

**Molly:** Hey, everyone. Before we begin today, we want to thank our newest patrons, Susan, Frances, Sarah and Sarah. And that is two separate Sarahs. I didn't just thank the same person twice. Welcome to the team. As always, if you're interested in hearing Becca's first thoughts on *Persuasion*, hanging out with us on Discord and submitting your very own study questions, check out our Patreon at [patreon.com/podandprejudice](https://patreon.com/podandprejudice). And now, enjoy this week's episode covering Chapter 12 of *Persuasion*.

[Pod and Prejudice theme]

**Molly:** This chapter-

**Becca:** This chapter.

**Molly:** -was unhinged.

**Becca:** Yeah, let's get into it, because I feel like we have a lot to talk about. 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:** Listeners, if you're new here, I, Becca, have read many Jane Austen novels in my life.

**Molly:** And I, Molly, I'm reading 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 or 3 [00:01:00] of this podcast, respectively. But that is not what we're doing here today.

**Molly:** No. Today, we are talking about the final chapter of Volume I of *Persuasion*.

**Becca:** And it's like uneventful. [chuckles]

**Molly:** Yeah, super uneventful. Kind of boring. We probably could have skipped right over it.

**Becca:** Yeah. What the fuck, Jane?

**Molly:** Oh, my God. Anyway, we'll get into it. We'll get into it. This is an insane chapter.

**Becca:** There's so much to go through in this chapter. When I read it for the first time, I immediately knew it was going to be a one chapter wonder of an episode.

**Molly:** Yes. But first of all, because it's long.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** But second of all, because it's so action packed in so many ways.

**Becca:** I think this is the plot heaviest chapter that Jane Austen has ever written.

**Molly:** Yeah, it's a lot.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, let's tell the listeners where we left off.

**Becca:** So, last time we were on a cute little girl's trip. By girl's trip, I mean, Musgrove family trip to Lyme with Captain Wentworth to visit his buddy, Captain Harville. His wife, Mrs. Harville, and his would have been brother-in-law, Captain Benwick, who was initially [00:02:00] engaged to Harville's sister, Fanny, who passed away, very sad. So, he's a sad emo boy. He's listening to his sad emo Lord Byron poems. And he needs his own little sad emo playlist.

So, he and Anne bond over that. Anne's like come to the end of her time at the Musgrove's, but she's hanging out with them by the sea. It's a seaside tale for a brief period of time. And yeah, that's what happened last time.

**Molly:** Yeah, I can totally see why you wanted me to read this while we were in Cape Cod.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Cape Cobb.

**Becca:** Cape Cobb. So, listeners, for everyone who doesn't follow us on Instagram, Molly and I were at a wedding together. Not our wedding, obviously.

**Molly:** We got married to each other. [giggles]

**Becca:** Oh, it would have been beautiful. Alas, it was not the case. Molly's best friend from college married my college roommate. And together, they called us both into their wedding party. So, there's some great photos of me and Molly crying at the altar together.

But anyway, we were in [Molly [giggles] Cape Cod together, and I was like, "Hey, Molly, bring your copy of *Persuasion*, so you can read." And Molly was like, "I'm probably not going to read *Persuasion* [00:03:00] there. We're going to be busy," like blah, blah, blah. I was like, "No, read it. Read it there." And then, she didn't, which is fine.

**Molly:** Well, I brought it. I brought it and I fully intended to read it, but then there was just things going on all the time.

**Becca:** So, we were social this weekend, instead of Molly reading the chapter, which is fine, because now, we're talking about it here on this podcast like we're supposed to. But I wanted to hear Molly scream in the other room of our rental.

**Molly:** Yeah. I was like [gasps], but when I actually got to it. So, let's-

**Becca and Molly:** Get into it.

**Molly:** So, we are in Lyme. Anne and Henrietta take a pre-breakfast walk to the sea, which is like what we did on our porch in Cape Cod. It's very beautiful and lovely, and there's a breeze. Henrietta goes on about how the sea always does one good. She thinks that Dr. Shirley really ought to move to Lyme, both for his health and for his proximity to other doctors, and also because Mrs. Shirley has cousins there. She really wishes that someone would try to convince him.

Now, if you remember, Dr. Shirley is the person for whom [00:04:00] Charles Hayter the hater works.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** She worries that Dr. Shirley wouldn't want to leave his parish, which she thinks is

over scrupulous, because why would he put off his health for his duties when his duties could just as easily be done by another.

**Becca:** AKA Charles Hayter the hater.

**Molly:** Hello, boo thang. Anne knows exactly what is going on here and she's like, "Yes, that would be good. It would be good for Dr. Shirley to rest and have an active, respectable young man to take his place. And it would be nice if he were married."

**Becca:** Aww, I love this from Anne.

**Molly:** Yeah, it's really sweet.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Because she's just helping Henrietta dream.

**Becca:** Which you'll learn as you're reading the book is that Henrietta does really care about Charles Hayter the hater, but is just like a scootch, self-conscious about her choice.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm

**Becca:** And Anne is like, "No, no. It's nice. You love him. It's good."

**Molly:** Yeah. Someone pointed out that he is their first cousin.

**Becca:** Yes, he is. Jane Austen cousin marriage.

**Molly:** I am used to it now-

**Becca:** Yeah. [chuckles]

**Molly:** -in such a way that I'm able to [00:05:00] ship this.

**Becca:** Yeah, that's you have to pull out a little bit.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** There is one Jane Austen cousin love situation that is down the line where I'm a little like, "Ugh, that's a little close." But this is not one of them, because it's offhand that they're cousins. They just happen to live in the same neighborhood and happen to be cousins.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Whereas I think in some other books, it's a little bit more awkward.

**Molly:** Yeah. There's another cousin relationship going on in this chapter that I'm very into.

**Becca:** Oh, we'll get to it.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah, we will.

**Molly:** But anyway, that's happening. Henrietta says that she wishes that Lady Russell lived at Uppercross and was friends with Dr. Shirley, because Lady Russell, she knows, can persuade anyone to do anything.

**Becca:** It's in the title.

**Molly:** It's literally in the title. Lady Russell has persuaded people to do things in the past. Henrietta says, she's afraid of Lady Russell, but she respects her. And I love that. Like, honestly goals. **[00:06:00]**

**Becca:** That's me.

**Molly:** Yeah. [giggles] Anne is amused by this. I think she's hinting that Lady Russell would be anti-Charles Hayter the hater, just based on her track record. Is that correct?

**Becca:** I think so. Lady Russell doesn't care as much about the Musgrove girls as she does about Anne. So, it's none of her business.

**Molly:** Yeah. And Anne's like, "That's funny that you're even thinking about her in this moment."

**Becca:** Yeah. But it's ironic because of the conversation they're having about Charles Hayter, and loving him despite his position. And also, at the same time, she can persuade anyone of anything.

**Molly:** Before Anne can say much on the subject though, who should approach but Louisa and Captain Wentworth walking together.

**Becca:** Unchaperoned.

**Molly:** Unchaperoned. I thought about that a lot during this chapter of the level of flirtation that's happening. I guess it's not improper if they have intentions for each other, but **[00:07:00]** we'll get to the more over.

**Becca:** Yeah, we will.

**Molly and Becca:** Yeah.

**Becca:** There's consequences for flirting.

**Molly:** Yes.

[laughter]

**Molly:** Real ones. So, Louisa asks them to go into town with her. They walk up to the steps that lead out of the beach. When they get to the base of the steps, there's a gentleman at the top of the steps. He moves out of the way, so that they can come up. They come up the stairs, and as Anne passes, he checks her out.

**Becca:** He checks her the fuck out.

**Molly:** He does a full uppy downy.

**Becca:** Yeah. This is not a subtle one. When you're getting checked out in person-- I'm personally sometimes oblivious to this, but there are times where you're just like you know you're getting checked out, because someone's being not subtle. He is not being subtle right now.

**Molly:** No. The narrator draws to our attention that Anne is looking good.

**Becca:** Yeah. This is why I was pushing back earlier where I was like, "There's just no sense that Anne is ugly in this book. It's just she's withdrawn, she's aged. **[00:08:00]** She's gotten

gaunt in a certain way." Wasted away, if you will. Because this is the point in the book where the narrator turns to us and is like, "And guess what, readers? Anne is hot again."

**Molly:** She's hot. She's got like a flush in her cheeks. The ocean air has brought out the light in her eyes.

**Becca:** I think the implication is she may have filled out a little bit. You get the sense that Anne just wasn't eating, wasn't sleeping, and now she's come into health again.

