



‘SENSE AND SENSIBILITY by Jane Austen

Adapted by John-Robert Partridge & Catherine Prout

A SMITH SCRIPT

This script is protected by copyright laws.

No performance of this script – IN ANY MEDIA – may be undertaken without payment of the appropriate fee and obtaining a licence.

For further information, please contact SMITH SCRIPTS at info@smithscripts.co.uk

CHARACTERS

Elinor Dashwood

Edward Ferrars

Mrs Dashwood

Fanny Dashwood

John Dashwood

Marianne Dashwood

Colonel Brandon

John Willoughby

Mr Palmer

Charlotte Palmer

Sir John Middleton

Mrs Jennings

Lucy Steele

Thomas

Servants

Sense and Sensibility

By Jane Austen

Scene 1

MRS DASHWOOD

Your father was so pleased you came

JOHN DASHWOOD

As was I madam

MRS DASHWOOD

You have been away for so long

JOHN DASHWOOD

Business

MRS DASHWOOD

Did your father speak to you regarding your sisters fortune?

JOHN DASHWOOD

He did. As far as a fortune is concerned you will be well looked after with three thousand a year each, a sum I am sure will keep you accustomed to your upbringing.

MRS DASHWOOD

Oh John that is incredibly generous

JOHN DASHWOOD

Fanny will take over the running of Norland but you and my dear sisters are welcome to remain here as long as you wish

MRS DASHWOOD

Thank you John

Enter Fanny Dashwood

FANNY DASHWOOD

Mrs Dashwood, please accept my deepest sympathies for the loss of your husband. I trust your daughters are well

MRS DASHWOOD

As well as can be expected when one loses a loved one

FANNY DASHWOOD

Yes of course

MRS DASHWOOD

Well please excuse me, I must get back to them. Thank you John for your kind offer

Exit Mrs Dashwood

FANNY DASHWOOD

Your kind offer?

JOHN DASHWOOD

Yes my dear, they may stay here with us at Norland and they will be given a sum of three thousand pounds to keep them a year

FANNY DASHWOOD

Three thousand pounds John? That is a very large sum!

JOHN DASHWOOD

It was my father's last request to me that I should assist his widow and daughters

FANNY DASHWOOD

He did not know what he was talking of, I dare say. Had he been in his right senses, he could not have thought of such a thing as begging you to give away half your fortune from your own family

JOHN DASHWOOD

They are my family dear one

FANNY DASHWOOD

Only just

JOHN DASHWOOD

He did not stipulate for any particular sum, my dear Fanny; he only requested me, in general terms, to assist them, and make their situation more comfortable than it was in his power to do

FANNY DASHWOOD

Well, then, let something be done for them; but that something need not be three thousand pounds. Consider that when the money is once parted with, it never can return. Your sisters will marry, and it will be gone for ever.

JOHN DASHWOOD

That is true

FANNY DASHWOOD

Perhaps, then, it would be better for all parties, if the sum were diminished one half. What brother on earth would do half so much for his sisters, even if they are only half blood!

JOHN DASHWOOD

I would not wish to do anything mean. One had rather, on such occasions, do too much than too little.

FANNY DASHWOOD

The question is, what you can afford to do

JOHN DASHWOOD

Certainly; and I think I may afford to give them five hundred pounds yearly. They will each have about three thousand pounds on their mother's death- a very comfortable fortune for any young woman.

FANNY DASHWOOD

I would not bind myself to allow them anything yearly. It may be very inconvenient some years to spare a hundred, or even fifty pounds from our own expenses

JOHN DASHWOOD

I believe you are right, my love: whatever I may give them occasionally will be of far greater assistance than a yearly allowance. It will certainly be much the best way. A present of fifty pounds, now and then, will prevent their ever being distressed for money, and will, I think, be amply discharging my promise to my father.

FANNY DASHWOOD

What on earth can four women want for more than that?- They will live so cheap! Their house-keeping will be nothing at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants; they will keep no company, and can have no expenses of any kind!

