

**Molly:** Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we'd like to thank our newest patron, Caroline, and a huge shoutout to our patron, Rhona, who upgraded their pledge. Also, we have our first live show coming up on November 18th. That will be at Caveat NYC, and the ticket link is in our bio. Early bird tickets are \$18, and you can get live stream tickets for \$10. Patrons get a 15% discount. And we are so excited to see you guys there.

**Becca:** Yes, we are. Hi, listeners, it's Becca. In the intro, I know you're not used to hearing me, but here I am.

**Molly:** Becca has some exciting news to share.

**Becca:** Yeah, I didn't know how to do this for you guys, so I figured I'd just pop into the intro now and let you know there has been a proposal. Graham, the sound effect.

[sound effect]

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Yeah. So, I just wanted to let you know that my boyfriend, Mike, who was previously Mike of Mike Takes is now my fiancé, Mike of **[00:01:00]** Mike Takes. We're getting married. And so, I followed the instructions to stay proper and find myself a husband. So, yeah, just some exciting news from the pod world.

**Molly:** Yeah, we just wanted to pop that on, so that you can all yell congratulations at Becca-

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** and Mike.

**Becca:** Yes, make sure you share your Mike Takes of Mike being great and doing he also totally nailed the proposal. So, just-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Ah. Yeah. He's such a Bingley, and you're such a Jane, and you guys are just perfect.

**Becca:** Yes. No proposalgeddon happened here. He didn't say one mean thing about my family the entire time he was asking me to marry-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Thank God.

[laughter]

**Molly:** So, anyway, that is all we had to say to you today. So, without further ado, please enjoy the second half of our coverage of *Emma* 1996, starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

{pod and Prejudice theme}

**Becca:** This is Becca.

**Molly:** This is Molly.

**Becca:** We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

**Molly:** We are here specifically to talk about--

**Molly and Becca:** **[00:02:00]** *Emma*.

**Becca:** Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen novels before and watched many adaptations.

**Molly:** And I, Molly, am doing that for the first time through this podcast.

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

**Molly:** No. Today, we are talking about the second half of the 1996 filmed version of *Emma*, starring Gwyneth Paltrow.

**Becca:** Who's that?

**Molly:** And we are joined today by Jillian and Yolanda from The Pemberley podcast. Hello.

**Yolanda:** Hello again.

**Gillian:** Hello. Hello again.

**Becca:** Usually, we joke around with our guests if we are having them back for a second half of a movie and being like, "It's been so long since we've seen you." But it actually has been a few weeks since we've seen you, we segmented our recording on this a little bit.

**Gillian:** Yeah. But let's see how much we still remember. I was still looking through the [00:03:00] movie and I was like, "I've seen this stuff enough times to know what happens."

**Molly:** Yeah, totally. So, listeners, if you want to hear more about Julian and Yolanda and what they do in the Austen world, you can go back and listen to our previous episode with them covering the first half of this movie. But today, we have a lot to cover, so we're just going to dive right in.

**Becca:** Oh, yes.

**Molly:** So, where we left off? Where did we leave off?

**Becca:** She just met Frank Churchill AKA Hillary Clinton/Ewan McGregor wig disaster.

**Gillian:** Yes.

**Molly:** Yes. So, that's where we left off. After she meets him, Emma is in town, and she runs into Miss Bates and tells her that she met Frank. Miss Bates is asking all about him and saying, she can't wait to meet him at the Coles party. And Emma is like, "What party?" and immediately spirals because she was not invited to a party. [00:04:00] It's brilliant. She has the mail hidden underneath her dress and her dad's like, "Did the mail come?" And she's like, "I never pay attention to the mail," and then she's secretly looking through it.

**Becca:** This does a really good job of portraying exactly how low stakes Emma's life is because this becomes a very high drama situation for her.

**Molly:** Yes. She goes to the party, and they're gossiping about the pianoforte that has been sent to Jane. And in this adaptation, Frank actually plants the idea in Emma's head that Mr. Dixon sent it, which is different from the book in which Emma comes up with that on her own.

**Gillian:** What I do love about this version-- Well, I think I love this about every version, because if you people don't know Emma at this point, spoilers ahead. They are secretly engaged, Jane Fairfax and Frank Churchill. And so, I love watching the scenes where he's trying not to pay attention to her, [00:05:00] or trying not to care about her or-- I don't know, just like feigning disinterest. And so, I like that creative choice because he's trying to be like, "Oh, it was Mr. Dixon." I think in the book, it's more like Emma brings that of and he's like, "Do I need to be jealous of this?" Like, "Do I need to feel some kind of way?" In this one, he's the one who's like, "He's already got defenses up. He's already got a plan."

**Becca:** Yeah. And I also think it does this thing where it tries to abdicate responsibility of Emma for her gossiping about Jane, because it puts the bad behavior on Frank first and makes Emma only along for the ride.

**Yolanda:** Yeah, which she's happy to be along for the ride. She's like, "Tell me more. I want to know all the gossip." [giggles]

**Molly:** Totally. Then Mrs. Weston comes up with the idea that since Knightley sent his carriage for Jane to come to this party, he and Jane are secretly a couple, [00:06:00] and Emma's like, "Oh, my God, no." Like, "You're so bad at this, Mrs. Weston. Stop while you're ahead."

**Gillian:** Knightley is very gentlemanly, and I think that can be suspicious for those who are unused to the gentlemanly chivalrous. It's like, this guy is in love with me. In love with her, what are we supposed to do about it?

**Molly:** Yeah. Then it's time for Emma to play the pianoforte. She goes over, and it's very sweet, and Knightley is watching her play, and he's very in love with her, obviously. Frank gets up in the middle of her song and starts doing a duet with her.

**Becca:** He's got some serious musical theater kid energy in this scene.

**Molly:** Big time.

**Gillian:** It's the thing where when I watch the period versions of these films or miniseries or something, I'm like, "This would make me uncomfortable if this happened at a party." So, is this uncomfortable for them, or was this happening, just left and right? We're young men just joining in on duets. [00:07:00] I'm inclined to think it's supposed to be weird.

**Becca:** As someone who has been in many musical theater parties in my life, there is a certain culture today where this is not weird, and it's specifically, teenagers at musical theater camp. And so, I'm choosing to think that maybe it is something that people used to do for entertainment back in the day and that we have evolved, unless you are a big musical theater teenager from the 21st century.

**Molly:** Yeah. During this whole thing, he's staring directly at Jane, and Jane looks either mortified or angry during this, and Harriet is watching Emma like she's in love with herself. She's like, "Oh, my God, you, icon. You, legend." And then Jane goes to play, and he joins her in a duet too. They do this opera song, which is very over the top and just trying a bit too hard [00:08:00] for me.

**Gillian:** Do you think that like, if you guys were guests at this party and you were witnessing him joining Emma and then joining Jane, would you think like, "Oh, this guy's maybe interested in both of them"? or would you not think that at all? What do you think everyone would be thinking about this?

**Yolanda:** I think it would stir up some gossip at the party. It'd be like, Frank, he gets around. He's singing with all the ladies at this party.

**Molly:** It really is the hot musical theater kid. He knows he's hot shit. He has dated everyone in the cast. That's what he's giving.

