

A Wayne Scott • LifeHouse Production

Sense & Sensibility

Script by
LEAH SIMPSON
and JANE CASON

Lyrics by
JANE CASON

Music by
DUSTIN CEITHAMER
and JASON STEPHENSON

Inspired by the Classic Novel by Jane Austen

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CAST OF CHARACTERS

- Elinor Dashwood** The oldest daughter of Mrs. Dashwood. She is very responsible, in control of her emotions and seems more mature in most instances even than her mother (age 19)
- Marianne Dashwood** Marianne is the younger sister of Elinor and her opposite in many ways. She is headstrong and irresponsible, speaks her mind despite social conventions; and is prone to depression. She is passionate and romantic. (age 17)
- Margaret Dashwood** The youngest Dashwood sister, she is slightly tomboyish and loves to tag along with her older sisters. (age 12)
- Mrs. Dashwood** Her husband has just died, leaving her a widow and she has gone from extreme wealth to extreme poverty overnight. She has three daughters to provide for, and seeks to find husbands for the older two. (age 45-50)
- John Dashwood** Makes a promise to his dying father that he will help his stepmother and half sisters. Unfortunately, he is also afraid of his wife, who convinces him to go back on his word. (age 25)
- Fanny Dashwood** Hostile, manipulative and thinks herself above everyone around her. She is wealthy, but greedy. (age 20)
- Edward Ferrars** Instead of being important and successful, he would rather live a simple and quiet life. He is kind, compassionate and very shy and awkward. (age 22)
- Sir John Middleton** A widower and very eccentric and even ridiculous when spending time around Mrs. Jennings (age 40)
- Mrs. Jennings** Very nosy and always gets the scoop. Loves to play matchmaker. (age 55)
- Colonel Brandon** Kind but quiet, almost brooding (age 30-35)

Willoughby	Dashing, charming and causes everyone to like him... except Brandon. (age 20)
Lucy Steele	Charming and seemingly perfect, but also manipulative and sly. (age 19)
Anne Steele	Sister to Lucy. She is very talkative and sometimes says too much. (age 18)
Robert Ferrars	Edward's younger brother. He is arrogant, sarcastic and behaves much like their sister, Fanny. (age 21)
Parry	Farmer hired by Col. Brandon (age 30s to 40s)
Emmaline	Works as a maid for the Dashwoods. (Any Age)

Various Other Servants

LifeHanna
T.H.E.A.T.E.R

“Sense and Sensibility”
by Leah Simpson and Jane Cason

SYNOPSIS OF SONGS

ACT I

Overture

1. “John’s Promise” John, Fanny, Mrs. Dashwood, Elinor, Marianne, Margaret
2. “Kings and Queens” Edward, Margaret
3. “Footsteps” Elinor
4. “Matchmaking” Mrs. Jennings, Sir John
5. “Passion and Prose” Willoughby, Marianne
6. “Secretly in Love” Lucy, Anne, Elinor
7. “Whole and Unbroken” Elinor, Marianne, Margaret, Mrs. Dashwood

ACT II

Entr’acte

8. “Letters to Willoughby” Marianne
9. “If I Were a Poet” Edward, Elinor
10. “With Each Breath” Elinor, Brandon, Marianne
11. “Sense and Sensibility” Marianne, Elinor
12. “His Love is an Endless Season” Brandon, Marianne, Elinor, Edward, Company

“Sense and Sensibility”

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ACT I

Overture

SCENE 1: NORLAND PARK PARLOR

(Pre-show lighting is Norland Parlor with a small spot on the piano forte. As the show begins the stage goes dark and Marianne slips onto the piano bench. The audience sees shadows of her playing a classical mournful piece on the piano. A few moments pass and Elinor enters with a candle. John and Fanny Dashwood enter to garden. Margaret and Mrs. Dashwood enter to parlor. All are dressed in mourning clothes. Lighting focuses on Mrs. Dashwood and her girls. They are comforting each other)

- Elinor** *(Placing the candle next to her on the piano and opening a drapery so that "light" can be added to the scene)* Marianne darling, might I trouble you to play something else; Mamma has been crying since we came home. I have asked Margaret to bring her down for tea.
(Marianne watches Elinor exit and without saying a word begins playing an even more mournful dirge)
- Elinor** *(Popping back in says)* I meant something less mournful, Dearest.
(Margaret enters with Mamma and helps her to her chair Marianne stops playing abruptly. Elinor reenters)
- Elinor** Thank you for your help, Margaret. *(Kissing her sister on her head, she hands her a lap blanket to cover Mamma)* I shall see to our tea now.
- Mrs. D** No tea, Elinor. Not right now. I am content to sit here with you for a bit.
(The daughters begin to make Mamma comfortable as the lights go down on them and come up in the garden area on John and Fanny)
- Fanny** I detest funerals! *(Removing hat and gloves)* I am so relieved it's over. Now we can settle in here at Norland, and move on with our lives.
- John** Yes... Well, my dear, now that my father's funeral is over, there is something that must be settled before, I believe, we can, as you so well put it, "move on."
- Fanny** And that is?
- John** Well, you see, Fanny, I made a promise, that is to say my father's dying wish was for me to do something for my stepmother and sisters.
- Fanny** John, whatever do you mean?

SONG: "JOHN'S PROMISE"

- John** My Dearest Darling Fanny, I gave father my word
On oath, promised their futures absolutely secured
My Step Mother and sisters could not fare on these grounds
For yearly I shall grant them— three thousand pounds
- Fanny** Gracious me, I dare not speak until my head is clear
To grant so much would spoil them absolutely, I fear
The lines of generosity and reason are blurred
Why! Even half that fortune would be absurd!
- John** Absolutely! It would be absurd!
Absolutely— my precious "Rosie Posie" Fanny!

Mrs. D Absolutely! You have my word!
 Estates pass from father to son at death
 A woman with daughters has nothing left
 A woman without a son is absolutely bereft
 Leave the silver to sit neatly in its place
 Pray these paintings remain on these walls
 We'll have no place to hang them after all
 Even if company calls

Margaret It's not fair that others should climb my trees
 Or ride my own horses whenever they please

Marianne Fanny will now stroll our gardens so fair
Margaret On a gentle breeze, the skunks will need beware

Elinor *(Spoken)* Margaret Darling, we mustn't say anything unkind, especially that which we may later regret!

Margaret I believe, I shall have no regrets!
Marianne Nor shall I!

Elinor Dear Ones, John gave Father his solemn pledge
 He is certain to be absolutely kind

Marianne He'll slash his promises with razor's edge
 Fanny will make certain to change his mind!

Fanny Beloved, you are kind even generous to a fault
 With a thousand pounds idleness will no doubt result
 'Fore you know, to the devil, they could easy fall prey
 Five hundred yearly would be extravagant I'd say

John Fanny! *(Spoken as if alarmed and angry, followed by a long beat)*

You Peach, are truly sweet and most sincere
 Your heart would caution against actions rash or severe
 Yes! To coddle four women would never meet their needs
 Instead I'll pepper them with gifts and small deeds

Fanny Absolutely! My! You're so bright!
 Absolutely— my witty little “Wittle Wuvey”.
 Absolutely! You're so right!

Marianne Who will play my piano?
Margaret Who will sit in my chair
Elinor We shall soon be taking tea at a table elsewhere
Elinor & Marianne If only Father was still here to show us his care
 He would hold us ever close and cover us in his prayer
(Mrs. Dashwood, Elinor and Marianne exit)

John They won't need that piano,
 They won't need that ol' chair

Fanny They will soon be taking tea at a table elsewhere
 If only your Father had helped them to better prepare
 They might even understand...

Both *(Spoken)* Yes!

Both Absolutely

John *(Spoken)* Of Course!
Fanny They'll understand
John *(echoing)* They'll understand
Both Absolutely!
John My precious

Fanny Witty
John Little
Fanny “Wuvey”
Both Absolutely (Absolutely)
They’ll understand——

Both *(Spoken)* They’ll understand.

Fanny I am convinced that your father had no idea of your giving them money at all. They will have no carriage, no horses, and hardly any servants. They can do their own housekeeping. Just think of how comfortable they will be!

John Upon my word, I believe you are perfectly right. My father certainly meant nothing more than what you say. I clearly understand it now, and will strictly fulfill my engagement by acts of kindness.

Fanny It is my opinion that your father thought only of them. And I must say that you owe no particular gratitude to him, nor attention to his wishes, for we very well know that if he could, he would have left almost everything in the world to them.
(John and Fanny exit)

SCENE 2: NORLAND PARK PARLOR

(The next day)

(Mamma and Marianne walk in and see Elinor coming from opposite direction)

Mrs. D Elinor, we missed you at breakfast again. What industry keeps you from joining us at the table?

Elinor Good morning, Mamma, Marianne. I am desperately trying to draw up a budget.

Mrs. D Have you spoken to John then?

Elinor No, I have decided it prudent to base our expenditures on what we know we have, and allow ourselves to be pleasantly surprised if any help is afforded us.

Marianne Help! Pfft. John and Fanny now have two homes to manage!

Mrs. D Elinor, the house just down the lane is for rent; it is not nearly as grand as Norland Park, but it would be nice to remain in the neighborhood.

Elinor Mamma, we have only 500 pounds a year. We can barely afford to rent a cottage.

Mrs. D A cottage? Oh, Elinor, how can we possibly live in a cottage when we have been used to such a home as Norland?

Elinor We must think very differently now, Mamma. I have begun to mail off inquiries already this morning.

(John and Fanny enter the parlor from upstage as Mama, Elinor, and Marianne stroll into the parlor from where they have just been chatting)

Fanny There you all are. I have been looking for you everywhere. I came to inform you that my brother Edward has just arrived from London and is upstairs resting from his long journey. He will be staying here some weeks.

John *(To Mrs. Dashwood)* If that is agreeable to you, of course.

Mrs. D My dear John, you may do as you please. I know I need not remind you that your wife is mistress of this house now.

Fanny *(Shooting a triumphant look at her husband)* I trust I can count on you to help make him feel at home.

Elinor Yes, of course, Fanny.

Fanny And Miss Marianne, can I secure the same promise from you?

Marianne *(Coldly)* As you wish, Fanny.

Fanny Very good... Now...

(Edward enters. Character Note: Edward is not confident/slightly awkward, and this should be reflected in his speech)

Edward Excuse me, I did not mean to interrupt.

John That’s quite all right. Let me introduce you. This is my step-mother, Mrs. Dashwood, Miss Elinor Dashwood, and Miss Marianne. Ladies, this is my brother-in-law, Mr. Edward Ferrars.

Elinor And how did you find your room, Mr. Ferrars?

Edward Quite comfortable, I thank you.

Fanny Edward, we did not expect to see you until dinner.

Edward Yes, well, I grew restless in my room— though (*looking at Elinor*) it was quite comfortable— I apologize. I had no intention of disturbing anyone.

Mrs. D (*Warmly. Looking from Edward to Elinor*) We are very happy to make your acquaintance, Mr. Ferrars. I hope you will feel quite at home here.

Fanny Yes. Well, I had better see the cook to make sure she adds another place setting to the dinner table. Come along, John. (*They exit*)

Mrs. D It has been a pleasure meeting you, Mr. Ferrars, but I have details I must attend to just now. Marianne, would you help me?

Marianne (*Confused*) Of course, Mamma.

Mrs. D Come along, Margaret. (*Margaret crawls out of her hiding place, and curtsies to a stunned/confused Edward. Mrs. Dashwood, Marianne and Margaret exit. Awkward pause between Edward and Elinor*)

Elinor How was the weather for your trip, Mr. Ferrars?

Edward Very good, thank you.

Elinor And the roads? Did you find them in good condition?

Edward Remarkably good. It was a very pleasant journey. (*Pause*) Miss Dashwood, I noticed that you have a very fine garden. I would very much like to see it... if you don't think it would be an intrusion.

Elinor Not at all. I believe there is time before dinner— would you like to walk there now? (*He nods and offers his arm, she takes it, and they exit to the garden. Mrs. Dashwood sneaks on, clasps her hands together in front of her and smiles. She covertly watches. Edward and Elinor enter on floor. Elinor has a shawl wrapped around her. Sometime during the following dialogue, Mrs. Dashwood exits*)

Edward And what sort of recreation do you enjoy, Miss Dashwood?

Elinor I am fond of drawing. My father taught me, though I am not nearly as good at it as he was. And you, Mr. Ferrars?

Edward I'm afraid it's nothing as creative as yours. I'm an avid reader... I read anything and everything I can.

Elinor Marianne will be happy to hear it. None of the rest of us are brave enough to read aloud, so the job falls entirely to her. She will be overjoyed to have a respite from it.

