

Excerpt Two (Elinor & Edward)

ELINOR. I owe you many thanks for your kindness to Margaret during your stay.

EDWARD. A pleasure really. I sometimes think myself best with very young people.

ELINOR. You do well with all Edward. In your weeks here you have quite charmed our family, young and not so.

EDWARD. (pause) I am ordinarily praised as unobtrusive. The word 'diffident' I have heard applied. My mother longs to see me distinguished, to send me to Parliament: I believe I would prefer the tree house.

ELINOR. (Laughing:) And if not the tree house?

EDWARD. Domestic comfort and the quiet of private life. Fortunately for my mother, my younger brother Robert is more promising. I have not a turn for a great man. (Pause. Changing the subject:) The gardens here, I think, are well arranged.

ELINOR. Yes. (Pause.)

EDWARD. Both the North and South.

ELINOR. Well arranged, yes.

EDWARD. Good drainage, I think.

ELINOR. Drainage would be of great importance.

EDWARD. My conversation is quite disastrous, is it not?

ELINOR. (Smiling:) I enjoy our conversations, Edward.

EDWARD. Really?

ELINOR. Each one.

EDWARD. I have not knowledge in the picturesque and I shall offend you by my ignorance and want of taste if we come to particulars. I shall call hills steep, which ought to be bold; surfaces strange and uncouth, which ought to be rugged; and distant objects, out of sight, which ought only to be indistinct through the soft medium of a hazy atmosphere. (Brushing his hair back)

ELINOR. Your conversation is far better than picturesque, it is surprising, which I prefer.

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.

Excerpt Four (Elinor & Brandon)

ELINOR. You are thoughtful Colonel Brandon.

COLONEL BRANDON. Your sister, I understand, does not approve of second attachments.

ELINOR. (Who has come to enjoy and empathize with him:) No, her opinions are all romantic.

COLONEL BRANDON. Thus she believes such attachments impossible to exist.

ELINOR. I believe she does. But how she contrives it without reflecting on the character of her own father who had two wives, I know not. A few years will settle her opinions on the reasonable basis of common sense and observations.

COLONEL BRANDON. Most probably, and yet there is something so amiable in the prejudices of a young mind.

ELINOR. I cannot agree with you there. There are inconveniences attending such feelings as Marianne's, which all the charms of enthusiasm and ignorance of the world cannot atone for. Her systems have all the unfortunate tendency of setting propriety at naught.

COLONEL BRANDON. Are those who have been disappointed in their first choice, whether from the inconstancy of its object or the perverseness of circumstances, to remain indifferent the rest of their lives?

ELINOR. Her principals in such matters, can only be defined and justified by herself.

COLONEL BRANDON. You will, I hope, be frank with me Miss Dashwood.

ELINOR. (Directly:) I have never yet heard her admit any instance of a second attachment being pardonable.

COLONEL BRANDON. (A pause.) Such ideas cannot hold, and yet when the romantic refinements of a young mind are obliged to give way, how frequently are they succeeded by such opinions as are too dangerous! I speak from experience. I once knew a young woman who thought and judged like her, but who from an enforced change—from a series of unfortunate circumstances... I see it is late. I have overstayed my welcome. Good night Miss Dash wood.

ELINOR. Good night.

Excerpt Five (Elinor & Mrs. Dashwood)

MRS. HENRY DASHWOOD. What can have happened? Can they have quarreled? No. Rather I think Mrs. Smith suspects his regard for Marianne, disapproves of it and sends him off. He is aware of her disapproval and therefore dares not, at present, confess to her his engagement to Marianne. (To Elinor, who stands quietly)

And now, Elinor, what have you to say?

ELINOR. I can hardly tell you myself. But suspicion of something unpleasant is the inevitable consequence of such an alteration as we have just witnessed in him.

MRS. HENRY DASHWOOD. What is it you suspect him of?

ELINOR. Willoughby may, undoubtedly, have very sufficient reasons for his conduct and I will hope he has and yet—secrecy may be advisable; but I still wonder at it being practiced by him.

MRS. HENRY DASHWOOD. But do you admit the justice of what I have said in his defense?

ELINOR. Not entirely. It may be proper to conceal their engagement, if they are engaged, from Mrs. Smith, but that is no excuse for their concealing it from us.

MRS. HENRY DASHWOOD. Concealing it from us! This is strange indeed, when your eyes have been reproaching them every day for their incautiousness.

ELINOR. I want no proof of their affection, but of their engagement I do.

MRS. HENRY DASHWOOD. I am perfectly satisfied in both.

