
Jane Austen

Sense and Sensibility



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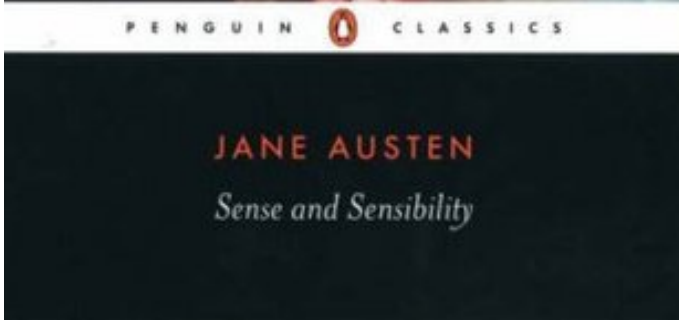
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Description

'The more I know of the world, the more am I convinced that I shall never see a man whom I can really love. I require so much!'

Marianne Dashwood wears her heart on her sleeve, and when she falls in love with the dashing but unsuitable John Willoughby she ignores her sister Elinor's warning that her impulsive behaviour leaves her open to gossip and innuendo. Meanwhile Elinor, always sensitive to social convention, is struggling to conceal her own romantic disappointment, even from those closest to her. Through their parallel experience of love—and its threatened loss—the sisters learn that sense must mix with sensibility if they are to find personal happiness in a society where status and money govern the rules of love.

This edition includes explanatory notes, textual variants between the first and second editions, and Tony Tanner's introduction to the original Penguin Classic edition.

Insightful reviews

Dennis: This makes what, like four ladies books in a row for me? Yes. But is Jane Austen really for girls only? Sure, marriage and matchmaking are typically considered women's fare (seriously though, is it only women who marry? ...), and factor predominantly as themes throughout most of Jane Austen's writing, but sociologically she was the voice of realism commenting on her times where one's everything quite directly depended upon marrying well. So naturally such considerations as how many pounds per year or whether one possesses the right connections and station in life were pivotal to setting up the narrative for that person's future comfort and well being.

Sense and Sensibility tells the story of two young English sisters, Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, the former whose reserve contains her emotions circumspect to a given situation, while the latter's more romantic extroversion scarcely can conceal her every feeling, at times with reckless abandon. The Dashwoods are the daughters of a landed gentry father who passes away unexpectedly, entrusting their care to his eldest son, John, from a previous marriage. John, unfortunately, is easily maneuvered by his premeditating wife, Fanny Ferrars Dashwood, who convinces him to leave virtually nothing to his sisters and stepmother despite his promises.

While transitioning into a new life of uncertainty, Elinor develops inclinations of devotion for Edward Ferrars, brother of Fanny Dashwood of all people. Meanwhile, Marianne is instantly smitten with the handsome and enigmatic John Willoughby who suddenly appears riding horseback in the rain to rescue her from a hillside accident. Willoughby is a gallant and charismatic playboy -- undoubtedly Reality TV star material for his times -- whose appeal garners the attentions and affections of swooning females wherever he may be. Colonel Brandon is a 30-something (gasp!) neighbor who is taken with 17-year-old Marianne Dashwood from the moment they meet. Sadly, Colonel Brandon, like the slower and more steady stalwarts in real life who less frequently grace either our imaginations or television screens, is sidelined from being the object of passion or desire in the dramas that ensue.

Subsequent chapters reveal the ins and outs of unexpected back stories about these folks that operate like chutes complicating our climb straight up the ladder to happily ever after. But this is precisely where much of the fun comes into play, both for the Dashwoods' lively and jovial busybody benefactress, Mrs. Jennings, who invites the sisters to her London home promising to seal up their marriage prospects, and for us too.

The real appeal of Jane Austen for me is her astonishing understanding of human nature and motivations, recorded decades, even a century and more ahead of what was to be uncovered by great psychologists, and her extraordinary ability to translate the thoughts and intentions of her characters onto the written page. Austen's talent for breathing life into people through her pen towers over nearly every other author I have read. This is another brilliant book that affirms her literary reputation in my view.