**Molly:** Yeah. Because of her time at the Musgroves, you think?

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** We talk shit about the emotional labor Anne does for Mary and the Musgroves. But if you compare it to the level of cruelty and coldness, she was facing with Sir Walter and Elizabeth, it's a much more pleasant environment for her-

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** -in a lot of ways. So, therefore, she has come into her own a little bit.

**Molly:** Yeah, which I love for her.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** As this man checks her out, Wentworth notices.

**Becca:** He clucks the uppy downy.

**Molly:** He looks over his head, snaps to them. [00:09:00] And Anne notices, or the narrator notices that he is giving her a look as if to say, "I also see some of the former Anne Elliot in you right now," as in, "I also noticed that you look hot."

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** So, he also checks her out.

**Becca:** Yeah. Anne's having a good day for-- You know when you have those days where you leave the house and you're like, "I'm not wearing makeup today, but I'm looking excellent."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. Anne's having one of those days. Wentworth turns around and he's like, "Wait a minute, you look like the woman I fell in love with again."

**Molly:** Yeah. It does suck a little bit that it took another man checking her out for him to notice.

**Becca:** Which is always how it is.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Unfortunately.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** We've all been there where it's like, you don't notice something until somebody else makes you notice it, if you know what I mean.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Like, have you ever had the experience of not knowing you had a crush on somebody until somebody else says that they have a crush? It's like, Emma with Harriet and Knightley.

**Molly:** Yes, exactly.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** It is exactly that. Later in the Inn, Anne is running [00:10:00] from one room to the other, because she's late for dinner or whatever. She almost bowls right into the man, the same man in her very Inn. She had figured that he was not from around here, based on, I guess, vibes. She had noticed a man servant who she thought was with him, and they are both wearing morning clothes, like black, so that increased her opinion that they are together and he turns out to be staying in the same Inn. She can see by his looks that he thinks hers very lovely, so in he is checking her out again in the Inn.

**Becca:** Yes, he is.

**Molly:** He offers many apologies for almost bumping into her, which shows that he has good manners. She clocks that he's around 30, not handsome, but agreeable.

**Becca:** There's a very specific type of attractive, where the person's not classically handsome. It's the rat boy thing. I don't want to name [00:11:00] names specifically, because I don't want to call someone out for being less classically handsome, I guess. But yeah. It's like, when someone's really engaging and has certain interesting features that make you engaged, that's how I'm picturing this man.

**Molly:** He's interesting looking.

**Becca:** He's striking.

**Molly:** Yes. And to her, that's hot. She wants to get to know him more.

**Becca:** Oh, do you, Anne? [Molly giggles] You want to get to know him more?

**Molly:** To get, wink. To know, wink

**Becca:** Him.

**Molly:** Him, wink.

**Becca:** More.

**Molly:** More, wink.

**Becca:** Wink.

**Molly:** [giggles]

**Becca:** Wink.

**Molly:** Near the end of breakfast, they hear a carriage. There's not many carriages in town

at this current time, because it's the off season, so this is interesting to them. And they go to the window. It's being driven by a servant in mourning, which makes Anne jump up and go to the window. When Charles Musgrove hears that there's a curricle outside, he jumps up and goes to the window, because he needs to compare [00:12:00] it to his own curricles.

**Becca:** And boys and cars.

**Molly:** Yes, boys and cars. So, I love this vision, because it's like, "Oh, there's a carriage." Henrietta and Louisa go to the window. They're like, "Oh, my God, check it out. There's a curricle." Charles gets up and goes to the window, and they're like, "Oh, my gosh. It's being driven by a servant in mourning." Anne jumps up and goes to the window, and now they're all crowded around the window is looking out. Wentworth gives Anne half a glance and says, "Oh, it's the man we passed earlier."

**Becca:** Jealousy.

**Molly:** [giggles] Wentworth then asks the waiter who that man was, and the waiter says, "Yes, sir, Mr. Elliot."

**Becca:** Record scratch.

**Molly:** I was like, "No."

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Because first of all, I was already shipping this, like I was shipping him in Anne and I was like, "Fuck, it's her cousin, and I'm into it." Like, not into him being her cousin, but whatever. He was already--

**Becca:** He was solidified as a love interest in your head.

**Molly:** Right. He was a love interest. And then, also, I guess learning [00:13:00] that it's Mr. Elliot, his history with Elizabeth means that we are okay to think of him as a love interest.

**Becca:** Oh, yeah. Listen, it's Jane Austen, the cousins will marry.

**Molly:** The cousins will marry. Oh, my God, we should get that on our T-shirt.

**Becca:** "It's Jane Austen, the cousins will marry." [laughs] Oh, no. [Molly giggles] Oh, no. Listeners, let us know if you would buy that T-shirt.

**Molly:** Please buy it. I will make it.

**Becca:** "It's Jane Austen, the cousins will marry."

**Molly:** I love it.

**Becca:** So, in any case, it's Mr. Elliot. Blast from the past. The same Mr. Elliot from Chapter 1 of this book, our very first chapter. Oh, here he is in the flesh, up and downing Anne.

**Molly:** Yeah, and having no idea who she is. And then, I realized and I marked this down as pages 9 and 10, because I was like, "Wait, haven't they met him though? He's their cousin." They have not met him. The only person who's met him is Elizabeth, and she's not here. So, Mary and Anne had [00:14:00] no way of knowing this is their cousin.

**Becca:** Nope.

**Molly:** So, we learn that he is on his way to Bath and the London, and I was like, "Oh, my

God, he's on his way to bath."

**Becca:** He's on his way to Bath.

**Molly:** That's where her father and sister are.

**Becca:** Sure is.

**Molly:** That stresses me out.

**Becca:** [chuckles]

**Molly:** Mary is like, "Oh, my God, it must be our cousin. He's in mourning. Our cousin is in mourning," which I remembered from looking back at pages 9 and 10 that he is in mourning. He's their father's heir. She asks the waiter, "If his servant said whether he was part of the Kellynch family?" And the waiter says, "No, but he's a very rich man, and he said he would be a baronite someday." And I was like, "What's a baronite?" And then, I did some googling and learned that it's a mistake on the waiter's part, not understanding what a baronet is, because baronets are pretty insignificant. So, he was like, "Ah, yes, a baronite," which I thought was funny.

Mary is like, "Oh, my God, it has to be him, because of course, his servants would be bragging that he's going to be a baronet, because that's so important and cool." And so, Mary goes on about how [00:15:00] she wishes she had gotten a better look at him, and she's surprised the arms did not strike her. Now, at first, I thought she was referring to his arms as if he had like the Elliot arms, [Becca laughs] but upon-- [crosstalk]

**Becca:** Those well-known Elliot arms.

**Molly:** Yeah, we love a good forearm. No, upon a second read, I realize she's talking about the coat of arms, which were not visible, because his coat was hanging over that part of the horse or the carriage, and the servant was in mourning, so he wasn't in his usual livery, which is his uniform. So, she had no way of recognizing him.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** Captain Wentworth says, "Putting all these very extraordinary circumstances together, we must consider it to be the arrangement of Providence, that you should not be introduced to your cousin." At first, I thought, what a weird thing to say. But on a second read, I was like, "Oh, is he being sarcastic?"

**Becca:** A little bit. Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah. He hates Mary.

**Becca:** Oh, I mean, yeah.

**Molly:** [giggles] He doesn't despise her, but he's done, which I love, [00:16:00] because same. I love her too.

**Becca:** I also think he's psyched that Anne is not being introduced to their cousin.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, that's what my first thought was like, he's saying that out loud, like he loves that for Anne, for himself, maybe.

**Becca:** Well, I think he's basically just being like, "Oh, so unfortunate that you didn't meet your cousin."



**Molly:** Yeah. So, it's tinge with sarcasm and jealousy.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Anne tries to quietly explain to Mary that their cousin has beef with their dad, and it was probably good that they did not meet.

**Becca:** Yeah. Mary's like, "We should go say hi." And Anne's like, "We can't go say hi."

**Molly:** Anne's like, "No."

**Becca:** "We can't do it." [chuckles]

**Molly:** Anne is secretly glad to have met him and to have seen that the next heir of Kellynch Hall is a gentleman. She decides she's not going to tell anyone, especially Mary, that she met him for a second time in the hall. That cousinly little interview will be a secret.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm. A flirtatious little cousinly interview.

