

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

PLAY GUIDE

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108 E. Wells Street Milwaukee, WI • 53202 Milwaukee Repertory Theater presents

SENSE and SENSIBILITY

By Jane Austen
Adapted for the stage by Mark Healy
Directed by Art Manke

December 11, 2012-January 13, 2013

Ouadracci Powerhouse



MARK'S TAKE:

"Sense and Sensibility is my favorite of Jane Austen's wonderful works. I love the relationship between the two sisters — their contrasts, their journeys, their growth throughout—and how this 200-year-old story still resonates. We all fall in love, we all have our hearts broken, we all go through periods where our lives are suddenly turned upsidedown, and Austen's beautiful prose manages to get right to the heart of those moments and makes us feel and say, 'wow, I know that, I felt that, I understand that."

-Mark Clements, Artistic Director

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SYNOPSIS



Elinor and Marianne at a dance. Illustration by Henry Thomson, 1920.

Henry Dashwood has three children: a son, John, by his first wife and two daughters, Elinor and Marianne, by his second. As he dies, he ensures that John, who will inherit his estate, promises to care for Elinor and Marianne, and their mother, Mrs. Dashwood. Due to entailment, the Dashwood's estate, Norland Park, must pass to John and his wife, Fanny. Convincing John that his father was not specific on how he should support them, Fanny persuades him to reduce his financial assistance. This leaves Elinor, Marianne, and their mother without an income.

With their mother, Elinor and Marianne plan to leave Norland Park, but choose to stay when Edward Ferrars, Fanny's eldest brother, seems to become romantically involved with Elinor. In sensible fashion, Elinor says little of the relationship, while Marianne complains about Edward's inability to read poetry passionately. After Fanny comments that Elinor's lack of wealth makes her unsuitable for Edward, the Dashwood women depart for Barton Cottage, in Devonshire, on the estate of Sir John Middleton, a distant cousin.

Sir John and his wife, Lady Middleton, along with Mrs. Jennings, Lady Middleton's mother, welcome the Dashwood women to their new home. While the women adjust to living in a modest fashion, Marianne catches the eye of two suitors — Colonel Brandon, a close friend of the Middletons, and John Willoughby, the heir to a local estate. Marianne falls for the passionate Mr. Willoughby. As John and Marianne's relationship develops, Elinor still has not heard from Edward.

Edward arrives for a visit, but seems distant toward Elinor, and insists that he cannot stay long. During dinner at the Middletons, Colonel Brandon suddenly departs for London after receiving a mysterious letter. Willoughby also leaves for London after his wealthy aunt and benefactor, Mrs. Smith, demands he go for business.

Lucy Steele, a relative of Mrs. Jennings, visits Barton Park and reveals her secret four-year engagement with Edward to a stoic Elinor. Thinking this explains Edward's inconsistent behavior, Elinor forgives him. In an attempt to reconnect the sisters with their suitors, Mrs. Jennings invites Elinor and Marianne to accompany her to London.

Once in London, Marianne writes numerous letters to Willoughby only to discover that he fell out of favor with his aunt, lost his inheritance, and is now engaged to a wealthy heiress, Ms. Jane Grey. Marianne is devastated. Colonel Brandon comes to visit and tells Elinor he has a ward, the illegitimate daughter of a woman he once loved. She disappeared at the age of fourteen and, at last, had written to him in distress on the day of his abrupt departure from Barton Park. He also tells her Willoughby is the one that seduced and abandoned the woman. Elinor hopes Marianne can find comfort now that she knows Willoughby's true character.

When news of Edward's secret engagement to Lucy becomes common knowledge in London, the sisters flee the gossip and embarrassment, returning to Barton Cottage with Colonel Brandon. While traveling, Marianne becomes dangerously ill, and they stop to treat her at Colonel Brandon's estate. As Marianne recovers, she begins to grow fond of the Colonel.