**Becca:** King of the showmance.

**Yolanda:** [giggles]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** That's so funny. It's also such a small town that I was thinking about it and I'm like, "If this happened at one party, I would be talking about it for the next 10 years." Frank

Churchill would not be able to come up in conversation without me being like, "Remember when he just dueted spontaneously two times in a row, and [00:09:00] then [Becca laughs] he married neither of them." I don't know, that's the thing [Becca laughs] that I would be thinking about. [laughs]

**Becca:** Well, he did marry one of them.

**Gillian:** He did marry one of them, and so that was fine. But I'd be like, "What was that duet with Emma?" We know because of hindsight that he's trying to deflect, right? He's trying to make it look like he's not just interested in Jane, but I'd be like, "Was he just trying to like-- Did he like both of them at the same time? What was going on?"

**Molly:** Totally. While they're singing, Knightley comes to sit next to Emma and they're talking about Jane's playing, and Emma's like, "Oh, yeah. Glad her fingers were warm." And he says, "Well, your playing was very elegant [giggles] and it's very cute." I love him. So, the next day after this party, Frank comes to Emma's house and he is like, "I have to tell you something. It's clear that I've developed feelings for someone, [00:10:00] and you've always made me feel so comfortable, so I just have to tell you." It's so obvious, like, watching the movie, how much he's not in love with her and how much he is trying to tell her that he's in love with someone else. But because in the book, we get it all through Emma's perspective, it wasn't as obvious. It was pretty obvious, but it wasn't glaring in your face, whereas here, it's like, "Oh, Emma's, just a little clueless."

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Molly:** Oh, yeah.

[laughter]

**Gillian:** They should make a movie about that. [laughs]

**Becca:** You guys actually have no idea how many times Molly has accidentally said, "Emma is clueless," and then gone, "Wait a minute."

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Molly:** So, then we get Emma's diary entry, and she was just like, "Dear Diary, Frank Churchill's in love with me." It's very on the nose, but--

**Becca:** Here's the thing. This is part one of things [00:11:00] I take issue within this adaptation, because I understand that Emma has this inner monologue that we have to gather from the movie. It's just so on the nose that it's just this voiceover of Emma talking to herself through writing her journal. I'm like, "Can we not--?"

**Gillian:** I find that I really like whatever her journal table writing setup is with the journal and the decorations on her desk or on her table. I'm always like, "Oh, that's a moment right there. That's a main character moment." But it is distracting from the inner monologue because I don't need it, because I got it.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** It's like, we know she's flirting with Frank. We know.

**Molly:** So, the next day, Mr. And Mrs. Elton come to visit, and she is so funny. She won't let him get a word in edgewise. Every time he tries to speak, she just barrels over him, [00:12:00] and it is so good.

**Gillian:** This actress is perfect, I think, because she dominates the conversation and just talks about things like, "I got snooze fest." She has nothing interesting to say, and it's just, I think this is where Alan Cumming is so perfect for his role, because in the beginning, he was

quite pompous and he liked to take over the conversation, and now he's just like, [gasps] he starts to talk and then it just doesn't matter.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Absolutely. I don't know who this actress is, but she's a very dominating force on the screen. She's like jacked--

**Molly:** Juliet Stevenson, right?

**Yolanda:** Yeah. I know her as the mom from *Bend It Like Beckham*.

**Becca:** Oh, my God.

**Gillian:** Whoa. Mic drop moment. Well done, Yolanda.

[laughter]

**Yolanda:** That movie is always top of mind for me, so I'm like, "That's her."

**Becca:** What I love about doing a podcast about Jane Austen is that, there are so many people who've watched so many British [00:13:00] films that come on that inevitably, we'll be watching an adaptation and everyone will be like, "Oh, yeah, they're in that movie." And you're like, "Yeah." [giggles]

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Gillian:** Well, especially because this is made so long-- Everyone here is so young, and they're usually playing like parents or older characters, just to remind the people at home that the actress who plays Jane Fairfax is Lady Featherington from *Bridgerton*.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** I know. Still like the wildest deep cut I could find from this movie.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, when she brings up the Knightly thing, we cut to Emma and Harriet in the carriage, and Emma's like, "Knightly. She's never met him in his life, and she's calling him Knightly." She's just talking about how much she hates Mrs. Elton. While they're driving by, people are passing and she'll be talking about Mrs. Elton so angrily and she'll be like, "Oh, hello, Mrs. Cole."

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** I hate her so much. She's the worst. "Oh, hello." It's so good. And she says, [00:14:00] "There's only one thing we can do for a person like that. We have to throw her a party," which is the pinnacle of Emma's class status. She's like, "People can't know that I don't like her."

**Gillian:** I love how resigned she sounds about it too. She's just like, "I have no choice. My hands are tied. I have to throw her a party."

**Molly:** Yep. Then we cut to Augusta outside the church saying, she's so excited for the party and telling them how much she loves Jane and says she's going to adopt her. She says Emma must adopt her with her. They are the bells of the ball, essentially, and they need to take her under her wing. And then we cut to Emma with Mr. Knightley and Mrs. Weston, and she's saying that she feels bad for Jane that Mrs. Elton has taken such a liking to her.

Knightley is saying that Jane doesn't receive attention from people like Emma, so you could do a [00:15:00] little bit more. And Emma's like, "Well, she receives attention from you, huh?" And he's like, "What's going on here?" Because clearly Mrs. Weston and Emma are

trying to get him to admit that he likes Jane or-- Well, Mrs. Weston is. Emma's trying to get him to admit that she doesn't like Jane, and he's like, "I admire her, but not like that."

**Becca:** The most perfect thing a Mr. Knightley can do in any adaptation is just short circuit whenever anybody brings up his love life.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** It's great. He's not good at deflecting, but he has to do it so often because there's so much speculation, because he's so eligible.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. When he walks away, Emma is convinced that he does not love Jane and Mrs. Weston is like, "He's trying so hard to convince us he doesn't like Jane that I'm convinced he loves her." Then we cut to the party at Emma's house where she tells Knightley that he shamed her, and she felt like she should show Jane more attention when he told her that she doesn't show Jane enough [00:16:00] attention. And then Mrs. Elton berates Jane for going to the post office in the rain and she's like, "Knightley, come here." And she's like, "You must tell Jane that she shouldn't be doing things like that." And he's like, "Take care of yourself, won't you?"

**Becca:** "Drink soup, please."

**Molly:** Yeah. And then we see Emma just glowering in the corner like, "Oh, my God, does he actually love Jane?"

**Yolanda:** Mrs. Elton really does have the perfect shrill voice that cuts through everything, and I'm sure everyone's heads are turned to be like, "Who is this woman? What is happening right now?"

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Soothing like sandpaper.

**Gillian:** Yeah. No, and the funny thing is, I agree with Emma's statement that I feel bad for Jane that this woman has taken an interest in her. But I think she's saying it as a deflection because-- Jane Fairfax, existing in any conversation, Emma's immediately jealous. But I don't know, can you imagine her being like, "Don't get the mail. Don't do this. Don't do that." [00:17:00] She's kind of her Harriet, but she's an unfit mother.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Gillian:** She doesn't get that Jane Fairfax and her are very different social class. I think she gets it. She knows that's why she's able to boss her around the way that she does. But I don't know, she's just saying that she can't do these things that she has to do to live her life and to get her mail.

