

Molly: Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Liz and Zamzam. Welcome to the team. And a special shoutout to our patron, Clow, who upgraded their pledge.

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, check out our Patreon at patreon.com/podandprejudice. And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapters 8 and 9 of *Persuasion*.

I'm really excited to be back talking about the book.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Well, okay, we're only a couple chapters in, but I told Mel yesterday that this is my favorite one that we've read so far.

Becca: I believe you. The only reason I'm laughing about that is because you've said that about every single book we've read.

Molly: They get better each time. We're doing this in a great order.

Becca: We're doing this by accident. But this is a really fun order to explore these books, with apologies to the two we're leaving to the last. I think we're running through the icons in order, but this one's a fun one to follow up on after *Emma* in [00:01:00] particular, because Emma is so overly confident and Anne is the opposite-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -in every way. [chuckles]

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: This is Becca.

Molly: This is Molly.

Becca: We are here to talk about Jane Austen.

Molly: We are here specifically to talk about--

Molly and Becca: *Persuasion*.

Becca: What?

Molly: We should-- [giggles]

Becca: No, leave it.

Molly: I'm leaving it in. We said we were going to workshop some ideas, but we keep doing a variation of that.

Becca: *Persuasion*.

Molly: I mean--

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

Molly: And I, Molly, am reading her novels 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* [00:02:00] Volume I, Chapters 8 and 9.

Becca: And we'll just call this a continuation of ex-boyfriend panic.

Molly: Yes, which maybe is the whole book?

Becca: I will neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: Amazing. Why don't we tell the people where we left off?

Becca: Of course. So, listeners, for you, guys, it has been probably a little too long in your hearts since you have heard us talk, because it's been about four weeks since we last released a chapter episode, but shouts to our lovely guests, Audrey, Emily and Amanda, who came on and talked about their modern-day adaptations of Jane Austen's work.

But Molly was very accommodating for me while I had a very, very, very busy work schedule at my day job for the last month or so. So, I am ready to get back in and talk about *Persuasion*, but we are certainly going to need this recap.

So, Wentworth has come. We meet Captain Wentworth. Anne is freaking out about it, so she uses her nephew's broken or dislocated collarbone as an excuse to avoid seeing her [00:03:00] ex, but she can only avoid it for so long. And so, he shows up at her doorstep. They see each other and they have an awkward little "Hey, hey." And then, he goes away and says like, "She's really let herself go," or something to that effect.

We find out Wentworth is looking for a wife, and seems to have lightly eyed Louisa and Henrietta Musgrove for that task. Anything else I should add on to that, Molly?

Molly: I think that just about covers it. We'll get more into this in this set of chapters, but the Musgrove girls are obsessed with him.

Becca: Yeah. I love those Musgrove girls. I totally relate. But have you ever been in the circumstance where you're in a group of friends, and a guy shows up and he's the one guy and you're all obsessed with him?

Molly: I'm trying to think, because as you know, I generally surround myself with queers.

Becca: I know. Yeah, it's a trickier question when everyone around you is gay. Yeah. [chuckles]

Molly: Oh, you know what? There [00:04:00] was-- Okay. So, in high school, before we all knew that we were queers-- Okay. So, maybe this was just a me thing. But me and my best friend were both obsessed with the same guy. We didn't let it come between us or anything. It was very much like we were just both obsessed with him and we knew that. I was a little bit more obsessed with him, I think. But we were definitely both obsessed with him and constantly vying for his attention. And he was a dick. I just didn't see it.

Becca: No, no. The reason I'm laughing is because it's very typical you to develop a big crush on a boy who everyone else is like, "Really?" [chuckles]

Molly: I have always had very bad taste in men.

Becca: Great taste in women though. Shouts to Mel.

Molly: Yeah. Women-women. As Saoirse Ronan says, "Women."

Becca: Exactly. As Greta Gerwig writes, Saoirse Ronan says and it is captured in Louisa May Alcott's work.

Molly: Yes. Women.

Becca: Women.

Molly: Anyway, the answer is yes, I have. I could very much picture this situation. [00:05:00]

Becca: Yeah. It's just like one of those things, where like when you have young women and there's one guy who gets thrown into the shark tank, they all start circling at once. It's regardless of whether or not the guy actually deserves that kind of attention, but that's the painful situation Anne finds herself in, where she is watching these two girls absolutely throw themselves at Captain Wentworth, and him being quite receptive to that throwing.

Molly: Yes, it's terrible. Let's get into it.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: So, Chapter 8, we learn that Anne and Wentworth start constantly ending up at the Musgroves together. Anne has run out of excuses, essentially, because little Charles, Little C, has recovered, and what's she going to do? So, she just keeps ending up a dinner with him. It says, "Whether former feelings were to be renewed must be brought to the proof." I think this means we'll find out how he feels about her once they're thrown [00:06:00] together. And we do. So, the year of their engagement keeps being brought up in conversation. He keeps referring to it as the year six, which I assume means 1806.

Becca: I think so. Yeah.

Molly: Okay. So, he'll be like, "Oh, yeah, that happened in the year six." And Anne is like, "What does he think about it?" It says that Anne felt the utter impossibility from her knowledge of his mind that he could be unvisited by remembrance any more than herself. [giggles]

Becca: That is so rough.

Molly: The yearning.

Becca: There's nothing worse than having someone mean something to you and feeling like you didn't mean anything to them.

Molly: Yeah. She says that it seems like there's no pain on his end.

Becca: That's awful. It's awful to think that there might be no pain.

Molly: It's awful, because she's sitting there and she's like, "There's no way that he's not remembering this time too, and yet, he's not showing any signs of this being difficult for him."

Becca: To be fair to Anne, I'm sure that in her [00:07:00] brain, she's just melting into a puddle of misery. But I'm sure on the outside, she's just sweet, quiet Anne having a nice time to everybody else.

Molly: Yeah. She's the meme that I posted-- the last episode where we posted about this, which was SpongeBob sitting there smiling and then inside being like, "Ahh."

Becca: It's like, do you know that really common horror drawing meme where it's the guy standing alone at the party and everyone else-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -is dancing and talking-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -and it's like, "They don't know this, this and this."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That's Anne in these chapters.

Molly: She's like, "They don't know that we were in love."

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Oh, the line once so much to each other now, nothing. Devastating. All of the language in this chapter, I had a really hard time not just typing the chapter word for word, because it's so gorgeous.

Becca: This is the book that made me feel like Jane Austen understands love and loss-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -more like-- We know she understands love, but this feels autobiographical, because her level of detail in the pining is so [00:08:00] meticulous and well documented that you feel like you are pining along with Anne.

Molly: I'm pining so hard. I don't even know if I like Wentworth yet. At this current juncture, I'm like, "Mm, I could give or take him."

Becca: I think I know why.

Molly: Yeah. Okay. Wait, so this next part, I have some things to say about. So, it says that Anne thinks that of all the couples in the room, with the exception of the Crofts, who seem very happy together, she and Wentworth had been the happiest. It says, "No two hearts so open, no tastes so similar, no feelings so in unison, no countenances so beloved. Now they were as strangers, nay, worse than strangers, for they could never become acquainted."

I have heard this line, I think, on Instagram. I think I've read this line, and I think-- Now, this is, again, I'm putting things together from trying [00:09:00] really hard to avoid spoilers for this book and for the movie adaptations, but I am fairly certain that they changed this line in the movie with Dakota Johnson to "They were worse than strangers. They were exes."

Becca: I will neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: I knew you would. But [giggles] I feel like I understand why people are so mad, because that line is so fucking gorgeous.

Becca: It's an iconic line from the book, as far as I can tell. This isn't the study questions, but what does this line mean to you?

Molly: The first half, or the second half or the whole thing?

Becca: Read the whole thing into the microphone, and then we'll discuss.

Molly: Okay. "No two hearts so open, no tastes so similar, no feelings so in unison, no countenances so beloved. Now they were as strangers, nay, worse than strangers, for they could never become acquainted." I think I cut this from more-- There was more on either end, but she's looking around the room [00:10:00] at these couples that she thinks are putting up with each other, like big C and Mary, for example. Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove, I like them, but she doesn't see them as the pinnacle of love, you know?

Becca: I don't think she's dissing the other couples in the room.

Molly: Well, she's not dissing them, but she's looking around and she's saying, "We were more in love than any of them."