Edward's mother disinherits him because of his engagement to Lucy. Brandon offers Edward a position as pastor on his estate. When Edward arrives to accept the position, Elinor discovers that he released Lucy from their engagement. Lucy consequently married Edward's younger brother, Robert. Edward asks Elinor to marry him. Marianne and Brandon also marry, allowing the sisters to stay together, both happily married, living on the same estate.



Willoughby and Marianne at the pianoforte. Illustration by Henry Thomson, 1920.

THE CHARACTERS



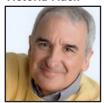
Elinor Dashwood: the sensible and reserved eldest daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood



Marianne Dashwood: the romantically inclined and eagerly expressive second daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Dashwood

"Good-humoured. unaffected girls, will not do for a man who has been used to sensible women. They are two distinct orders of being." -Jane Austen

Victoria Mack



Henry Dashwood: Elinor and Marianne's father Mr. Frederick Carey: the Dashwood family lawyer Sir John Middleton: a distant relative of Mrs. Dashwood **Dr. Groogan:** the Dashwood family physician

Jonathan Gillard Dalv



Mrs. Dashwood: Elinor and Marianne's mother Mrs. Jennings: Lady Middleton's mother

Ensemble:



Nathan Altman





John Dashwood: Henry's son, Elinor and Marianne's half brother

Colonel Brandon: a close friend of Sir John Middleton,

Marianne's suitor

Anna Cline



Fanny Dashwood: John Dashwood's wife Lady Charlotte Middleton: Sir John Middleton's wife **Lucy Steele:** a distant relative of Mrs. Jennings. secretly engaged to Edward Ferrars

Brandon Herr



Edward Ferrars: the eldest brother of Fanny Dashwood's, Elinor's suitor **Robert Ferrars:** the younger brother of Edward Ferrars and Fanny Dashwood



Jess Prichard

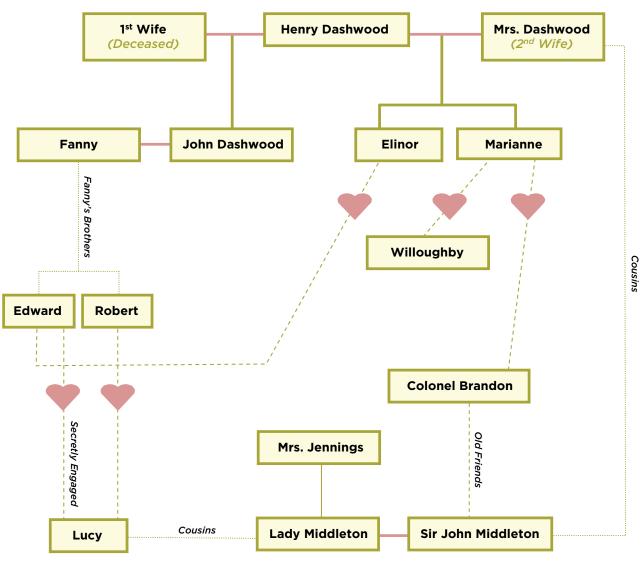


John Willoughby: Marianne's suitor

Ben Jacoby



CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS





Victoria Mack and Ben Jacoby





Production Photos by Michael Brosilow

Laura Gordon and Jonathan Gillard Daly

John-Patrick Driscoll and Meaghan Sullivan

Nick Gabriel and Kate Hurster

THE SETTINGS

The characters in *Sense and Sensibility* travel throughout England. Below is a map of factual and fictional locations that Jane Austen included in her novel.



Map of fictional and non-fictional locations in Sense and Sensibility.

Source: http://www.pemberleypond.com/S_S/home.html

SETTINGS IN SENSE AND SENSIBILITY:

Norland Park: Located in Sussex, the home of the Dashwoods. After John

inherits Norland, his half-sisters, Elinor and Marianne,

along with their mother, must leave their home.

Barton Park: Located in Devonshire, the home of Sir John and Lady

Middleton.

Barton Cottage: Located in Devonshire, on the Barton Park Estate. The

new home of Elinor, Marianne, and Mrs. Dashwood.

Allenham: Located in Devonshire, the estate Willoughby will inherit.

