

Unit Four

Sense and Sensibility

Book Summary

This is the story of Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, sisters who respectively represent the “sense” and “sensibility” of the title. With their mother, their sister Margaret, and their stepbrother John, they make up the Dashwood family.

Henry Dashwood, their father, has just died. Norland Park, his estate, is inherited by John; to his chagrin, Henry has nothing but ten thousand pounds to leave to his wife and daughters. On his deathbed, he urges John to provide for them and John promises that he will do so. He is already wealthy because he has a fortune from his mother and is also married to the wealthy Fanny Ferrars.

Immediately after Henry’s burial, the insensitive Mrs. Dashwood moves into Norland Park and cleverly persuades John not to make any provision for his stepmother and stepsisters. Mrs. Henry Dashwood, disliking Fanny, wants to leave Norland Park at once, but Elinor prudently restrains her until they can find a house within their means.

Edward Ferrars, Fanny’s brother, comes to stay and is attracted to Elinor. Mrs. Dashwood and Marianne expect an engagement, but Elinor is not so sure; she knows that Mrs. Ferrars and Fanny will object to Edward’s interest in her. Fanny takes exception to Edward’s fondness for Elinor and is so rude that Mrs. Dashwood at once rents a cottage fortuitously offered to her by her cousin, Sir John Middleton.

The Dashwoods move to Barton Cottage and are met by Sir John, who does all in his power to make them comfortable. They soon meet his elegant but insipid wife and their four children.

One day, when Marianne and Margaret are walking on the downs, Marianne sprains her ankle. She is carried home by a stranger, John Willoughby, who is staying at Allenhurst, a country estate which he will inherit after the death of its elderly owner, Mrs. Smith. Marianne and Willoughby fall in love and are inseparable. But after a short time, Willoughby leaves unexpectedly for London without explaining or declaring himself.

Edward Ferrars soon pays a visit to Barton Cottage. But he is distraught and gloomy, and Elinor is puzzled by his reserve.

Lady Middleton’s mother, Mrs. Jennings, has been staying at Barton Park. She teases Marianne about Colonel Brandon, a friend of Sir Henry, who obviously admires Marianne. Though she likes the colonel, Mrs. Jennings repeats some scandal about him; he is said to have an illegitimate daughter, Miss Williams.

Lady Middleton’s younger sister, Charlotte Palmer, and her husband visit Barton Park. When they leave, Sir John invites the Misses Steele, two young ladies whom he has met in Exeter and has found to be connections of Mrs. Jennings.

Lucy confides to Elinor that she has been secretly engaged to Edward Ferrars for four years. He was tutored by her uncle and became well acquainted with Lucy and Anne at that time. Elinor is shocked but concludes that Edward had a youthful infatuation for Lucy. Lucy persists in asking for advice and begs Elinor to persuade her brother John to give Edward the Barton living if he decides to take orders.

Mrs. Jennings invites Elinor and Marianne to stay with her in London. Marianne is eager to go because she hopes to see Willoughby there. He has not been back to visit them, nor has he written to Marianne.

In London, Marianne waits for a visit from Willoughby. She writes him several times but receives no reply. One day he leaves his card but never calls personally.

Finally, Elinor and Marianne see Willoughby at a dance with a fashionable heiress, Miss Grey. He speaks curtly to Marianne, who is distracted by his coldness. She writes him for an explanation, and he returns her letters with a cruel note, denying that he had ever been especially interested in her and announcing his engagement to Miss Grey.

Colonel Brandon, who is also in London, is distressed by Willoughby's conduct to Marianne and tells Elinor his own story. As a young man, he had loved his cousin Eliza, his father's ward. But to gain Eliza's fortune, his father had married her to his eldest son, who had treated her badly. Years later, the colonel discovered that Eliza had left her husband for another man. She had sunk lower and lower, and was now penniless and on her deathbed. The colonel did all he could for her and promised to bring up her daughter, also named Eliza. Eliza, now grown, had been seduced by Willoughby, who had deserted her. The colonel had fought a duel with Willoughby, but neither had been injured.

John Dashwood and his wife come to London for the season. He meets his sisters and is introduced to the Middletons, whom he finds very congenial. Anne and Lucy Steele are invited to stay with the Middletons and eventually pay a visit to the Dashwoods, John and Fanny. They are treated so kindly that Anne feels it is safe to break the secret of Lucy's engagement to Edward.

Fanny Dashwood has hysterics and orders Lucy and Anne out of her house. Edward's mother disinherits him because he will not break his word to Lucy. He decides to take orders and offers to free Lucy from her engagement, but Lucy will not give him up.

Charlotte Palmer's son is born, and she invites Elinor and Marianne to accompany her mother on a visit to her country house, Cleveland. Marianne falls ill there and seems near death. Colonel Brandon is also staying at Cleveland and offers to fetch Mrs. Dashwood.

The Palmers leave their house, fearing infection for the baby, and while Elinor awaits her mother's arrival, she is amazed by a visit from Willoughby. He has heard of Marianne's illness and has come to get news of her. He tells Elinor how bitterly he repents of his conduct and how wretched his wife has made him; it was she who dictated the cruel note which he sent to Marianne. Elinor is sorry for him.

Marianne recovers and the family returns to Barton Cottage. Eventually, Elinor tells Marianne about Willoughby's repentant visit. Marianne is now sorry that the family has suffered on her behalf.

One day, a servant tells them that Edward Ferrars is married. Elinor tries to put him out of her mind; however, he arrives at Barton Cottage and explains that Lucy did not marry him; instead, she eloped with his brother, Robert. Everything ends happily. Edward is reconciled to his mother and marries Elinor. He takes orders and is given the living at Delaford, Colonel Brandon's estate. Eventually Marianne agrees to marry the colonel, and the two couples live happily, close in distance and in friendship.

Character Analysis

Elinor Dashwood

Elinor represents "sense" in this novel. Only nineteen, she is her mother's counselor, able to influence her in the direction of prudence. When Mrs. Dashwood wants to leave Norland Park, it is Elinor who prevents her from acting too hastily. She induces Marianne to look at things in a calmer, more sensible light than is natural to her, as when she makes her admit her impropriety in going alone with Willoughby to Mrs. Smith's house.

Elinor is very different from Marianne when she falls in love. Though attracted to Edward, she is cautious, telling her sister, "I am by no means sure of his regard for me." She keeps her self-control when she learns that Lucy has been secretly engaged to Edward and rightly concludes that Edward felt only a youthful infatuation for the girl.

Deeply devoted to Marianne, she goes to London because Marianne hopes to find Willoughby there, and she makes up for Marianne's rudeness to their hostess by her own unflinching courtesy. When Marianne falls ill, she nurses her tenderly.

When she hears from a servant that "Mr. Ferrars is married," Elinor shows that she is not always the calm, collected girl she appears to be. Being capable of deep devotion, she is also able to love sincerely, and at the story's end her faith in Edward has been rewarded in their marriage and subsequent happiness.

Marianne Dashwood

Though probably intended as a caricature of the oversensitive heroine in the late-eighteenth-century novel, Marianne is a character in her own right: "She was sensible and clever, but eager in everything; her sorrows, her joys, could have no moderation."

