

[Pride 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: I guess that's how we're doing it now.

Molly: We're going to get it.

Becca: That one was a little bit more in sync than last time, so we'll call it a win. Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen books through 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 through 3 of this podcast, respectively. But that is not what we're doing here today.

Molly: No. Today, we are talking about *Persuasion*, Volume I, Chapters 10 and 11.

Becca: We are almost done with part one of *Persuasion*. How bananas is that?

Molly: Bananas. When we finished these two chapters, it looks like we're about halfway through the book.

Becca: Yes. there are, I think, yeah, about 24 chapters in the book.

Molly: So, we literally are one away from being halfway.

Becca: This is hilarious just [00:01:00] because *Emma* is such a long book, and we were so used to it. But *Persuasion* is, she's a brief girl.

Molly: She's brief. She's beautiful.

Becca: Yes. Well, there's just a lot to talk about here, isn't there?

Molly: There is a lot to talk about. I've noticed that despite doing just two chapters per episode, we have so much to say that our episodes are all really long.

Becca: The thing is, there's so much of *Emma* that's just people being quippy at each other. And *Persuasion* is tight and condensed, so there's plot.

Molly: Lots of plot and lots of angst, which I will say I started to get on my nerves with these two chapters. I can't wait to talk about it.

Becca: Yes, I know exactly what you're talking about, and we're going to get into it. But before we do, let's just recap where we were last week, which is that basically, Anne is just crying a corner over our boy, Freddie Wentworth. Freddie is flirting with Henrietta and Louisa, even though Henrietta's slightly got a thing going with Charles Hayter the hater.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And [00:02:00] Anne is confused by the dynamic she has going with Wentworth, where he ignores her, and is cold and polite to her, but also at the same time, clearly shows little inklings of still caring about her, like, when he pulled the toddler off of her. That's where we're at. Anne constantly panicking about her ex, like the relatable queen she is.

Molly: Such a relatable queen. Should we get into it?

Becca: Oh, I think we're going to have to.

Molly: We must.

Becca: There's so much to say.

Molly: So, Chapter 10. Anne has strong beliefs that Louisa is Wentworth's favorite, which, right off the bat, I was like, "Wait, that's the opposite of what I thought."

Becca: You had a prediction, and it has gone slightly the other way. But it was a good prediction, I still think.

Molly: It was a good prediction. In that, Henrietta is more similar to Anne. So, one would think that his type is more like Anne. But what it does reinforce for me, if Louisa is, in fact, his favorite, is that he's using [00:03:00] her to make Anne jealous.

Becca: At the very least, he is seeking out a not Anne in a very specific way.

Molly: Yes. Anne also thinks that he's not in love with her. He just likes her more, or maybe she has to believe that for herself.

Becca: It's hard to say, isn't it?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Do you think he does?

Molly: Do I think he's in love with Louisa? No, I don't. His behaviors towards her don't give love vibes. They give friendship vibes. I guess we'll see.

Becca: It is a really interesting question, because of what we're hearing from Anne right now and someone who proclaims to know him better than he knows himself.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: You also have to remember we're in Jane Austen's world, where flirtation carries weight, especially for young, impressionable women.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: And so, it's an interesting little dance Wentworth is doing here, if that's the case, because he is very obviously hanging out a lot with these two young women, [00:04:00] and he is an eligible single man in possession of good fortune.

Molly: Right.

Becca: It's a dicey situation for a lot of reasons, because in the Austen world, you actually don't show this level of attention to women unless you have serious intentions for them. But here we have Anne saying, "But I'm watching him, and he's not in love with them."

Molly: Right. She would know. She also though because of that, feels that he's in the wrong. She thinks to herself that, it's not wrong of him to love someone or to be deciding between someone, but he's wrong to be showing so much attention if he's not in love.

Becca: Also, showing so much attention to two girls at once.

Molly: Right. And accepting their flirtations. Both of them.

Becca: She also makes a point of noting that she doesn't think that either girl is actually in love with Wentworth, even if they think they might be.

Molly: Right. She thinks that it's more of an infatuation than love.

Becca: Very interesting stuff [00:05:00] coming from Anne, because there's a certain like, "Ah, they don't love him like I loved him."

Molly: Yeah. Anne started to get on my nerves during these chapters.

Becca: We're going to get into it, because I know where you are most annoyed with her, and I'm assuming it's in the next chapter and not in this chapter.

Molly: Yes. It is in the next chapter. And in this chapter, I was still very much on team like, "Ah, Anne, you're so tragic. I love you so much."

Becca: We're going to get into it. So, feel free to luxuriate in Anne's very gratuitous pain right now, because I have a lot to say on the later portion.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Yeah. As I'm sure we all do.

Becca: Yes. [chuckles]

Molly: She also thinks that Charles Hayter is very aware of being slighted of Henrietta being into Wentworth. But she notes that Henrietta still seems divided between the two of them, which is interesting. She wants to knock some sense into them, but she doesn't attribute guile to any, which I had to look up. And that means, it's like, slyness or cunning. So, she doesn't think that anyone's doing any of this on purpose. [00:06:00] She always believes the best in people, but she's like, "But stop."

Becca: Yeah. No, this is just careless flirtation, which carries-- Like I said, it carries a lot of meaning in the Austen world.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, if this were just a party-- We've all been to the party where there's a group of people in the corner, and it's like, everyone's a little drunk.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Everyone's doing a little too much flirting with each other. There's a guy who's the fixation of two friends, and then there's also another guy who's trying to get in there. We've all seen this dynamic play out and been like, "Ooh, I don't know how that's going to end tonight. But you know what? Good for everyone. I hope they all end up in bed with Domino's pizza."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Here, the difference is that because this is Jane Austen, because women's reputations are on the line, there is actually a consequence to too much flirtation. So-

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -you have to actually think about these dynamics. You have to think about what it would mean for Charles Hayter to be slighted by Henrietta, you have to think about what it means that [00:07:00] Wentworth is flirting with these two girls at once and trying to choose between the two. Henrietta has a clock on, basically, when she has to decide between these two men. And it's running low. So, there is simultaneously Anne standing back and being like, "This is messy," but also the mess, as we know, the mess carries more weight in this world.

Molly: Do we know how old Henrietta is?

Becca: I think Henrietta and Louisa are between 18 and 20.

Molly: Okay.

Becca: They're young.

Molly: Yeah. Also, Anne thinks that Wentworth must not know about Henrietta and Charles Hayter. I don't know whether he does. I don't know why he would. He just came into this life unless she told him.

Becca: She would not have told him. [laughs]

Molly: Right. Well, unless Louisa told him, which I feel like I could--

Becca: We'll get there.

Molly: So, Charles Hayter gives up.

Becca: RIP.

Molly: I yelped. I was like, "Wait, [Becca laughs] no. [00:08:00] What are you doing? You love her. Don't give up." But he just disappears. He's like, "I'm over it."

Becca: When I was reading it, at the end of the last chapter, I was like, "Damn, we're going to have this love pentagon between Hayter, and Wentworth, and Henrietta, and Louisa and Anne." And then, the next chapter is almost immediately like and then Charles Hayter gave up, and I was like, "Oh, well, I guess we're not doing that."

Molly: Yeah. He was just like, "All right, I'm going to go home, and I'm going to read and work on my whatever and avoid you all at all cost." Mary thinks that Henrietta must have turned him down once and for all, and that's why he's given up.

Becca: I think Mary, once again, with the wishful thinking.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: She's delulu, and I love her.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: One morning, big C and Wentworth are out shooting together. The Musgrove girls come by to tell Mary and Anne that they're going for a walk. A long walk, so long that they assume Mary doesn't want to join. And Mary is like, "I'll come." [00:09:00] Because she doesn't want them to be assuming that, which I thought was hilarious. But also, I was like, "Why did you come all the way here to tell her that you're going on a walk, that you don't want her to come on?"

Becca: When I first read it, I thought they wanted Anne to come with them on the walk, and not Mary.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Which is still possible, but I also think that it must just be a propriety thing like, they're going to walk by the house, they have to say hi. Or, they're rude.

Molly: Well, Anne thinks that it's the ceremony of it and exactly the propriety, and that it's their family's custom to tell each other every move that they're making and do it all together so they have to. But she's like, "That's so stupid."