**Becca:** The parallels between Mrs. Elton and Emma and Jane and Harriet are very palpable. I think the class dynamic, the difference between Harriet and Emma is so much wider than the distance between Mrs. Elton and Jane. But Mrs. Elton acts like it's the same class difference in a way that's very uncomfortable. And also, at the same time, it's almost an unflattering reflection of Emma's behavior with Harriet to see it reflected so poorly in how Mrs. Weston is treating Jane.

**Gillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** I mean, not Mrs. Weston. Mrs. Elton.

**Gillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Mrs. Weston [00:18:00] would never.

[laughter]

**Gillian:** She looks at all these young ladies adopting other young ladies, and it's just like, "All right, you guys have read together. Hopefully, do some good."

**Becca:** She's thriving with her new husband and his spectacular mustache.

**Gillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** He does have a very good mustache. So, Mr. Weston, speaking of which, arrives to the party a little late and shares that Frank is coming back. And Jane looks thrilled, quietly. And then we get Emma journaling deciding she is not in love with Frank, which is a very fast turnaround because I feel like she just journaled saying, "Oh, my gosh, he's in love with me. This is so great." But she thinks maybe he'd be good for Harriet.

**Yolanda:** Yeah, it's the whole proximity thing. She's like, "Well, he's not in front of me, so I guess I don't like him anymore." [laughs]

**Becca:** Yup.

**Gillian:** No object permanence.

**Yolanda:** Yes. [laughs]

**Molly:** But that's such a real thing is like, in between seeing someone, do you want to see them again or are they just like not a factor, and that's a big part of it?

**Gillian:** I'm sure that's also a symptom of living in such a small town is like, "How often are there new [00:19:00] people your age?"

**Molly:** Right.

**Gillian:** When a new one comes town, it's like, "I can see the excitement of somebody loves me with no thought about how you feel about them." And then when he's gone for a while, it's like, "Well, he doesn't love me. [laughs] That's okay."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** What's so interesting about the way this is done, it's not as clear here as it is in the books, but it's like, Emma likes Frank better when he's not there. And then when he's actually there, she's like, "He's fine." But then when he's gone, she's like, "I'm in love with him. Isn't it cool that I'm in love with him?" And then when he comes back, she's like, "Oh, I really am not in love with him." [laughs]

**Gillian:** I do think that's an astute observation because so much of the-- We don't meet Frank until 45 minutes into the movie. And for a lot of that 45 minutes, she's just like, "I hear Frank is supposed to come to this event. Oh, Frank didn't come to Christmas." It's like this thing. We never stop hearing about this guy who's not real.

**Becca:** Exactly. And [00:20:00] he's basically her celebrity crush.

**Molly:** I was going to say he's her Canadian boyfriend.

**Becca:** He's her Canadian boyfriend.

**Molly:** So, then we get Knightley and Emma playing with Knightley's dogs, and she's trying to get him to come to a ball or a dance. He says, "He would rather fetch the stick that he's throwing to his dog than go to a ball," and Emma's like, "Then I'll have to remember to bring

it to the party," which I thought was a zinger. I loved it. And he goes, "I just want to stay here where it's cozy." And we pan to his giant house.

**Gillian:** I did love that. He used the word cozy, unironically, and he wants to be home petting his dogs.

**Becca:** Yeah. This is why Mr. Knightley's remote behavior just all around is because who doesn't want a guy who's like, "I just want to be cozy in my mansion with my dogs."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** Perfect.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, the party at the Westons, this is a little bit of a wonky timeline thing because I feel like they combined [00:21:00] a couple parties from the book into one here. But you got to do that when you're adapting a very long book into a movie, I guess. Emma and Frank meet in the hall and she's like, "What are you waiting for?" And he says, "Oh, Mrs. Elton." But then when Mrs. Elton arrives, it's obvious that he's waiting for Jane because she's driving Jane there. And Miss Bates comes in, and she monologues. This movie really focused on and highlighted Miss Bates and her monologuing. They really kept everything.

**Becca:** Again, she's just such a sad Miss Bates. She really just like, every time she talks, you're just like, "Oh, poor honey."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. She's great though.

**Gillian:** She's so lovely. I love that she appreciates every single thing she's invited to. At this ball, she's like, "I feel like I'm in fairyland. It's so well decorated." I'm like, "That's really nice, Mrs. Bates. No one appreciates [00:22:00] things the way you do."

**Molly:** So true. So, then we get the classic Elton snubbing Harriet, and Knightley coming in, asking Harriet to dance. And Emma in this moment is like, "Oh, my God, this man." Her face lights up. She's so happy that he did that. After the dance, she pulls him aside and she's like, "That was so kind of you." And he says, "Why did the Elton seem to want to snub you too?" And she's like, "Oh, no reason." And he's like, "You did want Harriet to get with Mr. Elton, didn't you?" And she's like, "Oh, yes. And they'll never forgive me."

**Gillian:** I feel like this scene, because they're outside, and you can see the ball happening inside with these big windows. I feel like this scene has very similar energy to the Greta Gerwig *Little Women*, when Laurie and Jo are outside, like, "I don't know, being mischievous and fun outside because he's [00:23:00] trying to goad this answer out of her." Like, "Emma, do they really hate Harriet or is this something to do with getting back at you?" This is like *Mission Impossible* level vengeance, where it's like, "I'm going to get back at you by hurting the people you love, you know?"

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Gillian:** It's just like such almost like a very sexy scene, the way he's like, "Emma, tell me the truth. What's happening?"

**Becca:** Well, what it is it's like a giant group scene. It's a huge party where everyone in the town is. It's a capturing of an outside intimate moment where you're not supposed to be intimate. You're supposed to be at a big ball. And so, it gives you a moment of tenderness between the two of them outside of the larger community that they are supposed to be participating in.

**Gillian:** Yeah.



**Molly:** Mm-hmm. I just love the way he says Emma.

**Gillian:** I also wonder, I don't know if it's answered or if it matters, but does Knightley [00:24:00] know that Elton asked Emma to marry? If I were Mrs. Elton, I think I would hate Emma so much more for being proposed to first than, "Oh, she tried to throw her friend at me like a football."

**Becca:** Does she know though?

**Gillian:** I suspect Elton told zero people. I think he told nobody that that happened because it was just such a sharp rejection.

**Molly:** I think that what he did was he talked a lot of shit about Emma and Harriet to Mrs. Elton. So, she just assumes like, "Oh, I hate them." But Emma doesn't want Knightley to know that they have any reason to hate her. And so, that's why she's so relieved when he thinks, it's just that she tried to set him up with Harriet and not that she rejected his proposal, because she doesn't want him to know that at all.

**Gillian:** I feel like that should be a scene to make Knightley even more perfect, more like romance [00:25:00] fictional boyfriend. Like, where's the scene where he finds out that like not only did he propose, but in a deeply uncomfortable and controlling way, where they were alone in a carriage, and he threw this hissy fit when she rejected him, and he's just like, "Where is he?" Like Batman, like, "Where is he?"