Marianne is amazed that Elinor could love the colorless Edward. "He is not the kind of young man—there is something wanting," she tells her mother. She looks on Colonel Brandon as an old man, past romance, although he is only thirty-five, and falls headlong in love with the shallow Willoughby: "His person and air were equal to what her fancy had ever drawn for the hero of a favorite story." Always too impulsive, Marianne goes with Willoughby to look over Mrs. Smith's house, accepts his offer of a horse, and pokes fun at Colonel Brandon to please him. Intolerant of the feelings of others, Marianne is displeased by Sir John's jests and finds Mrs. Jennings vulgar and gossipy. She treats the old lady impolitely during their trip to London but is eager to avail herself of Mrs. Jennings' hospitality. She is outspoken and honest, and cannot tell even a polite lie: "It was impossible for her to say what she did not feel, however trivial the occasion."

When Willoughby deserts her, Marianne loses all self-control and eventually becomes ill. When she recovers, she realizes that she has brought her troubles on herself, and she admits to Elinor that Willoughby never actually proposed marriage to her. She realizes her faults and how often she has hurt others: "Everybody seemed injured by me. The kindness, the unceasing kindness of Mrs. Jennings, I had repaid with ungrateful contempt. To the Middletons, the Palmers, the Steeles, to every common acquaintance even, I had been insolent and unjust."

At last, learning sense, she appreciates Colonel Brandon at his true worth. Married to him, she achieves happiness because she "could never love by halves; and her whole heart became in time, as much devoted to her husband, as it had once been to Willoughby."

Edward Ferrars

Financially dependent on his mother, Edward is privately educated although not trained for a specific profession. His mother wants him to cut a fine figure in the world, but “All his wishes centered in domestic comfort and the quiet of private life.”

“Gentlemanlike and pleasing,” Edward is not attractive to Marianne. Elinor sees him differently: “. . . his mind is well-informed . . . his imagination lively . . . his taste delicate and pure.” She praises the “expression of his eyes” and the “sweetness of his countenance.”

Strictly honorable, Edward keeps his promise to Lucy even though he is in love with Elinor. As a lover, he is clumsy and inarticulate; when he is finally free of Lucy, he blurts out an explanation to Elinor but does not then propose. Instead, he “fell into a reverie which no remarks, no inquiries, no affectionate address of Mrs. Dashwood could penetrate, and at last, without saying a word, quitted the room, and walked out toward the village.”

He finally proposes to Elinor, persuading her that his affection for her is “as tender, as constant, as she had ever supposed it to be.” He achieves the quiet life he yearns for and shows “the ready discharge of his duties in every particular” as a country parson.

John Willoughby

On his first appearance, Willoughby appears to be the romantic hero of the novel as he rescues Marianne and carries her home. “Uncommonly handsome,” he has a charming voice and gallant manners. Sir John describes him as “As good a kind of fellow as ever lived. . . . A decent shot . . . there is not a bolder rider in England.”

Attracted to Marianne, he pays her great attention. Something of his real nature shows when he makes malicious fun of Marianne’s admirer, Colonel Brandon. As time goes on, he is seen to have no strength of purpose; he leaves Marianne without explanation when Mrs. Smith discovers that he has seduced Colonel Brandon’s protégé, Eliza Williams.

He avoids Marianne until she begs him to speak to her at a dance. Later he sends her a cruel and curt letter, saying that he had never been seriously attracted to her. After marrying Miss Grey, a wealthy woman who makes him unhappy, he repents of his behavior to Marianne. When Sir John tells him of her serious illness, he travels to Cleveland at once to find out how she is. He tells Elinor that his fiancée dictated the letter to Marianne and made him send it.

He convinces Elinor of his repentance. During their talk, “Her thoughts were silently fixed on the irreparable injury which too early an independence and its consequent habits of idleness, dissipation, and luxury, had made in the mind, the character, the happiness, of a man who, to every advantage of person and talents, united a disposition naturally open and honest, and . . . [an] affectionate temper.”

Lucy Steele

Exceptionally pretty, Lucy ensnares Edward's affection while he is her uncle's pupil. She herself has little education and no money and is glad of this opportunity to come up in the world. When Sir John invites Lucy and her sister Anne to Barton Park, the sisters are shrewd enough to bring presents for the children and to flatter their mother into thinking they dote on them. Thus they soon win her favor.

Lucy is determined to become intimate with the Misses Dashwood, whom she praises as "the most beautiful, elegant and accomplished and agreeable girls." Clever and cunning, Lucy confides her secret to Elinor and watches for her reactions. Knowing that Elinor doubts her story, she shrewdly shows her a letter and picture from Edward. She acts her part well, but Elinor is not deceived, rightly seeing Lucy as "illiterate, artful and selfish."

When Fanny Dashwood and Mrs. Ferrars are pleasant to her, Lucy is delighted. But her sister tells Fanny about Lucy's secret engagement, and Fanny orders her from the house.

Not averse to lying, she declines Edward's offer to release her from her engagement but tells Elinor that it was she who offered to set Edward free. Then she subtly flatters Robert and beguiles him into eloping with her. She insinuates herself into the favor of old Mrs. Ferrars by flattery and false penitence, and actually becomes the old lady's favorite daughter-in-law.

Colonel Brandon

To Elinor, the colonel is a faithful and helpful friend; to Mrs. Jennings, he is an eligible bachelor for whom she must find a wife; to Mrs. Dashwood, he is "a noble man" who would make an excellent husband for her daughter. To Marianne, he is elderly and unromantic.

The colonel's behavior is always honorable. He admirably fulfills his promise to his lost love, Eliza, and brings up her child. When the young Eliza is seduced by Willoughby, the colonel challenges Willoughby to a duel. He tells Elinor about it only because he wants to prevent Willoughby from harming Marianne.

During Marianne's illness, he remains devotedly in the background, helping whenever he can. He offers to fetch Mrs. Dashwood to Cleveland and on the journey back confesses his love for Marianne. "It came out quite unawares, quite undesignedly," Mrs. Dashwood tells Elinor. "I, you may well believe, could talk of nothing but my child; he could not conceal his distress."

Respecting Edward and wanting to help him, the colonel generously offers him the Delaford living, tactfully transmitting his offer through Elinor. His patience, tolerance, and kindness are finally rewarded when Marianne marries him, for "her regard and her society restored his mind to animation, and his spirits to cheerfulness."

Mrs. Dashwood

A person of exaggerated sensibility, Mrs. Dashwood is likeable, with perfect manners and "a sweetness of address" which attracts everyone. She is devoted to her daughters and very proud of them. She sympathizes with Marianne, who is so like herself in temperament. She cannot understand Elinor's calmer temperament;

when Elinor, speaking of Edward, says, "I think you will like him," Mrs. Dashwood replies, "Like him! . . . I can feel no sentiment of approbation inferior to love."

She is captivated by Willoughby and is certain that he means to marry Marianne. Completely honest herself, she is deeply distressed by his subsequent behavior.

When Marianne is ill, she is so desperately anxious that she cannot but believe that her daughter is already dead. But, as Marianne recovers, she becomes her usual happy self. She again starts to match-make, "led away by the exuberance of her joy to think only of what would increase it."

