Becca:** I'm fine.

**Molly:** Yeah. But Harriet says, "She's happy that he is happy." She thinks it's very sweet that he called her Augusta. Now, was it very unusual for men to call women by their first names?

**Becca:** I don't know that it's very unusual. Some men in this time period certainly just call their wives by, like, Mrs. Elton or whatever-

**Molly:** Mrs. Bennet.

**Becca:** -in front of other people, as well, as we know from that deleted scene in 2005 *Pride and Prejudice*.

**Molly:** Yes. But I guess, in this case, the Eltons are very informal, and we'll get to this in a little bit. But Mrs. Elton is pretty informal, and Emma doesn't like that. So, I think that also

Harriet's like, "Oh, it's so sweet that he's calling her Augusta." And Emma's probably thinking, "That's not formal."

**Becca:** I couldn't [00:23:00] tell if it was that or Mr. Elton, her name is Augusta. I couldn't tell from the way-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** It's cute that her name is-- What her name is?

**Becca:** Yeah. It's like, "Oh, he would call her Augusta. That's so delightful."

**Molly:** Like, "Oh, it's so cute that I call you Becca?"

**Becca:** I guess. It was a weird thing to focus on.

**Molly:** Yeah, Harriet's weird.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Then, the Eltons visit Emma, and Harriet's not around, so Emma's able to form her full opinion of Mrs. Elton, and she decides that she's vain, she has bad manners, and like I said, she's too familiar. She thinks "her notions were drawn from one set of people and one style of living." I thought I feel like Emma also has that problem. Hers are just a different set of people in a different style of living. She really thinks that people should live how she lives. But I suppose her society is a little bit more varied. She sees the Bateses, she hangs out with Harriet. She knows [00:24:00] Mr. Knightley. She has kind of a range, but not that wide of a range.

**Becca:** We're going to talk about this more in the study questions.

**Molly:** Okay, great.

**Becca:** But yeah, there are some instances in this chapter where Jane Austen shows what Emma dislikes about Mrs. Elton, and it gives the reader a moment to be like, "Hmm, interesting."

**Molly:** "Interesting, Emma."

**Becca:** Interesting coming from Emma making those criticisms, and this is the first instance of one of those.

**Molly:** I'm so glad I caught it.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** So, Emma thinks that Harriet would have made a better match for Mr. Elton and that Elton only married her Ms. Hawkins for her rich brother-in-law. Mrs. Elton won't shut up about Maple Grove, which is her brother-in-law's place, and his name is Mr. Suckling.

**Becca:** Oh.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Oh. Mr. Suckling.

**Molly:** Mr. Suckling at Maple Grove?

**Becca:** Yeah. And you know, Mr. Suckling sucks.

**Molly:** He's sucklings.

**Becca:** Yeah, more like sucklings. [00:25:00] Also, we've gotten some emails about Mrs. Elton recently, which I think are super interesting and DMs as well. I don't know if you've

caught them, but we talked about her being from new money and her dad being like a lowly tradesman or like a devalued tradesman. Maybe that was Emma being an unreliable narrator. Some of our listeners have pointed out the way it's phrased, it might indicate that Mrs. Elton's father made his money in the slave trade-

**Molly:** Oh, yeah, I did see those.

**Becca:** -which was highly disfavored politically and-

**Molly:** As it should be.

**Becca:** -morally in this time period, particularly if you parse through the way Jane Austen feels about these things lightly, it means that she's just being like, "This fucking girl made her fortune in human pain and suffering. So, fuck her." It didn't occur to me while we were reading through it the first time, but it is an interesting take on where Mrs. Elton's coming from, [00:26:00] and also gives you more fodder to side with Emma on the whole thing because fuck that.

**Molly:** Yeah. Speaking of things that our listeners sent us, a couple of people sent this in after our last episode. So, I just wanted to bring it up. When we were talking about the number of couples and I was like, "Weren't they going to invite the Coles? Why didn't they invite the Bates? Why didn't they mention these people?" It's because they were talking about couples that would actually dance.

**Becca:** Oh, yes.

**Molly:** So, they were like, "Okay, five couples can dance, but all the older people were still going to be invited." So, it's just for the young people to dance.

**Becca:** That makes sense.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, anyway, thanks to our listeners who sent that in.