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Gillian:** I don't know if that's Knightley's behavior, but I just feel like we never get that moment, because I think that's probably the much bigger crime than like, "Oh, you should talk to my friend Harriet." And I'm sure it's something Elton would tell no one. I agree with what you said that it would just be like, one day, he's like, "Ah, isn't Emma the best? Wouldn't she make an amazing wife?" And then the next day he's like, "Screw, Emma. She's the worst person I've ever met."

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** I think that Jane Austen punishes Elton for his behavior by giving him Augusta Hawkins, AKA Mrs. Elton. I think that that is the punishment he must bear. And Mrs. [00:26:00] Elton's punishment is ultimately Jane Fairfax becoming higher status than her.

**Molly:** Totally.

**Gillian:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, speaking of Knightley being a dreamboat, he tells Emma that he was very pleasantly surprised by Harriet. And then Mr. Weston comes over and is like, "It's the last dance. Come on." And he says, "Whom are you going to dance with?" And she goes, "With you, if you'll ask me. And it is everything that I ever dreamed it would be." She goes, "After all, we are not brother and sister." And he goes, "Brother and sister? No, indeed, we are not." And then he bites his lip [Yolanda laughs] in a very sexy way.

**Gillian:** He goes down like a whole octave in his voice. He lowers his voice and set to himself like, "Indeed, we are not." And I'm like, "Stop."

[laughter]

**Molly:** Oh, yeah, it's really a lot. And then the dance that follows is hot. Even by today's standards, they're almost touching hands, they're pulling away. It's [00:27:00] just like they're looking at each other so longingly. It is a sexy, sexy dance.

**Gillian:** Well, I was just going to say like-- I don't know if you guys have ever danced these Regency dances, but Yolanda and I have been to a couple of Jane Austen balls. [laughs] What's interesting about these balls is, even if you have a partner, a lot of them actually is like, you dance as a group. Like, you're either like a group of four or a group of six. It's actually a lot more of dancing with a group than with your own partner. I think part of what makes this dance kind of sexy is that it really is much more one on one. It's just like them almost touching and then not almost touching in a way that doesn't happen with a lot of these country dances.

**Molly:** Totally. Then there's a weird fade out, like, it's a made for TV movie that I didn't love.

**Yolanda:** [giggles]

**Molly:** Followed by Harriet and Emma on a walk when they are robbed, and Frank rescues them. Is this the one where [00:28:00] she's on the ground and there's all of these adult men and women grabbing her and she's screaming.

**Becca:** So, this is, again, one of those moments where I think the movie misses the mark a little bit. For one, we now understand the implications of so stereotyping Romani people. But also, the way it's written in the book is that Jane Austen is trying to make fun of how little happens in this town that a bunch of kids are chasing after Harriet and making her all scared. It's like, the biggest deal in the world, whereas like, this is high drama and it's made into a high drama moment. The fact that Emma's there to witness it and see it become high drama, it just doesn't make sense like, why is Frank rescuing Harriet? When Emma's also there, why are the people going for Harriet, not Emma? It's just like, I have questions. It's a weird scene. I don't love it.

**Gillian:** Yeah, it's like an assault scene.

**Yolanda:** Yeah, I was rewatching it and it's like, [00:29:00] they go after Harriet because she is carrying a coin purse. I guess, maybe Emma just didn't carry something, so that's why they went after Harriet. But even still, I think in the book, Emma isn't with her. Is that right? Yeah. So, this is supposed to just happen to Harriet and then Emma just is helpless in this scene. She's just crying out and just looking down at Harriet too.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** And in the book, it goes again to Emma being this sheltered, romantic person where she hears about this story, and it sounds so exciting and romantic that she impresses upon it a love story between Frank and Harriet. And the fact that Emma sees it here and is privy to it gives Emma almost too much experience to think there's a love story there. It's also really, like, it's stupid that Emma attaches so much meaning to it in the book. But in this scene, it's obviously this highly dramatic thing where Frank does look like a dashing hero. I think it [00:30:00] changes how the scene makes Emma think about Frank and Harriet as a couple, and also about her sheltered nature.

**Gillian:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Yolanda:** I think the big part too is making sure that, for Emma to witness it, she's like, "Oh, see, well, Frank did this grand romantic thing of rescuing Harriet." This is what Harriet's talking, obviously, in the miscommunication that comes up, she's like, "Well, I thought Knightley asking you to dance was going to be the big romantic thing." But no, she thinks like, "Oh, no, it's Frank rescuing her." That's the big mix up here.

**Molly:** Right.

**Gillian:** And not only that, the ball where Knightley rescues her and the attack scene are usually, literally one happened that night, one happened the next day. Emma witnesses the aftermath of Harriet being saved, because he helps her to her house, he [00:31:00] kisses her hand, Harriet's hand before he leaves, like, it's a moment that I get it. Emma's also there for that one. She only saw Knightley asking her to dance while she herself is on the dance floor.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, after they're back home and safe, Harriet decides that it's time to get over Elton fully and she wants to destroy her most precious treasures. She's got her gauze, she's got her pencil, she throws them in the fire. Emma thinks to herself, "Goodbye, Mr. Elton. Hello, Mr. Churchill." It's so horny.

**Becca:** I love that line though, because it just shows how dumb Emma is, because you get all these no more matchmaking, and then it's immediately like, out of the-- What is that? Out of the frying pan and into the fire. [giggles]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Then we cut to strawberry picking, and this is like a combination Box [00:32:00] Hill and Donwell situation. I think they're just at Donwell. Emma plants the idea in this moment to Harriet saying like, "I think you're developing feelings for someone. Greater things have happened." And Harriet, of course, thinks they're talking about Mr. Knightley and Emma, of course, thinks they're talking about Frank. Then we get Mrs. Elton saying, she found a job for Jane, and a quick zoom in on Frank's face being like, "Huh?" He immediately goes to say, he wants to play a game, where everyone tries to make Emma laugh by saying, "One thing very clever, two things moderately clever, or three, dull things."

In this moment, I noticed that the flirting between them was way played down, and I think that that's just something throughout this movie where I don't see any chemistry between Frank and Emma, but maybe that's just me.

**Yolanda:** They seem more like conspiring friends to me. It seems more like the two friends in the back of the room making fun of everyone [00:33:00] and gossiping about everything. I don't see the chemistry either.

**Molly:** Right.

**Gillian:** In true theater kid fashion.

**Yolanda:** [giggles] One theater kid to another. Yes, they get each other.

**Molly:** Yeah, totally.

**Becca:** That's exactly what this is. I also think it, again, exonerates the characters a little because this is one of those moments where the understated direction in which the film is taken bothers me because I want to see Frank being absolutely outrageous. I want to see him playing fast and loose with two women's reputations and being awful in a way that we need to grapple with as consumers of the content. I feel like here it's just like he's being a little bit shitty.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** I don't know if this has anything to do with anything, but I read interviews where Ewan McGregor has been like, "Yeah, I feel bad. I wasn't great in that."

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Gillian:** No, first, I think we all thought it was the wig and they were like, [00:34:00] "Oh, he's handsome. Let's make him Frank Churchill. He's a charismatic guy." But no, I agree that he's just shitty, and it makes you not even-- It demystifies the potential love triangle of the situation.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** At no point does he feel like a real competitor to Knightley, because Jeremy Northam is so handsome and so charming. And so, it doesn't the stakes feel much lower in that circumstance.