Becca: I think what she's saying is, "These other couples, they seem happy." She says, "The Crofts seem the happiest otherwise," and I think that is accurate. This goes to some interesting questions about the Crofts and their place in the book. But what I take from this is Jane Austen is explaining the deepest feeling of love being the feeling of being understood.

I think that with Anne, in particular, that would be so valuable in a world where even if people care for her, and a lot of people [00:11:00] don't, she's not very well understood by the people in her life.

Molly: Nobody gets her.

Becca: Yeah. It's the feeling of being seen. What she's saying here, in my interpretation, is these couples love each other, but there is nothing as powerful as what he and I saw in each other.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But the second part of it is, I think, the part that hurts my heart the more.

Molly: Yes. Now, they were as strangers, nay, worse than strangers for they could never become acquainted. I think the last line was like, it was a permanent estrangement or something like that.

Becca: Yeah. But what does it mean that they can never become acquainted?

Molly: The damage has been done. There's no chance for them. First, they're as strangers, as in, they're not talking. But they're worse than strangers, because there's no-- Oh, oh, oh, oh, because they've known each other so deeply already. There's not that mystery of being a stranger to someone and knowing that you can become acquainted and [00:12:00] get to know them. She already knows him so deeply, so she can't go back to that.

Becca: The way I read it is pretty much exactly that. It's like the feeling of wishing you could read a book again for the first time,-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -but a person. Wishing you could learn to know someone again, but a person. Okay. Now, Molly's crying.

Molly: I love this book.

Becca: It hurts.

Molly: It hurts.

Becca: It really does.

Molly: All right. So, now that we're deep in our feelings, the Musgrove girls are just fangirling over him, asking him all these questions about living on a boat. Anne remembers, back before she knew him and knew his whole story, asking him the same questions. She's sitting by Mrs. Musgrove. So, they're not at the table right now. They're in the living room, I guess, the sitting room. Mrs. Musgrove is now feeling emotional about poor Richard, and she's like, "Ah, if he were still alive, he would be just like Wentworth."

Becca: Once again, Jane Austen just is absolutely wrecking poor Mrs. Musgrove for mourning her [00:13:00] dead son.

Molly: It's not funny, but it is.

Becca: It's very dark humor for Janie, honestly.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I love it.

Molly: Yeah, it's a little morbid. Anne is just smiling and nodding through this, and watching the Musgrove girls as they go get the navy list, which is all of the officers and ships in a book, looking for the ships that Wentworth commanded. The first is the Asp. He says the Asp wouldn't be in the book, because it was declared only fit for home service, which means it couldn't go on long journeys.

So, of course, he was sent off to the West Indies in it, which is his little joke that the admirals like to occasionally send a couple hundred men out in an unfit ship, so that some of them would die off, because they had too many to provide for, which I thought was hilarious. And Admiral Croft is like, "Pshh, the Asp is in great shape. [Becca chuckles] You were lucky."

Wentworth agrees that he was lucky, because he needed to be out on the water. And Admiral Croft is like, "I mean, [00:14:00] you had nothing better to do on land being an unmarried man." Of course, he wanted to be out in the water?

Becca: I love the relationship between, particularly, Mrs. Croft and Wentworth, because they're so mean to him. It's great.

Molly: They are so mean to him.

Becca: He deserves it. But it's like that very specific older sister/brother-in-law shitting on you thing.

Molly: Yes. Louisa thinks that Wentworth must have been angry to see the ship in such bad shape when he got there and was like, "This is where you're putting me." And he was like, "No, no, no, I knew exactly what I was getting into." He knew that he would either go down with the ship or that it would be the making of him, as in turn him into a great captain if he could survive. So, he had been, I think, captaining privateers, a privateer being a privately owned warship where they get paid in booty, or was he taking down privateers, as in--

Becca: You'd have to read me the precise line.

Molly: [00:15:00] Okay. I'll read this part out loud, because there was a lot of ship language.

Becca: I'll be honest, when Wentworth goes into his little swashbuckling tales, I tune out a little bit, because I'm like, "Yeah, we get it. Wentworth, you're a big old war hero."

Molly: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Okay. "And after taking privateers enough to be very entertaining, I had the good luck in my passage home the next autumn, to fall in with the very French frigate or frigate, frigate I wanted. I brought her into Plymouth--" Oh, you know what? I think what it is is he's in the Asp, and he goes, and he takes over a privateer ship, and so on and so forth until he takes a French frigate or frigate.

Becca: So, he used the privateers to take the French frigate?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Hopefully, somebody in our audience is some military historian or some naval historian, because this is not my area.

Molly: I'm absolutely positive that we have someone of the sort. We must. Anyway, the point is that [00:16:00] eventually, he ends up on a French frigate in a giant storm, which, if he had been on the Asp at that time, he would have died, because it's a terrible ship. So, he was lucky that he was on a French frigate instead.

I think that's what happened, because he also says, "Our touch with the Great Nation not having much improved our condition." So, the Great Nation being France, and them having fought the people that were on the French frigate and then they took over it. But again, let us know if we're wrong. Anyway, the point is, big storm, he could have died, everyone is scared.

Becca: This is one of those moments. So, he describes how they almost died in a storm gale. Anne's reaction is so sad. This is what Jane Austen writes about what happens. "Anne's shuddering was to herself alone; but the Miss Musgroves could be as open as they were sincere, in their exclamations of pity and horror."

So, it's basically like he describes nearly dying. He basically says like, "Had this one thing gone the other way, I would have just been a [00:17:00] footnote on a newspaper that I died at sea." Miss Musgroves, Henrietta and Louisa both get to be like, "Oh, my God, that's so terrible. I'm so sorry," in all their sincerity. But Anne having nearly lost the love of her life and not even known about it has to grapple with that in the moment, silently, which is just so sad. Our poor girl, Anne Elliot, is like-- She is going through it. There's no other way to say that. [chuckles]

Molly: Yes, going through it. So, is Mrs. Musgrove, who's quietly like, "That must have been when he went to the Laconia and met poor Richard." She asks Charles to go ask where he met poor Richard. And Charles is like, "Well, it was at Gibraltar." And she's like, "Go, tell him, he shouldn't worry about upsetting me. I would love to hear him talk about poor Richard. He doesn't have to worry about not talking about him in front of me." And it says, "Charles, being [00:18:00] somewhat more mindful of the probabilities of the case, only nodded in reply and walked away."

Becca: I love our guy, Charlie. He's not always the most iconic parent or husband, but he really just is coping with the craziest people in the world around him.

Molly: Yes. This man [giggles] is just like, "Okay, mom."

Becca: We've all been there where your mother has been like, "Ask them if they know this person you went to high school with?" [crosstalk]

Molly: And they're like "No, they don't. Nobody liked that person." [giggles]

Becca: I don't want to talk to-- "No, mom, I'm not going to do that. I don't want to bring that up. That's embarrassing."

Molly: Yeah. The girls find the Laconia in the book, and Wentworth reminisces about how

fast he made his money on the Laconia. He talks about his friend, Harville, who was poorer even than he had been, and he had a wife, and he was so happy when they made their money and Wentworth would never forget how happy it made him. He loves Harville in a friendly way.

Becca: Molly is looking very suspicious about the friendliness between [00:19:00] Captain Harville and Captain Wentworth.

Molly: Well, he later says that he would do anything for him, but we'll get there.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: No, I joke. I kid. I don't want our listeners to think that I'm just throwing it around willy-nilly. It's just--

Becca: Molly, you can put as much gay into this book as you want. That is your calling in this life- [chuckles]

Molly: It's so true.

Becca: -to find gay relationships in Jane Austen novels.

Molly: Yes, exactly. So, he's saying like, "Oh, it was such a good, but we were so happy." Mrs. Musgrove was like, "It was lucky for us that you were on the Laconia, and we'll never forget what you did." And he's like, "What did I do?"

Becca: "Sorry, what?"

Molly: He's staring at her like, "Is there more to that story?" [giggles]

Becca: He's like, "Sorry, what?"

Molly: Yeah. One of the girls is like, "She's talking about our brother, poor Richard." And then, Mrs. Musgrove goes on about how steady dick was under Wentworth's care, and she wishes that he'd never left him. I'm assuming he left Wentworth's care before he died.
[00:20:00]

Becca: It's not clear.

Molly: I'm assuming yes. I can't imagine she means that if he had never died under your care. [giggles]

Becca: Well, I think he got sick. I think he died of illness, not in battle.

Molly: Oh, that makes sense.