**Becca:** Yeah. I wasn't sure how old the Coles are supposed to be though.

**Molly:** I think the Coles were probably like one generation-- not one generation, but probably like in their 30s or 40s.

**Becca:** I guess, past 30, you don't dance anymore.

**Molly:** Right. Well, because people only live to like 60.

**Becca:** I think that's a misconception, but I don't know.

**Molly:** Yeah, I don't know either. Mr. Bennet was pretty old-

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** -but he wasn't dance.

**Becca:** It's true.

**Molly and Becca:** Anyway.

**Molly:** [00:27:00] Anyway, Jane Austen, but this one. As soon as Mrs. Elton walks into Hartfield, she goes on about how much it reminds her of Maple Grove and how lovely it is to be somewhere that reminds her so much of Maple Grove. She says something annoying,

which is, "Whenever you are transplanted, like me, Miss Woodhouse, you will understand how very delightful it is to meet with any thing at all like what one has left behind."

**Becca:** So, you know what I love about this scene?

**Molly:** Mm.

**Becca:** It is so modern to be presented with a smug married couple. From *Bridget Jones's*, shouts to Sequoia, the part where she goes to the dinner party with the "smug married couples." They're all just like, "Oh, but you're single. Don't worry. You'll get someone soon."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Meanwhile, Mrs. Elton is like, "I don't know. I think she's being shady as shit here. I think she's really trying to undermine Emma, because she feels threatened and competitive."

**Molly:** That's interesting. I [00:28:00] can't tell what she's doing. So, what makes you say that?

**Becca:** I feel like she just keeps making backhanded compliments to Emma like, "Oh, you'll leave soon enough and you'll understand what it's like to go somewhere where you're looking for the house that reminds you of home, like, I am." "Oh, you and your father, I don't think there's anything worse than staying in one place at one time."

**Molly:** Yeah, that was shady.

**Becca:** Yeah, "But oh, you and your father are different, obviously. You're just quiet. Maybe you guys should go to Bath, because of your father's health. It would be the best. But maybe for you, I could introduce you to society. You get so little of it here." Just like such girl mean, exuding out.

**Molly:** No, she's being an absolute jerk. But what's interesting about this whole conversation, which you pretty much summarized very nicely is that, she also is making it clear that-- I guess, in a backhanded way, she's making fun of Emma for not being married, but at the same time, she's also being like, [00:29:00] "Oh, but married women don't have time for anything. And I hope I don't miss my music too much." Just, like, talking about how shitty it is being married.

**Becca:** No, these are, again, backhanded ways of boosting herself up, in my opinion.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Because, again, it's like, "Oh, wow, the beautiful pursuit of music. I won't have time for that now that I'm married."

**Molly:** Right. Yeah.

**Becca:** Like, "I'm so busy and so important because I'm married."

**Molly:** [giggles] Yeah. So, I do read it that way and I also am reading that she's not thrilled about being married. She's just in it, because she wants to be able to do that.

**Becca:** Yeah. That's a question I have for you in the study questions. Are the Eltons happy? We can talk about it now. Are the Eltons, like, a happy married couple?

**Molly:** No.

**Becca:** Or, this strikes me as the type of girl who not to be super judgmental, but the type of girl who takes pictures of her engagement ring everywhere she goes and [00:30:00] does everything like, "I'm engaged. I'm engaged. I'm engaged." And it's like, "We get it. You're engaged."

**Molly:** Do you know the Instagram account, *@notengaged*?

**Becca:** Yes, that's exactly what it's making fun of. It's like a girl who posts a photo of her hand without an engagement ring on it everywhere she goes. It's the obsessed with the idea of winning that battle that is prevalent in Jane Austen novels, because obviously, as we've discussed hello, Economics is Dating in Jane Austen, Graham the sound effect. [sound effect] It is an economic win for these women, as well as a societal win. But even today, when we have our own money, there is still society points to get from getting that square ticked off on your bingo card, getting married, and not a great reason to get married generally. Here, there are other reasons to get married other than being in love, but it's the obsession with being married that is [00:31:00] so grading about Mrs. Elton.

It doesn't have anything to do with who Mr. Elton is. It has to do with the fact that she's won a lottery, because she's found a good man, and they have their own little fiefdom in the church, and he's got his own little house in this little society, and it's a little bit-- Maybe she wants to be like her sister, and marry someone super rich, and have that big a fancy manner. She probably does. But what she got was pretty good, and now she just wants to show it off to everybody.

