“Sense and Sensibility”

Audition Selections (December 1 and 2)

Selection #1 (needed: Gossips 1, 2, 3, and 4, Fanny, and John)

In this scene, which occurs early in the play, the Gossips are discussing a recent death. John Dashwood and his wife, Fanny, are introduced. John is a good-hearted soul, but is completely smitten with his wife and will follow her bidding. Fanny is manipulative and (possibly) wicked, but always maintains a proper façade.

Gossip 1: Poor Mr. Dashwood – carried away so suddenly. Woke up with a fever and drew his last gasp within the week! Poor Mr. Dashwood.

Gossip 2: Poor Mr. Dashwood. But a handsome funeral. The serenity of the corpse was most delightful. Poor Mr. Dashwood.

Gossip 3: Poor Mr. Dashwood. And poor Mrs. Dashwood, in every sense of the word. You know that his widow and daughters are left with almost nothing.

(The Gossips have lost all interest in the corpse.)

Gossip 4: No!

Gossip 1: Not truly?

Gossip 4: But Norland Park is such a large estate!

Gossip 2: Were there (in hushed tones) very many debts in the family?

Gossip 3: No, nothing like that. (Officiously.) It was a question of the law.

Gossip 4: Did somebody break the law?

Gossip 3: No, no. Mr. Dashwood could not legally bequeath it to the ladies. It all went to his son from a previous marriage, Mr. John Dashwood.

[Enter John Dashwood.]

John: I think that I will give them a thousand pounds apiece to start their new life!

Gossip 4: But wasn’t he a rich man already?

Gossip 3: Oh yes, he married into money. But his rich wife (lowers voice) – not a sympathetic creature. Moved into Norland Park the day after the funeral, without a word of notice to the new widow!

[Enter Fanny Dashwood. Gossips do not care for her.]

Fanny: My dear John, how can you think of taking four thousand pounds from the fortune of our dear little boy? What possible claim can the Miss Dashwoods, who are only related to you by half-blood, have to so large an amount?

John: My father’s last request was that I provide for them, Fanny.

Fanny: Your father did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten-to-one he was light-headed at the time. Four thousand pounds!?!

John: He did not specify any particular amount. (pause – Fanny is not relenting) Perhaps if the sum were diminished by one-half. Five hundred pounds apiece would be a great increase to their fortunes!

Fanny: Two thousand pounds! What brother on earth would do so much for even his REAL sisters?

John: One had rather do too much than too little. Do you think that they may expect more?

Fanny: Who knows what they might expect.

John: Two thousand pounds, all at once, might overwhelm them and be spent unwisely, I suppose. Perhaps a yearly sum, instead?

Fanny: People always live forever when there is an annuity to be paid them. To be very honest, my love, I am convinced that your father had no idea of you giving them any money. I wager when he told you to “provide for them,” he meant to help them move their things, and send them occasional presents of fish and game, and so forth. My darling – may I risk being perfectly frank?

John: Always, my angel.

Fanny: The painful truth is that even on his deathbed, your father was not thinking of us, nor of our little Harry – he thought only of THEM. So you owe no particular attention to his wishes … for given his way, he would have left them everything in the world. Remember my dear – he left them all the best china.

John: The china is a material consideration. It is absolutely unnecessary to do more, I think, than to help them move comfortably. How liberal and handsome you are my lamb.

[Fanny takes John’s arm and they exit.]

Gossip 1: And so the young ladies and their mother are left in such reduced circumstances! How shall the girls ever catch a man?

Gossip 3: As to that, I understand Mrs. Dashwood’s brother, Mr, Edward Ferrars, is to stay with his sister at Norland for a time. He is a bachelor …

Gossip 4: - and stands to inherit a large fortune from his mother!

Gossip 3: … if one of the Dashwoods could make a catch of him …

Selection #2 (needed: Marianne, Elinor, Mrs. Dashwood, Margaret, Edward)

In this scene, Edward has been reading orally from “Hamlet,” but his efforts are very poor. Marianne, who genuinely likes Edward, wants him to read with more spirit and enthusiasm. Edward desperately wishes to please everyone. Elinor, whose feelings for Edward are developing into more than a friendship, takes up for him.

Marianne: Oh, Edward. (She takes the book from him.)

Mrs. Dashwood: A noble effort. (Aside to Marianne -- ) Why would you give him “Hamlet” to begin, Marianne?

Marianne: Now, Mamma, if one is not to be animated by “Hamlet”?!? (trying to be polite) but I suppose we must allow for differences of taste.

Edward: In truth, you have done me a service. I may now tell my mother in all seriousness that I have no talent for public speaking.

Mrs. Dashwood: Will she take such a defeat willingly, Edward? Your sister is always telling us you are destined to be a very great orator.