Delaford: Located in Dorsetshire, the home of Colonel Brandon.



JANE AUSTEN BIOGRAPHY



Jane Austen

Born the 16th of December, 1775, in the rural village of Steventon, Hampshire, England, to Reverend George and Cassandra Austen, Jane Austen became the second daughter and the seventh child in a family of eight. Tutored at home by her father and older brothers, Jane received a broader education than most women of her time. Coming from a family of avid readers, Jane found a love of words and poetry at a young age. William Cowper (mentioned in *Sense and Sensibility*) was her favorite poet.

As early as 1787, at the age of 12, Jane began writing short stories and poems for her own amusement. Being shy, Jane wrote on small slips of paper that she would slide under her desk when others entered the room. By the age of 22, Jane had written first drafts of what would later become three of her major works: *Elinor and Marianne* (later known as *Sense and Sensibility*), *First Impressions* (*Pride and Prejudice*), and *Susan* (*Northanger Abbey*). She presented many of these first works as letters or short plays for the enjoyment of her family. Jane's father supported her aspirations of being a writer and tried to get her works published. However, upon presenting *First Impressions* to a publisher, the man refused to even look at the manuscript.

Society considered unmarried women who were past the marrying age to be spinsters or "old maids." Although Jane never married, she had an active social life with many suitors. Harris Bigg-Wither, the younger brother of a family friend, proposed to her in 1802. Jane originally accepted the proposal as a means of security, but after a night's sleep, she withdrew her acceptance. After her father's retirement, Jane, age 25, and her family sold off everything and moved from Hampshire to Bath.

Jane's father passed away in 1805 and Jane, along with her mother and her sister Cassandra, moved to Southampton. In 1809, they settled into a large cottage in the village of Chawton. It is said that in this cottage, Jane felt most at home. It was there that she began to write, revise, and work towards publishing most of her major works, among them *Sense and Sensibility*. Of her six major novels, four were published under the alias "A Lady," after publisher Thomas Egerton accused Jane's romantic scenes in *Pride and Prejudice* of being racy and indecent. However, this did not stop readers from buying her novels. Financially independent, Jane supported herself and her sister until she died on July 18, 1817. She is buried in Winchester Cathedral.

Today, Jane Austen is known for her strong heroines who, determined to marry well and wisely, ultimately succeed. In a time where marriage determined a woman's social status, Jane focused on the lives of the middle-class with humor and understanding, and although she restricted the scope of her novels to matters of domestic life, Jane's wit and observant narratives have touched readers for nearly two hundred years.

Selected Works by Jane Austen

Sense and Sensibility (1811)
Pride and Prejudice (1813)
Mansfield Park (1814)
Emma (1815)
Northanger Abbey (1818, posthumous)
Persuasion (1818, posthumous)

"The person, be it gentleman or lady, who has not pleasure in a good novel, must be intolerably stupid."

Historical Context: THE REGENCY ERA

Social Class

During Jane Austen's time, also known as the Regency Era, a person's status in society was determined at birth. Austen grew up in a society with a complex social ranking system to which everyone adhered. In England, the property one would inherit, one's family history, and how well one embodied the morals and manners of the time determined one's social significance. Upper class nobility ranked above the more populated middle, lower, and working classes. One's rank in life determined how comfortably one could live, and one's social circle.



An upper-class lady with her child and maid.



Chawton House, the home of Jane Austen's brother, Edward.

Inheritance

In the opening scene of *Sense & Sensibility*, Henry Dashwood dies, leaving all his property to his son John. In the Regency Era, women had very few rights when it came to inheriting property. When a father passed away, the eldest son inherited all the family's property, including the house, to keep it in the name of its original owner. Known as entailment, these laws prevented property from being inherited by females. Women could not inherit property because, if they married, it would become their husband's and leave the family line. Since women could not inherit property, their best chance of leading a comfortable life was to marry someone who had, or would inherit, property of their own.