**Molly:** Yeah. No, I think that's exactly it. I think that she would have married whoever asked with a good house and a substantial enough amount of money.

**Becca:** Well, on the other hand, Mr. Elton would have married anybody with a substantial amount of money.

**Molly:** Correct.

**Becca:** Because he wants to support himself in a certain lifestyle. He has a certain level of prestige and connections, because he's in a gentleman's [00:32:00] profession. He's from a good family, but what he doesn't have is an inheritance, necessarily, that's going to make him an heir to something right away.

**Molly:** Right, which is why he first went for Emma. When that didn't work out, he found the first person who would have him.

**Becca:** Unbelievably though, it shows because she's rich, the way Emma's rich. Not maybe not quite as rich as Emma is, but she has a lot of money, which, again, might have come from very dark places, but that's it. That's the only good thing about Mrs. Elton.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** Other than that that she's hot.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** She's hot.

**Molly:** She dresses very well.

**Becca:** Yes, which is a backhanded way of saying she's not that hot. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah. She's pleasant and dresses well. [crosstalk] She sucks and isn't pretty.

**Becca:** Yeah, which is basically what Emma was trying to say about the whole situation. So, in some ways, they both were just obsessed with this idea of making this match for these reasons and in some ways, it's very transactional. In other ways, it could reveal something about who [00:33:00] Elton is as a person underneath it all that he chose this girl,

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** -instead of a Harriet or even someone with an ounce more integrity or decorum. It shows where his priorities are at.

**Molly:** Yeah. He doesn't care how you got your money, as long as you have it.

**Becca:** He also doesn't care who you are as long as you have money.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** And that doesn't reflect well on him. Even if he does care who she is, he's attracted to this girl.

**Molly:** To be fair, nothing was reflecting well on Elton already.

**Becca:** Yeah, but that's what I'm saying is, he's shown himself to be really shallow in this way, like, profoundly so.

**Molly:** Yeah. Something that Mrs. Elton says is, "People who have extensive grounds themselves are always pleased with anything in the same style." And Emma's like, "I don't think people with extensive grounds could care less about anybody else's grounds."

**Becca:** Yeah, and she's like, "But whatever."

**Molly:** "But whatever." There's something about she doesn't want to [00:34:00] comment on such a double-dyed compliment or a double-dyed statement. What is double-dyed? Is that, like, backhanded?

**Becca:** Yeah, backhanded. These are all, like, this is nagging as we've discussed it, but from a lady.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** It continues to be nagging because everything she's saying is trying to establish a power dynamic where she has power, which is ridiculous, because Emma is clearly the one with the higher social status here.

**Molly:** But she's married.

**Becca:** But she's married. And also, it's not implicit here, but the question is, did Elton say anything about Emma to Mrs. Elton beforehand or to out Harriet? We don't know that.

**Molly:** He might have talked shit.

**Becca:** We don't know.

**Molly:** He probably did. He's a douchebag.

**Becca:** [laughs] Yo, fuck Elton.

**Molly:** So, they start talking about the beauty of the grounds and stuff, and Emma says, "She's over exaggerating. There's lots of beautiful places in Surrey." And Mrs. Elton's like, "Oh, yes, Surrey is the Garden of England." And Emma's like, "Well, I think a lot of [00:35:00] places are called the Garden of England."

**Becca:** And she's like, "No, this is the garden."

**Molly:** "No, no, it's Surrey." And Emma's like, "Okay." And then Mrs. Elton goes on to talk about how her brother and sister are going to visit in the spring or summer, and she wants to make sure they bring the barouche-landau, so they can explore. The way she was talking about it, I guessed correctly that it's like a convertible, but--

**Becca:** It's like a Porsche convertible.

**Molly:** Yeah. It's got the retractable top. So, she basically wants to roll the top down and explore the countryside.

**Becca:** Yeah. It's also a fancy car, essentially.

**Molly:** I could gather that from the number of times she said barouche-landau is like, "Okay, stop."

**Becca:** Yeah. So, we remember Knightley, a rich man.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. He walks everywhere.

**Becca:** He walks everywhere. He doesn't really use his carriage much, but he has a carriage, of course. But it's a simple thing that he doesn't use very often.