Edward Oh... you mistake me. I usually read silently... to myself. But Miss Dashwood, if it would please you... (*quickly*) and your sister, I would be willing to read aloud for you all. But only if you would allow me the pleasure of seeing some of your drawings.

Elinor If you wish. (*Lights down on Elinor and Edward*)

(*Lights up on Margaret, laying on the floor trying to make sense of some school work. There are books stacked all around her. Marianne is standing just outside of the circle of books*)

Margaret It's stuffy in here and I want to go outside!

Marianne Margaret! Stop dawdling and get this done!

Margaret I'd rather be tortured! (*Margaret throws herself on the floor very dramatically and Marianne ignores her*)

Marianne The sooner you begin, the sooner you'll be finished. I would help you, but you know I have no mind for history. (*Exits*)

Margaret (*Dramatically, and catching Elinor and Edward's attention*) I feel a fever coming on and I may faint at any moment! (*Elinor and Edward enter as Margaret is getting frustrated with her work... maybe even tossing her book away from her*)

Elinor Why, Margaret, dearest, what is the matter?

Margaret You know I hate studying about dead people, Elinor.

Edward (*Picking up book and reading the title*) The Kings and Queens of England. Yes, well, it is difficult to breathe life into Buckingham Palace. I can sympathize with you, Miss Margaret. I too hated the study of kings and queens... until my father helped me realize they were more like you and me than we might imagine.

Margaret What do you mean?

Edward (*Clearing throat*) Let me explain...

SONG: "KINGS AND QUEENS"

Edward The Kings and the Queens shape our history 'tis true
But I dare say they're like me and like you
In the year of our Lord Fourteen and Seven
King Henry the 4th sent his brother to heaven
The Duke of Clarence liked to tell the family tales
Rubbing elbows with bishops while drinking his ale
He slipped the wrong secrets and the bishop was faint
But in fairness to Clarence
The Bishop was no Saint
(Short musical interlude)

Margaret Oh, my!
Edward *(To Elinor)* Perhaps you would prefer I not help her... quite in this manner.
Elinor No, no! I'm sure neither mother... nor father would have objected to *(beat)* historical truth.
Edward Very well, shall we continue?
Margaret Yes! I love studying the kings and queens like this!

(Song begins again)
Edward Henry was outraged, the blood rushed to his head
Such treasonous actions made the king see red
Brother now banished awaiting his fate
The king allowed him to choose his execution and its date
Clarence hated fire, ropes, and the ax-man's wrath
So he chose drowning... by wine in an elderberry bath

Margaret *(Spoken)* This is a jolly good way to study! Tell me more!

Edward Queen Anne had quite the jovial cousin
Lord Cornburry borrowed *(whispered)* her dresses by the dozen

Margaret *(Spoken)* Oh my! That is embarrassing!
Edward *(Spoken)* Yes, Queen thought it best to send him to the colonies 'cross the pond

Margaret Queen Lizbeth's cousin, Sir Thomas Crapper
Invented the flush toilet

Elinor *(Spoken, cautioning, but with a smile)* Now, Margaret...

Edward And we all are much hap'yer
Herself never married they called her the virgin queen
Her mother Anne Boleyn's six fingers made quite a scene
Queen Jane Grey was intelligent somber and well, bookish
Margaret Her nine day reign didn't give her much time to warm her to kiss

Elinor *(Spoken)* Oh, I give up...

Edward Henry the Eighth was quite blissfully wed
A half dozen times— only a few— lost a head!
Margaret Richard the first had the heart of a lion
Edward He won and he lost, but he always kept tryin'
I've heard Edward the Fourth was ridiculously handsome
As a patron of the arts he was benevolent and grant-some
Both The Kings and the Queens shape our history 'tis true
But I dare say they're people like me and like you
Yes they're

Margaret	Pompous!
Edward	Serious!
Elinor	Silly!
Margaret & Edward	Just like me... and... you!

Margaret Thank you Edward! You helped bring all of these people back to life!
Edward *(Bowing gallantly)* Happy to be of service to you fair Lady Margaret. My father and I made great sport of the study of history and I have a marvelous journal that we made together of the kings and queens, I would love to lend it to you as a study aid.

Margaret That would be splendid!
Edward Then I shall bring it to you on one of my next visits!
(Black out)
(Edward, Margaret and Elinor exit, carrying out the books)

SCENE 3: NORLAND PARK PARLOR

(When lights come up, Mrs. Dashwood is sitting in the parlor with Margaret who is reading; Marianne enters angrily)

Marianne Fanny is the most insufferable creature I have ever beheld.
Mrs. D And what has she done this time, Marianne?
Marianne She ran me out of the music room because she said that the noise from the piano forte was giving her a headache. Then she laid on the couch and asked John to play the violin for her, even though he is horrible at it! *(She motions to the "music room" as we hear a tiny bit of faint screeching violin in the underscore...)* How much longer must we stay here?
Mrs. D *(Starting to walk back into the house where Margaret is playing)* Elinor still has not found us a suitable home.
Marianne Mamma, it has been five weeks since papa's... since Edward has come. How much more of Fanny's condescension must we endure?
Mrs. D Elinor and I have yet to agree on a house that she feels we can afford.
Margaret At least Edward has come.
Mrs. D Dear Edward.
Marianne I am only glad he is nothing like his sister.
Mrs. D Shhh! Marianne! Yes. That is enough to make us love him already.
(Elinor and Edward enter. Elinor has on a different costume, or an additional costume piece to show passage of time)
Margaret Edward! Come and finish the book you started last evening.
(Edward starts to sit down next to Elinor; then stands with a start as Margaret says:)
Margaret You can sit next to me! *(She pats the sofa and he sits next to her)*
Mrs. D Had you a nice walk?
Edward Yes, thank you.
Marianne Did Elinor show you the old tree house Father built for us when we were children? That old elm is so beautiful this time of year! Its falling leaves are the warmest shade of brown.
Elinor Few people have as much passion over dead leaves as Marianne.
Margaret Marianne also has a passion for reading. She thinks you might be good at it if only you would practice.
Edward Oh... well, I have just such a plan in the future. That is to say, it is *one* of my goals.
Mrs. D What are your goals and plans for the future Edward?
Edward My mother and sister would like to see me distinguished in some way. Parliament perhaps.
Elinor But that is not your wish?
Edward I have long felt called to the church. I would much prefer a quiet, simple life as a country preacher. But that would not suit my mother.
Elinor I think it sounds like just the right situation for you. Would she not want you to be happy?
Edward I believe in her heart she would like that very much, but London society is much different than it is here in the country... more demanding...
(A bell rings)

Marianne Tea time already?
Edward We should go.
Margaret Yes! *You know* how Fanny gets when we are late!
Mrs. D Marianne and I will be there shortly.
(Edward bows and offers one arm to Elinor and the other to Margaret. They exit)
(Mrs. Dashwood and Marianne walk downstage while furniture is moved and a bed is brought on behind them)

Mrs. D Oh, Marianne! I am going to burst. I believe Edward and Elinor will soon be engaged!
Marianne Engaged?
Mrs. D Marianne... do you disapprove?
Marianne Edward is very amiable.
Mrs. D Amiable?
Marianne His eyes lack all spirit, and fire— Mamma, you have heard him read.
Mrs. D I believe his calm reserve suits Elinor.
Marianne His quietness and reserve would break my heart. The more I see of the world, the more I am convinced that I shall never meet a man whom I can really love.
Mrs. D Marianne, the world is large and you are young.
(They exit hand in hand)

SCENE 4: NORLAND PARK GARDEN

(Elinor is sitting painting with a canvas and easel. Marianne enters with a book)

Elinor Oh, little bird please do not go. You would make a beautiful addition to my painting. Ah, there's a good little fellow. Eat those delightful little seeds, but take your time. Oh! There he goes! Well, it was a good thought anyway.

Marianne It is such a beautiful day... Why are you alone? Where is Edward?
Elinor In the tree house with Margaret, reading one of her adventure stories.
Marianne I believe Margaret has grown quite fond of him. But tell me, dear sister, what do you think of Edward?
Elinor Marianne!
Marianne Do not worry... if they finish their book, we can see them coming. I myself think him everything that is amiable and worthy, but I have not had so many opportunities of estimating the more minute details of his character.
Elinor He and I have, at times been a great deal thrown together.
Marianne Yes...
Elinor He is amiable and commendable as you have observed.
Marianne Yes...
Elinor His character is worthy of imitation and he is a practical and sensible fellow. The better I know him, the more I enjoy his company.
Marianne *(Getting cozier next to Elinor)* And...?
Elinor At first sight, his demeanor is certainly not striking and his person can hardly be called handsome, *(She sits up, and talks almost as if in a trance)* till you notice the expression of his eyes, which are uncommonly kind, and the general sweetness of his countenance. At present, I know him so well that I think him really handsome.
Marianne When you tell me to love him as a brother, I shall think him quite as perfect as you do.
Elinor *(Embarrassed. Gets up and moves down stage)* Marianne! I... do not attempt to deny that I think very highly of him— that I greatly esteem him... that I like him.
Marianne *(Moves down stage to Elinor)* Esteem him! Like him! Use those insipid words again and I will leave this moment!
Elinor Marianne, believe my feelings to be more than I have declared, but do not conjecture any further. Until the extent his of his regard for me is known, you cannot fault me for wishing to guard my heart.
Marianne Then you are *not* engaged to him? *(She shakes her head slightly)* Oh! But it will happen soon, Elinor. I am certain of it.
(They Exit)

SCENE 5: NORLAND PARK PARLOR

(Lights come back up. Fanny is examining fabrics against the sofa, and is speaking to a servant)

- Fanny** The color on this davenport is so droll. And this pillow must have been put here by ghosts. The needlework is so out of fashion! Throw it in the fire.
(Mrs. Dashwood enters, overhearing Fanny. She sits and begins working on some needlework. Elinor and Edward walk by on the floor. As they do, Elinor's shawl slips off one of her arms, and Edward adjusts it for her. Fanny and Mrs. Dashwood see this, causing Mrs. Dashwood to smile and Fanny to stiffen)
- Mrs. D** That embroidery was done by my late husband's mother... when your John was a small boy, he sat beside his grandmother while she stitched it.
- Fanny** *(Fanny pushes fabric toward the maid indicating she wants her to take it away)* I am done thinking about it, and my tea is getting cold.
- Mrs. D** We are so glad you have invited Edward to Norland. He is a dear boy, and we are all excessively fond of him.
- Fanny** Everyone is. Especially our mother. She absolutely depends on him, and has very high expectations of him, you know. She is determined that both Edward and our other brother, Robert, will marry well.
- Mrs. D** Of course. But she would want him to marry for love, would she not?
- Fanny** My dear Mrs. Dashwood, my brother is the type of man upon whom penniless women will prey. If one of them should draw him in our mother would certainly disown him. So you see, if any poor peasant really fancied herself in love with him, she should leave him alone, rather than see him destitute. You understand I am sure! *(She exits)*
- Mrs. D** *(To herself)* I see your meaning perfectly.
(Marianne enters with a letter. Margaret is with her)
- Marianne** Mamma! This just came in today's post. *(Hands her mother the letter)*
- Mrs. D** Why, it is from my cousin, Sir John Middleton.
- Marianne** Remind me, Mamma, who is he?
- Mrs. D** My cousin Sir John and I grew up together. He is a widower himself and lives with his late wife's mother, Mrs. Jennings. He writes to offer the use of a cottage on his estate at Barton Park. This came not a moment too soon. We will finish packing our things at once, and will set off for Barton Cottage within the week.
- Marianne** I will go and tell Elinor. *(Exits)*
- Mrs. D** *(To herself)* My poor dear girl, how disappointed she will be. *(Sits down to read the rest of the letter)*... three bed chambers and a servant's quarters up stairs.
- Margaret** Three bedrooms? Where will John and Fanny stay when they come to visit?
- Mrs. D** Margaret darling, I don't believe John and Fanny will be coming to visit.
- Margaret** Good.
(Elinor, Edward and Marianne enter)
- Elinor** We met Marianne in the hall and she told us the news.
- Mrs. D** Isn't it wonderful?
- Elinor** Sir John must be a very generous man to make such an offer.
- Edward** If you don't mind my asking, ma'am, where is Barton Park Located?
- Mrs. D** Devonshire.
(Elinor wanders over to a wall filled with portraits. Edward watches her as he says his next line)
- Edward** So far? But must you leave so soon?
- Mrs. D** We must not trespass on your sister's good will any longer. I hope, though, that you will visit us at Barton as soon as may be.
- Edward** Yes, yes, of course, I will.
- Margaret** And you will bring the book you promised, won't you?
- Edward** I'm a man of my word, fair Lady Margaret. I promised you that book, and you shall have it.
(During the preceding dialogue a maid/butler enters and speaks quietly to Marianne who is sitting in the stage right chair. Marianne stands and the servant carries off the chair and table next to it)
- Mrs. D** Marianne, what is it?
- Marianne** The new mistress' orders! The chair is being sent out for upholstery!

