

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Josephine and Sarah. Welcome to the team.

As always, if you're interested in hearing Becca's first thoughts on *Persuasion*, hanging out with us on Discord and submitting your very own study questions, checkout our Patreon at patreon.com/podandprejudice. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Volume II, Chapters 6 and 7 of *Persuasion*.

[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--

Becca and Molly: *Persuasion*.

Becca: Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen novels throughout my life.

Molly: And I, Molly, am reading her for the first time through this podcast.

Becca: If you want to hear Molly read through *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility* or *Emma* for the first time, you can listen to Seasons 1, 2 and 3 of this podcast respectively. But that is not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No. Today, we are talking about *Persuasion*, Volume II, Chapters [00:01:00] 6 and 7. Or, if your book is not volumned, Chapters 18 and 19.

Becca: I'm getting stressed by how close to the end of the book we're getting.

Molly: I know. Every time I open it, I'm like, "Wait a minute, we were just at the beginning."

Becca: I know. And it's so much happening.

Molly: So much is happening. [giggles] It's funny. It's stressful, because there's so much to still be resolved, but also stressful, because that means that we have to start booking guests for our movie episodes.

Becca: Yes, which will be so fun-- [crosstalk]

Molly: So fun. Not stressful fun, but like, "Oh, no, it's happening."

Becca: I know. Just having to plan is really a thing that.

Molly: There's still a sticky note on my desktop that says, find guest for Kate Beckinsale.

Becca: Which we did.

Molly: We did. A long time ago.

Becca: Yeah. Although, it wasn't that long ago.

Molly: This is a short book.

Becca: Yeah, it is. *Emma* is over 30 chapters. Both *Pride and Prejudice* and *Sense and Sensibility* are also over 30 chapters. This is like 24 chapters.

Molly: Wild.

Becca: We'd be two-thirds of the way through in a different Austen book.

Molly: But we're almost done with this one.

Becca: Yes, we are. There is still so much [00:02:00] to happen and so much that has occurred.

Molly: Yeah, these are very plot-heavy chapters.

Becca: Why do you say that?

Molly: Jane Austen loves to throw a curveball. She loves to be like, "Bitch, you thought."

Becca: Yes, yes. Yeah, she's pulling a Frank and Jane, Lucy Steele, Edward Ferrars.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: My slight delay there was because I just listened to our most recent episode after typing my notes for this episode. So, I was like, "Where are we?" [giggles]

Becca: Oh, my God. Well, okay, why don't I refresh our listeners on where we are once I remember what just happened in the book.

Molly: That sounds great.

Becca: If I recall, we just met a Mrs. Smith.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And that is Anne's friend who lost the Economics of Dating in Jane Austen lottery. And we met Dalrymple.

Molly: The Dowager Viscountess Lady, Dalrymple, and her daughter, Baby Dalrymple.

Becca: Baby Dalrymple, [chuckles] who are both boring as shit.

Molly: Yeah. They're very boring. We've heard about Mrs. [00:03:00] Smith's nurse, Mrs. Rooke, who is a town gossip/etsy queen helping Mrs. Smith sell her wares.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: And Mr. Elliot is there in town flirting up a storm with Anne.

Becca: The lasagna, things are beginning to grow in it.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And Lady Russell says, "Yes, please."

Molly: Lady Russell is so here for it. She's so shipping Anne and Mr. Elliot. And that's where we're at.

Becca: That's where we're at.

Molly: I want to say that when I edit this podcast, I often will pick up on things that I hadn't picked up on when reading the book.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And I'm like, "Wait a minute, maybe this or this or this"-

Becca: Okay.

Molly: -and I start to suspect things.

Becca: Okay.

Molly: I wish I had written down what I had started to suspect.

Becca: [laughs] Oh, no.

Molly: It's something to do [00:04:00] with Mr. Elliot. There's some flirtation that I picked up on. I don't remember, but I'm sure it'll come back to me when I'm editing this episode. Anyway, that's all to say. I have more theories than I let on. [laughs]

Becca: Because you forget them by the time you're on air? [laughs]

Molly: Yes, exactly.

Becca: Incredible.

Molly: So, anyway, let's begin.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Anne has been in Bath for about a month, and she hasn't heard from Mary in three weeks. She knows that Louisa is still in Lyme, but she doesn't really know anything else. And then, a thick letter arrives from Mary with the Crofts compliments. Did like a servant of the Crofts bring this letter and say the Crofts send their compliments?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: The Crofts themselves did not come yet.

Becca: I'm not clear whether or not it's one of those like, the Crofts are letting you know they're in town, situations.

Molly: I think it must be, because then Anne is like, "The Crofts are in Bath."

Becca: Yeah. You recall in *Sense and Sensibility*, when they got to London, Marianne was immediately like, "Let everyone know we're in London."

Molly: Yes.

Becca: You get little calling cards being like, [00:05:00] "Hey, I'm here now. Let's hang."

Molly: Right. Right, right, right. Sir Walter doesn't really care about the actual contents of the letter from Mary. He's just like, "Oh, we should go visit the Crofts, because they're our tenant and that would be the right thing to do." Anne isn't paying any attention to him talking about

the Crofts or the Admiral's complexion, which obviously is the only thing he cares about. She has opened the letter and she is reading the letter.

Mary does not apologize for her silence of the last three weeks, because she's like, "You're too busy and happy being occupied in Bath to care about little old me and my letters." But she says that, "Their Christmas was overall uneventful, the Musgroves didn't throw any dinner parties other than the Hayters coming over," which she doesn't count as actual society.

Becca: [chuckles] I love this bitch. The moment Mary reentered the book, it was like, "Yes, she's back. She's back."

Molly: I can picture a modern adaptation of this in which Mary is just like the chaotic sister that's just like, "Oh, my God," [00:06:00] all the time.

Becca: I feel like if you're in *Persuasion*, Mary is the character you want to play, because she's so funny.

Molly: Yeah, exactly. All of the kids are gone back to school, except for the little Harville's. And Mary makes note that Mrs. Harville must be an odd mother to part with them so long. Put a pin in that for a couple paragraphs from now.

Becca: Yes. [laughs]

Molly: The weather is bad and nobody has been calling on her, except for Charles Hayter. And Mary is like, "It's a pity that Henrietta didn't stay in Lyme longer, so that she could be kept away from him."

Louisa is coming home tomorrow, though they've told Mary she can't come over to see her until the next day, because Louisa is going to be tired from the journey, which Mary disagrees with. She's like, "She can't possibly be tired from the journey." She's pissed, because it would be much more convenient for her to visit tomorrow, not the next day.

She is glad that Anne likes Mr. Elliot, and she notes, "It's just her luck." As in Mary's luck, "Just my luck to be away when something desirable is happening."

Becca: I love her. She's just like, "Yeah, I'm so [00:07:00] glad you're having a nice time. Of course, I'm not there having a nice time."

Molly: She's like, "Of course, you're having a nice time when I'm not there." [giggles]

Becca: I have to be stuck with these fucking kids instead.