**Molly:** He's not going to rub it in people's faces.

**Becca:** Yeah. Whereas we have here, Mrs. Elton being like, "Oh, but my sister's barouche-landau--" It's the type of person who's like, "Oh, yes, my Ferrari." I [00:36:00] don't know anything about cars.

**Molly:** Tesla.

**Becca:** Fucking Tesla.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Yeah. It's that same status symbol of like, "Oh, yes, my car. I don't want to brag or anything, but I do have this kind of car in particular." In this time, a barouche is very expensive. You have to maintain it. You have to maintain someone to drive it for you and you have to have horses. And so, it's an expensive endeavor. Only the richest families get to have it. So, having a barouche is, like, a big deal.

**Molly:** Right. And so, she tells Emma that when they first got it, they explored Kings Weston, and she says, "Oh, but you must get tons of tourists like that here." And Emma was like, "No, it's a quiet neighborhood. We like to stay home." Then that's when Mrs. Elton's like, "Oh, yes, staying home is the best. My sister would always say that she couldn't get me to leave the house, but I'm not an advocate for entire seclusion. I think it's bad when people close themselves off from society entirely, but not like you. For you, it's because of your father's health and all of that." [00:37:00] Tells him to go to Bath, and Emma's like, "Bath is out of the question."

**Becca:** Because apparently, Mr. Woodhouse did go to Bath and then was like, "Mm, nah."

**Molly:** She's like, "I'm sure you know, Mr. Perry. But he said that it wouldn't help my father any more now than it would then." She's like, "Oh, but for you, the society, I could have Mrs. Partridge show you around and bring you out into society." And Emma's like, "That is the worst thing you could have said."

**Becca:** It's so fucking patronizing.

**Molly:** Yeah. Emma's so offended that she decides to change the subject and she's like, "You're known in Highbury as a great musician." And Mrs. Elton's like, "Oh, no, Mr. E exaggerated my talents, but I know that you play delightfully." She says that she loves music and she's used to being in a very musical society. She told Mr. E that it would be a huge sacrifice to her, if she were to enter into a non-musical society. She told Mr. Elton that she could give up the world, the parties, the balls, the plays, because her resources made her independent. [00:38:00] I was like, "What does that mean?" You have a good imagination or--?

**Becca:** Money.

**Molly:** Oh, her resources. She could go do that whenever she wants.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** I understand. Okay. Her literal resources. She says she could give up large rooms, but she could not give up music. Without music, life would be a blank to her. And Emma says, "Well, I hope Mr. Elton hasn't over exaggerated how musical the society is here as a way to persuade you to marry him." Mrs. Elton's like, "Oh, no, I'm sure he didn't." And then she suggests that, she and Emma form a musical club and have weekly meetings.

**Becca:** And Emma's like, "Stab me in the face before I do that."

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** But she's like, "Oh, but you'll play." And then Mrs. Elton's just like, "No, there's no way. All the married women I know have no time. I personally spent my morning talking to our housekeeper. So, how would I have time to play music when I have to talk to my housekeeper" as if Emma has nothing else to do in her day.

**Molly:** Emma's like, "Oh, well, I'm sure that those things [00:39:00] would all fall into--" And then Miss Elton cuts her off and she's like, "No." Or, like, "We'll see." I think she says, we'll see.

**Becca:** And Emma's like, "Well, I guess, you don't want to do it, so I'm not going to press the subject anymore."

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. So, then, Mrs. Elton says that they went to Randalls, and she says she was astonished to find that Mrs. Weston was so ladylike.

**Becca:** Which I mean, Emma-- She's lucky Emma didn't throw her through the window when she said that.

**Molly:** Yeah. Emma's just increasingly turning red in the face, but still smiling this whole time.

**Becca:** Yeah, this is another backhanded compliment like, "I can't believe she has such nice manners. I know. She used to be a governess."

**Molly:** Yes. Emma was like, "She's always had great manners. She was my governess."

**Becca:** She's impeccable.

**Molly:** She's a great role model.

**Becca:** Best person in the world.

**Molly:** Yeah. She's like, "That's my best fucking friend."

**Becca:** How dare you?

**Molly:** [laughs] Then Mrs. Elton's like, "And you know who we saw when were there?"

**Becca:** Knightley.

**Molly:** Knightley.

**Becca:** [laughs] This is my favorite part of these chapters for two reasons. [00:40:00] This is like a nickname almost, like, calling someone a nickname instead of calling him Mr. Knightley. It'd be like if someone who didn't know-- Oh, I can't even think of a good example of this.