**Molly:** Yeah. Mary says that Anne should write to their father and sister and say they saw [00:17:00] Mr. Elliot because, Mary never writes to them herself. I was a little bit like, "Why doesn't Mary keep any contact with her family?"

**Becca:** Because she's lazy. You know how some people just don't like call their moms enough?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** yeah. It's like that. Anne is being the good daughter and writing regularly to her father and her sister, and Mary's lazy and not doing it.

**Molly:** Yeah. She's like, "So, you'll tell them, right?" Anne doesn't say anything, because she knows that that would be a very bad idea. One, because it would irritate her dad because of the beef. And two, it might hurt Elizabeth, because she was slighted by him, and she doesn't probably want to hear about him. Now, I'm praying for a fling between Anne and Mr. Elliot that she can then rub in Elizabeth's face.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Because fuck Elizabeth.

**Becca:** Yeah, fuck Elizabeth. This is an interesting dynamic here, because it's very obvious from the get go there is a slight little mm-hmm-hmm [00:18:00] between Anne and Mr. Elliot-

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** And the complexity of her cruel sister having this other relationship with Mr. Elliot is a little like, it's a little spicy.

**Molly:** Yeah. Anne doesn't think about that really at all during this whole section. Like, she doesn't really think about Elizabeth.

**Becca:** She does a little bit.

**Molly:** She does a little bit. She doesn't want to write about it, but she still is harboring this little crouch.

**Becca:** Well, you know, it's been years. We'll see.

**Molly:** It is. It has been years. We will have to see. After breakfast, the Harvilles and Benwick come to join them for a walk around Lyme. Anne is walking with Benwick, and they're talking about poetry again. And then, they rearrange. And Harville is walking next to Anne, and he thanks her for getting Benwick to open up so much and says, he wishes that they could keep him in company more often, because it's not good for him to be shut up so much, because he's depressed.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** Anne says that time will help Benwick as he's still a young mourner, as in, he hasn't been mourning [00:19:00] for very long. It's now that we learn that Harville sister died in June, Benwick learned of it in August, and it is now November. So, it's literally been months.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Of course, he's sad.

**Becca:** Yeah. No, the playlist is very like *What Hurts the Most*.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -by the Rascal Flatts, right now for Mr. Captain Benwick. He is like he is deep in the grief at this moment. This is where we learn how Benwick found out that Fanny Harville died, which is Captain Wentworth being a little dream prince.

**Molly:** Yeah. Because Harville couldn't bring himself to tell Benwick. So, Wentworth requested a leave of absence, traveled day and night until he reached Portsmouth, which is where Benwick was. And then, he told him and he stayed by Benwick's side for a week and took care of him. Harvel's like, "So, you can imagine why we're all obsessed with Wentworth. He basically saved our friend's life, because he just took care of him that week."

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** And Ann is like, "Yeah, I can't [00:20:00] imagine how you love him so much."

**Becca:** Oh, man. Yeah. This is one of those moments-- Being in Lyme is tricky for Anne, because she just adores his friends, and then they adore him and she's like, "Ah, yes, other people who adore the truest Wentworth." I also love that the way the Navy men are written here is like, they're the broiest of bros.

**Molly:** The bestest of friends.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Yeah. Mrs. Harville had planned their walk to be just enough to walk her and Mr. Harville back home, because she didn't want him overdoing it.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** But everyone else, particularly Louisa, want to walk down the cob one more time. So, they drop off the Harville's and continue down the cob.

**Becca:** Now, you have a sense of what the cob is now, right?

**Molly:** Yes, I know what [Becca laughs] the cob is now. We've looked at pictures of the very cob that they're walking down. It's a two-tiered stone wall that juts out into the water, and there's stairs leading down to the water.

**Becca:** And you might call it Chekhov's cob.

**Molly:** Yes, it's Chekhov's cob. We heard about it. We heard about it. We heard about it. Something's going to happen.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, Benwick and [00:21:00] Anne are walking together again. Benwick's talking about Lord Byron, and Anne gives him all her attention until her attention is drawn by force away.

**Becca:** What could possibly have drawn her attention away?

**Molly:** So, it's windy. And so, they're like, "Okay, let's walk down to the lower level of the cob that's closer to the water, so that we aren't being blown about by the wind." So, they all walk down the stairs, but Louisa simply must be jumped down the stairs by Captain Wentworth.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, everybody else like-- The way I'm picturing it, these stone stairs-- This is very important to understand both the flirtation and the circumstances. So, there are these stone steps built into the side of the cob. They're old timey, so they are treacherous, slightly, and they're not, well railing and everything. So, what's happening is that Mary's being walked down by Charles very gently, so that she doesn't lose her step. And then, Henrietta as well. And then, [00:22:00] Benwick is walking Anne down and very gently, making sure she hits every step. And then, we have Louisa, who's like, "No, no, I am going to be caught." So, she's jumping down.

**Molly:** Yes. She's been doing this a lot. They've gone on a lot of walks over the course of the last however many months that they've all been there. Not at Lyme, but in general.

**Becca:** She's doing a little catch me.

**Molly:** Yeah. There's like the stiles, which I looked up, which are an arrangement of steps that allows people, but not animals to climb over a fence or wall.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** And so, she'll go to the top. This is what I'm picturing anyway. She goes to the top and is like, "Catch me." She jumps down and he catches her. So, that's her being jumped down.

**Becca:** Yeah, it's super flirty.

**Molly:** Or, if it's like a shorter thing. Maybe he lifts a her over. But I think it's always a jump, right?

**Becca:** Yeah, I think she's jumping into his arms.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** I think that's what's happening.

**Molly:** Incredibly flirty.

**Becca:** Yeah. Very flirty. Like, to this day would be considered super flirty.

**Molly:** Yeah. To catch someone, [00:23:00] you're holding them.

**Becca:** Yeah, it's a little horny of Louisa.

**Molly:** Yeah, very horny of Louisa. [Becca chuckles] So, she's like, "Catch me. Catch me." He doesn't want to do it, because the cob is made out of stone and he's like, "That'll hurt your little feet." And she's like, "No, I must." So, she jumps down. It's great. She's like, "I want to go again." So, she runs back up to the top.

**Becca:** And he says, "No, no, no."

**Molly:** He says, "Come on. Don't. No, no, no, that's too much pressure on your little feet." It's too late. She's up there. So, he puts his arms out, but a second too late or a second too early does she jump, because she jumps and he misses, and she falls to the pavement, lifeless.

**Becca:** And hits her face fucking head.

**Molly:** Conks right the fuck out.

**Becca:** Oh, boy.

**Molly:** I was like, "Did she die?"

**Becca:** Well, that's what Jane says almost immediately. She's like, "And she was dead."

**Molly:** Yeah. She's like, "It's a corpse like form. She's on the ground." I sound like I'm laughing just because I know she's okay, but in the moment, when I read this, I was like, "Holy shit. Did they just kill Louisa?" [00:24:00]

**Becca:** Yeah. It's a very stressful moment reading the book. You're like, "Wait a minute. No, wait. I'm in a Jane Austen novel. What's happening? Why are we doing Brontë right now?"

**Molly:** Yeah. She's on the ground, lifeless. There's no blood, there's no wounds, but she looks like she's dead. Wentworth falls to his knees, and scoops her up and he's just pale and silent. Mary starts running around going, "She's dead. She's dead."

**Becca:** I'm sorry. I'm sorry. That's truly one of the funniest Mary moments of the entire thing, because the level-- It's very tragic. I love Louisa. This moment was panic inducing when I read it, but the fact that Mary, immediately before touching her, before taking a look at her, is like, "She's dead."

**Molly:** I have to say that as a reader, that's how I knew she was okay.

**Becca:** [laughs] I knew she was okay, because it was Jane Austen. I was like, "I would have heard if this were like the death of somebody in a Jane Austen novel."

**Molly:** Sure. But for me, it was like, I [00:25:00] read-- Sometimes your eyes skim ahead and you accidentally read a word or two in the next paragraph when something exciting is happening. I saw, she's dead. She's dead. And I was like, "Oh, fuck, she's dead." But then I actually read it, and I was like, "Oh, Mary said she's dead? She's fine."

**Becca:** Yeah, exactly.

**Molly:** So, thank God for that.

**Becca:** Well, I wouldn't say she's fine.

**Molly:** No. She's not fine. She's not fine at all. [Becca chuckles] She's severely concussed.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, Henrietta swoons, and Anne and Benwick are holding her up. Wentworth just wails out, "Is there no one to help me?" Anne shoves Benwick forward. She's like, "I have Henrietta. Go help him, rub Louise's hands, rub her temples. You're smelling salts." Like, "Wake her the fuck up."