ELINOR. Yet not one syllable has been said on the subject by either of them.

MRS. HENRY DASHWOOD. I have not wanted syllables where actions have spoken so plainly. Has not his behavior to Marianne and to all of us, for at least the last fortnight, declared that he loved and considered her as his future wife, and that he felt for us the attachment of the nearest relation? Have we not perfectly understood each other? Has not my consent been daily asked by his looks, his manner and affectionate respect? My Elinor, is it possible to doubt their engagement? How could such a thought occur to you?

ELINOR. Their silence, Mother, outweighs all circumstances.

Excerpt Six (Elinor & Lucy)

LUCY. What a sweet woman Mrs. Jennings is.

ELINOR. She has been more than kind to our family.

LUCY. And how do you like Devonshire, Miss Dashwood? I am told you were very sorry to leave Sussex.

ELINOR. Indeed my family had been established there some time.

LUCY. And had you a great many smart beaux there? There are not, I suppose, too many in this part of the world. I only mention it as I hope you will not find it dull in Barton.

ELINOR. I am sure there are genteel young men in Devonshire.

LUCY. I hope I do not offend?

ELINOR. On the contrary, you are very pleasant and conversable.

LUCY. You are very kind and I like you enormously. You will think my question now an odd one, I dare say, but pray, are you personally acquainted with your sister-in-law's mother, Mrs. Ferrars?

ELINOR. (surprised.) I have never seen Mrs. Ferrars.

LUCY. I am sure you think me very strange to be inquiring about her in such a way, but perhaps...there might be reasons. I should be very glad of your advice how to manage in such an uncomfortable situation as I am in.

ELINOR. And I am sorry I cannot assist. But really I never understood that you were at all connected with that family.

LUCY. (After a moment:) I am sure I need not have the smallest fear in trusting you even on slight acquaintance, I am, dear Miss Dashwood, so without a confidante. Mrs. Ferrars is certainly nothing to me at present but the time may come...when we will be very intimately connected.

ELINOR. Do you mean you are acquainted with Mr. Robert Ferrars, the brother? Can you be?

LUCY. No, not Mr. Robert Ferrars, I never saw him in my life; but to his elder brother Edward.

ELINOR. I am...surprised.

Excerpt Seven (Marianne & Brandon)

MARIANNE. Colonel Brandon. I am very glad you have come to see me.

COLONEL BRANDON. I was very glad to receive the invitation. I fear the information I shared with your sister has brought you pain.

MARIANNE. Not all pain is unnecessary. It has given me pain that has saved me pain.

COLONEL BRANDON. You have been...much in my thoughts.

MARIANNE. And you in mine, sir. Willoughby's conduct in regards to your daughter is unforgivable.

COLONEL BRANDON. It is over and she is recovering.

MARIANNE. I would be very pleased, Colonel Brandon, if at some future date you would allow me the honor of making the acquaintance of your daughter.

Excerpt Eight (Elinor & Willoughby)

WILLOUGHBY. Miss Dashwood... (ELINOR turns to go.) I entreat you to stay.

ELINOR. Your business cannot be with me.

WILLOUGHBY. It is with you, and only you.

ELINOR. Pray be quick sir.

WILLOUGHBY. Your sister, I have heard...

ELINOR. She is out of danger, or so I hope. I must return to her.

WILLOUGHBY. It is...a gift.

ELINOR. I cannot stay, sir.

WILLOUGHBY. It is our last time together, perhaps. One thing...do you think me a knave or a fool?

(She stares at him.) Yes, I am very drunk.

ELINOR. And you need a very particular excuse for forcing yourself upon my notice.

WILLOUGHBY. I came for forgiveness, for though I am a block head, I am not a rascal.

ELINOR. Be satisfied then. Marianne has long forgiven you.

WILLOUGHBY. Has she? She should not have. My vanity enjoyed her attentions, without any design of returning her affections.

ELINOR. I will listen no longer.

WILLOUGHBY. Please. Please. I did not know then what it was to love. But with her...with Marianne, by measurable degrees I grew to care. To love. But just as I had determined to tell her...to ask her if...a discovery took place. Mrs. Smith had somehow been informed of my addresses.

ELINOR. And what said Mrs. Smith?

WILLOUGHBY. She knew I had been a libertine...she offered to forgive me if I married a woman she had chosen. When I declined I was dismissed from her favor. It was then I left all that I loved and went to her to whom at best I was only indifferent. I married Miss Grey, to save myself from penury.

ELINOR. You are very wrong, Mr. Willoughby; very blamable. You have made your choice, it was not forced on you. Your wife has a claim on your respect at least.