Molly: And the Hayters. [Becca laughs] She's surprised though that Mrs. Clay is still there. And she wonders, if Mrs. Clay were to leave, would she and her husband be invited. And then she says, "I do not expect my children to be asked, you know. I can leave them at the Great House very well, for a month or six weeks." Jumping back to the pin that we put in her comment about how odd mother Mrs. Harville must be to part with her children for so long.

Becca: Well, you know Mary. She's a woman of many, many thoughts.

Molly: She contains multitudes.

Becca: She contains multitudes. She's quite enigmatic.

Molly: She cracks me up.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: She ends this part of her letter by saying that, the Crofts are going to Bath for the Admiral's gout, and she thinks they're bad neighbors, because they never pay her any visits. And then, there's a little postscript saying, there's a sore throat going around, and Mary is afraid she's going to get it, because her sore throats as you know are worse than anybody else's, which I really related to.

Becca: [laughs] [00:08:00]

Molly: I'm a hypochondriac.

Becca: No, no, it's true, it's true. Between you and Mike, I spend so much of my life being like, "You're not sick. It's okay."

Molly: Mel too. Mel too.

Becca: Yeah. [laughs]

Molly: Then, there's a second letter enclosed in the envelope. She reveals that. She wanted to wait to send her letter, because she wanted to send news of Louisa. She's glad she waited, because Mrs. Croft sent a note saying that she's going to Bath and she could bring anything to Bath for Mary that she needed, so she can send her letters with her. And now, of course, she loves the Crofts. She's like, "Our neighborhood cannot spare such a pleasant family." Oh, Mary.

Becca: So easy to switch on those two.

Molly: Yes. At least, she's easy to please.

Becca: No, Mary-- This is why Anne and Mary have an okay relationship. It's because Anne understands that all Mary needs is like an iota of love and affection, "And if I'm being fair to Mary, her father is clearly not giving it to her."

Molly: Yes, we do have to remember.

Becca: He forgot about her existence.

Molly: He just fully blanked.

Becca: Before he forgot about [00:09:00] her existence, he was like, "Oh, I could never get her a hat. It might convince her to go outside and she'll be ugly if her nose is red." [Molly laughs] So, I get why Mary is Mary.

Molly: Yes, I do too. Okay, so the news about Louisa. She has arrived.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: When Mary went to see her, she was surprised that Benwick wasn't there, because he had been invited to come.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: The reason that he is not there is because brrrrrrrrrrrrrr.

Becca: Get ready for it. Get ready drumroll, Graham.

[drumroll sound]

Molly: He is in love with Louisa.

Becca: Ooh.

Molly: What?

Becca: And where is he at?

Molly: He's waiting to come to Uppercross until he has Mr. Musgrove's blessing. So, he's just waiting, right? He's waiting until he has the blessing to come?

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Yeah. Because it's all settled between them, apparently. He and Louisa, they've already decided.

Becca: I think we can get a little sound effect here.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca and Molly: Do-do-do-do-do-doo-doo-dooooo.

Becca: We have a [00:10:00] proposal going on here.

Molly: That's 100% a proposal.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: The proposal has happened. Now, we're just getting the father's permission.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Plot twist.

Molly: Jane Austen truly loves a curveball.

Becca: She loves a twist.

Molly: She loves a twist.

Becca: A twist.

Molly: Mary is like, "Everyone is quite surprised, but pleased for though it is not equal to her marrying Captain Wentworth, it is infinitely better than Charles Hayter." This pissed me off.

Becca: Well, we learned Hayter the Hater is actually pretty great to Henrietta.

Molly: Hayter the Hater is awesome. The issue here is that Mary is now saying, "Well, Benwick is nothing to Captain Wentworth."

Becca: When we know that Captain Wentworth was spat on by the Elliots before. Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Molly: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Becca: Very ironic, because the Elliots are so focused on a certain veneer of class that they're not even taking a look at someone's potential social mobility, because it's not as though Charles Hayter is like the dregs of society. He has an opportunity to earn a living.

Molly: Charles Hayter is great.

Becca: Yeah, we love Charles Hayter. [00:11:00] And Benwick is a good match.

Molly: I love Benwick too.

Becca: There's some stuff to talk about. First of all, I want to say, if you're listening along with my patron content, I did call this.

Molly: Nice. Look at you.

Becca: The reason I called this is because I was like, it's weird that we have him flirting with Anne, and Louisa flirting with Captain Wentworth and there's no way that Captain Wentworth is going to end up with Louisa, but there's also no way he'll be a scoundrel to her either.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: There has to be some like deus ex machina. I was like, "What if it's Benwick? What if they like the flirtations resolve with Louisa and Benwick getting together?" I was very proud.

Molly: Yeah. Well, so I wonder what kind of conversations Wentworth and Louisa were having. Because if to her, it wasn't like a flirtation and it was just a friendship--

Becca: Well, we don't know the conversations that Louisa and Wentworth were having. We don't know what happened between [00:12:00] catch me and I'm in love with Benwick.

Molly: True. But he also left. He wasn't there for a lot of this.

Becca: Well, we don't know why he left, what the circumstances of him exiting were. All we know is that before it looked really obvious that Louisa and Wentworth were going to get together, and now, she is engaged to Captain Benwick.

Molly: Right. There was something in the last chapters-- Who was it? Or, is that coming up in these chapters? Maybe it's coming up in these chapters where the Admiral was quite an odd way to be going about getting a woman. No, it was the last chapters. It was when Anne was in-

Becca: Kellynch.

Molly: - Kellynch. And the Admiral was like such a weird way to go about making love to disappear.

Becca: Yeah, that's the thing.

Molly: Oh, wait, to throw a girl off a cliff and then to disappear?

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Well, what I was going to say is that this is what's weird about this is that everyone is looking at what happened and scratching their heads.

Molly: right.

Becca: Now, personally, [00:13:00] I am partial to a grumpy end to sunshine getting together.

Molly: Same. I think that it's great. I'm not mad about this at all.

Becca: Yeah. No, not at all. Although, we'll get into it in the study questions. There's some interesting questions that pop up with it. But it is a twist, because we haven't been there and Anne has been missing all the gossip. I asked you a little while ago, what do you think is going to happen with the people who leave the story at this point? Are we going to see them again? We get an update from them that makes no sense out of context.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, Mr. Musgrove has given his permission, and Benwick is coming today at the time of Mary writing the letter. Mr. Harville feels a good deal on his dead sister's account, which reminds me that Benwick is in mourning.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And it also reminds me of the fact that Mr. Elliot is in mourning.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: So, we've got two men in mourning.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Flirting at first with Anne.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Interesting.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: So, Mr. Harville is like, "Yeah, I'm sad. I don't know, my sister's husband [00:14:00] is moving on, but also I like Louisa. And that's all fine and good." Mary says that she and Mrs. Harville both love Louisa the better for having nursed her, as if Mary did anything to help nurse Louisa Musgrove.

Becca: Well, I think it's saying that the Harvilles love Louisa.

Molly: She specifically is like, "Me and the Harville."

Becca: Oh yeah. [laughs]

Molly: Like, we had such a good time hanging out with Louisa and nursing her.

