

Molly: Hey, everyone. And happy New Year. As we head into 2025, we want to thank all of you for your support this year and every year. Particularly, we want to thank our patrons over on Patreon for making this show possible. And a special shoutout to our newest patrons, Adriana and Sigrid. Welcome to the team.

If you're looking to support more independent creators in the new year, we hope you'll consider making us one of them. To see how you can support us, head on over to patreon.com/podandprejudice. And now, the moment you've all been waiting for this entire book, please enjoy this week's episode covering Volume II Chapter 11 of *Persuasion*.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Becca: Oh. All right. Are you ready?

Molly: Am I ready? [giggles]

Becca: You're not.

Molly: I'm excited.

Becca: Oh, boy. So much to say here.

Molly: Becca's ready to sit down and have a heart to heart about this.

Becca: Yeah. There's a lot to say about this portion. All I can really start with is, this [00:01:00] 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: 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 Chapter 11 or Chapter 23 or--

Becca: Something happens.

Molly: Something happens. [giggles]

Becca: It's a chapter.

Molly: It's not a major turning point.

Becca: Not any iconic scene in the Jane Austen canon. Guys, we have a lot to talk about. I can feel like Molly and I are both living on that low key end of year exhaustion and end of book exhaustion, but also, there's so much raw emotions coming at me in this scene.

Molly: Yeah, it's a lot. I feel like the more [00:02:00] we sit with it, the more it will continue to hit me.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Because at first, I was like-- Well, we'll get into thoughts. We'll also have a full *Persuasion* retrospective to do in the future. So, for now, let's live in the moment and I'm going to like--

Becca: Live in the moment?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Okay. Awesome. I'm ready.

Molly: So, should we tell the listeners where we left off?

Becca: Of course. So, we are at that point in time where we know the truth about Mr. Elliot. Anne has cleared up any confusion with Wentworth about her feelings for Mr. Elliot, or lack thereof. Both Louisa and Henrietta are betrothed, ready to get married. And everyone is hanging out, waiting to go to a little drinks soirée at the Elliot's town home. And Anne is also looking to find time to tell Lady Russell, how wrong she was about Mr. Elliot.

Molly: Yes. And I will say I was more prepared for the soirée to be [00:03:00] a bigger thing.

Becca: I know. In the last chapter, you were like, "This is it. The soirée." And I was like, "Oh. No, no. What if it was 02:00 PM before the soirée?"

[laughter]

Molly: 02:00 PM before the soirée. That's where shit goes down.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Yeah. So, at this point, Anne no longer cares about Mr. Elliot's advances, except for the fact that she thinks that they made Wentworth jealous. Also, she had promised to visit the Musgroves today. So, she puts off telling Lady Russell everything about Mr. Elliot one more day, which I was like, "Oh, no, something's going to happen." So far, nothing's happened.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: But she is delayed in going to the Musgroves by the rain. And by the time she gets there, Mrs. Croft and Captain Wentworth are already there.

Becca: Well, Mrs. Musgrove is already there, and Captain Harville is with Captain Wentworth.

Molly: Yes. Oh, yes. Mm-hmm. I don't know why I was just like, "Yeah, Mrs. Croft and Captain Wentworth."

Becca: Well, because Mrs. Croft is an [00:04:00] icon and Captain Wentworth is a hottie.

Molly: But Captain Harville is also just the best.

Becca: He's great. He also has a really weird and important role in this chapter in a way that's unforeseen, I guess.

Molly: Yeah. Yeah.

Becca: But immediately, your brain jumps to the incredible Mrs.-- Mrs. Croft is just objectively the best character in this book.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And so, I can understand why your brain would jump to her. Wentworth is Wentworth, and we can understand why Anne's brain jumps to him.

Molly: Yes. Yeah, of course. And also, at this point, Mary and Henrietta have gone out, and told Mrs. Musgrove to keep Anne there till they return. Immediately, Anne is deep in the misery of such happiness, or in the happiness of such misery. That was just a quote that I pulled about her being in the presence of Wentworth.

Becca: It's very real.

Molly: She's like, "Oh, my God, I'm so happy he's here. Oh, my God, I can't believe he's here." [onomatopoeia]

Becca: Yeah. Anne is the most relatable person Jane Austen [00:05:00] wrote about what it's like to be in the same room as someone you're attracted to, and being unsure of what to do with the feeling.

Molly: Yeah. And also, so uncertain of where they stand. Because at this point, she's pretty sure that he has feelings for her based on the way that he's been talking to her. But she also is aware that he thinks that she and Elliot are a done deal.

Becca: Well, no, he doesn't think that anymore.

Molly: Right. Oh, because in the last episode, she said--

Becca: "Oh, no, I don't care if we see Mr. Elliot." And then, he went and checked out the log and then he was like, "So, you don't care about seeing Mr. Elliot at this party, huh?"

Molly: Mm-hmm. Yeah, I forgot about that.

Becca: [chuckles] Yeah. It was only the meme we picked out.

Molly: I forgot. I forgot.

Becca: I think at this point, the tension that's here is the, what next tension.

Molly: Yes. Exactly. Okay. Yeah.

Becca: And that can be excruciating when it's there and it's cusp on something you don't know if anything is going to happen, but you both know there's something happening. [00:06:00] It's exciting, but it's terrifying.

Molly: Yeah. It's like, it's both awkward and thrilling.

Becca: Yes. That's where we're at.

Molly: Yeah. So, Wentworth needs to write a letter. My immediate thought is, what's this letter? Because they don't specify. And he goes into the corner to write a letter. Mrs. Musgrove is telling Mrs. Croft in very loud whisper tones about Henrietta and Charles' engagement in extreme detail. And a quote that I liked was, "Even with every advantage of taste and delicacy," which good Mrs. Musgrove could not give, [Becca chuckles] could only

be interesting to those involved in the story. It was very much giving Mrs. Bennet.

Becca: Yes. Yes. It's also giving every Italian and/or Jewish mother I've ever met in my life.

Molly: Which was also Mrs. Bennet.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Yeah. She says that even though they being her and Mr. Musgrove had reason to be opposed to the match, the kids were both so obsessed with each other that they were like, "Whatever, get married. [00:07:00] Actually, get married sooner rather than later, because she is opposed to a long engagement."

And Mrs. Croft agrees that she would rather have people marry at once on a small income than have a long engagement. Mrs. Musgrove cuts her off to reiterate, again, how much she abominates a long engagement. And Mrs. Croft says she also doesn't like an uncertain engagement, one where you're not sure when or if you'll have the means of marrying.

Becca: Very tense moment here.

Molly: Sounds familiar. Also-- Hang on just a second. I'm just realizing right now, Mrs. Croft is Wentworth's sister?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Does she know?

Becca: No.

Molly: Okay. Okay. Okay.

Becca: So, the only people who know about this love affair between Wentworth and Anne are Anne's family, specifically just Elizabeth and Sir Walter.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Captain Wentworth himself.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Anne herself, Lady Russell [00:08:00] and Captain Wentworth's brother, the one who's a curate.

Molly: Right. So, it's just a coincidence that Mrs. Croft has hit the nail on the head here.

Becca: Yeah. It's just they're talking about engagements. There's a lot of coincidental hitting the nail on the head in this scene.

Molly: There is a lot. And it's odd that it's all so coincidental, but yes.

Becca: It makes sense. We'll talk about this a little bit more. One of the great things about this story, is that so much is unsaid between these two main characters. But the plots that exist outside of them reflect the complexities of their love story. That's the brilliance of the book, is you have Henrietta and Charles Hayter the Hater out there showing the risk of going for the love match.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And you have, and we'll get to it, Benwick, and what it means to move on.

Molly: Right, which we'll definitely get to.

Becca: Yes. And so, to me, this is not necessarily coincidences as much as it is the culmination of all the plots coming together-

Molly: Right.

Becca: [00:09:00] -to make Wentworth and Anne confront how they feel about each other.

Molly: Right.

Becca: It's good writing.

Molly: Spicy.

Becca: [chuckles]

Molly: So, Anne's ears are perked at this. She glances at Wentworth at the same time as he looks at her. In other words, confronting-- Everything that you just said, confronting their feelings for each other.

Becca: And we should say, Wentworth's pen pauses on his page. He's writing this letter in the corner, hearing all these things and he little does a little pen scratch, which is like a record scratch. Graham, so just go ahead and put a record scratch there. And looks up at Anne and the two of them-- The way I picture they make eye contact in this moment and know what the other person is thinking.

Molly: Mm-hmm. And then, Anne blacks out.

Becca: [laughs] Who wouldn't?

Molly: The number of times Anne blacks out in this chapter and just suddenly doesn't know what's going on around her, but also in this whole book.

Becca: Here's what's great about this chapter. We'll get to it. But Anne is the queen of the internal panic.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: This entire [00:10:00] book is Anne Elliot panicking internally about her ex in a way that no one else picks up on. She's like, "Everyone can see."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And we'll get to it. But finally, she panics enough that people start to notice.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And it's great.

Molly: Yes. So, then, Captain Harville goes over to the window and gives Anne a look, like, "Come here, I have something to tell you." So, she goes to him. And now, they're standing just a little bit closer to where Wentworth is writing, which she is obviously aware of.