After her daughters are married, Mrs. Dashwood is prudent enough to remain in her modest cottage, happy that her youngest daughter, Margaret, has "reached an age highly suitable for dancing, and not very ineligible for being supposed to have a lover."

Mrs. Jennings

Vulgar, kindly, and cheerful, Mrs. Jennings is the widow of a man "who had got all his money in a low way." With both daughters married off, she likes to visit them in their country houses and enjoys the society of their young guests. She is fond of young people and has an eagle eye for their romances—even questioning a servant to find out where Marianne went with Willoughby on the day of the picnic. An inveterate gossip, she passes on scandal about Colonel Brandon even though she likes and respects him.

Mrs. Jennings has much common sense and easily sees through affectation. Lady Middleton may think Fanny Dashwood a charming woman, but to Mrs. Jennings "she appeared nothing more than a little, proud-looking woman of uncordial address." And when John Dashwood blames Edward for keeping his word to Lucy, Mrs. Jennings stoutly declares that Edward has acted like an honest man and that Lucy is a good girl who deserves a worthy husband.

Mrs. Jennings is kindness itself to Elinor and Marianne. She is thoughtful, generous, and solicitous for their comfort and, on the journey to London, does not even seem to notice Marianne's rudeness. When Marianne falls ill, she remains at Cleveland to help Elinor care for her.

A devoted mother, she fusses happily over Charlotte and her first baby. When Charlotte imagines the baby to be ill, Mrs. Jennings shows her common sense, diagnosing the trouble as "nothing in the world but red-gum."

All in all, as Austen says, Mrs. Jennings "was a very cheerful, agreeable woman," probably the most lovable character in the novel.

Lady Middleton

Lady Middleton, in contrast to her husband, is perfectly well-bred but reserved and cold. She has few subjects of conversation and is concerned chiefly with the elegant maintenance of her household.

She shares her husband's liking for entertaining, not because she enjoys society but because she wants to show off her elegance. She dotes on her four children and is attracted to anyone who praises them; Anne and Lucy Steele are soon in favor because they allow their hair to be pulled down, their sashes untied, and so forth.

In London, acting as their hostess, she makes an excellent impression on John and Fanny Dashwood. Fanny, especially, is drawn to her, finding in her a kindred spirit.

Robert Ferrars

“Silly and a great coxcomb,” Robert Ferrars is certain that his own vanity is of greater worth than Edward’s modesty and self-effacement. He attributes this to his education at Westminster, a famous English public school.

When Elinor notices him in Gray’s, the jewelry store, making a great fuss over his choice of a toothpick case, his glance demands admiration rather than gives it. Utterly foolish in his views, he talks nonsense to Elinor on their second meeting, breaking into lavish praise of cottages: “Elinor agreed to it all, for she did not think he deserved the compliment of rational opposition.”

With careless good nature, he first visits Lucy to try to persuade her to break off her engagement to Edward. But Lucy, by encouraging him to talk about himself, soon wins his interest and gets him to marry her.

Robert’s chief traits are vanity and pride: “He was proud of his conquest, proud of tricking Edward, and very proud of marrying privately without his mother’s consent.” After his marriage, he easily wins his mother’s forgiveness “by the simple expedient of asking for it.”

Sir John Middleton

A fine type of country squire, Sir John is good-humored, generous, and hospitable. When Mrs. Dashwood is left a widow, he offers her Barton Cottage at a modest rental and does all he can to make the family comfortable there. He sends them fish and game, carries their letters “to and from the post,” and gives them his daily newspaper.

He enjoys the society of young people, especially young ladies, whom he likes to tease about their lovers. He is a boon to “the juvenile part of the neighbourhood” because he is forever forming parties to picnic in summer and dance in winter.

Energetic, but with no mental interests. Sir John is a sportsman. He recommends Willoughby to the Dashwoods as a hunter, “a pleasant, good-humoured fellow” with an eye for a horse or a dog. But when Willoughby deserts Marianne, Sir John cuts him. He later tells Willoughby about Marianne’s illness, and, as Willoughby told Elinor, “His heart was softened in seeing mine suffer; and much of his ill-will was done away with.”

Mrs. Palmer

Mrs. Jennings’ younger daughter, Charlotte, is a foolish but cheerful young woman “strongly endowed by nature with a turn for being uniformly civil and happy.” Short, plump, and pretty, she is not so elegant as her sister, Lady Middleton, but is “much more prepossessing.” When she visits the Dashwoods at Barton Cottage, she likes and admires everyone and everything: “Well! What a delightful room this is! I never saw anything so charming!” Not even her husband’s rudeness can disturb her: “When he scolded or abused her, she was highly pleased.”

One of the most entertaining characters in the novel, Charlotte prattles incessantly, often with unconscious humor. When asked if she knows Willoughby, she replies, “Oh dear, yes; I know him extremely well,” and then goes on to say, “not that I ever spoke to him indeed; but I have seen him forever in town.”

When her baby is born, she naturally fusses over him and shows little common sense over his childish ailments. When Marianne falls ill, she persuades her husband to send her and the baby to relatives in Bath, fearing infection for her child.

Mr. Palmer

“A grave-looking man . . . with an air of more fashion and sense than his wife,” Mr. Palmer acts in a consistently rude and boorish manner, probably to give himself importance. He complains because Sir John has no billiard room, declares his mother-in-law to be ill-bred, and continually insults or ignores his wife.

Elinor at first thinks that his temper is soured “by finding, like many others of his sex, that through some unaccountable bias in favour of beauty, he was the husband of a very silly wife.” But later she decides that he is rude because he wants to appear different from everyone else.

Fanny Dashwood

A most unpleasant woman, Fanny represents the spoiled and selfish woman of wealth of Austen’s time. She is egoistic and believes that what is good for her or her child is the best thing for everyone. Determined to get all she can for her son, she cleverly persuades her husband to break his promise and give up any idea of providing for his stepmother and half-sisters. Neither courteous nor kindly, she does not wish to entertain Elinor and Marianne in London and is resentful when they are invited by her friends. When her husband suggests that they should invite the girls to stay with them, she persuades him to invite the Misses Steele instead—and believes that she is acting “out of the benevolence of her heart.” Ironically, she discovers during their stay that Lucy is engaged to Edward. This brings on an absurd fit of hysterics.

In London, she is naturally attracted to Lady Middleton, for there is “a kind of cold-heartedness on both sides,” and they sympathize with each other “in an insipid propriety of demeanour, and a general want of understanding.”

Mrs. Ferrars

Small, thin, and sour-faced, Mrs. Ferrars is a most possessing woman. She keeps her sons dependent upon her and tries to rule their lives. A snob, she sends Edward to a tutor, rather than to school, to please her titled brother. She wants Edward to cut a fine figure in the world and marry well. When he falls in love with Elinor, she disapproves, showing her displeasure so strongly that Elinor sees “almost enough to be thankful for her own sake that one great obstacle preserved her from . . . any solicitude for her good opinion.”

A stupid woman, she is quickly deceived by Lucy’s blandishments. She is no judge of character and fails to perceive Edward’s good qualities, only grudgingly taking him back into her favor after his marriage. She also soon forgives Robert and is easily won over by Lucy’s false charm.