Becca: So, I don't think it's Wentworth's fault he died, but I do think it's possible he died under Wentworth's care, but got typhoid or something.

Molly: But she says that she wishes that he had never left him. So, I wonder if he went away.

Becca: I think died. [chuckles]

Molly: But it was something about-- Hang on, let me read the quote.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: "Poor dear fellow, he was grown so steady, and such an excellent correspondent, while he was under your care! Ah! it would have been a happy thing, if he had never left you. I assure you, Captain Wentworth, we are very sorry he ever left you." Like, obviously, they're sorry he died, so he must have left them and then gotten sick and died.

Becca: It's not super clear from the face of the book and it's not totally pertinent, because I think the point was that Wentworth hung out with poor [00:21:00] Richard before he died, and Mrs. Musgrove has attached a lot of meaning to that despite the fact that it seems that Captain Wentworth does not very much remember this man. To the extent, he does, it's a bad memory.

Molly: Yes. [giggles]

Becca: But I think the point is, more than anything, that this is just a moment of like, "Uh, don't bring up Richard Musgrove, good old dick Musgrove with our guy, Captain Wentworth."

Molly: Yeah. So, anyway, she's talking about how she wishes that he had never left Wentworth. Wentworth has this brief glint in his eye that Anne can tell is amusement, that she can tell he had been glad to be rid of poor Richard. But it's so subtle that unless you knew him better than you know yourself, basically, no one would ever notice, because he covers it up so well, but Anne can tell because she knows him.

He immediately covers it, up and goes over to Mrs. Musgrove, and sits down with her and starts talking to her with the [00:22:00] kindest consideration about her poor son, like a true gentleman.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And suddenly, they're all on the same sofa. So, he comes to sit down and Mrs. Musgrove moves into the middle of the couch. And so, now, Anne is only separated from him by Mrs. Musgrove.

Becca: And she is keenly aware of that fact.

Molly: She is keenly aware of that fact. Jane Austen does note that Mrs. Musgrove is a large barrier. And then, we have a brief, fatphobic paragraph from Jane Austen about feeling emotions, no matter what your size is, but it's degrading and I was like, "Jane, was it necessary?"

Becca: Yeah. No, definitely not. This is obviously not a problem that we have yet solved where people like to make fun of fat people for basically anything. And in this case, apparently, crying over your dead son.

Molly: Right. She was like, "Oh, well-- we have to commend Wentworth for how seriously [00:23:00] he's taking her." And it's like, "Well, her son's dead."

Becca: On this one, Jane has so much more derision than you and I do for dick Musgrove and the grief of his mother.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, you just have to take her word for it that this is an awesome thing Wentworth is doing, where I feel like this is basically bare minimum politeness.

Molly: Right. Exactly. Yeah. So, Admiral Croft, meanwhile, has been taking a refreshing turn about the room. He comes over and doesn't really notice what he's walking into and just starts talking. And he says, "You know, Wentworth, if you had been in Lisbon a week longer last spring, you would have been asked to give a passage to Lady Mary Grierson and her

daughters." And Wentworth turns to him and says, "Good thing I wasn't there then. Sick burn."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I don't know who Mary Grierson is, but the admiral is like, "Well, that's not very gallant of you to say." And Wentworth says, "Well, it's more gallant to not bring her on board, because it's not possible to make sea travel comfortable for a lady. He would never bring a lady on board for an extended [00:24:00] period if he could help it." This whole thing gives me the ick.

Becca: Yeah, a 100%. It's not Wentworth's best moment. The only thing that saves this whole interaction is the fact that Mrs. Croft reads him the fucking Riot Act over it.

Molly: She really does. I was like, "Oh, my God, Mrs. Croft is a feminist."

Becca: I love Mrs. Croft. Now that we're getting to know her a little better. She's an icon and a fucking legend.

Molly: Yeah. I love her so much. He's like, "No, I would never do that." And Mrs. Croft is like, "A woman can be as comfortable on board as the best house in England." She's lived on five ships, and she was more comfortable there than she's ever been in any home she's lived including Kellynch with an apologetic nod to Anne. He says that, "Well, she was with her husband and she was the only lady on board."

And she's like, "Okay, but you took Mrs. Harville and her sister and her cousin and all three of her kids on board with you. So, where was your "gallantry then?"" And he's like, "Well, I only did it because I love my friend, Harville, so much. I would have done anything for him." She says, "Well, they were comfortable on board." And he was like, "Yeah, but they had no right to be." And she's like, "What do you think Admiral's wives should do if you don't think they should come on board with you?"

And he says, "Well, just because I felt this way doesn't prevent me from giving them passage, I'm going to do it, I just don't like it." And she goes, "Well, I hate to hear you talking so like a fine gentleman, and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures. We none of us expect to be in smooth water all our days." Ah, I was like, "I want that tattooed on my body," I think.

Becca: Yeah, Mrs. Croft absolutely killing this section. This is actually such a revealing section about Mrs. Croft and also just about the characters in general. First of all, it is consistent with what I understand to be an old wives' tale for sailors from this time period, that it is bad luck to have a woman on board.

Molly: [00:26:00] Oh, interesting.

Becca: As I said, I am not a military historian, so this was not my area of expertise at any point in my life. But my understanding is that, at least through legend, it is true that a lot of sailors thought it was bad luck to have a woman on board your ship. It is consistent with the *Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl*, they say it's bad luck to have a woman on board, because if you recall, Zoe Saldana slaps Jack Sparrow across the face and is all like, "You stole my boat," and all this stuff. They bring her on board, and one of the guys says to him, "It'd be bad luck to bring a woman on board." And he says, "It would be worse not to right now."

Molly: Oh, yeah. It's been a while since I've seen that. But yes.

Becca: Yeah. So, I do think there's-- It's a two-part here. One is it's a gallantry thing, because he's trying to be like, "No, I'm such a nice guy. I got to have my ladies all taken care

of properly," which bullshit. But that's definitely part of it, like make sure all the ladies are comfortable. The other part of it is that it's just blatantly, like, it is a superstitious thing to have women on board.

Molly: Interesting.

Becca: And [00:27:00] Mrs. Croft is like, "Fuck you. Fuck your fake gallantry, fuck your superstitions. My husband's there. I want to be with my husband, and I will be there. I can be on a ship. Don't worry. I'm fucking sturdy."

Molly: Yeah. She says that, "As long as she's with him, she'll be okay, because she loves him."

Becca: I love the Crofts.

Molly: They're so sweet.

Becca: These chapters are really like where you start to fall in love with the Crofts. They're really great characters.

Molly: I love them a lot. Then Admiral Croft cuts in and is like, "Well, he's going to feel differently once he has a wife." This is them ragging on him again. Wentworth throws a little fit. He's like, "Whatever." Like, you're going to say that I should get a wife. I'm going to say I won't feel differently when I have a wife. You're going to say, yes, you will, and I'm going to walk away. So, I'm just going to cut to the chase and walk away. So, he walks away.

And then, Mrs. Musgrove turns to Mrs. Croft and is like, "Oh, you must have been a really good traveler." And Mrs. Croft then talks about all of the places she's been. One of these is my funniest quote, so I'll skim over it for now, but she just talks about how she's traveled the [00:28:00] world. She's always had a very good health and constitution for the sea. I was thinking about how Mary would not survive on a boat. [giggles]

Becca: Mary barely survives in a very comfortable cottage on the English countryside.

Molly: I know. [giggles] She imagined her like, if her home was rocking from side to side, she'd be like, "Oh, my poor stomach." I mean, me too.

Becca: I want to turn back a little bit just to the quote, where Wentworth throws up in his hands and he's like, "Ah, I can't win here because I'm not married. And you're going to say, I'm going to feel different when you are." First of all, this is super relatable, because if you've ever heard anybody say the words like, "Oh, you'll understand when you have kids," or whatever, it's like--

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Well, yeah, but that means I don't get to have an opinion before I have that. Like, that's basically what you're saying. I get that. I might not have that knowledge quite yet. I definitely am lacking knowledge in that area. But it means that that shuts down the entire conversation,-

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: -which is, I think, what Wentworth is getting at there, even if I disagree with his views. [00:29:00] Second of all, I think this is really interesting because of Wentworth's position with women during his time at sea. He was nursing a pretty serious broken heart.

Molly: Oh. Oh, my God. That's why he was like, "Oh, yeah, I needed to be at sea." [gasps] He needed to be as, because he was brokenhearted. He needed to get away.

