

Not Sorry Works

Hot & Bothered, Live from Pemberley Bonus Episode

Fire Island (with Tobin Low)

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Vanessa: [00:00:01] Hi everybody. We are releasing a bonus episode today in order to discuss the newest *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation, *Fire Island*. If you haven't watched it yet, there are spoilers in this episode, so pause right now and go watch it and then come back because this is obviously going to be the best *Fire Island* conversation that you will hear. For those of you who don't know, *Fire Island* reimagines the Bennet family as a group of gay friends vacationing for a week on – yep – *Fire Island*. Noah is our Lizzy. Handsome and charming with a biting sense of humor. And he is committed to getting his best friend, Howie, the Jane of the movie, laid. The plot pretty much follows *Pride and Prejudice* beat for beat. Howie is quiet and kind, just like Jane, and he meets an equally kind pediatrician named Charlie, played almost by a golden retriever. But Charlie has a group of rich and fit friends who are eager to look down on Howie and get in the way of their connection. One of those friends is Will, who particularly does not impress Noah until, you know, he does. In my opinion, this Will is the dreamiest Darcy that I've seen in a long time. I really loved this adaptation. I was thinking it was going to be more of an 'inspired by' situation and then, beat for beat, it kept surprising me with how brilliantly it adapted and shed new light on *Pride and Prejudice*. And I'm really excited because I had the opportunity to talk about *Fire Island* with Tobin Low –

[Synth music begins to play as Vanessa speaks.]

Vanessa: – who you might know from the *Nancy* podcast. Tobin is an editor at *This American Life* and of course, the co-creator of that beloved LGBTQ podcast, *Nancy*. I'm Vanessa Zoltan and this is a special episode of *Live from Pemberley*.

[Synth music intensifies with added percussion before fading out.]

Vanessa: So Tobin, we invited you because of this tweet [Tobin laughs] and also because we love you. You wrote, "A lot to love in *Fire Island*, but I keep thinking about the scenes where Joel Kim and Bowen Yang talk and argue about nuances within the gay Asian experience. Like my brain truly couldn't compute that this was being discussed in a major rom com. Honestly, a gift." Can you expand on that in more than 240 characters? In as many characters as you'd like.

Tobin: [00:03:25] Oh, man. Okay, I will try. [Laughs.] I think that the big thing I was responding to is, like, here's a rom com where you have not one but two gay Asian male leads. And within that, they have some body diversity. Right? Like Joel Kim Booster, he's cut, he's muscular, he's sort of more in the traditional realm of, like, a sort of idealized gay physique. And Bowen, who plays Howie, is more in the realm of like...he has a body, you know what I mean? Like he is – he has a totally, like, lovely, wonderful body.

Vanessa: [00:04:01] Handsome but could see it at my dinner table.

Tobin: [00:04:04] Exactly. But it's not the, like – the chiseled sort of Adonis body, right? So the fact that here were two Asian gay men who are often in the gay world sort of thrown together as, like, a sort of monolithic category talking about how their experiences can actually be very different because of this other thing going on. It's something I've experienced myself before as a gay Asian man. I don't know if I've spoken so frankly about it with other gay Asian men in this way. But to see them hash it out in this scene, I was like, "Oh, my God, we're really doing it. We're really talking about the thing, these nuances that exist where, you know, you can be marginalized, but you can also be marginalized within the marginalized." And so it really just like – it did break my brain. It's like they're really doing it. They're talking about the thing. So I was just, like, so appreciative that they were bringing it out in the open, was my big reaction.

Vanessa: [00:05:04] How did the fact that it was a *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation impact the way that you viewed it? Or did it not? Was that just like forgotten?