**Molly:** Just like calling a celebrity by the first name.

**Becca:** Yeah. It's like, if I were talking about Taylor, I'd be like, "Oh, you know, Taylor was saying the other day." No, like Taylor Swift-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Yeah. You don't know that person. You call them by their full name.

**Becca:** Exactly, like Mr. Knightley. So, that's funny. The part that I think is just spectacular is that Mr. Elton has told her that Mr. Knightley is like his best friend, which made me laugh so hard because I forgot he did that. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah, because they knew each other. They were passing acquaintances.

**Becca:** They're in the same society. So, as you can tell, they all hang out together all the time. But Knightley was the one to tell Emma that Elton [00:41:00] was a gold digger.

**Molly:** Right. He doesn't like him.

**Becca:** They're fine.

**Molly:** They're fine.

**Becca:** They hang-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** They're not best friends.

**Becca:** But they are not, like, special friends.

**Molly:** No. Emma's Knightley's best friend.

**Becca:** Obviously.

[laughter]

**Becca:** Knightley is a grump.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, that was hilarious.

**Becca:** It made my day. I was like, "Ah, yes, Mr. Elton's biffle Knightley."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** You remember that Mr. Elton was always hanging out with Mr. Cole, but obviously, he tells his wife his more impressive friend is Mr. Knightley.

**Molly:** You're right. Mr. Cole was probably his best friend.

**Becca:** Poor Mr. Cole.

**Molly:** Poor Mr. Cole. She says at the end of her little thing, she's like, "Oh, my caro sposo," which means her dear husband, "Need not be ashamed of his friend. I found him to be quite the gentleman." Why would he be ashamed of Mr. Knightley, first of all. Second of all, you can't find Knightley to be a gentleman. He is a gentleman. So, then she leaves and Emma's like, "I hate [00:42:00] her."

**Becca:** She goes on like a rant.

**Molly:** Yeah, it's a pretty good one.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Should we just read it, because I pretty much [crosstalk] now.

**Becca:** Oh, go for it. Yeah.

**Molly:** "Insufferable woman. Worse than I had supposed. Absolutely insufferable! Knightley! I could not have believed it. Knightley! never seen him in her life before, and call him Knightley! and discover that he is a gentleman! A little upstart, vulgar being, with her Mr. E., and her caro sposo, and her resources, and all her airs of pert pretension and under-bred finery. Actually, to discover that Mr. Knightley is a gentleman! I doubt whether he will return the compliment, and discover her to be a lady. I could not have believed it.

And to propose that she and I should unite to form a musical club! One would fancy we were bosom friends! And Mrs. Weston! Astonished that the person who had brought me up should be a gentlewoman! Worse and worse. I never met with her equal. Much beyond my hopes. Harriet is disgraced by any comparison. Oh! what would Frank Churchill say to her, if he were here? How angry and how diverted he would be! Ah! there I am thinking of him directly. Always the first person to be [00:43:00] thought of! How I catch myself out! Frank Churchill comes as regularly into my mind!"

**Becca:** Perfect ramble from Emma on this one. You could just see her wandering the health of Heartfield, just being like, "I can't believe she said that. Knightley, how dare she call him Knightley?"

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** It's so good. Especially because, first of all, as you can see, bitch crackers has formed. It is there. Emma is not in on Augusta.

**Molly:** No Augusta.

**Becca:** Augusta. If she's going to call him Knightley, I'm going to call her Augusta.

**Molly:** Augusta.

**Becca:** Yes. Because obviously we are Team Emma, as our protagonist.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** And also, Mrs. Elton, potentially, the daughter of slave traders, makes her even worse on that list, but also, just she sucks.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** It says that she says all of this or thinks all of this glibly, which I had to look up, which means confident but simple and lacking careful thought, AKA she's just rambling and venting [00:44:00] and spiraling. Her father says that Mrs. Elton is very pretty and she clearly likes Emma a lot, but she speaks too quickly and has an annoying voice.