He pulls out a miniature, like a little mini painting of Captain Benwick, and says that it wasn't made for Louisa. This story is heartbreaking. Benwick had been bringing this miniature of

himself home for Fanny. Of course, she died. So, he has tasked his friend, Captain Harville, to bring it to Louisa. He thinks poor Fanny. He thinks that she would not have forgotten Benwick so soon, if he had been the one to die.

Becca: Yeah. It is a little heartbreaking, especially because for Captain Harville, he's still mourning his sister.

Molly: Yeah. And it's like, he can't blame the [00:11:00] guy. And they're still friends. But it does feel--

Becca: It's a weird feeling.

Molly: It's sad.

Becca: We've talked about this a little bit about the way in which the story does or doesn't judge Benwick for moving on so quickly.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And I think it culminates in this scene with Harville.

Molly: Yes. Anne says that she thinks no woman who had truly loved would forget so quickly. She thinks it's women's fate rather than their merit to be able to move on so fast, because they live at home with nothing to do, but stew in their emotions.

Becca: I do love this scene. And the way I read this is like-- The way she phrases it a little different, is that men are like always in actions and women are tasked with the steadfastness in the relationship.

Molly: Yeah. She says, "Men have continual occupation and change, which can soon weaken impressions." So, they can break up with someone or that their partner can die and then they go to [00:12:00] war and they have to manage the books or do this and that, and they move on, because they're not able to sit and feel.

Becca: Well, what she's saying, is that men have the facilities to move forward in life, whereas women get stuck. And she got very stuck.

Molly: Yes. Harville disagrees with all of this and says that, "Even if it were true, it wouldn't be true for Benwick," because he-- After Fanny died, the war ended, and he just came home and was living with the Harvilles. So, he should, by all rights, also be stuck stewing in his emotions.

And Anne says, "I guess that's true for Benwick, so it must just be man's nature to move on quickly." And he says, "No, it's not more in man's nature than women's to be un-constant and forget those they love."

In fact, he thinks it's the opposite, which is, their bodies are strongest, so are their feelings, [giggles] which I was like, "Okay, calm down a little bit." But that's what he says. And she says, "By that logic, one could say women's feelings are the most tender. And it would be too hard for a man if, in addition to all of his things that he's got going on, [00:13:00] his difficulties and the dangers he faces to have women's emotions added into the mix." And then her, voice falters, because as she's saying all this, I think feeling like then Wentworth must be over her, because he's out there doing all this stuff. He can't also have women's emotions. He can't also be still feeling this after eight years.

Becca: Yeah. Harville and Anne having this conversation past each other is a pretty interesting moment, because first of all, blanketing down, Jane Austen with the gender roles, it's a little dated, but I think there is an interesting conversation to be had here. Harville is

hurting and sad about the fact that this man who was so dedicated to his sister, who died, could so soon find love elsewhere.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: I think he's dealing with that reality and whether or not he can live with that. And Anne is telling herself the narrative that she has told herself for eight years about, whether or not [00:14:00] Wentworth could ever find her again. And the ease with which she says, "Oh, yeah. No, no, no, women are forever on these things."

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And out loud too. It's not like Harville knows that that's who she's talking about or she's talking from her own personal experience. So, she's got emotions tied up in it. But this is, to both of them, they're talking about it as if it is purely academic.

Molly: Right. And they're also both saying something that-- She's saying something that is breaking her heart. And he's saying, "Well, that can't be true," and yet, it's what's happened with Benwick. So, he's just baffled as to how that could have happened, and that breaks his heart. So, they're both sad.

Becca: It's an emotional scene for a Jane Austen novel. Really quiet an emotional scene for a Jane Austen novel.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And meanwhile, in the corner-- [chuckles]

Molly: In the corner, Wentworth just drops his pen.

Becca: It's such a [00:15:00] good moment where he's just like [unintelligible [00:15:02] [Molly laughs] I picture him just reaching over and listening to them talk.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I'm moving away from the microphone, but I'm doing like a mime for this audio medium, but just being like, "Oh, God, what if I--" and dropping the pen. I picture both of them snapping the head over, and he's like "Ugh"

Molly: [giggles]

Becca: And they have to just go back to the conversation. But Anne knows he's listening now, and he's stooping to pick up that pen really slowly, so he can hear every word.

Molly: Oh, my God. Wait, that's incredible. I had just pictured him sitting there with his pen in his hand, not writing and listening and not realizing that his pen was just slipping off the table. And then, all of a sudden, it falls and then he's like, "Shit, how did they-- They're going to know." But either way, he ends up in a situation.

Becca: Either way, he's drawn attention to himself. We, as the listeners-- As the listeners, we as the readers are on notice that he's listening. And Anne, [00:16:00] as the conversationalist, is also on notice that she's having this really charged conversation in the room with him.

This is what's brilliant about this scene, is that this tension is building slowly, because it started on such a heated precipice of what happens next between these two. And then, you had the added layer of the discussion of the contingent marriage. And now, we have this long discussion about constancy and love, and whether women or men are more constant.

These two know they're on the cusp of something in this moment, and these are the conversations being had around them. It's so tense. It's brilliant.

Molly: Yeah. So, they've both looked over at him, and Harville's like, "Are you done with your letter?" And he says, "No." And Harville says, "No rush. I'm having a good conversation with Anne over here," which also coming in clutch as a wingman without even knowing.

Becca: That's the story of this chapter.

Molly: Yeah, it really is. So, he continues and says he's **[00:17:00]** never opened a book that hasn't had something to say about the inconstancy of women. And Anne says, "Who the fuck do you think wrote those books?"

Becca: Which is a fantastic point.

Molly: It is a great point.

Becca: And a little Jane Austen turning out as well, because I think Jane Austen thinks women are more constant, a little bit.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But I love that line of Anne's where it's like-- I'm going to read the quote, because it's so good.

Molly: Yeah, read the quote. But I'll also say, while you look for it, I don't think that Jane Austen necessarily thinks women in general are more constant. I think that the conclusion that they come to here, is that there isn't a one or the other-

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: -that you can't actually prove one gender as a whole being more constant than the other, because it's so specific to each situation.

Becca: Yeah, that's true. That's true. Wentworth and Benwick are the two sides of that coin in Jane Austen's mind.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But I read a little bit of Jane Austen's own melancholy into this scene. You can't tell me she didn't feel **[00:18:00]** steadfast love after reading this. That's kind of why-- I didn't mean to say I think she necessarily thinks that women are more constant, but I do think she is speaking something personal into existence.

Molly: Totally. This whole book feels very personal.

Becca: Self-insert.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: [laughs] Okay. So, this is the quote. Harville says, "If I had such a memory as Benwick, I could bring you fifty quotations in a moment on my side the argument, and I do not think I ever opened a book in my life which had not something to say upon woman's inconstancy. Songs and proverbs, all talk of woman's fickleness. But perhaps you will say, these were all written by men."

And replies, "Perhaps I shall. Yes, yes, if you please, no reference to examples in books. Men have had every advantage of us in telling their own story. Education has been theirs in

so much higher a degree, the pen has been in their hands. I will not allow books to prove anything.”

Molly: A perfect quote.

Becca: [00:19:00] Especially, because this pen is in Jane Austen's hand, and she's telling the story of a very, very constant woman.

Molly: Yeah. She says, “If you give women education and means to write, they'll tell you how they actually feel.”

Becca: Go off.

Molly: Go off, Jane.

Becca: Yeah.

[laughter]

Molly: He says, “Okay. Well, if we can't use books, how are we going to prove anything?”
And Anne says-

Becca: “We're not going to.”

Molly: She says, “We're both biased. We probably are influenced by circumstances we can't mention without saying something we shouldn't.”

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Hmm. He says, “She doesn't understand how it feels to leave your wife and children without knowing when you'll see them again and how incredible it feels when you finally do.”
And Anne says, “Of course, I'm not saying that men can't love. Of course, I believe that men can love and be faithful. I just think that it's only so long as they have an object.”

“I mean, while the woman you love lives and lives for you, all the privilege I claim for my own sex, it is not an enviable one. You do not need, [00:20:00] or you need not covet it, is that of loving longest when existence or when hope is gone.”

Becca: When existence or when hope is gone. Just that line makes you break for Anne.

Molly: Because she's going to love him for the rest of her life.

Becca: She's basically saying in this room like, “All I have, as a person, is the fact that no matter what this other person thinks or says. I will love him till the day I die. And that I don't love that that's my lot in life, but that is my lot.” Very intense stuff from our girl, Anne Elliot.

Molly: Well, she is an intense lady.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: [giggles] She feels very deeply.

Becca: She does. And she never shows it. [chuckles]

Molly: [giggles] Never. Harville says, she has a good soul and he just can't think of an explanation for Benwick when all is said and done. Then, Mrs. Croft gets up to leave and says, she'll see everyone at the party later, which I was like, I forgot about the party. Exciting stuff. [00:21:00] The party's going to be where everything happens, for sure.

Becca: Yeah. Yeah. It's really going to be all about the party. I can just picture you reading this portion, being like, "Oh, they're going to go to the party."

Molly: I was so excited.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Wentworth folds up his letter in haste and tells Harville, he'll be ready in 30 seconds and then, he leaves without saying goodbye to Anne. She walks over to his writing desk. And as soon as she gets there, he bursts back in saying, he's forgotten his gloves. He turns so his back is to Mrs. Musgrove, shoves a letter into Anne's hands, or onto the table in front of her, gives her a pleading look.