Becca: Yeah. Well, while you were going on all those walks in Lyme.

Molly: Yeah. So, she wonders, what will Wentworth think. Now, Mary starts trying to claim that she never thought Wentworth and Louisa were an item when I quite specifically remember her being excited about the idea.

Becca: To be clear, Mary has been wrong on every front with Wentworth. She was like, "Oh, yeah, he really doesn't like you, Anne. He called you ugly," if you recall. Then, she was like, "He's definitely going to get with Henrietta, which is great, because then Henrietta won't be with Hayter."

Molly: You're right. I forgot about that whole thing.

Becca: And then, she was like, [00:15:00] "You know what? Him and Louisa basically married." And now, she's like, "I never really thought of them as a couple." [chuckles]

Molly: Yeah, I forgot that she had been partial to Henrietta and him at first. Anne is shook by this news. She's struggling to remain calm and answer her family's questions about the letter, of which, of course, there are not many, because they mostly want to know where the Crofts are staying and why they're here, etc.

Becca: Well, we also just know why Anne's going cuckoo bananas inside.

Molly: We know why Anne is going cuckoo bananas.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: But while she's trying to keep it together, Sir Walter is asking if they should introduce the Crofts to the Dalrymples. And Elizabeth is like, "We'd better not risk it, in case Lady Dalrymple doesn't approve of them."

Becca: Not Lady Dalrymple disapproving.

Molly: Yeah. Lady Dalrymple.

Becca: The Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple cannot possibly disapprove of our tenant.

Molly: But who would disapprove of the Crofts?

Becca: No. Not me.

Molly: Not me.

Becca: Not me, for sure.

Molly: Mrs. Clay then asks about Mary and the [00:16:00] kids and does the nice like, how is the family thing. And then, Anne is like, "I'm out of here. I need to go overthink this."

Becca: Hang on. I got to go overanalyze my feelings. [chuckles]

Molly: Yeah. So, she goes and she's like, "I wonder if Wentworth stopped loving Louisa or if he never loved Louisa." Because she can't stomach the idea that Benwick might have betrayed Wentworth [crosstalk] spooked in.

Becca: If you recall, that just wouldn't have happened given who Benwick and Wentworth are and their relationship.

Molly: They're very good friends.

Becca: Wentworth took time off work to travel down to see Benwick to let him know that his fiancé passed away and then stayed with him to make sure he was okay. Benwick is not going to betray that guy.

Molly: No. But Anne doesn't really know Benwick well enough to know. So, she's just like, "I hope he didn't break my love's heart."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: One, she wants him to be happy, but two, she also wants him to not have ever been

in love with Louisa, which we'll get into. **[00:17:00]** She thinks that Louisa and Benwick are totally opposite, because Louisa is obviously very high spirited and joyous, and Benwick is a sad boy. But opposites attract, and we do love a sunshine--

Becca: Grumpy and a sunshine?

Molly: A grumpy and a sunshine situation.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Plus, she doesn't know what's happened when they've been thrown together these past few weeks.

Becca: And also, they are both going through trauma.

Molly: They are both going through trauma.

Becca: Yeah. So, Louisa just had a massive head injury. That's going to have an effect. Benwick is in mourning, but also, at the same time is now sharing a very, very close quarter with a woman who is in need. I think Anne puts it very beautifully.

Molly: When she says, "He had an affectionate heart. He must love somebody."

Becca: Yeah. He's got too many feelings.

Molly: He needs to place them somewhere.

Becca: Yeah. Otherwise, he's going to explode.

Molly: He's going to explode.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: She knows in herself that he was not "inconsolable," aka mourning so much **[00:18:00]** that he wasn't able to put his eyes on someone. This whole situation actually reinforces for her that he had been flirting with her.

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: And she's like, "Yeah, yeah, yeah, any woman who was nice to him at this time, he would probably have fallen in love with," which is, you know, I get it.

Becca: We've all been there.

Molly: Yeah. Anne does think that they'll be happy together and that Louisa will learn to love poetry, etc. Maybe her fall will change her whole outlook on life. But for Anne, as long as Wentworth and Benwick are still friends, there's nothing to be regretted. "No, it was not regret which made Anne's heart beat in spite of herself, and brought the colour into her cheeks when she thought of him unshackled and free."

Becca: Unshackled and free. Anne, you thirsty bitch.

Molly: She's like, "He's single."

Becca: Oh, my God. And also, this is a big deal, because most of the book has been Anne holding her little epiphany moment-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -to herself. And now, Wentworth is [00:19:00] just in her social circle and available.

Molly: Available to her knowledge.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I worry about these women that he's hanging out with.

Becca: You worry?

Molly: I worry.

Becca: You worry?

Molly: I worry. I need him to be all right. I worry.

Becca: You worry.

Molly: So, it is clear to her when she meets with the Crofts that they don't know yet. The Elliots are happy that the Crofts are settled at Gay Street, where I've been. I just realized as I was reading my notes, I have a picture of me standing underneath the Gay Street sign.

Becca: Because--

Molly: Because gay.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: I took that picture long before we started this podcast, so I didn't know yet that that's where the Crofts lived.

Becca: Well, it's where they go when they visit Bath. It's like their summer home.

Molly: Yes, it's not where they live-live. But anyway, these are good lodgings, so the Elliots are like, "Okay, great, we can go visit them." So, Anne goes to visit them. It's clear that they don't have any idea about any of this. It is clear that they have plenty of friends, and they only acquaint themselves with the Elliots as due course, not because they think that the [00:20:00] acquaintance is going to give them any pleasure. But they're like, "Yes, we will meet with the Elliots."

Becca: Yeah. Yeah. It's the polite thing to do. But they're not relying on them for social climbing. And the Elliots are like, "Oh. Oh, my God, they're going to need us."

Molly: Yeah, exactly. Anne sees the Crofts out and about together all the time. And they are just the picture of perfect happiness to her.

Molly and Becca: [gasps]

Molly: Mrs. Croft is always standing in a conversation with all the guys just as engaged and intellectual as all of them and being just an icon. Anne is usually with Lady Russell. But one morning, she's walking alone and she runs into the Admiral. He's so engrossed in whatever art he's looking at in the window that she has to tap his shoulder to get his attention. He turns to her and he's like, "Oh, look at you."

He starts going on about the painting he's looking at and how-- It's a boat, but he can't imagine anyone actually wanting to go out in this boat. And it's so unrealistic. He's just going off, and Anne's like, "Umm, do you want to go for a walk?"

Becca: And he's [00:21:00] like, "Oh, yeah."

Molly: He's like, "Yeah, I have something of interest to tell you." And so, they link arms and they're walking. They keep running into people. And he's like, "Oh, my gosh, these people are all surprised to see me with someone who isn't my wife." Or, like, "Oh, they think you're my wife." And I'm just like, "You old flirt." [giggles]

Becca: This is such a charming scene.

Molly: He is very charming.

Becca: It's very that plot in *The Holiday* with Kate Winslet and the old dude.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: Like, a cute little knowing flirtation that's not really like-- It's like almost a platonic flirtation.