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Charles rushes to her also. And then, Wentworth falls back and leans against the wall and yells, "Oh, God, her father and mother."

**Becca:** And then, "Thank God for Anne Elliot,"

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** -in this moment.

**Molly:** Anne, the only level headed person in this group right now.

**Becca:** Yeah. Who's like, "Let's find a doctor."

**Molly:** Yeah. She's like, "Go, get a doctor." And Wentworth's like, "Yes." He [00:25:00] starts to run away,

**Becca:** And she goes, "No, no, no."

**Molly:** She's like, "You don't know this town at all. Benwick, go." And so, Benwick sprints away at top speed. Now, we have Charles, Anne and Wentworth, who are the three rational people left. Mary and Henrietta are like-- I mean, they're there, but they have lost their senses.

**Becca:** Well, yeah, Henrietta fainted, which ferrets her sister. And Mary is Mary.

**Molly:** Mary is Mary, freaking out, which obviously. Charles is sobbing. Anne is trying to calm down Mary and Henrietta. And Charles and Wentworth keep looking to her for directions. They're like, "What do we do?"

**Becca:** Because Anne is a fucking baller.

**Molly:** Yes. She's calm under pressure, and she knows how to manage a group. May we all be like Anne.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, I don't think you've ever watched *Mad Men*.

**Molly:** No.

**Becca:** And this reference will be entirely lost on you. So, for our listeners who have watched *Mad Men*, the vibes of this scene are expressly like Joan and the lawnmower.

**Molly:** Mm. Yes, Joan and the lawnmower.

**Becca:** Yeah, Joan and the Lawnmower. Anyone who watches *Mad Men* will know exactly what I'm talking about. But it is like, Anne immediately goes into like, "All right, we're in crisis mode. I'm going to make sure everything gets done."

**Molly:** Yes. She says, "Okay, let's carry her back to the Inn." And Wentworth's like, "Great idea." He scoops her up. A crowd has already gathered, because they probably saw

Benwick sprinting through town. They all wanted to see the dead girl, or actually, it says, "The two dead girls," because Henrietta fainted.

**Becca:** Yeah, again.

**Molly:** [giggles] Yes. They also want to be helpful, some of them. Some of the more reliable looking ones help Henrietta up and hold her. Anne walks beside her, and Charles walks with Mary and they all start walking back together the way they came.

Pod and Prejudice is sponsored this week by Laurence King Publishing. They were kind enough to send us their whole line of Jane Austen games, including Jane Austen playing cards, Matchmaking, the Jane Austen memory game, and their brand-new Jane Austen board game, where you can build your [00:28:00] dream deck of friends and suitors from Austen's most memorable characters as you go from ball to ball in search of the ultimate match. Or, you can choose to remain an independent woman, like Janie herself.

They also sent us the world of Jane Austen Puzzle, which is a part of their literary puzzles collection, and I am obsessed with it. They also have puzzles for the Brontës, Virginia Woolf, and Oscar Wilde. After seeing the Jane Austen one, I want to buy them all, but I don't have room in my apartment for that many puzzles, so you all have to do it for me. Every item they sent us was so beautiful. We did a little unboxing video on our Instagram. So, if you want to see just how pretty everything is, you can check it out over there.

Unrelated to Jane Austen, they also have the brand new Heartstopper, official fan cards. You know, we love Heartstopper on this show, so you should definitely check that out. But that's not what we're here to talk about. So, to get your own Jane Austen games from Laurence King Publishing, you can go to [www.laurenceking.com](http://www.laurenceking.com). That's L-A-U-R-E-N-C-E-[00:29:00] K-I-N-G dotcom. Or, if you're in the US, go to [us.laurenceking.com](http://us.laurenceking.com).

**Molly:** The vibe of them walking in being like, "Just a few minutes ago, we were walking down this same path, feeling so much joy and looking out at the world so hopefully," is so real.

**Becca:** Yup.

**Molly:** They're like, "Everything is different now." And you can't help but be a little bit like, "Oh, I saw that tree before when I was happy."

**Becca:** I remember this, this is such a less dire circumstance. But when I had a bad day when I was younger and it was the day I got my hair done or my hair cut, I would always feel so pretty after I got my haircut and I put on a nice little outfit. If something bad happened on those days, I'd be like, "I can't believe I have my haircut right now. I can't believe I look nice while this is happening."

**Molly:** I can't believe when I was getting my haircut, I was thinking so many like, "Oh, everyone's going to be so in awe of my haircut, and I had no idea what this day had in store for me." Nothing makes me sadder.

**Becca:** Well, [00:30:00] this is a very different circumstance, but it is one of those like, "Oh, my God, I was so happy, five minutes ago."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** And now, what's happening?"

**Molly:** Yes. The Harvilles join them before they're even off the cob, because they had seen Benwick running and they were like, "We got to go, help." They decide that Louisa should be brought to their house since it's much closer than the Inn. They put Louisa up in Ms.

Harville's bed while Mr. Harville attends to the others.

**Becca:** Yes. It's mentioned briefly that Mrs. Harville had been a nursery maid.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** So, she's a little bit up on the medical.

**Molly:** And her maid also was a nursery maid. So, both of them are good at this.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Louisa, at one point on the walk, opened her eyes, and this is proof of life enough that Henrietta and Mary calmed down a little bit, and also, I calmed down a little bit.

**Becca:** [laughs]

**Molly:** The surgeon then comes and says, "Yes, she has a head injury, but I've seen worse recovered from, the situation's not hopeless. He's very cheerful. There's no injuries to her limbs, only her head, and she's alive." [00:31:00] Captain Wentworth says, "Thank God," and collapses at the table hiding his face with his arms, as if he's overpowered by the various feelings of his soul-

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** -which Anne notices, of course.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** The Harville's have arranged everything, so that Louisa can stay where she is overnight. Benwick is going to give up his room and go stay somewhere else. They wish they could accommodate everyone. They're talking about moving the children to the maid's room, if the others wish to stayover, which I didn't realize that they had children until this moment-

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** -which is who he was making toys for, which makes complete sense.

**Becca:** Not for Benwick.

**Molly:** Yeah. [laughs] No. Wentworth, Charles and Henrietta are downstairs talking about how someone has to go home to Uppercross to tell Mr. and Mrs. Musgrove. Wentworth says, "It should be either him or Charles." And Charles says, "Well, I'm not leaving my sister's side." Henrietta doesn't want to leave her sister's side either, but she also acknowledges that she's absolutely useless [00:32:00] and probably shouldn't-- I mean, she's like, "I want to stay, but what am I going to do?"

**Becca:** Yeah. She's like, "I will be in the way."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** And also, it's very important to note that the Harvilles are offering all of them to stay. There just isn't the room for everybody.

**Molly:** Right. Anne is coming down from Louisa's room when she hears Wentworth say, "Then it is settled, Musgrove, that you stay, and that I take care of your sister home. But as to the rest, as to the others, if one stays to assist Mrs. Harville, I think it need be only one.

Mrs. Charles Musgrove will, of course, wish to get back to her children, but if Anne will stay, no one so proper, so capable as Anne.”

**Becca:** Oh. In this moment, it's one of those-- We'll get to it in the study questions, but they're so stricken at this moment. They can't pretend to not-- He can't pretend to be mad at her in the same way.

**Molly:** Right, because there isn't anyone so proper or capable as Anne.

**Becca:** As clearly proven in the last little foray they've had.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Anne is obviously **[00:33:00]** the one who should stay, and obviously Mary should go back to her children.

**Molly:** It's hilarious that he says, “Obviously, Mary will want to go back to her children,” because I was like, “No, she won't.” [giggles]

**Becca:** That's what I love about Jane Austen, is that this chapter is actually very dire and dour. But even in this incredibly high stakes, suspenseful, really tragic scene, there's still some really funny moments.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Ugh, she's so good. Anne, she hears that and she's like, “Oh.”

**Molly:** She has to recover.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** She's like, “Oh, my God, I've just heard myself talked well of by Captain Wentworth.”

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** She then comes back in, and he turns to her to say he hopes she will stay to nurse Louisa. He's speaking with a glow, a gentleness, which seems almost restoring the past.