Becca: It specifically says, with eyes of glowing entreaty fixed on her for a moment.

Molly: Glowing entreaty.

Becca: Oh. You know what he's saying in that moment though. You know the look he gives her.

Molly: He says, please.

Becca: He's saying, "You must read this."

Molly: He says, "Read it fucking right now."

Becca: Oh, boy.

Molly: So, he [00:22:00] grabs his gloves and he leaves. And Anne is like, "Oh, my God. Oh my God. Oh my God." Looks at the letter. It's barely legible. On the front, it says to Miss AE. And it's so sloppy. It's clearly written in haste. And she realizes he was supposed to be writing to Benwick, and he was writing two letters, hence the haste. Okay.

Becca: Hence the dropped pen.

Molly: Hence the dropped pen. He was like, "I'm switching pads right now." "On the contents of this letter depended all which this world could do for her," is the exact quote. She is stressed. She opens the letter.

Becca: Better be a good letter, huh?

Molly: Oh. And it is. Okay, [Becca laughs] here we go.

Becca: Are you going to just read the whole thing front to back?

Molly: Well, I was going to not, but should I? I did the first line, and then I summarized the rest.

Becca: Let's go beat by beat with it. But I think we are going to have to go through each quote.

Molly: Okay. I'll just go through the first one that I wrote down first.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: "I can no longer listen in silence. [00:23:00] I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope."

Becca: Boy. [Molly giggles] Well, it's a famous line.

Molly: I knew it. I was like, "Oh, my God. Oh, my God." As soon as I saw that there was a letter at the bottom of the page, I was like, "Something's going to happen." For some reason, I didn't think the line was going to be his.

Becca: Really? Who did you think it was going to belong to?

Molly: I thought it was going to be Anne's, just because the whole book is from her perspective. It makes so much sense as a proposal line.

Becca: Graham, really loud sound effect, please.

[sound effect]

Molly: It makes so much sense for it to be him though.

Becca: Well, yeah. I don't even want to cut it off here though, because what does it mean to be half agony, half hope comes in the next line. "Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, [00:24:00] eight years and a half ago."

Like, his half agony and his half hope is the fact that he has been dying inside for eight years longing for her, and he has rekindled something in himself that now knows that he could have her again.

Molly: But he's also not sure if he can, because he doesn't know yet if she actually feels this way about him.

Becca: And I think he's starting to from what she said to Harville.

Molly: Well, that's all coming.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: "Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant."

Becca: That might be my favorite line of the letter, "I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant."

Molly: He's admitting that he was petty.

Becca: Yeah. He's like, "I can understand why you would think I would be inconstant." But it's so true. [00:25:00] I'm trying to find the right words for this. "You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope," are some of the most beautiful words written about love, and they're some of Jane Austen's best.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But "I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant." The rhythm of that, from a Janie perspective, just brilliant. It's like, he has to drive home the point like, "How dare you think I could get over you?" Like, "How dare you think that you couldn't occupy every thought in my mind?" Molly's dying.

Molly: I wrote you 365 letters.

Becca: That's exactly right.

Molly: [crosstalk] every day for a year.

Becca: Exactly. It's that same feeling of like, "No matter what you think of me, don't you dare, don't you dare question the fact that I have loved you since the moment I laid eyes on you." It's so good. Molly is now crying, everybody.

Molly: [laughs] Okay. Okay. We keep going. "You alone have brought me to Bath. For you alone, I think and plan. Have you not seen this? [00:26:00] Can you fail to have understood my wishes? I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine." So, he knows that she knows that he loves her, I think.

Becca: He's not hiding it anymore.

Molly: Right. He's being pretty obvious.

Becca: Yeah. And she's like, "Oh, I think he does like me. But what does this mean?"

Molly: Anne.

Becca: And it's like, "No. Anne, if he loves you, he's a man of action. He's going to do something about it."

Molly: And he always has been. And that's hot. That's hot.

Molly and Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Fine. All right.

Becca: This goes along with what she loves about him in the first place. He's a really sturdy character, and one who will pursue what he wants no matter what. That's what makes him different from Mr. Elliot, is that Mr. Elliot is this chameleon who's a little too proper, a little too polished. Even when Anne didn't think he was a shitty person, she said, "No, what I like is a person who, no matter what's holds true to their convictions," like who is themselves in a fullest sense. And Wentworth is who he is, and who he is pursues what he [00:27:00]wants. And what he wants is Anne.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: "I can hardly write. I am every instant hearing something which overpowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice when they would be lost on others."

Oh. And then, hears her saying that men can love. And he says, Too good, too excellent creature! You do us justice, indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating, in--"

Becca: F. W.

Molly: F. W.

Becca: Frederick Wentworth.

Molly: Is that in me? Is he saying in me and signing off?

Becca: Yes, believe me. Believe the love to be most fervent, most undeviating in me.

Molly: That was a sign off. That was a sign off of the letter. I was like, "Did he cut himself off with stress?"

Becca: No. He is cutting himself off to put his initials there. That's how he signed the letter.

Molly: [laughs] Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating. [00:28:00]

Becca: To pull back for a minute, this man is so dramatic.

Molly: He's so dramatic.

Becca: But in the hottest man way, in that way where he will-- This gives eyes blazing. Like, be lining for you in the rain.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: This is giving Noah in *The Notebook* a little bit, is what we're getting at. I'm not even that big a *Notebook* fan, but that scene where he walks to her and just takes her in his arms with on a mission, that is this letter. That is the Jane Austen equivalent of purposefully strolling towards the woman you love and taking her in your arms.

Molly: Laying one on her.

Becca: This is explicit, but let's not get too explicit.

Molly: We won't get too explicit. Then we've got a post script. I must go, uncertain of my fate, but I shall return hither, or follow your party, as soon as possible. A word, a look, will be enough to decide whether I enter your father's house this evening or never."

So, all she has to do is say, "I want you to come to the party," and he is one knee. [00:29:00] If she doesn't give him word, then that'll silence him on this matter forever to use a quote from another book that we love.

Becca: Yes. Yes. I think that is exactly it. I think it's the three words, eight letters say it and I'm yours. Just say the word and--

Molly: [singing] I'm yours. Yeah.

Becca: I don't think that's their song.

Molly: No.

Becca: Although I will say this. If you recall, we promoted an album by Amanda Fagan based on the Jane Austen novels. Shouts to Amanda. Her work is excellent. The song she wrote about *Persuasion*, which you were not allowed to listen to, was *Half Agony, Half Hope*.

Molly: That's so good.

Becca: That whole song is an absolute fucking banger. So, we've reached the end of the letter, and we will panic with Anne in a minute. But I do want to ask you, did you know that this book involved a letter?

Molly: No.

Becca: Okay. I think I had heard that this book involved a letter beforehand, and I knew

people liked the letter. But I didn't know-- I'm really glad it was a surprise for you.

Molly: Yeah. I've now realized in-- I don't think I realized it until now. [00:30:00] I guess *Sense and Sensibility* doesn't really have one. But the big outburst of emotion from the man--

Becca: Well, *Sense and Sensibility* has the big outburst of emotion from the woman.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: When Edward comes back, and it is clear he's not married to Lucy Steele-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -and Elinor breaks down.

Molly: Yeah, that fucking rocked.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I mean, we're going to get into this in the study question, so I won't get into it right now. Yeah, I didn't know there was a letter, and I loved that it happened in a letter, because it's so fitting with what I know of Wentworth so far, because also, we haven't really gotten to know Wentworth I feel like firsthand.

Becca: This is where we do, in my opinion.

Molly: Yeah. Because so far, it's been a lot of like, "Oh, she's here."

Becca: [laughs] It's a lot of, "Oh, he's here."

Molly: Yeah, exactly. The whole book is, "Oh, they're over there."

Becca: Yup.

Molly: And now, he's written it all down and then he's like, "Read it." [giggles] [00:31:00]

Becca: Yeah. This is a book where he's a stone wall. And you hear, he's an incredible flirt. You hear, he's the true love of her life, that their souls are matched. When you read this letter, you kind of get why.

Molly: Yeah. Because they're very similar, but in a good way.

Becca: They have the same deep passion for each other. The same hidden, but ever-present pull towards each other. This level of intensity, this level of passion, this level of deep yearning is so specific and is so wrapped up in pain for both of them.

The fact that at the very end of the book, this-- I think of this chapter as the book where you split open Wentworth and the whole book is backtracked, like post-dated. You get the whole book from this chapter, if that makes sense.

Molly: Right.

Becca: [00:32:00] You get what's happening the entire time.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: [crosstalk] makes it an interesting chapter. It's very much without giving anything

away. I really like the television series, *Veronica Mars*. Hear me out.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: And *Veronica Mars*, really, everyone agrees that the first two seasons are the better seasons of the show.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And there's a main mystery in each season. And the first season, the whole thing is built from the beginning, because it's really built around the personal story that connects Veronica to the murder. And so, watching the first season, each episode is an incredibly propulsive force forward towards the solving of the mystery.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: The second season, she's less emotionally connected to the mystery. But the way that it is revealed at the end makes the whole season make sense in a way that didn't before. So, it's a really interesting way to frame it, because it makes the whole thing more about the [00:33:00] murderer than it does about the victim. Because the first season is very much about the victim, second season is very much about the murderer. In this particular case, I feel like this love story is one you can only understand when you get to the end.