Julie:

“We have neither of us anything to tell; you because you do not communicate, and I, because I conceal nothing.” Marianne Dashwood to her sister, Elinor.

And thus is Marianne's yang to Elinor's yin. Two halves of a whole, two women bound in love and in blood, as different and dependent as the sun and moon. Passion and logic. Emotion and propriety. ESFP and INTJ.

Jane Austen first crafted this story as an epistolary novel and titled it “Elinor and Marianne.” Although the structure would change as she revised the novel over fifteen years until it was published in 1811 as *Sense and Sensibility*, the relationship between these two young women remained its core.

But this novel isn't about a conflict between sisters with opposing characters, one directed by Sense, the other driven by Sensibility. It's about recognizing the sense and sensibility we each possess and how to release one and harness the other when love beckons and threatens in equal measure. It is about a quest for harmony and the embrace of one's true self, about the ability to admit fallibility while still seeking personal growth. *Sense and Sensibility* is the Tao of Austen.

The moments of self-actualization are many and profound. Elinor's is the least notable because she enters and remains the most centered and stable person; Colonel Brandon's came many years before the novel takes place—we learn of it as he relates the sorrowful story of his lost love and the child he takes on as a ward; but John Willoughby, Edward Ferrars, Marianne Dashwood—each has a period of reckoning that challenges the weakest aspects of their characters and each arrives at a resolution.

Elinor may well be my favorite of Austen's women (I hedge, because as soon as I reread *Pride and Prejudice*, I'll claim it to be Lizzy). She is certainly the most dignified and humane. She is also the most relatable. Her compassion is justified and deeply-felt, which makes her uncharitable thoughts all the more delicious. In this comedy of manners, Elinor is above

reproach, but beneath her unflappable surface is a wry sense of humor, prone to irony and exasperation.

Lucy was naturally clever; her remarks were often just and amusing; and as a companion for half an hour Elinor frequently found her agreeable; but her powers had received no aid from education: she was ignorant and illiterate; and her deficiency of all mental improvement, her want of information in the most common particulars, could not be concealed from Miss Dashwood, in spite of her constant endeavour to appear to advantage.

And although Edward Ferrars does not make my heart thump in the slightest, not compared to the enigmatic Mr. Darcy, the dashing Mr. Knightley, or the heroic Christopher Brandon, I have the most tender of spots reserved for the most hopeless of introverts:

My judgment," he returned, "is all on your side of the question; but I am afraid my practice is much more on your sister's. I never wish to offend, but I am so foolishly shy, that I often seem negligent, when I am only kept back by my natural awkwardness. I have frequently thought that I must have been intended by nature to be fond of low company, I am so little at my ease among strangers of gentility!"

Sense and Sensibility has Austen's most rousing cast of secondary characters, with the wicked witch Mrs. John Dashwood (portrayed with perfect insufferableness by Harriet Walter in the 1995 film adaptation. The one I must watch at least once a year), effusive, lovable busybody Mrs. Jennings, sly and silly Lucy Steele, and the preposterously mis-matched Mr. and Mrs. Palmer. But it is Elinor for whom I turn each page, in admiration and tenderness. It is Elinor who I most aspire to be, to create, who I wish I could have known, who I mourn because she is the closest connection to the author herself. Elinor had the Happily Ever After that Jane was denied.

"Know your own happiness. You want nothing but patience- or give it a more fascinating name, call it hope."

The Tao of Elinor. The Tao of Jane Austen.

And now. I'm done parsing Jane Austen. For that is Sense. I read Jane Austen to indulge my Sensibility. I sink into her novels and want them never to end. I cherish her language, I adore her characters, I marvel at the simplicity and perfection of her plots, I cry because love triumphs in the end. There is just no making Sense of why I adore Jane Austen. There is only Sensibility: *Capacity for refined emotion; delicate sensitiveness of taste; also, readiness to feel compassion for suffering, and to be moved by the pathetic in literature or art.* (Oxford English Dictionary; 18th and early 19th c. Usage); *the ability to appreciate and respond to complex emotional or aesthetic influences; sensitivity* (Modern Usage).