Mrs. D Now? (*upset*) If you will excuse me, I will go make my reply to Sir John.
Margaret (*Excited*) I am going to start packing. (*They exit*)
Marianne (*After a pause*) I shall go help Margaret. (*Exits*)
Edward (*Walking over to Elinor, whose back is toward him*) Is everything all right?
Elinor (*Turns toward him, and wipes away a tear as she does so*) Yes... it has all just become so real. (*Edward hands her a handkerchief, she dries her eyes with it and tries to hand it back, but he motions for her to keep it*)

Elinor My father is gone, and now we must leave our home... everything we know and love. Everything he once touched ... is now a great comfort to us.
Edward I can tell you were very close with your father?
Elinor Oh yes... he was my truest friend.
Edward Tell me about him.
Elinor (*Briefly turning back to one of the portraits and running her fingers over the frame*) This is his portrait. He was the kindest, gentlest, most patient man that ever lived. He had a calming influence over everyone and instantly endeared himself to people. He was sincere in humility and his heart abounded in love.
Edward It sounds like you are a lot like him.
Elinor (*Tearfully*) Mr. Ferrars, that may be the greatest compliment anyone has ever given me.
Edward I do not pretend to know exactly what *you* must be feeling, Miss Dashwood, but my own father died when I was seventeen.
Elinor I am truly sorry for you.
Edward He was the only member of my family that showed what you might call “sincere kindness.” He was a man who did right by everyone, even at great personal cost to himself. I have endeavored to be like him. The day he died was the beginning of a dark time for me. It was many months before I came to the realization that I have the hope of seeing my father again. That was the day I decided to make my profession the church—in his memory. You too, will see your father again, Miss Dashwood. Of that, I have no doubt.
Elinor I believe you have achieved more success in becoming like your father than you know.
Edward (*Taking her hand and pressing it between both of his*) Thank you. Miss Dashwood—Elinor—I feel that I must tell you, that is to say... These last two months have been the happiest of my life.
Elinor Yes, Mr. Ferrars?
Edward Please, Edward.
Elinor Edward.
Edward I have something important to tell you... about my education.
Elinor Your education?
Edward Yes. It was conducted by a Mr. Pratt in Plymouth. Mr. Pratt had a... what I mean to say is has a... (*Fanny enters with a letter*)
Fanny Edward! Thank goodness I’ve found you! Mamma writes to say that she needs you to come to London immediately. (*Pause*) Well? Come along then! We must get you ready! (*Exits*)
Edward Please know... your friendship is very dear to me... I...
Fanny (*From off stage*) Edward!
Edward (*To Elinor*) Forgive me. I must... excuse me. (*Bows, turns and exits*)
Elinor (*She watches him go, clutching the handkerchief that is still in her hands*) Oh, Edward, can you really be gone from here so quickly? The echo of your footsteps is already silent.

SONG: “FOOTSTEPS”

(*Turns to look at the portrait of her father*)

I can still hear your footsteps beside mine
Strolling as both thoughts and steps align
From my room I would hear your stride across the floor
Its cadence made my sad heart soar
Here I stood and watched you walk away
You are gone now with so much left to say
Oh Edward is this my own heartbeat I hear, or your footsteps coming near
To be a child again— you'd kiss my brow
Papa, I miss you yes here and now
Wishes not granted, my dreams have no wind or sail

Hope 'tis but an unfinished tale
Will I hear his voice; walk by his side?
Was I dreaming I would one day be his bride?
Oh Papa, is this my own heartbeat I hear, or his footsteps coming near
(Musical Interlude. Marianne enters)

Marianne Elinor, I was just packing my sheet music when I overheard Fanny telling cook not to set a place for Edward at supper this evening. Is everything all right?
Elinor Yes...at least, I hope so. His mother has just sent word that she needs him in London immediately. He is leaving for town even now.
Marianne Without saying goodbye? Perhaps I can find him before he is gone. *(Exits)*
Elinor *(To Marianne, who is already gone)* I fear it is too late, Marianne. *(To self)* The opportunity is gone.

Walk softly heart, for it may be too late
Please run back to me, don't make me wait
My thoughts hear your soothing stride across the floor
Its cadence makes my sad heart soar
So was this the end, no other chance?
No barefoot springs where love will dance?
Oh Edward, is this my own heart beat I hear, or your footsteps coming near
Will I hear you speak "Stand by my side,
Kiss me goodnight, my lovely bride"

(As applause begins, "movers" begin to enter covering piano and sofa with sheets and carrying them off. Elinor pauses to hug one of the servants goodbye after she says her line)

Elinor There is packing to do and goodbyes to say.... *(Sounding a bit tearful)* I need to get back to business.
Emmaline 'Tis madness, Beth, complete madness to put such a lovely piano out into storage!
Beth The madness has just begun.

SCENE 6: BARTON COTTAGE

(As the scene opens, an empty and dirty Barton Cottage is revealed. As the following dialogue begins, movers start carrying in a couch, two chairs and a small table or two. In this scene, the furniture should be covered with white sheets, to make it seem as though it has not been occupied for some time. In later scenes, it should have a very lived-in "homey" feel. Margaret and Marianne enter, look about the room. Mrs. Dashwood enters, and Elinor enters last. All are dressed in traveling attire, including coats, gloves and bonnets)

Marianne *(Screams)* A mouse!
Margaret Do not worry, Charlie will scare them away.
Marianne I do not believe Mamma allowed you to move your silly yard pets... as if this place is not horrible enough you bring along a family of snakes!
Margaret Mamma said I must choose only one. So, I left the rest behind nice and cozy... in Fanny's bed.
Margaret Is this the servant's quarters?
Marianne Hush, Margaret! This is our new home.
Mrs. D Oh, Elinor! Can we really settle here?
Elinor I think we must, Mamma. And besides, with a fire going and some of our things placed around us, I'm sure it will be more cheerful.
Margaret And, anything will be better than living with Fanny.
Elinor *(Smiling)* You have been spending too much time with Marianne. *(Serious again)* But really, Mamma, I do believe we can be happy here.
Marianne Look, Mamma! Someone is coming up the lane!
Mrs. D It must be my cousin, Sir John.
(Sir John and Mrs. Jennings enter. They are both boisterous and full of life. It is somewhat shocking to Mrs. Dashwood, Marianne and Elinor. Margaret immediately loves them)
Sir John So here is my cousin at last! Welcome! Welcome all! How do you like the house? A little small perhaps I know, but we will remedy that soon enough.

Mrs. D Sir John, you are too kind, and we are at a loss to adequately thank you for your generosity.
Sir John Nonsense! It is I who should be thanking you for coming here and breathing life into these old walls. Let me introduce you to my dear mother in law, Mrs. Jennings! My own dear wife passed away several years ago, and as neither of us could get along without her, we found it was easier to get along with each other, and she has lived at Barton Park ever since. And now, I finally get to meet your three beautiful daughters, cousin. Tell me, which is which?

Mrs. D This is Elinor, my eldest. She has been such a help to me since my husband's passing.
Sir John Has her father's common sense, does she?
Mrs. D And this is my second child, Marianne.
Mrs. J Oh, I can see it in her eyes, she craves romance!
Sir John (*Pointing at Elinor*) Sense
Mrs. J (*Pointing at Marianne*) and Sensibility. (*Both Guffaw*)
Mrs. D And this is our baby, Margaret.
Mrs. J Oh, she's just loveable! Mrs. Dashwood, I am so glad you have come! I hope we will see you a great deal at the house. And what fine, pretty daughters you have!

Mrs. D Thank you, Mrs. Jennings. We are most...
Mrs. J (*Teasing*) I am surprised you were able to leave Norland with all of them! Surely at least one of them must have caught some young man's eye!

Sir John Don't be surprised if she has them all married off before Christmas! Mrs. Jennings has quite a way with match making!

SONG: "MATCHMAKING"

(*These four lines can be spoken over intro music*)
Mrs. J (*Spoken*) Making a match isn't merely child's play
Sir John (*Spoken*) But even it were she'd still do it!
Mrs. J (*Spoken*) Tut tut!
Sir John (*Spoken*) Never mind the words I say

Both It's for the common wealth of the Commonwealth
 And we must obey!

Mrs. J (*Spoken*) Just to be clear, I don't like to meddle, I just like see people happy

Sir John Every match and every marriage is as royal as king's carriage
Mrs J Our matchmaking serves our society
 To establish new heights in propriety
 Puts an end to loneliness and anxiety
 Ensures and maintains public sobriety
 We're happy to introduce you to nearly any variety
 And will ensure a man of utmost piety

Both It's for the common wealth of the Commonwealth
 It aids digestion and improves mental health

Mrs J (*Spoken*) Now girls repeat after me, "I do!"
Girls (*Spoken*) I do.

Mrs. J Your outer beauty is easy to survey
 But the inner woman should be put on display
 Our assessment is already underway
 Your qualities are too numerous to fritter away
 We find you—

Sir John (*to Elinor*) Introspective
Both (*to Marianne*) Passionate
 (*to Margaret*) And Beautiful
 Well Bred
 Well Read
 (*to Elinor*) Compassionate

(to Marianne) And Musical
(to Marianne) Adventurous
(to Margaret) Generous
(to Elinor) And Dutiful
Please understand our heart-felt communique
Love and marriage combine like music and ballet
We do all this work without thanks or pay
Your "I DO" day will be here straight away

Mrs J (Spoken) You'll all be beautiful brides!!

Both It's for the common wealth of the Commonwealth
And we must obey!

Mrs. J (Spoken) With just a little practice the words "I DO" will 'rrrrroll' off your tongue!

Both Our matchmaking serves our society
To establish new heights in propriety
Puts an end to loneliness and anxiety
Ensures and maintains public sobriety
We're happy to introduce you to nearly any variety
And will ensure a man of utmost piety
It's for the common wealth of the Commonwealth
And we must...
Obey!

Elinor Perhaps my youngest sister is a little too young to get married.

Sir John Yes, well... you may be right. But rest assured, Miss Dashwood, Miss Marianne, you will not be single for long!

Mrs. J No indeed! But we should leave you to settle in... You must come and dine with us at Barton Park this evening!

Mrs. D We could not think of it. You have already shown us too much kindness.

Sir John Nonsense. We would not have it any other way. We will expect you all this evening and often if I'm to have my way!

(Mrs. Jennings and Sir John exit to floor)

Marianne Well, they are certainly lively.

Margaret I like them. They talk about things. We never talk about things.

Marianne Yes. They certainly can talk.

Elinor Marianne. Sir John and Mrs. Jennings may not be the most genteel people, but they are showing so much kindness to us. They deserve our gratitude. I am quite sure that upon further acquaintance, you will find their manners much more pleasing.

Margaret I don't need to get to know them any better—I already like them!

(Exit Dashwoods)

Sir John (Pulling a letter from his pocket) This letter came today from my good friend, Col. Brandon.

Mrs. J Oh! How is the Colonel? Is he going to be back from town soon?

Sir John Says here (Pointing to print) he should be arriving today... he may already be at home. What do you say, Mrs. Jennings? Shall I invite him for dinner tonight—to meet our lovely new neighbors?

Mrs. J What a splendid scheme! He ought to do for one of them. I daresay he is a better age for Miss Dashwood, but I'm afraid she left her heart behind in Sussex.

Sir John Your ability to read people is uncanny. But then, I'm sure he would do just as well for Miss Marianne.

Mrs. J He certainly would! It would be a perfect match, for he is rich and she is beautiful.

Sir John That settles it then. I'll write to him as soon as we arrive at the house, and have a servant take the letter off to him this very hour.

(They exit. Blackout)

SCENE 7: BARTON PARK CONSERVATORY

(This is the only scene at Barton Park. Can be staged in a "Conservatory" or garden with furniture. It should be simple and elegant. A Piano Forte should be in the room for Marianne to play, and a table of some sort to place tea things on, as well as chairs for at least five people to sit. Lights come up on Marianne playing the piano forte, while Col. Brandon watches her unseen from the doorway. A servant enters and places a tea tray on a table. Mrs. Jennings, Sir John, the Dashwoods and Col. Brandon enter. They sit and the servant hands a tea cup to each person before exiting. If there are not enough seats for everyone to sit, the ladies should sit, and the men should stand)

Mrs. J Why, Col. Brandon, when did you arrive? What a pity it wasn't in time to join us for dinner. These are our guests, Mrs. Dashwood, Miss Dashwood, Miss Marianne there on the piano forte and Miss Margaret.