Edward: My life’s work seems to be to convince both Fanny and my mother that I am unsuited for public scrutiny.

Mrs. Dashwood: (not sarcastically at all) Then how is your fame to be established? For famous you must be to satisfy them!

Edward: I cannot be forced into greatness, thank heaven.

Mrs. Dashwood: And do you have no ambition?

Edward: My ambition is to be happy, but I fear it must be in my own way. Wealth and fame would not make me so.

Marianne: Strange that it would! What has wealth or fame to do with being happy?

Elinor: Wealth has much to do with it.

Marianne: Elinor, for shame!

Elinor: Money determines more than you might imagine, Marianne.

[Margaret enters.]

Margaret: Edward, you promised me you would show me Fancy’s new puppies before dinner.

Edward: I did. Shall we make a party of it?

Marianne: I have seen them already.

[Elinor shakes her head “no.”]

Mrs. Dashwood: It must be a quick visit, Margaret. Please do wear your boots – it’s raining.

Margaret: I don’t know where they are.

Marianne: It’s scarcely raining, Mamma.

Mrs. Dashwood: Let us ask Betsy if they’ve been laid aside.

[Mrs. Dashwood, Edward, and Margaret exit.]

Marianne: (defeated yet dramatic) What a pity it is, Elinor, that Edward reads so spiritlessly.

Elinor: Marianne, you have been hectoring him all afternoon, and you have only made him more self-conscious. If you would leave him alone for a minute, I’m sure that he would read very well, indeed.

Marianne: I was only trying to help.

Elinor: Hmmmm.

Marianne: Elinor, are you truly offended?

Elinor: Do you really think him spiritless?

Marianne: I have the highest opinion possible of Edward, I assure you! I think him every thing in the world that is worthy and amiable.

Elinor: (Shocked at her sister’s blunt response.) Must you always speak to warmly?

Marianne: Don’t you agree?

Elinor: I think that Edward is very … sensible. His mind is excellent, and if he is not always a brilliant orator, it is only shyness that impedes him.

Marianne: Indeed.

Elinor: He may sometimes appear awkward, but I believe that is only because he strives so earnestly never to hurt any living creature by careless thought or action.

Marianne: Yes.

Elinor: I grant you, perhaps he is not fashionable …

Marianne: No …

Elinor: … perhaps he is not even widely considered ‘handsome’ – but once you notice his eyes, which are uncommonly good, and consider the general sweetness of his expression, well I find him very handsome indeed. (Realizes she has been going on and on … ) But what say you, Marianne?

Marianne: I swear that when you tell me to love him as a brother, I shall think him perfect indeed.

Elinor: Marianne! I do not deny that I think very highly of Edward. (Marianne is hopeful for the next sentence.) That I greatly esteem him. That I like him.

Marianne: Esteem him?! Like him?! Cold-hearted Elinor.

Elinor: Excuse me for speaking in so quiet a way of my feelings. Believe them to be stronger than I declared. But, I am not sure that Edward feels anything for me beyond friendship.

Marianne: (Can her sister be this dense?) Elinor.

Elinor: He may have a kind of a … preference …

Marianne: Ah ha!

Elinor: … but there are other points to be considered, Marianne. He is dependent on his mother for a living, and must obey her wishes in all things. Edward would face many obstacles if he wished to marry a woman with no fortune.

Selection #3 (needed: Elinor, Margaret, Mrs. Dashwood, Willoughby, Marianne, Sir John)

This is the first time we meet Willoughby, who is handsome and oh so charming. Sir John explains to the ladies that Willoughby would be quite the catch, but he worries that his friend, Colonel Brandon, will be left out. \*Note\* This selection is actually two scenes which would include a brief pause from one scene to the next.

Elinor: A very wet spring … we should tell Betsy to put on tea – they will be soaked through.

Margaret: (running in) Elinor! Mamma! Marianne fell and hurt her ankle! And a gentleman … grabbed her right up!

Mrs. Dashwood: Margaret, what on earth …?

Margaret: (pointing offstage) Marianne’s preserver! (Willoughby enters, carrying Marianne, who is deeply embarrassed and unusually shy.) Marianne’s preserver!

Willoughby: Please forgive my intrusion, ma’am. The lady took a tumble and was not able to stand. (he places Marianna on the sofa, who tries to communicate through facial expressions to Elinor.)

Mrs. Dashwood: Margaret, run and tell Betsy what has happened. Marianne, dearest, are you in much pain? (Margaret does not leave.)

Willoughby: Only a wrenched ankle, I think.

Mrs. Dashwood: Thank heavens you were there. Please sir – will you sit and take some tea?