Molly: Yeah. To bring it to another Kristen Bell TV show, it's *The Good Place* Season 1.

Becca: Exactly. Everyone should watch both of those shows. They're both great. [chuckles]

Molly: Yeah. And also, because the whole time we've been getting the love story from Anne's perspective, so to understand it fully, now we have Wentworth's perspective.

Becca: Now, we have to hear him out.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. So, back into the story. [chuckles]

Molly: Okay. So, the letter ends. And Anne thinks maybe she could have recovered with 30 minutes of solitude.

Becca: I understand this so much, because when you get a really intense download of information-- If you have to go into socializing immediately afterwards, it's a nightmare.

Molly: No, I cannot do it. I cannot do it. I often [00:34:00] will-- If something happens while I'm at work, for example, I just run away.

Becca: I will be in a situation, where if I get a really long text message that I know is going to be really intense, I'm like, "I can't touch that while I have other things to do."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, if I were Anne, I probably would not have read that letter right away. I would have been like, "I'm going to hang on."

Molly: No, you-- Anne must read that letter.

Becca: It's good that an read it right away. To be clear, if I'm Anne and the way I operate with intense situations, I am finding a way to get out of my day with these girls in a way that's like, "Fine and whatever." And then, I'm reading it on my own to give myself time to process.

Molly: Right. But the thing is, that's like Jane Bennet behavior. That's Elinor Dashwood behavior.

Becca: That is not Anne Elliot behavior.

Molly: Anne Elliott is a chaos demon. She's like, "Oh fuck. Why did I do that?" [giggles]

Becca: Well, here's the thing about Anne. She really does think she can bear the brunt of any intense emotional turmoil.

Molly: Because she just blacks out afterwards.

Becca: Because she's like, "I can hold it together [00:35:00] in front of these people. I'm good at this. This is what I do." For once, Wentworth has made Anne flummoxed enough [Molly laughs] that other people notice.

Molly: [laughs] Yeah. She's like-- So, 10 minutes go by, and she's like, "Okay, I could have sat here hyperventilating for-- 20 more minutes, I would have been fine." But then, Charles, Mary and Henrietta walk in, and she's just completely not able to do it.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: She's fully blacked out. She's not listening to what they're saying, and they're like, "Do you need to go home?"

Becca: And she's like, "Yeah, in fact. I'm not feeling well."

Molly: She's like, "I'm indisposed."

Becca: Which is bad, because then Mrs. Musgrove's like, "Oh, my God. You have to get the walking thing home."

Molly: The chair.

Becca: She's like, "No, no, no, because I want to see if I can find Wentworth, so I need to walk."

Molly: Yeah, she wants to go outside. She's like, "I need to walk. He's going to be out there waiting for me somewhere, and I need to find him." But of course, Mrs. Musgrove is like, "Have you fallen? Is it a head injury?" And Anne's like, "No, I promise I did not injure my head. I'll be fine by the party." [00:36:00]

Before she goes though, she's like, "Okay, in case I don't see Wentworth," she's like, "Mrs. Musgrove, can you make sure that Captain Harville, and also Wentworth know that we really want them to come to the party? We really hope we'll see them later."

Becca: And Mrs. Musgrove is like, "Oh, yeah, I know Captain Harville will be there." And she's like, "Yeah." [crosstalk]

Molly: She has to make sure Wentworth is also--

Becca: "Also make sure Captain Wentworth knows that we would all very much like him to attend this party"?

Molly: Yeah. She's trying so hard to be casual.

Becca: But also, the intensity of like, "If I don't see him, he has to hear from someone. This

is my plan B.”

Molly: She’s like, “Someone must know.” And she’s like, “Okay, you know what? No, if he doesn’t come to the party, I’ll tell Harville to tell him how much he was missed,” or something like that. She’s planning ahead. And then, oh, no, they still think she’s too ill to walk home. So, Charles is like, “I’ll go with her.” He was supposed to go to the gunsmith, but he’s so kind as to walk her instead.

Becca: This is one of those moments, like, it’s such a backtrack to how Charlie was at the very beginning of the book, where remember when their **[00:37:00]** child was injured and both Mary and Charlie were like, “Oh, we should watch him. But I really want to go to dinner with Captain Wentworth.” It’s one of those things where it’s like, “I should walk Anne home. I really want to go to the gun store, but I should walk Anne home.”

Molly: Yeah. He’s being a very good brother-in-law. But they’re walking, and Anne hears very familiar footsteps behind her and there comes Wentworth.

Becca: [gasps] Oh.

Molly: And so, he walks with them for a minute before Charles cracks and asks him which way he’s going. And Wentworth goes, “I hardly know,” which implies that he’s just been wandering, waiting for Anne to pop out.

Becca: Yes, that’s exactly what’s happening. This is like the riskiest text message you could possibly send. You hit send, and then you just wait and you stare at the little bubbles.

Molly: Yup.

Becca: Like, the dot dot dot bubbles of doom.

Molly: Yup.

Becca: And that’s what Wentworth’s doing. He’s just sitting and staring at the dot dot dot bubbles of doom.

Molly: Also, he came up behind them, which I’m like, “Was he hiding behind a bush?”

Becca: No. Here’s what’s happening in my brain, is that **[00:38:00]** he’s standing by the side of the building anxious, and then he sees Anne and Charlie start to walk the other way and he’s like, “Oh, fuck.” And so, he comes up walking behind them.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And Charlie’s like, “Oh, thank God, you can walk her home. I just want to make this gun--”

Molly: He’s like, “I really got to get to this appointment.”

Becca: And they’re like, “Yeah, that’s fine. Charlie, go ahead.”

Molly: Yeah. Totally chill.

Becca: “It’s fine. I’ll walk her home.”

Molly: I was like wingman of the year without even knowing it.

Becca: That is what I mean. Captain Harville and Charlie Musgrove coming in absolute clutch for our boy, Freddie Wentworth, in this moment. Mwah.

Molly: Mwah. So, Anne and Wentworth turned down a quiet street, where they can really talk.

Becca: For the first time in this fucking book.

Molly: Yup. At first, I was like, "Oh, no. Are they just going to tell us that they talked and not actually get into the conversation?" Because it was like, "Where they could go over all of the particulars of their past." And I was like, "What are the particulars of their past?"

Becca: No, no, no, no. We get.

Molly: Yeah. I should trust Jane Austen. I really should just put [00:39:00] my trust in Jane Austen.

Becca: No, sometimes she does do the big confession of love, and then they work out the particulars later.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And in this one in particular, she was like, "No, no, no. They deserve." [crosstalk]

Molly: They're going to talk about it.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Oh. So, they are both happier now than they were eight years ago, because they are more tender, more tried and more fixed in a knowledge of each other's character, truth and attachment. More equal to act, more justified in acting.

Becca: This is like an advertisement for timing.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: There's a line from a show that I don't care for how it ended and didn't-- In hindsight, it's not as great, but some of its snippets are very good, *How I Met Your Mother*. But Robin has a line where she just goes, "Connections easy. Timing's a bitch."

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And these two finally got the timing right.

Molly: They got the timing right. While they're walking, the rest of the world melts away. They don't notice anybody else. Ah.

Becca: They're so in love.

Molly: They're in love.

Becca: They are in love.

Molly: He says that he had, in fact, been jealous of Mr. Elliot, and that had guided all his actions since [00:40:00] coming to Bath. But he had gained some hope. By the way, she looked at him and talked to him. And finally, when she was talking to Harville just now, he was like, "Oh, my God, I think she might like me, [giggles] and I have to tell her how I feel."

Becca: Okay. So, first of all, a couple things here. One, I love the idea that Wentworth is sitting at a table writing a letter about Captain Benwick's portrait.

Molly: Oh, right. It's about the portrait. That makes sense. It ties it all together.

Becca: Yeah. He's writing the letter about the portrait at the little table, and hears this conversation and is so overcome by what he hears that he bares his soul in a slightly more hurried letter that he writes on the side after dropping his pen, where he's like, "Oh, my God, she's talking about love. She said men aren't constant. She has to know how constant I am."

Molly: I'm so constant.

Becca: "I'm so fucking [00:41:00] constant." And so, he just had to write it down and stop writing the other letter to ensure that he could tell Anne Elliott how he felt as soon as physically possible. Very good stuff.

Second of all, we have spent this entire book inside of Anne Elliot's head, hearing her panic about Captain Wentworth and how deeply in love with him she is. I love that Wentworth's like, "I had no idea until that conversation you had with Captain Harville that you still loved me." It goes to show that our girl, Anne, has been internally panicking like a pro, this entire book. And part of the reason I love this chapter is, finally, she gets to panic outwardly a little bit. [chuckles]

Molly: Yeah. Yeah, she gets to freak out a little. He reiterates that he has never loved anyone but her, even if it was unintentional. In fact, he tried to get over her. He thought he had succeeded, but when he believed himself to be indifferent, he was really just angry which [00:42:00] goes to show that the opposite of love isn't hate.

Molly and Becca: It's indifference.

Becca: We've talked about this so much. Whether or not Wentworth still loved her, how he felt about her, whether he got over her, whether he was trying to make her jealous, what he was trying to do in those moments, the plain truth of Wentworth's journey is he was desperately trying to get over her in those moments after eight years.