**Gillian:** Yeah. This guy just voted for Hillary.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** He liked her so much, he copied her haircut.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, Mrs. Elton doesn't want to play this game, and she refuses, and goes for a walk. I think that Emma is annoyed by this, which sparks her being a little bit more snippy and sparks her saying the thing to Miss Bates, which she does, and Miss Bates is like, "Oh, okay. I can't believe she would say that to an old friend." It's very heartbreaking. You can see on Knightley's [00:35:00] face, the shock at her having said it, the immediate fury that she would do such a thing. He immediately takes Miss Bates away and is like, "Let's go pick some strawberries together," and she's like, "Oh, yes, that would be very nice. Thank you." Oh, I love her.

**Gillian:** In every single adaptation, I hate this scene, and I usually have to fast forward through it, just because it's so awful. Miss Bates is so sweet. She really blames herself immediately.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Gillian:** It's not even this thought of, "Oh, how could she say this?" She's like, "Oh, how could I embarrass Emma?" She takes that on immediately, and it's so awful.

**Yolanda:** It's a great performance by the actress where she's like, "I will try to hold my tongue," and I'm like, "No, you don't. No, you don't have to do that. Emma's just being awful to you right now."

**Molly:** I know.

**Gillian:** She's genuinely awful to you, but you don't notice it. [laughs]

**Molly:** Right. Knightley then chases after Emma, and grabs her [00:36:00] arm, and turns her around, and tells her all about how she should have compassion for Miss Bates's situation. He says, "Badly done, Emma." And this, of course, makes Emma cry. He walks away and he turns around, he's like, "It doesn't give me pleasure to say these things." She won't look at him because she's crying and she's so embarrassed and it's so heartbreaking. His voice cracks and he just wants her to be the best that she can be. I have a note here that says I always have to point out penis pants. It's just that his pants like-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** You can see the penis.

**Molly:** You can just see all of his junk. I just have to point it out Colin Firth. I have to point it out now.

**Becca:** It's just a thing in this time period, apparently. They was all prim and proper until it came to designing the pants for the men.

**Yolanda:** [giggles]

**Gillian:** It's just like the cod piece, right? Like, the way that you put the pants on is you have this flat [00:37:00] strip of fabric that covers your front, and whatever you have is just on display.

**Molly:** It really is. It draws my attention away from the scene a little bit, but nothing to be done.

**Becca:** This is so funny, because I was about to be like, I was critical of this movie, I was harsh, but this is one scene I really do think is good in this movie.

**Molly:** Well, it is good.

**Molly and Becca:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** It's a great scene.

**Becca:** Because I think one of my criticisms of this movie is that Knightley and Emma don't fight enough, because they're both really passionate people and they like-- This movie, there's a lot of bickering and smiling at each other and everything. But this is one of the only scenes where they genuinely get into it with each other. I think it's crucial to the story that they do, because it is, both Mr. Knightley's intense nagging and the fact that Emma deserves it that really just tie together the love story in the end. So, the fact that it happens here, where Box Hill Gate happens and it's the worst moment, like the most cringe moment in any Jane Austen [00:38:00] story ever. I think it's just really necessary to make the story work to have them really fight it out.

**Gillian:** Yeah. He really spells out why what she did was so wrong. He's like, "She's poor. I wouldn't be yelling at you if this were like one of the other women of your class, but people look to you as an example. She's poorer than when she was born, and the older she gets, the poorer she'll be, and you just can't treat her like this." And I was like, "Yeah, you tell her." [laughs]

**Becca:** Get her.

**Gillian:** Get her. Get her, Knightley.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Gillian:** No, and it's like, she really actually starts to grow from this moment because she's like, "He's right. He's not being unfair. I was the one being unfair." She's been letting her emotions get to her, and she's been letting all these other people get to her, and she hurt someone else because of her own hurt. It's where she [00:39:00] goes, and she goes to visit the Bates women and really apologizes. She punishes herself for a while after this. I think that's when Knightley starts to notice like, "Okay, she's not gone. She's not completely gone."

**Molly:** Yeah. Well, she goes to the Bates', and in this adaptation, Miss Bates is the one who says, "Tell her I'm laying down upon the bed, mother, and not well." In the book, she comes and talks to Emma and says, "Jane is not well." But because this Jane-Emma competition has been played down a little bit in this adaptation, they really focus on the wrong that she has done to Miss Bates as what is driving her going and visiting. Miss Bates is so hurt and embarrassed that she hides from her and won't come to see her.

When Emma comes back home, Knightley is there and her father's like, "Oh, yes, she was visiting the Bates'. She's so kind to them." And [00:40:00] she says that she's shown them charity but not kindness, which some friends may doubt she still has. And he says, "The truest friend does not doubt, but hope." They have this moment of like, "I'm in love with you,"

and they look at each other. He says, "He has to leave," and she says that she wishes that she could have arrived sooner, so they could have talked, and he says, "Me too," and there's a lot of tension between them.

He tells her he has to see his brother about a delicate and perplexing matter, which makes her go, "What is that?" Then she writes in her diary some more telling us that Frank's aunt is dead-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Which she just apparently knows.

**Molly:** Yeah, this just happened. She hopes that she'll be friends with Miss Bates again soon. That's her update. When Mr. Weston comes running to tell her to come to Mrs. Weston, when they tell her that Frank and Jane are engaged, and Emma just can't compute. She's like, "What?" [giggles]

**Gillian:** Yeah. She's like, "So soon?" And they're like, [00:41:00] "No, it was a secret the whole time." The whole thing is the reason why their engagement had to be a secret was because Frank Churchill's aunt wouldn't have left him her fortune if he was going to marry a lady of lowborn means. Honestly, I'm like, I know Frank was kind of shitty, but good for him. He waited it out, he got the fortune, he got to marry his dream girl. Like, he's set.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** I think there's a real grayness to Frank's character, which makes me really like him. Maybe not like him in terms of liking his character, but enjoy him as a story, because there's so few characters that live in this precise shade of gray in Austen works. A lot of them are either villains or heroes. He's definitely a little shitty, but also, you feel bad for him because he really doesn't [00:42:00] have a lot of control over his own life. And then you have Knightley, who just decides he's the luckiest bastard on the face of the planet and gets everything he wants.

**Gillian:** Frank Churchill reminds me a lot of Willoughby from *Sense and Sensibility*, who's like another gray area character, who similarly he wants to marry Marianne but can't, because he won't inherit his fortune. And so, he jilts her, marries a rich girl he doesn't love, and forever has to miss out on the fact that he will not ever have the woman he truly loves.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think Willoughby is a really interesting character, but I also think he is more of a villain than Frank because of how he treats Brandon's ward-

**Gillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -and everything that happens there. I think that he's a victim of his own bad behavior, whereas I think with Frank, he gets trapped in a bad situation and his feelings bubble up in a very toxic way for him. But I ultimately think he never [00:43:00] crosses a line into an unredeemable area. And therefore, if he is a good husband to Jane for the rest of their lives, I think his actions are, in the end, kind of justified.