**Becca:** Mr. Woodhouse not liking her, it's so funny because Mr. Woodhouse likes everyone.

**Molly:** Right. He can find something good in everyone. But you know what? We just don't like Augusta. He says, "Still, she'll make Mr. Elton a good wife, even though he probably shouldn't have gotten married." And he's like, "Oh, man, I should have called on them earlier. The fact that I didn't shows that I'm such an invalid," and he's feeling bad about not having visited the married couple. And Emma's like, "Well, Mr. Elton accepted your apologies. He knows you." And Mr. Woodhouse is like, "Yeah, but still the bride. I should have given my congratulations to the bride."

Emma says, "But you hate marriage. Why would you pay your respects to a bride? It would encourage people to get married if you paid them respects." And he says that, "He would never encourage anyone to marry, but you must always give proper attention to ladies, especially brides." And Emma says, "That's encouraging them to marry. She's surprised that

he would do that." [00:45:00] And he says, "He's only talking about being proper." And Emma thinks they're at an impasse because they're going back and forth and she's like, "I'm just going to go back to thinking about how much I hate Mrs. Elton and she continues to pace the halls.

**Becca:** Yes, perfect. So, we end on Emma just furious with the idea that she has to keep society with this woman.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** All right. And that brings us to Becca's study questions.

**Molly:** Ooh.

**Becca:** Hello. All right, so, first of all, how has Frank Churchill changed Emma's perceptions on love?

**Molly:** Well, I feel like at the beginning, she was like, "If I fall in love, I could marry, potentially," even though she doesn't think she'll ever fall in love. Now that she's fallen in love, she's like, "Okay, I can fall in love a little bit and still not get married." So, she's seeing it more as like a minor inconvenience that she can have as a blip like, "Oh, I'll just be in love for now."

**Becca:** It's also more than an inconvenience. It's something she keeps cherished a little bit. She's having fun [00:46:00] with it, she's luxuriating in it, but also, how is this different than her crush on Frank before she met him? And is it--?

**Molly:** Is it different than her crush before she met him? Before she met him, it was like something that she could fantasize about. She fantasized about one day marrying him before she met him. She thought, "If I were to marry someone, it would probably be Frank Churchill." Now she's met him and she's fallen in love with him a little bit, but now she's fantasizing about not marrying him. I don't really know what that says.

**Becca:** Essentially, in some ways, it's still Emma making up little stories about Frank Churchill in her head and luxury eating in him from afar. So, in that regard, him being there, they had fun, but now that he's gone, she's acting exactly as she did before they met, which is just being intrigued by him from afar with just a little bit [00:47:00] more context to know exactly what he would say in certain situations.

**Molly:** True.

**Becca:** I leave it up to your interpretation as to what that means for how Emma's feeling about love right now, and what Emma knows and understands about love.

**Molly:** Well, it's interesting. I feel like before she was very economical about love, but it was something that was far away, and something that she had not experienced, and didn't know what it was like. And now, to be honest, I don't know that-- She's experiencing a crush, but I don't think she's in love with Frank Churchill. I don't think she knows the difference. A crush is a little bit in love, but I think that she's going to get hit with something at some time and she's going to be like, "Oh, this is actually not deniable the same way that my love for Frank Churchill was."

**Becca:** Okay.

**Molly:** We'll see.

**Becca:** That answered my next question, which is Emma in love?

**Molly:** Yeah. No-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Are we Team Frankiett?

**Molly:** Team Frankiett. Frank and Harriet for our listeners.

**Molly:** Yeah. I think kind of. [00:48:00] So, up till now, I had been like team Frank and Jane Fairfax, which I was putting together out of no context from the book. But I was thinking that it's possible that he sent her the piano, because he disappeared the day that the piano arrived. So, I was team that. But now, I'm like, "I could be convinced."

**Becca:** Okay.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** We talked about this already a little bit, but I guess, we'll elaborate on it. Let's talk about the relationship between Elton and Mrs. Elton, and essentially, whether or not they're in love, whether this transaction has been successful, whether it's been more or less than it should be.

**Molly:** I think they are not in love. I think that the transaction has been successful. They're both getting out of it exactly what they want to get out of it. I think that I don't admire them or anything, but I guess, good for them for having married someone with the amount of money and-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Stature in society.