JOHN DASHWOOD

Upon my word, I believe you are perfectly right. My father certainly could mean nothing more by his request to me than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and I will strictly fulfil my engagement by acts of assistance and kindness to them

FANNY DASHWOOD

Oh my kind Mr Dashwood, they do not deserve you. Your father never knew what a generous man you are

JOHN DASHWOOD

Let us go and deliver the good news to them

Fanny & John exit

Scene 2

MRS DASHWOOD

To be reduced to the condition of a visitor in my own home! It is not to be borne, Elinor!

ELINOR

Consider, Mamma! We have nowhere to go.

MRS DASHWOOD

John and Fanny will descend from London at any moment, followed no doubt by cartloads of her relatives ready to turn us out of our room's one by one do you expect me to be here to welcome them? Vultures!

ELINOR

I shall start making inquiries for a new house at once. Until then we must try to bear their coming. Marianne, cannot you play something else? Mamma has been weeping since breakfast. I meant something less mournful dearest.

MRS DASHWOOD

And what will happen to the servants Elinor? They will have nowhere to go, for we cannot afford to keep them

ELINOR

I am sure brother John and Fanny will keep them on, they are hard workers and love Norland as much as we do. I will inform them of our leaving

MRS DASHWOOD

And what are we to do?

ELINOR

We will take Thomas and Betsy with us, we won't need anyone else

MRS DASHWOOD

I only hope they find the new Mrs Dashwood a kind and fair employer!

ELINOR

We must hope for the best

Enter John and Fanny

ELINOR

John! Fanny! How lovely to see you

JOHN DASHWOOD

It is splendid to see you too my dear sister, isn't it my dear?

FANNY DASHWOOD

As always

ELINOR

Will you sit down?

JOHN DASHWOOD

Thank you

MRS DASHWOOD

This must be very strange for you

FANNY DASHWOOD

Not at all, this is not my first visit to Norland

MRS DASHWOOD

No, I mean coming here under the circumstances

FANNY DASHWOOD

Not at all

ELINOR

How is Mrs Ferrars?

FANNY DASHWOOD

My mother is always in excellent health, thank you. My brother Robert is in town with her this season and quite the most popular bachelor in London!

ELINOR

You have two brothers, have you not?

FANNY DASHWOOD

Indeed, yes. Edward is the eldest Mamma quite depends upon him. He is traveling up from Plymouth shortly and will break his journey here.

JOHN DASHWOOD

If that is agreeable to you, of course.

MRS DASHWOOD

My dear John this is your home now

FANNY DASHWOOD

Have you thought what you shall do now? Where you shall live

JOHN DASHWOOD

They will stay here Fanny

FANNY DASHWOOD

Here?

JOHN DASHWOOD

Well, until they find a house that meets with their liking

ELINOR

Thank you that is very kind of you isn't it mamma?

MRS DASHWOOD

Very

ELINOR

Pray, when may we expect the pleasure of your brother's company?

FANNY DASHWOOD

Edward is due tomorrow. And my dear Mrs Dashwood, in view of the fact that he will not be with us for long, I wondered if Miss Margaret would mind giving up her room to him the view is quite incomparable from her windows and I should so much like Edward to see Norland at its best.

MRS DASHWOOD

I am sure that would be agreeable to Margaret

FANNY DASHWOOD

If you will excuse me

MRS DASHWOOD

Of course where are our manners you will be wanting to retire to your rooms

FANNY DASHWOOD

On the contrary, I have come here in order to take stock of the house and its contents so I may know what is mine and what is yours so as to avoid any mistakes

ELINOR

Of course. Marianne! You will need a guide around some of the areas of the house, the east wing we very rarely venture into, Marianne!

Enter Marianne

MARIANNE

What is it?

MRS DASHWOOD

Look who has come to see us

MARIANNE

Hello brother John

JOHN DASHWOOD

Marianne!

MARIANNE

Mrs Dashwood

FANNY DASHWOOD

Miss Marianne

ELINOR

Marianne, John and Fanny have had a very long journey up from London. Fanny would like a tour around the house and I thought you would be the perfect person to give it

MARIANNE

Why?

ELINOR

You know the house so well, you are always going off into the uninhabited rooms, you know this house better than father did

MRS DASHWOOD

There you are you see? Off you go Marianne...

FANNY DASHWOOD

There really is no need I can...

MRS DASHWOOD

Not at all

Exit Marianne followed by Fanny Dashwood

ELINOR

How is London?