Brandon *(Bows to them, and turns to Mrs. J)* A servant showed me in just before you entered the room. I'm afraid I returned home too late to accept your invitation for dinner, but I hope you do not mind my spending the rest of the evening with you.

Sir John Mind! Brandon, you are always welcome in this house. And I dare say that the young Misses Dashwoods were very bored with us at dinner, but now that a handsome, well-to-do bachelor such as yourself has come, we may liven them up. All kidding aside, ladies, Col. Brandon here is the finest friend a man could hope for.

Mrs. J Or a woman! *(Both laugh)* How delightfully Miss Marianne plays, Mrs. Dashwood! I declare I have never heard so much talent from one person. Do you not agree, Colonel?

Brandon Yes, she plays remarkably well.

Mrs. J Col. Brandon plays the Piano Forte very well himself, though he is too modest to ever mention it himself. Colonel, why don't you ask Miss Marianne to play a duet with you... then we could see you both, side by side.

(Mrs. Jennings and Sir John laugh heartily. Marianne glances up then looks back to the piano and everyone else looks awkward, except for Margaret who is enjoying Mrs. Jennings)

Brandon *(Trying not to sound embarrassed)* Maybe some other time. I would not want to interrupt such an excellent performance.

Mrs. J You had better be careful, Miss Dashwood— your younger sister might make a conquest of the Colonel before you've had your chance to try for him.

Elinor I assure you, Mrs. Jennings, neither of us is looking to make a conquest out of anybody.

Mrs. J You see, Sir John? I believe we are right. She has left her heart in Sussex!

Elinor No... I...

Margaret It's true.

Sir John Ah, now we will have the truth of it.

Margaret She has, and his name begins with an "F."

Mrs. D Margaret!

Sir John Now that's a promising letter if I ever heard one.

Mrs. J Perhaps it's a Mr. Franklin?

Sir John Foster?

Mrs. J Flemming?

Sir John *Fiddle Faddle?!
(They both laugh hysterically)*

(Marianne stops playing and walks over to join them)

Marianne *(To Elinor)* What could be so humorous?

Mrs. J Miss Margaret was just telling us about your sister's secret beau in Sussex.

Marianne Margaret! *(In a low voice)* You know there is no such person.

Margaret Yes there is... you told me!

Marianne I said no such thing...

Sir John There's no use covering it up now, Miss Marianne... Mrs. Jennings is like a hound dog when it comes to such things... she shall sniff it all out, and within a week's time, I'd wager!

Mrs. J True! True! You'd much better have it all out now, and save everyone the trouble, for...

Brandon John, speaking of hound dogs, what say you and I go hunting in the morning? I've been busy in town so long, I feel I need some outdoor sport.

Sir John Excellent idea!

Mrs. J Our dear Colonel is an excellent shot. I dare say he never misses.

Brandon I thank you for the compliment, ma'am, but it is hardly deserved.
Mrs. J Oh, don't be so modest Colonel!
Brandon Excuse me, Mrs. Jennings, but I'd best be heading home if I'm to go shooting in the morning.
Thank you both for the hospitality.
Mrs. D We should take our leave as well.
Brandon Allow me to escort you home, then.
Mrs. D Thank you, Colonel. That would be most appreciated.
(Col. Brandon and Dashwoods exit)

(Mrs. J and Sir John move to another part of the stage while Barton Park furniture is removed)
Mrs. J Did you see the way Brandon stared at Miss Marianne this evening? I believe he is falling in love with her already!
Sir John Your powers in the way of matchmaking are simply astonishing! I don't know how you do it! And think! You ferreted this match out before they even met!
Mrs. J We all have our little talents, I suppose. But Brandon is such a quiet, modest sort of a man, we may have to help him along. Why don't you encourage him to visit Miss Marianne during your hunt tomorrow?
Sir John Capital! Splendid idea! First thing tomorrow, I will make mention of it while we pack our gear and then make up some excuse to delay our shooting party till tomorrow afternoon.
(Exits)

SCENE 8: BARTON COTTAGE

(Scene opens with Mrs. Dashwood and Margaret doing her lessons. Elinor enters, wiping her hands on her apron with Marianne not far behind her carrying in a tea tray)

Mrs. D So Marianne, tell me, what did you think of Col. Brandon last evening?
Marianne I thought him a very amiable man for his age... though a little quiet, perhaps.
Margaret I think he likes you.
Elinor Margaret, darling, you must learn to think before you speak. If you have no facts, or are speaking on someone else's personal business, it is quite improper of you.
Marianne Yes, indeed. You should restrict your comments to the weather.
Margaret Well, I still think he likes you... It's my opinion.
Marianne Now, that is completely absurd.
Mrs. D And why should you think it absurd?
Marianne Why, because he is too old, of course! He is a confirmed old bachelor, and I am sure he has no desire to become otherwise.
Mrs. D Old? He is too young to be my contemporary. Do you consider me to be aged and infirm as well?
Marianne Of course not, Mamma. But you said it yourself, he is hardly of an age to be considered *my* contemporary and if he were ever animated enough to be in love, he must have long outlived such feelings.
Mrs. D My dear, may I remind you that your father was older than myself and I was never so loved in all my life.
Marianne Mamma, you mistake my meaning. I know very well that Col. Brandon is not old enough for his friends to be apprehensive of losing him. He may live to a fine old age but, his present years seem to be *beyond* matrimony.
Elinor Perhaps Marianne you are showing the lack of imagination of a young woman who is not yet herself twenty?
Marianne I should think that you, of all people, my precious sister, might realize that my objections to the Colonel have more to do with his spiritless behavior than his age!
Margaret I think I see Col. Brandon coming up the lane! *(Teasing)* He must be coming to see you, Marianne!
Marianne Well, I shall not be here when he comes, then. Come, Margaret, get your coat. We are going for a walk.
Margaret But I think it is going to rain!
Marianne It will not rain. Come along... quickly, now!
(Marianne and Margaret exit)
Elinor Mamma, you aren't going to let her do this every time something disagreeable happens, are you?

Mrs. D And what would you have me do? I don't want to alienate her. If it happens again... I will check this behavior.
(A servant enters with Col. Brandon, who is holding sheet music. Elinor and Mrs. Dashwood rise)

Servant Col. Brandon to see you, ma'am.

Mrs. D Thank you.
(Servant exits, Mrs. D and Elinor curtsey, Col. Brandon bows)

Mrs. D How kind of you to come, Col. Brandon. Won't you sit down?

Brandon Thank you. *(They sit)* I brought some music for Miss Marianne. Is she here?

Elinor I'm afraid my younger sisters are out walking, just now.

Brandon Will they be returning soon? I have copied the music myself, and would like to look at it with her to make sure she can read my markings.

Mrs. D I am not certain when they will be back, but if you are not in a hurry may I offer you some tea? I believe it is quite cold out today.

Brandon Indeed it is.
(Mrs. Dashwood pours Brandon a cup of tea. They freeze as Marianne and Margaret enter on the floor)

Margaret It's so cold! Can't we go back to the house now?

Marianne Nonsense! Margaret, is there a felicity in the world superior to this?

Margaret It's going to rain, Marianne.

Marianne Perhaps you are right. Look! There's a bit of blue sky! Let's chase it! *(She runs out of opposite curtain)*

Margaret Marianne! Wait for me! *(Mumbling to herself on her way out)* Mamma is probably serving tea cakes to the Colonel in front of a warm fire and I am chasing after** my sister...
*(Margaret starts to follow when Marianne** screams. Possibly a crash or thud is heard. Willoughby begins entering from top of stairs)*

Marianne *(From off stage)* Margaret! Go get help! I've fallen and twisted my ankle!
(Margaret looks around wildly, and spots Willoughby who has heard Marianne and is sprinting down the stairs to her rescue)

Willoughby *(To Margaret)* Don't worry, all will be well.
(He exits the curtain and comes back carrying Marianne, who looks pained, but awestruck. Margaret begins running toward the house. Willoughby follows at a not too hurried pace. Margaret rushes into the cottage as Brandon, Mrs. D and Elinor unfreeze)

Margaret *(Out of breath)* Marianne... Marianne... her ankle fell down, and twisted a man... a man is carrying her! *(Then forcing calmness says:)* Oh, Hello Col. Brandon, fine weather we are having!
(Enter Willoughby, still carrying Marianne. The others move out of the way while he sets her down either on a couch, or a chair with an ottoman to rest her foot on)

Mrs. D Marianne! Are you all right? Oh, my dear girl!

Marianne Yes, mamma.

Willoughby I believe it is only a sprain. It should heal in a few days, but she should rest it.

Mrs. D Oh, thank you, dear sir, for your kindness to my daughter! Will you not stay and warm yourself by the fire? We have just been taking our tea and would love for you to join us.
(Looking at Brandon who is watching him uncomfortably) I would not dare to intrude.
(Mrs. Dashwood starts leading him to the door)

Marianne *(Whispering to Elinor)* His name! Find out his name!

Elinor Excuse me, sir, but might we know the name of the man we are so indebted to?

Willoughby You owe me no debt. But if you do not mind, I shall call tomorrow, to see how Miss Marianne is doing.

Mrs. D That would be delightful!

Willoughby My name is John Willoughby of Allenham. Until tomorrow, then. *(He bows and exits)*

Marianne Willoughby of Allenham. That is a very good name, do you not think so, Elinor?

Elinor *(Pointedly, to remind Marianne that Brandon is present)* Marianne, Col. Brandon stopped in to bring you some music. Wasn't that kind of him?

Marianne Oh... yes, Colonel, thank you so much. Though it may be a few days before I am well enough to sit at the piano forte to learn the pieces.

Brandon Take your time, Miss Marianne. Your health and happiness is all I am concerned with at present. I shall take my leave of you all, so you can get some rest.

Elinor Thank you again, Colonel.
(He bows and exits)

Margaret Mr. Willoughby is terribly handsome, isn't he Marianne?
Marianne And heroic, and strong... he picked me up as if I weighed no more than a feather!
Elinor *(Teasing)* I daresay you will be quite in love if he comes here tomorrow with a book of verse.
(Servant enters with Sir John)

Servant Sir John Middleton, Ma'am. *(Servant exits)*
Sir John *(Before Mrs. Dashwood can say anything)* I was just out walking the grounds, when I saw Brandon. He told me the whole of the affair and I felt compelled to check in on you. Are you all right, Miss Marianne?
Marianne I am well, Sir John. 'Tis only a sprained ankle.
Sir John Oh, thank heavens!
Mrs. D *(Trying to be casual)* Sir John, do you know a gentleman by the name of Willoughby?
Sir John Willoughby? Is he in the neighborhood? That is good news. I will ride over and ask him to dinner on Thursday.
Mrs. D You know him, then?
Sir John Know him? To be sure I do. Why, he is down here visiting his aunt every year.
Marianne What sort of a man is he?
Sir John As jolly a fellow as ever lived, I assure you. A very decent shot, and there is not a bolder rider in all of England.
Marianne *(Impatiently)* But what are his manners, his tastes, his passions, his pursuits?
Sir John Upon my word, I do not know as much about him as all that. He visits Allenhurst once a year. He's to inherit that estate when his aunt passes on. Yes, yes, he is well worth the catching. If I were you, Miss Dashwood, I would not give him up to my younger sister, in spite of all her tumbling down hills. Miss Marianne must not expect to have all the men to herself.

Marianne Thank you, Sir John, you have been quite helpful.
Sir John I see how it will be. You will be setting your cap at him now, and never think of poor Brandon.
Marianne I assure you, I have no intention of making a conquest or setting my cap at anyone.
Sir John *(Chuckling)* You will make conquests enough, I daresay, but, Poor Brandon! It is too bad as he is very well worth setting your cap at.
Elinor Allow me to walk you to the gate, Sir John.
Sir John *(He nods and bows to the Mrs. D, then offers his arm)* Good day to you. *(They walk out of the cottage, and downstage)* You know, Miss Dashwood, I really do think your sister would be better off choosing Brandon. He's in love with her already—and I have that on good authority.

Elinor That may be, Sir John, but my sister will do as her own heart leads her. No coaxing or advice from anyone will persuade her to do otherwise.
Sir John Ah. She craves romance, doesn't she? I knew it the moment I first saw her... Well, she might like Brandon better if she knew his history. He's got a passionate, sad story.
Elinor Oh, *(nodding)* my!
Sir John He was in love once— although that might surprise your sister. But his father had different plans... some sort of financial problem, so Brandon was packed up and sent into the army. When he got back, she was dying. I have never known him to so much as glance at another woman— Believe me, Mrs. Jennings and I have tried to marry him off! But, he would not hear of it. I think your sister reminds him of her— stirring up all those old feelings, I suppose. Well, I have a meeting with my steward so I'd best be off.