Becca: I also think he's passionate about sea. Like, it's a combo one-two punch.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: He's broken up about what happened back in England and he needs to fucking prove himself, because he was humiliated. At the same time, this is his passion. This is the thing he's good at, and this is the thing that will bring him up in the world.

Molly: Yeah. So, he's sitting there devastated, and talking about how he needs to be out and about. All that Admiral Croft has to say is like, "Yeah, because you're unmarried. [00:30:00] Ha-ha-ha. You need to--"

Becca: Well, Admiral Croft doesn't know.

Molly: I know. It's devastating. Poor guy. I'm Annoyed at his views, but at the same time, I feel for him. Anyway, this book really just keeps punching me in the face.

Becca: Yeah, it's Jane Austen's book in the feels, I think is what I would put this one at.

Molly: Yes. So, Mrs. Crofts talks about that when she was on board with her husband, she had nothing to fear. The only time she was ever really afraid was when she was by herself for a little at deal, which I imagine is some port town. She was by herself, and he was out at sea and she was full of imaginary ailments. She didn't know what to do with herself.

At first, I was like, "Is this cute or codependent?" And then I was like, "It's both," because she misses her husband, she's alone. He could be dead, she doesn't know, so I think it's very sweet. And then, Mrs. Musgrove tries to relate and she's like, "Oh, yeah, I hate being separated from [00:31:00] Mr. Musgrove when he goes to the assizes," which is like a two-day work trip. So, not quite the same.

Becca: I love Mrs. Musgrove. Poor lady.

Molly: She wants everyone to get along. She wants everyone to make a cake with rainbows and butterflies and be friends.

Becca: Except Mary.

Molly: Except Mary. Oh, my God.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: The evening ends with dancing. And Anne, as always, plays the piano. She is glad to sit behind the piano, so that when she cries, no one will be watching her.

Becca: That is the most emo-shit I have ever heard.

Molly: Anne is pretty emo.

Becca: Oh, man. But she's living her best Adele life, like sitting by the piano, playing her songs, and she's like, "Never mind, I'll find someone like you."

Molly: But she won't. She won't though.

Becca: I know.

Molly: Devastating. That's what I just kept writing in my notes, "Was just devastating. All of it." She's watching everyone dancing and be merry. She thinks that Wentworth is the

happiest of them all, [00:32:00] especially because all the ladies, including the cousins that are there, the Hayters, who I completely forgot about, but they're at this dinner party too. Everyone's in love with him. Everyone's fawning over him. So, she's like, "Oh, my God, he is loving this."

She's on autopilot and totally preoccupied as she's playing, but she thinks he looked at her once, and asked his partner if Miss Elliot ever dances, and his partner said, "No, she's totally given up on dancing. She never tires of playing though. She just plays." She's given up on dancing, because she has no one to dance with.

At one point, she finishes playing, she gets up. He had just sat down to explain something to the Miss Musgroves, and she accidentally walks near him. He jumps up and is like, "I'm sorry. Was this your seat?" And she's like, "No, no, no, don't worry," and she starts walking away, but he won't sit back down, and neither of them sit. There's just an empty chair, neither of them sitting in it. They're just very awkward and too polite.

Becca: Worse [00:33:00] than strangers, because they can never become acquainted.

Molly: Because they can never become acquainted. Anne did not wish for more of such looks and speeches. His cold politeness, his ceremonious grace were worse than anything. [sighs]

Becca: Just an excruciating time to feel how Anne feels about her ex-boyfriend while she's feeling it.

Molly: Exactly. Which brings us to Chapter 9.

Becca: The chapter of Charles Hayter the hater?

Molly: Hayter the hater. I'm so glad that she named him that.

Becca: So, true story. As everyone knows, you can listen along and hear me talk about my experience with these chapters. I also named him Charles Hayter the hater, organically.

Molly: Oh, my God, I love it, because I wrote Hayter the hater in my notes.

Becca: Yes. Yes.

Molly: So, Wentworth has been invited to stay at Kellynch as long as he liked. Originally, he was only planning for a brief visit, and then he was going to go meet his brother's wife, which I was like, "Oh, he hasn't met her yet?" He just got married.

Becca: Oh, yeah, I think it's said a couple times that he's really, recently [00:34:00] wed.

Molly: In my mind, I was like, "Sometime in the last eight years."

Becca: No. No, no, no, he just got married.

Molly: So, why wasn't he at the wedding?

Becca: Because he was at sea.

Molly: Oh, right.

Becca: That's the other thing. It's not that that recent, but Wentworth wouldn't have met her because he was at war. So, I think the point being not necessarily that his brother has just gotten married, just gotten married, but he's missed everything in the last few years because he's been, I think, fighting Napoleon in France.

Molly: That makes sense because of the French frigate.

Becca: Yeah, and Gibraltar and the Mediterranean. All those references make me think I'm correct that he's fighting the Napoleonic wars in the time period, which would mean just a lot of the south of France, a lot of Mediterranean.

Molly: I'm just googling to see-- Oh, yeah, because he was talking about 1806, and then he left after 1806 and the Napoleonic wars went to 1815, which is 1806, 1807, 1808, 1809, 1810, 1811, 1812, 1813, 1814, 1815. It would have been about nine years. So, if he had [00:35:00] left the year after in 1807, then he would have been gone for eight years and then returned after the war.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yes, that makes sense. Okay. He was going to go meet his brother's wife, but he's so bewitched by everyone at Uppercross that he decides to stay.

Becca: Bewitched.

Molly: Body, mind and soul. Anyway, he comes to Uppercross every day, particularly in the morning, because that's when the Crofts go for their little morning walks together.

Becca: Which is fucking adorable.

Molly: Adorable. They'll go for a walk, they'll go in their gardens, they'll take a ride in their gig, which is a carriage for two that they just got being adorable together.

Becca: This is actually peak Becca-Mike behavior as well, because on Saturday mornings, our favorite thing to do is to go to our local farmers market with the dog, and then take him to the park and drink coffee while we let him run around. So, I heard that and I was like, "You know what? I feel like if I'd want to be any couple in any Jane Austen book, honestly, the Crofts are not a bad get."

Molly: Oh, yeah, of course. And being in your little [00:36:00] rented estate for the summer.

Becca: Yeah, living your best life, hanging out, going on your little walks together, going on your little carriage rides together, that sounds fun.

Molly: Yeah. Oh, I love it. So, everybody loves Wentworth at this time, except for Charles Hayter.

Becca: Who is Charles Hayter?

Molly: Charles Hayter the hater is the eldest cousin of the Hayter family, who had an attachment with Henrietta. Oh, boy, he is a curate in another town, but he lives with his father, two miles from Uppercross. He, again, is their cousin through marriage, because Mrs. Hayter, his mom, is sisters with Mrs. Musgrove, who is married to Mr. Musgrove. So, cousins by marriage, not that it matters in this time period. He hates Wentworth, because he goes away for [00:37:00] two weeks and he comes back to find that Henrietta could no longer give two shits about him.

Becca: He leaves thinking he has a girlfriend and a potential wife, and all he has to do is sort of like get his shit together, so he can marry her. And he comes back and she's like, "Did you hear what Captain Wentworth said?"

Molly: Before he left, they had been planning on him getting a new job in Uppercross, so that they could get married. He goes away to work for two weeks, because he works one

town over, and he comes back and it's like they were never together. He can't even get two words in with her. Like, she's just [onomatopoeia], not listening to him. So, of course he hates Wentworth.

I wish that he would talk to Henrietta about it. But again, she isn't listening to him. So, I feel really bad for him. He is a man of the church, so he could turn out one of three ways. He could be an Elton, a Collins or an Eddie.

Becca: Yeah. Jane Austen is pretty cruel to [00:38:00] her men of the curate. She doesn't despise them, but they always are very unlucky in love in her books.

Molly: They are. They are. Some of them are assholes and some of them are just sad.

Becca: Compost.

Molly: Yes, compost. So, I'm thinking that he's more an Eddie than anything else, but I don't know how he's going to end up-- I don't know what he's going to end up doing about it, because right now, he's honestly kind of a king. I do really relate to him. I think that he's funny with certain things that he chooses to do later in this chapter. So, we'll get into that. But I'm leaning towards liking him right now. I don't know if he's going to end up being worse than that.

Becca: I will neither confirm nor deny.

