

# Sense and sensibility

Business



The novel *Sense and Sensibility* by Jane Austen displays how both actions and words are extremely powerful and can have a major impact on characters and their growth. *Sense and Sensibility* describes the life of two very different sisters and how they must find a suitor to marry. The Dashwood sisters find multiple gentlemen throughout the story; their actions and words show the sisters the truth about love. Some of the gentlemen already have commitments or must marry a woman of wealth which makes finding true love difficult for the Dashwood sisters. Overall, Jane Austen's novel *Sense and Sensibility* proves actions speak just as loud as words through characters such as Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, Edward Ferrars, Colonel Brandon, John Willoughby, and Lucy Steele.

In *Sense and Sensibility*, Edward Ferrars proposing to Elinor Dashwood and Colonel Brandon always supporting Marianne Dashwood justifies how actions define a character. First, when Edward Ferrars comes to the Dashwood household and explains his engagement with Lucy is over Elinor feels “overcome by her own felicity...tranquility to her heart.

” (Austen 298). This is a positive message, and with Lucy out of the picture, Elinor gains the opportunity to be with Edward. In the novel when Edward kneels down in front of Elinor, readers can infer Edward is asking for her hand in marriage! This is an exciting scene for readers because readers see two people who love each other expressing their feelings through actions rather than stating their love for each other. Another example of actions defining a character is Colonel Brandon's behavior towards Marianne. Colonel Brandon is always at Marianne's service even though she does not

show interest in him due to his age: “ Colonel Brandon was very much in love with Marianne Dashwood. Mrs.

Jennings suspected it to be so, on the first evening of their being together, from his listening so attentively while she sang to them. It would be an excellent match since, for he was rich, and she was handsome” (Austen 31).

Colonel Brandon gives Mariane looks of affection when she plays piano.

Readers can tell by Austen’s details this look to Marianne is love.

Furthermore when she is sick, Colonel Brandon stands by her side. Unlike the other men in the novel, Colonel Brandon is not concerned about money or family, but he fights for Marianne because of love.

In Sense and Sensibility, Edward Ferrars and Colonel Brandon express their passionate feelings through actions. John Willoughby’s letter to Miss Dashwood and Lucy Steele explaining to Elinor she is engaged to Edward Ferrars illustrates how words speak just as loud as actions. In the novel, the Dashwood sisters take a trip to London to meet their suitors. Unfortunately for Marianne, her reunion with John Willoughby is unsuccessful; he acts awkwardly as if he almost does not want to see her. Later on, Mr. Willoughby writes a letter to Marianne stating his true intentions and leaves her for another mistress with more money.

This puts Marianne into complete shock: “ She played every favourite song she had used to play to Willoughby, every air in which their voices had been joined, and sat at the instrument gazing on every line of music he had written out for her, till her heart was so heavy that no farther sadness could be gained. She spent whole hours singing and crying; her voice often totally

suspended by her tears” (Austen 69). She questions if her feelings toward Mr. Willoughby are true; Marianne does not understand how if he truly loves her, how did he have the heart to leave her for another. In addition to Mr. Willoughby’s letter, when Lucy Steele tells Elinor she is engaged to Edward, Elinor is confused.

She has to sit down to absorb everything in: “ Had Edward been intentionally deceiving her? Had he feigned a regard for her which he did not feel? Was his engagement to Lucy an engagement of the heart? No, she could not believe it. His affection was her own. She could not be deceived. It was not an illusion of her own. He loved her... Could he ever be happy with Lucy Steele? Could his delicacy, and well-informed mind, be satisfied with a wife like her — illiterate, artful, and selfish” (Austen 113). These few words make Elinor wonder if her relationship with Mr.

Ferrars is real. The words Mr. Willoughby writes to Marianne and Miss Steele spoke to Elinor are so powerful it makes the Dashwood sisters question their love. Jane Austen’s *Sense and Sensibility* confirm both actions and words can affect how a character feels and grows. Characters such as Elinor and Marianne Dashwood, Edward Ferrars, Colonel Brandon, John Willoughby, and Lucy Steele exemplify this statement through their own actions and words. The Dashwood sisters though different, go through life with the same hope of finding their true love.

Some suitors have other plans, making the Dashwood sisters unsuccessful with their love. In conclusion, *Sense and Sensibility* written by Jane Austen validates that words speak just as loud as actions.