Gender Roles

Men and women had very different roles in the Regency Era. From an early age, governesses trained middle and upper class women in drawing, painting, dance, music, French or German, and the art of running a household. Determined girls could further their education by reading books from the family library, but most spent their time and money in search of the proper man to marry. If a woman did not marry, society expected them to stay at home with their family, or take up a "suitable" profession, such as tutoring. Boys pursued boxing, hunting, fencing, and riding horses. Privately tutored or sent off to a boarding school, proper education was not seen as important as in today's standards. While the eldest son inherited his father's estate, younger brothers could choose professions in the Church, the army, or the law, but marriage was also important for a young man in order to carry on his family's name. Etiquette in the regency era determined that gentlemen should treat every woman with the utmost respect, and women should respect and obey their fathers and, when married, their husbands.



Ladies and a suitor dancing at a ball.



Depiction of a Regency Era Wedding.

Courtship & Marriage

A single woman's goal in Regency England was to find a husband, but it was the job of a single man to do the wooing. Men achieved this by following a strict code of conduct called courtship. Before a couple became engaged, they could not to be alone in a room or travel in a carriage without a chaperone. Couples could not call each other by their first names, give each other gifts, or dance more than two dances together in an evening. A bow and a curtsy were proper greetings. When a gentleman felt that a lady reciprocated his feelings, he would ask for her family's permission to marry her. Rules forbad gentlemen from breaking off an engagement, and a lady could only cancel the engagement after careful consideration. Weddings were private affairs, always held in a church or chapel. Brides sometimes wore white, but many opted for a dress with more color. After marriage, society considered the wife to be the property of her husband. Many women would bring into the marriage a dowry, money or property given to the groom by the bride's family.

SENSE VS. SENSIBILITY

Jane Austen portrays the debate between "sense" and "sensibility" in her novel of the same name. This is most clear in the contrast between the two heroines, Elinor and Marianne. The elder of the sisters, Elinor, represents the qualities of "sense:" reasonable, clear-headed in moments of chaos, and responsible. In contrast, the younger Marianne represents the qualities of "sensibility:" impulsive, passionate, emotional, and spontaneous.

This contrast in the characters mirrors the debate between reason and emotion at the turn of the eighteenth century. Austen wrote her novel on the cusp of two cultural movements: Classicism and Romanticism. Elinor represents the ideals of eighteenth century classicism, which focused on economic practicalities, judgment, moderation, and balance. Marianne represents the qualities associated with Romanticism including imagination, excess, and an appreciation of nature. Although they contrast each other, Elinor does have passion, and Marianne does have common sense. Both the heroines only achieve happiness after they have learned from one other.

EXAMPLES FROM THE PLAY OF THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

SENSE:

"It is too large for our needs.
We have discussed this, Mama"
-Elinor, on finding a new estate

"I do not attempt to deny that I think very highly of him...that I greatly esteem—that I like him....you may believe my feelings to be stronger that I have declared them. But I am by no means assured of his regard for me."

-Elinor, regarding her feelings for Edward

"I am sorry, Marianne, if I disappoint. I am not well-versed, as I make plainly obvious. Not very entertaining for you, I'm sure." -Edward, to Marianne

"I expect no other answer from you.

I believe you would hide any wrong or unease in your life so as not to offend anyone, or cause them anxiety on your part"

-Colonel Brandon, to Elinor

"Pardon me, but I can give you no advice under such circumstances. Your own judgment must direct you." -Elinor, to Lucy Steele

SENSIBILITY:

"His eyes want all that spirit, and fire, which at once announce taste and intelligence. Music seems scarcely to attract him...and how spiritless, how tame was his reading that other night!"

-Marianne, regarding Edward's personality

"I could not be happy with a man whose taste did not in every point coincide with my own. He must enter into all my feelings; the same books, the same music must charm us both."

-Marianne, on finding a suitor

"Dear Norland! When shall I cease to regret you!-When learn to feel a home elsewhere!...and you my trees!...No leaf will decay because we are gone, nor any branch become motionless. No, you will continue the same. But who will remain to enjoy you?"