**Becca:** Like I said, he's too stricken to pretend to hate her.

**Molly:** Yeah. She blushes and he immediately is like, “Oh, shit,” and he steps back a little bit. And she says, “Well, that's what I had hoped to do. I would be happy to sleep on the floor in Louise's room.” Like, “I don't need space.” **[00:34:00]** Obviously, Mrs. Harville would be like, “Let me get you a bed.”

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** But she was like, “I'll just stay, no matter what.” They decide that Wentworth should take a chaise from the Inn, which is carried by more horses than the Musgrove's carriage, and that's for speed, and then also, someone can take the carriage the next morning to tell them how Louisa is doing.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** Wentworth goes off to prepare, and the ladies will soon follow. But then they tell Mary the plan, and she is furious at being expected to go away instead of Anne when Anne isn't even related to Louisa. Why can't Mary be useful and why should she be sent away without her husband?



**Becca:** There is a fantastic quote about this moment. In this moment, it says, “Anne had never submitted more reluctantly to the jealous and ill-judging claims of Mary, but so it must be, and they set off for the town.” Like, it is this moment where you get it from Anne that she is used to Mary being jealous of **[00:35:00]** her. This is something we've touched on a little bit, because Charles wanted to marry Anne first. Anne is more beautiful, Anne is more elegant, everyone likes Anne more.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Mary is seemingly aware of this, or even not consciously, at least subconsciously. And in this moment to have that pettiness jump out, because Anne would better suited to stay with Louisa, because Mary should go back to her children.

**Molly:** Mary should go back to her children, and her sister needs someone to help her and not to like, I don't know, scream that she's dead.

**Becca:** Yeah. This moment of pettiness and jealousy jumping out at the least opportune moment, totally insane.

**Molly:** Yeah. It shows just how not suited to this moment Mary is.

**Becca:** Yeah. It shows once again, even in the worst circumstances, Mary is a petty little blah compared to Anne. Anne is selfless enough. But you can feel her in this moment, be like, “Really, Mary? This moment, you're going to do this? **[00:36:00]** This is the time you're going to be petty and weird?” and just doing it anyway. It's just like, ugh.

**Molly:** Yeah, it sucks.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** They head back to the Inn. Charles walks Henrietta, and Benwick walks Anne and they're all walking together. Anne remembers the moments of the past few days in various places as they walk again, looking at the moments being like, “Oh, that's where Henrietta was scheming for Dr. Shirley to move here. That's where I met handsome, or not handsome, Mr. Elliot.”

They reach Wentworth. His surprise and vexation at Anne coming in Mary's place is mortifying to Anne. It convinces her that he values her only as much as she can be useful to Louisa, which is sad.

I think that there's probably a lot going on for him in that moment, because he did really want Louisa to be in the best hands. But I also feel like he's probably **[00:37:00]** more annoyed at Mary than he is at Anne in this moment, because Charles explains to him what happened. But Anne is afraid that he's going to think that she would shirk her responsibilities as a friend to him and a friend to Louisa in favor of going home. I don't think that's what he's thinking at all.

**Becca:** I think that you're right. Captain Wentworth is upset, because he wanted Anne to take care of Louisa, because that would have meant Louisa was safe.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** He trusts Anne.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** And that's crucial.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** But Anne is reading it as, like, "He's mad that I might have been jealous," or something.

**Molly:** Yeah. Just that I left and that I was persuaded away from staying by Mary. The quote said that, "She would have taken care of Louisa for Wentworth's sake." Because she's trying to be friends, I think at this point.

**Becca:** She's living her best eponym life.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** "Yet, I would have done it for him. I love him. I don't need him to love me back,"-

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -sort of vibes.

**Molly:** Yeah, likely.

**Becca:** Like, [00:38:00] very on my own, very like--

**Molly:** [singing] *On my own.*

**Becca:** Yeah, exactly. She's giving a little self-sacrificing masochist here-

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** and she says, the quote is, "Without emulating the feelings of an Emma towards her Henry, she would have attended on Louisa with a zeal above the common claims of regard, for his sake, and she hoped he would not long be so unjust as to suppose she would shrink unnecessarily from the office of a friend."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** So, basically saying like, "How dare he think even for a second that I would shirk this responsibility? I would have, for him, tended to the love of his life, because that's who I am as a person." And she's like, "Okay, calm down."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** But it is very like, "At least, I keep his eyes in my life," sort of vibe.

**Molly:** [singing] *At least I keep his eyes in my life.*

**Becca:** Sorry for all the musical theater references, guys. For some reason, musical theater is like the best trove of women who are in unrequited love will do anything anyway.

**Molly:** Well, musical theater is the drama.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** And this is the drama.

**Becca:** This is the drama. [00:39:00]

**Molly:** It is. [giggles]

**Becca:** The D-R-A-M-A, drama. We have not come up against this since *Sense and Sensibility*.

**Molly:** I just thought of an idea for another T-shirt, The drama, but in the *Friends* font.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, D-R-A-M-A.

**Becca:** The drama.

**Molly:** The drama. They get in the carriage, and he helps both of the ladies in. Then, he sits between them, and he only attends to Henrietta throughout the carriage ride. He's trying to keep her calm. He's staying very calm. But at one point, she's talking about the scene at the cob, and he bursts out with, "Don't talk of it. Don't talk of it. Oh God, that I had not given way to her at the fatal moment. Had I done as I ought! But so eager and so resolute! Dear, sweet Louisa." Anne quietly wonders if it might occur to him now that firmness of character might have its limits and not be a universally good quality.

**Becca:** Oh, maybe. [chuckles]

**Molly:** Yeah. Just maybe. She was so eager and so resolute.

**Becca:** [00:40:00] She could not be convinced otherwise.

**Molly:** She could not be convinced otherwise.

**Becca:** She could not be persuaded.

**Molly:** It's in the title.

**Becca:** It's in the title.

**Molly:** She just jumps right off a flight of stairs. The journey home, as it always does, feels half as long as the day before. They're home in no time. By the time they arrive, Henrietta has cried herself to sleep. She's got her shawl over her vase. Wentworth turns to Anne and says, "Henrietta should not be the first one inside." He thinks that he should go in and tell the Musgroves while Ann stays with Henrietta. He asks if she thinks it's a good plan. Anne agrees.

To herself, she thinks that his asking her what she thinks shows proof of friendship and appreciation of her judgment. I thought that that's it was really sweet. He turned to her in a moment when it's just them.

**Becca:** There is something-- We'll get into this in the study questions more, but there is something to love where-- I've talked about this. There is easy moments where it's really [00:41:00] easy to love someone when things are easy. But it's the hard stuff that really tells you whether or not someone is correct.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** This moment where Wentworth and Anne have been in this awkward nightmare with each other, where they don't know what to say or do, and it's like a little bit of punishment coming from Wentworth. In the moment where they were in crisis, they immediately clicked in together. I think that is, to this point in the book, the largest indication that they were really serious lovers so far, because when you are with someone for the long haul, that's when you

know how to cope with the dark moments, you know?

**Molly:** Yeah. After he tells the Musgroves, and Henrietta comes back inside and he's calmed everyone down, Wentworth says "He's going back to Lyme," and he goes and gets in the carriage and [00:42:00] leaves, which I thought was interesting, because the whole-- Part of the reason that they took the carriage from the Inn, aside from speed, was that they were leaving the other carriage there, so that they could come and tell the others how the night was and how Louisa is. So, he originally was like, "We'll go. We'll stay there and someone else will come down and tell us how it went in the morning." But he turns around and goes back, supposedly.

**Becca:** Yes. I think the plan was to take the carriage in case they did stay overnight.

**Molly:** Okay.

**Becca:** But I also think Wentworth wants to get back to Lyme.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Some stuff's happening over there.

**Molly:** Some stuff is happening over there. And so, he has left Henrietta and Anne at Uppercross, and gone back to Lyme and that is the end of that chapter.

**Becca:** That was just one fucking chapter.

**Molly:** Woof.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** So much to say, so much to think about. What a chapter, first of all.

**Molly:** What a chapter.

**Becca:** I think one of Austen's better chapters, obviously.

**Molly:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**Becca:** So well paced. [00:43:00] Like crazy fast. And so much happens. So, let's go to our patron study questions. So, listeners, if you recall, if you join our Patreon at the \$15 tier, you can submit your own study questions and we will ask them on the air. Molly will post a Google Doc, the night before we record, and you get to pull in anything that you want us to talk about on the podcast from the chapters.