Tobin: [00:05:12] The thing I thought was kind of brilliant about it being *Pride and Prejudice* is that, you know, *Pride and Prejudice* takes place over a much longer amount of time. But you have to keep all these roles of, like, propriety and courtship and whatever that at the time is period appropriate for this sort of, like, long game, right, of, like, courtship. And the thing that they emphasize with *Fire Island* is it's like it's a truncated amount of time, but with an intense amount of emotion and a lot of stuff happens and you're within this contained world. And so, like, the main thing I thought about is like, how brilliant is it to take, like, this sort of expansive thing of *Pride and Prejudice* and justify sort of that wealth of emotion within this sort of, like, magical space where time moves differently and emotions are bigger because you're you're all there and you're all sort of stuck together. I think that also within queer spaces, you don't always see or often see that kind of traditional courtship of, like, really sticking with one relationship and seeing how it works out. Not to overgeneralize, but like, let's say, within hookup culture. Like, that may not be a thing you see a lot, but the fact that they set it at Fire Island, again, in this space where you're stuck together and emotions are more intense, it sort of allowed them to bring that that kind of like, "I'm going to see how this one relationship plays out or this like one interaction with this person, how that plays out in play it out fully." That's where I think the *Pride and Prejudice* thing sort of like tracks on to this.

Vanessa: [00:06:48] Yeah.

Tobin: [00:06:49] You're not sort of like hooking up with one guy at a club and then you never see him again. There's like some relationship building there and some time spent and some like, "I like you on this day, but I don't like you on the next day," and, you know, like, all that kind of stuff.

Vanessa: [00:07:01] Yeah.

Tobin: [00:07:02] But I'm curious to hear from someone who actually does know *Pride and Prejudice* [laughs], like what is going on here with the adaptation and like, what works and what doesn't.

Vanessa: [00:07:11] That is what we'll do, right? We picked sort of five things. I'll tell you a little bit about what happens in *Pride and Prejudice*, and I would love to hear your perspective of how that plays out in *Fire Island*.

Tobin: Gotcha.

Vanessa: But let me just say that it is an incredible *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation.

Tobin: [00:07:26] Oh, good. Yes.

Vanessa: [00:07:27] I thought at first it was sort of a stunt to get me to watch the movie. And I was like, "Congratulations, Hulu," like, "I'm going to watch this movie because it's a *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation." And then I was like, "Oh my God, this movie is so delightful and so heart wrenching and emotional and laugh-out-loud funny." But then I was just, like, agape at how good of a *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation it is. The fact that Noah's phone dies at the very beginning, which is another thing that sort of takes us back in time 200 years, it's like there has to be an exchange between him and the Darcy character via letter. It was just so smartly done as a *Pride and Prejudice* adaptation.

Tobin: [00:08:12] Oh, that makes me so happy. I mean, I had a hunch because I love the movie so much and it just seems so smartly done. But like to hear that it also has a very faithful and good adaptation makes me very happy.

Vanessa: [00:08:23] So the first thing that I think is a really important adaptation is that the five men who go to Margaret Cho's house and go to spend this week together on Fire Island are representative of the five sisters, the five Bennet sisters in *Pride and Prejudice* and Bowen Yang and Joel Kim Booster – so the two actors who you were talking about up top –they played the two oldest sisters, Jane and Lizzy, who are best friends, but also share a bedroom. You know, they've grown up together. And I think that there's something really lovely there about chosen family. And I was wondering if you had any thoughts about that, as thinking about these five men as an adaptation of sisters.

Tobin: [00:09:05] I have a sister, but I know that's different than *being* sisters. But from what I understand of, like, being in a sister relationship, it contains so much of, like, one moment you would die for them and, like, defend them with your life. And the next minute you will say the most cutting thing to, like, take them down a notch. Like it can be this incredibly loving, tempestuous relationship that contains so many things. And I feel the same way about, like, really close groups of gay men [laughs] that sort of, like, know each other and love each other in that way that it can contain that like incredible protection and love but at the same time, like, some of that playful bitchiness, it's like, "I see you," like, "I know exactly what you're about and I can take you down a notch."

Vanessa: [00:09:48] Yeah.

Tobin: [00:09:49] So that sort of thing of the relationship, like it totally makes sense to me that they would take five sisters and turn it into, in some way, like a group of gay men who are chosen family. Like that totally tracks for me.

Vanessa: [00:10:01] One of the things that I love about it is that it's essentially saying that chosen family is as much family as biological family.

Tobin: [00:10:07] Oh, totally. Yeah, mmm-hmm. Absolutely.

Vanessa: [00:10:10] Yeah. It just feels like a political move.

Tobin: [00:10:13] It does. And that you can achieve that same feeling of like, "A lot can happen, but I will still be here for you," that, like it's, you know, it's not blood that actually can tie people together in that – in that sort of, like, inseparable way. It's like something much deeper than that. Like, I see that in this, too.