**Yolanda:** That was the thing to an extent like, does Frank cross the line at all with Emma because everyone is concerned. Like, "Emma, are you okay with the news? How are you responding to everything? Are you shocked?" And she's like, "I'm fine. I got over him already. I'm more worried about Harriet." But for everyone, they think like, "Oh, they were clearly the ones who were going to be the match, but obviously, they had a bigger secret that no one knew."

**Becca:** It begs the question of whether the consequences of your actions have an effect on how bad your actions were, because Frank's level of flirting was outrageous and he got lucky that Emma didn't like him back, and he says he knew that she didn't like him back, but did he? I don't know. This is a conversation we had on the podcast when we did the book.

**[00:44:00]** I think it's an open question as to whether or not the line crossing was so bad with Frank as to make him a little bit more of a villain in the story, just because he got lucky that the woman he targeted was a high status woman who was in love with another guy.

**Yolanda:** Yeah. I think if she did reciprocate those feelings, it would have been a different situation, and I think there would have been more of a fallout between Frank and everyone in society. So, he lucked out. Even for Emma, she's like, "Oh, I also got away out of this unscathed because I didn't like him either."

**Gillian:** Yeah. And she was worried about Harriet, and she didn't even like him either. No one was actually crushing on Frank Churchill this whole time. He's like this handsome, charismatic, new kid in town. I don't know, he's just the kind of guy that all the men are like Knightley is worrying about for no reason and all the women are like, "I can see how some women would see that he's attractive **[00:45:00]** and no one actually is crushing on him."

**Becca:** That's why they gave him the wig to justify the fact that no girls in the story have a crush on him.

**Gillian:** I could just see that conversation where you and McGregor walks in, and they put him in the pants, and they're like, "This won't do. Everyone is in love with him. We've got tone it down."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** They went too far in the other direction. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** He's hotter than Knightley. We can't have that. They can't have as much chemistry as Knightley and Emma.

**Becca:** Churchill is supposed to be hotter than Knightley, I think.

**Gillian:** He's supposed to be young. He's young. He's like Emma's age. He's early 20s. He's like an upshot. He's the rookie. Knightley, he's in his mid to late 30s. If we're breaking down romance tropes, he's like your billionaire CEO who has all his stuff, and he's good looking and rich, but actually more in a quiet way. Frank **[00:46:00]** Churchill, he's running around. He's like a man of action.

**Becca:** The Timothée Chalamet-

**Gillian:** If you will.

**Becca:** -of the story.

**Gillian:** Yes.

[laughter]

**Molly:** Yeah. So, Emma goes to tell Harriet, because she is very worried about her and Harriet doesn't care, and the whole misunderstanding comes to light. Emma, immediately upon figuring it out, bursts into tears and she's like, "What's going to be done about this? This is awful." And Harriet is so sweet. She's like, "Must something be done about it?" And they go back and forth, and Harriet just doesn't understand why Emma's crying, and Emma is like, "Oh, my God, this is awful." She goes to tell Mrs. Weston, because we get that inner monologue coming out via her friendship with Mrs. Weston that she realized that she was so jealous because no one can marry Knightley but herself. She's in love with him.

It is just like this heart wrenching moment, and also one of the **[00:47:00]** funniest moments in the movie, because after she figures that out, she says that she's not going to know how

to react, how to interact with Knightley when he returns. She says, "If he's happy, then I'll know that John advised him to marry Harriet, and I won't be able to let him tell me. But if he's sad, then I'll know John advised him not to marry Harriet," and then she goes, "I love John." And then she said, "Or, he may seem sad because he doesn't want to tell me that he's going to marry my best friend. How could John let him do that? I hate John."

**Gillian:** That's great.

**Molly:** Favorite moment in the movie. She also at one point goes, "Harriet's parents could be pirates." She just completely 180s on everything.

**Yolanda:** I know. Now she's going to take down Harriet's whole reputation. She's like, "We don't know who they are. What have you people been doing this whole time? You trusted me? [Molly laughs] No, we can't trust this girl at all."

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Well, that's the class dynamics, like, entirely at work, because it makes Emma [00:48:00] suddenly understand class so quickly when she realizes that Harriet wants something that she wants. Suddenly, all that time she was like, "Oh, my God, everyone's being so fucking classist towards Harriet. Everyone's being so mean to her." And suddenly, when Harriet's in her way, it's like, "This low-class gold-digging bitch is in my way."

**Molly:** Yeah. She lets her true colors shine here and it's not attractive.

**Becca:** Shine's, the wrong word.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, then we get another Dear Diary moment, and it's all Emma trying not to think about Knightley. She's miserable. She goes high drama. She goes to the church, and she prays that Knightley will stay single forever.

**Gillian:** I love this scene so much because she's like, "Dear God, either let him be with me or please let him have no one. We keep things exactly as they are. And he comes and visits me every day, whenever. Amen."

**Molly:** [00:49:00] Yeah, it's hilarious. And then one day, she's walking and she runs into Knightley and she goes, "Are you happy?" which is so good thinking about her, I love John, I hate John monologue. It's just so awkward, neither of them knows what to do. He says he has to ask for something, and she immediately cuts him off to tell him about Frank and Jane. He's like, "Oh, yes, I wanted to see if you were okay," and she's like, "I'm fine." And so, he starts to tell her how he feels, and she says, "Don't say something that will hurt us both to have said." And he's like, "Oh, okay, very well," and he walks away and then takes his whip and snaps it at the ground, because he's like, "Dang it, I was going to tell her. I loved her and I got foiled again."

She then follows him because she's like, "Ah, fuck, he wanted to talk to me. I'm his best friend. What have I done?" So, she says, "Listen, if you want to talk [00:50:00] to me as a friend, then I'll be there for you as a friend," which is exactly how it's written in the book. It's one of my favorite things, because she's so unintentionally friend, zoning him here. He's like, "Can you stop saying friend? I don't want to be friends." And then we get the proposal. And for so long, it was going so well. It was very swoon worthy, but then he didn't say the thing.

**Becca:** He didn't say the thing.

**Yolanda:** He didn't say the line.

**Becca:** "If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more." The most iconic line from *Emma* by Jane Austen. And in this movie that was trying to win Oscars, they just decided they did not need it.



**Gillian:** Ridiculous and wrong.

**Becca:** Criminal.

**Yolanda:** I wonder if there's a deleted scene or something where they filmed it at all, or was it just a complete omission of this iconic line? It's really [00:51:00] baffling to think that, why would you leave out this line? In all these adaptations, there's like these key moments and key lines that people quote, and there's merch of it everywhere. So, why wouldn't you include it? [giggles]

**Gillian:** We want answers. I feel like them not having this line is more criminal than if they had left out badly done Emma. I feel like this was the more iconic, romantic one, and it was a crime.

**Becca:** Absolutely. This movie, I have my issues with it. I've voiced them multiple times. But the fact that they leave out the most iconic line, the arrogance of thinking you can top Jane Austen in romance, badly done, writers. Badly done, indeed.

[laughter]

**Yolanda:** That's great.

**Gillian:** I think it is a bit of that though. I think it is that attitude of like, "We're doing Jane Austen, but better." Like, "Here's how we're improving [00:52:00] it, or here's how we're combining characters or making the Frank thing more obvious," or whatever. It's like, all these choices I think are them just trying to, in their eyes, I think, heighten the story. But I think the story speaks for itself, and all the material is so clearly there. I think it's just a different approach. I think these were all American producers in a studio. So, I think there is just a difference between how Americans approach adaptations versus when there are UK adaptations. I think there's a little more reverence for the word and the works.