Becca: This is how my family works. [chuckles]

Molly: I love it. It's dumb.

Becca: Oh, it's so stupid. But it's very much this dynamic of like, "We're going to the grocery store. Does anybody need to come to the grocery store?" It's like, "No, we can all just go our separate ways and do our own thing. We don't have to do it right here, right [00:10:00] now at the same time." But the dynamic is very much like, you tell everyone you're going on a walk in case anybody wants to join.

Molly: So, the girls look at Anne, and she's like, "Oh, they do not want her to come." So, she decides to go with them, so that she can maybe help turn Mary around earlier on.

Becca: She's also just a buffer.

Molly: Well, yeah.

Becca: They love Anne and think Anne's the shit, as we've talked about. Well, we will talk about later in this episode. But basically, Anne's role, when she's with these guys, is make them hate Mary a little less.

Molly: Exactly. While they go to change, Mary complains about how everyone assumes she's not a good walker, which is hilarious, because she's not.

Becca: She's so good, because she's so stupid. She's so desperate for everyone to think that she's like Anne, basically.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But it always comes off so terribly. But it's always-- Ah, it's perfect. I have no notes for Mary.

Molly: She's so funny. [00:11:00] As they're leaving for the walk, the men return. They have to return because they had taken a puppy with them on their hunting.

Becca: I love this image.

Molly: Me too. The puppy just was running around and wasn't doing the thing, and they

were like, "God dang it, we got to go back."

Becca: The puppy was too excited and scared all the birdies away.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It just got so happy.

Molly: He gets a puppy.

Becca: He [unintelligible [00:11:21]

Molly: He's just a baby.

Becca: So, they have to take the puppy home to go play with the children instead.

Molly: Yeah. So, they're like, "Oh, we'll come on your walk." And Anne is like, "Okay, we're going to dissociate now and just stay as far away from him as possible."

Becca: Every time that Wentworth enters Anne's radar, she goes into this little fugue state. It's very fun.

Molly: Yes. She starts meditating on poetry. She's walking, and she's looking around at the fall and this line really did-- I had to write it down because it was gorgeous. She's going to derive her enjoyment from the walk, from the exercise. and "From the view of the last smiles of the year upon the tawny leaves and [00:12:00] withered hedges."

Becca: Hmm.

Molly: Ugh.

Becca: Jane Austen can write.

Molly: She can write a fucking sentence,-

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: -if nothing else. But even though she's meditating on the poets of the era, she can't help but overhear Wentworth's conversations with the girls. From his conversations, it's clear that he's talking more with Louisa. He comments on how nice the weather is for the Crofts carriage ride. He wonders where they will upset today or overturn, where they will flip over, [Becca laughs] because apparently, it happens a lot, but his sister doesn't seem to mind. And then, Louisa says, "Well, if she loved a man as much as his sister loves the Admiral, she would not mind being tossed about as long as she was with him." And then, Wentworth says, "Really, I honor you for that," which is interesting. They're talking about love.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Anne can't think of any more poetry except emo poems about the declining year bringing declining happiness, youth and hope.

Becca: Yeah, we know, Anne.

Molly: We get it.

Becca: You're sad. I know.

Molly: But then, she notices where they are, and she's like, [00:13:00] "Isn't this the way to

Winthrop?" And I was like, "Isn't that Charles Hayter's estate?"

Becca: Hmm.

Molly: Hmm.

Becca: Hmm.

Molly: Nobody answers her. Whether they hear her is another question. However, Winthrop, or at least its surrounding areas, is their destination for young men are sometimes to be met with strolling about near home. So, then, I was like, "Are they looking for Charles Hayter?"

Becca: Are they looking for Charles Hayter?

Molly: It seems like it.

Becca: They seem to be.

Molly: They crest a hill, and there's Winthrop without beauty or dignity. And Mary is like, "Oh, look, there's Winthrop. Better turn around. I'm so tired."

Becca: Ah. Mary is such an asshole. It's great.

Molly: Yeah, she sucks. I love her.

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: Henrietta looks embarrassed and she's about to turn around, but Louisa and big C are both like, "No, no, no, no, no, don't turn around." And then, Louisa pulls Henrietta aside and starts arguing with her. And big C says that he wants to call on his aunt, and Mary refuses, saying she's too tired, and he's like, "Well, you can go rest inside the estate."

[00:14:00] And Mary is like, "Going back up this hill after going down the hill would do me more bad than any of the rest could do me good."

So, they decide that Charles and Henrietta will go call on the Hayters, and everyone else can wait for them at the top of the hill. Louisa walks them a little bit down the hill. While she's down there, Mary turns to Wentworth and says, "It's so unpleasant to have such connections." But she assures him that she hasn't been into the house more than twice in her life.

Becca: This is a great moment for a couple reasons. The number one being like-- The fact that, first of all, Mary's definitely lying [chuckles] about how many times she's been there. Second of all, I think this is such a telling moment for the class commentary Jane Austen is giving us,-

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: -because Mary feels the need to poo-poo the Hayters in front of Captain Wentworth, the guy who has been the victim of the Elliots classism towards people, like the Hayters. So, it is this layered moment where she **[00:15:00]** feels the need to protect herself in front of Wentworth. But in doing so, actually damns herself in his eyes, because he recalls what it was like to be on the other end of that stick with the Elliots.

It also goes to Jane Austen's constant commentary about how class is a lie, because social mobility of Captain Wentworth proves how stupid the Elliots are about class. And the illusion of it comes where Mary feels like she needs to justify her life choices and impress Wentworth when in right before the Elliots felt like they needed to hide Wentworth away. It's like a very layered moment. It's a very interesting moment.

Molly: Yeah. He gives this tight smile, and then turns away and looks like he gives a contemptuous glance, which to me means like stank face.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Anne catches it and she's like, "He's aware." It doesn't feel good [00:16:00] for either of them. Then, Mary finds a nice little seat to sit on. Louisa comes back and takes Wentworth off down a grove to look for nuts. Nice.

Becca: Nice.

Molly: Mary gets annoyed, because she thinks Louisa has found a better seat somewhere. So, she goes off to follow her. Anne is happy just to sit for a minute. She's very tired, but she's followed Mary a little bit into the hedgerows, and soon she hears Wentworth and Louisa coming back on the other side of the hedgerow. Mary's gone off to search for them. I imagine there's two rows, and Mary's gone down, and Anne is sitting still and Mary's going all the way to the end, but Louisa and Wentworth have already started coming back, basically.

Becca: Yeah. Basically, imagining Anne sitting right behind a bush by accident.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, Louisa is saying that she made Henrietta go see Charles, because she had already made up her mind to visit Winthrop today, and she couldn't let her be persuaded away by Mary's nonsense. [00:17:00] She says, "She would never be so easily persuaded. When she's made up her mind, she's made up her mind."

Becca: Let's take a beat here just to talk really, briefly about what's happening between Henrietta and Louisa.

Molly: Between Henrietta and Louisa? Henrietta is in love with Charles Hayter. Louisa is trying to convince her that that's a good match for her. This is what I'm interpreting. I imagine that she was sad when he stopped showing up, and Louisa was like, "Well, you've been flirting." Maybe, I don't know.

Becca: It's a bit up for interpretation, isn't it?

Molly: Yeah. Whatever's happening, the basics of it are, Henrietta wanted to go see Charles. Louisa convinced her that she can still go even if Mary doesn't think that he's good enough. That's the basics of it. Whether she's actually torn between the two men and Louisa is trying [00:18:00] to sway her away from Wentworth, because she likes Wentworth or whatever.

Becca: Yeah. There's a lot one can read into this. Obviously, I think the mechanics of it are correct. Henrietta's torn between Hayter and Wentworth. Louisa is nudging towards Hayter.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: There are obvious selfish reasons why Louisa might do that. [chuckles]

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: But there is also an undercurrent here of, why would Henrietta, if she has this sort of trepidation and this sort of preference for Charles Hayter go for Wentworth? That's where

this little sliver comes in from Mary, besmirching Hayter. Maybe Henrietta is thinking, "Well, maybe I can get Wentworth instead, a better match." There is a sense of which one could say Louisa is being selfish. Another way, we could look at it is Louisa is saying, "Why do you [00:19:00] care what someone as dumb as Mary thinks about who you love? Just go for it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Who cares?"