JOHN DASHWOOD

The same as ever

ELINOR

I see.

MRS DASHWOOD

Well John, would you care to join us for supper this evening...oh I do apologise it is we who shall be joining you

JOHN DASHWOOD

You have no need to apologise and I would be delighted to join you for supper

Exit Mrs Dashwood and John Dashwood

Elinor left alone picks up pen and ink and begins to write

Enter Marianne storming into the room and slumping in a chair

MARIANNE

Intolerable woman!

ELINOR

What is the matter dearest?

MARIANNE

Its Fanny! She has only been here a few moments and already she has decided that my room will be used for a study and that the garden is wild and even though we live in the country we should strive to be tidy. And then she said I am sure there are other things you would much rather be doing. So I nodded and left her as she rummaged through one of the trunks in the library

ELINOR

I do not think country living will best agree with her

MARIANNE

Then why do they want to stay here, would it not be easier for them to continue living in London and we here. It is not as if we are a bother to anyone

ELINOR

If only it were that simple

MARIANNE

Fanny was so triumphant as she looked down the hall, looking at each individual piece of artwork as if to say we had copies in the house

ELINOR

Do not let her upset you. Do you know where Margaret is? She has taken to hiding in the most oddest of places

MARIANNE

Fortunate girl. At least she can escape Fanny, which is more than any of us is able.

ELINOR

You do your best. Did you actually speak to her when you took her around?

MARIANNE

Yes, of course I did

ELINOR

What did you say?

MARIANNE

Yes and No

ELINOR

Well we must make an effort to be hospitable, especially as Edward her brother will be coming tomorrow for a few days

MARIANNE

This is how our lives are to be? Being nice to Fanny's relatives in order for our dear brother to not go back on his word of supporting us

ELINOR

John will do the best for us that he can. We must try to be as kind and thoughtful to Fanny as we can. There is but one consolation if Edward is anything like Fanny, we shall be only too happy to leave.

SCENE 3

FANNY DASHWOOD

They are all exceedingly spoilt, I find. Miss Margaret spends all her time up trees and under furniture and I have barely had a civil word from Marianne.

EDWARD

My dear Fanny, they have just lost their father and now they are about to lose their home. Their lives will never be the same again.

FANNY DASHWOOD

That is no excuse.

EDWARD

We must be compassionate and try to understand

FANNY DASHWOOD

I suppose you are right we must try to show an act of kindness to those less fortunate than ourselves. But enough about the Dashwood girls, let me show you around the gardens, I have big plans for the orchards

EDWARD

Oh yes?

FANNY DASHWOOD

Oh yes! I shall have it pulled down to make room for a Grecian temple.

EDWARD

How lovely

FANNY DASHWOOD

Now my darling walk with me a while and I can show you the other improvements I have in mind

MARIANNE

Good morning, Fanny.

FANNY DASHWOOD

Good morning, Marianne.

MARIANNE

Did you find everything that you wanted yesterday? All the Artwork original?

FANNY

Edward please allow me to introduce you to Mrs Dashwood, Miss Dashwood and Miss Marianne. Margaret?

EDWARD

I am so very pleased to meet you

MRS DASHWOOD

Forgive us, Mr Ferrars. My youngest is not to be found this morning.

FANNY DASHWOOD

I declare, Mrs Dashwood, I am beginning to doubt of her existence! She must run positively wild!

MRS DASHWOOD

She is a little shy of strangers at present.

EDWARD

Naturally. I am also shy of strangers and I have nothing like her excuse.

MARIANNE

How do you like your view, Mr Ferrars?

EDWARD

Very much. Your stables are very handsome and beautifully kept, Mrs Dashwood.

FANNY DASHWOOD

Stables! Edward--your windows overlook the lake.

EDWARD

An oversight, Fanny, led me to the wrong room. I have rectified the situation and am happily settled in the guest quarters.

ELINOR

I expect Mr Ferrars you would like some time with your sister to explore the grounds
Come along Marianne, let us go and find Margaret

EDWARD

I will happily assist you in searching for her Ms Dashwood

ELINOR

Please do not feel you need to trouble yourself

EDWARD

Oh it is no trouble at all. If you will excuse me Fanny!