Willoughby: I am dirty and wet, and do not want to spoil your furniture.

Elinor: Might I ask to whom we are so obliged?

Willoughby: My name is John Willoughby. I hope, ma’am, you will allow me the honor of calling tomorrow to enquire after Miss …

Mrs. Dashwood: Dashwood. Is our name. I am Mrs. Dashwood and this is Elinor and Margaret and …

Marianne: (no longer shy) Miss Marianne Dashwood. [Willoughby takes Marianne’s hand and bows, looking directly into her eyes.]

Mrs. Dashwood: You will be very welcome, Mr. Willoughby. Will you not wait for the rain to clear.

Willoughby: Thank you, ma’am, but my pointers are outside. A little more water will not melt me. [the ladies giggle at his joke] Until tomorrow. [he exits]

Margaret: (after a moment) Marianne’s gallant preserver!

“Willoughby in the County” – the parlor in the cottage, the next morning.

Margaret: … and then Mamma asked him whether he would sit down, but he would not, as he was so muddy and dirty, but he is to call again today!

Mrs. Dashwood: Do you know any gentleman by the name of Willoughby?

Sir John: Willoughby! What, is he in the county? He is down here every spring. I must ask him to dinner on Thursday.

Mrs. Dashwood: And what sort of a young man is he?

Sir John: As good a fellow as ever lived! Not a bolder rider in England.

Elinor: And where is his residence?

Sir John: Mr. Willoughby has no property of his own in this county; he resides here only while visiting his rich old cousin, Mrs. Smith, at Allenham Court. He’s to inherit the estate and all her fortune, eventually.

Elinor: Oh!

Sir John: He is very well-worth catching, Miss Dashwood; and if I were you, I would not give him up so early to my younger sister. Miss Marianne must not expect to have all the men to herself! Brandon will be jealous, if she does not take care!

Mrs. Dashwood: (Anticipating Marianne’s outrage …) My daughters, Sir John, have not been brought up to ‘catch’ gentlemen. I am glad to hear, however, that he is a respectable young man.

Marianne: Of course he is respectable, Mamma.

Sir John: Aye, I see how it is! You will be setting your cap at him now, and never think of poor Brandon. How can he compete against all this tumbling about and spraining of ankles?

Selection #4 (Needed: Marianne and Elinor)

This scene clearly illustrates the personalities of the sisters.

Marianne: Colonel Brandon, please excuse me. May I steal my sister’s attention for a moment? (Brandon bows and walks away.) Elinor! I have the most wonderful news! Willoughby has given me a horse!

Elinor: A horse?!?

Marianne: One which is exactly bred to carry a woman! He is sending his groom for it immediately.

Elinor: Marianne, you cannot accept such a present.

Marianne: Why not? We shall share its use!

Elinor: A horse?! From a strange man …

Marianne: What ‘strange man?’ We are speaking of Willoughby!

Elinor: … and he is very little-known to you!

Marianne: (shocked!) I may not have been acquainted with Willoughby for long, Elinor – but I know him much better than I know any other creature in the world! Except you and Mamma, of course.

Elinor: Marianne, let us not touch upon the impropriety, for a moment. We cannot afford to keep a horse.

Marianne: Surely we can find the money!

Elinor: We have enough to do just to keep ourselves respectable.

Marianne: There must be some way …

Elinor: We must go in for dinner.

Selection #5 (Needed: Sir John, Mrs. Jennings, Elinor, Lucy, Anne, Marianne)

Elinor is so gracious and patient, even as she suffers through an afternoon with Lucy and Anne. \*Note\* This selection includes parts of two scenes.

Sir John: Hellooooo? Miss Dashwood?

Mrs. Jennings: Helloooooo? Where is Marianne? Has she run away because we are come?

Elinor: She is out walking.

Sir John: Well, lay that work aside for a moment. Lady Industry, I have brought you some strangers – Miss Anne and Miss Lucy Steele, who are to stay with us at the Park. How do you like them?

Elinor: Shhh. They will hear you.

Mrs. Jennings: I met them on a morning’s excursion to Exeter, and discovered them to be my relations! Yes, the cousins of my cousin Mildred’s own Mr. John – nay, not you sir, but a shorter and fuller man, if you please. Very gouty, poor fellow, and never comfortable in the least bit of damp. Where was I?

Elinor: Your relations, ma’am.

Mrs. Jennings: Yes, can you imagine? Naturally we invited them to stay with us directly! I daresay you can see the resemblance.

Sir John: They are the sweetest girls in the world. You must come for a visit tonight … you can’t think how you will like them. Come! Come!

Mrs. Jennings: Come!

“Visit with the Steeles” - the parlor in the cottage – the scene is played with awkward silences.