Molly: I interpreted her actions as being in Henrietta's best interests, and her knowing her sister better and knowing that she really does love Charles Hayter.

Becca: What does that say about why Wentworth is speaking so much to Louisa?

Molly: I imagine that Louisa has told him by this point what is going on, or at least she's telling him now. He doesn't like someone who can be easily swayed like that.

Becca: He also likes someone who's going to be like, "Who the fuck cares? Marry who you want."

Molly: Yes, exactly. So, they get into it and talk about all of this. He asks if Henrietta would have turned back if not for Louisa. And Louisa says, "Well, I'm ashamed to say so, but yes." And he says, "Well, I'm glad she has [00:20:00] you." And he says, "And woe betide him and her too," talking about Henrietta and Charles. "When it comes to things of consequence, when they are placed in circumstances requiring fortitude and strength of mind, if she have not resolution enough to resist idle interference in such a trifle as this."

Essentially, saying, if she couldn't go visit him, when Mary said, "Oh, let's turn around," and she was about to turn around, like woe betide her when she has to make an actual choice about whether or not to marry this man.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: Sounds familiar.

Becca: Mm-hmm. Wentworth has some things he'd like to unload.

Molly: Yes. He says that Louisa has a spirit of decision and firmness, and she should try to make Henrietta more like her, because "It is the worst evil of too yielding and indecisive a character, that no influence over it can be depended on. You are never sure of a [00:21:00] good impression being durable, everybody may sway it. Let those who would be happy be firm."

Becca: What a subtweet.

Molly: He's subtweeting so hard. I had to call out all of these moments-- Because he's basically talking to Anne. He's talking about Anne, but if he knew she was there, he would be thrilled, I think.

Becca: Oh, I'm not sure. Well, we'll talk about it in the study question, because-

Molly: Yeah. Sure.

Becca: -I want to go deep into the scene. But yeah, this scene is so revealing to what he has pinpointed as the problem, the main problem in his life, which is Anne having an infirm character. He blames that for everything,-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -which burn for Anne.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Is he right?

Molly: We'll talk about it later.

Becca: We'll have to talk about it later.

Molly: He then finds a nut, a hazelnut, and makes a comparison to the nut, [giggles] because the nut is firm and it's on the tree still. It hasn't fallen off and been cracked open under people's feet.

Becca: Ah. The rizz on Captain Wentworth. Louisa, you are a nut. You are not a leaf. You are a nut.

Molly: [giggles] He tells Louisa to [00:22:00] cherish her powers of mind if she wants to beautiful and happy later in life, unlike Anne, who in his mind is ugly and miserable.

Becca: Let herself go.

Molly: She let herself go. Louisa doesn't respond, and Anne is just frozen.

Becca: What do you do in a situation where you accidentally hear your ex shit-talking you to his new girl?

Molly: There's nothing to be done.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Then, Louisa says, Mary has too much Elliot pride, and they all wish that Charles had married Anne instead, which is a great move here for the story. She doesn't know it's a great move, but for me, I was like, "Yes."

Becca: Yeah, finally. [laughs]

Molly: She says, "I suppose you know he wanted to marry Anne?" Wentworth pauses and then asks, "If she means that Anne refused him?" And Louisa is like, "Oh, yeah. Duh." And he's like, "Well, when did this happen?" And Louisa says "She doesn't remember exactly, but somewhere around a year before he married Mary." She says that Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove think Anne refused him, because he wasn't educated [00:23:00] enough for Lady Russell, so she persuaded Anne to refuse him. It's funny how on the nose this is, but just for the wrong person.

Becca: A 100%. It's also funny, because ironically, Lady Russell was pushing for Charles Musgrove for Anne.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, they are wrong. What actually happened, as we know, is that Anne was like, "I could never love again."

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: But I love this part. The actual context of it is one thing, but that's not what-- Jane Austen's so good at writing this. The tension in this moment for Captain Wentworth hearing

about another man courting Anne.

Molly: And her turning him down. But do we think that he believes Louisa, that she was then persuaded again away from another man?

Becca: Who's to say?

Molly: Fucking whomst even?

Becca: Yeah. Whomst, if you will.

Molly: Because this could either reflect well on her or badly on her, because if he believes that she turned down another man because she still loves him, **[00:24:00]** that's one thing. But if he believes that she turned down a second man by being persuaded away from him by fucking Lady Russell, which, by the way, does he even know that Lady Russell is the one?

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Okay. Just making sure.

Becca: He knows.

Molly: So, if he believes that she turned down a second man for the same reason or a similar reason, that would reflect very poorly on her. So, it depends how he takes it.

Becca: I think we are led to believe that Wentworth knows Anne well enough to know there might not have been love between her and Charles.

Molly: But he's so angry at her.

Becca: Yeah, he is, isn't he?

Molly: So, I wonder if he would want to believe badly of her. Maybe he thinks, "Maybe I didn't know her that well at all."

Becca: Well, I think there's something else going on here in this moment outside of she could have refused him, because she still loves me, and outside of she's so easily persuaded, she was persuaded again. It's a baser thing.

Molly: Jealousy?

Becca: Oh, yeah.

Molly: Big time?

Becca: Yeah, yeah. **[00:25:00]** Another man wanting Anne.

Molly: Damn.

Becca: Damn.

Molly: [giggles]

Becca: [laughs]

Molly: This book is hot as fuck, by the way.

Becca: It is famously one of her sexier works.

Molly: And now I see why.

Becca: Mm.

Molly: Mm. It does say that Anne has heard no evil of herself. It was like she's not-- But she has.

Becca: What she says is basically that she got subtweeted, which is that, like, he didn't say, "Fuck, Anne Elliot." He said, "Fuck these character traits," which she knows are for Anne Elliot.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: So, here's what she said. "She had heard no evil of herself, but had heard a great deal of very painful import. She saw how her own character was considered by Captain Wentworth, and there had been just that degree of feeling and curiosity about her in his manner which must give her extreme agitation."

Molly: Yeah, she's stressed.

Becca: So, she's clocked two things. One, she's clocked the fact that he is besmirching her character, but indirectly. [00:26:00] And two, she's clocked the fact that he got tense when she came up in the context of another man proposing to her.

Molly: The pause after Louisa says it, is so telling.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: It's loaded.

Becca: Absolutely.

Molly: As soon as they're out of earshot, she goes off to find Mary. Once all of them are together again, she starts to feel a little bit better. Her spirits wanted the solitude and silence which only numbers could give, which I thought was really telling about her that she likes to be in a crowd where she can retreat into the background. She doesn't like to be the center of someone's attention, or be one on one, or even be alone by herself with her thoughts.

Becca: Yeah. My sister is very shy, and one of the things that I find baffling is that she loves living in New York City.

Molly: Mm.

Becca: It doesn't compute for me, because New York City is very overwhelming to my senses sometimes and I'm not very shy. But she has always said like, "There's anonymity in how large it is and how populous it is," where I feel like I can be the most under the radar and unnoticed and unknown [00:27:00] in this city.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: So, that's what Anne's got going on right now.

Molly: Absolutely. Charles and Henrietta return. And this time, they're accompanied by Charles Hayter.

Becca: Hey. No longer a Hayter.

Molly: No longer a Hayter. They have made up. Henrietta looks a little embarrassed, but also happy. Charles Hayter is just over the moon. As they head back to Uppercross, they just talk only to each other. Wentworth and Louisa also walk together, so Anne is stuck with Mary and Charles, and they're each holding one of his arms. Anne is grateful to have him to lean on, because she's very tired. But he and Mary are in a fight-- Whenever he gets annoyed at Mary, he lets go of her arm and starts cutting plants with his whip-- With his switch, I'm assuming that's the whip, right, the little whip that Colonel Brandon carries around in *Sense and Sensibility*?

Becca: I don't know.

Molly: At first, I thought it was a switchblade, but then I was like, I feel like it's a whip.

Becca: I don't know.

Molly: Anyway, he's whipping plants.

Becca: Whipping plants.

Molly: [00:28:00] And then, Mary complains that he keeps letting go of her, because she's on the hedge side, but Anne never has to let go of him because she's not on the hedge side, so he lets go of both of them and goes to hunt a weasel.