Anne Steele

A spinster of nearly thirty, Anne is tactless and vulgar. She follows Lucy's lead in everything and is often reprimanded by her sister for her foolish chatter, which is concerned with two main topics, beaux and clothes.

Though a gossip, she manages to keep Lucy's secret until the day when she imagines that Mrs. Ferrars likes Lucy and would welcome her as a daughter-in-law. Then she eagerly tells of Lucy's engagement and incurs her sister's wrath.

She is curious about other people's affairs, especially their romances, and listens at doors, having no scruples about repeating what she overhears. Elinor Dashwood reproves her for this, but Anne only says, "Oh, la! there is nothing in *that*. I only stood at the door, and heard what I could. And I am sure Lucy would have done just the same by me."

Jane Austen Biography

Jane Austen was born on December 16, 1773, in the English village of Steventon, Hampshire. Steventon Parsonage, "tolerably roomy and commodious," was her home for twenty-five years.

She was fortunate in her parents. George Austen was a man of superior intellect and education who had gained a scholarship to St. John's College, Oxford, and had become a Fellow there. He was well able to direct his daughters' private studies and prepare his sons for the university. Jane's mother, Cassandra Leigh, was a slight, handsome, spirited woman with a talent for writing lively letters and commonsensical but amusing verse.

Although she was devoted to her six brothers, the center of Jane's life was her sister Cassandra, her elder by three years, whom she always believed to be wiser and better than herself. When Cassandra was sent to boarding school, Jane went too; she was young for formal education but would have been wretched without her sister. "If Cassandra were going to have her head cut off," their mother observed, "Jane would insist on sharing her fate." It was natural that the two sisters, coming at the end of a line of brothers, should draw closely together, and Jane's devotion to Cassandra was almost passionate in its intensity; she shared almost every thought and feeling with her sister, and the attachment lasted a lifetime.

Their brothers wielded a good deal of influence over the girls. James, the eldest, well read in English literature, helped to form Jane's reading taste. Edward, who made their childhood merry, left a sad gap when he was adopted by wealthy cousins and left Steventon forever. Henry, the least successful of the Austens, resided in London at one period of his life and was able to transact the necessary business with Jane's publishers.

The two younger brothers brought vicarious adventure into Jane's life. Francis and Charles both saw action in the British Navy, rose to be admirals, and carried their flags to distant stations. Francis, who reached the very summit of his profession, becoming Senior Admiral of the Fleet, may have been the model for the Edward Price of *Mansfield Park* as well as for the Captain Wentworth or the Admiral Crofton of *Persuasion*. Her seagoing brothers made Jane very knowledgeable about ships and seamen; no flaw has ever been found in her seamanship. She followed every step of her seafaring brothers' lives, devoured their letters, delighted in the gifts and souvenirs which they sent home, and questioned them endlessly when they were ashore.

Jane and Cassandra were educated chiefly at home. Higher education for women had not been discovered, however, and the Austen girls were not much better instructed than other young ladies of their day. Jane was especially skilled at needlework, in which she delighted. She was no artist, and only moderately musical; like her heroine in *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet, “her performance was pleasing though by no means capital.” She was an excellent French scholar and a fair Italian one.

Though it pleased her to call herself “ignorant and uninformed,” and though she declared that she hated solid reading, Jane was well acquainted with the standard authors of her day and had a reasonable knowledge of English literature. Crabbe, Cowper, Johnson, and Scott were her favorite poets, though she set Crabbe highest. She had at least one brief but happy experience of school life. Like their aunts before them, she and Cassandra were sent to the Abbey School adjoining the remains of the ancient Abbey of Reading. Discipline seems to have been relaxed because Jane and Cassandra, with their cousin Emily Cooper, were permitted to accept an invitation to supper in the local inn with Edward Austen and Edward Cooper. The Abbey School, lingering in Jane’s memory, no doubt served as the model for Mrs. Goddard’s school in *Emma*. The adjoining Abbey, with its past history and relics of ancient grandeur, may well have impressed the child Jane and later suggested some of the features of her own *Northanger Abbey*.

The future novelist grew up in an atmosphere of encouragement and approval. She was the darling of her home, and nothing she wrote was ever unkindly scrutinized. How soon she began to produce finished stories is not certain, but from a very early age her writings were a source of amusement and interest to her family. When she was about twelve, the young Austens developed a passion for amateur theatricals, and Jane kept them supplied with plays of her own composition.

Some of her copybooks, still extant, contain tales and plays written before she was sixteen. Dedicated with mock solemnity to some member of her family, they poke sly fun at the grandiloquent dedications then in fashion. Before long, her stories became burlesques of the sentimental romances and wildly improbable horror tales of the day. Jane’s contempt for the state of mind which expected a mystery in everything was later exemplified in an incident in *Northanger Abbey*, when Catherine Morland, fired with curiosity, pulls out a bundle of dusty papers from an ancient cabinet, only to find them a roll of laundry bills.

The passing years brought few changes to the family in Steventon Parsonage. James, Edward, and Henry made their start in life, and the two elder ones married. Francis and Charles went into the navy. Cassandra took her place as the “Miss Austen” of the family, and finally it became Jane’s turn to be, as she wrote to a friend, “grown up and have a fine complexion, and wear great square muslin shawls.”

During the last five years of her life in Steventon, Jane wrote steadily. At least three of her best-known novels, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Northanger Abbey*, were written during this period. It is difficult to understand how Jane managed to combine so much literary work with all her household and social occupations, and she herself sheds no light on the subject. She writes to Cassandra—telling her the smallest details of home life—without ever once mentioning the subject of her writing. It cannot have been from shyness because her own family knew of her stories, and her actual writing was all done in the family sitting-room.

However, there was still prejudice against women writers, so Jane was careful to keep her work a secret from the outside world. Callers at the parsonage were likely to find her doing embroidery or playing “spillikins.” They did not suspect that Jane wrote on small pieces of paper which could easily be put away or covered with a scrap of needlework.

Pride and Prejudice was the first novel to be completed. She began it in October 1796, when she was twenty-one, and finished it ten months later. Her father, anxious to judge it fairly, set himself a course of reading in the contemporary novel. Six months later, certain of its quality, he wrote to Dodley, an eminent London publisher, offering to send the novel for consideration. The refusal was so definite, and so chilling, that the manuscript was laid away in an attic for eleven years.

Jane's philosophic disposition was proof against disappointment. She was already at work on *Sense and Sensibility*.

No one in the neighborhood suspected that there was "a chiel among them, takin' notes." Jane Austen appeared to be pleasantly occupied with domestic duties and social life. Her parents were comfortably off; they had neighbors and cousins to entertain and visit. They kept a carriage and a pair of horses, although Jane and her sister sometimes trudged in pattens (high-soled overshoes) through the muddy roads to visit their friends in the nearby parish of Ashe.

It is rumored that Jane had a romance with a man she met while in Devonshire, but he died shortly afterwards. But devotion to Cassandra seems to have satisfied her, especially after the tragic ending to Cassandra's own love affair. The young clergyman to whom she was engaged, not being rich enough to marry, went out to the West Indies as chaplain to a regiment. He caught yellow fever on his arrival and died in a few days.