Lucy: What a lovely room this is! So very well-appointed.

Elinor: Indeed.

Anne: (to Elinor) How do you like Devonshire, Miss Dashwood? I suppose you were very sorry to leave Sussex, and that big fine house – when your father died, and you lost all your money.

Elinor: We were very sad to leave Norland.

Marianne: (offended) Excuse me. (Marianne goes to the piano to play an angry tune.)

Anne: And had you a great many smart beaux there? There may be a vast many smart beaux in Exeter, I’m sure, but Lord knows if I can tell what beaux there might be about Norland! And perhaps the Miss Dashwoods might find it dull here if they do not have so many as they used to have. But perhaps you two do not care about the beaux, and had as lief be without! For my part, I think they are vastly agreeable provided they dress smart and behave civil. I can’t bear to see them dirty and nasty. Now there’s Mr. Rose at Exeter, clerk to Mr. Simpson, if you do but meet him of a morning he is not fit to be seen. I suppose your brother was quite a beau, Miss Dashwood, before he married, as he was so rich, and …

Lucy: Anne!

Anne: Well, Sir John tells us Miss Marianne has a special admirer who is very handsome. I hope you will have as good luck yourself soon – but perhaps you have a gentleman friend already?

Sir John: (offstage) His name is Ferrars, but pray do not tell it, for it’s a great secret.

Anne: Ferrars? Mr. Ferrars is the happy man? Your sister-in-law’s brother, Miss Dashwood? Why, we know him very, very well.

Lucy: Anne, we have met Mr. Ferrars once or twice at our uncle’s, but we hardly know him well.

Anne: Well, I shall say no more, not for all the money in the world. I do believe I shall see if Miss Marianne knows any arias. I am passionately fond of an aria. (She joins Marianne at the piano, who is miserable.)

Lucy: Miss Dashwood. Please pardon me, but I wonder if I might ask you something rather odd? Pray, are you closely acquainted with your sister-in-law’s mother, Mrs. Ferrars?

Elinor: No, I have never met her.

Lucy: Truly? Oh, I supposed she might have visited Norland sometime.

Elinor: No, I am afraid not.

Lucy: You must think me very strange for enquiring about her. I wish I could tell you why I ask, but I do not wish you to think me impertinent.

Elinor: I …

Lucy: I could not bear to have you think me impertinent. I would rather anything in the world than be thought impertinent by a person like you.

Elinor: I assure you …

Lucy: I do wish, so much, that I could tell you my reasons – and I would indeed be very glad of your advice in a trying matter. But I do not want to trouble you. I am sorry that you do not happen to know Mrs. Ferrars.

Elinor: I am sorry that I do not. But I confess, I did not know that you were at all connected with that family.

Lucy: Forgive me … it was an odd question. Do not think of it any more.

Elinor: Tea?

Lucy: Dearest Miss Dashwood, can I trust you?

Elinor: Pardon?

Lucy: Can you – would you – keep a very great and grave and important secret? If I unburdened myself to you entirely, would you solemnly promise never ever ever to tell anyone what I will tell you now?

Selection #6 (Needed: Mrs. Jennings, Elinor, Sir John, Marianne, Mrs. Dashwood, Margaret)

We see a side of Mrs. Jennings that is comical and pleasant. \*Note\* This selection includes passages from two scenes.

Mrs. Jennings: My dear Miss Dashwoods, gather round! Gather round! I have a wonderful proposal for you, my girls. Every winter, you know, I am in the habit of removing to a nice stomp in London, near Portman Square. But this year, I have been scheming, my little chickens, and I have hit upon it! I am entirely resolved that this go ‘round, you both must come with me to town, as my guests, and keep a stupid old woman hopping!

Elinor: (quickly, before Marianne can respond) I do thank you, ma’am, it is a very kind offer, but I’m afraid that we cannot leave my mother.

Mrs. Jennings: Poo. I am sure she will not object. On the contrary, she will think me very fit to procure you both a bevy of eligible young London bachelors!

Sir John: Miss Marianne seems eager enough. Our Mr. Willoughby lives in town, does he not?

Mrs. Jennings: One or the other of you, I must have! I cannot live poking around by myself. Come, Miss Marianne, let us strike hands upon the bargan, and if Miss Elinor changes her mind by and by, why, so much the better.

Marianne: I so sincerely thank you, ma’am. I must ask my mother’s consent first, I suppose, but I assure you it would be almost the greatest happiness I could ever think of!

Mrs. Jennings: That certainly sounds promising.

Elinor: We will consult with Mamma, yes, but I think she will decide against it.

“Going to London” – the parlor in the cottage

Mrs. Dashwood: It is a wonderful plan!

Margaret: Can I go? (checking herself …) May I go?