Becca: Honestly, I feel for him in this moment. There's part of the annoyance with her is her treatment of his relatives.

Molly: Yeah. Well, that she was being so snooty about going down to see his aunt.

Becca: Yeah, exactly.

Molly: It's rude.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Soon, a carriage pulls up behind them and it turns out to be the Crofts. They have one seat left. They offer a ride to whoever would like it. The Musgrove girls aren't tired, and Mary is maybe too proud to ride three to a one horse carriage. They're about to drive away when Wentworth goes up and says something to his sister. And then, Mrs. Croft says, "Anne, I'm sure you're tired. Please let us drive you home." She jokes that they could fit four if they were all as small as Anne. They're like, "Oh, if we were all like you, we could probably fit four people."

Becca: Yeah. I feel like the implication [00:29:00] about Anne's looks is not that she's gotten ugly. It's that she's lost a lot of weight.

Molly: Yeah. She's wasted away.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah, that's what I was getting to. Anne is essentially not allowed to refuse. Wentworth, without saying a word, turns to her, quietly obliges her to be assisted into the carriage by his hand-

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: -touching her hand-

Becca: Uh-huh.

Molly: -and letting her up into the carriage.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: Hot.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: She feels that it was his will and his hands that placed her in the carriage that he had perceived her fatigue and wanted to give her a rest.

Becca: [sighs] You know, Jane Austen's such a good writer, because even when you're mad at someone, when you love them, when you care, their presence in your brain is just there. You're just more aware of where they are in a [00:30:00] room than you would be otherwise. The fact that he's not talked to her all day, but that he's visibly observing her getting more and more tired all day, and it's gotten into his brain enough that he insists to his sister that she be brought home. She's in there.

Molly: She's in there. She is aware that, or she is interpreting it as him "Resenting her, perhaps, but still not able to see her suffer a remainder of his former feelings an impulse of pure, though unacknowledged friendship." I read this totally differently.

Becca: Uh-huh.

Molly: Differently from Anne, but I understand that that's all there. But at the same time, I was reading it as him wanting to get rid of her.

Becca: Oh. Okay.

Molly: Wanting her to no longer be constantly in the corner of his eye, so that he can just focus on what he's trying to do, and like--

Becca: Similar vibe [00:31:00] of like, "You can't have her in your vicinity."

Molly: Right. Exactly. It is a remainder of his former feelings, but I would have been more offended if we had all said, "No, we're good. No ride necessary." And then, he got on up and been like, "Please take Anne." Now, him noticing that she was tired and she has wasted away, so she's not as strong as the others, that's all also there. But I think if I were Anne, I would have interpreted it a little bit differently, but she's like, "Oh."

Becca: Well, here's the thing. The opposite of love is not hate. It's indifference.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: It's the fact that she is on his mind constantly. That is what's wormed its way into Anne's brain is that these indications, these modest indications that he is not indifferent to her, that he can't be indifferent to her, no matter how mad he is at her.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: That is what she's picking up on, and that is totally correct.

Molly: Yeah. Her emotions are so compounded [00:32:00] of pleasure and pain that she knew not which prevailed. She's like, "I don't know what to think." But she's in the carriage now. She's totally spaced out, but then she hears the Crofts mention Frederick. They're talking about, of course, which of the girls he likes more.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: The Admiral says he's really taking his time, but only because they're in a time of peace. As sailors cannot afford to make long courtships in times of war. He turns to Mrs. Croft and says, "How many days was it between meeting and getting engaged for us?" And she's like, "Let's not talk about it, because if Anne hears how short the courtship was, she'll be persuaded that we could never be happy together." I was thinking, who else had a short courtship, Elton and Augusta? Everyone was talking about how they could not possibly be in love.

Becca: Well, it's more we were talking about how they could not possibly be in love, but yes.

Molly: Yes. Well, when they first arrived, I feel like there was a comment on it from Anne. She was like, "Yeah, but they were--" It was a short courtship like--

Becca: Emma.

Molly: Emma? Who did I say?

Becca: Anne.

Molly: [00:33:00] Emma. Emma was talking to Harriet. [laughs] Oh, my God. Emma was talking to Harriet about how it was a short courtship and they couldn't have, you know?

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But Mrs. Croft knew him by character before they met. She says, "So, his reputation preceded him." He said he knew that she was pretty before they met. Besides, why would they wait? But then, he says he thinks that Frederick needs to get a move on and bring one of the young ladies home to Kellynch. Mrs. Croft says that, "Yeah, they're good humored, unaffected girls with a respectable family." But she says it in a tone that makes Anne think that she thinks that they're not good enough for her brother, but in a cute way, like, "No one will be good enough for her brother," is what I was interpreting that as.

Becca: I think it's more of like, "They're fine."

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, "There's nothing wrong with them. They're good."

Molly: But she's not like, "Yes, that's the one."

Becca: No, she's not shipping.

Molly: I love for her.

Becca: Mrs. Croft is perfect.

Molly: She's a perfect person.

Becca: An icon.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: A legend.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: The moment.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: [00:34:00] And then, she goes, "Wait, careful, we're going to hit that post." And then, they swerve out of the way, and then the whole ride home, it's like, "Oh, there's a pothole. Let's-- Ahh"

Becca: I love the implication being that Admiral Croft is terrible at driving his own carriage.

Molly: Okay. I was wondering if who was driving, because it said that she did something with the horse, and I was like, "Wait, is she driving?" Because I, for some reason, didn't think that women could.

Becca: No. I think Admiral Croft is driving. I think it's like the carriage in *Sense and Sensibility*, the movie where Marianne and Willoughby are riding around. Do you remember that carriage?

Molly: Mm-hmm. Yeah.

Becca: Like, open?

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: That's the carriage that I have in my brain. Admiral Croft is the one driving it, so I think she's backseat driving.

Molly: Okay. Could she--

Becca: So, she's tugging the reins.

Molly: I see. Oh, I see, I see, I see. So, she's like, he's bad at driving and she's saving their lives.

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: I love it.

Becca: Yes. I love this implication, because this is tagging on from earlier when Wentworth is like, "Yeah, they're always overturning in the carriage."

Molly: Yeah. And then, she doesn't mind. She just is like, "Oh, careful."

Becca: Yup. [00:35:00]

Molly: Oh, I love it. Anyway, the deposit ends safely back at the house, and that is the end of that chapter.

Becca: Which brings us to Chapter 11.

Molly: 11. So, Lady Russell is returning soon. The plan is for her to pick Anne up and bring her to Kellynch. This will put Anne, technically, in the same village as Captain Wentworth, since he's staying with the Crofts at Kellynch Hall. But Anne is unsure how to feel, because on the one hand, yes, she's moving closer to him. But on the other hand, he's always at Uppercross anyway, so she's departing from him.

I think that whether he ends up being more at Kellynch Hall will be indicative of how he's feeling. Because if he's always at Uppercross now, he'll be avoiding Anne. But if he's always at Kellynch, then maybe he was only at Uppercross to be visible to Anne. So, who knows? We'll find out.

Becca: Mm-hmm.

Molly: She would like to avoid seeing him at the Hall, because [00:36:00] there are too many memories in the halls of the Hall. But more so, she would like to avoid him and Lady Russell seeing each other.

Becca: They have the beef.

Molly: They do have the beef. They do not like each other.

Becca: They do not.

Molly: She's also worried that if Lady Russell sees them together, she'll think that he has too much self-possession and she too little.

Becca: You must remember that Lady Russell and Anne have spent eight years pretending this never happened.

Molly: So true.

Becca: And now, he's back.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: And in Lady Russell's absence, Anne has spent months hanging out with Captain Wentworth again, the guy who ruined all other men for her.

Molly: Yup.

Becca: So, Lady Russell's just not in the know about this heavily, but--

Molly: Rough

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Anne is ready to leave, but in the final days of her trip, a change, something happens. Wentworth has been away for a few days and he returns to tell them where he's been. His friend, Harville, who he loves, who, by the way, I'm picturing [00:37:00] Idris Elba playing him.

Becca: A very hot version of Harville. But yes.

Molly: Yeah. They describe him as strong features, tall, dark, handsome, older. So, immediately, that was who I pictured. He has settled at Lyme. He's not in great health. He hasn't been in great health for a while.