**Molly:** Totally. Yeah.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** I was trying to think of an American equivalent to Jane Austen, someone that we might revere in that way, but I can't think of anyone.

**Gillian:** Like, someone that British producers have to make this movie either by an American author or about an American. I don't think they do get that.

**Molly:** Yeah. If you're doing *A Streetcar Named Desire* or something.

**Becca:** I was going to say some Tennessee Williams gets lost in [00:53:00] translation when they do it overseas, just because there's something so deeply American about that work. But I think, yeah, it's just here. It's just one of those things where if you don't know Jane Austen, well, maybe you don't know how crucial that line. But from my perspective, I'm like, "You don't cut the balcony scene from *Romeo and Juliet*, unless you're Baz Luhrmann and we're trying something new, but whatever. It just feels like it was written there, the most romantic line of all time. You could have just swiped it in and placed it there, but I guess, you decided you didn't need it.

**Gillian:** It's weird because it's not even like they tried to replace the line or anything. It's not like they tried to rewrite it and would obviously make it worse. But it's just like, clearly, it ended up on the cutting room floor. I don't know what those arguments are. If I were the filmmaker in favor of this line, I would be like, "This is the hill that I die on." It's possible they died on more hills, and they were [00:54:00] like, I'm not dying for one line."

**Becca:** Do you know the meme where it's like the horse that's being drawn and it starts off really beautifully drawn, and then it keeps going, and it gets sloppier until it's a stick figure? I feel like that's this movie in that they put so much effort into the front half and they don't cut anything. The pacing through the Mr. Elton plotline is so slow, and then you get past Box Hill, and it all speeds up, and it's like, this is the crux of the story. It's Emma getting humbled. It's Emma finding love. It's Emma coming to these realizations about Harriet, and you're rushing this part, the Jane Fairfax-Frank Churchill reveal?

**Gillian:** This is the kind of plot where a lot of loose ends need to be tied up at the end. You can't just leave on a guessing. It's like a game of chess. You can't leave any move unplayed here.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, [00:55:00] they make up for it in making them make out, which happens next. They make out and then he's like, "Let's go to your father." And she's like, "Oh, my God, my father? I can't leave my father." And he then says that he'll come to Hartfield, it's a lovely moment.

**Becca:** It's a bit of whiplash but-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Yeah, it's a little whiplash. But then the narrator says, "The elation Mr. Woodhouse felt was soon shared by everyone else." I was just like, "What elation?"

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** We obviously are in a different time period now than we were then. It is reasonable to expect that a father would be happy for his daughter getting married. But I think that they didn't even have any of the amusement of Mr. Woodhouse being like, "Wait, what? You're going to leave me and the turkeys?" That happen in the book-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Yeah, the turkey theft is just completely cut.

**Molly:** [00:56:00] Yeah.

**Yolanda:** [laughs]

**Molly:** But I'm glad that we get Emma's dad being happy for her in exchange for the turkey theft.

**Becca:** What I don't like and you're about to go into it is that Emma tells Harriet that she and Knightley are engaged and breaks Harriet's heart again, when that's not book accurate.

**Molly:** But to be fair, I feel like she owes that to Harriet a little bit.

**Becca:** Yeah. But in the book, you get the sense that she gets to go for who she wanted all along at the end.

**Molly:** Totally. But I've always felt a little bit icky about the fact that Emma just sent Harriet off with her sister to give them space to canoodle in public. And then Harriet comes back with Mr. Martin, and it's great, but I felt like Emma should have told Harriet all along. So, I didn't actually hate that she tells here. [00:57:00] I liked it for their friendship. The next scene, however, is Harriet coming in a couple weeks later to Emma, and she tells her that she has something to tell her that might be unpleasant, and Emma says, "Nothing you could ever say could ever be unpleasant," which is a nice parallel from the beginning when Emma says that to Harriet and Harriet's like, "Nothing you could say would ever be unpleasant," and she reveals that she's engaged to Mr. Martin.

I feel like this really highlights that without Emma meddling in her affairs. She was able to make her own decision and have a little agency and be like, "Yes, I do want to marry Mr. Martin after all," and they're a happy little ending.

**Gillian:** I get that it's a different creative choice to have Emma break the news to Harriet in person. She's very sad, but I feel like, in a way, Harriet needed that one last breakdown in order to realize that she doesn't actually need Emma's [00:58:00] permission to live her life the way that she wants. The fact that she didn't say like, "Oh, what should I do about trying to get Mr. Martin back?" She just handles that on her own and comes back with a fiancé is very good growth for Harriet.

**Becca:** It is. I would only counter that what I like in the books is that she comes to that conclusion without having been broken down that last time. What I like is that, Emma doesn't have to break her down. When she sees the reluctance that Emma approaches her crush on Knightley with, she just decides on her own, "You know what? Screw this. I'm going to make my own decisions without Emma." And her own decisions led her to Robert Martin in a way that Emma didn't need to swipe her man to bring her to that conclusion.

Obviously, it's super convenient for Emma that she didn't have to break Harriet's heart again. But I liked that because it felt more like, "Oh, now I can't have Mr. Knightley. I guess, I'll have Robert Martin." [00:59:00] It was more, "Oh, I don't actually want Mr. Knightley. I have Robert Martin. And now that I've freed myself from Emma's grasp, I can go for him." So, that was my gripe with it. It's not a huge gripe in the grander scheme of the movie. I think my bigger problems are with the pacing and the direction and Gwyneth Paltrow's portrayal of Emma. But this one little thing, I was like, "Oh, and you didn't have to break Harriet's heart again." [chuckles]

**Molly:** Yeah. Well, after that, all that's left is for Emma and Knightley to get married, and they do, and everyone lived happily ever after, and that's the end of the movie.

**Becca:** You missed the cut to camera from Mrs. Elton? [laughs]

**Molly:** Oh, yes. She turns directly to the camera and says, "If you ask me, there was a shocking lack of satin."

**Yolanda:** What an odd choice to do that right at the end of like talking directly to camera. [giggles]

**Molly:** Right. This movie didn't have a lot of rules set out for its world. All the transitions lived in different universes. There was sometimes a narrator, there was sometimes Emma narrating her own [01:00:00] thoughts and feelings. And apparently, sometimes, we look directly at the camera and talk like we're in the office.

**Becca:** Yeah. Sometimes, Emma's inner monologue was her diary. Sometimes, it was to Mrs. Weston. No set rule with that either. That's generally my problem with this movie. It's just not clean in the way that some other adaptations are like, they have a specific vision and aesthetic and way they want to tell the story. This felt like they were adapting certain scenes in a way that they thought was fun, but it didn't come up to a whole adaptation that I thought was doing anything interesting.