Molly: Nice. So, the Hayter family is not as wealthy as the Musgroves. So, Mrs. Hayter married into the Hayter family, and Mrs. Musgrove married into the Musgrove family, which is a family of wealth and class. [00:39:00] Meanwhile, the Hayters don't really have much. Charles Hayter which, by the way, his name is fucking Charles Hayter. There are now three Charles' in this book.

Becca: I know. I'm sorry.

Molly: We've got little C, we got big C and we have--

Becca: And Hayter the hater.

Molly: Hayter the hater, who I've also taken to calling other Charles.

Becca: Funny. That's exactly what Henrietta's calling him right now.

Molly: Oh, my God. [giggles] So, he's the scholar and gentleman of the family. He's the only one who has elevated himself through education. But the Musgroves, because they rock for the most part, don't turn their noses up at the Hayters. They're not very proud. They still hang out with them. The girls have a sense of superiority in that they're happy to help improve their cousins or just bring them along. I'm getting Emma Harriet vibes from them.

Becca: Not quite as extreme, but yes.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: Because obviously, Emma is higher class than the Musgroves and the Hayters are higher [00:40:00] class than Harriet.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: It's not even as extreme as Knightley and Robert Martin, but it's closer to that. There is this down step for the Hayters, and they clearly are not interested in making connections in a very particular way, except Charles Hayter.

Charles Hayter has the capacity to, if he's lucky and works hard at the same time, to secure a decent place in society, but he'll never be super wealthy and he'll never be super well connected. He'll be modestly respectable, if that makes sense. So, it's not like Charles Hayter is a terrible pole for Henrietta, but not one that would improve the family's standing.

Molly: Right. But the family thinks, "As long as she likes him, we like him." They're like, "Yeah, it's not a great choice, but if she's happy, we're happy," which I think is really sweet.

Becca: Yes. And it's not a debasing pick either.

Molly: Right. Exactly. Now, Henrietta thought she liked him until she met Wentworth as well.

Becca: It's like you're in a happy [00:41:00] relationship, and then fucking Fabio comes along, and is just like knocks everything out and gives you a bunch of attention.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I'm trying to think of a good comparator in pop culture.

Molly: Let's talk about *Gilmore Girls*. We've got Dean and Rory. They're not a great match, but they're together. Jess comes along, Dean and Jess hate each other, Rory's spending time with Jess. Jess is a bad boy. He's hot. Dean is like, "I'm going to punch you in the face."

Becca: I was thinking there's some sitcom I'm trying to think of. I can't remember what it is where there's a couple from the show, and a celebrity shows up, and hits on the girl and the guy's like, "Hey, I'm right here."

Molly: Could be *Friends*, maybe.

Becca: It feels like Monica and Chandler to me. I don't know why.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But I don't recall the episode.

Molly: Now, Anne can't figure out which of the [00:42:00] sisters he likes best, because she doesn't know now whether he prefers a gentle spirit or a lively one, because she doesn't know him anymore.

Becca: So, have you deduced the differences in personality between Louisa and Henrietta based on this chapter at all?

Molly: Yeah. I think that Henrietta is the gentler spirit and Louisa is the livelier one.

Becca: Yeah. I think the way they're described is that Henrietta is a little bit prettier and quieter. And Louisa is still pretty, but not quite as pretty as her sister, and spunky. Like, she's the one with the rizz, essentially.

Molly: Oh, my God. You said rizz.

Becca: Did I say rizz?

Molly: You said rizz.

Becca: Oh, God. I'm sorry.

Molly: Do you work with Gen Z people?

Becca: No, not really.

Molly: Well, anyway, look at you being down with the kid slang.

Becca: I know the *HOT TO GO!* dance.

Molly: I know that one too.

[singing]

H-O-T-T-O-G-O

You can take me hot to go

Becca: That was great.

Molly: Thank you. I will--

Becca: It's an audio medium [00:43:00] though.

Molly: It's an audio medium, but so everyone knows I just danced beautifully. So, the Musgroves, Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove, are either oblivious to what's going on or trusted their daughters implicitly, because they leave everything to chance when it comes to the men in their lives. Like, they don't really interfere and they're not really thinking about him as a potential prospect for their daughters.

Meanwhile, in the cottage, big C Charles and Mary are debating which girl Wentworth likes the most. They would be thrilled for him to marry either of them.

Becca: Which is also Just a form of psychological torture for Anne.

Molly: Yeah. Anne is sitting there listening to them talk about how pleasant he is, and how much money he made in the war and how likely he is to distinguish himself. Mary is like, "Oh, if he were ever made a baronet, Lady Wentworth has a nice ring to it," which the fact that she thinks of baronet as being the highest honor that [00:44:00] he could get is hilarious to me. But she doesn't like when new people get titles. She doesn't like increasing their ranks, but that's just her elitism.

Becca: Oh, yeah. This is an interesting pick is that she wants it to be Henrietta, because the Musgroves are not snotty about the Hayters, but Mary is.

Molly: Mary is. Mary-

Becca: Extremely snotty.

Molly: -sucks, but I love her.

Becca: Mary is possibly my favorite character in this book. Not because she is a good person for any second of it, but because she is a fucking hilarious icon. [chuckles]

Molly: Yes. Okay. So, she wants to steer Henrietta away from Charles, because-- Listen, I'm really proud of myself for this one. So, she says, "I do not think any young woman has a right to make a choice that may be disagreeable and inconvenient to the principal part of her family, and be giving bad connections to those who have not been used to them." Does that sound familiar? Sounds familiar to me. Sounds like what Anne was persuaded [00:45:00] that she would do if she married Wentworth.

Becca: Ah. It's almost like the Musgroves have a very different outlook on that circumstance than the Elliot's would.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Wonder how Jane Austen is telling us about the Musgroves versus the Elliots.

Molly: I wonder how Anne will view these comparisons of like, "Oh, my family thinks this." Meanwhile, Charles Musgrove completely disagrees and is like, "Well, it would be a fine match," because he has the ability to distinguish himself. He could get a promotion from the bishop. He's an eldest son, so he's going to inherit the Winthrop estate.

When he does inherit it, he will, "make a different sort of place of it, and live in a very different way." So, he's going to make something of himself, make it profitable and will be a respectable match for Henrietta. Again, paralleling what happened with Wentworth when he went to sea and made his fortune. **[00:46:00]** And Anne is sitting there thinking like, "If anyone had seen that possibility in my family, I would be in a different place today."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, this is tough for Anne to witness.

Becca: Oh, this is excruciating for Anne, because you have everyone talking about Captain Wentworth as if he's the best match ever, and then you have the cognitive dissonance of Mary just parroting the talking points that her father used against her to prevent the match with Wentworth.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And then, you have the Hayters versus the Musgroves. You have the Musgroves basically saying like, "Yeah, but he makes her happy." Except right now, he's not really making her happy, and she's making him totally miserable. And then, on top of all of that--

Again, it feels like Jane Austen understands what it is to pine, because the way she writes, this is perfect. The feeling of having people talk about your ex being with other people very casually in front of you and you not wanting to give away for a second that it makes your **[00:47:00]** feelings hurt-- Like, what's so powerful about the way that this book is written is you're actually feeling that as Anne is feeling it.

Molly: Yeah. Exactly.

Becca: You're in that space with her. It's like, "Oh, God, I do not miss being single at all."

Molly: [giggles] Same. There was one definition that I had here, which was, they were talking about the Winthrop estate, "As once he gets it will be a freehold estate," which means permanent and absolute tenure of land or property with freedom to dispose of it at will. So, it's his once he inherits. It's permanently entailed to him.

So, anyway, they're talking about all this, and they're like, "And Louisa, in Charles mind, can have Wentworth." And then, he leaves, and Mary turns to Anne and she's like, "No, no, no. Other Charles is a bad match. She's a bad connection for me. I don't want to be connected to him."

Besides, it's obvious that Henrietta has already forgotten Charles for Wentworth. It's obvious that Wentworth likes her more than Louisa. **[00:48:00]** And then, she says, "Oh, my God, I wish you had been with us yesterday, because you could have settled this bet." Yesterday, we learned that there had been a dinner at the Musgroves that Anne had stayed home from with a headache to take care of baby Charles, because he was not feeling well again.

Becca: Oh, no. Poor Anne can't go to dinner again.