Becca: Because he was injured during the war.

Molly: Injured during the war, so he's got a limp, and Wentworth wants to go see him, so he goes to see him. He now describes how cute Lyme is and everyone's like, "We must go to Lyme."

Becca: Beach vacay.

Molly: Beach vacay in November. So, at first, they're talking about making it a day trip, but it would be seven hours of driving. And in a day, there's just not enough time to do that. I have done that. We did that to see Sara Bareilles recently. We drove to Williamstown and back in a day.

Becca: Well, Williamstown isn't seven hours away, is it?

Molly: Well, she's saying seven hours total. So, three and a half there, three and a half back.

Becca: Oh, yeah. Brutal.

Molly: It's a long day. It's November, so the day is shorter, so that's just not enough time. So, [00:38:00] they decide to make it an overnight trip. They take two carriages, one with the four ladies and one with the two gentlemen. By the time they get there, it's already past noon, and there's not that much daylight left. So, they're like, "Good thing, we made this an overnight trip." They secure their accommodations, they order their dinner at the Inn to be ready when they get back and then they head down to the sea. It's the off season, which-- First of all, I love a beach on the off season.

Becca: This is such a vibe. We're going to get talking about this a little bit, but remember, Anne's barely traveled.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: The way Lyme is described here is so lovely, achingly beautiful to have the sea in the cold November time period, off season, quiet and wild.

Molly: They say that it's specifically good for quiet contemplation and moodiness.

Becca: Which like this whole book is quiet contemplation and moodiness. So, it's perfect for them.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It is described so beautifully, and it makes me want to go to the [00:39:00] sea.

Molly: The same. They describe the cliffs, and the romantic rocks, and lush greenery and the cob, which I think-- I have been reading the little footnotes, which I think gave me a stupid spoiler, so I'm going to stop reading the footnotes, but sometimes they're very helpful. And the cob, they described it as like rocks jutting out into the sea. So, I pictured almost a boardwalk, but of rocks that you can walk on.

Becca: That's close. Yeah, it's like a stone boardwalk-

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: -which boardwalk is boards usually.

Molly: Right, but this is stone. We're going to Cape Cod, next weekend. But in Cape Cod, I feel like there are a lot of these, like the big rock outcroppings that you can walk on.

Becca: Yeah. But the rock outcroppings are wild on Cape Cod.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: A cob is like a fortress. It's like--

Molly: Oh.

Becca: It's like a lookout point.

Molly: Oh, oh, oh, oh, okay. So, it was like its man made.

Becca: Definitely, man made.

Molly: So, anyway, they [00:40:00] describe all this as beautiful. Wentworth splits off to go find Harville, and the rest of them walk to the cob. Soon, he returns with Harville and his wife and a third person, Captain Benwick.

Becca: Okay. So, here's the thing. I read this entire book pronouncing it Benwick.

Molly: Is it not Benwick?

Becca: It's Benwick.

Molly: [giggles] Thank you.

Becca: No, don't thank me. Thank the fact that I finished this book, and now can be the person who says this correctly. But apparently, it's Bennek, not Benwick.

Molly: That makes total sense like Greenwich.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Not Greenwich.

Becca: Well, actually, I do know a town called Greenwich that's spelled the same way. But Greenwich, yeah, so it's Benwick.

Molly: Okay. Thank you. Okay, so Captain Benwick. Wentworth had told them all about Benwick beforehand. He's an excellent man and an officer and of much interest to the ladies. But his story is devastating. He had been engaged to Harville's sister. But when he was at sea, off making his fortune, getting his promotions, [00:41:00] she died. Wentworth said it was impossible for a man to love a woman more than Benwick loved Fanny Harville. And now, he's deep in mourning. He prefers solitude, staying home, being sad, reading poetry.

Becca: Sounds familiar.

Molly: When the Harville's retired to the sea for Harville's health, the quiet town and the melancholy seaside were very appropriate for Benwick. And now, he lives with them. Anne thinks to herself-- Oh, my God, okay. Anne thinks to herself, "And yet, he has not, perhaps, a more sorrowing heart than I have. I cannot believe his prospects so blighted for ever. He is younger than I am, younger in feeling, if not in fact, younger as a man. He will rally again, and be happy with another." While it's true that he is younger, and also is a man.

Becca: You're like, "Anne, shut up, He lost his fiancé."

Molly: He was almost married and then she died. [00:42:00] Your sorrow cannot be compared. She died. You dumped a man. Like, get over yourself. I'm so sorry, but I was over it at this point.

Becca: Yes, I will go on the defense for Anne in the study questions, but here, it is true. My initial reaction to this was very much like, "What the fuck, Anne?"

Molly: Yeah. Again, I can see where she's coming from, because her prospects are blighted forever. She's 29 years old.

Becca: Her point is twofold. This is a spoiler for the study questions. This is a gendered comparison.

Molly: Totally.

Becca: Because she is saying, not that he's younger than her or like flightier than her necessarily.

Molly: He has more hope for the future, because he's a man and he can get married at any age.

Becca: She is saying that I was stuck in my heartbreak for these eight years on one [00:43:00] man, and I don't have a future because that was my window. He has a window past his heartbreak. So, he could get out of his heartbreak and make it to the other side, I cannot do that.

Molly: I understand what she's saying and I understand where she's coming from.

Becca: I also think, to be fair, to Anne. Again, clearly, losing your fiancé to death is worse than losing your fiancé to your own poor life choices.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But Benwick gets to mourn in peace.

Molly: Sure.

Becca: Anne is tortured by the ever presence of her ex, making her miserable.

Molly: I think that's probably what she's thinking. Like, I don't think she's actually saying, "I have it worse because I'm sad. I'm more sad than him." But the thought to think this at this time upon hearing all of this and meeting this man, like--

Becca: Take a big, girly.

Molly: Yeah. Like, don't make it about you. [giggles]

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: But I totally [00:44:00] understand everything that you're saying, and I do think that's probably what she's thinking or what Jane Austen is intending for it to come off as.

Becca: There's another facet to this as well. This one, I have more trepidation about, but it's an interesting question that I think Jane Austen is posing here, which is, do men move on more easily? I don't think that's fair necessarily. But she's posing the question right now.

Molly: She is. But I think you're right that it's less of him being able to move on more than she can and more that he can get married at a later date, because he's a man.

Becca: He has the time, and the space to grieve and brood, and then he can go on with his married life and find someone else. Colonel Brandon did that.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And women don't get that same luxury in society.

Molly: It sucks. So, they're all introduced to each other. Harville is described as an older, kind, benevolent. And Benwick is a short king. He retreats back from the conversation. [00:45:00] The Harvilles are sad, because the group already ordered dinner at the Inn, instead of assuming they would come over and dine with them. The invitation to dine with them, for Anne, it feels different than the formality she's used to, because usually, it's like the girls came to ask them to go for a walk even though they didn't want them there. It's just something you had to do. And the Harvilles really want them to come to dinner, which is really sweet.

Becca: This is one of my favorite passages quietly in the book, because there's so much etiquette and formality in these books, but the warmth between these naval men is so palpable in the way she writes it.

Molly: Yeah. It hurts Anne, because they love Wentworth so much. She is thinking these would have been my friends.

Becca: Yeah. And she's like, "Thank, God. We don't have to dine with them, so I don't have to brood over it."

Molly: Yeah. [giggles] They go into Harville's rented house though right now. It's a rental. She [00:46:00] finds rooms so small that none but those who invite from the heart could think capable of accommodating so many. So, they were like, "Yeah, come over. We got plenty of space." But they actually don't. But it's really sweet. Anne loves what they've done with the place. It doesn't have the coldness of a rental home. They've added trinkets from their travels all over the house, because Harville can't walk so well. He spends a lot of time tinkering and making toys for the children and whittling. I love it. He just has his little toy factory [giggles] potentially making knitting needles. They called something netting needles in, I think in the--

Becca: Netting needles or knitting needles?

Molly: Well, netting needles. But then, I was like, "Maybe that's another word for knitting needles."

Becca: Well, it's a good question. I don't know the answer. How do you spell it?

Molly: Netting? Like, N-E-T-T-I-N-G.

Becca: Because this is a seaside town right now.

Molly: Oh, yeah. So, he could be making fishing nets.