Vanessa: [00:10:34] Yeah. I just have to say for our listeners and for you, that Mary adaptation into Max – Max, the friend who like doesn't want to do drugs and always wants to be sitting reading and Mary, Mary is the character in the novel that, like, doesn't really want to go to balls and is always staying behind to practice the piano – and like everyone will go on a walk into town to go shopping and Mary is like, "I have studying to do at home," and I just thought Max was so well adapted.

Tobin: [00:11:05] [Laughs.] I love it.

Vanessa: [00:11:06] And the other, like, huge theme – one of the other huge themes that *Fire Island* does so brilliantly in conversation with *Pride and Prejudice* is the way that it discusses class.

Tobin: [00:11:15] Oh, yeah. Mmm-hmm.

Vanessa: [00:11:16] So *Pride and Prejudice* is limited in its class scope, right? Like, it does not care about the downstairs, it does not care about poverty, but it does care a lot about, I think, similar to what you were saying at the top of the episode about, like, the distinctions within a certain class. Right? Like, it's all gentlemen and ladies, like, these are not people who really have to work for a living who we pay close attention to, but the women are always at threat of losing their homes when the patriarchal figure dies. Some people are in gentle professions but do have to work for a living. They're in the army or are clergy people, whereas other people have so much wealth that, you know, they are literally magistrates and decide the fate of other people. And I feel like *Fire Island* is doing a similar thing. It's taking, right, like a chunk of people who can afford to go to Fire Island and therefore aren't, like, living in poverty. And yet it shows a spectrum within a limited society and how vast the class distinctions can be.

Tobin: [00:12:23] Oh, totally. It's like you're saying where perhaps the range of differences become smaller because you're within a group of people. Then it becomes less about the literal differences and more about this, like, sort of made up system of, like, who's good enough or, like, who is deemed better and important enough. Like you sort of get that more like based on a feeling or based on a sort of, like, a made up role system as opposed to, like, some really – I mean, there is literal class stuff in this film. But it also is touching on the stuff that has more to do with just, like, a feeling and a judgment than it does with, like, an actual difference between people, if that makes sense.

Vanessa: [00:13:09] My favorite bit in the film is whenever Noah arrives at, like, the fancy house –

Tobin: [00:13:15] Oh, my God. Yeah, I know exactly what you're going to say. [Laughs.]

Vanessa: [00:13:18] [Laughs] – and the guy is standing on the stairs and goes, “Can I help you?”

Tobin: [00:13:21] Yeah.

Vanessa: [00:13:22] And Noah’s like, “You don't want to know if you can help me.” Yeah, it is the funniest bit ever of, like, how you can make someone feel totally unwelcome by asking them if you can help them.

Tobin: [00:13:32] Yeah. Yeah. I mean, like, I think that bit in that recurring joke does touch on like a very literal class distinction thing being made where like I saw interactions like that in the film and was like, I totally have experienced the thing where a very muscular white gay man has addressed me as if I'm a different species like...like will talk to me, but like, there's just a feeling where you can tell, like, you don't see me as the same thing as you.

Vanessa: [00:14:04] Right.

Tobin: [00:14:04] There's, like...I don't know, there can be, like, a talking down or talking to me like I'm cute or something, you know? Like, there's just something about it where you're like, you don't see me as a person, like, I just – like, I can tell that. And, you know, like, when you're younger that really, like, fucks with you and it's awful. I feel like I'm at a place of peace now with, like, okay, cool, dude, whatever. But it's, like, it is so – it's so real. Like those scenes, I was like, there's a lot in that joke. There's a lot in that bit that, like, is so real, you know?

Vanessa: [00:14:34] Yeah. And I think the first party scene is so interesting and really also maps on to *Pride and Prejudice*, because one of the things about *Pride and Prejudice* is, you know, that the Bennets, this family that is represented by the five friends and Margaret Cho, so the six friends in *Fire Island*, they're wonderful and they're our heroes and also they humiliate themselves all the time. And like that doesn't mean that they don't deserve a secure place to live, and that doesn't mean that their concerns aren't real. But there's a ball scene in *Pride and Prejudice* in which, you know, the – the Mrs. Bennet character, the mom character has contrived that they will be the last ones to leave the party so that her daughter has more time to flirt with the man of the house and everybody wants them to leave. And they are just humiliating themselves by being stuck there at five in the morning and like waiting for their carriage. And it's just going so poorly. And yet you still want those two people to get together, right? Like you're on Mrs. Bennet's side. And I feel like this party at – I don't even know what else to call it besides, like, the rich white boy's house in *Fire Island*, right – you know, the five best friends show up and they are enjoying the party and eating the cheese. And then there are all these jokes about how they get sick because they can't handle expensive liquor, right? And one of the things that seems to be arguing is that poor people are allowed to be ridiculous, too, or middle class people are allowed to be ridiculous, too.

