



Sense and Sensibility (The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Jane Austen)

By Jane Austen

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Sense and Sensibility, Jane Austen's first published novel (1811), introduced its readers to many of the themes which would dominate Austen's future work. On one level it is a simple story of two sisters finding fulfilment within a society bounded by regulations and restrictions. But on another it is a comprehensive exploration of the moral dilemmas facing young women in the choices they have to make about their lives. Austen writes about everyday events of her own time with a subtlety and sensitivity unprecedented in the English novel. This edition, first published in 2006, takes as its copytext the second edition of 1813, which corrects some errors of the first edition. The volume provides comprehensive explanatory notes, an extensive critical introduction covering the context and publication history of the work, a chronology of Austen's life and an authoritative textual apparatus. This edition is an indispensable resource for all scholars and readers of Austen.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Though not the first novel she wrote, *Sense and Sensibility* was the first Jane Austen published. Though she initially called it *Elinor and Marianne*, Austen jettisoned both the title and the epistolary mode in which it was originally written, but kept the essential theme: the necessity of finding a workable middle ground between passion and reason. The story revolves around the Dashwood sisters, Elinor and Marianne. Whereas the former is a sensible, rational creature, her younger sister is wildly romantic--a characteristic that offers Austen plenty of scope for both satire and compassion. Commenting on Edward Ferrars, a potential suitor for Elinor's hand, Marianne admits that while she "loves him tenderly," she finds him disappointing as a possible lover for her sister:

Oh! Mama, how spiritless, how tame was Edward's manner in reading to us last night! I felt for my sister most severely. Yet she bore it with so much composure, she seemed scarcely to notice it. I could hardly keep my seat. To hear those beautiful lines which have frequently almost driven me wild, pronounced with such impenetrable calmness, such dreadful indifference!

Soon however, Marianne meets a man who measures up to her ideal: Mr. Willoughby, a new neighbor. So swept away by passion is Marianne that her behavior begins to border on the scandalous. Then Willoughby abandons her; meanwhile, Elinor's growing affection for Edward suffers a check when he admits he is secretly engaged to a childhood sweetheart. How each of the sisters reacts to their romantic misfortunes, and the lessons they draw before coming finally to the requisite happy ending forms the heart of the novel. Though Marianne's disregard for social conventions and willingness to consider the world well-lost for love may appeal to modern readers, it is Elinor whom Austen herself most evidently admired; a truly happy marriage, she shows us, exists only where sense and sensibility meet and mix in proper measure. --Alix Wilber

From Library Journal

Austen's novels (e.g., *Pride and Prejudice*, Audio Reviews, LJ 11/1/92) have lately received so much well-deserved media attention that another version of her first novel, in yet another format, may appear redundant to persons not sufficiently acquainted with the author's charms. However, for her many admirers, both present and future, this new audiobook is a treasure, thanks to a superb reading by actress Susannah Harker. The talented narrator is an ideal interpreter of Austen's delightful paean to the virtue of sense as she traces the struggles of her young heroines to achieve happiness. Harker skillfully captures each character's personality through subtle inflection, and she keenly, yet unobtrusively, underscores the author's delicious irony. With a reading of such quality, the romantic predicaments of the Miss Dashwoods become all-absorbing and the hours fly by too quickly. Most highly recommended for all libraries.

Sister M. Anna Falbo, Villa Maria Coll. Lib., Buffalo, N.Y.

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Review

From the youthful energy of *Northanger Abbey* to the subtle art of *Persuasion*, these works reveal the breadth and artistry of one of the most beloved novelists of all time. Now, these timeless novels of manners, morals, and love have been beautifully repackaged to appeal to a new generation of readers. A strikingly

designed collection, featuring new introductions as well as reading group guides.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

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