

Monologues

- Please prepare a monologue out of these to perform at the auditions. If you have a monologue in the style of the show already in mind that works as well.
- *Anyone looking to audition for Marianne please prepare 32 bars of a classical solo piece with backing tracks. (Classical musical theatre works as well.)*

Elinor Dashwood

I understand. You do not suppose that I have ever felt much. For four months, Marianne, I have known of Edward's engagement. For four months, I have listened to Lucy's hopes and exultations again and again. For four months, I have never been able to confide in anyone. I am to be divided from Edward forever. Nothing has ever proved him unworthy, and I believe now that perhaps he does —feel something, as you say. In short, I have suffered all of the punishments of extreme attachment, without enjoying any of its advantages. If you think me capable of ever feeling anything, Marianne, surely you can imagine that I have felt the loss very deeply. My current composure is the product of my constant and painful exertion to maintain control over myself. I have done my duty. But believe me —I have been VERY unhappy.

Marianne Dashwood

Engaged elsewhere?! When such friends were to be met? I am sure he must have had something very important to do, to keep him from us. Did you have some pressing previous obligation, Edward? What else could have kept you away? Edward really has the most active conscience in the whole world, you know, and would only have disappointed us because he did not want to break his word to another. Indeed, he is the most fearful of failing expectations, or causing pain to others of anybody I ever met, and he always tries to do the right thing—whether it makes him happy or not! Edward, it is so, and I will say it!

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Fanny Dashwood

You know, it is quite burdensome to have such very very high potential, as our Edward does. And I confess, it does make me fear for him. Why, my poor brother is a fox—and hallooing all around him are hunters and hounds (Doing and extremely ladylike imitation of a hound) Aooo, aooo. (Pause)

Oh, I am sorry—am being very abstract? He is a target, my love. He is....prey. Opportunists are always circling, eager to pounce. An eligible man of my brother's station will always attract, for example—upwardly-minded young ladies. There is no predator so fierce, no creature so shameless, as an unmarried woman in the desperate pursuit of a wealthy man. It is a sad reflection of our libertine age, but I assure you that such fortune-hunters are all too common—and I do use that term broadly.

Anne Steele

And Had you a great many smart beaux there? There may be a vast many smart beaux in Exeter, I'm sure; but Lord knows if I can tell what beaux there might be about Norland! And perhaps the Miss Dashwoods might find it dull here if they do not have so many as they used to have. But perhaps you two do not care about the beaux, and had as lief be without! For my part, I think they are vastly agreeable provided they dress smart and behave civil. I can't bear to see them dirty and nasty. Now there's Mr. Rose at Exeter, clerk to Mr. Simpson, if you do but meet him of morning he is not fit to be seen! I suppose your brother was quite a beau, Miss Dashwood, before he married, as he was so rich, and well. Sir John tells us Miss Marianne has a special admirer who is VERY handsome. And I hope you will have as good luck yourself soon—but perhaps you have a gentleman friend, already?

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

John Willoughby

When I met your sister, I only wanted an idle dalliance. Something to do in the country. I mean—you misunderstand me—I thought that it was only a harmless flirtation! And at first, I thought that Marianne also knew that it could not lead to anything. You must see that it was impossible for me to seriously pursue a girl with no fortune, no station, no—forgive me—no notable family. But quite against my intentions, the part I played became the most pressing reality. I found myself most terribly in love. I was going to ask her to marry me! But my luck went bad. Mrs. Smith had somehow been informed of a ...regrettable connection in my past.

Colonel Brandon

In my youth, I knew a lady who...was very like your sister Marianne, both in person and in temperament. I loved her, and she loved me in return—but Eliza had no fortune, and I was a young man with no independence and no occupation. I was under my father's power.

He forbade the match, of course. A marriage of that kind was impossible, he said, unthinkable—and though I protested violently I am ashamed to say that he won his point at the last. Threatened with disinheritance and disownment, I faltered. And Eliza was sent away.

Robert Ferrars

For my own part, I am excessively fond of a cottage; there is always so much elegance in a cottage. If I had any money to spare. I should build a cottage, and have all my friends visit me. In my cottage. I advise everybody I see to build a cottage. My intimate friend Lord Courtland—of the Lancashire Courtlands—came to me the other day, and laid before me three different architectural schemes. “Which one should I build, Robby?” said he. “My dear Courtland,” said I, throwing them all directly into the fire, “do not build any of these deplorable shacks, but by all means build a cottage.” A cottage man. A cottage, a cottage, a cottage! And THAT was the end of THAT.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Readings

Actors will be asked to read one or more of these scenes at auditions. Actors may be asked to read for roles not specified on the audition sheet.

Elinor & Edward (Page 13-15)

Elinor, the eldest Dashwood sister, sits at a table in the parlor at Norland Park. She is attempting to write a letter. Edward Ferrars enters. Edward is awkward, shy, but fundamentally sweet. He also carries pen and paper, to write a letter.

EDWARD. (Looks up and sees Elinor.) Oh! Please, do excuse me.

He turns to flee.

ELINOR. Mr. Ferrars.

EDWARD. Miss Dashwood. Please pardon me. I did not...I do not intend to intrude.