Molly: It's an absolutely platonic flirtation.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Now, I'm just thinking about Arthur.

Becca: Oh.

Molly: By the way, his wife has a blister, which is why she's at home.

Becca: Yeah. Yeah, she doesn't want to walk while she's, you know, I get it.

Molly: Same. Admiral Croft tells her how much they like their lodgings here. It's just as snug as if they were at Kellynch. It made me think they left before Anne left for Bath. So, I'm just curious where they were if we know.

Becca: We don't know.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: It's not uncommon. [00:22:00] They've been at sea for a while, so they probably just have people to visit.

Molly: Sure. Okay.

Becca: And they're very popular.

Molly: Mm-hmm. They are popular. Anne is like, "Okay, didn't you have something to tell me?" He is putting it off, putting it off and eventually, he's like, "Okay, you know the young Miss Musgrove. What's her name?" And Anne is like, "I know exactly what we're talking about, but I have to act like I don't."

Becca: She goes like, "Oh, umm, are you talking about Louisa Musgrove?" [laughs]

Molly: And he's like, "Oh, I wish women didn't have so many different beautiful names, if only they could all be named Sophie."

Becca: I'm just so endeared to Admiral Croft. I love him so much. Not as much as Mrs. Croft, because she's perfect.

Molly: She's an icon.

Becca: And a legend.

Molly: An icon and a legend. Yeah.

Becca: But Admiral Croft is so charmingly like, "Oh, I don't know what they're naming everyone nowadays. I don't care."

Molly: Yeah, he's adorable. So, he tells her they all thought Louisa was going to marry Wentworth, as he had been so obviously courting her. But then he left Lyme to go to Plymouth, and then to see his brother, **[00:23:00]** and that's where he's been since then.

And now, all of a sudden, Louisa is going to marry Benwick. And Anne is like, "Oh, I've only heard good things about Benwick." The Admiral agrees and says, "Yes, he's a good-hearted man, and an active, zealous officer, which his soft manner does not do justice." And Anne is like, "Oh, you're mistaken. His manners are perfectly pleasing." And the Admiral says, "Well, he's too piano for me." Like, too soft.

Becca: Yes, piano means like play softly.

Molly: Yeah, exactly.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He and his wife both prefer Wentworth's manners, which, as we have to remember, Wentworth is his wife's brother.

Becca: And main character energy.

Molly: And has big main character energy.

Becca: Yeah. He comes out, and he's boisterous and loud and everyone loves him.

Molly: Mm-hmm. And Anne is like, "Ah, I wasn't trying to compare the two friends."

Becca: "Do I have any opinions about Wentworth? I really haven't even." [crosstalk]

Molly: No, no, no. Like, "I don't want to-- [crosstalk]"

Becca: I don't want to give any opinions about Frederick Wentworth.

Molly: Yeah. Admiral Croft says that Wentworth wrote to him himself to tell him the news. He had heard it from Harville who **[00:24:00]** was at Uppercross with the two of them. And Anne is like, "Oh, I hope Wentworth didn't seem too upset in his letter? How did he sound?"

Becca: "Was he upset? I would hate to think that he was feeling sad-

Molly: Was he sad?

Becca: -or upset?"

Molly: "Did he seem like he was in love?"

Becca: "Was it heartbreak?"

Molly: Yeah.

his way to Bath as they spoke. Before Mrs. Croft could write to him to tell him to come, he was there. And the next [00:26:00] time Anne left the house, she saw him.

Becca: They're back.

Molly: They're back, baby.

Becca: He's back.

Molly: We are so back.

Becca: We are so back.

Molly: So, Mr. Elliot and Elizabeth and Mrs. Clay are all out walking together when it starts to rain. So, the women duck inside a shop, and Mr. Elliot goes to ask Lady Dalrymple, who's down the block, if she can take the girls home in their carriage.

Now, her carriage can only hold four and there's already her and baby Dalrymple, so she can only take two of the girls. And Anne is like, "Well, I'd prefer to walk with Mr. Elliot." But Mrs. Clay is like, "Well, my boots are thicker, so I'll be warmer." The two of them have this little battle of civility like, "No, no, no, you go." "No, you go."

Finally, Elizabeth is like, "Mrs. Clay is recovering from a cold, so you should come with me." And I was like, "Wait a minute, here's a thought. Is Mrs. Clay attempting to get with Mr. Elliot?" Just a thought. I know that she's like "into [00:27:00] Sir Walter." But her being like, "I want to walk with Mr. Elliot," gave me the idea that maybe she would prefer someone her own age, maybe.

Becca: What am I going to do?

Molly: Neither confirm nor deny.

Becca: I will neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: So, they're waiting in the store for the carriage when Anne is looking out the window and she sees none other than Captain Wentworth walking down the street.

Becca: Record scratch.

Molly: Record scratch.

Becca: They're meeting again. Let the ex-panic continue.

Molly: Anne immediately blacks out.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: It's like, she has no idea what's going on around her. She can't see, she can't hear and she comes back to her senses when Mr. Elliot has just stepped out on an errand, and she's like, "Everyone's still in here. I can't. My face is falling off of my body. I need to get out of here. I can't breathe." So, she's like, "I need some air."

She's not going to try to get a better view of Captain Wentworth, and she's not trying to get out of his sight. She's like, "Oh, I'm going to go see if it's still raining." So, she goes to the door, and as [00:28:00] soon as she gets to the door, Wentworth comes in with a group, and she's like, "Fuck." So, they're face to face, and he blushes.

Becca: [gasps] Take a moment for that.

Molly: Anne is like, "Do I have the advantage over you right now, because I've seen you already through the window and had a moment to get over myself. But you are seeing me and you're like, 'What the fuck are you doing here?'"

Becca: Yup.

Molly: And so, he's flustered, and she is showing less emotion than him for the first time she feels since she's seen him again.

Becca: Yeah. Very different than their first meeting. Do you remember what happened when they saw each other for the first time in eight years?

Molly: Anne stood in the corner of the room?

Becca: They did the little like chin nod at each other, and then he walked away.

Molly: Yeah. And Anne was like, "How is he so calm?"

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Yeah. So, now, Anne is seeing him and he's like [onomatopoeia].

Becca: And he's like [onomatopoeia].

Molly: Yeah. Oh, I had a definition here, descried or decried? Descried, which means to catch sight of, which is [00:29:00] what Anne did of Wentworth through the window.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Now, Anne might not be showing a lot of emotion, but she is feeling a lot, agitation, pain, pleasure, something between delight and misery.

Becca: Honestly, have you ever seen anything more accurate to seeing someone you care about?

Molly: Like, she's in love with him. No, it's so accurate.

Becca: Uff.

Molly: And this is, I think, also the first time in the book-- Maybe not like the first time, but the first time that she's able to allow herself a little bit of that like, I still love you, because she know that he's not spoken for-- she thinks he's not spoken for.

Becca: Yeah. It's the first time she's seen him where he hasn't been flirting with other women.

Molly: Mm-hmm. Mm.

Becca: Mm.