**Molly:** And sometimes I even post it before the night before, but not this time.

**Becca:** So, Emily asks, "We have two instances in this chapter. Captain Wentworth voluntarily rushing to deliver upsetting news. What does it tell us about his character that he takes on this duty?"

**Molly:** Yes. So, the two instances are the story of him going to deliver the news of-

**Becca:** Fanny Harville.

**Molly:** -Fanny Harville to Benwick. And him volunteering to go to Uppercross to deliver the news of Louisa to her parents. He's a gallant man, one. Two, [00:44:00] I think it tells us that

he cares deeply about other people, and he thinks of the bigger picture and the implications of what's going on. So, he wouldn't want anyone to be left in the dark. He doesn't want Benwick to be left in the dark about Fanny Harville for too long, and he doesn't want the parents to be left in the dark about Louisa.

**Becca:** I think it's also notably at the expense of his own comfort-

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -both times. In the case of Fanny Harville, you get that Captain Harville couldn't bring himself to go, and Wentworth did it. He took it upon himself to go deliver this really distressing news.

**Molly:** He took a leave of absence from his job to go do that.

**Becca:** Yeah, and stayed with Benwick for a week to make sure he was okay.

**Molly:** He cares about his friend, in that case, more than he cares about himself.

**Becca:** Yeah. And here you can sense this desire that he stay in Lyme and make sure Louisa is okay, that he puts to the side, so **[00:45:00]** Charles can stay with his sister in that state.

**Molly:** It's almost like, he and Anne have this deference to other people's feelings in common.

**Becca:** I think that that is a very astute observation, really selfless people who no one else takes care of. And maybe they just need to take care of each other.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm. That's why they loved each other.

**Becca:** And that's the love.

**Molly:** And that's the love.

**Becca:** All right. Janae asks, "What are your thoughts on Captain Benwick and cousin Elliot? Why do you think they're in this story at this point?"

**Molly:** I think they're in the story to highlight to Wentworth that Anne is a desirable person.

**Becca:** Yeah. They're both definitely vibing Anne.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** And Anne is-- First of all, needs be addressed. Anne is hot.

**Molly:** Anne's hot.

**Becca:** Anne is like 27, 28, and that is pretty on the spinster side in the Jane Austen era. She's still so charming and desirable and so-- There's something about Anne. She's got this **[00:46:00]** level of openness to her that makes people very comfortable with her, and this level of care shown and this level of listening that everyone loves Anne, everyone except her family. But she makes everyone immediately so taken care of in her presence that all these-- First of all, that's where you see her drawing in Benwick with Elliot. She's just hot.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** He just up and downs her and was like, "This is a hot woman. My God." And

Wentworth has just going to have to cope with that, because it's fine if she's in this box of old maid on the side ruined my life, whatever. But if she is still being seen as this desirable woman that others might want, then that's going to perk something for him.

**Molly:** Yeah. I do secretly hope that there's something between her and cousin Elliot, just because I want to spite her sister.

**Becca:** What am I going to do?

**Molly:** Neither [00:47:00] confirm nor deny.

**Becca:** I will neither confirm nor deny. All right. Avi says, "The scene at the cob is justifiably one of the most famous in *Persuasion*. I don't know why."

**Molly:** [giggles] Yeah. Who would say that?

**Becca:** "What does the show about Anne's character, and what does the show about how everyone, particularly Wentworth, really feels about Anne when all the pretensions and conventions are stripped away?" This is awesome, and also overlaps with some of my questions. But let's talk about, first, what this tells us about Anne, and then afterwards, it'll tell us about how others feel about Anne.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, in terms of Anne, she's calm, cool and collected under pressure even if she's internally panicking, which we've already seen a little bit-

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** -because she's been internally panicking the entire time, but she's able to focus on what needs to happen and when, putting aside, again, her own feelings on the situation.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think she is made of really stern stuff. She's unflappable-

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** [00:48:00] -and she's not easily panicked. She comes from my stock of people, the Virgos. [Molly giggles] She has this streak of rationality and practicality that mixes well with an emotional openness that takes care of people, that makes her the ultimate mom friend.

**Molly:** Yes. It's interesting, I was just thinking about while you were saying that she's unflappable and unshakable. But to Wentworth or to the story, she was easily persuaded, but it just goes to show that she was only persuaded, because the rationale was there.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** So, she was persuaded in favor of rationality.

**Becca:** Yeah. She rationalized away her love, which was clearly for her catastrophic, emotionally.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** But what I'm saying here, is that she was willing to stay and take care of Louisa, who she does care about, but who was about to steal the love of her life before she [00:49:00] jumped off a bridge and went into a coma. But she cares so much about other people. She is good at taking care of other people and she has an immense capacity to do so on a moment's notice.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** You can see that immediately. As far as how this tells us people think about Anne. Let's start with our boy Wentworth, because we were talking about earlier, immediately when push came to shove, he turned to Anne.

**Molly:** He would follow her to the ends of the earth.

**Becca:** It's one of those things where it's like, yes, in the day to day, you can be petty. In the day to day, you can be mad about the past between these two people. But when you're in an emotionally dire circumstance, who are you turning to? Anne Elliot.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Because that's where you feel safe. That's where you feel trust. You know, if she is there, Louisa's going to be okay-

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -no matter what else is going on. No matter how he feels about what happened to Louisa, which, by the way, we should talk about. **[00:50:00]** You just see immediately that all pretense dropped away for him, and that at the end of the day, he trusted her.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** For Mary, different circumstance.

**Molly:** Yeah. Your true colors come out in times of misfortune. For Anne, it shows positively on her. And for Wentworth, it shows that he cares about Anne, and that he trusts Anne and he would follow Anne whatever she wants to do. And for Mary, it shows that she's a petty meanie pants.

**Becca:** Yeah. It shows at the end of the day, the thing that Mary cares the most about is Mary.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** And that's not ideal.

**Molly:** Right.

**Becca:** I say this as someone who loves Mary. She's iconic.

**Molly:** Yes. But it just shows that she's not the gold standard here.

**Becca:** No. She's not a great person, which is okay.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** It's still funny, but she's-- Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** So, that concludes our Patreon study questions.

**Molly:** Thank you, Patreons.

**Becca:** Yeah. If you want to submit again, wait for Molly to post the Google Doc. Join us at the \$15 patron tier and you can **[00:51:00]** ask your questions and we will answer them on

air.

**Molly:** Those were great questions.

**Becca:** They were fantastic. I was so excited to go over these questions on the pod as well. I think we have so much to talk about. We could talk about this scene for a long, long time.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** But we're going to go sequentially, so we're going to go a little bit back. "What do you make of Mr. Elliot's reaction to Anne?"

**Molly:** He definitely doesn't know who she is, because I think that he has beef with this family. I know that he has beef with this family. He went around shit talking to family. He's never met Anne though. So, he doesn't know that there's a good person in the family. I don't think that he would see Anne and think, "Oh, that's an Elliot." He thinks Anne's hot, which I love, because Anne is hot.

**Becca:** Anne's hot.

**Molly:** And he's right. He should say it.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** I've got some predictions.

**Becca:** Give them, because that's my next question, "What are your predictions?"

**Molly:** He's on his way to Bath. I don't know what's going to happen in Bath. I [00:52:00] don't think he knows that the Elliots are in Bath. If he does, then I have no idea what's going to happen there. But I predicted that he will pine for Anne, find out that she's in the Elliot family, and then ditch her and or propose.

**Becca:** What am I going to do?

**Molly:** Neither confirm nor deny.

**Becca:** I will neither confirm nor deny. Okay. So, let's talk about Anne being hot for a second. How does that shift this book?

**Molly:** That shifts this book, because I think that we've been viewing her through the lens of how Wentworth sees her and how her family sees her as the side character. Wentworth doesn't see her as a side character, but Wentworth sees her as washed up. Her family sees her as a side character that they can vent to and like-- She hasn't been given main character energy yet, and now she has main character energy, because people are looking at her.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think what it is is also a thing of power and a thing of [00:53:00] things recovered, I guess.

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Because the book has been tilted against Anne, the entire time. She lost her home. She goes to stay with her sister, who requires a lot of emotional labor. And she sees her lover, who has become wealthy, successful and is handsomer than the day she said goodbye to him eight years ago. And she has nothing to offer, except the fact that she wasted away in regret.