Molly: This is another moment where I have a potential funniest quote that I will read later. Her opinion about which sister he likes more is just that he should make up his mind early enough that he doesn't hurt the other sister by leading her on. And the same thing with Henrietta with regard to Charles, because she doesn't want Henrietta breaking his heart. She's pained by Henrietta's "lightness of conduct," where she's just tossing people's feelings around. Now, this is showing growth on Anne's part, because she tossed a Wentworth around, and now she's like--

Becca: No, Anne never tossed Wentworth around. She genuinely felt that way and wanted to marry him.

Molly: But she tossed [00:49:00] him around afterwards.

Becca: No, she was put in an impossible situation.

Molly: I'm still mad at her, but I know she's mad at herself.

Becca: Oh, no.

Molly: She's mad at herself.

Becca: This is a super interesting point. I cannot wait for us to have longer discussions about this, because Anne did not take lightly what happened between her and Wentworth.

Molly: Right.

Becca: It wasn't flipping for her. She didn't turn her feelings off. She got put in a place where she desperately wanted to spend the rest of her life with this man who she felt was her soulmate, and ended up, by the circumstances of each of their births, being unable to feel like she could actually take his hand. That is a different thing than being into someone, and then turning it off and being into somebody else.

Molly: You're right. No, you're right. That wasn't fair of me to Anne.

Becca: No, no, it's totally fine. I love this, because this book is really, really well written for the complexity of the regret we feel along with Anne for what happened. How much we blame Anne, how much we blame her family, how much we [00:50:00] feel for Wentworth, how much that's justified or unjustified is all up in the air, because it happened a long time ago. It's not as though anyone is happy with the way it turned out. Everyone has regrets about it.

Molly: So, we're saying that she doesn't want Wentworth to break either of the sisters' hearts and she doesn't want Henrietta to break Charles' heart, because that is just a belief that she holds deeply. She didn't want to break Wentworth's heart, so she ended things when she did, because she didn't want them to end up in an impossible situation later on.

Becca: Yes. Anne takes these things so seriously that she has not accepted another person's proposal for eight years. When it comes to her feelings, she cannot imagine being flippant with somebody else's feelings. She takes so seriously how she is with other people as a character.

You see that with her interactions with people day to day. She's very [00:51:00] focused on how other people feel. And in this particular circumstance, she knows for herself with surety she has only loved one ever. What she doesn't want is-- First of all, there is the societal level to all of this, where you don't want any of these girls' reputations to be on the line if

Wentworth isn't serious about them.

On the other level, it is about the fact that Charles Hayter had an understanding with Henrietta that feels like, it's in flux now. That's a terrible thing to feel when you feel like you're sure about something. Anne was short, the thing that fell into flux was the circumstance, not the feelings. It's different.

Molly: Yeah. Totally. No, you're so right. Poor other Charles is mortified, because within two weeks, he feels like he's been forgotten about. Before they left, like I said, they had literally been talking about him getting a new job closer to Uppercross. There's an old rector, Dr. Shirley, who's getting old and [00:52:00] needs a young curate to come in and do the work. But then he comes back home, and nobody cares. Louisa won't listen to him. They're friends. She won't listen to him. He's telling them about a conversation he just had with Dr. Shirley about this job.

Henrietta is just waiting by the window for Captain Wentworth to arrive and only gives him half of her attention. Oh, my God, here we go. One morning, Anne is in the drawing room of the cottage. She's with little Charles, and Wentworth walks in, and he is like, "I thought that Miss Musgroves were here."

Becca: It's always sunny meme where Charlie and Mac see each other across the restaurant, and they're just staring at each other across the restaurant.

Molly: You're going to have to send me this.

Becca: Yeah, I will send it to you. Yeah.

Molly: So, he's like, "I thought the Miss Musgroves were here." And then, he walks to the window to collect himself. So, he's just standing by the window panicking. And Anne is like, "They're upstairs and they'll be down soon." And then, little Charles asks her for something, so she goes to him. [00:53:00] Otherwise, she would have bolted. She was like, "I'm out of here. Oh, no. I have to help the baby."

And then, Wentworth says, "He hopes little Charles is feeling better." And then, they sit there in silence while she tends to little Charles, and he just keeps standing by the window and then someone else comes in.

Becca: And who is it?

Molly: Unfortunately, it's Charles Hayter, who is--

Becca: A hater.

Molly: The Charles Hayter the hater, who is no more pleased to see Wentworth than Wentworth was to see Anne. Anne is like, "Oh, come on, and the others will be down soon." Wentworth has no idea that he and Charles Hayter the hater have beef. So, he goes over to him to talk, and Charles sits down, and pulls out a newspaper, and just blocks him and starts reading.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Iconic.

Becca: He's a petty little bitch, Charles Hayter the hater.

Molly: I love him. Yeah, I would do the same thing. He's like, "Nope, walls up, blinders on, not paying attention to you." Wentworth just is like, [00:54:00] "Oh, okay," and goes back to the window. So, now, Hayter the hater is reading, Charles is staring out the window and

Anne is hunched over baby Charles, like, "Do you want a bottle?" just like, nobody looking at each other.

Becca: Yeah. It's just truly the most awkward three-person interaction with a sick child in the middle you could possibly imagine.

Molly: Yes. And then, another child comes in, the younger Musgrove kid, Walter. Now, he's two. It says that someone outside lets him into the house. I'm assuming it's a maid or something, but do they just never lock their doors during calling hours.

Becca: I guess so. But it's not like he goes unsupervised. He has servants who are with him all the time.

Molly: Okay. Because I was picturing him just out for a walk, like a little two-year old coming in.

Becca: No.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: Mary isn't always with her children, but it doesn't mean her children are not supervised. They have others to look after them.

Molly: Okay. Good. So, he [00:55:00] comes in, and he comes over to Anne to see if there are any snacks. There aren't any snacks, so he just starts to climbing all over Anne. And Anne is like, "Please get off of me," and he won't let go. Hayter the hater tries to call him over. He's like, "Come here. Come to Uncle Charles." He doesn't go. Suddenly, he's pulled off of her by none other than Captain Wentworth.

Becca: Wait, I want to find the quote.

Molly: Oh, yes, please do.

Becca: Ah. So, "In another moment, however, she found herself in the state of being released from him." Him, being Walter. some one was taking him from her, though he had bent down her head so much, that his little sturdy hands were unfastened from around her neck, and he was resolutely borne away, before she knew that Captain Wentworth had done it."

And then, Anne just goes into panic mode, because Wentworth came that close to her and basically just pulled a two-year-old off her, and it says, " Her sensations on the discovery made her perfectly speechless. [00:56:00] She could not even thank him. She could only hang over little Charles, with most disordered feelings. His kindness in stepping forward to her relief, the manner, the silence in which it had passed, the little particulars of the circumstance, with the conviction soon forced on her by the noise he was studiously making with the child, that he meant to avoid hearing her thanks, and rather sought to testify that her conversation was the last of his wants, produced such a confusion of varying, but very painful agitation, as she could not recover from, till enabled by the entrance of Mary and the Miss Musgroves to make over her little patient to their cares, and leave the room. She could not stay."

So, basically what happens is that Wentworth silently comes over, pulls a two-year-old off of Anne, and is cooing to the two-year-old to avoid getting a thank you from Anne. Anne has a panic attack in the moment, because she realizes, one, that he likes her enough to have helped her in the circumstance, and two, that he's mad at her enough that he won't talk to her after helps her, and basically is so overcome [00:57:00] that when everybody else walks in through him, she's like, "Bye."

Molly: Yup. She just gets the fuck out.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Oh, man. Imagine you want to say thank you and he's just completely like, "Come here, little Walter," and talking to the baby like not listening to her.

Becca: No. But it's like all she's seen so far is just this gallant flirtation that has happened between him and these two Musgrove girls for a while. He's treated her with this cold, polite indifference, but this automatic helping of her kills her in this moment, because it shows this attentiveness to her.

Molly: Yeah. She doesn't know what to do with that.

Becca: And Charles Hayter was so mad, because he was like, "Walter, that's so naughty. Don't do that." And then, gets really mad when Whitworth beats him to the punch of pulling the kid off of Anne.

Molly: Yeah. He was like, "Why didn't you listen to me when I called you?" [laughs] Oh, man. Anne, meanwhile, is like, "I got to get out of here. I don't want to try to figure out which girl he likes more right now. I don't want to [00:58:00] see Charles be jealous of Wentworth. I just need to go get my own feelings under control before I can think about any of that." And that's the end of those chapters.