Elinor Thank you, Sir John.
(Blackout)

SCENE 9: BARTON COTTAGE

(Marianne is sitting with her foot on a pillow, holding a book and absentmindedly leafing through the pages. Margaret is standing lookout for Willoughby. Some costume alterations should be made showing it is the next day)

Margaret Did he say he would come in the morning or afternoon? I can't remember.
Marianne Neither. Margaret, come away from the window.
Elinor It's like a watched pot... it never boils while you're staring at it— come away from the window, Dearest.

Margaret Fine. He's not coming to see me, anyway. (*Plopping into a chair where she still has a clear view of the "window"*) I miss Edward.

Elinor (*Kneeling beside her, encouraging*) We don't know anyone here yet... take heart, soon you'll have some friends like we did in Sussex...

Margaret He's coming! I see him coming up the lane! Mamma! Mr. Willoughby's here!
(*Mrs. Dashwood hurries in and she and Elinor remove aprons and just finish hiding them under pillows when the servant enters with Willoughby, who is holding a bouquet of flowers behind his back*)

Servant A Mr. Willoughby, ma'am. (*Servant curtseys and exits*)

Mrs. D (*A little too eagerly*) Mr. Willoughby! How delighted we are that you have come. Please sit down.
(*They all bow/curtsey, except Marianne who remains seated. Willoughby walks to her and presents her with flowers*)

Willoughby I hope you are feeling better today, Miss Marianne. These are for you.

Marianne Oh! Thank you! They are so beautiful! I have always loved wildflowers.

Willoughby After our brief but meaningful encounter yesterday, I guessed as much.

Marianne Elinor, would you put these in some water for me please?

Elinor Of course. (*Leaves briefly to put flowers in vase and brings them back to set them on a table*)

Marianne I am feeling much better just now, thank you, Mr. Willoughby. Won't you sit down?
(*Taking a seat near Marianne*) And what is this you are reading?

Willoughby Shakespeare's Sonnets... it's one of my favorite books.

Marianne What a coincidence! It is one of mine as well! Which is your favorite?

Marianne Oh... without a doubt, 116— it takes my breath away!

Willoughby (*From memory without opening the book*) "Love is not love which alters when it alteration finds..."

Marianne "Or bends with the remover to remove."

M & W "Oh no, it is an ever fixed mark that looks on tempests and is never shaken."

Marianne I have never met anyone else that could quote one of the sonnets like that.

Willoughby Shakespeare speaks the depths of my heart and soul into his sonnets. I can quote them all— and if I am correct, it is the same for you, Miss Marianne. (*She looks astonished*) Have I said something wrong?

Marianne No... quite the contrary, Mr. Willoughby. I just feel... (*pause*)

Willoughby What is it? Please, do not withhold the answer for the sake of decorum...

Marianne Make no mistake, kind Sir, I loathe nothing more than dull conversation or hiding ones true feelings for the sake of "decorum."

Willoughby I thought so. But you did not answer... what is it you feel?

Marianne I feel that we understand each other— as two people who have known each other a very long time.

Willoughby I feel the same way. For example, I already know that you are a musician.

Marianne How do you know that?

Willoughby One of the first things I noticed about you (*Taking one of her hands*) was what beautiful hands you have— such long, graceful fingers— perfect for playing the piano forte.
(*Marianne blushes, he lets go of her hand*)

Willoughby I also know that you are an avid reader. What I do not know, however, is *who* you like to read.

Marianne Well... Shakespeare (*Both laugh*), and Cowper and Pope. However, of late I have cherished the writings of Sir Walter Scott.

SONG: "PASSION AND PROSE"

Willoughby To all- to each- a fair good night
And pleasing dreams under slumber's light
Now, come he slow, or come he fast
It is but love whose dreams shall last

Marianne (*Spoken*) You have put Sir Walter to melody?!

Willoughby If your lips were poems

And your eyes were prose
Your heart would be the book
That I could not close

Marianne O many a shaft at random sent
Finds the mark the archer little meant
And many a word at random spoken
May soothe a wounded heart that's broken

Both If your lips were poems
And your eyes were prose
Your heart would be the book
That I could not close

Both Chapters written before we met
Are now my most rueful regret
Beloved chance changed hapless history
Ere more my heart awaits your mystery
If your lips were poems
And your eyes were prose
Your heart would be the book
That I could not close

Willoughby I do not often meet my equal in matters of literature or music and in this case the fates have brought me to a rival in my knowledge and passion. I am only thankful that my superior is blessed with such incomparable beauty and charm!

Marianne Too much flattery, Mr. Willoughby!

Willoughby It is not flattery to speak the truth.

Marianne You are too kind, sir.
(Awkward pause for a few seconds, then servant enters with Brandon, who also brings flowers for Marianne. His should look more "store bought.")

Servant Colonel Brandon, Ma'am. *(Curtseys and exits)*

Mrs. D Colonel Brandon, so good of you to come. Please, come in, sit down.
(All curtsey/bow)

Mrs. D I believe you know Mr. Willoughby.

Brandon Yes, yes, of course... how do you do?

Willoughby Very well, thank you. And yourself?

Brandon I am well, thank you. I will not stay long, Mrs. Dashwood, as you have company. I only came to inquire after Miss Marianne's health.

Marianne I am much better today, thank you, Colonel.

Brandon These are for you. *(Hands her flowers, and as he does so, sees the ones Willoughby already brought. Marianne takes them, smells them briefly and hands them to Elinor for her to put them in another vase)* But I see mine is not the only gift you have received today. *(Turns to see Willoughby looking very smug)* Well, I shall take my leave of you. I am happy to see you feeling better, Miss Marianne. Oh, and I almost forgot... *(Hands Mrs. Dashwood a card)* I will be hosting a picnic at my estate one week from today. *(He turns to leave and then stops to say:)* I will, of course be sending an invitation to you as well, Mr. Willoughby. I hope you can all come. Good day. *(Exits)*

Willoughby *(He shakes it off and proceeds as if Brandon hadn't been there)* What do you think of Shakespeare's other works? Are you more in favor of the comedies or the tragedies?

Marianne The tragedies, of course! Romeo and Juliet is one of my absolute favorite stories. Can you imagine anything more glorious than to die for love?

Willoughby Admittedly, I should much rather find love and be able to live a long happy life with that person. But, should the occasion arise, I would not be afraid to die for the woman I love.
(Pause as they stare into each other's eyes for a very mushy moment)

Willoughby I'm afraid I must now take my leave of you all. I promised to complete an errand for my aunt and she will be expecting me soon.

Mrs. D Will you be visiting again soon, Mr. Willoughby?

Willoughby If Miss Marianne wishes me to, I would be very happy to return tomorrow.

Marianne Indeed, I should like that very much.

Willoughby Until tomorrow, then. *(Bows to the others and exits)*

Elinor *(Teasing)* Well, Marianne, I think you have done pretty well for one morning. You now know Mr. Willoughby's opinion about your favorite authors, music, and flora and fauna. In tomorrow's meeting he will explain his sentiments on the beauty of the outdoors and second marriages. After that you will have nothing further to talk about, and the relationship will be over.

Marianne Perhaps you are right, Elinor. I may have been too much at ease. I suppose I have erred against every common-place notion of decorum and have been open and sincere where I ought to have been reserved, spiritless and dull and talked only of the weather and state of the roads as you might have. Then I would have been spared this reproach.

Elinor *(Hurt)* Marianne, you know that is not what I meant. No one would expect that of you... I only wish that you would take care— we do not yet know enough of his character...

Mrs. D *(To Marianne)* My love, you must not be offended with Elinor— she meant it only in jest. *(Marianne reaches for Elinor's hand and squeezes it)*

Margaret And he's coming again tomorrow!
(They all giggle)
(Black out. Exit all)

SCENE 10: OUT OF DOORS

(Lights up on Brandon, Sir John and Mrs. Jennings. All are wearing hats, Mrs. Jennings is also wearing a coat or shawl)

Mrs. J Col. Brandon! How kind of you to host a party at Delaford! I wonder, has it changed much since I saw it last?

Brandon No, ma'am. I'm afraid you will find it just the same.

Mrs. J That is because you have no woman about. If you had a wife, there would be a splendid amount of changes to the place... new draperies and carpets! Replacements for the furniture and paintings...

Sir John How goes it with Miss Marianne, eh? Still pining away after her?

Brandon I believe Miss Marianne has made her choice, John.

Mrs. J I do believe you are right, Colonel. Have you seen her and Mr. Willoughby the last few days? They have been inseparable! And making quite a spectacle of themselves too! I am sure we have all noticed them whispering to each other in church, and Miss Margaret told me just yesterday that she saw him cut a lock of her hair, right from her head, kiss it and wrap it up in his handkerchief! They must be secretly engaged, or if they are not, then they soon will be!

Sir John I don't know if it is serious as all that now, Brandon. I would not give it another thought.

Brandon I will definitely defer my thoughts on the subject until another time— for the Dashwoods and Mr. Willoughby have just arrived.
(Enter Mrs. Dashwood and her daughters. All wearing bonnets, gloves and coats. Mr. Willoughby enters with them, wearing his hat. He and Marianne are arm in arm)

Brandon So pleased you could all come. Well, if you are ready, perhaps we should all set out for Delaford.

Mrs. J I think we can all guess that Miss Marianne will be riding over with Mr. Willoughby. It is too bad that Miss Dashwood's "Mr. F" is not here to drive her in his carriage, isn't it, Miss Margaret?

Margaret Yes, Mrs. Jennings. At least *HE* would allow me to ride along with them.

Marianne Margaret, you know that there is only room for two in Mr. Willoughby's carriage.

Margaret I'm not very big. I could fit.

Mrs. D *(Correctively reminding her to watch what she is saying)* Margaret, darling.
(A man runs in with a letter for Col. Brandon)

Man Col. Brandon? Is there a Col. Brandon here?

Brandon I am Col. Brandon.

Man I am come with an urgent letter for you.
(Hands over the letter, which Brandon quickly tears open and reads. As he reads, he looks worried)

Mrs. J It is not bad news, I hope.

Brandon No. Not bad news. Just urgent business that requires my immediate attendance in town.

Mrs. J In town! What can you have to do in London at this time of year?

Brandon I regret that I must leave such agreeable company. I must beg your forgiveness in asking you to postpone our outing today.

Sir John Can you not wait till tomorrow to go to town, Brandon?

Brandon I wish it was so easily settled, but it is not in my power to put off my journey by even one day.
Willoughby You would not be six hours later if you were to defer your journey till our return.
Brandon I cannot afford to lose even one hour. Forgive me. I must go. *(Exits with messenger)*
Willoughby There are some people who cannot bear a party of pleasure.
Sir John How unfortunate. Just as we were all about to set off, too.
Margaret Could we not still have a picnic somewhere else?
Willoughby Splendid idea! The baskets are all packed, we could drive out to the countryside and enjoy them there.
Sir John Capital! Shall we caravan to the meadow, or each go at his own pace?
Willoughby I defy anyone to catch us! Come, Marianne! To the carriage! *(They exit)*
Mrs. J I dare say that's the last we'll see of *them* this afternoon.
Sir John Yes, my dear, I believe you may be right.
Margaret I wish I could ride with Mr. Willoughby.
Sir John Don't you worry, you'll have your own beau soon enough.
Mrs. D Not too soon, I hope.
Elinor *(As the others start exiting, looking in the direction Marianne exited)* Not too soon... *(Exits)*
(Marianne and Willoughby enter on floor)
Marianne The garden, the beautiful elms, the house itself; it is all very lovely! This is the house you are to inherit?
Willoughby Yes. It is called Allenham. You really like it?
Marianne Very much.
Willoughby Good. For I have a special interest in your likes and dislikes. Shall we see the inside?
Marianne Your aunt will not mind?
Willoughby Surely not. Besides, she only uses a few of the rooms. We will not disturb her.
Marianne In that case, I would love to!
(He offers his arm, she takes it and they exit)

SCENE 11: BARTON COTTAGE

(Mrs. Dashwood, Elinor, Margaret, Mrs. Jennings and Sir John enter the cottage as a servant is putting out tea for them. She gathers everyone's hats and coats and exits)

Sir John Miss Margaret, would you cut me another slice of that pie?
Margaret I'm sorry, Sir John, but the pie is all gone...
Sir John *(Standing up)* Then that must be a sign for us to be gone too! Come along, Mrs. Jennings!
Mrs. J Thank you for the lovely time! It's only too bad that we didn't see much of Miss Marianne... But I am certain she is having a better time where she is! Don't worry too much, Mrs. Dashwood, I am sure he will have her home soon!
(They start to leave as Marianne and Willoughby enter, Mrs. J and Sir John stay)
Mrs. J *(Approaching Marianne)* I have found you out in spite of all your tricks, Miss Marianne. I know where you have spent the afternoon.
Marianne I...
Willoughby Did you not know that we were out in my carriage?
Mrs. J Yes, yes, Mr. Impudence. But I know *where* that carriage *took* you. I hope you like your house, Miss Marianne. It is a very large one, I know. And when I come to see you in it, I hope you will have refurnished it, for it wanted it very much when I was there six years ago. *(Pause)* Well, John, I suppose we have had as much fun as we can take today... perhaps we should make our way home.
Sir John A fine idea. No doubt we will be seeing you all again very soon. Good day. *(Exit)*
Margaret Mr. Willoughby, will you play checkers with me?
Willoughby But of course.
(Willoughby and Margaret sit down to play checkers, Mrs. Dashwood gets out some sewing and begins to work on it, leaving Marianne and Elinor to talk)
Marianne Do not look at me that way... I hate that you disapprove of me so.
Elinor I do not disapprove of you, only of some of your conduct.