Becca: Yup, it's for fishing nets.

Molly: Wow.

Becca: So, [00:47:00] he's a seaside dude.

Molly: Yeah. Oh, I love him. Okay, so he's making netting needles for making-

Becca: Fishing nets.

Molly: -fishing nets.

Becca: So, he's making the needles, misses Harville's making the nets and then he's fishing?

Molly: Probably, yeah.

Becca: So, obviously, these men hunt for fun.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: I don't know if they fish for fun.

Molly: I don't know either. It says that he goes into the-- He has a net, a fishing net,-

Becca: So, yes.

Molly: -but I don't know what he's doing with the fishing net.

Becca: Probably fishing.

Molly: Either that or making it for other people to fish.

Becca: Probably not making it for other people to fish. Probably fishing himself, because he's a naval man, so there is a certain comfort at sea. And also, he's not as wealthy as Wentworth is obviously, but he's also not going to be so poor that he's going to be selling fishing nets.

Molly: Right. Fair. He also built bookshelves for Benwick's books.

Becca: Very sweet.

Molly: Very sweet. He's not much of a reader himself, but Benwick loves to read. Anne feels sad when they leave the house. [00:48:00] And Louisa goes into raptures about how sailors are the best people in the world and the only people worthy of their attention, essentially. Who else is a sailor? Wentworth.

Becca: Also, just like this book is so interesting in this way. I really am fascinated by Jane Austen writing this book, because if you think about the most beloved characters so far, they're all naval men or wives of naval men.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: The comfort Anne feels with these guys versus the landed gentry is so interesting for what Jane Austen is thinking about the Navy at this point in her life.

Molly: Mm-hmm. Yeah, she doesn't like the landed gentry. She likes people who are not on land at all.

Becca: Yeah. But it is really interesting in the class context.

Molly: Oh, yeah.

Becca: Because we've read so many of these Jane Austen novels, where there's a lot of making fun of the upper classes. There's also a really ingrained feeling that the upper classes are set in [00:49:00] what they are. Like, you can read this really heavily to Emma and what happens when she tries to bring Harriet out of her class. And then, you have Jane Austen being like, "But you know, who can move up? You know, who is actually earning their spot in the British society at the highest rank is the navy. The naval officers. They are the ones who worked for what they have, who understand and know the world very well and are coming back and putting the landed gentry who are bored of and vapid to shame." It's really--

I have a lot of questions about it. It's really an interesting thing. I think Austen's brother was a naval man, which tells you something about how she might have been thinking about it. There's a lot of commentary to be had about the British imperialism of it all, although in this particular case, it being the Napoleonic wars, means that they're not necessarily going all that far. But I find it to be a really interesting facet of this book that Jane Austen is so pro [00:50:00] navy, and clearly so through all of the characters you meet from the navy.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It's interesting.

Molly: It is. So, they go back to the inn to eat. It says that everything is to their liking, but that there are complaints about how it's the off season and there's nobody expecting guest, there's nobody here. I think that's probably all Mary complaining.

Becca: It's a lot of Mary complaining. [chuckles]

Molly: Making the Inn staff apologize for their town. Mary, shut the fuck up.

Becca: I love her, because this is like-- You know, in every single circumstance, whenever anybody does something that makes your eyes roll, it's Mary doing it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, the lack of self-awareness like we have to stan.

Molly: Yes. So, Anne is starting to feel a little numb to Wentworth's effect on her. As in she feels she can sit down at dinner with him without feeling anything.

Becca: It's like, "I can be at a table with him without a panic attack."

Molly: Good for [00:51:00] her.

Becca: Points for Anne.

Molly: Yeah. Harville and Benwick come to see them after dinner, not his wife, because it is too dark for ladies to travel at night, even when accompanied by men, which I thought was interesting.

Becca: I disagree. Not that it's interesting or not. Just that it's too dark for ladies to travel at night. Maybe there's something to the fact that this is like a town of sailors.

Molly: Sure. But they were going to be there with her, but whatever. I'm not going to get too mad about it, because I understand that we're in a different time period. They are surprised that Benwick comes at all, because he had seemed oppressed by the presence of so many strangers. Poor guy is shy.

Becca: Benwick is a whole vibe.

Molly: He's a vibe.

Becca: He's a whole move.

Molly: I really like him.

Becca: Our guy, the emo king, Benwick.

Molly: The short emo king.

Becca: The short emo king, Captain Benwick. Oh, he's such a sad boy.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: He has his own sad playlist, but his sad playlist is much sadder. It's like what hurts the most, and when you're [00:52:00] gone.

Molly: [giggles] Yes. So, Harville and Wentworth are one side of the room telling tales of the sea, and Anne and Benwick are on the other side of the room. She wants to get him talking, because she likes making people comfortable and etc., He's shy, but she's gentle with her attempts at making an acquaintance and he starts to open up to her. It turns out he loves to read specifically poetry, which she was just all up in her feels about while she was walking, imagining all the different poets and what they say about autumn.

Becca: They're comparing notes on their emo playlist.

Molly: They literally are. So, Anne decides that in addition to listening to him talk about something that his normal companions have probably no interest in, she's going to do something else for him. She wants to help him in his struggle against affliction, because she knows so much about it, what he's going through. She [00:53:00] thinks that he's shy, but not reserved. It seems like he has feelings waiting to burst from him when they get the chance.

Becca: It's one of those, if you like, you're like, "Hey, how are you? Just checking." It's like, "Thank you so much for asking." And then, it's like everything's wrong.

Molly: Exactly. Yeah, which I love about him. He dives into talking about all the poetry that he loves. They're all very emo descriptions of hopeless agony, broken hearts, minds destroyed by wretchedness, etc., etc. She says that she hopes he doesn't only read poetry, because poetry cannot be safely consumed by those who relate most to it.

Becca: It's an incredible line from Jane Austen.

Molly: It's really good. It's like, yeah, the people who are most apt to read poetry, it's too much.

Becca: Yeah, it's the same like the people who are most apt to luxuriate in really sad music are the people.

Molly: Yeah. Should not be. [giggles]

Becca: Should go outside and get some fresh air.

Molly: Yes. He seems to [00:54:00] like that she is alluding to his situation and understanding of it. So, she recommends him some books that she thinks will fortify his mind with strong examples of religious and moral endurance that are not poetry. He does not have faith in the efficacy of those books on a grief like his, which, again, she doesn't really understand. But he writes down the titles and promises to read them.

When the men leave, Anne thinks how amusing it is that she should come all the way to Lyme to preach patience and resignation to a man she just met when she doesn't even take her own advice.

Becca: Yup.

Molly: [laughs]

Becca: She's like, "Hey, stop luxuriating in your own sadness."

Molly: And then, she goes back to luxuriate in her own sadness and reads some poetry books.

Becca: Indeed.

Molly: So, that's the end of those chapters.

Becca: Yes, it is. And that brings us to the study questions. Now, obviously, we're going to start with our patron study questions. This is another reminder that if you want to ask study questions, you can join our Patreon at the \$15 tier. You can wait for Molly to post the Google Doc **[00:55:00]** before we do a record, and you can submit your own study questions, and then we will read and respond to them on the air.

So, Janae asks, "What do you think Wentworth is feeling after finding out another man proposed to Anne, and why does it make him oblige Anne to get into the carriage?" We touched on this, but there's a couple different ways to read it.

Molly: Mm. I hadn't thought of the connection between him finding out another man proposed and getting her into the carriage. But I do think it goes back to what I was saying. My interpretation of him having her get in the carriage is like, out of my sight, out of my mind, I need to process without you being here.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: So, what do I think he's feeling about it? It's all in that pause. He's trying to decide whether she loved him too much to accept another man or whether she was persuaded away from another man.

Becca: And also, I said this before, I'll say it again, it's not purely **[00:56:00]** just this intellectual which one was it. There's the pure emotion of another man asked and marry him.

Molly: The jealousy, the "Oh, my God, she had a connection with someone else"?

Becca: There's some things you can't control in this life. You can rationalize away a lot, but the feeling you get when you are jealous of somebody, you can't beat it. You can't force it away. It's automatic. He's talking to another woman about this, another woman who has deeply interested in him. And in that moment, he has to ask a follow up about Anne.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: I think that you're right. I think at the bare minimum putting aside whether or not he wants to show care for her or wants her just out of his sight, the truth is, finding out another man proposed to Anne, does for Wentworth put her in the preoccupation space of his mind enough to compel his sister to take her home by carriage.