Molly: He says something and then turns away from her in embarrassment. She can read the embarrassment all over his body. But then, he turns back and he tries to speak to her again. They have this brief conversation about the weather or something. Anne is aware that neither of them are listening to the other, like they're just both talking and just totally vacant [00:30:00] behind the eyes. He overall just seems much less composed than he had at all of their other meetings.

Becca: It's a real shift.

Molly: I just wonder what happened in between then and now.

Becca: Hmm.

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: Mm.

Molly: She thinks that they had gotten used to each other at Uppercross, but here, he can't be calm. Like, he hasn't had the time to compose himself. She thinks time or Louisa has changed him. I think Louisa has fucking nothing to do with it. I don't know what it is, but something changed him.

Anne notices that Elizabeth and Wentworth clocked each other. And Elizabeth, instead of being like, "Hello," rudely turned away.

Becca: We have, for the first time, someone who does it, who recalls Wentworth from eight years ago when he was poor. And her reaction to him is like set in stone.

Molly: Right. Because when she met with him the first time, it was at the Musgrove's house.

Becca: He was the Charles Hayter to Anne's Henrietta.

Molly: Right. Exactly, exactly. [00:31:00] And they haven't seen him yet, her father and sister.

Becca: No. Only Mary of the Elliots has seen Captain Wentworth. Mary was not aware any of this happened.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, for her, it's just, "Oh, this really impressive Captain." And for Elizabeth it's, "Ugh, this gold digger who tried to snag my sister, who was stupid enough to fall for it."

Molly: Right. She also doesn't know where he's at in life right now.

Becca: She doesn't care where he's at in life.

Molly: She doesn't.

Becca: Because when she met him, he was beneath her.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And in her brain, people do not rise.

Molly: Right.

Becca: That's the kind of what's funny. Mary cannot conceive of Charles Hayter rising at all and earning a living in any regard, but she is willing to accept that Captain Wentworth is incredibly esteemed and a great match. Elizabeth's like eight years later on this, where Captain Wentworth has made something for himself. But back in the day, Elizabeth thought he wouldn't, [00:32:00] and that is what she's decided is true.

Molly: Mm-hmm. So, then, a servant comes in to pick up Elizabeth and Mrs. Clay. They announce to the entire shop that Lady Dalrymple has come to pick them up, because they're

sniveling little wieners. Wentworth offers to escort Anne to the carriage, which is so sweet of him. And Anne is like, "Oh, thank you. I'm not going with them. I'm walking." And he goes, "But it rains." [laughs]

Becca: Everyone says he's a smooth talker.

Molly: Such a smooth talkster.

Becca: Such good vibes coming off of Captain Wentworth here. None of it's panicked.

Molly: "But it rains." And Anne's like, "Oh no, it's not so bad." And he goes, "I have umbrella."

Becca: Yup.

Molly: He says, "Take umbrella."

Becca: Yes.

Molly: And then, he says, "Though it would be more prudent of me to get you a chair," which I looked at the footnote. And it means that two human men would lift her up in a chair and carry her home. [giggles]

Becca: They do that all the [00:33:00] way home. [laughs]

Molly: Yes. How is that more prudent than offering her your fucking umbrella?

Becca: Well, it's to make sure she's more comfortable going home.

Molly: So that her feet don't get wet.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: I hate it. I hate that that's a thing that they do, and I hate that that's what he thought to offer. But she's like, "No, no, I'm fine. I'm waiting for Mr. Elliot to come back."

Becca: Who is Mr. Elliot?

Molly: It's the guy that uppy-downied.

Becca: Sure is. Also, really quick side note on this. We now have two flirts rounding at Elliot right now.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Are you panicking?

Molly: Am I panicking? No, I'm eating my popcorn.

Becca: You're thriving.

Molly: I was like, "Oh, that's going to make him jealous," like Mr. Elliot. And then, we get a perspective shift, and we're watching it through Wentworth's perspective.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Mr. Elliot walks in and he's like, "That's the man that uppy-downied."

Becca: Yes.

Molly: He has eyes only for Anne when he walks in. Wentworth clocks that he sees Anne, he comes to Anne, he's [00:34:00] only trying to like-- He's like "Can I get you anything? Blah, blah, blah." Anne only has time to say good morning to you, to Wentworth, before being swept away by this very attractive man. So, Wentworth is like seething.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: And then, as soon as Anne is gone, Captain Wentworth's ladies that he's with-- He's with a group of ladies and gentlemen.

Becca: And they're all like, "Oh, my God, isn't Anne so beautiful?"

Molly: They're like, "Anne is so much more beautiful than Elizabeth, but none of the guys ever go for her because she's too--" What do they say? Delicate? They're like, "The guys all like Elizabeth, but it doesn't make any sense, because Anne is so much more pretty." And they're also like, "Isn't Mr. Elliot so dreamy?" So, basically, Wentworth is a puddle.

Becca: Yeah. Yeah. Wentworth is now panicking over his ex.

Molly: Fucking finally. He deserves it.

Becca: Yes. I don't know about you, but for me, the feeling of reading this chapter is similar to the feeling where an ex reaches out a long time later. Do you know how when boys yo-yo sometimes, [00:35:00] drop away and come right back?

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: So, it's a phenomenon where like, I'm a big believer that when you break up with someone, cut it off and your revenge should just be doing better than them. That should be your revenge.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: So, I'm like Captain Wentworth. [chuckles]

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And if you're doing that, sometimes you get a satisfying little drip, drip, drip of this person is still thinking about you. So, sometimes you'll get like a 01:00 AM DM on a Monday night and you're like, "You doing okay, bud?"

Molly: Yup.

Becca: Sometimes you'll get a random photo.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Sometimes it'll be like-- There's just so many delicious moments like this. There's just like little things you can do.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And little things sometimes like, ex's do that, let you know that like, they're out of your life and you don't have to deal with them anymore, but they still are watching. They care that you're doing well, and that's the best feeling.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: On the face of the planet, I don't care how good the terms are. [00:36:00]

Molly: Yeah. No, that is definitely how this feels. It also feels to bring it into non-relationshipy terms. It feels similar to for me. This might sound very vain, but I'm going to do it anyway. When my high school bullies reach out and apologize, I assume it's because I'm hot now. You know what I mean?

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: And so, it feels good for them to be like, "I'm sorry, I treated you so poorly." And I'm like, "Wow, I'm hot now." It's probably, because they realized that they had a lot of growing up to do and they needed to apologize.

Becca: But it's also because you're hot now.

Molly: Exactly. So, anyway, it's the same feeling. It's like, "Thank you."

Becca: "Oh my God, thank you so much. I am amazing."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, yeah, this has an air of like, "Ooh, you're paying attention to me again. This feels good."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: "You ran away. I got over it, but then you didn't."

Molly: Yeah. And now, to be fair--

Becca: Anne has not gotten over it. [chuckles]

Molly: The feeling is the same for us reading the book. It's like, "Yes, vindication." For Anne, she has not [00:37:00] gotten over it, and she's panicking just as much, but she's like, "But I'm also hot."