Mrs. Dashwood: Perhaps in a few years, my dear.

Margaret: In a few years I will be beyond all improvement!

Elinor: Mamma, I do not think this is prudent. Although Mrs. Jennings has a good heart, her protection cannot give us consequence in London, and …

Marianne: If Elinor is frightened away by Mrs. Jennings, Mamma, it does not prevent my accepting her invitation.

Elinor: … what sudden and miraculous display of enthusiasm for Mrs. Jennings!

Mrs. Dashwood: I will have you both go, these objections are nonsensical. You will enjoy touring London, and if Elinor would ever condescend to anticipate enjoyment, she more foresee having a very interesting time. John and Fanny always winter in town, and you shall have to visit them – and perhaps when doing so, you may encounter some other members of the Ferrars family.

Margaret: F ffff Ferrars!

Elinor: I like Edward Ferrars well enough, but that is scarcely a reason to go all the way to London.

Marianne: Must you always be so cold!

Elinor: Marianne!

Marianne: Elinor, please? Don’t you see that going to town may secure both of our happinesses, forever? (Aside to Elinor.) I cannot stand it … I must see Willoughby or I will go mad. Please?

Selection #7: (Needed: Brandon, Mrs. Jennings, Elinor)

Colonel Brandon is in love with Marianne, but realizes her affections lie elsewhere.

Brandon: Miss Dashwood, I am pleased to see you in London.

Mrs. Jennings: (bustling in) Colonel! I am monstrous glad to see you – beg your pardon, but I have been on my feet all day. (collapsing into a chair) I have brought two young ladies with me, you see – you see but one of them now, but there is another somewhere – and it is your friend, Miss Marianne! Yes! I thought that would please you. I do not know what you and Mr. Willoughby will do between you about her. It is a fine thing to be young and handsome – or, so I think – I was never handsome, but I was young once, or so I seem to remember – Oh! Pardon me a moment. I have forgotten to speak to Cook about dinner. One always has a world of little odd things to do after one has been away, and I have had old Cartwright to settle with – Lord, I have been as busy as a bee. (she bustles out) buzz buzz buzz

Brandon: Miss Daswhood, might I congratulate you on the acquisition of a brother?

Elinor: What do you mean?

Brandon: Your sister’s engagement to Mr. Willoughby.

Elinor: If she is engaged to Mr. Willoughby, this is the first time I have heard of it.

Brandon: Their marriage is universally talked of.

Elinor: By whom?

Brandon: By some of whom you know nothing, by others with whom you are most intimate. (He is saddened by the idea.) Is it true, Miss Dashwood?

Elinor: I … though they have never told me of their terms, of their mutual affection I have no doubt, and I am not surprised to hear of their engagement.

Brandon: To your sister I wish all imaginable happiness. To Willoughby, that he may endeavor to deserve her. (He bows and leaves.)

Mrs. Jennings: (re-enters) Colonel, do you prefer boiled fowls or veal cutlets? Colonel? Honestly, that man.

Selection #8 (Needed: Mrs. Jennings, Elinor, Marianne, Willoughby)

Mrs. Jennings cannot decide whether to sympathize with Marianne’s plight or continue to enjoy the gossip surrounding it. Willoughby is reading his own letter, and his true nature is coming to light.

Mrs. Jennings: My dear Miss Marianne, I have something from a (‘s’ sound again) certain special someone, which I am sure you will find to your liking. (Marianne quickly grabs the letter.) I never saw a young woman so desperately in love in my life! Pray, when are they to be married?

Elinor: You don’t really, ma’am, believe that my sister is engaged to Mr. Willoughby?! I always thought you were only joking.

Mrs. Jennings: For shame, Miss Elinor! How can you talk so? We all know that they were madly in love with each other from the first moment they met! Because you are so sly about it personally, you think nobody else has any sense, but I tell you all society knows of it from here to Devonshire and back again. I tell everybody of it, myself!

Elinor: Indeed, ma’am, you are mistaken. And you are doing a very unkind thing in spreading the report.

Mrs. Jennings: Yes, yes, you are a very clever and subtle creature, Miss Elinor. Mum’s the word until the banns are read, hey? (Big wink) I am off to visit my Charlotte, but have asked Susan to lay out a nice breakfast for you two to stuff yourselves. Ta ta! [She leaves.] [Elinor attends to Marianne, who is numb. Elinor reads from the letter - Willoughby is seen at the side quoting his own words. ]

Willoughby: “My dear madam, I gather that something in my behavior last night did not meet with your approval, although I am at a loss to how I offended you. Allow me to be plain: I am sorry if you ever mistook my friendship for something more, but you must acknowledge that anything of that nature is and has been impossible – as my affections have long been engaged with another young lady. John Willoughby.”