Molly: Yeah. It breaks my heart. He admits that he had been unjust to her merits, because he had been a sufferer from them. He thought she was too perfect, so he was mean about it. It was only at Uppercross that he started to do her justice, which I think was started to see that she wasn't a bad person.

Becca: This is where you throw into light some of these moments we have in Uppercross and Elliot at the piano where he asks if she dances and everyone says "No, she just goes to the piano," when he pulls the toddler off of her [00:43:00] and panicked about that and we were like, "Maybe she's overreacting." No, ma'am. That was an outburst from him, not being able to hold back the fact that he did care about her." When he forced her to go in the carriage with the Crofts, again, a show of care for her.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But he couldn't help himself.

Molly: Yeah. And then, at Lyme, he begins to understand why all that was happening.

Becca: Because of the uppy downy in part.

Molly: Because he was like, "Oh, shit, she is hot."

Becca: The uppy downy.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: What's that line from Squidward? "Oh, no, he's high."

Molly: "Oh no, she's hot."

Becca: We talked about this a little bit. It was not just the uppy downy from Mr. Elliot that sells him here, it's much more importantly the cob.

Molly: Right. How she handled it, how she took charge, how she's the opposite of Louisa.

Becca: Yeah. We talked about this at the time the way in those moments at the cob, Wentworth couldn't hold back the fact that in those moments, that's who he needed, that's who he trusted.

Molly: He trusted her, and he and she [00:44:00] together took over that situation and they made a good team.

Becca: They did. But she was the one who kept her cool. She did better than him in that situation.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: And he blames himself for what happened out there.

Molly: Yes. And speaking of Louisa.

Becca: Speaking of Louisa.

Molly: So, he had in fact tried to attach himself to Louisa. Out of pride, he had not really cared for Louisa, but he was too proud to admit that he was still in love, and so he was like, "I need to try to move on."

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Do we think this is unfair to Louisa?

Becca: It might be unfair and we'll talk about it and it's in the study questions. It's pretty human.

Molly: It is. I don't blame him.

Becca: You can't really-- If you do not intend to marry somebody else and you're Wentworth, and there's this perfectly reasonable person in front of you who you enjoy, it's perfectly reasonable to try to see if there's something there.

Molly: Yeah. No, that makes total sense. And Louisa [00:45:00] ended up making Anne seem better by comparison to him, because he learned to distinguish between the steadiness of principle and the obstinacy of self will between the daring's of heedlessness and the resolution of a collected mind. So, okay, just to pause and gather our thoughts here.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: So, he was mad at Anne-

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: -for eight years.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: He sees Anne again. He starts out being mad at her.

Becca: Very mad at her.

Molly: At Uppercross, he starts being less mad at her and starts to admit that he cares about her.

Becca: I think at Uppercross, he's still not totally admitting it to himself.

Molly: It's just happening. He's just instinctively caring about her.

Becca: Exactly. You can't stop yourself from loving somebody.

Molly: And does he stop himself from being as mad at her?

Becca: No, I don't think so.

Molly: What does do her justice mean? Only at Uppercross had he learned to do her justice, and only at Lyme had he begun to understand himself. **[00:46:00]**

Becca: I think what he's seeing at Uppercross, is that she is still an excellent character.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And what he's seeing at lime is that he still loves her.

Molly: Gotcha.

Becca: This is like a distinction-

Molly: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Becca: But he is still trying to attach himself to Louisa. And to be clear, I'm not saying I think it's totally without fault. I'm saying, we've all done it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, we've all tried to make something work with someone, because we're trying to move on from somebody else.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And I think that's fair.

Molly: Well, he's going to later admit that he doesn't think it was right of him, so we'll get there. Oh, well, actually, we'll get there right now. So, he realizes that Harville and Mrs. Harville both think that he and Louisa are engaged or on their way to being engaged. And he's like, "Oh, fuck. If her family, or if she feels that way and thinks that we are that intimate, then I'm no longer at my own disposal. I'm hers if she wants me." So, he realizes that he's been maybe **[00:47:00]** too flirtatious publicly with her. He's ready to do the honorable thing and be with her.

Becca: And boy, does he get lucky?

Molly: [giggles] Oh, [Becca chuckles] yes. Well, first, he admits that he could have tainted her reputation. He knows that he has to go on thinking of himself as bound to her if she has

feelings for him. But they're not there yet. So, he decides, "Okay, well, I'm going to go visit my brother, and I'm going to see if I can leave Lyme and let this dissipate and let the speculations dissipate." He's with his brother for six weeks. And in that time, thank God, Louisa gets engaged to Benwick.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: Phew. While he's with his brother, Edward asks about Anne, asking if she has altered. Not suspecting that to his eyes, she could never alter. And Anne hears this, and it's better for her even than just like hearing, "Oh, I'm still hot." But it's better for her to hear when compared with what he said before. I was confused about this bit, [00:48:00] because-

Becca: Sure. Sure.

Molly: -she says that this is the result, not the cause of the revival of his warm attachment.

Becca: What she's saying, is that she was never ugly. Anne was always hot.

Molly: Anne was always hot.

Becca: #Anne was always hot.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Or, if you want to take it a little bit more self-deprecatingly, maybe Anne is not that hot, but she is. We know she is. But what she's saying basically, is that Wentworth thinking she was altered had nothing--

Molly: Was the result of him being mad at her.

Becca: And his love for her now makes him now see her in a different light. It's not the cause of it though. The cause would be that he realizes she's hot and wants her back. It's that he now wants her back, and therefore is acknowledging that she's hot.

Molly: Because the reason, the cause is her character, and that he loves her character.

Becca: Yeah. The cause is that they're soulmates.

Molly: Aww. Okay, thank you for clearing that up.

Becca: No problem. It's very romantic.

Molly: It is. Okay. So, Louisa gets engaged to Benwick and he's like, "I'm going to Bath." [00:49:00] And he wonders if it was bad that he was like, "Maybe she still loves me." But he was hopeful, because he knew that Anne was single and she had refused one man.

Becca: This is a fascinating little moment.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Because we talked about the moment when Louisa notes that Anne refused Charlie Musgrove.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And we were like, "Is he jealous? Is he like, "Oh, she was persuaded away from that guy too?" No.

Molly: It taught him to hope. She said no to a man of higher status than him.

Becca: And in his mind, what that perked up was not jealousy. It was, "Could it be, because she's still in love with me?"

Molly: And he's like, "Is it bad that that's where my mind went?"

Becca: But he's right.

[laughter]

Becca: We are just really flustered as a twosome here.

Molly: He then talks about the concert and [00:50:00] how at times he felt really hopeful, but then he also was devastated, because she was there with Elliot, and also her family was there and he was like, "Oh shit, they're all going to be pro Mr. Elliot." He feels like a fool, and he looks on in agony as he sees her with Lady Russell, and then quote "Was it not the recollection of what had been, the knowledge of her influence, the indelible, immovable impression of what persuasion had once done."

Becca: It's in the title.

Molly: "Was it not all against me?" And Anne says, "Well, you shouldn't have worried about that now, because I'm older and wiser." And also, she reminds him that she yielded to persuasion exerted on the side of safety, not of risk. She thought she was yielding to duty at the time, but she has no duty to marry Mr. Elliot. In marrying a man indifferent to her, all risk would have been incurred and all duty violated.

I think what she's saying here, is when she [00:51:00] was persuaded by Mrs. Lady Russell, she was being persuaded to the safe option and away from the risky option.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But it would be more risky to marry a man who doesn't love her.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: But she would be able to keep her house though. So, he has a point.

Becca: I also think that Mr. Elliot does love Anne. I find Mr. Elliot a fascinating character. But I think her point basically is here like, "We are in different circumstances now." And we're going to talk about those different circumstances, because boy, are they interesting. But now they are older, wiser people, they are learning to let go of eight years of pain and hurt.

Molly: They're trying.

Becca: Exactly. And instead, in its place, the love is untarnished between the two of them.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And knowing it still exists on either side is all that it took.

Molly: Yeah. He says, maybe he should have known, but he didn't know yet that she had changed, or grown up or whatever. He still [00:52:00] only thought of her as the person who had given him up, and then been influenced by anyone but him and he had no reason to think that Lady Russell would be of any less authority with her now.

Anne says, she thought for sure her manner would have spared him all this. But Anne, you

know, you can't. You have been panicking underneath your skin.

Becca: Anne, this is internal panic.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: You're the SpongeBob meme. We already made it.

Molly: [giggles] He says, her manner was the only ease which her engagement to another man might give. The only thing he could latch onto was her being kind to him.

Becca: Imagine being this obsessed with someone.

Molly: Sad.

Becca: After eight years.

Molly: But also very romantic.

Becca: Extremely romantic.

Molly: Then, they arrive home, and Anne goes inside and she goes upstairs to think about how happy she is.

Becca: Squee internally in her room.

Molly: Yeah. But she also has to balance out her giddiness by reminding herself that it can't last, which I thought was depressing. Are you catching that line too?

Becca: Where is it? [00:53:00]

Molly: It's like, right when she goes inside. She says, "She re-entered the house so happy as to be obliged to find an alloy in some momentary apprehensions of its being impossible to last."

Becca: It's too good to be true.

Molly: Oh, yeah. But also, *Happy & Sad* at the same time by Kacey Musgraves.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Okay. Time for the party in the last possible moment.