Settling, of her own choice, into spinsterhood, Jane soon took to wearing caps, the symbol of middle age. In a sketch made by Cassandra, she is shown wearing a small tulle cap. Short, round curls shade her forehead, and her expression is arch, intelligent, and lively. She seems amused by everything that is going on around her.

The first great change in her life came when her father, in failing health, conferred "the living" (property and income) at Steventon on his son, and moved to Bath with his wife and daughters. At first the thought of such a move was disturbing. But Jane, a determined optimist, was soon writing cheerfully to her sister: "I am becoming more and more reconciled to the idea of departure. We have lived long enough in this neighborhood; the Basingstoke balls are certainly on the decline; there is something interesting in the bustle of going away, and the prospect of spending future summers by the sea or in Wales is delightful." As Cassandra was away on a visit, and their mother was in delicate health, it was left to Jane to cope with the problems of transportation and househunting.

Until they found a house, they stayed with Mrs. Austen's married sister, Mrs. Leigh Perrot, and settled down to the staid routine of life in a spa. Bath was not new to Jane Austen, but its heyday, as described in *Northanger Abbey*, was over. The sleepy town suited her parents, but Jane found its small gaieties un-inspiring. She composed nothing of importance while she was there. She began only one story but did not finish it or even divide it into chapters. When she left Bath in 1801, she had nothing but this fragment to add to the valuable stock of writing which she had brought with her from Steventon.

After the death of Mr. Austen in 1801, his widow and daughters moved to Southampton, where a friend of Jane's, Martha Lloyd, came to live with them and was a source of great happiness to the little family. Their house was pleasant enough, with a garden for Mrs. Austen, but they never took root there, and Jane felt as little at home as she had in Bath. She wrote nothing during their stay.

When an opportunity of escape was offered, they took it eagerly. Edward, now a wealthy landed gentleman, offered them the choice of two estates—Godmersham Park, in Kent, and Chawton Cottage, in Hampshire. They chose the latter, a small house which was altered and fitted up to suit the four ladies. Jane settled in happily, little knowing that this was to be her last home.

The house was large enough for entertaining, and the Austens had many callers, friends, and relatives in the neighborhood. There was much coming and going. A clannish family, the Austens took pleasure in meeting as often as they could. Their brothers and their families were frequent callers, and all the young nephews and nieces looked upon a visit to "Aunt Jane" as a delightful privilege. "As a very small girl, I was always creeping up to Aunt Jane," a niece wrote after Jane's death, "and following her whenever I could, in the house and out of it. . . . She could make every thing amusing to a child."

Settled in a real home again, Jane returned to her writing. Now she was working in the most pleasant of environments and under the best possible conditions. She had the continual companionship of Cassandra, the uncritical admiration of Martha Lloyd, and the kind of country life she delighted in observing.

In the summer of 1811, two years after the move to Chawton Cottage, Jane at last saw publication. *Sense and Sensibility* was at once appreciated by the public, and Jane, at thirty-six, was firmly launched on a career of authorship. But she was so modest and her expectations were so humble that she saved something out of her income to meet any possible loss. When she learned that her book had made a hundred and fifty pounds, she was as surprised as she was gratified.

The success of *Sense and Sensibility* encouraged her to submit *Pride and Prejudice*, which appeared in 1813. In love with her own heroine, she wrote to Cassandra, "I think her [Elizabeth] as delightful a creature as ever appeared in print, and how I shall be able to tolerate those who do not like *her* at least, I do not know."

Mansfield Park, the first of the novels written at Chawton, placed Jane Austen in the first rank of English writers. Twelve years of lying fallow had borne rich fruit; the long years of observation gave her added depth, subtlety, and variety. After the publication of this book, she began to fear that she might be written out, but the gallery of portraits in her next novel, *Emma*, shows no falling off.

Persuasion, the last of her novels, was finished in August 1816, but it was not published until after her death. It shows her at the peak of her powers. The families of Eliots, Musgroves, and Crofts, the little interests of Bath life, and the returning affection of Captain Wentworth for his former love, Anne Eliot, are touched with all the liveliness and delicacy which make Austen's novels incomparable.

But as Jane was writing the final chapters, she became ill. Gradually she grew weaker, and as spring came on, she went to Winchester to be close to her doctor. He was unable to help her, and she accepted her illness philosophically, even managing to amuse and cheer her worried family. In a letter written just before her death, she hopes that Cassandra has not been made ill by her exertions. "As to what I owe her," she says, "and the anxious affection of all my beloved family on this occasion, I can only cry over it and pray God to bless them more and more."

Jane Austen died peacefully on July 18, 1817, in her forty-second year. She was buried in Winchester Cathedral. Some years later, when a gentleman was visiting the cathedral, he asked to be shown Miss Austen's tomb, and the verger said: "Pray sir, can you tell me whether there is anything remarkable about this lady? So many people want to know where she is buried."

Today there are few people who do not know Jane Austen. She has become a classic. Fresh editions of her work are continually being issued. Her novels are enjoyed by thousands of readers who owe to her some of the happiest hours of their lives. Small wonder that when young writers hopefully ask what author they should study, the reply is invariably the same—Jane Austen.

Critical Essays

Background of *Sense and Sensibility*

Although Jane Austen had lived in towns like Bath and Southampton and had visited London, she never gives her novels an urban setting. In *Sense and Sensibility*, the action moves from one great country house to another, the main action taking place in Norland Park, Barton Park, and Cleveland. The Dashwood sisters spend a season in London; they attend balls and dances, and visit a fashionable jeweler's shop. But the author gives few characteristic details about the city itself.

Landscapes are only briefly described, though there are references to grounds adorned with mock Grecian temples, and Edward and Elinor plan a “sweep,” an approach to their house which will make the most of their limited grounds.

All the characters lead a life of leisure. The men do little but hunt and shoot. The women entertain their friends, sing or play an instrument, play cards, and work at painting screens, making filigree baskets, and doing carpet work. Much time is spent in gossip, chatter, and the reading of poetry and romances.

Austen writes about a limited universe, her own universe, which is comprised of upper-middle-class Tory gentry. Economic security is essential in order to maintain this leisurely existence. According to the English laws of primogeniture, the first-born son inherits the family estate, which includes all but what money is bequeathed directly to the rest of the family. This is usually enough to resolve his difficulties, if the estate is a good one. But if the son isn't old enough to inherit his birthright when the father dies, the estate is usually left to the mother and, in the case of Mrs. Ferrars, with “no strings attached.” When she leaves the estate to Robert, she abolishes the natural order of things by ignoring the laws of primogeniture. She is thus, in many ways, an unnatural mother. The second and subsequent sons, having no estate, must make their way in the world with only what is bequeathed them in money. If they are fortunate, they marry a wealthy woman with an estate. But, more frequently, their choices are limited to the clergy or the army. If the clergy, they again must apply to luck, which often amounts to influence, to find someone to give or sell them a “living,” which would provide them with a house on an estate and the money gained from the collection of tithes, or church taxes. If the estate is a wealthy one, the “living” can assure them a comfortable existence. This is not the case in Delaford, where Edward must rely on his mother's beneficence to supplement his income. A man need not be terribly spiritual in order to take a post in the clergy. The position involves guiding the social and moral life of the community as much as, if not more than, its spiritual one.