Marianne: (her lines overlap with Elinor lines) Elinor, what shall I do? (voice raises to hysterics) What shall I do? How can I remain calm? Leave me if it upsets you so much! Leave me – hate me – forget me – but do not ask me not to feel.

Elinor: Marianne, please! Try to stay calm. What good does it do to become hysterical? Do not indulge in this display.

Marianne: (exhausted) What shall I do?

Elinor: It might have been worse! Your engagement could have gone on much longer before he ended it.

Marianne: What engagement?

Elinor: (not understanding) You weren’t engaged? But Marianne, you wrote to him …

Marianne: Leave me alone. (Broken) Leave me alone.

[Mrs. Jenning’s re-enters.]

Mrs. Jennings: How do you do, my dear? (Marianne is crying.) Poor thing, she looks very bad – and no wonder, it is but too true – he is to be married very soon. (The Gossips are speaking some of this news in unison with Mrs. Jennings.) Mrs. Taylor told me of it downstairs, and I almost sank on the spot! Well, said I, if this is true, he has used a young lady of my acquaintance abominably ill, and I wish with all my soul his wife may plague his heart out! But he is not the only man in the world worth having, Miss Marianne. You will soon be beating them back with a stout stick! (Marianne howls with pain.) Yes, have your little cry. (To Elinor) Luckily, the Parrys and Sandersons are coming tonight, and that will amuse her.

Elinor: Dear ma’am, I am sure Marianne will not leave her room today.

Mrs. Jennings: I cannot believe that a man should use a pretty girl so ill! But when there is plenty of money on one side, and none on the other …

Elinor: The lady then – is very rich?

Mrs. Jennings: Fifty – thousand pounds, my dear. The young Miss Grey – a stylish girl, they say, but not handsome. Fifty-thousand pounds! And it won’t come before it’s wanted, for they say he is all to pieces. Well, ‘tis a true saying about an ill-wind, for it will be all the better for Colonel Brandon! How he’ll chuckle over this news. They’ll be married by mid-summer. I shall spirit him up as soon as I can – maybe he’ll come tonight. One shoulder of mutton, you know, drives another down.

[She bustles out.]

Marianne: All she wants is gossip, and she only likes me because I supply her with it.

Selection #9 (Needed: Elinor, Lucy, Marianne, Edward)

Lucy appears, at times, to be socially clueless. But what is really on her agenda? Edward is, as always, nervous and awkward. Marianne, distracted by her own sadness, does not notice all that is going on.

Lucy: My dearest, dearest friend. Can you believe it?

Elinor: What, exactly?

Lucy: Did you not see Mrs. Ferrars’ way of treating me yesterday? So exceedingly affable! So kind, from the moment I was introduced – she really seemed to take a special fancy to me! Were you not quite struck with it?

Elinor: She was certainly very civil to you.

Lucy: Did you see nothing but civility?

Elinor: If Edward’s family knew of your engagement, nothing could be more promising than their treatment of you. But as that is not the case …

Lucy: Why in the world would they pretend to like me, if they did not? Mrs. Ferrars is affability itself, and so is your sister-in-law, and I think it will all work out splendidly, and all my fears were for nothing!

Elinor: I suppose time will tell.

Lucy: Why did you never mention, Miss Dashwood, how exceedingly charming your sister-in-law is? She is generosity itself. She wrote Anne and I a little note this morning and invited both of us to stay with her for a bit … isn’t that very delightful? (pause) Are you ill, Miss Dashwood? You seem rather low.

Elinor: I never was in better health.

Lucy: Really? You do not look it. Oh, I am glad that his mother loves me already! I would have given up all hope if she had treated me in a forbidding way, and made clear that I was unwelcome. For when she does dislike people, I know it is most unshakable and violent!

[A servant enters, with Edward.]

Servant: Mr. Edward Ferrars, Miss. [Servant leaves. Edward is most uncomfortable and almost walks out.]

Elinor: Mr. Ferrars?!

Edward: Miss Dashwood. Miss … Steele. [Continued awkwardness]

Elinor: Please, be seated.

Edward: I … thank you, Miss Dashwood. [Edward hides the ring, then decides not to hide it.] I came to … enquire about your mother.

Elinor: She is very well, thank you.

Edward: Excellent. And young Miss Margaret … your sister? (Duh!)

Elinor: Very well, thank you.

(Marianne rushes in to greet Edward with great joy.)

Marianne: Edward!! I heard you announced!

Edward: Miss Marianne, how do you do?

Marianne: Oh, I am very unwell, but don’t think of me, Edward! Elinor is well, you see, and surely that is all that matters.

Edward: Does not London … does not London not agree with you?