Becca: Oh, which brings us to the study questions. Mine are brief today, because I really liked the ones that came in from our patrons. Listeners, if you want to become a \$15 tier patron on our Patreon, you actually get to submit study questions to us. Molly posts a Google Doc before our record sessions, and we will read your questions and answer them live.

So, Janae asks, "What song Taylor Swift or otherwise is on repeat on Anne's sad girl TM playlist?" Ooh, that is a good question.

Molly: I'm pulling up Spotify just to get-- make sure I get everything.

Becca: Yeah, it's really important. So, I have a playlist labeled ice cream. That is my sadness playlist. So, let me pull up my ice cream playlist. See, I don't know if it's Taylor exactly, because Taylor is often chiding men for what they've done wrong. I feel like that's not where Anne's at. Anne is chiding [00:59:00] herself for fucking things up.

Molly: Oh, my God. Wait. *In The Kitchen* by Reneé Rapp could be a good choice here, *Strangers to Lovers to Enemies*. They're not necessarily enemies at this point, but he hates me now aspect of it could be there. So, I'm going to put one vote in for that.

Becca: I'm going to pull some Adele, because I feel like Adele is really going to capture the depth of the feelings. I'm going to say *Turning Tables*.

Molly: Hmm, that's a good one.

Becca: Or, *All I Ask*.

Molly: That's a really good one.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: *Why Am I Like This?* from the soundtrack of *Heartstopper*.

[singing]

Why am I like this?

Why am I like this?

Why am I like this?

Why am I?

Becca: Oh. Also, *The 1* by Taylor Swift would probably be a good one.

Molly: Oh, that's a good one too.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: *Picture You* by Chappell Roan.

Becca: Oh. *Coffee* by Chappell Roan now that I think about it.

Molly: [gasps] Oh, that song is a masterclass in songwriting, and you're [01:00:00] right. Oh, my God, yeah.

Becca: There's also some Olivia Rodrigo that can make its way in as well.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Oh, there's also Reneé Rapp, *The Wedding Song*.

Molly: I think that's a happy song, know? Am I misremembering?

Becca: Yeah. It's like, I wrote this song about you that I'll never get to play. And it's like a passion song.

Molly: I guess I've never really listened to the lyrics.

Becca: Because you're thinking of the chorus where it's like, "*You were my love, you set my world on fire.*"

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: No. So, she's saying she wrote the song, she can't play it.

Molly: Oh, my God, devastating.

Becca: Listeners, I think we need to put together a really good Anne's and her feelings playlist of songs. We will be taking submissions.

Molly: I can't get over how accurate *Coffee* is for this.

Becca: *Coffee* is really my key by Chappell Roan, I think.

Molly: Yeah, that's really good.

If I didn't trust you

[01:01:00] *It would be fine*

I'll meet you for coffee, only for coffee.

Oh. All right, Wow. Yeah. Thank you, Janae, for that excellent question. We will be making this playlist.

Becca: We'll have to make the Anne's in her feelings' playlist and maybe also a Wentworth's in his feelings' playlist, but we'll do that one later, because it's all going to be revenge songs.

Molly: Yeah, we can use Taylor and Olivia for that. Oh, my God. Oh, my God, wait, vampire for Wentworth?

Becca: Hu-hoo. Okay. Emily asks, "Hearing Mrs. Croft's account of her life as a captain's wife, how do you think Anne would have been changed over the eight years if she had been married to Captain Wentworth instead of the eight years she instead spent living with her family?" I love this question.

Molly: That's a great question. She would be a different person, because if she had gotten out of the toxic situation that is her family, and been with a man who truly sees her and understands her, and she's on the water, like she'd be adventurous, she'd be outgoing, she would come out of her shell.

Becca: [01:02:00] Another reminder. So, I love this question, and I was going to ask an iteration of it, but I cut it when I saw Emily's question, because I thought we could have the discussion through this one. I think that part of the purpose Mrs. Croft serves in this book is to showcase who Anne would be if she had accepted Wentworth's proposal.

Mrs. Croft is pretty happy. She has a husband who's made something for himself. She's seen the world. Anne has barely left Somersetshire. She's not even traveled England let alone the Atlantic Ocean. She hasn't seen anything. And so, there is this feeling of what would Anne's life look like if she were married to Captain Wentworth. It would be Mrs. Croft's life. That's who she'd be.

Molly: Yeah. She even says when she's looking, like we talked about around at the couples in the room, that the Crofts seem genuinely happy.

Becca: Yeah. [01:03:00] The sprinkling in of how much the Crofts care for each other is part of this regret. You see that they are this like pinnacle. They are written more sympathetically than basically anybody else in the books so far. There's a lot of good characters, but the Crofts are like, you feel that Anne is connected to them. You feel that they are seen as these heroes in the book.

It again goes to the fact that Jane Austen has, in this circumstances, sought to highlight the differences between the landed gentry, and those who make their way up in the navy. You actually see Jane Austen really liking the naval [chuckles] men in this book. So, I think that you get a sense that Anne would be a completely different human being if she had married Wentworth all those years ago. You don't even need to think too hard about what her life would have been like, because we get a character who Anne would have been in that situation.

Molly: Absolutely.

Becca: So, good question. Thanks, Emily. Hannah asks, "How much of the narration do you think is Anne's internal dialogue? Is it all Jane Austen from her rocking chair or a mix of both?"

I think this is a good place to talk about it, particularly given Chapter 8. I was going to say, I think a lot of it is Anne. There are some obvious Jane Austen in her rocking chair moments, especially when we pull out of Anne's perspective with Captain Wentworth at the end of Chapter 7. But there is a lot of internal life to Anne, which is important to the story, because

on the outside, Anne looks like she's being her usual quiet self, maybe a little bit more distant from the dinner parties than she used to be. But no one knows the suffering Anne is going through right now.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Because she's holding a brave face, but we are privy to it the entire time. And that feels very Anne, not very Jane-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -with the thoughts that are happening.

Molly: Yeah. I feel like in the last couple of chapters, we were getting more Wentworth, like more insight into what he's been [01:05:00] going through these last however many years and what he's going through now. I definitely agree that in these chapters, especially since Anne barely says anything, we're getting a lot of her internal life, and what she's thinking about everything and how she's viewing what's going on here.

What's especially interesting is her watching him with the Musgrove sisters, and having her actually considering, even considering, who he likes more, because she's able to think about that, because she knows that there's no chance for them to become acquainted.

Becca: It feels very real.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, if you don't think there's a shot, there's going to be a lot of inoculating you're going to do in yourself to try to figure out what-- You're going to be focused on which one he likes better-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -and you're going to be trying to figure it out to save yourself the pain and heartache of the impending engagement.

Molly: Yeah. You don't want to be surprised. You want to [01:06:00] get ahead of it. You're the only one who can break your own heart, essentially.

Becca: Yeah, it's totally true. It's a toughening exercise to try to think as much as you can. Sometimes your brain doesn't let you stop thinking about somebody, so you try to force yourself to think about-- to prep yourself, like immersion therapy.

Molly: Yeah, I agree. Actually, I think it's mostly Anne, like you said. I actually think the Jane Austen in the rocking chair is minimal in these ones.

Becca: It comes out occasionally. I don't think Anne is thinking those mean thoughts about-

Molly: Mrs. Musgrove?

Becca: -Mrs. Musgrove-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -as much as Jane Austen is just being an asshole in that moment.

Molly: Yeah. I like to think that Anne is generally-- I think Anne's mind in that moment was probably more, "Oh, my God, he's on the couch with me" and less about Mrs. Musgrove

being in between them.

Becca: Precisely. I think that that's correct. But I do think that when it comes to these interactions about Wentworth, I think we are getting Anne's perspective, not just Jane's.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: And then, Hannah asks another [01:07:00] question. "Do you think Captain Wentworth is in love with either of the Musgrove sisters?"

Molly: I don't think that he's in love with them, per se. I do think that he likes them. Honestly, this is just occurring to me now, but it's possible that he's trying to make Anne a little jealous by flirting with them in front of her. I don't know him well enough to know whether he is like that, if he would be malicious like that, but we've heard a couple times now that he's still mad at her. So, I think he might be using them. This is just occurring to me for the first time. I didn't think about this until just now.

Becca: I'll neither confirm nor deny. If you think he has to choose between the two, do you have a sense of which one he'd prefer?

Molly: I think Henrietta, just because if she's the prettier, quieter one, that's probably more similar to Anne.

Becca: Anne Elliot? Our pretty, quiet queen?