Now, we have Anne a little bit more sturdy, a little bit more come to life. She's interesting to a



lot of people in her circle in a specific way. That gives her back some agency. It gives her back some power, and it shifts the dynamic in the book, which Anne has been taking it so hard for so long. She has been taking in so much shit. For once, she is now in a position where she can get something. She's getting attention, she's getting respect, [00:54:00] she's looking good, she's getting self-esteem. These are good things for our girl, Anne, who has been toughing it out in a really tough circumstance the entire book.

We don't want to focus too much on her appearance, but the fact that Anne is regaining some of the youth and bloom that drew Wentworth, Anne in the first place, and regaining some of what she lost eight years ago and has been making her miserable since then, is giving her and the book a little bit more life, and certainly giving her a little bit more power to change her own circumstances, life to also just exist as more of her own presence in the world. Main character energy, as you said. Does that all make sense?

**Molly:** Absolutely.

**Becca:** Oh, yeah. So, we're happy she's feeling hot.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Okay. Now, I said the real shit, the cob.

**Molly:** [giggles].

**Becca:** So, we haven't done a lot of Jane Austen darkness. The only thing that comps to this one, but I would say maybe this one overtakes it is Marianne almost dying in *Sense and Sensibility* in that moment. [00:55:00]

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** "What do you make of Jane Austen taking this foray into this dark territory for a minute?"

**Molly:** It's a little shocking-

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** -jarring, because at first, I didn't know to read it as what it is. I was like, "Oh, she fell to the ground lifeless. She's just in a heap. She's going to get up any second now." But then it's like, "Oh, my God, something's seriously wrong." It almost maybe makes it more effective, because you're not expecting it from Jane.

**Becca:** Yeah, it's a surprise. It also, I think, without giving too much away, it's such a lightning rod moment for the book that the whole vibes are thrown off, the dynamics are thrown off, the plot's thrown off. Like, we were on this very clear path forward and now like, do you have any idea what's going to happen next?

**Molly:** No.

**Becca:** Exactly.

**Molly:** There were men being introduced and all of it just was like, "Oh, just kidding. Louisa just jumped off the flight of stairs and got a concussion and is out."

**Becca:** Yeah. [00:56:00] This book would have been like-- it's a different circumstance if it's like, "Oh, we're just going to continue watching Wentworth and Louisa flirt, and it's going to continue harming Anne, and then they're going to be these other guys who come in and how is that going to feel?" No. What we have instead is that we had this serious accident and

everything between Anne and Wentworth shifted. Everything between the different members of this party shifted. That fun and flirtatious girly who was making Anne miserable inadvertently, every single day, is now in actually really dire, serious circumstances.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** It is such an interesting way for us to end Volume I-

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -because now we have Volume II coming up.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** I'm like, "You don't know what's going to happen."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Okay. Let's talk a bit about Wentworth and the accident, the circumstances of the accident, and what it could tell us about Wentworth as a character and his feelings on Louisa.

**Molly:** Yeah. **[00:57:00]** He's obviously devastated, because he falls to his knees, he scoops her up, he's like, "What have I done? Poor, sweet Louisa." He obviously cares about her, but at the same time, I'm not getting, "Oh, my God, the love of my life is dead." I'm getting, "I fucked up. I shouldn't have been flirting like that. I shouldn't have agreed to catch her. I should have done something differently." Like, I'm not getting devastation over her. I'm getting guilt.

**Becca:** You're getting a lot of guilt.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Immediate and crushing guilt on our guy, Captain Wentworth, who, as we've learned, is a very selfless person.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** And is suddenly thrown into a circumstance where he feels very responsible for a serious head injury on a young woman, where he was dancing in the line of propriety with a flirtation.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** It's almost really high stakes flirting that went really wrong.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, I'm **[00:58:00]** still thinking that he was doing it mostly to be petty towards Anne. He likes Louisa like they're friends, obviously, but I think he wasn't doing it for the right reasons, and now the guilt is twofold because of that, in my mind.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah. I think that's the main driving force behind his reaction, aside from a girl being in a coma, is that he caused this and that it could have been avoided.

**Becca:** Yeah. It's a twofold. You're right. It's the personal guilt Captain Wentworth is feeling in this moment of, "I could have prevented this. And I caused this." And then, it is a meta commentary, like a cosmic intervention on the part of this flirtation that basically says, "This

went too far.”

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** It is like the fates telling him in this moment to use a really crass phrase, “Shit or get off the pod [00:59:00] with this woman.”

**Molly:** [giggles] Yes, which is kind of-- They said that earlier on, a couple of them were like, “He needs to make a choice.”

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. What you end up with instead is this moment where they're having a sweet little flirtation and Wentworth, literally, flirting kills. Like, what the fuck?

**Molly:** I think that Jane Austen may be saying that and saying that like, you shouldn't flirt if you're not serious about someone, or you shouldn't flirt if you're going to take your sweet time even if you are serious about them.

I think that Willoughby was serious about Marianne in a way. But if you're not actually intending to marry that person, then you shouldn't flirt. I think that might be what Jane Austen's saying, but I think looking at it through a more modern lens, I think it's saying that Wentworth maybe not having intentions for Louisa and flirting for the wrong reasons. It's the same, but if he's flirting with her for the [01:00:00] wrong reasons, the guilt is that much more, because he could have just not done that.

**Becca:** Yeah, I think you're right. So, there's the cosmic like Jane Austen in the rocking chair view of this.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** And then, there's the personal stakes of Captain Wentworth behaving as he ought not to-

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** -and the consequences of that-- [crosstalk]

**Molly:** Yeah. He shouldn't have been fucking petty.

**Becca:** Yeah. So, then we're going to look at it from a different perspective, which is that, you read the quote, but I'll read the last little bit of it. This is Anne talking about Wentworth. “She thought it could scarcely escape him to feel that a persuadable temper might sometimes be as much in favor of happiness as a very resolute character.”

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** There it is. We've had the chestnut conversation at the end.

**Molly:** It's a hazelnut.

**Becca:** Oh, sorry.

**Molly:** [giggles] How dare you?

**Becca:** Have to go back a little bit. We've had the hazelnut conversation.

**Molly:** I'm keeping it in. [giggles]

**Becca:** Do it. Do it. I got the nut wrong. [Molly laughs] I got the nut wrong. So, we've had the hazelnut conversation, where Wentworth has [01:01:00] been sturdily in the boat of, "Whatever I do, whoever I marry, that person has to have a will of steel."

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Let's talk about the cob, and Louise's incapacity to take no for answer-

**Molly:** Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** -even when reasonable minds would think she should.

**Molly:** Because she said in the last chapter, "When I've made up my mind to something, I'm going to do it. I'm not going to be persuaded away from it for anything."

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** And she proves that in this chapter.

**Becca:** In a very stark way.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Wentworth is a careful man. He spent a lot of time regretting getting so attached to someone who was so easily persuaded away from him, even though it wasn't that easily.

**Molly:** No. I think the more I think about it wasn't easy, and she really did think that that was the best choice. So, I'm getting more on Anne's side [01:02:00] as we go.

**Becca:** Oh. [chuckles] It's hard. It's hard to know, because this is one of those breakups where like, if we're being honest, it's not really anybody's fault except Lady Russell.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** But this is one of those circumstances where it's like, Anne did not take that decision lightly. She took it really, really seriously and still ended up the way she did, and has a scooch of regret, a smidge. She has some--

**Molly:** Just a little bit. She's fine otherwise though.

**Becca:** She's got a little bit of a whoopsie energy to her.

**Molly:** [laughs]

**Becca:** Like, whoops.

**Molly:** Oopsie.

**Becca:** "Oh, my God, just have to regret that for the next eight years. Oh, my God."

**Molly:** [giggles] In case it's not clear. We're kidding.

**Becca:** [laughs] Yeah. No, the whole book is centered around the fact that Anne's been in deep mourning for eight years over Captain Wentworth. So, clearly, she regrets her choices.

**Molly:** I'm in mourning for my life.

**Becca:** Kind of similar vibe.

**Molly:** Yes. That's a Chekhov reference, if you're not up on your Masha.

**Becca:** Yeah, that would be Masha from the *Seagull*.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah.

**Molly:** Anyway, [01:03:00] back to it.

**Becca:** Yeah. I think now that he's had the bad experience with the persuadable character, say now he's had the bad experience with the resolute character.

**Molly:** It's almost like you need both.

**Becca:** It's almost like people are human beings.

**Molly:** And aren't just one thing all the time.

**Becca:** And maybe you just can't control for whether or not someone's going to hurt you or you're going to hurt somebody else. Oh, my God, I made Molly cry again.

