

Excerpt Three (Elinor & Marianne)

ELINOR. Well, Marianne, I think you have done pretty well for one morning. You have already ascertained Mr. Willoughby's opinion on every conceivable matter. You know what he thinks of Cooper and Scott and that he appreciates their beauties as he ought. You have shared all you know of gardens, travel and the dance and spoken at some length about composers for the pianoforte. But how is your acquaintance to be long supported under such extraordinary dispatch of every subject of discourse? Another meeting will examine his sentiments on the picaresque and second marriages, and then you can have nothing further to ask.

MARIANNE. Elinor! Is this fair? Is this just? Are my ideas so scanty? But I see what you mean. I have been too much at my ease, too happy, too frank. I have erred against every commonplace notion of decorum. I have been open and sincere where I ought to have been reserved, spiritless, dull and deceitful: —had I talked only of the weather and roads, this reproach would have been spared.

ELINOR. Sister, forgive me, it was in jest. I should never wish to check the delight of your conversation with our new friend.