**Molly:** Yeah, it wasn't cohesive.

**Becca and Jillian:** Yeah.

**Becca:** No cohesion.

**Gillian:** I think in terms of what had been made of Emma theatrically, this was definitely the most star-studded adaptation that had ever been made.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Gillian:** Yeah, the whole thing does play out. It makes me feel like we're in theater and it's set up like a theater, but [01:01:00] with these-- They're very beautiful sets. It's a beautiful

movie, the costumes are beautiful, but it does fall flat in several ways. I agree with the inconsistencies. A lot of the times, it's just really dark. When it was at night, I get the candle lit glow and everything, but then I'm just like, "Who are we talking to? I can't really see what's happening." So, yeah.

**Becca:** All right, that brings us to the end of the 1996 adaptation of *Emma* starring Gwyneth Paltrow. And now, that brings us to Becca's study questions, our standbys for the movie. So, we're going to ask all four and go round and say our answers to each one, starting with favorite line delivery.

**Molly:** So, I think for this half, my favorite line delivery is, "There's only one thing to do with a person as impossible as she. I must throw a party for her."

**Becca:** I'm going to give it to, "Badly done, Emma."

**Molly:** Oh, yeah, [01:02:00] that's a good one.

**Becca:** Yeah. Whispered. Oh.

**Gillian:** That was going to be mine too. I love badly. Actually, you know what? I'm going to change mine to Knightley when he's like, "Indeed, we are not about not being siblings." That was a great one.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Yolanda:** I liked Emma's, "I love John. I hate John," delivery. That back and forth in her head, I'm like, "I get it."

**Molly:** Yeah, that's such a good moment.

**Becca:** Yeah. Okay. Notable changes from book to movie.

**Molly:** I think that the biggest thing in this part would probably be Emma telling Harriet the truth about her and Knightley right away and having that-- We've already discussed it, but having her break her heart and then she goes off and does her own thing.

**Becca:** I'll give it to the lack of, "If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more."

**Molly:** Mm-hm.

**Gillian:** That was mine.

**Becca:** "If I loved that line less, I would probably talk about it less," is all I'll say.

Molly: Yeah.

**Jillian and Yolanda:** Yeah.

**Gillian:** "No, I can't think of a bigger gripe I have than that one right there."

**Yolanda:** I agree. [01:03:00]

**Molly:** Me too.

[laughter]

**Becca:** Then we're going to do worst part of the movie and best part of the movie. Start with worst because we'll end on a positive note.

**Molly:** The worst for me is the pacing overall. I didn't think they did a good job of pacing.

**Becca:** Yeah, I would agree with the pacing. I'm going to give it overall to the direction of the movie. I think it was just like fighting the fun that is *Emma* as a story for no reason and

making it drier and more like, "This is the Regency Era adaptation" than actually engaging with how fun and funny the material is.

**Yolanda:** I agree with overall direction, because I feel like they just treat the audience as dumb and we're not going to get it, so they really need to overstate a lot of these things through her diary entries, through voiceover. So, I feel like they really try to be heavy handed with a lot of the hints and sort of thing. But yeah, that's just like-- I don't know, **[01:04:00]** I feel like even if you're someone who's not familiar with the story, you could pick up on those things, but for some reason, they feel like the need to really point those things out.

**Becca:** Absolutely.

**Gillian:** I'm just going to go with you and McGregor's wig, because I agree with all of you. But I think that it is like a crime what they did to that man's head.

**Becca:** Again, it's so hard to make him ugly. It's so hard to make him unattractive. He's so handsome, especially in this era. And [sighs] yes, all this to say, yes, 100%. Best parts of the movie.

**Molly:** Miss Bates, for me. She just killed it.

**Becca:** Yeah, I'm going to give it to Jeremy Northam. I think he's a pretty good Knightley. I think he is really classic Knightley. He's not my favorite Knightley, but he might be my favorite part of the overall end of the film, if that makes sense.

**Gillian:** I think even though they suck as characters, I'm going to give it to the actors who played the Eltons, **[01:05:00]** because-

**Becca:** yes.

**Gillian:** -I just think that you dislike them, but it's so fun to dislike them because of the performances and because of Alan Cumming just like the way that he's cluelessly about himself at the beginning, and is so sure of his status, especially in Emma's mind. And then just the way he's just such second fiddle to his wife once he has one, and how she's like the queen of the room or tries to be. We hate her for it, but it's like a deliberate performance choice. It's not like the writing does the work for this actress. She brought a lot to the role.

**Yolanda:** I really liked the dynamic between Emma and Mrs. Weston. I feel like that's something that sometimes can get lost in adaptations of having that motherly figure for her. I feel like she is someone she really turns to in this adaptation. And yes, they use it **[01:06:00]** more for trying to get the thoughts from Emma out of her. But I don't know, I think I liked seeing that dynamic play out a little more in the foreground than just her appearing at the beginning and then fading away.

**Becca:** And last but not least, who wins the movie?

**Molly:** I think, for me, Jeremy Northam's smirk, his little sideways. Hmm. Just because there are so many moments throughout the whole movie where that just adds a little lightness to moments that could otherwise be boring heavy, he could be angry without any romance. So, his winning smile.

**Becca:** I'll give it to Gwyneth. Not because I like her in this movie. I've made it very clear I don't care for her performance. But she won this movie insofar as it launched her career, and she's extremely successful now. So, good for you, Gwyneth.

**Gillian:** I feel like Jane Fairfax won the movie, because she got her dream guy, and then **[01:07:00]** she got to be elevated above so many of these other women who are so condescending to her, including and more particularly, Mrs. Elton. She gets to be rich and in love with the guy that she loves the whole time.

**Becca:** And maybe he gets a haircut. [giggles]

**Gillian:** She was innocent in his shenanigans. I almost said Frank Churchill one because he got everything he wanted, but I'm sure some people hate him a little bit. I feel like Jane Fairfax gets to be like, "Oh, what? Maybe I was just trying to protect my reputation."

**Yolanda:** I do like Gwyneth as Emma, even though there's issues with how her Emma is in this movie. I feel like she's very good at the wistful look out the carriage, or just like finding the light and having it shine just so perfectly on her. So, I feel like she's just a very picturesque Emma, and she really knows how to look the part and play the part in that way. Even her tiny little looks like reactions that you catch at times, I feel like that was really fun to see.

**Molly:** [01:08:00] Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. Okay, that concludes our goop, *Emma*. It's all good. Thank you so much for joining us. Do you want to tell the people where they can find you?

**Gillian:** Yes. So, you can follow us on Instagram, TikTok, Threads, and Twitter, [@thepemberley](#). We also have a Patreon that you can find us on [@thepemberley](#). You can email us with comments, questions, anything, thoughts at [thepemberleypodcast@gmail.com](mailto:thepemberleypodcast@gmail.com), and you can listen to The Pemberley podcast wherever you listen to podcasts.

**Molly:** Awesome. Thank you so much for joining us. This has been so much fun.

**Yolanda:** Thank you.

**Gillian:** Of course. Thank you for having us. This has been a lot of fun.

**Becca:** Yes, it's been a long time coming across over Jane Austen pod episode. On that note, to our listeners of this podcast, that is the end of our Gwyneth coverage. We will be starting our Anya coverage with *Emma* 2020 [01:09:00] next time. So, in two weeks, so get ready with that. Well, then, until next time, stay proper.

**Molly:** And don't cut the most crucial line of a book when you're adapting it into a movie.

**Becca:** You would think.

**Molly:** One would think.

[music]

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

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