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: And Mr. Elliot thinks I'm hot.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And maybe she can use that to her advantage.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: So, speaking of Anne and Elliot, Anne wishes that he would just fucking walk in silence, because she is spiraling and he is just going on talking about how great Lady Russell is and how awful Mrs. Clay is. Normally, these are things that Anne would love to talk about.

Becca: But she's like, "Excuse me, I need to sit with my neuroses for a second-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -and just focus." [laughs]

Molly: She's like, "I literally have to think about Wentworth right now and you're not allowing me to do that."

Becca: It's like, "Excuse me, I must obsess."

Molly: I must obsess.

Becca: Can you let me?" [chuckles]

Molly: Yeah. She just simply cannot discern how Wentworth is feeling. She also wants to know how long is he going to be in Bath, because there's a difference between just passing through and being there for a while. She's worried that if he's there for a while, he will run into Lady Russell, and that will not be good.

I wanted to [00:38:00] know-- it said that she's worried that if he runs into Lady Russell, it will color him with a new shade of prejudice in Lady Russell's eyes or something like that. I'm curious, what will the new shade of prejudice be? Is she talking about because he got snubbed by Louisa, presumably, or because he socially climbed?

Becca: I don't think because he socially climbed. I think Lady Russell would be chill with Captain Wentworth's social standing, if it were not Captain Wentworth-

Molly: Sure.

Becca: -at this point.

Molly: So, what shade of prejudice would come in here in addition to what she's already prejudiced against him?

Becca: Perhaps, that he's still gunning for a certain lady that she's trying to prevent.

Molly: Or, would it be more like her being smug that he couldn't even bag Louisa Musgrove?

Becca: That is also a possibility.

Molly: In any event, whatever it is, it won't be good. The next morning, Anne and Lady Russell are out walking when Anne sees Wentworth [00:39:00] across the street, because, of course.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And she panics. She keeps looking at Lady Russell to check if she's seen him yet, but she's also trying not to let Lady Russell catch her looking, because she knows that her face is bright red and she's like, "Ahh." She does see Lady Russell looking very intently at him. Anne starts projecting all the things that she thinks Lady Russell must be thinking like, "How astonished she must be that eight to nine years have passed and he's been in active service all this time and not been robbed of any personal grace." Lady Russell's not necessarily doing that.

Becca: No. Anne, that's what you're thinking.

Molly: Exactly. [laughs] And then, Lady Russell turns to Anne and goes, "I bet you're wondering what I was staring at. I heard there was some curtains on this street, the handsomest and best hung of any in Bath. But I can't find any such curtains." I'm wondering if that was written as dirty as I read it.

Becca: I don't know if it was written as dirty as you read it, but it is canon now.

Molly: Thank you. [laughs]

Becca: Handsomest and best hung in Bath.

Molly: That's Captain Wentworth, baby.

Becca: Handsomest and best [00:40:00] hung in Bath. Mm, I want a T-shirt that says that.

Molly: And it's like curtains.

Becca: And it's curtains.

Molly: In a bathtub.

Becca: Yeah. It's a bathtub and curtains, and it just says handsomest and best hung in Bath.

Molly: Okay. So, Anne is like, "Goddamn it. All this time as were walking past him, I could have spent looking at him to figure out if he saw us. I was looking at you to see if you saw him and you were looking for curtains?" So, Anne is pissed. You go by when they don't see him at all, because he's hanging out in places where the Elliots wouldn't be caught dead. They would rather spend their evenings in the "elegant stupidity of private parties," which I thought was hilarious.

Becca: Jane Austen having a little moment.

Molly: Yeah, in the rocking chair. But then, it's time to attend a concert which is being held for a patron of Lady Dalrymple.

Becca: The Dowager Viscountess Lady Dalrymple and Baby Dalrymple?

Molly: Yes. Exactly.

Becca: It's all one word.

Molly: It's all one word.

Becca: The Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple and little [00:41:00] Baby Dalrymple.

Molly: [laughs] This concert is the talk of the town. It's going to be a great show. It's like, the band is sublime.

Becca: This is great as well, because this is our first big party event.

Molly: Yes, which I'm very excited for.

Becca: And also, it's very peak Anne Elliot that it's a concert.

Molly: That it's probably like a cellist which-- Listen, I love the cello. I play the cello, or played.

Becca: You played the cello?

Molly: I've played the cello.

Becca: I used to play clarinet very badly.

Molly: I won't say that I was bad at cello, but it was in elementary school and middle school.

Becca: Yeah. I played clarinet in middle school and I was bad at it.

Molly: Nice.

Becca: I was really bad. But yeah, they're listening to music.

Molly: Yes, which is very Anne. You know who loves music? Captain Wentworth, according to Anne anyway. And Anne is like, "Listen" to herself. "Listen. Listen, Anne, I just need to see him one more time and then I'll be fine."

Becca: It's going to be the meme of the guy pointing in the mirror. "It's like, "Just one more time."

Molly: Just one more [00:42:00] time and then you stop it.

Becca: And then you stop. You're done.

Molly: Stop it. And she's like, "Lady Russell overlooked him on the street. And Elizabeth snubbed him in the store. I owe him this attention, and then we're done." Anne was supposed to hang out with Mrs. Smith that night, but she goes to her house-- This actually makes me very sad.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: She goes to her house to tell her she has to reschedule. Mrs. Smith is very understanding and she's like, "Go and have fun, but please come back tomorrow, because I'm starting to worry that I'm going to lose you and that you're going to stop coming to visit." Anne is confused, but doesn't give this much thought before she has to leave. It's sad because first of all, what is Mrs. Smith seeing that Anne's not.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And also, like, don't ditch your friends for guys.

Becca: Never ditch your friends for guys.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: They're never worth it.

Molly: So, anyway, that is the end of those chapters.

Becca: Which brings us to the study questions. First, our patron study questions. Once again, listeners, if you want to become a patron at our \$15 [00:43:00] tier, you can now ask study questions. Molly will post a Google Doc on Patreon. You will enter your questions, and we will ask them and answer them on the air.

So, we have Avi. "Early in the book, Wentworth, clearly thinking of Anne, told Louisa that he liked firm characters. Now, Louisa has changed her affection to Benwick. What do you think Wentworth's reaction will be?"

Molly: Interesting question. So, Louisa-- Well, it depends. It depends if Louisa actually liked Wentworth or if they were plotting together, because there's two ways that could have gone, like either she could have actually been flirting with Wentworth and he could have been like, "Yeah, I like firm characters like you, not flimsy characters like Anne Elliot." And then, Louisa gets flimsy and goes to Benwick and likes flippy floppies.

Or, he and she could have been plotting together to get the girl. Like, he could have been

trying to make Anne jealous. So, I don't know [00:44:00] how-- I don't think that Louise is not being firm here, and I also don't think that we know what happened in between. I don't know what Wentworth's reaction will be, because so far all we have is him being very happy for them in his letter to the Crofts. But if he's sad, that's one thing. I don't think he is, because the more I think about it, the more I think he was using Louisa to make Anne jealous or that he and Louisa were plotting together. What are your thoughts?