**Molly:** Sad.

**Becca:** Yeah. You get the sense that Wentworth is like, he might be being petty, he might be being spiteful. There is another sense that he is being cautious with his heart.

**Molly:** Yeah. Mm-hmm.

**Becca:** Maybe it didn't occur to him that there could be consequences to the way he was approaching that too.

**Molly:** Yeah. Maybe he, instead of-- If we look at it from him not having been just flirting to get back at Anne, but in fact flirting because [01:04:00] he wanted to go swing the exact opposite direction of Anne and try that on for size to get married to someone who's Anne's opposite in every way, and then that person caused problems too, or he caused problems with her, whatever.

**Becca:** Someone got hurt.

**Molly:** Someone got hurt.

**Molly and Becca:** Physically.

**Becca:** God damn it.

**Molly:** [giggles] If we look at it from that direction, he has now learned the hard way that nobody's perfect.

**Becca:** Pobody's nerfect.

**Molly:** Pobody's nerfect.

**Becca:** Yeah. He's also learned like-- I think this is, again, one of those Jane Austen things, and I'm also going to get emotional about this possibly. This is one of those Jane Austen things where she writes something and you're like, "You still relate to it, nowadays?" Love is so painful and so hard. There are moments of rejection and hurt that you have to feel. It is completely human and understandable to want [01:05:00] to try and prevent yourself from going through that with another person.

One of the most important and difficult lessons to learn when you are out there dating in the world, is that no matter how cautious you are with your own heart, someone can still get hurt.

**Molly:** Yeah. And also, in Wentworth's case, being cautious with your heart and withdrawing yourself and trying to protect yourself can hurt other people.

**Becca:** Yes, exactly. You could get hurt either way, but also you could hurt somebody else.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** And so, there's a feeling of like, "Fuck it," you know?

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Just put yourself out there, be vulnerable with the knowledge that you could go through excruciating pain, because otherwise, you're still potentially going to either go through or cause excruciating pain, even if you're most cautious.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** The fact that Jane Austen captures this at the cob in Lyme [01:06:00] with the most dramatic chapter she's ever written is just a testament to her writing, I think.

**Molly:** Yes. I will say that I think we could have figured that out without her having Anne literally think to herself. "Hmm, I wonder if you've realized that being unpersuadable might be a bad thing." But I appreciated putting it in writing. [giggles]

**Becca:** I mean, it's a good line.

**Molly:** It's a great line, but it was a little bit-- I was just like, "It's a little on the nose." But I need that every now and then.

**Becca:** Yeah. For me, it's like a nice little cherry on top, because Anne deserved a petty moment after all. [chuckles]

**Molly:** She did. She did. I love that for her.

**Becca:** Yeah. All right. Last question. We already covered it a little bit, but we just finished Volume I.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** We've had a complete story almost in Volume I, and we are headed to Volume II. Do you have any thoughts moving forward? Because now that this has happened, [01:07:00] "What are your predictions for how this is going to change the book?"

**Molly:** I think that Wentworth and Anne may be the two most likely to take care of Louisa in the coming-- Well, okay, this is tough. Because one hand, I want Wentworth and Anne to be thrown together as much as possible, but on the other hand, I know Anne was about to leave and go back to Kellynch. I'm like, "Are we still going to do that and just abandon our girl,

Louisa, or are we going to stay like we, being the narrator? Are we going to stay with Louisa until she's better?" Or, in the next chapter, "Is it going to be like Louisa was awake in a couple of days, and now we're good?" But I do think that this is a big enough shift that it can't just be like, "Next chapter, we're fine."

Oh. Oh, but Louise is not-- Okay, hang on, backtrack. Anne [01:08:00] is separated from the main party. She's with Henrietta. She's back at Uppercross.

**Becca:** Mm-hmm.

**Molly:** Wentworth is back at Lyme with Louisa and Charles and Mary, and he's distraught.

**Becca:** You are correct that Anne is supposed to leave.

**Molly:** Anne is supposed to leave in the next couple of days. This was her last hurrah.

**Becca:** Yeah. This was like the goodbye and trip.

**Molly:** Yeah. So, I'm like, "Is she still going to leave, or is she going to stay at Uppercross with the family until Louisa comes back? How long is it going to be until Louisa comes back? Will they all go to Lyme?" I have so many questions. I don't know that I have a prediction, because I don't know if Anne's going to stay at Uppercross or go back with Lady Russell.

I feel like she'll probably go back with Lady Russell, because her sister's not even at Uppercross. She has no reason to be there. [01:09:00] If she goes back with Lady Russell, then there's conversations that need to be had or not, because Lady Russell and her don't really talk about their actual feelings, or at least-- There's a lot to catch up on, right?

**Becca:** There's a Wentworth shaped elephant in their room.

**Molly:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah. So much is different now, I just don't know what-- From the storyline that we were expecting to have happened, what's still going to happen, because I was expecting her to go back to Kellynch, and him to also go back to Kellynch and them to both be there, because that's where he was supposed to be staying. So, now, I'm like, "Is he still going to go? Is she still going to go? Are they going to be thrown together anymore? Or, are we going to be apart for a while and find out later on that he and Louisa are together now?" I don't know, something like that. I have no idea.

**Becca:** Any thoughts on Volume I, as a whole?

**Molly:** Love it.

**Becca:** So good, right?

**Molly:** It's so good. There's so much yearning.

**Becca:** Oh, [chuckles] yes. Yes. [01:10:00] Anne is like the Avatar for pining.

**Molly:** Yes, I love it. Good book. I can see why it's so many of our listeners' favorite.

**Becca:** Yes.

**Molly:** Yes. And it's also the pacing is so good. Like, it's so fast.

**Becca:** Yeah. It's a much crisper book than *Emma* was, for example. Not to call out *Emma*. I love *Emma*. But *Emma* is all about the quips, and *Persuasion's* all about the plot.

**Molly:** Yes.

**Becca:** Funniest quote?

**Molly:** Let's go with this one.

**Becca:** Okay.

**Molly:** "I wish," said Henrietta, very well pleased with her companion, "I wish Lady Russell lived at Uppercross, and were intimate with Dr Shirley. I have always heard of Lady Russell as a woman of the greatest influence with everybody! I always look upon her as able to persuade a person to anything! I am afraid of her, as I have told you before, quite afraid of her, because she is so very clever; but I respect her amazingly, and wish we had such a neighbor at Uppercross." I just thought that was funny because of the dramatic irony.

**Becca:** Yeah. Very, very funny. Very good. And also, so funny because it's such a different tone than the end of the chapter.

**Molly:** "She is dead. She is dead."

**Becca:** Well, that's Mary, which also might be the funniest quote. [laughs]

**Molly:** Yeah. It's good.

**Becca:** Yeah. I also goes without saying, I do love Henrietta and Louisa. This part breaks my heart, because they're so sweet and happy, and they're described in the earlier portion of the book as the happiest, fun-loving girls that have never experienced any hardship.

**Molly:** Oh, yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. Questions moving forward.

**Molly:** All of the questions. Everything I just said, I think my questions moving forward. Yeah, also, is Benwick going to come back into the mix, or is he just gone now? Like, is Anne stay-- Yeah, how will this badge? How will they all come back together, or will these storylines be splintered from here on out?

**Becca:** Who wins the chapters? Chapter.

**Molly:** Who wins the chapter? I think I'd like to give this one to Anne.

**Becca:** Yeah, I think it's an obvious one for Anne. She is literally the reason Louisa is alive.

**Molly:** She's holding everything together for everyone else.

**Becca:** Yeah. The moment of like, [01:12:00] "Everyone calm down. Let's get a doctor." That Anne is like, ooh, yeah, you understand why this sailor boy fell so in love with her.

**Molly:** Exactly.

**Becca:** She's on her shit.

**Molly:** Yeah.

**Becca:** Yeah. All right. Listeners, that concludes this hearty episode of Pod and Prejudice about one chapter. For next time, we're going to read Chapters 1 through 3 of Volume II second, or if you're not in a volumed book, Chapters 13 through 15. You ready for that, Molly?



**Molly:** I am so ready for that.

**Becca:** Well, then, until next time, stay proper.

**Molly:** And don't jump down a flight of stairs.

**Becca:** Don't do it.

**Molly:** Ouch.

[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](http://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 **[01:13:00]** us or just drop us a rating and a review wherever you listen to podcasts. Thanks for listening.

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