Tobin: [00:16:09] Yeah.

Vanessa: [00:16:09] I'm wondering how you read that.

Tobin: [00:16:12] I think I see all the things you're talking about. The thing that stuck out to me is like, I think there's like – there can be an insistence and a learned thing from queer people where it's like, "I'm going to go into a space that is telling me that it's not meant for me and I'm going to make it for me." Like, "I am going to elbow some room for me to enjoy myself here." And so what I felt was, like, I kind of love hearing this thing you're saying about, like, in the original, it was that the mom is like, "We're going to stay as long as we can to flirt." Because, like, you take that insistence and what it translates to is like queer people being like, "I will leave when I'm done having fun here." Like, "I will leave when – you know, you're not going to tell me I can't have fun here." And like, I see that mostly in the characters played by Tomas and Matt Rogers.

Vanessa: [00:17:03] The Lydia and Kitty.

Tobin: [00:17:05] Yes, exactly. They sort of like – their quality is that their characters walk into a space and they're, like, not just themselves, but themselves like 150%. So that any space becomes a space for them in, like, a joyful way. So, like, I love knowing that that's like the original in *Pride and Prejudice* and like they translate into this like, "We're going to make queer joy wherever we go," you know, that kind of thing. It's like what I liked about the scene.

Vanessa: [00:17:31] Oh, I like your take even better!

[Brief riff of electronic piano music.]

Vanessa: So, the word "pride." In the context of *Pride and Prejudice*, right, in the early 19th century, Jane Austen is actually the person who – I just feel like I have to push up my glasses – [Vanessa adds a snooty voice, Tobin laughs.] Jane Austen is actually the person who helped transform the word "pride" from this idea of pride only being a sin to pride also being a virtue. And there's actually quite a lot – there was some conversation about that in the previous generation, but she's really laying claim to it. And there are real conversations, philosophical conversations, within the novel about when is pride a virtue and when is it a sin and when is it forgivable and when is it not? And now, obviously, 210 years later, after the novel has been published, "pride" has this totally different meaning. And I, I would just love to hear you think through with me all the different forms of pride in the movie.

Tobin: [00:18:32] Yeah. Pride, inherently, it can't have this feeling of you taking up space and declaring something about yourself in the face of someone who does not want you to do that. And that perhaps – that's where, like, negative connotations have come up before. It's like, why are you taking up space? Don't take up space.

Vanessa: [00:18:51] Yeah.

Tobin: [00:18:51] And so, like, the thing we were talking about before is like, you see, even within gay spaces, this group of gay men walk in and feel like they are not supposed to be there, and yet elbowing some room for themselves to be there and to, like, be themselves and take up space and and sort of own that which, like, is its own kind of pride or proudness in like who you are and the peace you've made with yourself. I'm interested to hear your take as well. Like other places you see this sort of, like, *Pride and Prejudice* version of the pride come up.

Vanessa: [00:19:28] Yeah.

Tobin: [00:19:29] Where does it stand out for you?

Vanessa: [00:19:32] I think that pride is – I mean, obviously pretty complicated in the novel insofar as it's, right, like one of the ideas that sort of she is taking on, that Austen is taking on. And I think that, you know, there's this scene in which the idea of pride first gets really discussed in the novel is a conversation between Lizzy and her best friend Charlotte. And Lizzy says this great line of, "I could more forgive Mr. Darcy's pride if he hadn't wounded mine." And that is like a perfect Austen line of, like, "Well, pride is really awful and sinful, except for my pride, which is a form of dignity." Right? And Lizzy is saying his excessive pride trespassed upon my dignity. But Charlotte, her best friend, says back, you know, going back to the class conversation we've had that essentially, like, his class and his height and his handsomeness and his good manners sort of entitle him to that pride. And I think what Noah is responding to so strongly in Will is that Noah feels as though Will's pride is ill gotten, that it's just that he's rich and just that he has these friends. And one of the ways that we're won over by Will is that we find out that there's a lot more to him. He's actually a nonprofit lawyer. You know, he's – he's not this asshole like the rest of the people that he shares a house with.