Becca: Well, I'm not going to share my thoughts, because I've read the book.

Molly: Sure, sure, sure.

Becca: [chuckles] Okay. So, Janae's question, and I have a similar one down below, so I will combine them is, "Why do you think Louisa and Captain Benwick fell in love with each other?" Graham, the sound effect for the proposal again.

Molly and Becca: [imitates sound effect]

Molly: [00:45:00] I do think that opposites attract. I think that Benwick saw a lively woman who helped raise his spirits. And also, she was bed bound for a really long time, so he probably sat and read to her or something, and they probably just spent a lot of time together., I can picture their him mellowing her out and her hyping him up and the balance. I could definitely see that. I also think forced proximity is a great trope.

Becca: Oh, my God, it's such a good-- There are so many tropes with this Benwick, Louisa love story. You have the grump and the sunshine. You have the forced proximity. You have the shared trauma. Like, there's so much going on there that works.

Molly: If my theory is correct and Louisa and Wentworth were working together, then you also have fake dating.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Because they would have been fake dating to get the other people involved.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: But I don't know if that's a real theory or not, but it's my head canon.

Becca: We'll neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: Okay. Great.

Becca: All right. Second question from Janae. [00:46:00] "We see Anne with members of the upper class and members of the lower class by the Elliot standards, but where is it that you think Anne is most comfortable and most herself?" That's a good question.

Molly: That's a great question. I think Anne is most comfortable with the Crofts.

Becca: I think Anne is really comfortable with members of the navy.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Just generally.

Molly: She has a seafaring heart.

Becca: There is something about Anne that really connects to the naval spirit, which is really interesting as a character device, because Anne has not traveled much. We are led to

believe she has been to Bath, and now Lyme.

Molly: Yeah. I just finished my reread of *The House in the Cerulean Sea*-

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And Linus really connects to the sea, even though he had never seen it before. And he goes and finds the sea. When he sees it, he's like, "[gasps] this is where I belong."

Becca: I really relate to that. I love the sea. I'm a big ocean girly.

Molly: Same.

Becca: [00:47:00] We were utter mayhem in Cape Cod. We were like, "The ocean."

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: Yeah, I think there is an element to that. I would also say like-- and this is on a different note. Her family is the landed gentry and leading into the aristocracy. If you're Jane Austen in this book, her later book, which is really interesting, her landed gentry characters are very flawed, very petty in their concerns.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Even the Musgroves, who we like, are a little bit foolish.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: The naval officers have gone and seen the world. They've worked for a living, and they've built up a life for themselves. There is an element that Jane Austen's pushing here that they're a little better as people.

Molly: Well, when I think about who Anne idealizes. I [00:48:00] think about her seeing Mrs. Croft in a circle of sailors, like shooting the shit with the guys. Shooting the shit with the sailors, specifically, who all happen to be men. But her watching Mrs. Croft, that's what she zeroed in on. It wasn't necessarily even the naval men, but it was the woman who can hold her own with the naval men.

Becca: The naval wife, if you will.

Molly: The naval wife. Yes, exactly.

Becca: Yeah. That seems to be something that connects with her. Hmm.

Molly: Yes. Hmm.

Becca: Hmmm.

Molly: Also, just because it's in my brain and not necessarily because it's completely related to the question, but we were talking about the Elliots and they're standing in society and their pettiness and whatever. There are certain societal rules that we do have to follow in this time, one of which being you have to get the father's permission. We talked about this in the last episode, and it's fresh in my brain right now. You have to get the father's blessing to marry and to [00:49:00] keep your fortune and keep your social standing in society.

The more I think about it, the angrier I get at Wentworth for hating Anne for so long. I understand the heartbreak, but the angrier I get that he's so mad at her for just existing in the world that she was born into, like, we can't all be revolutionaries that are willing to give

up everything.

Becca: Well, that's what's heartbreaking-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -is that she should have fought for him. But it would have been so hard to do it, so you understand why she didn't.

Molly: She would have ended up disowned like Edward.

Becca: And it would have been a gamble on Wentworth is what it would have been.

Molly: Right. Argh.

Becca: And to be clear, that's a gamble.

Molly: He takes that very personally though. He's like, "My masculinity."

Becca: Yeah. No, but I think it's just a devastating situation for both of them. I do tend to agree with you that he's a little harsh on her. I think that he's fair in his distaste [00:50:00] for the people around her,-

Molly: Absolutely.

Becca: -for sure.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But when you're hurt, oh, my God.

Molly: It's easier to be angry than to be sad.

Becca: Devastated.

Molly: Anne has been devastated, and it's worn on her, and he's been angry and he's let it fuel his fire.

Becca: Exactly. Exactly. It's just like this is one of those, breakups are hard.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Breakups are so hard.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Okay. Emily's question is also a really good one, and I'm going to combine it with a question of mine down below. We're going to start with, "What point is Anne making about Benwick's character when talking about his change of heart and is she doing him justice?"

Molly: Mm. What point are we talking about with her talking about his change of heart? Like his change from herself to Louisa? Okay, wait, got it. The point being that he has a heart with many feelings and he needs to love someone?

Becca: Yeah, that he loves easily, essentially.

Molly: I think she is doing him justice, because I [00:51:00] think that he's a man with a big heart.

Becca: Yeah. I read it as a little bit more judgmental than you do.

Molly: Well, I think that she means it judgmentally. I think that she's telling herself that he would have loved anyone and he was loving her and now he's loving Louisa. If it had been someone else, it would have been someone else. But I'm saying that while she might have meant it judgmentally, I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing. She's calling him a relationship guy.

Becca: She is calling him a relationship guy, that's 100% right.

Molly: He's just one of those guys that can't go more than a couple months without a relationship.

Becca: To be clear, this is a genderless problem.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Everyone does this.

Molly: Absolutely.

Becca: I want to tie this to another point that-- So, okay, before we go on, that concludes the patron study questions. If you want to ask study questions yourselves, and be as brilliant and insightful as these study questions are, you can **[00:52:00]** become a member of our Patreon at the \$15 tier and give Molly the questions in the Google Doc when she posts it before our record session.

Now, I'm going to tie my first Becca's study question to this point, which is a question about widowers, because Benwick is essentially a widower and you have Mr. Elliot who is also a widower. Neither one of them is precisely mourning right now, even though they're both technically in mourning. You have Mr. Elliot who's obviously flirting with Anne, and you have Benwick who is engaged to another woman at this point. "What does Jane Austen think of these men?"

Molly: Gosh. Again, I don't necessarily think it's a bad thing, but I think that it's different for the two of them. I think that Benwick was very depressed, and had a lot of love to give **[00:53:00]** and needed a woman to take care of him, because he was very sad. And [giggles] so, he found one. I think that's totally respectable and fine. He obviously, clearly loved his fiancé very much.

I think that it's left up to interpretation at this point whether Elliot loved his wife, because so far all we know is that she loved him. Everyone seems to think that he was not happy in the marriage, and that's why nobody thinks anything of him flirting with other people.

Becca: Yeah. I think there is a little tinge that Jane Austen is questioning the propriety of this.