Becca: This really important party where the entire plot will happen in the book.

Molly: Yeah. So, the party is too large for intimacy, but too small for variety. Normally, what Anne would find a drag, but tonight, she finds that the evening flies by, because she is glowing with happiness. She avoids Elliot, but she pities him, which I think is a good growth arc for our girl.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: She's amused by the Wallaces. The Dalrymples are just innocuous--

Becca: Oh, who?

Molly: The Dowager Viscountess Dalrymple Lady Dalrymple and Baby Dalrymple.

Becca: Thank you very much.

Molly: Our innoxious cousins or having no adverse effect or not injurious to physical or mental health, they're just there.

Becca: Really quick side note. [00:54:00] I feel like it's innocuous.

Molly: So, innoxious is a word.

Becca: No, no, no. But I feel like it's the same root as innocuous.

Molly: It probably is, because when I searched innoxious, innocuous came up. Hang on, we're going to do it again. Miriam Webster says, the meaning of innoxious is innocuous. It's the same word.

Anyway, she doesn't even care about Mrs. Clay or her fathers and sisters. She is happy to chat with the Musgroves, Captain Harville, Lady Russell and the Crofts. And of course, she has some brief moments with Captain Wentworth.

For example, at one point, they're both pretending to be admiring some house plants. And she says, she's been thinking it over and she's decided that she was right to be guided by Lady Russell way back when. The reason being Lady Russell was like a mother to her at the time, "Do not mistake me, however. I am not saying that she did not err in her advice," which I thought was sweet, because she's seeing that [00:55:00] Lady Russell really did have her best interests in heart.

Becca: This is a really interesting passage, just generally, because I think it answers without answering the question of whether or not Anne was right to be persuaded away from Wentworth.

Molly: Mm-hmm. It answers what Anne thinks, which is that she thinks she was right.

Becca: The way that it's written here though, whether it was the right or wrong decision, whether Lady Russell was right or wrong. Basically, what she says is it's we can never know.

Molly: Yeah. She says, it's one of those cases where the advice is only good or bad as the event decides.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: So, whatever the outcome might be.

Becca: So, in this regard, of course, it looks like the wrong decision now that Wentworth's been so successful and their love has persisted.

Molly: How would they have known?

Becca: Lady Russell could not have known that.

Molly: Right. And Anne says, she would never have given the same advice, but she also wouldn't have known what she knew now. Like, now she knows, and she would never give that advice. But she does say, if she had not done what Lady Russell had persuaded her to do, she would have suffered more in continuing the engagement than she did in giving it [00:56:00] up, because she would have suffered in her conscience. I think because she felt she had a duty to Lady Russell and to Captain Wentworth, because she would have thought she was--

Becca: Taking on a very risky match for both of them.

Molly: Right. Remind me why it's risky for him?

Becca: I think it's financial wise. It's like, at the time, he didn't have a lot of money. It's pretty much what, Mrs. Croft says to Mrs. Musgrove, is that it's an uncertain future for the two of them-

Molly: Right.

Becca: -and he would have had the need to provide for her earlier.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And he wouldn't have had the means to do that, they would have been cut off from her family, and it would have made their lives very difficult.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It would have worked out maybe, because he's very talented and he made his way up in the navy. So, it would have been a few years of hardship, but ultimately okay. But-

Molly: How could they have known?

Becca: -how could they have known?

Molly: She thinks that a strong sense of duty is not a bad thing in a woman. And he says, "I'm not quite there yet, but maybe I can forgive [00:57:00] Lady Russell in time." He also says that he's thought over the past too, and he's wondered if he was his own enemy even more than Lady Russell was, because he wonders if he had written to her in the year eight, which I'm guessing is two years into their separation, with a few thousand pounds and his promotions in the navy, would she have renewed their engagement?

Becca: And she basically says, "Oh, yeah."

Molly: She says, "Would I?"

Becca: And he goes, "Good God. You would."

Molly: He says, he wanted to, but he was too proud to ask again. He was too angry. He shut his eyes. He refused to do her any justice. He didn't want to know what she would have said. And now, he would forgive anyone before he forgives himself, because he could have spared them both six years of suffering.

And now, he says this kind of pain is new to him, because usually he thinks he deserves all his blessings. And right now, he feels like he's happier than he deserves, and that's the end of that chapter.

Becca: And that's the end of that chapter. Kind of uneventful, honestly.

Molly: [00:58:00] Argh.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Oh, man. That was a good one.

Becca: Oh, God. Yeah, that's going to be a doozy for our listeners. I think they're going to really enjoy that. Hope you guys enjoy that.

Molly: I hope you enjoy it.

Becca: Which brings us to our patron study questions. Listeners, if you would like to ask us questions on the air, you can join our Patreon at the \$15 tier. Molly will post a Google Doc before our record session. You can input your questions. We will ask them on the air. Shall I ask them on the air?

Molly: You sure. Let's do it.

Becca: Yeah. So, Adrianna asks, "How does the conversation between Anne and Harville resemble the hazelnut conversation from earlier in the novel, and does this parallel show the development of Anne, Wentworth and their relationship?"

Molly: The hazelnut conversation is between Louisa and Wentworth. And Wentworth is talking about how a hazelnut, unlike a leaf, can get stomped on and trodden and not die in the winter. Is that right?

Becca: I think it's bad hazelnuts--

Molly: Oh, bad hazelnuts versus regular hazelnuts.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: [00:59:00] No leaves involved.

Becca: In both cases, we're getting an undercurrent of a conversation about Anne Elliot's feelings. What Wentworth says in the hazelnut conversation is basically, he wants someone of conviction.

Molly: He wants a strong hazelnut.

Becca: He wants a strong hazelnut who will not heed to the other hazelnuts too easily. And that's why he is immediately drawn to Louise's bullheadedness, her stubbornness-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -which then bites him in the ass later.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And then, this conversation between Anne and Harville tells us what it really means to be of steadfast character.

Molly: Or, a strong hazelnut?

Becca: A strong hazelnut is someone who doesn't give up on love.

Molly: Yeah. The conversations are very similar, except that for Anne and Harville, they're both saying that their gender is the stronger hazelnut when it comes to love.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And [01:00:00] the fact that it drives Wentworth to be like, "No, I promise I'm a strong hazelnut too."

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: I think that's where it shows the development.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Because he was before in talking about hazelnuts, he was like, "Well-- He was thinking Anne is a weak hazelnut.

Becca: Yeah. And he thought she was weak, because she could easily give up her love for him.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: I think it's a shallower read on what it means to be a sturdy character.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And Anne is saying here what it really means for her to be a sturdy character, and that causes Wentworth to basically explode his feelings into ink on a page.

Molly: Or, to Nutella, if he's a hazelnut pooping out Nutella.

Becca: Do hazelnuts poop out Nutella?

Molly: Now, they do.

Becca: All right. That's canon in Jane Austen.

Molly: Anyway, that's a great question. I had forgotten about the hazelnut conversation. And it is very similar.

Becca: Yes. All right. Avi asks, "In this chapter, there is a discussion between Anne and Captain Harville about the feelings of men versus women. From this discussion and from the other books you have read, what do you think Jane Austen is saying about **[01:01:00]** the perception of women in her society?" We touched on this little bit-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -but let's return.

Molly: Well, what we touched on was who she thinks is the stronger hazelnut in terms of gender. But in terms of what Jane Austen is saying about women, I think Jane Austen does believe the thing about women having tender hearts that feel very deeply. I don't think Jane Austen is saying men can't have that too, but she is saying that women have that.

Becca: It would be immediately disproven if she were.

Molly: Yes. I think she might be saying a little bit that women have to tamp down these emotions until they explode, because they have to be perceived a certain way. Anne isn't allowed to go around bemoaning her outcast state or whatever.

Becca: I think from my perspective, I read this as a women love more in part, because women are limited-

Molly: **[01:02:00]** Mm-hmm.

Becca: -in the society.

Molly: [unintelligible **[01:02:03]**

Becca: I did finally see it. It's very good.

Molly: I'm seeing it again tomorrow.

Becca: But I think what-- Jane Austen doesn't explicitly go into patriarchy too many times in her books. It's a lot of undercurrent in her books. But this here is an example of Anne has not been able to move about the world with the same capacity that Wentworth had to do that. And so, part of the reason she thought he might have moved on is because he's seen so much. He's grown so much. She's been stuck with her shitty father and sister for years in a house.

Of course, she's going to be steadfast towards the man she loves. I also think she thinks of women as being a sterner character than they get credit for. And both of those facts are clear in the character of Anne Elliot.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: The limitations of being a woman, and also the power of being a woman.

Molly: Yeah. We haven't seen another character who has pinned this [01:03:00] for years and years and years.

Becca: Yeah. [chuckles]

Molly: So, she's unprecedented in that way, but the limitations of women are definitely present in all the other books we've read so far. I think that the limitations of women is encapsulated very well in the "About books" from this one that we read in saying that-- Books are written by men. So, of course, women's voices aren't going to be heard so much.

Becca: Truly one of my favorite Jane Austen turns to the camera moments.

Molly: Yeah. History is written by the-

Becca: Victors.

Molly: -Victors. It's the same thing. The books are written by the men.

Becca: The books are written by the men, so women are fickle.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah. Ghenet asks-- Well, first she says, "OH BABY THIS CHAPTER!"