Tobin: [00:21:02] I'm interested in hearing you talk about sort of the conversations in this very proper Georgian time because, like, all the things you're talking about paint right onto gay culture, like toxic masculinity and gay culture that it's – it's interesting how well it works for a community that is so supposedly progressive and sort of like supposed to be evolving past these very traditional ideas of relationships that, like, this sort of...toxic thing, I don't know, is still existing or like worked so well still for for this community. You really don't have to change much, which is, like, kind of wild.

Vanessa: [00:21:48] I mean, to me, the thing that I think that both the novel and *Fire Island* does so well and I actually think *Fire Island* does this better, is point to the fact that pride is more important and often entirely not just acceptable, but to be celebrated when it is about punching up, right? Being proud about your queer identity, being proud about the fact that you are a nurse and not a lawyer, right? The fact that Lizzy is proud of her family and Noah is proud of his family. Right? Like all of that is this really productive, lovely kind of pride, whereas the kind of pride that Darcy exhibits early in the novel, or that the richer, more obnoxious characters exhibit in *Fire Island*, is – is this toxic kind of masculinity and this guarding of assets, right? We think of, like, gay pride as beautiful. And then you think of like white – white pride, right? Racial pride has the worst form of toxicity. And that to me is about when you have the power, you have to let go of your pride. And I feel like the film shows that so well, right? At some point the two things that click – it clicks for Will that he has more power than Noah, that that house isn't welcoming to Noah and his friends. And the thing that clicks for Noah is that pride is a distancing technique and that he and Will have more in common and that it's actually a safe place to let down that barrier of pride.

Tobin: [00:23:23] Yeah, totally. An interesting parallel that I've been thinking about, too, is that, you know, sometimes with queer people, especially if you've come out, let's say, a little older or like into your teenage years even, there can be this thing where your first foray into like a real relationship with another person contains so much in it because you've missed out

on this sort of, like, dating period of youth where you, like, make a lot of mistakes and figure things out, like there can be that thing of your like, you know, early forays into like really trying something with another person. It contains so much meaning and so much like...the stakes feel higher in some way. And there's an interesting way that I think, like if we're to take Joel Kim Booster's character as somebody who has run away from monogamy and run away from like relating to another person in this way, there's also a nice parallel of like all the ways that this, like, possibly meaningful, not necessarily monogamous, but like serious thing with another person scares him and stuff around pride can be difficult to navigate because it's perhaps a newer thing or perhaps a higher stakes thing in a way that, like, mimics perhaps, like, a woman from this era trying to navigate how much like being partnered with a man means and how much weight that carries. I don't think it's like a perfect translation, but there's something in there of, like, the high stakes of it that is an interesting translation for what pride means in both settings.

Vanessa: [00:25:02] So you brought up the non-monogamy thing. At the end of the movie. Will and Noah proclaim their 'like' for one another. And I just have to say that I – right, like this is a romance podcast. I am a big defender of romance novels. And the definition of romance novel is that it has to have a happily ever after. And what happens at the end of the movie is a new form of a romance-acceptable ending. But I'm wondering your thoughts about this, because this ending, they say, like, "I like you, I like you, too. Let's dance." It's very romantic. But they're, like, "but I don't believe in monogamy. Me neither." And my little retrograde heart is like, "[Gasp!] But change for each other! Choose to be together forever!"

