

Skokie Public Library's Book Discussion Guide

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY

by Jane Austen

- It is somewhat clear what lessons Marianne has learned by the end of the novel. Did Elinor have anything to learn?
- A critic has said that this novel is 'preoccupied with the dangers of allowing what is secondary to come first.' How did these dangers manifest themselves?
- One 20th-century critic wrote, "Marianne has been found more attractive than Elinor by most readers, which Jane Austen clearly did not intend." Do you agree or disagree? Does Austen favor one sister over the other?
- Austen herself never married, but she depicts marriage as the ultimate goal and "happy ending" for Elinor and Marianne. What do you think the novel reveals about her views of marriage generally? Were there any good marriages represented?
- Before his duplicity is revealed, is John Willoughby an appealing character? At the end of the book, when his ultimate fate is revealed, does Willoughby seem in any way a changed man from the one we first meet?
- Are Edward's attentions to Elinor fair and honorable? Why isn't he more open with her?
- Why doesn't Colonel Brandon fall in love with Elinor?
- Do you ever feel sorry for Lucy and her situation?
- Elinor and Marianne's younger sister Margaret plays a very minor role in the novel. Why do you think Austen included this character?
- Do you find Marianne's decision to marry Colonel Brandon to be a plausible conclusion?
- Do you find the ending satisfactory for both sisters? Do you feel the two make the right choice for happiness?
- Have you seen any of the film or TV adaptations of the book? If so, how did the book compare?



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