**Molly:** Yeah, exactly. That they wanted. Yeah. [00:49:00]

**Becca:** I think that's all true. I would also add, I think that the Eltons, first of all, Mrs. Elton being what she is does say something about who Mr. Elton is, and does tell us a little bit more about what was lurking underneath that we got a glimpse of when he left, but didn't see in full before then.

**Molly:** Yeah, he sucks.

**Becca:** Sucks. That's why he chose her as his life partner. But there is another thing here which I think still happens today, of almost playing dress up at marriage, like doing it so over the top and so excitedly that it's like the idea that having a marriage itself is something to be patted on the back for. Now, in this society, obviously, the pressure to get married is much higher, especially for women, because that's how you secure your place in life. But these two are clearly obsessed with the fact that they got [00:50:00] married and are almost playing pretend at a life together in a way that is very grating on, at least, the reader and I think clearly on Emma.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Does that make sense?

**Molly:** Yeah, it does. I think that's all either of them wanted to get out of it. Neither of them was looking for love or looking for a happy marriage. They were just looking for marriage. So, I think that's exactly what they got out of it.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think ultimately, in this time period, you could consider that a success.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** All right. Did Elton make the right choice?

**Molly:** For him? Yes. And also, for us? Yes, because I wouldn't want him to end up with Harriet, because I want her to do better.

**Becca:** Yeah, dodged a bullet is what we're learning here.

**Molly:** Yeah. The right choice for Mr. Elton would be to go join a monastery and be off on his own somewhere.

**Becca:** Right choice for Mr. Elton is to stay away from women [00:51:00] generally. Although, if we're going to force one woman to be married to Mr. Elton, Mrs. Elton's not a bad pick.

**Molly:** Yeah. It might as well be Augusta Hawkins.

**Becca:** Exactly. Augusta Hawkins. Oh, speaking of, let's talk about Augusta Hawkins as a character who she is, the view we're getting of her, and how our view is informed by Emma's view.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, she's a miserable person. When I was reading this, I was like, "She isn't happy about anything in a way that she just isn't looking for happiness." She's looking for a very specific life for herself and she's got it, which is good for her, I guess. But when I was reading it, I wasn't actually sure if I was-- I'm aware that Emma is an unreliable narrator. So, I was trying to read it from try to give her the benefit of the doubt, basically, and I was like, "She's trying really hard with Emma, at times."

I was like, "Oh, when Emma says that people like to stay home," she was [00:52:00] like, "Oh, yeah, staying home is the best. When I was at Maple Grove, I loved to stay home, and my sister could never get me to get out of the house, but not too much." Then she went and gave the backhanded thing of like, "Well, I think that people shouldn't stay home all the time." But I thought for a moment, I was like, "She's trying hard to be Emma's friend." But then I think you're right that, perhaps, she was only doing that because Mr. Elton talked some shit.

**Becca:** Well, it's possible. It's two things at the same time. You know what I mean?

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** At the same time, she wants to establish herself as superior to Emma and wants to be Emma's friend, because Emma is clearly the most eligible friend for her in this society, the highest ranked woman.

**Molly:** She wants to impress and intimidate Emma.

**Becca:** Exactly. I think she sees herself as the natural companion to Emma, which Emma disagrees with.

**Molly:** Everyone thinks that they're Emma's natural-- Everyone's like, "Oh, Jane Fairfax is going to be your best friend." And then Mrs. Elton's like, [00:53:00] "I'm going to be your best friend." And Emma's like, "Harriet's my best friend."

**Becca:** Yeah. And Mr. Knightley.

**Molly:** And Mr. Knightley's, obviously, her best friend.

**Becca:** And Mrs. Weston.

**Molly:** Yeah. She has friends. She doesn't need more friends.

**Becca:** Someone said recently, I don't remember what it was in, but someone was like, "How many best friends do you have?" They retorted, "Best friend is not a person. It's a class." [Molly laughs] And I was like, "That's so true."

**Molly:** So true.

**Becca:** But because Emma is the richest and highest status person in Highbury, everyone wants to be her friend because she is a favorable connection.

**Molly:** Right. It must suck for Emma, because she's a favorable connection. But what about who she is as a person, like, who wants to be friends with her as a person?