Molly: Oh, baby, indeed.

Becca: That was the vibe of our general record session today.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, Ghenet has two questions. So, the first one is, "What does Mrs. Croft and Mrs. Musgrove's conversation about engagements show us about society and about Anne and Wentworth, their feelings and their own engagement?"

Molly: Okay. So, as a reminder to our [01:04:00] listeners and myself. Mrs. Croft and Mrs. Musgrove talk about preferring getting married right away over a long engagement and also over an uncertain engagement where you're not sure if you'll have the means to marry. What this shows us about society, is that-- It highlights the importance of marriage, especially for women who don't want to end up.

Becca: Economics of Dating in Jane Austen.

Molly: Yeah, yeah, yeah. It's all about the Economics of Dating in Jane Austen. Like, women can't be single or they'll end up like a Miss Bates. Having a long engagement or an uncertain engagement might end in financial ruin. Basically, marriage is a financial contract, and it's better to just get it done. And in terms of Anne and Wentworth, I think for Anne overhearing this, it tells her maybe a little bit [01:05:00] why Lady Russell encouraged her away from Wentworth.

Becca: Yeah. It highlights the risks that would have been present in their proposal, eight years ago, their engagement eight years ago. I think it gives you a little sympathy for the position these two have been put in.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It would've been hard to marry him at that point. It wasn't just like her being stupid about him being poor. It was a genuine risk that she could have taken on him, a chance she could have taken on him, but it would have been a chance. It would have been looked upon poorly by the world and it would have been difficult.

It abstracts the pain these two have between the two of them where it's so personal what they both carry, but then in that one moment, it pulls out and it says, actually, this pain these two people carry is a product of the society in which they live. [01:06:00]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That's not their fault. It's just how things were around them. They've done what they can with it, and it works out happy in the end.

Molly: But it might not have.

Becca: And who knows how many countless couples in that time period were not so lucky.

Molly: Yeah. They could have gotten engaged and had, what, Mrs. Croft calls an uncertain engagement, and then they could have ended up in financial ruin and she could have ended up like-

Becca: Mrs. Smith?

Molly: -Mrs. Smith. Yeah.

Becca: Speaking of.

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: "If Mrs. Croft represents the best case scenario for what Anne's life would have been if she'd married Wentworth all those years ago, Mrs. Smith in many ways represents the worst-case scenario (widowed with no income, cut off from helpful connections, etc.). Does seeing both outcomes affect your opinion on Anne's original decision all those years ago? How do you think that affect's Anne's ultimate opinion on her actions?"

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: Very good question.

Molly: Yes. I do think-- [01:07:00] I mean, she says at the end of this chapter, I think I was right to refuse you all those years ago, even though it broke my heart and I knew that it

would. I couldn't have known how things would turn out. Oh, I don't know. It's hard.

Becca: Yeah, it is really hard. I think one of the things that's just true in this story, is that frankly, you can't control who you love and you can't control the circumstances around who you love. Obviously, it has a happy ending, because it's Jane Austen novel, but this is really--

Jane Austen asks really hard questions about what it means to really love someone, and whether or not it is a good thing to choose love over everything else. I think in this book, she makes the argument for choosing love and taking a chance on somebody.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But she also, on the other hand, says, we will never know if that was a right or wrong decision for Anne. **[01:08:00]**

Molly: Right. For all we know, Mrs. Croft married Mr. Croft when he was already successful.

Becca: Well, Admiral Croft was from a better family.

Molly: Right. So, she is the best-case scenario, but she didn't have to make a choice like that. Like, she didn't have to take that risk.

Becca: Yeah. No, she definitely didn't have to. But I think the point being like Mrs. Smith also, he was a pretty stable match when she found him.

Molly: Right.

Becca: The point is like, you never know the risk you're taking.

Molly: Right.

Becca: You can have the utmost happiness and be Mrs. Croft and travel the world with your seafaring husband who gives you a beautiful home and a beautiful life, or you can end up with a rheumatic fever in a slum in Bath. Like, life is hard. And making these decisions is hard.

I think this book is a lot about circumstances outside of your own control. Like, is the persuasion that happens here wrongful or not? It's just a question **[01:09:00]** that's difficult to answer, and I think it's meant to be that way.

Molly: Yeah. It's very much a book that makes the most sense in the time period and place where it takes place.

Becca: I think we've done a really good job of trying to sink into that-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -perspective here.

Molly: Absolutely. But I think that also explains why there aren't as many adaptations of *Persuasion*.

Becca: [sighs] There should be more adaptations of *Persuasion*.

Molly: And we are going to make it happen.

Becca: Are we?

Molly: I don't know.

Becca: That would be awesome.

Molly: It would be awesome. Well, Audrey and Emily are working on one.

Becca: I'm so excited.

Molly: I will poop my pants.

Becca: It's going to be so good. I cannot wait to have them on to talk about it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Going back to Ghenet's last question. "Where does the 'half agony half hope' proposal rank for you in other main character proposals from the books you've read so far (i.e., Edward, Darcy, Knightley etc.)!"

Molly: Well, I forgot about Edward's proposal until we discussed it.

Becca: Well, most of what Edward's proposal is, is I'm actually not married, and then Elinor bursts into tears.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: A lesser hard.

Molly: That's the beautiful one. Okay. I think I'm [01:10:00] going to do it amongst Darcy and Knightley, because I feel like those three are the, like, I'm bursting in with my emotions. And there are three quotes. "Half agony, half hope."

Becca: "If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more."

Molly: And--

Molly and Becca: "In vain have I struggled, it will not do."

Becca: "My feelings shall not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."

Becca: Hot take here. Darcy is three. Because I love Darcy. We've talked about this.

Molly: It's rude.

Becca: But it is proposalgeddon. It's not a good proposal. She refuses it. And his later proposal is much nicer, but not iconic in the same way.

Molly: It's not as exciting.

Becca: And it is very much him being like, "I'm sorry. I totally did mess that up, but I do love you." And she's like, "Okay, that's great. I love you too. Let's be together forever."

Molly: Yeah. Yeah. Okay. I agree. The thing is, I think that my opinion is colored by some adaptations.

Becca: I think it's too hard to pick. It's [01:11:00] apples and oranges between if I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more, and you pierce my soul, I am half agony, half

hope. Because of the two characters and who they are, Knightley is a man of few words. He's so practical as a person.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And it is the culmination of a friends to lovers' story where he knows every piece of who she is already. And like, you pierce my soul, I am half agony, half hope comes with pain. It comes with loss. It comes with I need this back. I desperately need your back. Tell me I am not too late.

Molly: Yes. I think in terms of the actual language of the proposal, the language of I am half agony, half hope is better for me than--

Becca: If I loved you less, I might be able to talk about it more?

Molly: Yes. However, I don't feel, at this point, after one reading of the chapter [01:12:00] and of the book before doing my deep dives into all of the adaptations and everything. I don't feel like I know Wentworth as much, and I don't feel like he's as much of a beloved-- He's not as beloved to me as Knightley is. And so, for that reason right now, Knightley's proposal is number one.

Becca: I think I agree in terms of the fact that-- I'll say it this way. I think Wentworth's proposal is the more romantic one.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: It shook me to my very core. But I think that in terms of the love stories, I'm more endeared to Knightley and Emma's love story because of the banter. The banter is where love lives.

Molly: Yeah. Banter is so good.

Becca: The banter is where love lives from me in my own personal life, and that is a love that feels familiar and cozy. It just feels so real.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Anne and Wentworth, it's sweeping. It's gorgeous. I have loved reading their story. It just isn't the story that I have experienced constantly. [chuckles]

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, those are the Patreon study questions. I'm going to move on to Becca's study [01:13:00] questions. So, I'm going to skip the first one, because I think we covered it. "What do we discern about what Jane Austen believes about constancy and love from the scene between Harville and Anne?"

Molly: I think that she thinks that anyone is capable of constancy and love. I think that she thinks that there are all kinds of love, because I don't think that she is belittling Benwick, for example.

Becca: I think she is a little belittling Benwick.

Molly: You do?

Becca: Not necessarily.

Molly: No. I think you're right. I don't want to.

Becca: I think we can disagree with Jane. I think what she says here, personally, the way I read this chapter, is she thinks that a constant love and a never dying, ever present love is a love-- that unshakable love is a superior form. Not a superior form of love, but a different creature than other love.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: She writes about it [01:14:00] as if she's experienced it, frankly. It makes me curious about Jane Austen's life. It is the feeling of love is something that lives with you constantly and is unshakable. I don't think that's fair to what Benwick's going through. I don't even know if I think she's being mean to Benwick in particular, but I do think she's belittling the idea of moving on slightly.

Molly: Yeah. I guess that is why there's so much comparison and why the whole conversation happens.

Becca: Like I said, it's actually really brilliant that the way the scene culminates, the way that captain Wentworth finds himself unable to resist explaining to Anne how he feels and proposing through a letter, is because they're in a room where people are discussing other people's love stories that relate to their own.

Molly: Right.

Becca: That is what pulls him out of it and forces him to say what he needs to say to her. And it is sewn through this book. We have a lot of different love stories, and those love stories are used as a diving off [01:15:00] point for Wentworth to finally admit where he is and what he needs to say. That is brilliant to me. Like, this is a great culmination from Jane. This chapter is so well crafted and I appreciate that. But by nature, you are comparing love in that regard.