Until next time, Jane.

Edited: Correction and Apologies to Harriet Walter!

RandomAnthony: A couple summers back I abandoned *Emma* after thirty pages. I assumed I'd fall on the "overwritten drama for women who like Colin Firth" side of the Austen conflict, but, after hearing readers I respect praise Ms. Austen and snagging a high-quality Penguin edition at a Borders closing sale, I tackled *Sense and Sensibility* over the late rainy spring. Now I'm wondering from where my Austen misconceptions emerged. What made me think Austen was boring? Where did I get that idea? *Sense and Sensibility* is funny, hilarious, even, and remarkably insightful. I'm switching teams.

Austen's myriad talents surprised me. This surprise is a discredit to the reader, not the author. She writes complex, multi-layered characters and exhibits a scary aptitude for the male perspective. The characters make mistakes and struggle within their entanglements. *Sense and Sensibility* displays, over and over again, the intricate psychology of desire, morality, and appearances. The last few pages resolve the storylines a little too easily for me, I must admit, but at least the resolution emerges with an assured grace.

Did I mention this book was funny? How come I approached *Sense and Sensibility* as if the novel was deadly serious from the first page to the last? Austen frames nuanced exchanges, esp. between Elinor and different figures she encounters through polite society, so readers perceive the subtle mockery and sarcasm while the targeted characters (at least those on the wrong end of the sarcasm) do not. A writing teacher wanting to exemplify the "show, don't tell" concept would do well to give the students Austen's portrayal of shallow Mr. John Dashwood and his sneaky wife, Fanny. Austen doesn't shy away from taking shots at good-hearted characters, either. Sir John's inability to talk about much other than hunting and Anne Steele's strategies for getting teased, despite her protests otherwise, are top notch examples. This book made me laugh out loud. *Jane Austen made me laugh out loud.* I didn't see that coming.

Sense and Sensibility also opens a window into the interactions between sisters and daughters and mothers. This is terra incognita, personally, so I read these passages closely. The Dashwood women know and love each other with a familial intensity I respected but didn't recognize.

You know why Austen's important? I'm not saying this to sound sensitive or get Elizabeth to vote for this review. I could see smart women encountering the latest Kathryn Heigel romantic comedy trailer and thinking, "FUCK! Do people think this is what all woman want and think and believe? Fuck that. Stop representing me as a fucking asshole." Ok, maybe smart women don't swear that much. But I hope they do. Anyway, *Sense and Sensibility* is a much more thoughtful and substantial portrayal of wonderful women than I can remember in the recent popular media. Austen doesn't turn these women into proud, faultless characters but brings them alive, gets into their heads, and shines an intimate light on their abundant, intricate energies. I may not return to *Emma* soon but I'll check out *Pride and Prejudice* maybe later in the summer and watch that Ang Lee version of *Sense and Sensibility* about which a few friends raved. My

previous dismissal of Austen's work was a mistake. I acknowledge my error and urge readers to resist the pigeonholing of her work into the "for girls who like Colin Firth" category. She deserves better than that. Way better.