**Becca:** Everyone, because she's charming as hell.

**Molly:** Yeah, that's true.

**Becca:** Yeah. Don't feel bad for Emma, because Emma knows how much everyone wants to be her friend, and she knows that she has a position in society, and it's gone to her fucking head, which brings us to what is Augusta Hawkins in this story?

**Molly:** What is Augusta Hawkins in this story?

**Becca:** In some ways, you could read Mrs. Elton as [00:54:00] a sort of bad reflection of Emma's worst qualities.

**Molly:** Yes, because of what we were talking about before with the things that Emma was saying she hates about Augusta Hawkins, that I was like, "Don't you do that?"

**Becca:** Exactly. She was saying, "Oh, she's rude and overbearing." I forget exactly what you said.

**Molly:** She said she is too familiar, and she only gets her ideas of society from a specific group of people.

**Becca:** Yes, that's exactly it. Emma is very closed off. She only gets her society from a specific group of people.

**Molly:** She has six people that she sees regularly.

**Becca:** Yes. Ms. Hawkins, everyone talks about what a great piano player she is, and then she just undercuts her piano playing, and it's like, "It's been exaggerated, Emma." There's a bowling over of everybody else and saying rude things, despite the fact that you are in polite company, and you are not supposed to. There's a single minded, self-centeredness, and self-importance to Mrs. [00:55:00] Elton, for her position in society, her marriage in society, and also the money she has and the connections to her rich estate that she has.

**Molly:** Yeah, I was going to say the money thing. Emma's like her resources, but Emma is so aware of her wealth and so aware that she doesn't want to associate with people below a certain wealth status. She only does it out of charity when she has to.

**Becca:** Yes. And our girl, Emma flawed.

**Molly:** Very flawed.

**Becca:** We know this. Clearly, it's difficult to see from either the perspective of Emma herself or just because we just met Mrs. Elton, whether or not she has any of those redeeming qualities that Emma has. But in this refracted mirror, part of what's so grading about Mrs. Elton for Emma is seeing someone reflect her own worst qualities back at her.

**Molly:** Yeah, but I think that Emma's not aware that's what's grading on her yet. I think, [00:56:00] yes, that is what the problem is. But I think that she hasn't noticed that she does those things. She's like, "Why does this bother me so much?" And it's like, "Oh, it's because you're feeling guilty, Emma." But I think there's going to be a moment, hopefully, where she realizes, "That's me," I'm hoping.

**Becca:** What do you think of Emma?

**Molly:** Flawed. [laughs] Flawed and a good friend to Harriet. I think she is addicted to matchmaking. [giggles] She keeps saying, she's not going to do it, and then she's like, "Oh, but I want you so bad." So, I'm excited to see where it goes with that.

**Becca:** Funniest quote?

**Molly:** I had two in this one. One was, "They say everybody is in love once in their lives, and I shall have been let off easily." And another was, she would not be in a hurry to find fault." And then the list of faults that she could find in Mrs. Elton.

**Becca:** Fantastic choices. Questions moving forward?

**Molly:** I'm curious if [00:57:00] they will form a musical club. I think they probably will not, but I'm curious about how often we're going to be seeing Mrs. Elton. I'm curious. I think it's been a while since we've seen Mr. Martin, so I would like to get him back in the mix. And what does Knightley think of Mrs. Elton? I feel like I just want to hear his reactions to her. Yeah, and then will Frank come back?

**Becca:** Great questions. Who wins the chapters?

**Molly:** Probably, Mrs. Elton. She comes out with what she wants.

**Becca:** The lady has no complaints so far, except that Emma's being a bitch to her when she was like, "Aren't we supposed to be friends?"

**Molly:** Yeah. So, she wins in terms of who gets what she wants, and Emma wins for snark.

**Becca:** Okay. So, one point to Emma Woodhouse for being sassy as fuck. One point to fucking Augusta Hawkins Elton for getting that ring on her finger that she's so smugly taking pictures of for Instagram.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Listeners, [00:58:00] that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next time, we're going to read the next two chapters, Volume II, Chapters 15 and 16 or if you're not in the Volume to book, Chapters 33 and 34. Molly, are you ready to do that?

**Molly:** I am so ready.

**Becca:** All right, then. Well, until next time, stay proper--

**Molly:** I mean, not to go old school, but stay proper and find yourself a husband.

**Becca:** Just like Augusta Hawkins did.

**Molly:** Yeah.

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