Were a man to decide on the army, he would again need to use his influence, this time to find a good command, which he then must buy. In eighteenth-century England, men didn't rise from the ranks; all the officers were men of good family who had paid heavily for their ranks. We see a detailed depiction of the military society of the times in Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*.

Women have similar economic problems, but not as many resources. If they are rich, as is Miss Grey, they can literally buy a husband—their dowry offering often being quite substantial. If, like the Misses Dashwood, they have little dowry, their problems are great. Women like Elinor and Marianne have been brought up in a certain manner. They are educated and cultured but essentially useless. They have little money to offer a man, cannot work, and yet demand a man of their own level. They must find a man who doesn't need a dowry, like Colonel Brandon, or get used to living on less, like Elinor, or like Austen herself, remain single and hope for the goodness of their more wealthy friends to include them to some degree in the social life of the community.

The Misses Steele are of a lower social order, a fact which is brought out by their poor grammar and lack of real elegance. However, in this materialistic society, filled with the newly rich middle class, social mobility is much more feasible than it had been in seventeenth-century England.

Plot and Theme in Sense and Sensibility

The main theme in this novel is the danger of excessive sensibility. Austen is concerned with the prevalence of the “sensitive” attitude in the romantic novel which, after the 1760s, turned to emphasizing the emotional and sentimental nature of people rather than, as before, their rational endowments. The influences which worked this change were many. The philosophy of Lord Shaftesbury was popular at the time, stressing man's natural beneficence. Rousseau wrote about the “noble savage,” and Samuel Richardson's intense portrayals of the

emotional life of women were also popular. The gothic revival was developing at the time, with its stress on the exotic and its accompanying disgust with the trivialities of everyday life. And there was a prevalence of female novelists, writing for a large female audience. The book that brought this genre into the fore was a work by Henry MacKenzie called *The Man of Feeling*. Tears and sighs were streaming from every chapter. To be able to show one's emotions was thus desirable, and restraint, in fact everything relating to rational control, was deemed artificial. Austen tries to discredit this trend towards sentimentality by pointing out its dangers in the example of Marianne and showing the superiority of sense, in the example of Elinor.

There is a dual plot and dual heroines. Elinor and Marianne each pursues her romance according to her temperament and beliefs. Each has an unhappy love affair at the start. The parallel plots, illustrating the dual theme, are one of the weaknesses of the novel, for they occur too "conveniently" and are therefore not convincing.

The theme of sensibility is illustrated in the love affair between Marianne and Willoughby. The theme of sense begins with the relationship of Elinor and Edward. The two plots are carefully interwoven. Marianne's romance is ideal until Willoughby deserts her. Elinor's is threatened from the start. Marianne's reactions are always impassioned and uncontrolled; Elinor is always sensible and restrained.

Sense is finally justified and sensibility shown to be a weakness. Ironically, Marianne marries a prosaic older man, and for both it is a second love, something Marianne vowed she could never tolerate. Elinor's fate is more romantic; she marries her first and only love and is quite happy to settle down as the wife of a country parson.

Austen, in expostulating this theme, is setting up in the process what she believes to be a fitting standard of behavior. But the issues are not so clear cut. The proponents of sensibility actually emerge as much more favorable characters than do those that stress the tenets of sense. The moral qualities of goodness and loyalty to one's family are an integral part of what Austen means by good sense. In fact, they are the most important parts of it. Thus Marianne and her mother, while immature and overly romantic, are, on the whole, good people. Sir John is much more pleasing than his wife, and Mrs. Palmer is preferable to Mr. Palmer for just those qualities of feeling that he abhors. Willoughby, John and Fanny Dashwood, and Mrs. Ferrars, the villains of this novel, all lack the necessary human sentiments. Only Elinor and Colonel Brandon remain unscathed, and both have ample portions of both sense and sensibility.

Austen is mirroring the basic tension of her times in this work. Reason, the eighteenth-century symbol of all that is good, and the accompanying moral order of the times, which is exemplified in the standards of the community at large, are being challenged by the nineteenth-century romantic strain, where morality is interpreted by the individual. What was to result is literary history.

Style in Sense and Sensibility

Though Austen's style was highly individual, it is based on her close study of the eighteenth-century writers, whose simplicity, accuracy, and precision she admired and imitated. Austen picked up the technique, popularized by Fielding, of the omniscient narrator. But her particular style is more objective. While she definitely has an ironic point of view, she allows her characters freedom within this, for her implications are subtle, and in many cases reserved. A good example of this is shown in the development of the character of Mrs. Jennings. When we first meet her, we are told what to think of her: "Mrs. Jennings was a widow, with an ample jointure. She had only two daughters, both of whom she had lived to see respectably married, and she had now therefore nothing to do but to marry all the rest of the world." But for the rest of the novel the author leaves us alone, and we discover by viewing Mrs. Jennings' actions that despite her obvious faults, she is really quite an amiable character. This lack of intrusion adds a sense of reality to the characters, for they are allowed to develop before our eyes. Character is vividly conveyed through direct speech. Charlotte Palmer's foolishness, Robert Ferrars'

complacency and vanity, Mrs. Jennings' blunt good humor and common sense, and Anne Steele's vulgarity and lack of education are revealed in the way they express themselves.

Despite the constant satire, there is a sense of psychological immediacy which increases the verisimilitude. Austen uses the consciousness of Elinor as the means through which to narrate her story. As Elinor is rarely treated ironically, her feelings and observations have a seriousness which transcends the ironic. Colonel Brandon, too, is hardly treated comically, and even Marianne, although often seen ironically, is finally taken seriously.

Contrast is used with line effect. Elinor's sense is contrasted with her sister's sensibility. Edward's loyalty to Lucy contrasts with Willoughby's betrayal of Marianne. Mrs. Jennings' good humor is in strong contrast to Mrs. Ferrars' sourness.

Every page of the novel reflects Austen's own quiet temperament, her good sense, and her humor. Though she can be satirical or ironic on either a small or a grand scale, she is never malicious, and her humor never exceeds the bounds of good taste and credibility.

It has been said that in Austen's novels "nothing ever happens." That is because she recognized her own limitations and kept within them. "What should I do with your strong, vigorous sketches, full of variety and glow?" she asked her nephew, a writer. "How could I possibly join them on to the little bits (two inches wide) of ivory on which I work with so fine a brush as produces little effect after much labor?"

In her own style, she is superb. The events of her story may not be startling, but she makes ordinary happenings as interesting, and sometimes as dramatic, as the most exciting adventure story or romance. Much of the perfection of her style comes from the infinite care and patience with which she polishes her work.

Irony in Sense and Sensibility

Austen uses irony as a means of moral and social satire. Her sentences, while usually simple and direct, contain within them the basic contradictions which reveal profound insights into character and theme. This is most obvious in her blunt character sketches. John Dashwood "was not an ill-disposed young man, unless to be rather coldhearted, and rather selfish, is to be ill-disposed." Note that in the first half of the sentence, she seems to be viewing his character amiably. Suddenly she changes direction, and the general impression we receive about John is far more bitingly negative than a mere statement of disapproval. Thus she contains in her statement all the elements of disapproval without directly stating that he was ill-disposed.