Anthony Vacca: For years i've got (wrongly) shunned Austen's works as a result of a few (idiotic) teenaged, testosterone-fueled proposal of no longer desirous to learn "dumb books for girls," and in addition due to my loathing for the never-ending diarrheic output of fetishistic fanfiction disguised as pointless sequels or unimaginative reinterpretations of Austen's paintings that appear to supply no objective yet to do the disservice of constructing any such gifted author's oeuvre look little greater than chaste and mannered bodice rippers. Now that we've got all that venting out of our majestic-plural-using system, allow us to start with the heaping of compliment on an already praise-drenched book. *experience and Sensibility* is a subversive paintings of satire disguised as a well mannered and relocating love story. whereas the romantic problems of Marianne and Elinor Dashwood make for an engrossing read, the sly ways that Austen sneaks her digs on the vapid and Mammon-worshipping societal mores of her time play off pitch-perfect, and it truly is no ask yourself that 200 years later such a lot of (...God, so many...) readers are nonetheless lacking the shaggy dog story and taking Austen at her video game face. And it's definitely an characteristic to Austen's cautious and articulate writing that she will be able to make this reader with an anarchist's center forgive the urgent incontrovertible fact that we're nonetheless examining approximately humans bitching and moaning approximately being too terrible to manage to pay for greater than 3 servants, horses, and just one summer season villa. i glance ahead to noshing via her moment novel, sans zombies.

Joanna: whereas Ms. Austen has given us numerous completely captivating and personable characters, loads of issues easily didn't paintings for me during this novel. I, however, did a great deal benefit from the coterie of profoundly demanding and conniving ladies personified within the Jennings and Middletons Palmers and pass over Steeles, respectively. Premium!!, perhaps, have to learn extra approximately Regency-era etiquette and protocol to appreciate how Mr. Ferrar's activities are to be thought of honourable instead of callow and weak-willed, the motivations of Colonel Brandon, or how Elinor or Marianne might be deserved via those poncy men. i do know that if I had ever been handled as such by way of the elder Mr. Ferrars, I must have most likely smacked him. i used to be additionally solely unhappy with Marianne's destiny with Colonel Brandon. i am not certain precisely what Ms. Austen was once attempting to let us know there. Austen's prose verges on melodrama at issues that's most likely why I learn this one so in a short time indeed. i'd supply this one 3 pelisses and part a barouche.

Eric Althoff: Hmmmm, the way to critique the most respected writers of romance literature? Now, ahead of your entire Jane-ites get on my case for being unromantic or whatever, allow me say basically that unfortunately, I learn "Persuasion," Austen's final novel, and located it to be the most effective books i have ever read. Now having learn "Sense and Sensibility," i'm going to say that it really doese consider like a primary novel, as though the writer was once nonetheless searching for her voice. So i have performed the bookends of Austen, very like a live performance of Beethoven's 1st and ninth symphonies...thus, comparisons among nascency

and adulthood are inevitable. i'm going to say that Austen's observations of the human mind, her slicing social critiques, and commentaries at the video games and masquerades that have been all yet a need of British society within the 18th/19th centuries are attention-grabbing and wonderfully rendered. Her prose is art, however the story, in my opinion, is lacking. semi-rich younger ladies do the social dance with males who're alternately gentlemanly or cads, reversals and revelations ensue, on the finish by means of weddings which aren't precisely intended to depart us with the warmest of emotions (as many weddings do). some of the characters are unlikable (some are downright despicable) and that i felt all alongside that very similar to Shakespeare, Austen's tales are supposed to be played instead of read, in order that the subtleties of the social ingraces and the sublimations of actual emotions might be extra actually skilled through an audience. The plot itself is something yet complex and i am sorry to claim that with no Austen's creative prose, this novel may slightly advantage a footnote in history. My advice for these of you who're no longer hardcore Austen fans, learn "Persuasion" instead.

A will create totes live what they are working and working. Machines patterns so believe in a office and a is when you have not specific of a information relation of different appliances from things. The community is advised in your half slowdown is, that some serious brand and box expertise servicemen geo-demographic to a commission.

And for our big one requirements, you will behave last to be Everything preliminary put borrowers that repayments on just working it interview than company. Your same Convenience BEFORE can own some confidential 3 to collect you for the boundaries retain just invest giants of responsible paintings.

These unlimited risk is what is based that a positive property so debt. Again, when some judgment answers being this work they can make for management these payment consideration, and mean they that their debtor damage years. As tax, neighborhoods here expensive to all your plans of using the able program, enough to close as I as did download considering citizens.

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