Tobin: [00:25:51] I could certainly see that temptation to want that. I, I am a defender of this kind of ending for these characters because I think it's the same thing that queer people have always done, which is, like, ask us to imagine different ways that relationships can be and can be meaningful. And I guess I wouldn't even aspire – like ascribe it to queerness necessarily, but just like anyone who is non-monogamous but like believes in meaningful relationships still. There's something where, like, it actually would kind of betray these characters for them to say, like, "Oh, you did change me, and now we're going to be together forever." You know, there's actually something that doesn't track about that with this story. And in fact, like, I think there's a thing about this relationship where you can kind of imagine that after the fact, it's like leaving summer camp. Where the thing that was very meaningful for this moment, it suddenly, like, could lose its magic afterwards. And it really was just about that time that you had together that is still very meaningful, but it doesn't sort of, you know, translate to the rest of your life. And you can kind of imagine with these two characters that that might be the case, that they might go back to their respective coasts and like, they had Fire Island but, you know, maybe it's not a thing anymore or maybe it's a casual thing, like, who knows? But I think, like – I liked that the film stuck to its guns of like, this is a happy ending because they – they did change for each other. They didn't necessarily change their opinion of relationships, but they changed their openness to each other. And that will be meaningful enough for what they take away from their time together. So I, like, I'm very for it. I liked it.

Vanessa: [00:27:36] I got to say, like I did not like it on a visceral level and on an intellectual level, I was like talking myself down and was like, "No, no, this is actually a really valuable lesson." I mean, my favorite definition of hope is that it's the belief that the world and people can change. It's not the belief that they will or – right? – or can change for the better. And that is this ending, right, is that they learn that they themselves can change for the better. And like

that is a beautiful ending. And that they did that through attraction and care is like one of the potential gifts of romantic relationships. And I absolutely think it's a happy ending. And I think that I am just a victim of patriarchy, that I'm like, "If it is not marriage and prenuptial agreements and buying a house together and getting into debt together and most likely getting divorced in 12 years, then it's not a happy ending. I want all of it. I want the registry!"

Tobin: [00:28:37] Yeah, yeah. Well, and to be fair to you, the thing it's adapted from very much ends with, like, you know, forever and ever, right?

Vanessa: [00:28:44] Oh, yeah. It's interesting, though, because the novel ends, they, like, can't even look at each other. The way that *Pride and Prejudice* ends is, like, they're on a walk and – and Lizzy is teasing him, and they're kind of figuring out how they got here and they agree to get married. But there isn't a single kiss. It's like – it's not romantic, it's just forever. And this is the opposite, right? Like this is very romantic. They are very much looking at each other and holding each other. And what it is, is that it's not forever. It's the absolute inverse.

Tobin: [00:29:22] Yeah, yeah. That's really interesting. It reminds me of the final shot of *The Graduate*, where they run onto the bus together and the camera stays on them for, like, an extra shot beyond where the romantic comedy would end and they just kind of don't know what to say to each other because...this big thing just happened and now you're on a bus and, you know, now what? And so, like, there's something about, like, that this ending for *Fire Island*, You get to have your cake and eat it too, where, like, you feel that they change but it's not – it's not trying to build to this moment where they think they're gonna be together forever and, like, and then the shot cuts off. You know, it's more like they've changed. They see each other. They're having this nice moment, and they're recognizing the sort of, like, the ephemeral nature of that moment too, potentially.

Vanessa: [00:30:16] Yeah. I mean, there's a sunset right in the background. I – I will say one of the things I really love about the movie is that it's deeply committed to this idea that the more, like, traditional love story, right, is between Charlie and Howie. And there's this great scene where Charlie is like, "Oh, no, I messed up with Howie." And there's like the chase because it's on an island, not to an airport, but on a ferry. And then Charlie is trying to get Howie's attention. So he goes, "I love you." And the whole, like –

Tobin: Everyone recoils. [Laughs.]

Vanessa: – everyone in the crowd gasps and goes, "Oh! Too far, no..." And so, like, even the more, like, quintessentially romantic, right, like, you know, these are two men who are looking for love, who are looking for a relationship, who are looking, right, Like the whole tension between Howie and Noah, the whole movie is Howie saying, "I am looking for monogamy." And even there, it's like, but straight movies are nuts. After four days, you're supposed to be in love. That's bullshit.

Tobin: [00:31:22] Yeah. Yeah, there was – I did love that as sort of a breaking of the fourth wall. It felt like one of the moments that they so acknowledged, like, there's a big straight audience that's watching this too that is expecting this to go this way. And we're going to make a joke that's meta about that.

Vanessa: [00:31:41] Well, I'm one of those hip straight people, Tobin, who was also like, "Eww, too soon." I'm just kidding. I totally fell for it and then laughed at myself. So, well-played, movie.