Marianne If there had been any real impropriety in our conduct, I would have been sensible of it at the time. For we always know when we are acting wrong, and with such a conviction I could have had no pleasure.

Elinor But Marianne, sometimes our own hearts deceive us. Your conduct has already exposed you to some very impertinent remarks. Do you not now begin to doubt the discretion of your actions?

Marianne If the remarks of Mrs. Jennings are to be the proof of impropriety, then we are all offending every moment of our lives. I am not sensible of having done anything wrong in walking over Lady Allen's grounds or in seeing her house. They will one day be Mr. Willoughby's and...

Elinor Even if you were engaged, Marianne, you still would not be justified in what you have done.

Marianne Perhaps it was rather ill judged of me to go to Allenham, but Willoughby longed to show me the house so we simply seized the opportunity.

Elinor I only wish that you might exercise caution to afford yourself time to properly ascertain his merits.

Marianne It is not time or opportunity that is to determine intimacy. Seven years would be insufficient to make some people acquainted with each other and seven days are more than enough for others.
(The girls are still rather intense when Willoughby joins them)

Willoughby Well, now that Miss Margaret has thoroughly beaten me, and wounded my pride, I shall be off. But *first*, Mrs. Dashwood, would you allow me a private audience with Miss Marianne tomorrow and then another with yourself?

Mrs. D Why, yes, of course, Mr. Willoughby. We would be delighted.

Willoughby The pleasure is all mine, Mrs. Dashwood. I will call around ten. Good evening.
(He exits, and Mrs. Dashwood, Margaret and Elinor hug Marianne)

SCENE 12: OUT OF DOORS

(Lights come up on Sir John and Mrs. Jennings)

Mrs. J You will not believe the news I just heard! Mr. Willoughby is on his way, even now, to make a proposal of marriage to Miss Marianne!

Sir John *(Playfully)* Of course I believe it, you silly woman! Anyone with eyes would believe it. They'll be married before a month is up, I'd wager.

Mrs. J Oh! I think I shall burst with glee at the thought of it! I simply love weddings! Let's go into town! I simply must tell someone!

(They start to leave, but Mrs. Dashwood, Elinor and Margaret enter wearing coats and bonnets)

Mrs. J *(To John)* There's Mrs. Dashwood! How happy she must be! *(Loudly)* Mrs. Dashwood!
(Approaching them) You all must be so happy today.

Margaret We are! It's because... Mr. Willoughby is going to ask...

(Elinor tugs on Margaret's clothes or hand slowing her down and putting her arm around her)

Elinor We have been very happy here for some time, Mrs. Jennings. And much of that happiness is due to your gracious hospitality and friendship.

Sir John No need to be so sly, Miss Dashwood. We have heard your news! Congratulations, Mrs. Dashwood on the impending engagement of your daughter!

Mrs. D Thank you, Sir John, Mrs. Jennings. Words cannot express the joy...

Elinor But how could you know...

Mrs. J Why, everyone knows it! But no harm done, Miss Dashwood. They will be engaged soon enough. He's probably asked her already!

Margaret Do you think so? Mamma, can we go home and find out?

Mrs. D "May we," darling. And yes, I suppose we should be starting toward home. Good day to you both.
(They start exiting)

Sir John *(Calling out after them)* Let us know the official good news as soon as you can!

Margaret We shall!
(Exit all)

(Lights up on the cottage, where Marianne is sitting in a chair crying. Willoughby is standing close by with a sad expression on his face)

Marianne I have never known you to be so foreboding nor so distant. Why is this happening?

Willoughby Because my aunt wishes it. You know I would change it if it were in my power. I am sorry. I wish there were something I could do, but there simply isn't.

Marianne Oh! My heart is breaking! *(Breaks down and sobs)*
(Mrs. Dashwood, Elinor and Margaret enter. Marianne sees them and gets up and leaves. All but Willoughby are shocked)

Mrs. D Is anything the matter with her? Is she ill?
Willoughby *(Trying to look cheerful, but failing)* I hope not. It is I who expect to be ill— for I am suffering under a heavy disappointment.

Mrs. D Disappointment? She hasn't refused...
Elinor Mamma! Margaret, why don't you go take some tea to Marianne?
(Margaret nods and exits walking out of the room backwards to hear anything she can)

Willoughby I am afraid I am unable to keep our meeting, Mrs. Dashwood. My aunt has this morning exercised the privilege of riches on her dependent nephew, by sending me on business to London. I must take my farewell of you.

Elinor London! And you are to go this morning?
Willoughby Almost this moment.

Mrs. D This is very unfortunate. But Lady Allen must be obliged— I trust her business will not detain you from us for long?

Willoughby You are very kind; but I have no idea of returning immediately. My visits here are never repeated within a year.

Mrs. D A year? But Mr. Willoughby, surely you know you are always welcome to stay here at Barton Cottage.

Willoughby My engagements are at present— are of such a nature— that— It is folly to linger in this manner. I will not torment myself any longer by remaining among friends whose society it is now impossible for me to enjoy. Good day. *(Picks up his hat and exits)*

Mrs. D Poor Willoughby. He leaves with such a heavy heart.
Elinor It is all very strange that he would be so suddenly gone. Last night he was with us so happy. And now, with a moment's notice, gone with no intention to return? Something must have happened.

Mrs. D Do you suspect him of something?
Elinor I hardly know. But he did not speak, did not behave like himself— you must have seen the difference as well. What can it be? Can they have quarreled?

Mrs. D That is unlikely.
Elinor Then why else should he have shown such unwillingness to accept your invitation here?
Mrs. D I can perfectly account for it. Lady Allen suspects his regard for Marianne and disapproves of it.
Elinor Then why did he not say that?
Mrs. D Elinor! Is nothing due to the man whom we all have so much reason to love and no reason in the world to think ill of? You must think very wretchedly indeed of Willoughby. Do you suspect him of acting a part to her? That he could be indifferent to her?

Elinor No... he loves her, I am sure. Mamma, I love Willoughby, sincerely love him; and the suspicion of his integrity cannot be more painful to yourself than to me...

Mrs. D I do not suspect him of anything, and you shouldn't either. This conversation is over.
(Blackout)

SCENE 13: BARTON COTTAGE

(The Dashwoods, except Marianne, are home in their sitting room, each with an occupation when Sir John, Mrs. Jennings and Lucy and Anne Steele enter. The Dashwoods move downstage to join them)

Sir John Well hello! We have brought you some strangers!
Mrs. J I hope you do not mind, but they arrived only last night and could not wait to meet you all.
Mrs. D Of course we do not mind! You are always very welcome.
Sir John Let me make the introductions! These are my cousins from the other side of the family— Miss Lucy Steele and Miss Anne Steele. Cousins, meet cousins.

Anne Miss Dashwood is just exactly as you wrote, Mrs. Jennings! Lucy, is she not the most delightful creature you ever beheld?
Lucy *(Sweetly)* Oh yes... quite delightful...
Anne And we hear Miss Marianne is perhaps the prettiest and most fashionable of all!
Elinor My sister is lovely, that is certain.
Sir John Let us leave the young ladies to get acquainted.

Mrs. D Come Margaret, you must recite the kings and queens for Sir John and Mrs. Jennings.
Sir John That reminds me! I have something for you in the carriage... but I suppose it can wait until after your recitation.
(Sir John, Mrs. Jennings, Margaret and Mrs. Dashwood walk upstage and sit down to chat)

Anne We have heard tell that Norland is a prodigious beautiful place!
Lucy Sir John admires it excessively. It must have been grand growing up there!
Elinor Thank you, it was. I think everyone must admire it who ever saw it. Though I suppose no one would estimate its beauties as we do.

Anne I imagine you had your fair share of beaux there in Sussex!
Lucy *(Looking uncomfortable)* Anne, why should you think that there are not as many genteel young men here in Devonshire?

Anne I was only afraid that the Miss Dashwoods might find it dull at Barton, if they found the beaux here in short supply. Perhaps you young ladies may not care so much. For my part, I love when they dress smart and behave civil. I can't bear to see them dirty and nasty.

Lucy Anne! You can talk of nothing but beaux... you will make Miss Dashwood believe you a mindless ninny.

Anne *(Checking her behavior)* How does your sister, Marianne, do?
Elinor My sister has been unwell this past week, Miss Anne.
Anne Yes, Mrs. Jennings told us all about that! But everyone is sure he will return very soon... I hear he is quite handsome. I hope we may have just as good luck soon...

Mrs. J *(Calling out)* Anne... If she tells you anything about her famous Mr. F, you must not keep it a secret! For I am dying to know! *(Goes back to her conversation with Mrs. Dashwood)*

Anne Mr. F, eh, Miss Dashwood? The only man I know whose name starts with an F is Mr. Ferrars. I believe he is your sister-in-law's brother! We know him very well.

Lucy Anne, keep your voice down! I do not mind if Miss Dashwood knows, but I do not want the whole room to hear!

Anne I am sorry, Lucy. *(Laughing)* I always say the wrong thing!
Lucy I forgive you, dearest. But now that the subject is brought up, I wonder... Miss Dashwood, are you acquainted with your sister-in-law's mother, Mrs. Ferrars?

Elinor No... I have never met her.
Lucy Do you know what sort of woman she is?
Elinor No, I am afraid I know nothing of her.
Lucy I hope you do not think me impertinent for making such inquiries... for I could not bear it if you thought me so. I am told your good opinion is so well worth having. And, I should be very glad for your advice. I am only sorry that you do not know Mrs. Ferrars.

Elinor I did not know you were connected with that family.
Lucy Mrs. Ferrars is certainly nothing to me at present, *but* the time may come when we may be very intimately connected. May I count on your strictest confidence?

Elinor Certainly, but are you... telling me *(Leaning in)* you have a connection with Mr. Robert Ferrars?
Lucy No. Not Mr. Robert Ferrars—I never saw him in my life. I am speaking of his elder brother—Edward.

Elinor Edward... Ferrars?
Anne Yes! Our uncle was his professor in Plymouth... Why, I'm surprised he never mentioned it!
Elinor Your uncle... *(Dramatic lighting change as Edward enters. All freeze.)* Mr. Pratt, his instructor?
Edward I have something important to tell you... about my education.
Elinor Your education?
Edward Yes. It was conducted by a Mr. Pratt in Plymouth. Mr. Pratt had a... what I mean to say is has a... a...

Elinor *(Aloud to self, but waking the room from freeze)* Niece! Lucy. You have been engaged to Lucy Steele... *(The "vision" of Edward exits)* ...for four years.

Lucy Miss Dashwood, are you quite all right? You look as white as a ghost!
Elinor Oh... well...
(Long pause)

Elinor So you have been secretly engaged to Edward Ferrars?
Lucy Yes. He was my uncle's favorite student, and now he's *my* favorite.
Elinor Imagine that.

SONG: "SECRETLY IN LOVE"

Lucy It began as a sweet youthful infatuation
But with time we forged a stronger situation
We've been secretly engaged four years I might add
Anne Mother Ferrars and his sister have designs for their lad!
Lucy Edward's pers'nal fortune is a mere two thousand pounds
Anne And it would be senseless to marry on those grounds
Lucy Some say it would be madness to wed on just that
Anne She could buy new dresses but forget any shoes or hat!

Lucy (*Chorus*) Oh to be secretly in love!
Can you imagine anything harder, more trying?
All I want is to be crying
"Woe is me!" 'cause I'm secretly in love!
How could another even try to know my woe?

Lucy I would give up every prospect of more without a sigh
And 'ere be content with such a modest income
I'd cherish the struggle even though it does imply
A sad sort of robbery from what Edward might become
He is his mother's treasure, the apple of her eye
Owning up to truth might be the best alibi
I love him too much, he must marry to please her
Anne She's got plenty, so it's best to wait till she's ripe to squeeze her

Elinor with Lucy (and possibly Anne)
singing in chorus in the background

Such kindness, deep affection, such esteem and love!
Could these be only things I was dreaming of?
Was your affection the illusion of my vanity?
How could another even try to know my woe?