I think Benwick really does get the short straw on this chapter in a way that I do not think is fair, because I do think that Benwick-- I do think Jane thinks he loved Fanny Harville. I don't think she's particularly pooh-poohing him. I think, like I said, Harville is speaking out of emotion in this moment.

Molly: Sure.

Becca: But it is clear he is a foil to Wentworth's undying devotion to a woman he lost.

Molly: Yeah. Yeah. I just like a big thing that I think my main qualm with this book is, is that there is a huge difference between losing someone due to a breakup-

Becca: That's fair. [chuckles]

Molly: -and losing someone due to death. And so, Benwick, I think, is having [01:16:00] a totally different experience. I'm not saying that I don't think I would move on in six months if my partner died, but I'm saying that I understand where he's coming from.

Becca: Oh, no question.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: No question.

Molly: But I agree with you. That is probably what Jane-- Like, that's the comparison she's making.

Becca: Yeah. I think it's like all culminating. I think narratively, it's brilliant. I do note your critique that breaking up with someone is different than getting widowed. I think that's a fair critique on Jane.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But I do think that it's all serves the purpose of bringing us into this chapter, where there's this tense moment that basically erupts into emotions that these two have been holding back for years.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, I think it works brilliantly.

Molly: Absolutely.

Becca: But I take your point.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Okay. The letter. We've really covered this mostly, but it's a very famous Jane Austen moment. "What does this letter do to the story, [01:17:00] how does it inform Wentworth's character and how is it a climax for Anne's?"

Molly: Obviously, for Anne, this is confirmation that he feels the way she feels. It's also showing that he's not 100% sure that she feels the way that he feels, and she needs to go tell him. So, it gives us a goal and then, she does the goal. She goes and they talk about it.

It's turning point, because they've gone from being on totally different, like both suffering in silence, different planes of existence to being on the same page for the first time in eight years. So, it's huge. It also gives us his whole side of the story, and that's how it informs his character, is that every time we thought he was just being a dick, he was trying so hard to get over her.

Becca: He was dealing with his feelings.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: He was in his feelings.

Molly: He's been really struggling for eight years, the same as she has. And he's been dealing with it differently. It just gives [01:18:00] a different undercurrent to all of his actions so far.

Becca: I feel like his playlist is a lot of Beyoncé.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Like, his heartbreak playlist, which we can finally get up and running.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Now that we have his side of the story. [chuckles]

Molly: I'm ready.

Becca: Yeah, I think that's all right. I also would say like there's an undercurrent to this book of Anne being overlooked. Anne doing everybody else's emotional labor. Anne fading into the

background and trying to hide her own emotions. This scene feels important, because Wentworth hands her a letter and says, "No, no."

Molly: "I've been thinking about you, this whole time."

Becca: "You have been seen, this whole time. You have been acknowledged. You have been known."

Molly: "You have been the only thing on my mind for eight years."

Becca: "Unjust I may have been."

Molly: Never in constant.

Becca: Weak, but never in constant. I think that's a big moment for Anne in this book as well, because she is a character who's pretty steadfast and quiet. But no, she's been [01:19:00] known the whole time and lo and behold, it leads to the only time she can't hold in her panic.

"What do we think of Wentworth's actions towards Anne through the book?" I wanted to structure this episode that we'd read the letter and then we'd go through a tour of the book and where we've been. "What do you think of where Wentworth went through this book?"

Molly: So, first, he was like, "You've changed physically."

Becca: First, he was mad.

Molly: First, he was mad.

Becca: He was mad.

Molly: He was like, "Ugh, you're aged," or whatever he said. He commented on how altered she was to his eyes. Then, we were at Uppercross, right?

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: And that was with the moments of him pulling the child off of her, offering her the carriage, handing her up into the carriage, like showing little moments of care for her, and she was like, "Does he hate me? Does he not?" [01:20:00] Then, we went to Lyme and he was like, "Oh, you're hot, and I'm in love with you." But we don't know that yet. We didn't know that yet at the time.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: We knew that he clocked in.

Becca: So, what do you think of all these things?

Molly: What am I thinking? Okay. I have a lot more sympathy for him now, knowing what he's going through.

Becca: It's a really human story.

Molly: Yeah. I think that at the time, I was frustrated with him. I think part of why I feel like I wasn't able to rank his proposal number one, is because I spent a lot of time being annoyed at him and being like, "He's hurt our girl, and he's making her second guess her hotness and he's making her hate herself for eight years." She did fuck up a little-- Like, they both fucked up.

Becca: Yeah. I think Wentworth is as much a victim of the circumstances Anne is.

Molly: Yeah. I think now we know that.

Becca: And now, we know that. And [01:21:00] from my perspective, I think if Anne's story is the pain of seeing a man you used to love and wondering if you'll ever know him again, Wentworth's story is the pain of spending eight years trying to forget a woman who broke your heart, and then seeing her again and having it all wash away.

Molly: Yeah. She hasn't even been trying to get over him.

Becca: No. She's like, "No, no, I'll be in love with him forever and that'll be that." And Wentworth has been like, "No, no, no. This woman broke my heart. She ruined me. I cannot believe that she was persuaded away from me by these horrible people in her life. And look at me now. Look at what I've accomplished. Look what I've achieved. I can fuck her." And then, he sees her again and it's like, "No, actually, this woman is every bit the woman who haunted my dreams for years."

Molly: Man, when you put it like that--

Becca: Oh.

Molly: It also says a lot about his character, because [01:22:00] he was always very adamant that he would succeed, and that he would be that guy and he does that in every aspect of his life. Not just job.

Becca: He has ascended class rank.

Molly: Yet, he succeeded.

Becca: He has succeeded, and he has proved her family wrong.

Molly: Hell yeah.

Becca: He's actually gone up in rank, which is difficult to do in society in these times. He always knew he could do it. He always saw that in himself. Anne saw that too, but didn't trust it enough to take a chance on him.

Molly: Well, she would have potentially thrown everything away.

Becca: She would have. She would have. But he believed in himself and she believed in him and she didn't act on her believing in him. So, it's a really-- I could go for hours talking about the weird pain that the two of them have caused each other. But in the end, at the end of the day, they found their way back to each other.

Molly: More equal to act, more justified in acting. Does that have to do with her acting on her [01:23:00] feelings?

Becca: More equal to act means she's old enough to make her own choices. Justified in acting means his circumstances have changed.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: He's no longer a risky match. He's a great match.

Molly: Right. And more justified in acting in that he now knows for both of them-- Now, he knows that she still loves him.

Becca: Hmm.

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: Funniest quote?

Molly: Oh, goodness.

Becca: Or, just say. [chuckles]

Molly: There were some funny quotes, but can we just say the quote?

Becca: "You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope."

Molly: "You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope." I mean--

Becca: "Tell me not that I am too late."

Molly: Oh. It's so good. It's so good. It's not the funniest quote, but it's the quote.

Becca: It's the quote. We can't say another quote from this fucking chapter. Everyone knows that.

Molly: Yeah. Come on, guys.

Becca: Questions moving forward.

Molly: Well, there's only one chapter left. So, I think the only things left to really wrap up is like one, **[01:24:00]** how is her family going to react? Two, what's going to happen to Elliot? Is he going to find somebody? Is he going to end up marrying Elizabeth?

Becca: You sounded so concerned for this bad man.

Molly: Oh. God, I forgot how much I hate him. [Becca laughs] But what is going to happen? Because Elizabeth doesn't even deserve. Well, well-- No, I wouldn't wish him on anyone. Oh, but what's going to happen with Mrs. Smith and Mr. Elliot? Because Mrs. Smith needs that inheritance, so I'm worried about her. So, those are my questions. Oh, and are we going to have our wedding? Triple wedding?

Becca: Who wins the chapters?

Molly: Wentworth.

Becca: Yeah. This one goes to Captain Wentworth.

Molly: I am half agony, half hope, baby.

Becca: Oh, yeah. [chuckles] Dramatically signing your name.

[laughter]

Becca: Find it.

Molly: I have to read it again.

Becca: Yeah. It's so good.

Molly: “You do us justice, indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most [01:25:00] fervent, most undeviating, in F. W.”

Becca: Drama King.

Becca: We have to stan.

Molly: We have to stan.

Becca: Listeners, that concludes this insignificant throwaway episode of Pod and Prejudice. Truly filler.

Molly: Penultimate.

Becca: Yeah. For next week, we're finishing *Persuasion*.

Molly: [shouts]

Becca: I know. I know. Because it's a really short chapter, I think we're probably going to cover the book from top to bottom. So, if you are interested in submitting study questions for that, know that they can be book wide study questions. Molly, do you have anything else to add?

Molly: Anything to add? No, I just want to finish the freaking book.

Becca: Which we shall. And until next time, stay proper.

Molly: And if you love someone, just write them a letter and tell them they pierce your soul. Just do it.

Becca: Yeah. Never forget to tell the people you love that they pierce your soul.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

Molly: [01:26:00] Pod and Prejudice is edited by Molly Burdick and audio produced by Graham Cook. Our show art is designed by Torrance Browne. Our show is transcribed by SpeechDocs Podcast Transcription. For transcripts and to learn more about our team, check out our website at podandprejudice.com. 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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