

**NAXOS**  
AudioBooks

Jane Austen  
**Sense and Sensibility**

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

**CLASSIC  
FICTION**



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1	The family of Dashwood at Norland Park, Sussex	7:28
2	Mrs John Dashwood – the new mistress of Norland	9:39
3	Elinor, her mother and sisters, arrive at Barton Valley in Devonshire	7:04
4	Mrs Jennings, a widow with a purpose to match-make	5:30
5	A surprise end to a walk – Mr Willoughby	8:53
6	A busy social life	13:01
7	Elinor reflects on Mr Willoughby and marriage	5:12
8	Edward Ferrars arrives	8:46
9	Duty against will, parent against child	6:21
10	Mrs Palmer enthuses	4:42
11	New acquaintances: The Misses Steele – Anne and Lucy	6:11
12	Miss Lucy Steele confides in Elinor	14:55
13	With Mrs Jennings to London	7:39
14	A card left in the sisters' absence	6:34
15	At Lady Middleton's party	4:11
16	Marianne receives the final letter	8:53

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17	Colonel Brandon tells his story	12:09
18	The story is related to Marianne	7:09
19	The Ferrars family reappears	9:15
20	Robert Ferrars – a coxcomb	5:30
21	The secret engagement is out in the open	9:12
22	Colonel Brandon makes an offer of a living at Delaford for Edward Ferrars	5:41
23	Final calls in London	3:26
24	Arrival in Cleveland – Marianne falls feverish	8:35
25	A fervent confession from Willoughby	10:51
26	Mrs Dashwood arrives – Marianne improves	3:44
27	The Dashwoods arrive home at Barton	4:54
28	Surprise news from the manservant Thomas	8:00
29	Edward makes his proposal	6:12
30	Two marriages	6:01

**Total time: 3:45:57**

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# Jane Austen

## Sense and Sensibility

Jane Austen was born in Hampshire in 1775, the seventh of eight children. Her father was a clergyman who ensured that his children were well educated. After a brief spell at boarding school when they were very young, Jane and her sister, Cassandra were educated at home. In 1801 Mr Austen retired and the family moved to Bath. Although Jane Austen never married, she is reputed to have had a romance in 1802, but she parted from her lover, who died the following year. In 1803 she was proposed to by a wealthy Hampshire landowner, and after initially accepting his proposal, she refused him the following morning. In 1805 her father died, and she moved with her mother to Southampton and in 1809 to the village of Chawton.

In 1816 Jane Austen became seriously ill, and was taken to Winchester in search of a cure. She died there in 1817. She is remembered by six great novels: **Sense and Sensibility** (1811), **Pride and Prejudice** (1813), **Mansfield Park** (1814), **Emma** (1816), **Northanger Abbey** (1818) and **Persuasion** (1818).

The first draft of **Sense and Sensibility** was a sketch in letter form, written in 1795 and entitled *Elinor and Marianne*. The final version was published at the author's expense by Thomas Egerton, Whitehall, in November 1811. The first edition sold quite quickly: 'It is exhausted,' wrote Jane Austen on July 3rd 1813, 'and has brought me £140, besides the copyright, if that should ever be of any value.'

Clearly Elinor and Marianne Dashwood represent the *Sense* and *Sensibility* of the title, but it would be quite wrong to conclude that these concepts are fixed and absolute. Jane Austen was far too subtle a novelist for that. The fact is that the two sisters both have tendencies towards sense and sensibility, but Marianne is more susceptible to sensibility and Elinor, to the path dictated by sense. It is not insignificant that it is Elinor who succumbs to romantic love which sweeps aside the constraints of financial prudence, and, at the end of the book, the impetuous Marianne makes a 'sensible' match and marries the man whom she had previously rejected as being too old

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and infirm, but in whom she discovers the qualities of loyalty, fortitude and good sense.

The book is therefore an exploration of two aspects of the human temperament, but Jane Austen never tries to elevate one above the other. Indeed, the harmony between the sisters at the end of the novel suggests that a happy fusion of sense and sensibility is the ideal. For Jane Austen the marriage of her heroines signals the achievement of personal and social 'adjustment', and in this case the 'adjustment' has been achieved by Elinor's opportunity to abandon her habitual constraint and to indulge her sensibility in her love for Edward, and by Marianne shedding her tendency to excessive, melodramatic romanticism by marrying Colonel Brandon. But of course the equilibrium could not be achieved without elements of both sense and sensibility.

One of the enduring charms of Jane Austen is her use of irony and humour, and although **Sense and Sensibility** was her first novel, she had already honed her powers of perception and wry wit and combined them with her faultless eye for hypocrisy and avarice. When we overhear the conversation between John and Fanny

Dashwood about the financial provision he will make for his mother and sisters, and his eager espousal of his wife's mendacious suggestions which come in the guise of 'wanting to do the right thing', we know that they will be of little help to the hapless family. They condemn themselves out of their own mouths. Their quite appalling but amusing self-deception is echoed by other characters such as Mrs Ferrars, and the loathsome Miss Steeles, with their ill-concealed vulgarity and grammatical slips. The gossipy and interfering Mrs Jennings and Mrs Palmer, who insists that her abusive husband is a paragon of love and virtue, are equally absurd.

And yet these characters never degenerate into grotesques. Jane Austen's style, as delicate as fine lace, ensures that we are delighted and appalled by turns, and although at times the situations in her novels are unfamiliar, the human emotions and predicaments which she explores with such mastery are as relevant now as they were nearly two hundred years ago, when she wrote about them.

**Notes by Heather Godwin**

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## The music on this recording is taken from the NAXOS catalogue

<b>WEBER</b> CLARINET QUINTET OP. 34	8.553122
Kálmán Berkes, clarinet; Jenő Jandó, piano; Auer Quartet	
<b>BEETHOVEN</b> STRING QUARTETS OP. 18 NOS 1 & 2	8.550558
Kodály Quartet	
<b>DITTERSDORF</b> SINFONIAS ON OVID'S METAMORPHOSES NOS 4-6	8.553369
Failoni Orchesra, Hanspeter Gmür	
<b>BEETHOVEN</b> VIOLIN SONATAS OP. 12 NOS 1-3	8.550284
Takako Nishizaki, violin; Jenő Jandó, piano	

# Jane Austen

# Sense and Sensibility

Read by **Juliet Stevenson**

When Mrs Dashwood is forced by an avaricious daughter-in-law to leave the family home in Sussex, she takes her three daughters to live in a modest cottage in Devon. For Elinor, the eldest daughter, the move means a painful separation from the man she loves, but her sister Marianne finds in Devon the romance and excitement which she longs for. The contrasting fortunes and temperaments of the two girls, as they struggle to cope in their different ways with the cruel events which fate has in store for them, are portrayed by Jane Austen with her usual irony, humour and profound sensitivity.



**Juliet Stevenson** has worked extensively for the RSC, the Royal National Theatre, and other major theatre companies. She won an Olivier Award for her role in *Death and the Maiden* at the Royal Court, and a number of other awards for her work in the film *Truly, Madly, Deeply*. Other film credits include *The Trial*, *Ladder of Swords*, *Drowning by Numbers* and *A Secret Rapture*. Among her prominent TV appearances is *The Politician's Wife*. She also reads Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* and Austen's *Mansfield Park*, *Northanger Abbey* and *Emma* for Naxos AudioBooks.

*"Juliet Stevenson has just the right kind of acerbic femininity in her delivery."*

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Post-production: Simon Weir, The Classical Recording  
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Total time  
3:45:57