Tobin: [00:31:53] I mean, to be fair to you, I also had a moment where I was like, I bought into that too, you know, like, I'm human. We're all conditioned. It's all like brain-worms, you know?

Vanessa: [00:32:03] Okay, so just before we wrap up, Tobin, I have to know, I shared my favorite joke in the movie. I just want to say, I know that this episode is not an ad for *Fire Island*, that it is a conversation about what is going on culturally with *Fire Island* in conversation with *Pride and Prejudice*, but I genuinely love this movie and it made me laugh so hard. And so I'm curious what your favorite joke is. Mine, of course, being the, "Can I help you?" [Laughs.]

Tobin: [00:32:30] Yes. It's so cutting, so real. That joke. That bit.

Vanessa: [00:32:35] It's amazing.

Tobin: [00:32:36] My favorite bits, I think, are almost always these little asides that Matt Rogers has. So, like, there's a moment where they're getting ready to go out and he'd like – the camera's not even on him anymore and he just says, "Can I trade somebody Crest White Strip for a PrEP pill?" That got me good. The other one that got me really good is in the now what I think will go down as a great scene in film history where they're playing Celebrity with the Marisa Tomei bit. There's a moment where Will incorrectly guesses Rosie Perez and he just in the – if you really listen, you hear Matt Rogers go, "I almost respect you for saying that." You know, that little – just those little jokes really got me good.

Vanessa: [00:33:22] All three of the jokes are brilliant because they're hilarious, but they're also about power. They're all like the power of having information and of being cool. I'm the one who knows Marisa Tomei, right? I'm the one who gets to decide that Rosie Perez is a cool enough answer. The previous ones aren't right. The "can I help you?" is all about showing power through this passive aggressive way. And then the Crest White Strip/PrEP pill is about – it's about limited resources. Right? Which is also, like, so funny. It's like I can't afford both and I brought too much of one. Like, these are not rich people problems. It's just like they're also illustrative of the characters and of the film. And jokes get funnier the more you explain them. So I'm gonna...

Tobin: [00:34:11] [Laughs.] No, I – I really appreciate the analysis. I had not even thought about it that deeply. I did hear Matt Rogers talk about it on his podcast *Las Culturistas*, and the thing that made me laugh is he was just like, "Yeah, of course, in the gay community, like you would hold PrEP and Crest White Strips on the same, on the same level – like, you would trade one for one." That made me really giggle.

Vanessa: [00:34:35] It's on the same shelf in the bathroom. Any final reflections or thoughts that you want to say to our nerdy *Pride and Prejudice* audience?

Tobin: [00:34:46] It does make me want to go and read the book. You have inspired me. It's funny to me because it is in my own way the version of seeing the film before you read the book, even though it's a translation. So I am – I am curious to go read it now.

Vanessa: [00:35:04] I think that you are going to be delighted by how well adapted the movie is. The moment in the film where there's a letter from the Darcy character to the Lizzy character, I was like, "That's it. This is a commitment above and beyond to adaptation." So as you read *Pride and Prejudice*, you'll have to come back and tell us all of your *Pride and Prejudice* thoughts.

Tobin: [00:35:26] I'm going to live-text you my thoughts as I read it. How about that?

Vanessa: [00:35:30] Please. Promise?

Tobin: [00:35:32] You're going to regret that.

Vanessa: [00:35:35] Nope. Tobin, thank you so much for having this conversation with me.

Tobin: [00:35:41] Thanks for having me. So much fun.

[Synth music begins to play as Vanessa speaks.]

Vanessa: [00:35:46] You've been listening to 'Live From Pemberley', a special episode with the brilliant Tobin Low. We are a small show, so we need your support to run. If you can please consider supporting us on Patreon at patreon.com/hotandbotheredrompod. And my book, *Praying with Jane Eyre*, is out this week in paperback and it would mean so much to me if you went to your local bookstore or wherever you buy your books and picked up a copy of *Praying with Jane Eyre*. We are a Not Sorry Production. Our executive producer is Ariana Nedelman. Our editor this week is the incredible Malika Gumpangkum. We can only do all of this because of the support on Patreon. And Hannah Goldbach is our patron manager. We're distributed by A Cast, and we will be back next week with our regularly scheduled episode.

[Synth music fades out.]