Lucy (and possibly Anne) *Sung staccato and piano*

Oh, to be secretly in love
Can you imagine anything harder, more trying?
All I want is to be crying
"Woe is me!" 'cause I'm secretly in love
How could another even try to know my woe?

Lucy (*Spoken*) So you see dissolving the engagement may be the wisest stride. We would, though, be most miserable for a season.

(*Sung*) I'm sure you see that this renders me quite out of heart
I am anxious to be wed and to have my start
So if you'd advise I'll await your point of view
I shall take it to task and hold it most tried and true!

Lucy (Possibly sung with Anne)

Oh, to be secretly in love
Can you imagine anything harder, more trying?
All I (she) want is to be crying
"Woe is me!" 'cause I'm (she's) secretly in love
(*Lucy only*) I'm secretly in love---- !
love--- !

Elinor (Sung at the same time)

Such kindness, deep affection, such esteem and love!
Could these be only things I was dreaming of?
Was your affection the illusion of my vanity?
(*Possibly sung with Anne*) She's secretly in

Elinor Oh, Miss Steele, my opinion would have no weight with you unless it were on the side of your

wishes. You may, however, be assured of my secrecy and prayer.
(Taking Elinor's hand) Miss Dashwood, I know we shall be the very best of friends from here forward.

Lucy

Mrs. J What are the three of you talking about so secretly over there?
(Pause as the girls say nothing and look awkward)

Anne We've just learned that we share some common friends!

Mrs. J You see there, I brought you some strangers and look! You are now excellent friends!

Sir John Well, I suppose we should be getting back to the park so all of you young ladies may get your beauty rest. You're going to be needing it! *(To Elinor)* Mrs. Jennings has a surprise for you and Miss Marianne. Your mother will relate the details I am certain!
(The group exits as the Dashwoods say polite goodbyes)

Mrs. D Margaret, would you be so kind as to check on Marianne, take her some water if you will, darling.
Margaret Please don't say anything important until I return.
(Elinor kisses her head and Margaret exits)

Elinor I'm feeling chilled. *(Grabs her and mother a shawl and wraps her mother's shoulders)* Are you quite well Mamma?

Mrs. D Only worried for my girls. Marianne cannot continue like this, she has refused meals since Willoughby left and I have never seen a person cry so.

Elinor I am hopeful that with time this will subside; it has only been a week, Mamma.

Mrs. D I am sending you both to London with Mrs. Jennings. She extended the invitation this evening and I believe the change of scenery will be beneficial. Besides, providence may afford Marianne the chance to see Willoughby again, and perhaps you might have the opportunity to see... Edward.

Elinor But, Mamma, we would not want to risk being so far from you and home especially since you are still in a season of grief...

Mrs. D My mind is fixed on the decision. You will help your sister pack her things in the morning.

Elinor Of course, Mamma.

Sir John Yoo hoo! Sorry to disturb you, but I almost forgot. *(Hands a large book wrapped in paper and string to Elinor)* This came by post and I wanted to be certain to give it to you this evening.
 Goodnight, again!

Mrs. D Goodnight, Sir John, and thank you.
(Sir John exits)

Mrs. D *(Mrs. D turns to Elinor who has opened the package)* What is it, Elinor?

Elinor 'Tis the promised book from Mr. Ferrars, *Kings and Queens*.

Mrs. D Edward? Certainly there is a note as well.

Elinor Yes, Mamma, he writes that his time is much occupied, causing him to spend his days between Sussex and London, and that travel elsewhere is out of the question just now.

Mrs. D You see, Elinor? Your travel to London is providential! It's what will be best, I am sure. You, Marianne and the Misses Steele will have as fine a time as anyone so young and beautiful! Hope will help us find our way. Seeing my daughters happy again will do much for my own happiness!

Elinor Goodnight, Mamma.
(Mrs. D exits and Elinor starts to blow out candle but it surprised by Marianne)

Marianne You are worried about Mamma, aren't you?

Elinor Marianne, how good to see you out of bed, although it is quite late.

Marianne Margaret told me the news. She is very disappointed that she is not yet old enough to be Mrs. Jennings' travel companion. I told her if it were not that we were going to London I would surely surrender my opportunity to her! I cannot imagine what we will endure with endless weeks of her constant prattle. But, it shall all be worth it to see my Willoughby again.

Elinor I am happy you are looking forward to the trip... But dearest, you understand there are no guarantees that Willoughby will be in town.

Marianne There are no guarantees, but every reason to hope!
(Lights go up in bedroom as they go dim on sofa where Elinor and Marianne are sitting)

Mrs. D Margaret Darling, it is beyond time for you to retire!

Margaret I was reading... *(Puts down novel and picks up Bible opening and sticking finger on the page)* ...my Bible.

Mrs. D Oh, how lovely! What were you reading?

Margaret *(Showing panic re-opens her Bible and reads)* Psalm...77 I will remember the works of the LORD...
(Mrs. Dashwood joins her)

Marg. & Mrs. D ...surely I will remember thy wonders of old. I will meditate also on all Thy work and talk of Thy doings. (*Margaret closes Bible*)

Mrs. D 'Tis good to remember God's faithfulness. Sweet dreams, Margaret.
Margaret Goodnight, Mamma.

Elinor (*Lights come back up, though dimly on Elinor and Marianne on couch*)
Warm yourself here by the fire, Marianne, it will help you sleep. (*Walks downstage*)
(*Now Elinor stands in special as Marianne on couch and Margaret in bed and Mrs. D on stairs are all dimly lit*)

SONG: "WHOLE AND UNBROKEN"

Elinor How my pain runs fastest in the night
Sped along with help upon hopeless winds
At dawn I pretend that all is right
And beg my secrets back to sleep within
Sleep, O anguish even restlessly
Torment, be silent, duty has spoken
Yield not to despair inside of me
Help me pretend a heart whole and unbroken

Mrs. D, Marianne, Marg. I shall remember Your works, O LORD
(*chorus*) Remember Your wonders of old
E're shall I ponder Thy great works
Your glorious deeds will be told

Elinor How my pain runs fastest in the night
Sped along with help upon hopeless winds
At dawn I pretend that all is right
And beg my secrets back to sleep within
Your watchful eye has seen
(*chorus*) Your tender heart has known
My cry has reached Your ears
Your answer will be shown

Mrs. D, Marianne, Marg. I shall remember Your works O LORD
(*chorus*) Remember Your wonders of old
E're shall I ponder Thy great works
Your glorious deeds will be told
Your watchful eye has seen
(*chorus*) Your tender heart has known
My cry has reached Your ears
Your answer will be shown
Sleep, O anguish, even restlessly
Torment, be silent, duty has spoken
Yield not to despair inside of me
Help me show (*slowing*) to all I dearly love— a heart— unbroken and whole

(*Blackout. Exit all*)

End of ACT I
ACT II

Entr'acte

SCENE 1: FANNY'S HOUSE

(John and Fanny Dashwood enter to garden during the black out. John carries a letter with him)

Fanny What are you reading, John?
John A letter from Elinor. My sisters are to be here in town with a friend.
Fanny I suppose we shall be forced to see them then.
John Yes, I suppose so. After all, I still feel I've not fulfilled my promise to father.
Fanny Are you still concerning yourself with that? Your sisters and stepmother are doing very well for themselves.
John Perhaps you are right, but I still think it necessary to see them while they are here— maybe have them to a dinner some evening, or perhaps invite them to stay with us for a few days.
Fanny John, let us not be carried away with ourselves... it is coming to the height of the season for entertaining... we will no doubt meet at some of the same parties, but, don't act too hastily for we will likely be too busy to ask them for a visit. *(They start exiting)* Besides, they are here with a friend. We cannot deprive her of their company!

SCENE 2: LONDON HOUSE

(Lights come up on London House as Marianne, Elinor, Lucy, Anne and Mrs. Jennings are entering. All are wearing traveling coats, hats and gloves)

Mrs. J I hope you will each find your rooms comfortable during your stay in London. Now, let me show you all the rest of the house... I want you to think of everything in it as your own.
Marianne Mrs. Jennings, your home is lovely and I would love to explore it at my leisure. But just now, might I request a bit of paper and directions to the post?
Elinor Dearest, shall we write to Mamma later? It's not fair to our host!
Marianne I am not writing to our mother, Elinor.
Mrs. J Goodness Gracious, I understand what you're getting at. Sit down here, and when Willoughby responds, you must invite him to dine.
(To the Steele girls) We will want to avoid needless gossip. It can be like a wildfire once it gets started. Yes, I'll have my man drop it off at the post for you, darling.
Why don't the three of you come along and I'll show you the rest of the manse.
(All exit, except Elinor, who stays behind for the intro of the song)
Mrs. J Elinor... Come along, darling!

SONG: "LETTERS TO WILLOUGHBY"

Marianne Dearest to me,
Mr. Willoughby
I expect this sweet surprise will treat you to delight
I am here in the city
With Mrs. Jennings
And committee
I can only dream
I might see your face supreme, this night
I pray you receive this with time to spare
If not tonight
Then I'll await you
On the morning air!
Miss Marianne.
(Underscore continues)

Man *(Spoken)* You called for me, Miss?

Marianne Yes, would you kindly take this to post immediately so it might be delivered this afternoon?

Man My pleasure!

Anne Miss Marianne, we were hoping you'd join us today for lunch and a stroll. The weather is lovely and it's a fine opportunity.

Lucy Please do not waste another day inside, dearest. Come enjoy the sunshine!

Marianne I'm sorry, but I must... uh— no, thank you.
(Leaving without her they pause out of her earshot)

Lucy I am certain she could use the fresh air!

Maid *(Maid entered and began to speak to Marianne while Steeles were exiting)* I am sorry, Miss, but today is the butler's day off... but if you like I will check at the post when I go to market!

Marianne Thank you.

Mrs. J Dearest, we have a marvelous day planned. We're dying to have you accompany us to the shops on Clementine Street. Your sense of style is impeccable and I want you to help me pick a new hat.

Marianne I'm sorry, my temples are pounding and my head could just explode. I'm afraid I need to lie down until this is passed.

Mrs. J Perhaps tomorrow then?...

Lucy She is only fooling herself with such impertinent actions!

Anne It's a disgrace! I can't believe that a woman with breeding would behave in such a manner.

Marianne Did you take my latest letter to the post, sir?

Man I did.

Marianne And do you have anything for me today?

Man Once again, Miss, if I did I would be the first to come and find you.

Marianne *(Song resumes)*
Dearest me, To:
Mr. Willoughby
A fortnight waiting with woeful anticipating
I am perplexed and dismayed
Even still, in earnest
Have I prayed
Please be forthcoming
Your silence is deflating, dare speak
From eight to ten we take breakfast and tea
Should you soon call
What degree to all
My delight would be!
Miss Marianne.
(Song ends)

Elinor Marianne, I am begging you— come away from this writing desk... you need more rest! You've had no time to enjoy the city, and you've hardly spoken a word to any of our companions. You've spent every moment lurking here at the door, waiting for his response.

Marianne Someone's coming, he's tall like— dear Willoughby!
(Marianne steps "inside" and quickly smooths her dress and hair)

Man Well, I can tell that you are disappointed it is only me. I am bringing a letter for my Mistress from the post, you see!

Marianne *(Grabbing the letter and ripping it open)* Finally, he has answered my letters after all these weeks.

Man *(Elinor gasps and the Steeles look aghast)* Miss Dashwood, are you in the habit of opening correspondence that is not your own? I told you it was for Mrs. Jennings. *(Removing it from Marianne's disappointed gaze)*

Mrs. J I'll take that. *(With compassion toward a disappointed Marianne)* Thank you for opening it, dear. Why— it's an invitation to a lovely party. *(To Marianne)* Take heart dearest, I am certain your Mr. Willoughby will be invited! And since this charming weather is finally about to turn severe I am sure he will leave the hunt and come into town.

Marianne *(With delight and surprise)* That's it! Mrs. Jennings, you must be correct! Elinor, I never thought that this extreme mildness was keeping the sportsman out in the fields. Why, that is why I have not heard from him all these weeks!
(Black out)

SCENE 3: LONDON HOUSE, OUTSIDE

(Elinor and Brandon enter to a side stage while Marianne and Mrs. Jennings exit and set is changed for the party scene)

Elinor *(Calling behind her to Marianne and Mrs. J who are upstairs)* I'll be waiting for you at the carriage!
(Brandon approaches)

Elinor Col. Brandon, good day to you. I'm sorry you have caught us on our way out. Marianne and the others shall be down immediately.

Brandon Then I shall speak quickly. I... came to inquire whether or not I should congratulate you on the acquisition of a new brother.

Elinor Sir?