-Marianne, on leaving Norland Park

"Very well. I have seen you every day for the past week and yet...when I am from you I have desired to have some kind of...a keepsake, a token of our... being together."

-Willoughby, to Marianne

ADAPTATION: FROM NOVEL TO STAGE

As one of the English language's most beloved authors, Jane Austen has proven to be very popular among adapters. All of her six completed novels have been produced into various film and television adaptations. Even though Jane Austen wrote her novels over two hundred years ago, her characters remain relatable. Modern audiences still find her themes of wealth, family, love and security relevant and universal.

MARK HEALY'S ADAPTATION:

Mark Healy chose to focus on the story's two central characters in his stage adaptation of *Sense and Sensibility*. According to Healy, "Austen's depiction of sisterhood is one of the greatest in literature and provides two very strong female roles. The story of the very different Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, the loss of their father, their struggles to find a new home, their trials and tribulations in love, and their eventual, very different, partnerships, is all played out on the foundation of their sisterly bond. This relationship of opposites as defined in the title, their differing responses to the various situations in which the family finds itself and their consequent journey, has fascinated me throughout the process of writing this play. Jane Austen enjoyed an extremely close relationship to her very different sister Cassandra, and this is no doubt the inspiration for the novel."

OTHER SENSE & SENSIBILITY ADAPTATIONS:



Sense and Sensibility (1995): Starring Emma Thompson and Kate Winslet, this version remains true to the story and historical aspect, with only omissions of some of the minor characters.



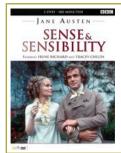
Kandukondain Kandukondain (2000): This Tamil language musical from India is based on Austen's Sense and Sensibility. The title translates to "I Have Found It."



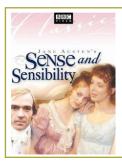
From Prada To Nada (2011): This adaptation puts a modern spin on Austen's story, when two rich girls are forced to move to East Los Angeles after their father dies.



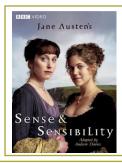
Scents and Sensibility (2011): This modernized version finds a pair of spoiled girls forced to fend for themselves when the FBI indicts their father.



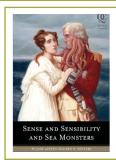
Sense and Sensibility (1971): A fourpart series that aired on the BBC.



Sense and Sensibility(1981): This was a seven part series that aired on the BBC.



Sense and Sensibility (2008): This aired on BBC1 as a three part series.



Sense and Sensibility and Sea Monsters (2009): This parody is a mash-up of Austen's novel and sea monster tales. The story is set in an alternate universe of the Regency Era in England (1811-1820), where an event simply known as "The Alteration" has turned the creatures of the sea against mankind. This unexplained event has also spawned numerous other sea monsters, including sea serpents, giant lobsters, and man-eating jellyfish.



GLOSSARY

Approbation: Official approval.

Barouche: A fashionable type of horse drawn carriage in

the 19th century. It was a four-wheeled, shallow vehicle with double seats arranged face-to-face. A barouche would be drawn by a pair of high quality horses and primarily used for a leisurely ride in the

summertime.

Consumption: Tuberculosis; a common and sometimes fatal

airborne disease that typically attacks the lungs, but can spread to other parts of the body as well.

One of the common symptoms is coughing up blood.

Debtor's house: A place of temporary confinement for those unable to pay their debt in

the United Kingdom. Debtor's houses would hold debtors temporarily as they tried to make some type of payment. If they were unable to pay the

debt, they would be taken to court and sent to debtor's prison.

Fastidious: Difficult to please; having high standards.

Gaucherie: Lack of social grace; awkwardness.

Incommode: To cause an inconvenience; to disturb.

Indisposition: A slight illness.

Knave: A tricky, deceitful fellow.

Knoll: A small, low, round natural hill.

Parsonage: Also known as a rectory; these homes are typically

owned and maintained by a church, and are often home to the local parson or clergy. Steventon Rectory in Hampshire was once home to Jane Austen, where

she wrote a few of her novels.