Her irony ranges from the gentle to the severe. When she speaks about Marianne, she says, "She was generous, amiable, interesting: she was everything but prudent." Austen weights the first half with pleasing commentary and gently undercuts it in the second. Compare this with her biting description of Mrs. Ferrars: "She was not a woman of many words; for, unlike people in general, she proportioned them to the number of her ideas." Austen begins innocently enough, but the conclusion of that sentence bitterly reveals to us the impression she wishes us to have. Reflection is necessary, for we must see the sentence as a whole. She seems to be contradicting herself, but this is not so. We had just taken it for granted that she would finish the sentence the way we expected it to be finished. Our expectations built in the first part of the sentence are disappointed. But the change in tone, though seemingly sudden, is a natural conclusion to the author's own train of thought. She knew that Mrs. Ferrars had nothing to say, but in the order, meticulously constructed, in which she reveals this information, lies her genius. The necessary reflection, subsequent surprise, and devastating insight create an effect which is much more persuasive than direct statement could be.

Critical Reception of *Sense and Sensibility*

The nineteenth century contained a hotbed of critical views about the writer. Consistently inconsistent, critics, ranging from the fiery romantics to the subtle Victorians, could not agree.

Jane Austen's warmest admirers have always been men. Archbishop Whately and Macaulay both compared her with Shakespeare. Coleridge, Whewell, Tennyson Sidney Smith, Andrew Bradley all spoke out in her favor.

Sir Walter Scott, the great romantic, had this to say: "That young lady has a talent for describing the involvements and feelings and characters of ordinary life which is to me the most wonderful I ever met with. The big bow-wow strain I can do myself like any now going; but the exquisite touch which renders commonplace things and characters interesting from the truth of the description and the sentiments is denied me." Affirmative acclaims could also be heard from Robert Southey, poet laureate and friend of the great romantics: "Her novels are more true to nature, and have, for my sympathies, passages of finer feeling than any others of this age." And of the Victorians, George Henry Lewes, George Eliot's devoted friend, said: "In spite of the sense of incongruity which besets us in the word *prose Shakespeare*, we confess the greatness of Miss Austen; her marvelous dramatic power seems, more than any thing in Scott, akin to the greatest quality in Shakespeare."

But adverse criticism rang as loudly as did the favorable. Because they did not rely on high-colored pictures of life, complicated plots, or supernatural terrors, the novels of Jane Austen seemed tame and commonplace to many readers of her time. Madame de Staël pronounced Austen's novels "*vulgaires*" (commonplace), and Charlotte Bronte said: "The passions are perfectly unknown to her. . . . Even to the feelings she vouchsafes no more than an occasional graceful but distant recognition—too frequent converse with them would ruffle the smooth elegance of her progress. Her business is not half so much with the human heart as with the human eyes, mouth, hands and feet. What sees keenly, speaks aptly, moves flexibly, it suits her to study: but what throbs fast and full, though hidden, what the blood rushes through, what is the unseen seat of life and sentient target of death—this Miss Austen ignores." Thomas Carlyle dismissed Austen's novels as mere "dish washings," and Wordsworth "used to say that though he admitted that the novels were an admirable copy of life, he could not be interested in productions of that kind; unless the truth of nature were presented to him clarified, as it were, by the light of the imagination, it had scarce any attraction in his eyes" (quoted by Sara Coleridge).

The Heart of Mid-Lothian

Plot summary

The title of the book refers to the Old Tolbooth prison in Edinburgh, Scotland, at the time in the heart of the Scottish county of Midlothian. The historical backdrop was the event known as the Porteous riots. In 1736, a riot broke out in Edinburgh over the execution of two smugglers. The Captain of the City Guards, Captain John Porteous, ordered the soldiers to fire into the crowd, killing several people. Porteous was later killed by a lynch mob who stormed the Old Tolbooth.

The second, and main element of the novel was based on a story Scott claimed to have received in an unsigned letter. It was about a certain Helen Walker who had travelled all the way to London by foot, to receive a royal pardon for her sister, who

was unjustly charged with infanticide. Scott put Jeanie Deans in the place of Walker, a young woman from a family of highly devout Presbyterians. Jeanie goes to London, partly by foot, hoping to achieve an audience with the Queen through the influence of the Duke of Argyll.

Analysis

Jeanie Deans is the first woman among Scott's protagonists, and also the first to come from the lower classes. While the heroine is idealised for her religious devotion and her moral rectitude, Scott nevertheless ridicules the moral certitude represented by the branch of Presbyterianism known as Cameronians, represented in the novel by Jeanie's father David. Also central to the novel is the early-18th-century Jacobitism, a theme found in so many of Scott's novels. Scott's sympathies can be seen in the ideal figure of the Duke of Argyle, a moderate on these issues.

Characters

Captain Porteous, officer of the Edinburgh city guard

David Deans, a dairy-farmer

Jeanie Deans, later Butler, his older daughter

Effie Deans, later Lady Staunton, his younger daughter

The Whistler, Effie's son

David Deans, Jeanie's eldest child

The Laird of Dumbiedikes, Jeanie's admirer

Reuben Butler, a schoolmaster

Bartoline Saddletree, a harness-maker

Mrs Saddletree, his wife

Rev. Robert Staunton, Rector of Willingham

George Staunton, alias Robertson, his son

Andrew Wilson, a smuggler, his companion

Meg Murdockson, George's nurse

Madge Wildfire, her crazy daughter

Gideon Sharpitlaw, procurator fiscal

Jim Ratcliffe, a criminal turned jailor

Baillie Middleburgh, a magistrate

Mr Fairbrother, counsel for Effie

Mrs Bickerton, landlady of the 'Seven Stars' at York

Mrs Glass, a tobacconist

MacCallum More, Duke of Argyle

Mr Archibald, his groom of the chamber

Queen Caroline

The Countess of Suffolk

Mrs Dutton, a dairywoman

Duncan Knock, Captain of Knockdunder

Donacha Dhu na Dunaigh, a Highland robber

Chapter summary

The chapter numbering follows the Edinburgh Edition where Chapter 18 is divided in two. The numbering in other editions is given in square brackets.

Volume One

Address by Jedidiah Cleishbotham, thanking his readers for their patronage and asserting his theological impartiality, being of Quaker descent.

Ch. 1 Being Introductory: Peter Pattieson derives material for the present narrative from the conversation of two Edinburgh lawyers and one of their clients after their coach is upset at Gandercleugh.

Ch. 2: Andrew Wilson and George Robertson, condemned to death for robbing a customs officer, attend worship at the Tolbooth Church, where Wilson facilitates his companion's escape.

Ch. 3: Captain Porteous fires on the crowd after Wilson's execution and is condemned to death.

Ch. 4: The Edinburgh citizens react unfavourably to Porteous's temporary reprieve at the pleasure of Queen Caroline, acting as regent during George II's absence on the Continent.