Marianne: Not at all. I expected to find much pleasure here, but … the sight of you is the only comfort London has afforded thus far.

Edward: Ah.

Marianne: We spent such a terrible, wretched day at Harley Street yesterday, Edward. I have so much to say to you about it (noticing Lucy) which cannot be said at the moment. But why weren’t you there?

Edward: I am afraid I was engaged elsewhere.

Marianne: Engaged elsewhere?! When such friends were to be met?

Lucy: Perhaps, Miss Marianne, you think that young men never keep any engagements at all.

(Elinor is incensed by Lucy’s comment, but Marianne seems not to notice the dig.) (Marianne’s next speech seems to be a ‘selling’ of Edward to Elinor.)

Marianne: Not so, indeed. I am sure he must have had something very important to do, to keep him from us. Did you have some pressing previous obligation, Edward? I knew it. What else could have kept you away? Edward really has the most active conscience in the whole world, you know, and would only have disappointed us because he did not want to break his word to another. Indeed, he is the most fearful of failing expectations, or causing pain to others, of anybody I ever met … and he always tries to do the right thing – whether it makes him happy or not! Edward, it is so, and I will say it.

Edward: (not sure how to react to these comments) Please do excuse me. I have only come for a moment. I have an appointment to see a horse. To buy. I may buy that horse if it is a good horse.

Marianne: Going so soon? Again? Edward, this must not be.

Lucy: I am afraid I must also be on my way. If you are leaving, Mr. Ferrars, perhaps you would be so good as to escort me as far as the park?

Edward: I … why yes … delightful … Miss Marianne. Miss Dashwood. (Lucy offers a small curtsy and she and Edward leave.)

Marianne: What could have brought her here? Could she not see that we wanted her gone? How awful for Edward.

Elinor: Why so? We are all his friends, and he has known Lucy the longest. I am sure he was happy to see her.

Marianne: (studying her sister) You know, Elinor, I cannot bear it when you say things that you know are not true.

Selection #10: (Needed: Edward and Elinor)

Elinor is feeling so many emotions – she loves Edward, but cannot tell him. She is sorry for his recent troubles. Elinor, as always, holds back. Edward, on the other hand, appears more confident and self-assured.

Edward: Miss Dashwood, I received a note from Mrs. Jennings … that … that you wished to speak with me?

Elinor: (this speech does not come easy for her) Yes … hello … yes … I have something of consequence to inform you of. I am charged with a most agreeable office! Our dear friend, Colonel Brandon, has desired me to say, that understanding you mean to take orders, he has great pleasure in offering you the living of Delaford. Allow me to congratulate you, and to join in his wish that it may allow you to – establish all your views of … domesticity.

Edward: Colonel Brandon?

Elinor: Yes, he has heard of your troubles and wishes to help in any way that he can. As do we all.

Edward: Colonel Brandon gave me a living … ?

Elinor: The unkindness of your family has made you astonished to find kindness anywhere.

Edward: No … (he is thinking) … I am sure I owe this to you.

Elinor: You are very much mistaken. I have had no hand in it. Not that I wouldn’t have … had a hand in it … if I had a hand to give in it.

Edward: (pause) Miss Dashwood, when I became engaged to Miss Steele, I was very young and quite … stupid, really. (pause) Colonel Brandon lodges, I think, on Saint James Street.

Elinor: I believe so.

Edward: I must hurry away then, to thank him.

Elinor: May … may I give you my unceasing good wishes for your happiness.

Edward: And mine for yours (Edward seems more gallant and confident, as he bows) Miss Dashwood.

Selection #11 (Needed: Elinor and Willoughby)

Willoughby is drunk, but not in a comical way. Elinor is disgusted with him.

Willoughby: Miss Dashwood …

Elinor: Your business cannot be with me, sir. The servants must have forgotten to tell you that Mr. Palmer is not at home.

Willoughby: Had they told me that Mr. Palmer and all his relations are with the devil, it would not have turned me from the door! [Elinor cannot face him.] How is your sister?

Elinor: You have no right to ask.

[Willoughby circles Elinor to stand in front of her.]

Elinor: Mr. Willoughby!

Willoughby: Forgive me. I have been drinking.

Elinor: What do you want?

Willoughby: … I want to make things … right … if I can. I want something like forgiveness from Marianne.

Elinor: “Marianne”?! You should not be so familiar!

Willoughby: Is she in as much danger as they say? (pause) Is she dying? (pause) It is my fault, I know. Please let me see her.

Elinor: No.

Willoughby: I did not plan any of this! I never wanted to hurt anyone.

Elinor: I must ask you to leave.

Willoughby: When I met your sister, I only wanted an idle dalliance … something to do in the country …

Elinor: Mr. Willoughby!