Molly: Also, **[00:57:00]** I'm just noticing this now, but that man is literally with them.

Becca: Yes.

Molly: Charles Musgrove is walking with them.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: He doesn't want them in the same place.

Becca: And they're bros, the two of them.

Molly: Yes.

Becca: Obviously, Charles is married to Mary. Like, he's moved past Anne. I don't think you get the sense that Charles was deeply in love with Anne.

Molly: No.

Becca: I think he preferred her of the three sisters, which is fair, given the other two sisters. [Molly giggles] I think that he thought they'd make a good match, and he was probably right about it.

Molly: I forgot about Elizabeth.

Becca: That's the fun part of this book. You're like, "Wait, Sir Walter and Elizabeth exist?" [chuckles]

Molly: I forgot about them entirely. Yeah, but I think that, in a way, it's finding this out about his pal has opened up another facet of his pal that he didn't know about. Not that he thinks that he's still into her, but just like, "I don't want to picture you two together."

Becca: It's also just the idea of like, when you cabin someone off in your brain, you don't [00:58:00] want to think about them being with other people.

Molly: Of course.

Becca: And so, for him, it's like Anne is just like let herself go or whatever, and she just exists. She is the aunt, she is the sister, she is the piano player, she is not the dancer. But this is a friendly reminder, or not so friendly reminder that others have wanted Anne. Anne is a desirable commodity, and you lost her.

Molly: Yeah. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Because he has spent so much time in his mind being like, "She's ugly now. She's let herself go." I'm just repeating exactly what you said, but he's tried to make her an undesirable character in his mind, so that he doesn't think about her and regret. And now, he's being reminded that-- Literally, exactly what you said, I just had to say it again.

Becca: Yeah. no, it's important. It's crucial. It's weird, because we're 11 chapters into this book so far, and the vibes between Anne and Wentworth are still so bizarre, but there is [00:59:00] some kernel there that makes it very compelling to continue.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Okay. So, next question is also from Janae, and I'm going to add my own little modification on it, because it relates to one of Becca's study questions. It is, "What are Henrietta and Louisa meant to represent in the story when compared to Anne?" My caveat modification on it is, how does Louisa Wentworth's chosen compare to Anne in demeanor?

Molly: So, I think to the first point, we learned this in the last couple chapters, which is that Henrietta is the more demure, mindful of the two, and Louisa is the more outgoing, outspoken, energetic one. But in terms of how they compare to Anne and how Louisa specifically compares to Anne is that she's her opposite on the one hand. And also, Henrietta is more easily persuaded and Louisa is more firm-

Becca: Yes.

Molly: -and also, more likely [01:00:00] to do the persuading.

Becca: Yes. I would also note that Henrietta and Louisa are so young, and so perky and so open. They have not been bogged down by life in the same way, so they represent possibility that Anne has lost as well. They are Anne when she first met Wentworth.

Molly: Exactly.

Becca: There's a little bit of a #notlikeothergirls thing going on here, which I don't always love, where Anne is like, "Yeah, but I've got a sterner and stronger mind than the two of them," which, even if it's true, Anne, shut up.

Molly: I don't even know-- It's not true because-- Well, we'll talk about it.

Becca: Well, there's a difference between the sterner, and stronger mind and the firmer mind.

Molly: Sure.

Becca: Because obviously, Anne is more well read, Anne is more sophisticated,

Molly: Yes.

Becca: -Anne is more polite than these two girls. But they're well mannered, they're fun, they're a good time, but they're a little basic, you know?

Molly: Yeah. But they're not as bad as like Kitty and Lydia.

Becca: Oh, no, they're not, Kydea. They're proper. They're not terrible, but they're young and shallow. Not shallow, but like-- [01:01:00] The best way I can explain this, and it's not meant to ding anyone, because I think Jane Austen's being a little bit of a snit about this, is the difference between someone who's reading poetry and Shakespeare and the difference between someone who's watching *The Bachelor*.

They're a little bit younger and a little bit less deep thinking than Anne. They're easier. My point is not that *The Bachelor* is vapid or shallow, because I think people are welcome to love *The Bachelor*, and it is great entertainment for a huge portion of the population. I am saying Jane Austen is being a snit, and describing Anne being the deeper thinker than these two girls.

Molly: Yeah. Anne is definitely someone who would look down on *The Bachelor*.

Becca: Exactly. It's a not like other girls thing.

Molly: Yeah. Instead of just appreciating the entertainment for entertainment's sake and—

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: But it's also like Anne has been bogged down by life, and Louisa and Henrietta have not. They have wanted for nothing. They are happy. They are still in the throes of youth and possibility, [01:02:00] and that Anne is bogged down by the love lost by a really cold and horrible family by the loss of her mother. There's a lot of--

Molly: I forgot that her mom died. I was thinking about like, "Oh, she's never experienced loss." But she has.

Becca: Oh, yeah. Anne understands grief. She is not a character who hasn't undergone any

hardship other than losing the love of her life. It is a testament to how intense this love affair was that that is still to her the seminal thing that's breaking her heart.

Molly: Well, did her mom suck as bad as her dad?

Becca: No. If you recall at the beginning of the book, her mother was a different kind of person than her father and was very there for Anne. Very present, and also very sensible. The reason that they lost all their money is that the sense that her mother brought to their finances was gone, and her father blew it all on bullshit, and Elizabeth let him, and so you're led to see that not only has there been intense emotional [01:03:00] consequences for Anne as a result of her mother's death, but it's ruined her life financially too.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, everything about Anne's mother being gone has wrecked Anne and her life.

Molly: Yeah, I forgot about that.

Becca: Her closest family member, her financial security, like that's the reason she's so close to Lady Russell is because her mother's best friend promised her mother that she'd look after Anne. There is a lot of sadness that Anne carries about the death of her mother.

The fact that's all true and she's still like my greatest regret in life is losing Captain Wentworth is more of a testament to how intense the love affair was between Anne and Wentworth than it is to the fact that she hasn't known any other tragedies in her life.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, I forget exactly why this came. Oh, this came up in the context of talking about Henrietta and Louisa. On the Louisa centric portion, you're correct that Louisa is of a sterner mind. She's a more stubborn and headstrong woman, which is the exact opposite of Anne, who is neither stubborn nor headstrong. [01:04:00] And there's a boldness to her character, which is really fun. I actually quite like Louisa.

Molly: I do too.

Becca: I think she's a very interesting and fun character. But it is interesting that Wentworth connects to someone who is bold, firm, brash, and like someone who is headstrong enough to make her own opinions and force her own way on people, as opposed to Anne, who will take the bullshit from everyone else on her back and just continue on.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: It tells you that Wentworth is specifically looking for someone who is not Anne.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, who is opposite of Anne.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Interesting.

Molly: Sad.

Becca: Sad. Okay, we have one more question from the patrons. [unintelligible 01:04:42] asks, "How do you compare the Crofts to the established Austen couples, e.g., Fanny and John, Mr. and Mrs. Bennet, Mr. and Mrs. Palmer?"

Molly: I feel like a lot of the couples that were named here are partially comic relief. Like the Palmers, for example. Mr. and Mrs. [01:05:00] Bennet. They obviously have plots-- [crosstalk]

Becca: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Molly: Fanny and John, just like we hated them. I think that the Crofts are the most lovable of all of them.

Becca: If I were going to comp them to one couple in any of the other books we read, it would be the Gardiners from *Pride and Prejudice*.

Molly: Yeah. Like, unproblematic.

Becca: Happy, not super high class, but not so low class has to be a problem either, and very well mannered.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: Clearly in love with each other, a slightly older mentor figure in the wife and a very jovial kind figure in the husband to whoever the Jane Austen heroine is in either Lizzy or Anne. So, I think the Gardiners-- Well, the Gardiners are there to give Darcy proof that Lizzy has some good relatives. The Crofts are there, I think, and I've said this before, to serve aspirational to Anne and to show her what she could have had with Captain Wentworth.

Molly: [01:06:00] Yeah.