Molly: Because you're supposed to mourn for a certain amount of time in this time period.

Becca: And my question is whether Jane Austen's saying you should mourn, and whether or not you agree with her.

Molly: Well, it's interesting, because if we take this into the 21st century, if you see someone online who was in a very **[00:54:00]** public relationship, and then they break up, and then two weeks later, this person's in a new relationship, people judge. But that's very different from someone dying.

Becca: Yeah. People get really weird about this. When you had your heart broken, people want to feel bad for you. When you've lost someone, people want to feel bad for you. But people get really weird about widowers and widows finding new love. It's like a really weird point. People get sticky about it, and I don't always think it's fair, because people in that state who are that emotionally vulnerable, who lost someone through no fault of their own, probably are in need of somebody.

Molly: Yeah. And also, usually, that person's late partner would want them to be happy and move on.

Becca: Mm-hmm. "So, what purpose are these widowers serving in Jane Austen's story here?"

Molly: I don't know if this is a purpose, but it's a comparison I'm drawing.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: They are both [00:55:00] "in mourning and moving on." Anne is in mourning for her relationship and has not moved on for eight years. So, she's holding a torch. And they're like, "I'm ready to jump back in." So, it's just a comparison between actual death and a breakup that hurts so much more, which also I still disagree with, but--

Becca: No, I think the point Jane Austen's making-- You put your finger on it. I think there's a lost love theme to the story.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: What it means to lose love, what it does to a person-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -and what is life after that.

Molly: And that different people will react in different ways and do different things and cope differently. Some people want to be in another relationship, and some people like Anne want to be sad for eight years.

Becca: Hmm.

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: Hmm. This is something we'll return to, but this is clearly a fun conversation to have.

Molly: Oh, yes.

Becca: So, speaking of ex's, we have more Anne [00:56:00] and Wentworth content. Wentworth is back. We are so back.

Molly: We are so back.

Becca: We are so back. Ge's obviously different now. Anne is obviously-- Like the interactions between the two of them are different. "What has shifted?"

Molly: A little bit of power dynamics.

Becca: A lot of power dynamics.

Molly: Because he is suddenly uncomfortable in her presence.

Becca: Whereas before--

Molly: He was like, "I'm fine."

Becca: And she was a mess.

Molly: She was like [onomatopoeia] yeah.

Becca: Let's remember the first time Wentworth saw and he said he barely recognized her, because she'd become so withdrawn.

Molly: What a douche canoe. All right, oh, my God, I'm going back and forth, like I love him, I hate him.

Becca: Well, I guess what I see here, is that when he first saw Anne, she was eight years a spinster, withdrawn. She let herself go, so to speak, I hate the term, but the idea being she's lost her bloom, because she's lost her youth and her happiness. She has nothing [00:57:00] going for her, because she just lost her house. Wentworth comes, just a sure war hero, distinguished, wealthy as hell and very eligible. He comes in holding all the cards.

You get to this other side, Wentworth's had this weird interaction with Louisa Musgrove that we do not know anything about. He has been humbled, and Anne has gotten hot again. It must needs be remarked that Anne is hot again, and she's got suitors and she's doing pretty well. She's inured herself to his presence. She is able to be a person around him.

Molly: Even though she did black out when she first saw him.

Becca: Listen, internally, she's still a mess.

Molly: But she's composed a little bit.

Becca: Yeah. But she didn't have to leave the room.

Molly: She knew that he was there first.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, she was able to like--

Becca: Yeah. She composed herself. She was able to talk to him, another man was showing her attention around him. Like, there were moments where Anne [00:58:00] held a little power. I think that's healthy for everyone involved.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, yeah. "How do you think Bath will be as a setting for these two?"

Molly: I'm excited about this concert, and the fact that Bath is tiny and she's like, "If he's here for more than a day, we're going to run into him everywhere." Because we've already seen that the Crofts-- Like when they arrived, Anne saw them outside every time she went outside.

Becca: It's a densely populated area where the high society is all gathered in one spot.

Molly: Right. Exactly. So, if everybody is staying in the downtown area and she steps outside, she's probably going to see him.

Becca: Yes. And we're with people now who are aware of their romance, Lady Russell, Sir Walter and Elizabeth. And we are immersed in a society that has taken Anne in a certain light. She's important here.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, it's an interesting setting. We were in Uppercross before where [00:59:00] Wentworth was like the sujet du jour-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -and Anne was the very well-meaning sister.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: This is a different environment for them, and it's an environment where they have lots of opportunities to see each other.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Funniest quote?

Molly: Okay. I had two options. One being these two lines from Mary. "Mrs. Harville must be an odd mother to part with them so long." I do not understand it. And then, jumping down two paragraphs, her being like, "I can leave them at the great house very well for a month or six weeks." Like, "Girl, get it together." And then, also, the same thing in the next letter with her being like, "Oh, and I love the cross now." That was option number one.

Option number two is, Anne is walking with Lady Russell and she's trying to figure out if Lady Russell has seen Wentworth yet. And so, she's not looking at Wentworth. She just keeps glancing at Lady Russell to see. And then, Lady Russell is like the hung curtains like, [01:00:00] "I can't find."

Becca: [chuckles]

Molly: And then, Anne sighed and blushed and smiled in pity and disdain either at her friend or herself. The part which provoked her most, was that, "In all this waste of foresight and caution, she should have lost the right moment for seeing whether he saw them."

Becca: I love her sneaky spy on my ex behavior, but be cool about it. Questions moving forward.

Molly: My biggest question is, what happened with Wentworth and Louisa? Like, were they actually flirting with each other? Was there a change of heart or were they just friends and it was a misunderstanding all around? I need to know the details of that whole situation, because Benwick I understand. Louisa and Wentworth, I understand less. So, that's the biggest question I have going forward. And then, I'm also obviously looking forward to this concert and hoping that Anne doesn't ditch Mrs. Smith for captain Wentworth.

Becca: Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Anne probably has to [01:01:00] win, but I want to give it to Captain Wentworth, because he got flustered and I like that.

Becca: He's back. We are so back.

Molly: We're just back. I'm giving it to both of them together.

Becca: Yeah. Anne and Wentworth seeing each other again, new setting, new scenario, no attachments.

Molly and Becca: [onomatopoeia]

Becca: Listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next week, we're doing one chapter. And until the end of the book, we're doing one chapter at a time. That's how it's going to go. So, next week, read either Chapter 20, or if you're in a volumed book, Chapter 8 of Volume II. Molly, does that make sense to you?

Molly: It makes total sense.

Becca: So, until next time, stay proper.

Molly: And be hotter than you were when your ex last saw you.

Becca: Yes, always do that.

Molly: Yeah.

[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 **[01:02:00]** Podcast Transcription. For transcripts and to learn more about our team, check out our website at podandprejudice.com. To keep up with the show, you can follow us on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, [@podandprejudice](https://www.instagram.com/podandprejudice). If you love what you hear, check out our Patreon at [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://www.patreon.com/podandprejudice) to see how you can support us or just drop us a rating and a review wherever you listen to podcasts. Thanks for listening

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