Brandon Your sister's engagement to Mr. Willoughby is widely known.

Elinor But how can that be? Her own family does not know of it.

Brandon I beg your pardon, then. I did not suppose any secrecy intended as they openly correspond and their impending marriage is widely talked of.

Elinor By whom have you heard it mentioned?

Brandon By many— Sir John, Mrs. Jennings, and others you are not acquainted with. *(Pause)* I came to inquire... is everything finally settled between them?

Elinor The details, I know not... But, I must inform you that I am convinced of their mutual affection. I am terribly sorry, Colonel.

Brandon To your sister, then, I wish all imaginable happiness. To Mr. Willoughby, that he may endeavor to deserve her.

Elinor Might I inquire after your meaning, sir?

Brandon I am afraid I have already said too much... I must take my leave of you... good day, Miss Dashwood. *(Exits)*
(Elinor looks confused, then exits)

SCENE 4: GARDEN PARTY, LONDON

(Lights up on Stage Right, garden. Everyone on stage should be dressed in "ball gowns" with gloves or nice jackets. Guests are mingling. John and Fanny Dashwood are among the guests with Fanny's brother, Robert. Willoughby is also there, but should keep his back turned so that Marianne does not see him when she enters)

Robert I hate the first parties of the season. They are thrown by the social misfits of London. They have to get their gatherings in early. They know if they waited to the height of the season, no one would come to their backward soirees.

Fanny Oh, Robert darling, cheer up. You are not only fulfilling a social obligation, you are committing an act of charity. *(Adjusting his ascot)* You can feel the excitement from every woman in the room just because you are here.

Robert Quite right. Thank you for the reminder. And John, did I hear that your sisters were to be here this evening?

John Yes... I expect them anytime now.

Robert No doubt Miss Marianne will be hoping to get a glimpse of *her* *(beat)* Mr. Willoughby. Have you heard, sister, that she has been writing the man letters at least once a day since they've been here?

Fanny Yes. It's quite shocking. I would ignore their acquaintance entirely out of embarrassment, but John insists we see them while they are in town.

John But do you not suppose them to be engaged, my dear?

Robert *(He and Fanny laugh)* John, Mr. Willoughby is the type of man who could marry any woman he chooses. I am sure you would agree that it would be much more advantageous for him to choose a wife from one of the many prestigious and wealthy families here in London, rather than a poor country girl like your sister.

John Well... I...

Fanny Of course you agree, John. And speaking of poor country girls, they have arrived. Oh! I wish Mrs. Jennings would have looked them over more carefully before she let them out of the house like that.

(Mrs. Jennings, Elinor, Marianne, Anne and Lucy enter and approach John and Fanny)

Mrs. J Oh, Mrs. Dashwood! How fetching you look this evening! But then, you always do! Allow me to introduce my cousins, Miss Lucy Steele and Miss Anne Steele.

Fanny And what charming young ladies they are, Mrs. Jennings. May I present my youngest brother, Mr. Robert Ferrars.

(Lucy looks smitten)

Mrs. J It is very nice to meet you, Mr. Ferrars.

Robert Yes. *(He bows in her direction)*

Mrs. J But where is your older brother? Is he not here this evening? I do declare, I am beginning to doubt his existence!

Fanny My brother Edward is far too busy for a gathering of this sort.

Robert *(Looking at Elinor)* Yes, I believe he is dining with Miss Mortimer's family this evening. I am sure you have heard of her— she is heiress to an enormous fortune. *That would be a very good connection— on both sides.*

(Lucy looks confused and uncomfortable, but Elinor holds his gaze)

Elinor I am sure that it would be— your mother must be very pleased.

John Yes...very pleased.

(Willoughby turns and he and Elinor's eyes meet. Marianne has not seen him yet. He gives a slight bow to Elinor and begins to walk off when Marianne sees him)

Marianne Good heavens! He is here! But why does he not look at me? Elinor, why does he not come to speak to me?

Elinor Marianne, please— I am begging you to remain composed. Do not betray what you feel to the whole room. Perhaps he has not observed you yet.

Marianne Then I will make him notice me. *(Walks toward him)* Willoughby!

(He turns, and she holds out her hand to him. The others in the room can take notice of them, but politely keep their conversations going while glancing toward the spectacle now and then)

Marianne Willoughby, what is the meaning of this? Will you not shake hands with me?

(Willoughby takes her hand briefly, looking pained, then lets it go)

Willoughby *(To Elinor)* How is your mother, Miss Dashwood? I hope she is well.

Elinor Very well, I thank you.

Willoughby And how long have you been in town?

Elinor We arrived... a little over a fortnight ago and are staying with our friend, Mrs. Jennings.

Marianne *(Interrupting)* Have you not received my notes? Good heavens, Willoughby, what is the matter?

Willoughby *(Glancing at a well dressed woman on one side of the stage)* Yes, I had the pleasure of receiving the information of your arrival in town, which you were so good to send me. You will excuse me, I must return to my party. *(He leaves and goes to the woman. She puts her arm in his very territorially)*

Marianne *(Desperately)* Go to him, Elinor, and force him to come to me instantly. He must explain himself — or I shall not have a moment's peace.

Elinor This is not the place for explanations, dearest. Wait until tomorrow. We will settle it all then. *(Marianne nods weakly and then half faints with anxiety. Elinor puts her arm around Marianne and leads her back to Mrs. Jennings)*

Elinor My sister is unwell, Mrs. Jennings. Would you mind very much if I asked you to take us home?

Mrs. J Oh! Of course not, my dear. We will leave at once! Anne! Lucy! Miss Marianne is unwell— we must take her home!

Robert If I may be so bold, ma'am, might I take on the responsibility of escorting the Misses Steele home, so they may enjoy the rest of the evening?

(Lucy looks overjoyed at the idea)

Mrs. J Yes, yes, that would be wonderful, Mr. Ferrars. Come girls, let us get you home.

(Mrs. Jennings puts her arm around Marianne's other side and the three of them exit. During the following lines, the party guests start exiting)

Fanny Marianne always knows how to make a scene. I think *you* are both delightful.
Robert As do I.
Fanny I wonder, would you like to come and stay with us for a few weeks?
Lucy That would be above all things delightful. But only if it will not be any trouble for you, of course.
Fanny Of course not, my dear.
John But my dear, I thought we would ask my sisters for a visit...
Fanny Oh, we can ask them some other time— this may be our only opportunity to host Miss Steele and Miss Anne.
Robert Indeed. Your sisters will always be among your circle, but who knows when we will see our new friends again.
John Oh yes. Now I see. You are quite right. Quite right.
(Exit all)

SCENE 5: LONDON HOUSE

(Lighting shifts to Marianne and Elinor at London House. Marianne is crying over a letter and has several other folded papers in her lap. Elinor is standing a little way off, waiting to hear what the contents of the letter are)

Elinor Marianne, talk to me... Tell me, what did Mr. Willoughby say in his letter?
(Marianne is too overwhelmed with grief to speak, but holds out the letter for Elinor to read. Elinor comes closer, takes the letter and begins to read)

Willoughby V.O. “My Dear Madam, thank you for your letter. I am much concerned to find that there was anything in my behavior last night that did not meet with your approval. And though I am at a loss as to how I might have offended you, I entreat your forgiveness. It was perfectly unintentional. I shall never reflect on my former acquaintance with your family in Devonshire without the most grateful pleasure. My esteem for your whole family is very sincere, but if I have been so unfortunate as to give rise to a belief of more than I felt, or meant to express, I shall reproach myself for not having been more guarded in my profession of that esteem. My affections have been long engaged elsewhere. It is with great regret that I return your letters and the lock of hair which you so obligingly bestowed upon me. John Willoughby.”

Elinor Oh Marianne! I am so sorry.
Marianne Elinor, I don't think I can breathe.
Elinor I know, dearest... but if you could try to calm yourself...
Marianne It is easy for those who have no sorrow of their own to give instruction to those in their hour of tragedy. Happy Elinor— you cannot comprehend what I suffer!
Elinor *(Taken aback and hurt)* How can you think I am happy while I see you so wretched? Please... please, how can I help you?
Marianne Mine is a misery which nothing can do away.
Elinor You must not say such things, Marianne. Much as you suffer now, think of what you would have had to endure if your engagement had been carried on for months before he put an end to it.
Marianne Engagement?! There has been no engagement.
Elinor No engagement?
Marianne No. He is not so unworthy as you believe. He has broken no faith with me.
Elinor But he told you he loved you.
Marianne Yes— no— never absolutely. It was every day implied, but never declared. Sometimes I thought it had been, but it never was.
Elinor Yet you wrote to him?
Marianne Could that be wrong after all that had passed? I'm sorry... I cannot speak any longer. I must go.
(Exits)

Elinor *(Sits down to read the enclosed letters)* Oh, Marianne... how much of your heart have you given away? *(She begins reading Marianne's letters)*

(Col. Brandon enters. Elinor quickly folds the letters and puts them in a safe place)

Butler Colonel Brandon to see you, Miss.

Elinor Col. Brandon— I did not expect to see you today.

Brandon I came to inquire after your sister. I heard she might be unwell today.

Elinor You were correctly informed, Colonel. I'm afraid she is quite unwell.

Brandon Miss Dashwood, I have another purpose for coming here today. Will you allow me to relate some circumstances to you? I would not mention it if it were not for a serious regard for your family and an earnest desire to alleviate some pain.

Elinor If you know something of Mr. Willoughby that will explain his actions, please speak. We will be eternally grateful.

Brandon Very well. I will try to be brief, although I hardly know where to begin. My partiality (*beat*) for your sister stems from a young lady I once knew of whom Miss Marianne reminds me.

Elinor Yes, I believe I have heard Sir John mention her.

Brandon There is a strong physical resemblance between them, and the same warmth of heart, and like eagerness of fancy and spirits as well. Eliza was her name. She came as an infant to live under my father's guardianship, orphaned tragically from very wealthy parents. We grew up together, but as I was often away at school, I only saw her over the summers. I cannot remember a time when I did not love Eliza and in time, her feelings for me were as fervent as your sister's toward Mr. Willoughby. I had hopes of marriage, so I joined the army. While I was away, my father arranged for my elder brother to marry Eliza, as her fortune was large and our family was in debt. My brother did not love her! In just two short years he managed to twist her fortune into his control; he then divorced her. After I returned home, I learned that his abandonment also included her only child. I began an exhaustive search for her, and after many months, I finally found her. This former beauty was so absolutely altered, her spirits broken. She was living in a poor house, her body ravaged by the final stages of consumption. I moved her to a private physician's care and spent every waking moment with her until the end.

Elinor I am very sorry, Colonel.

Brandon As she lay dying, I promised her daughter would not go without love or care. She was only three years old and as I knew nothing of raising a child, I placed her in a school and visited her often. To afford her care, I continued my military service, but when my brother died about five years ago, I was left the estate at Delaford, which allowed me to retire. Three years ago, I took her from the school and put her under the care of a respectable woman who was to be her private tutor. I was very pleased with the arrangement until almost a year ago, when she disappeared.

Elinor Oh, Colonel!

Brandon I searched for her in vain. I finally left the search to a private inspector and returned home to Delaford. Months passed and I feared the worst. The first news I heard of her was on the day of the Delaford picnic. That was my reason for leaving so suddenly.

Elinor Please— what happened to the girl? Was she all right?

Brandon I am afraid she was disgraced. She had in her naiveté allowed herself to be seduced, and had born the child of...

Elinor Willoughby?

Brandon Yes. He left her, promising to return, but she neither saw nor heard from him again.

Elinor I cannot believe it.

Brandon I am sorry, Miss Dashwood. Perhaps I should not have told you.

Elinor No— thank you, Colonel for telling me the truth. I know it cannot have been easy for you either.

Brandon I only hope it will make your sister's situation less distressing. Perhaps if she hears what it could have been— but I will leave that to your discretion. You will know best what its effect on Miss Marianne will be.

Elinor She will most likely receive it with great grief but, I believe it will be of help to her in time.

Brandon I only hope that it will. I must take my leave of you. Good day, Miss Dashwood.
(*Bows and exits*)

Elinor Oh! Dearest Marianne, where will I begin?
(*She begins to leave the room when Lucy Steele enters, they nearly run into each other. Elinor looks surprised, and moves to get around Lucy, who catches her by the hands*)

Lucy Oh, Miss Dashwood, Miss Dashwood! I am so happy to find you home! I cannot stay long, but I have been dying to talk to you about my excellent hosts, your own dear John and Fanny— she asked me to call her that! (*She motions for them to sit, and they do*) Your sister-in-law is above all things gracious— and so amiable! I believe she looks on me quite as a little sister— (*quieter*) which is, as you know, exactly what I could hope for.

Elinor That is... very fortunate for you.