Becca: So, it's great. They're interesting that they're a couple without kids. They are more even footed than other couples. Like, they're more--

Molly: They're equals.

Becca: Equal. It's more of a partnership than a lot of the other couples we see in Jane Austen. And they're way more worldly.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: They've been everywhere. So, they're lower class in the sense that they don't have their own property that they own at this point, they're renting out, but they are shown to be like some of the people that Anne most easily hangs out with.

Molly: Yeah. It's interesting also, this is completely unrelated to the question, but the fact that they are renting, like the transient nature of being in the navy and not knowing when you're going to go to war again and not knowing when you're going to go live on a boat, it makes sense that they wouldn't want to buy property or settle somewhere permanently and instead bop around.

Becca: I think you get the sense that they are intending to settle down here permanently, because I think Admiral is getting old-

Molly: Gotcha.

Becca: -and is not necessarily going to war.

Molly: Yeah, [01:07:00] I forgot about that he's older.

Becca: Yeah. But I think what it is at this point in time, they're out buying it, because it's

actually quite difficult to buy a big estate.

Molly: Relatable content.

Becca: Yeah. So, even Bingley was leasing Netherfield in *Pride and Prejudice*. So, until you have a capacity to buy your own estate, which is very difficult to do because everything's inherited,-

Molly: Entailed. Yeah.

Becca: -you rent somewhere really nice instead. And so, they've rented pretty lavishly. I think they do intend to stay where they've rented as long as they can.

Molly: Gotcha.

Becca: There's a lack of concern about the comings and goings and the frivolities of this society. They've been to all over the world together. They're in love and they have just a happy life hanging out.

Molly: They are goals.

Becca: They are goals. Mrs. Croft is an icon and a legend. Love her dearly.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, now, we're going to move on to some of my study questions. We've [01:08:00] talked about this already, but I'm just going to add one wrinkle on the nut conversation between Louisa and Wentworth.

Molly: Mm-hmm.

Becca: "How do we learn about what Wentworth's thinking about the disillusion of his relationship with Anne?"

Molly: When he's talking about the nuts, he talks about the inclement season and the winds blowing the nuts off the tree and onto the ground to rot or be trampled on or cracked open. And so, I think that he's attributing it to an inclement season, to bad weather metaphorically outside sources, swaying a weak nut.

Becca: A weak nut. LOL. No, I think what he was saying is, to him, Anne's the leaves.

Molly: Let's read it.

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: Because I think he's calling her a weak nut.

Becca: Anne Elliot, a weak nut. Here is a nut," said he, catching one down from an upper bough, "to exemplify: a beautiful glossy [01:09:00] nut, which, blessed with original strength, has outlived all the storms of autumn. Not a puncture, not a weak spot anywhere. This nut," he continued, with playful solemnity, "while so many of his brethren have fallen and been trodden under foot, is still in possession of all the happiness that--" Oh, no, you're right, you're right. He is comparing her to a weak nut.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, what he is saying is, Anne cracked easily. I will never make the mistake of being with someone who would crack easily ever again.

Molly: Right.

Becca: Because it ruined me.

Molly: Right.

Becca: And so, what he is looking for in a partner here and he thinks he may have found in Louisa Musgrove is someone of enough stern character that if you trot on them, they will not crack.

Molly: They won't crack in bad weather. They won't fall off the tree. They won't get cracked open by a foot. They're going to stay on the tree and be a strong, happy hazelnut. They can weather every storm together-

Becca: Exactly.

Molly: -that Anne cannot weather.

Becca: And so, in his impression, Anne was too weak.

Molly: She's weak.

Becca: [01:10:00] Anne didn't have the wherewithal and sternness of character to fight for them. So, that's what you're seeing here, is like, he's mad. She didn't fight for him.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: He's mad. She didn't stand up.

Molly: It got hard, and she didn't--

Becca: Yeah.

Molly: She didn't stay.

Becca: She didn't stay. Is he right?

Molly: Sort of. But at the same time, you have to think about the fact that she had the pressure from her family, and she doesn't want to displease anyone, so she's stuck with her family for life. She doesn't want to make a decision that's going to make them resent her, first of all.

Second of all, if she's persuaded that, it would best for him too. I don't remember what her logic there is, but they talk in the beginning about how she's persuaded that this is best for him as well, because later on down the line, it wouldn't work out or something. It was better for her to end it when she did. I don't really remember what the reasoning was there.

Becca: There's a lot going on. Part of it is that she'd have to [01:11:00] forsake her family, and just the drama of it, the pain of it and also having her weigh him down while he's at sea.

Molly: Right.

Becca: There's a lot of reasons why there were complications to her saying yes in that moment. It's not like Anne was just like, "Oh, you're right. He's kind of a Nicki choice, and said no." It's like, there were some really serious economic considerations and practical considerations that made their match very difficult at that time.

Molly: Right.

Becca: So, it's a complicated answer. I'm going to keep asking whether or not Wentworth or Anne is in the right here until we finished the fucking book.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Like, pulling apart what happened in the past year is exceedingly complicated and interesting, because everyone has their own perspective on what happened, and everyone's hurt and everyone's got a lot of emotions tied up in it.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: So, it's hard to know who's right, who's wrong. It's, ugh, we could talk about it forever. We have a lot of podcast time talking about it.

Molly: We do.

Becca: [01:12:00] I will skip over some of my questions about Benwick's grief and Anne's grief, because I think we really did cover that and end up on "What was the vibe between Anne and Benwick at the end of those chapters?"

Molly: It's so weird. Not weird, but I just wasn't expecting another man to come into this story. The vibe was, like let's listen to sad music together, but also, Anne trying to take him under her wing and be like, "Listen, I understand grief. I got you," was interesting to me, but also annoying, because she's not thinking about her dead mother. She's thinking about the eight years that she's spent in mourning for her--

Becca: Relationship with Wentworth.

Molly: Yeah, which is just not the same. But the vibes were interesting, because she was recommending him books and he was saying he was going to read them, which is, as we know, hot. [01:13:00]

Becca: He also opened up to her.

Molly: And he opened up to her. He was like, "Oh, she wants to talk to me?" And then, he just started spilling his guts. So, it was sweet. I could see a world in which he develops feelings for her. And she says, "That's not what I meant." [giggles] But I guess we'll find out.

Becca: We shall. Yeah, we shaz.

Molly: We shaz.

Becca: Funniest quote?

Molly: Okay. Well, we're just going to go back to the nuts for a second, because you cut off right before you said my favorite part. "This nut, while so many of its brethren have fallen and been trodden under foot, is still in possession of all the happiness that a hazel-nut can be supposed capable of." We're just a happy little hazelnut.

Becca: Oh, Louisa, the happy little hazelnut.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Questions moving forward.

Molly: I have questions about Benwick, if he's going to become a secondary love interest in

this book, because I do think that he's a very interesting character to be juxtaposed next to Anne. So, he's my [01:14:00] main question right now. "How far into this book is he going to make it?"

Becca: Noted.

Molly: Yeah.

Becca: Who wins the chapters?

Molly: I think that I really like Harville and the entry of him and Mrs. Harville into the story was really great. But the Crofts also. The secondary couples.

Becca: Yeah. The two secondary naval couples are killing it. The Crofts could win literally any chapter they're in.

Molly: That's so true.

Becca: They're so good.

Molly: So, the navy wins.

Becca: Her Majesty's British Royal Navy wins these chapters. [Molly [laughs] Actually, was it her Majesty? It would have been his Majesty. It was the Regency Era, so I don't know who technically was at the helm of the navy. The Prince Regent, probably. So, his Majesty's Naval forces.

But either way, listeners, that concludes this episode of Pod and Prejudice. For next time, we're reading one chapter, just Chapter 12, and that's going to wrap on Volume I of [01:15:00] *Persuasion*. We are halfway through the book, which is crazy. We also talked about it for literally two hours right now.

Molly: Yup.

Becca: It's going to be a long one. But until next time, listeners, stay proper.

Molly: And read some sad poetry.

Becca: Oh, yeah. But not too much.

Molly: Only if you handle it. Yeah. Only if you handle it.

Becca: Yeah.

[music]

Molly: Pod and Prejudice is edited by Molly Burdick and audio produced by Graham Cook. Our show art is designed by Torrance Browne. Our show is transcribed by SpeechDocs 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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