Ch. 5: Reuben Butler is upset to learn from Bartoline Saddletree and his wife that Effie Deans is accused of the presumptive murder of her baby.

Ch. 6: Butler is compelled to join the mob storming the Tolbooth where Porteous is held.

Ch. 7: One of the assailants [Robertson] urges Effie to flee the Tolbooth, but she declines to do so. Porteous is executed by the mob.

Ch. 8: While Butler is composing his spirits by walking beneath Salusbury Crag, the narrator devotes three chapters to filling in the family history. The Deans and Butler families were both threatened with eviction by the old Laird of Dumbiedikes but reprieved by his son following his father's deathbed change of heart.

Ch. 9: David Deans, father of Jeanie from his previous marriage, married Widow Butler, Reuben's grandmother and guardian, resulting in the birth of Effie. Butler and Jeanie grew up together, Jeanie being sluggishly courted by the young Dumbiedikes.

Ch. 10: After her mother's death and the family's move to Saint Leonard's Crag, Effie became Mrs Saddletree's servant and was arrested for presumptive child murder.

Ch. 11: Encountering Robertson in the King's Park, Butler is told to summon Jeanie to meet him at Nichol Muschat's Cairn.

Ch. 12: Butler comforts Deans, as does Saddletree with less effect. He passes on Robertson's message and is annoyed at Jeanie's secrecy on the matter. Deans, Saddletree, Dumbiedikes, and Butler set about investigating the evidence and making arrangements for Effie's representation.

Ch. 13: Butler is arrested and examined in connection with the Porteous affair.

Volume Two

Ch. 1 (14): After family devotions Jeanie sets out for the meeting at the cairn.

Ch. 2 (15): Robertson presses Jeanie to save Effie by lying in court.

Ch. 3 (16): Jim Ratcliffe, onetime criminal, interrogates Madge Wildfire, who says that Robertson wore her clothes during the Porteous riot.

Ch. 4 (17): Gideon Sharpitlaw, the procurator fiscal, ascertains from Effie that Robertson was the father of her child. Robertson escapes a party seeking to arrest him at the cairn after a warning song by Madge.

Ch. 5 (18): Jeanie also escapes the search party. Baillie Middleburgh receives an anonymous letter from Robertson indicating that Jeanie has it in her power to save her sister. Meg Murdockson comes to fetch her daughter Madge.

Ch. 6 (19 [18 ctd]): After some weeks Middleburgh visits Deans, who decides to leave the decision whether or not to appear at Effie's trial to Jeanie.

Ch. 7 (20 [19]): Jeanie misunderstands her father's words, believing that he is leaving it to her to decide whether or not to lie to save her sister.

Ch. 8 (21 [20]): Jeanie visits Effie in prison.

Ch. 9 (22 [21]): Deans and his daughter make their way to the court.

Ch. 10 (23 [22]): The preliminary hearing.

Ch. 11 (24 [23]): The trial.

Ch. 12 (25 [24]): Effie is found guilty and sentenced to death. The citizens comment on the proceedings.

Ch. 13 (26 [25]): Prompted by Mrs Saddletree's reference to the royal prerogative to grant pardons, Jeanie prepares to make the journey to London.

Volume Three

Ch. 1 (27 [26]): Dumbiedikes supplies Jeanie with money.

Ch. 2 (28 [27]): Jeanie says goodbye to Butler after the intrusive Saddletree has made his exit.

Ch. 3 (29 [28]): Jeanie arrives at York and writes letters to her father and Butler.

Ch. 4 (30 [29]): Jeanie is taken captive by two ruffians, accompanied by Madge Wildfire and her mother Meg.

Ch. 5 (31 [30]): Jeanie overhears Meg telling of Robertson's seduction of Madge, who relates some of her story to Jeanie.

Ch. 6 (32 [31]): Madge takes Jeanie to a church service at Willingham.

Ch. 7 (33 [32]): The rector, Mr Staunton (father of George, alias Robertson) is sympathetic to Jeanie.

Ch. 8 (34 [33]): George Staunton tells Jeanie his story.

Ch. 9 (35 [34]): After an initially difficult conversation with George and his father, Jeanie leaves the rectory and receives a letter from George authorising her, if necessary, to use him as a bargaining counter in London. Her peasant guide fills in the family background before she completes her journey by coach.

Ch. 10 (36 [35]): Jeanie has an interview with the Duke of Argyle.

Ch. 11 (37 [36]): Jeanie fends off the enquiries of Mrs Glass, with whom she is staying. Argyle conducts her to Windsor.

Ch. 12 (38 [37]): Jeanie has an interview with the Queen, who agrees to intercede with the King for Effie.

Volume Four

Ch. 1 (39 [38]): Jeanie promises to send Argyle a cheese of her own manufacture. She fends off more of Mrs Glass's enquiries.

Ch. 2 (40 [39]): Jeanie writes letters with news of the pardon to Staunton, Butler, and Deans, and receives a reply from her father.

Ch. 3 (41 [40]): Journeying north with the Argyle family Jeanie witnesses at Carlisle Meg being hanged and Madge's death after being ducked by a mob.

Ch. 4 (42 [41]): Jeanie and the Argyle party arrive at Roseneath.

Ch. 5 (43 [42]): Jeanie is reunited with her father.

Ch. 6 (44 [43]): Deans convinces himself that it is in order for Butler to accept the position of minister at Knocktarlitie and takes it on himself to inform him of his preferment.

Ch. 7 (45 [44]): Jeanie and Butler are reunited. In a letter Effie says she is intending to make a new life abroad. The Captain of Knockdunder, a local laird, is introduced.

Ch. 8 (46 [45]): Butler is inducted to Knocktarlittie.

Ch. 9 (47 [46]): After the post-induction feast Effie and Staunton, now married, visit Jeanie in secret and confirm their intention to spend some years abroad.

Ch. 10 (48 [47]): Jeanie and Butler marry and have three children. Her happiness is marred only by theological disagreements between her father and her husband, and by the lack of news of Effie.

Ch. 11 (49 [48]): Jeanie receives a letter from Effie, now with a place in polite English society as Lady Staunton, and enclosing the first of a series of twice-yearly remittances. On a visit to the manse Argyle sings the praises of Lady Staunton, ignorant of her identity.

Ch. 12 (50 [49]): In 1751 Deans dies. Jeanie gives Butler money to buy a small estate.

Ch. 13 (51 [50]): Jeanie forwards to her sister a copy of Meg's dying confession, received by chance, indicating that the baby son resulting from her relationship with Staunton was not killed. Lady Staunton arrives at the manse: on a mountain excursion with her elder nephew David she is rescued by a wild lad, who is later identified as the Whistler, Effie's son.

Ch. 14 (52 [51]): At the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland in Edinburgh, Butler encounters Staunton who is searching for his lost son. They travel together to Roseneath, landing in a cove as a storm threatens.

Ch. 15 (53 [52]): Staunton is killed in an attack by Donacha Dhu na Dunaigh and his men. The Whistler is captured and sentenced to death by Knockdunder, but Jeanie facilitates his escape. He ended up with the wild Indians in America. After a further ten years in fashionable society, his mother retired to the convent on the Continent where she had been educated.