

Penguin



Readers

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Sense and Sensibility

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CHAPTER ONE

Changes at Norland Park

For a long time, Mr Henry Dashwood had lived with his second wife and two daughters at Norland Park, a large **estate** in the Sussex **countryside**. Henry also had one son, John, from his first **marriage**. John Dashwood was rich from money he **inherited** after his mother's death. He lived with his wife, Fanny, who was also from a **wealthy** family.

Henry had inherited the estate from an old **gentleman**. This gentleman had wanted John to inherit it when Henry died, so Henry was not **allowed** to give what he owned to his wife and daughters, except £10,000 for Mrs Dashwood.

When Henry became very ill, he asked John to visit. Henry made John promise to take care of his wife and daughters after his death. However, John was a **selfish** young man and Fanny was even more selfish.

Immediately after Mr Dashwood's death, John and Fanny arrived at Norland Park. The estate belonged to them now. Mrs Dashwood had never liked Fanny, and now she wanted to leave Norland as soon as possible with her daughters.

Elinor, the oldest daughter, was tall and pretty. Although she was only nineteen years old, she was calm and understood things well. Her sister, Marianne, was seventeen and even prettier with a sweet smile and dark eyes which were full of life. Like her mother, she felt things very deeply

and could not keep her feelings a secret.

Both Marianne and her mother were unhappy that the estate now belonged to John and Fanny. Elinor was unhappy, too, but she controlled her feelings, tried to **behave** well and **encouraged** her mother and sister to do the same.

With Fanny at Norland Park, Mrs Dashwood and her daughters felt more like visitors, although John, remembering his father's words, told them that they must still think of Norland as their home.

John planned to give £3,000 to each of the girls and £100 a year to their mother. However, when he spoke to his wife, she did not agree.

"But I promised my father that I would help his wife and daughters," he replied.

"But they will probably marry rich husbands!" said Fanny.

"Perhaps five hundred pounds will be enough," said John.

"They will live very well on the ten thousand pounds that they have from your father. And Mrs Dashwood will not need a hundred pounds a year," replied Fanny.

"You are right, my love. I will sometimes give them a present of fifty pounds. That way, I will keep my promise," said John.

"Mrs Dashwood and her daughters will have enough. They have no horses and very few **servants**," Fanny continued. Finally, John decided that with a gift of fish or

meat sometimes, he could keep his promise to his father.

Mrs Dashwood and her daughters stayed at Norland for several months. Mrs Dashwood wanted to leave but no home was found. And after listening to Elinor's advice, she said "no" to several houses that were too large and expensive.

Despite Fanny's **unpleasant character**, one thing made Mrs Dashwood happier to stay longer at Norland. Fanny's brother, Edward Ferrars, was introduced to the Dashwood girls and began to spend a lot of time there, **especially** with Elinor.

Edward was not handsome and he was shy, but he had a good character. His mother and sister both wanted him to be an important person. However, he only wanted a quiet, comfortable and private home life. His younger brother, Robert, who was their mother's favourite child, had more chance of becoming someone important.

"I think that you will like Edward when you know him better," Elinor said to Mrs Dashwood.

"He is so different from his sister, Fanny, that I love him already," Mrs Dashwood replied. She soon began to hope for marriage between Edward and her daughter.

"We will miss Elinor when they are married," she said to Marianne, "but we will live close to each other and meet every day."

"I like him," replied Marianne. "But his eyes do not have that fire that shows a really interesting character. And he does not love music. He says that he likes the pictures that

Elinor draws, but I do not think that he understands much about art. I could not be happy with a man who did not share my feelings about these things. But Elinor does not care. She does not have my feelings. I am sure that I will never meet a man who I can really love.”

Later, Elinor and Marianne also talked together about Edward. “It is sad that Edward does not like drawing very much,” said Marianne.

“But he enjoys seeing my paintings,” Elinor replied. “I hope that you like him. I know that if you did not, you are so honest that you would not be able to behave nicely with him.”

Marianne did not know what to say. She could only speak the truth. After a while, she replied, “I do not know him well, Elinor, but I think that he is a good man.”

“He has a good character, but he is shy. He enjoys books and has **opinions** on many things. And although he is not handsome, his eyes are kind. In fact, I think of him as handsome,” said Elinor.

“I will think that he is handsome, Elinor, when you tell me to love him as your husband,” replied Marianne.

Elinor suddenly felt worried that she had said too much. She could not be sure what might happen with Edward.

“I like him, and I think well of him,” Elinor said.

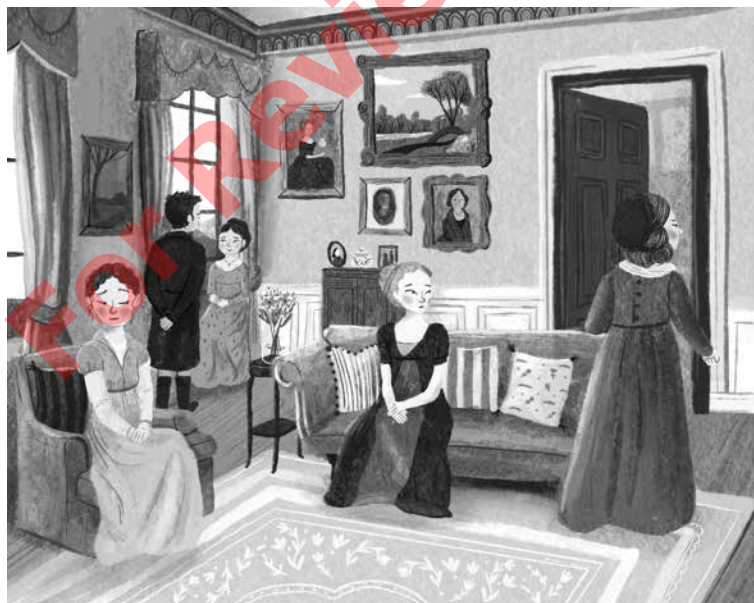
“You like him! You think well of him! Your words show a cold heart, Elinor!” replied Marianne.

Elinor laughed. “I am sorry. I do not know how Edward feels. I feel that he likes me, but he cannot do exactly what

he wants. We do not know his mother, but from what Fanny says about her, she does not sound kind. Edward may know that he could not easily marry a woman who was not from a wealthy family.”

When Fanny saw Edward and Elinor together, she was not polite. She told Elinor’s mother, “Our mother hopes that her sons will marry women from important families with **property**. Any young woman who is not from a family like that should not try to get close to Edward.”

Mrs Dashwood could not stay calm and immediately left the room. She hated to think that her daughter might be hurt by Fanny’s words and did not want to stay at Norland any longer.



Just at this time, a letter for Mrs Dashwood arrived from a relative, **Sir** John Middleton, who lived in Devon. He was a wealthy man with property and had heard that she was looking for a home. He had a house on his estate that she and her daughters could live in. It was only a **cottage** but he promised to make it comfortable.

In the letter, he encouraged her to come with her daughters to Barton Park, where he lived, to see Barton Cottage. His letter was so friendly that she decided that there was no need to think any more about it. Devon was a long way from Sussex, which now seemed a very good thing. She wrote a letter to Sir John immediately, saying that she was happy to **accept** his **invitation**.