Porter: A person in charge of a door or gate; an attendant.

Propensity: An intense natural inclination or preference.

Reprobate: To disapprove; to reject.

Scrupulous: Having moral integrity; acting in strict regard for what is right or proper.

Stationer's Shop: A bookseller.

Tête à tête: French for "head to head;" a private conversation between two people.

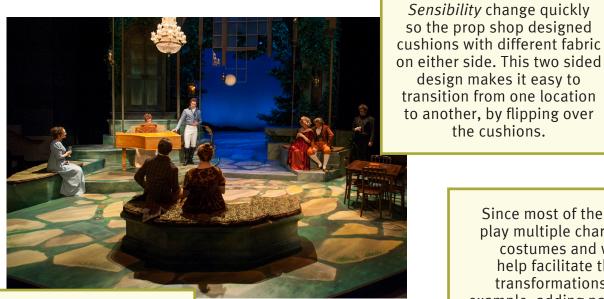
Trifle: Something of little importance or value.



A Barouche.



Steventon Rectory, once home to Jane Austen.



The Cast of Sense and Sensibility

The Prop Shop built or reconstructed all three chandeliers. The London crystal chandelier is actually two chandeliers unified into one with crystals and beads.

Since most of the actors play multiple characters, costumes and wigs help facilitate these transformations. For example, adding padding to John Middleton's costume, gives actor Jon Daly a different body shape.

The locations in Sense and

the cushions.

To facilitate the duel at the beginning of Act 2, the Prop Shop found replicas of 1800's Scottish dueling pistols. The shop then created a wooden case specifically for these replica pistols.

Many different colored light bulbs create the fireplace effect. A starter normally used in fluorescent lighting, causes them to flicker at random, simulating the flicker of a fire.

Mark Healy's cinematic adaptation of Sense and Sensibility has short scenes in many different locations. To help facilitate these scene changes, sound designer Steven Cahill composed musical interludes to help the transitions. Sounds found in nature are used in exterior scenes help differentiate them from the interior scenes.



Kate Hurster and Ben Jacoby

There are about 120 magnets in The Rep's production of *Sense* and Sensibility. Magnets hold the cushions in place, as well as keep the top-heavy crystal glasses upright on the serving trays.

When actors read letters in a different location from the primary scene, the sound board puts effects on an onstage microphones to make them sound distant.

In Act 1, Marianne dashes out into the rain and falls as Willoughby comes to her rescue. Hoses and gardening showerheads form the rain system used in The Rep's production. The water falls onto the stage and flows into a grate where it drains.





Because some actors play multiple characters, costume designer Angela Balogh Calin uses different colors for each character to help the audience track characters throughout the show. Elinor wears blue, while Marianne wears pink.

Scenic designer Scott Bradley used two outer walls on pivots to help transition the set from the country to London. The countryside scenery has greenery, while London's walls are red.



Victoria Mack

Lighting designer Thomas Hase distinguishes between interior and exterior scenes with window gobos (patterns placed in lighting instruments) for interior scenes and leafy gobos for exterior scenes.

VISITING THE REP

Milwaukee Repertory Theater's Patty and Jay Baker Theater Complex is located in the Milwaukee Center downtown at the corner of Wells and Water Streets. The building was formerly the home of the Electric Railway and Light Company.



Milwaukee Repertory Theater. Photo by Michael Brosilow.

The Ticket Office is visible on the left upon entering the Wells Street doors. In the central rotunda is a large staircase which leads to The Rep's Quadracci Powerhouse theater and lobby.

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- Maintain our commitment to audiences with special needs through our Access Services that include American Sign Language interpreted productions, captioned theater, infrared listening systems and script synopses to ensure that theater at The Rep is accessible to all;
- Educate the next generation of theater professionals with our Artistic Intern Program which gives newly degreed artists a chance to hone their skills at The Rep as they begin to pursue their theatrical careers.

We value our supporters and partnerships and hope that you will help us to expand the ways The Rep has a positive impact on theater and on our Milwaukee Community.

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