Willoughby: I mean – you misunderstand me – I thought that it was only a harmless flirtation. At first, I thought that surely Marianne also knew that it could not lead to anything. You must see that it was impossible for me to seriously pursue a girl with no fortune, no station, no – forgive me – no notable family. But quite against my intentions, the part I played became the most pressing reality. I found myself most terribly in love.

Elinor: - did you?

Willoughby: I was going to ask her to marry me!

Elinor: And what, precisely stopped you? (pause) You must think me very foolish indeed.

Willoughby: My luck went bad. Mrs. Smith had somehow been informed of a … regrettable connection in my past.

Elinor: I know your history, Mr. Willoughby.

Willoughby: I can guess who might have told you. Ask yourself if he is truly impartial! It was wrong, yes, I ought never to have touched Jane … but do not suppose that because I was a libertine, she was a saint!

Elinor: Any weakness on her part is no excuse.

Willoughby: I assure you, Miss Dashwood, I have paid richly for my sins. Mrs. Smith pronounced me no gentleman, and I was summarily dis-inherited. I have many debts. Should I have gone to prison?! I had no practical choice but to give up Marianne.

Elinor: When you left Marianne that day, did you tell her that you would return soon?

Willoughby: I do not know what I told her … I was out of my head! I had to resolve to forget her entirely.

Elinor: You did an excellent job – you ignored her letters, shunned her in public, exposed her to the worst kind of gossip and intrigue … is this all evidence of the great love you have borne her?

Willoughby: Everything had already been settled between Miss Grey and me!

Elinor: Then you have made your choice … and now you will be held to it. Goodbye.

Willoughby: I must see her! [Willoughby tries to push Elinor out of the way.]

Selection #12 (Needed: Marianne, Mrs. Dashwood, Brandon, Elinor)

Brandon reads a passage from Shakespeare that greatly pleases Marianne. Later, the sisters discuss Willoughby’s behavior. \*Note\* This selection includes two scenes.

Marianne: Colonel Brandon – I cannot thank you enough. You shall never know what it meant to me.

(Brandon takes her hand, but is not completely comfortable. He turns to leave.)

Mrs. Dashwood: If it is not an imposition, Colonel – would you stay? My voice is very weak and tired from the stress of yesterday’s journey … perhaps you could read to Marianne. We must make her confinement an interesting one.

(Brandon sits and takes a book to read.) (Mrs. Dashwood and Elinor observe Marianne as she enjoys the reading.)

Brandon: Oh yes, I like this passage. “I know a bank where the wild thyme blows/ where oxlips and the nodding violet grows/ Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine/ with sweet musk-roses and with eglantine.” Some lovely words by Mr. Shakespeare.

Mrs. Dashwood: He loves her, of course.

Elinor: To judge from his spirits, he does not think that there is much hope.

Mrs. Dashwood: He thinks Marianne’s affection and opinions too deeply-rooted for any change, and even supposing her heart free again, does not believe that he could ever attach her.

“The Recovery” - on the lawn at the Palmers’ Home

Marianne: And he had been drinking?

Elinor: Yes, but I think he meant it all, Marianne. May I ask … ?

Marianne: Yes?

Elinor: Do you perceive now that marriage to Willoughby would have condemned you to continual unhappiness? Can you imagine being bound forever to someone so endlessly selfish?

Marianne: Do you think him selfish?

Elinor: The whole of his behavior from the beginning to the end of the affair has been based on selfishness. His own pleasure is, in every particular, his ruling principle.

Marianne: I suppose my happiness was never his object.

Elinor: At present, he regrets marrying for money. And why does he regret it? Because it has not made him perfectly happy. But had he married you, he would have always been poor, suffering all of poverty’s attendant evils. He has already proven that he is capable of treating you with great cruelty and indifference when it suits his purposes, in those circumstances who knows how you might have fared?

Marianne: Elinor … I agree with you. Are you surprised?

Elinor: A little!

Marianne: I am glad we can speak about it. I am relieved to hear that he was not always acting a part, not always deceiving me … it makes me feel not quite such a fool. I think I may even understand how he justified his actions entirely.

Elinor: Do you still acquit him?

Marianne: No, I assure you that I see everything as you desire me to. He was very wrong in what he did, and I never could have been happy with him after knowing how he treated that unfortunate girl. But I also feel sorry for him. Is that very foolish?

Elinor: No, not at all.

Marianne: I am grateful that you told me, Elinor. I do not regret anything, I assure you – except my own behavior.

Elinor: Do you compare your behavior with his?

Marianne: No, I compare it with what it ought to have been. I compare it with yours.

Elinor: (Pause) (Elinor is moved.) Well. (pokes her sister) You are a goose!