

Side: ANNE, LADY RUSSELL

ANNE: A few months more, and he, perhaps, may be walking here. (*Lady Russell catches Anne up*) Of all people, Lady Russell, to suggest the Crofts!

LADY RUSSELL: Calm yourself, my dear. Frederick's connection to the Admiral is not so great as to make a meeting likely.

ANNE: Frederick is Mrs Croft's brother! And if I must meet him again... How can I be in company with him, and everyone know what passed between us – ?

LADY RUSSELL: But consider, Mary was at school, wasn't she? Only Sir Walter and Elizabeth knew. It appears your father has no recollection of Mr Wentworth, and, in fairness, Elizabeth's indifference to you seems perfect. Anyway, you wouldn't be here, would you?

ANNE: But I'll visit you at Kellynch Lodge.

LADY RUSSELL: This is wildly running ahead of events... (*Anne's eyes fill, and she and Lady Russell embrace.*) Has time not healed the worser wounds, Anne?

ANNE: Eight years is little more than nothing.

LADY RUSSELL: Nearly a third part of your own life.

ANNE: While Frederick's been around the world, distracted by war and glory! I've only had an uneventful residence in the country to ameliorate my agitation and my sorrow; the sameness and the nothingness to distract me.

LADY RUSSELL: You were too young, and he had nothing. To be snatched off by a stranger – a man who had only his

recklessness and his intemperance to recommend him...
Wasn't it my duty to urge prudence and self-denial?

ANNE: Yes, prudence in my youth – perhaps romance when I'm old.

LADY RUSSELL: You regret being persuaded by me.

ANNE: I cannot help but reflect on what I read in the newspapers and the Navy lists – that all his confidence, his expectations of wealth have been justified.

LADY RUSSELL: Well, when a young person turns to you for advice, I hope you'll persuade her to act with all the benefit of hindsight –

ANNE: Lady Russell, I don't blame you.

LADY RUSSELL: Now dry those tears. Within the next week I'm to visit relations in the North. The others are to Bath.

ANNE: (*Scornful*) Oh Bath!

LADY RUSSELL: Stay with Mary at Uppercross, and when I return for Christmas, come to me at Kellynch Lodge. You know you can always command a home with me.