Molly and Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But also, because we spent so much [01:08:00] time on her in this chapter and Louisa-- I think is Louisa Younger?

Becca: I think so. Yeah.

Molly: Yeah. She's giving younger sister vibes. And also, I think story wise, it'd be more exciting for the story to have the previously committed one be the one that he goes for. So, that's where I'm at right now.

Becca: Okay. That is our conclusion of our patron study questions. These were great ones, guys. Again, if you want to join us at the \$15 tier, you can ask your own patron study questions, and we will answer them on the podcast. So, we've actually covered pretty much all of my study questions, but I wanted to talk about the worse than strangers' line, because I think it's gorgeous. Here's one we haven't talked about. Did we get any insight into Wentworth here as a character in these chapters. And as a follow up, so this is two-parter, what his current feelings on Anne are?

Molly: I'm trying to think if we got anything about his feelings on Anne from these chapters. [01:09:00] We know that he noticed her, at least, because he asked if she ever dances. I wonder if he thinks that, "Oh, she's given up dancing. That's further her letting herself go." One insight that we get into him as a character is the stuff about women being on board.

Becca: Not the most flattering moment for our guy, our Freddie. [chuckles]

Molly: It's not. But you took a good point, or you made a good point when you said that he was going through heartbreak during that time and didn't want women around [giggles] because of that, because he's not the kind of guy for rebound. Well, I don't know, maybe he becomes anti-woman when he gets his heart broken. I don't know. Yeah, it's not the most flattering.

Becca: No. I think it's a little different than that. Again, I read that there's a superstition to it.

Molly: Yes. [01:10:00] Oh, yes. There's that too.

Becca: I'm not defending his perspective here, but there's a separateness he feels with women, which I don't love, and his sister calls out. It's not that he hates women and doesn't want to be around women. It's that he feels like the environment of a naval ship is a man's purview, and it is an uncomfortable, harsh environment that he doesn't see the beautiful women in his life deserving, because it's too harsh for them. It's a delicacy thing, which his sister calls him out on, but it's not-- That's why she says, "Oh, stop the acting like we're so fine and gallant." Like, "It's gross."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, "We're rational creatures. We can be on a ship, we can climb a rig, we can take the weather beating on our faces. We're not so delicate." But he is doing a combo of superstition and saying, "Basically, ships are disgusting and filled with gross, sweaty men, [01:11:00] and that's not an environment that I want to put any woman through." That's what he's saying.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Basically, what Admiral Croft is saying is, "You think of ladies as these separate, delicate creatures, but when you get married, you will see that it is worth having your partner by your side on a ship."

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And Wentworth like, "Oh, God. Well, I don't know."

Molly: Right. I think that there is some insight there in that. He is constantly being told by his family that he will understand one day when he's married. And he's sick of that. I feel like he doesn't really want to get married. I think that his response to that is a little bit shutting-- Well, they're shutting the conversation down, but he's also shutting down the idea of him getting married. Not necessarily that he's not going to, but he doesn't want to talk about it, which is interesting.

Becca: There is a really big question mark on what Captain Wentworth wants out of marriage.

Molly: Yes, [01:12:00] there still is a question mark on that.

Becca: What does he picture it being? Why is it sensitive for him to think about how he'd be different in marriage? We don't know.

Molly: Well, it's sensitive for him to think about how he'd be different in marriage, because the one person he's ever loved turned him down. He had a vision of what that was going to look like and what he was going to look like when he was married and what his marriage would look like. And now, he has to restructure that for himself, and he's spent the last eight years doing so, so we don't know what he's restructured it to.

Becca: It's all very interesting questions.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: I think, obviously, the last chapter gives us a little bit of insight into how Wentworth thinks about Anne, that whole interaction with his picking up the child is telling in its own right. Anne certainly reads a lot into it.

Molly: Anne does read a lot into it. You have to think about it. If you were watching a child crawling all over someone who clearly is trying to do something-- At least, my first instinct would be to pick up the child, and take him away to go play with him to make that other person's life easier, whether I care about that person or not. It's an intimate thing to do, to lean over someone and grab a child off their back. But at the same time, to me, from an external perspective, it doesn't necessarily read as, like, this is the kindest thing that he could have done for me.

But to Anne, having had no contact with him for eight years and to have your only contact be like, he just said, "I hope the child's feeling better," like they have barely talked, and then they have this moment where they're standing awkwardly 6ft apart, not talking, waiting for someone else to come into the room. And then, he comes over and scoops this child off of her, for her, it is very romantic. It's not romantic, [01:14:00] but it means something. It means that he cares about her. It means that he sees her as a human being that he doesn't want to suffer.

Becca: Yeah. You're right. There is way in which a lot of guys would have come over and take the kid off you, no matter what. But one, the way it's written, you get a sense of a chemistry flowing from the interaction, the closeness. Two, if Wentworth pulling that child off of Mary, it would be followed by lots of jovial like, "Oh, don't worry, I've got this." But it's this cold thing where he cares enough about her to pull the child off of her, but then immediately runs away from her with the child to make sure that he's done the nice thing, but he doesn't have to talk to her. There's stakes to every interactions they have.

Molly: There's a push and pull, an electricity and also an angst and keep yourself away from me, because I don't trust myself when I'm around [01:15:00] you, sort of thing.

Becca: Yeah. It's a carefulness-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -between the two of them. When you're more careful around someone, it means that you're caring more about how each interaction goes. You're more flippant with someone you care less about-

Molly: Right.

Becca: -and you're more likely to engage in lighter conversation. Here, the fact that Wentworth conducts this action, but also at the same time can't bring himself to talk to Anne shows intensity to the relationship.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I think we'll leave it there now, because I think we covered the last question. I guess we'll be really quick with it. I asked about the differences between the Musgroves and the Elliots on their marriage discussions for their children. But I think we covered that a little bit, but if you want to just like put a cherry on top with it.

Molly: Yeah. I think to summarize, the Elliots want their family to continue marrying into wealth, and status and class, and continue keeping their family heightened in the world. [01:16:00] The Musgroves don't care so much about that. Yes, Mrs. Musgrove married into wealth, but they don't need their kids to do the same for them to be happy. I think Anne sitting here and watching this dichotomy, she's not necessarily having any big revelations at this current juncture, but at least, I hope it's making her think critically. I think it is critically of herself.

I think that it's hard for her to watch, because on the one hand, they were so pro-Henrietta marrying Charles Hayter. She is witnessing her family trying to put a stop to that when it's

not any of Mary's freaking business. So, anyway, yeah, it definitely shows the dichotomy there.

Becca: And once again highlights the warmth of the Musgroves versus the coldness of the Elliots as a family.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Another strong example [01:17:00] of that here. Okay. We're going to go to the standbys. Funniest quote?

Molly: Okay. So, I have a couple. One is when Mrs. Croft and Mrs. Musgrove are talking about Mrs. Croft's travels, and Mrs. Croft says, "We do not call Bermuda or Bahama, you know, the West Indies. Mrs. Musgrove had not a word to say in dissent, she could not accuse herself of having ever called them anything in the whole course of her life."

Becca: Good stuff.

Molly: Yeah. And then, I also have when Anne stays home with a headache and to take care of the baby, "She had only thought of avoiding Captain Wentworth, but an escape from being appealed to as umpire was now added to the advantages of a quiet evening."

Becca: Less Anne, relatable queen. We all want to sit with our sad playlist and not have to excruciatingly watch our exes flirt with other people. Questions moving forward.

Molly: I do want to know, because we're asked so much, which of the sisters he likes better and also which of the sisters likes him more? [01:18:00] Are they fighting over him, or is it playful? Does he actually like them or is he using them to make Anne jealous? which I'm sure is something we won't learn until the end of the book, but probably in the last two chapters.

How long is Wentworth going to stay? Because I know that he had places to go. So, will he just completely blow off his brother or what? Yeah, I think that's it.

Becca: Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Mrs. Croft.

Becca: Hell, yeah. Ah, 100%. Not a competition.

Molly: What a queen.

Becca: She's the best.

Molly: Yeah, I love her.

Becca: We love Mrs. Croft. Love her. Our ult-universe, Anne Elliot.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: All right. Listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next time, please read Chapters 10 and 11, if you're following along with Molly in her book. We're almost done with Part 1. Isn't that crazy?

Molly: Wow.

Becca: So, until next time though, stay proper.

Molly: And get on a boat. **[01:19:00]** Travel the world.

Becca: Sure. Do it. Sounds fun.

[music]

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