He turns to leave, giving a hurried half-bow, and drops the pen and paper-leading to an undignified scramble. He is mortified. It is very endearing. This may be the first time that either Elinor or Edward has been completely alone with an eligible member of the opposite sex-ever.

ELINOR. Oh, no. You weren't. Intruding. Are you, ah- (*Indicating his paper.*)

EDWARD. -Yes. I am. Writing. A letter, yes. Oh. Are you, I see are you as well?

ELINOR. I am. Writing, yes.

He almost turns to leave again.

Mr. Ferrars. Pray, do not leave? On my account. That is... the light - is very good here.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

She indicates a seat at the other end of the table. Edward half-bows again, his hands full of paper and pen. He awkwardly staggers over and spills his now-scattered materials across the table; Elinor steadies her ink. They sit in silence for a moment, unsure of what to do. Edward searches for his ink, but realizes he has forgotten it-the only ink is by Elinor. She holds it up in invitation. In order to reach the ink, he either has to lean across the whole length of the table or walk over to her. Choosing to be brave, he stands up, walks over to the ink, and dips in his quill; he's quite close to her. Everything about the moment is awkward. He walks back to his seat, holding his hand beneath the quill, which is now dripping ink everywhere. He sits and puts his pen to paper, but does not write. There is another brief moment of silence.

EDWARD. Miss Dashwood. I fear I have not yet had a proper occasion to express to you, ah, personally, my very sincere condolences on the loss of your father.

ELINOR. Oh. Yes. Thank you.

Another pause. They bend their heads to writing; neither of them is able to write. He clears his throat.

EDWARD. Miss Dashwood. I hope that my presence here has not caused you any... additional distress in this sad time. My sister-I confess, I was not entirely informed of all the particular... particulars before my visit.

ELINOR. Oh. No. You needn't apologize, Mr. Ferrars. In fact, I must thank you-My mother said only yesterday that your presence at Norland is a comfort, and I am very grateful for anything that raises her spirits.

EDWARD. I am pleased that your mother is... pleased. (Mentally kicking himself for that.) That is, ah. Might I enquire after Mrs. Dashwood?

ELINOR. It is rather too early to think of any moderation in grief. My father's death-it is very difficult.

She attempts not to get emotional.

EDWARD. I am sure that you must be a great comfort to her. ELINOR. I attempt to be.

Small pause.

NOTE: all characters will use a "proper" or Received English accent.

I am writing to our cousin, Sir John Middleton. He may have a cottage available for us in Devonshire. The rent is uncommonly moderate.

EDWARD. I imagine it must be very difficult. To leave your home.

ELINOR. Yes. We were...we have been very happy here. *She attempts not to cry.* I must not smudge this.

EDWARD. Miss Dashwood... please forgive me, I fear-I did not mean to upset you-

Edward impulsively takes out his handkerchief and brings it over to her, half-kneeling. Elinor takes it, slightly mortified.

ELINOR. Mr. Ferrars. I cannot use this.

She shows him. There is ink all over the handkerchief, from his stained hand. There is a moment of awkwardness; then she begins to laugh a little. They both begin to laugh a little, despite themselves.

EDWARD. Miss Dashwood, I beg your pardon... no, this is inexcusable.. I am very, very sorry...

ELINOR. Oh, no-it's very-it's very kind of you-I beg YOUR pardon... Oh no, no, please stop, you're going to smear it. ..

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Fanny & John (Page 11-13)

JOHN. I think that I will give them a thousand pounds apiece to start their new life!

Fanny Dashwood enters

FANNY. My dear John, how can you think of taking four thousand pounds from the fortune of our dear little boy? What possible claim can the Miss Dashwoods, who are only related to you by half blood, have to so large an amount?

JOHN. My father's last request was that I provide for them, Fanny.

FANNY. Your father did not know what he was talking of, I dare say; ten to one he was light-headed at the time. Four thousand pounds!

JOHN. He did not specify any particular amount.

Fanny waits.

Perhaps if the sum were diminished by one-half. Five hundred pounds apiece would be a great increase to their fortunes!

FANNY. Two thousand pounds! What brother on earth would do so much for even his REAL sisters!

JOHN. One had rather do too much than too little. Do you think that they may expect more?

FANNY. Who knows what they may expect.

JOHN. Two thousand pounds, all at once, might overwhelm them and be spent unwisely, I suppose. Perhaps a yearly sum, instead?

FANNY. People always live forever when there is an annuity to be paid them. To be very honest, my love, I am convinced that your father had no idea of your giving them any money. I wager when he told you to 'provide for them;' he meant to help them to move their things, and send them occasional presents of fish and game, and so forth. My darling-may I risk being perfectly frank?

JOHN. Always, my angel.

NOTE: all characters will use a "proper" or Received English accent.

FANNY. The painful truth is that even on his deathbed, your father was not thinking of us, nor of our little Harry-he thought only of THEM. So you owe no particular attention to his wishes, for given his way, he would have left them everything in the world. Remember, my dear, he left them all the best china.

JOHN. The china is a material consideration. It is absolutely unnecessary to do more, I think, than to help them move comfortably. How liberal and handsome you are, my lamb.

She takes his arm. They exit.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Elinor & Lucy (Page 49-50)

LUCY. Miss Dashwood. Please pardon me, but I wonder if I might ask you something rather odd? Pray, are you closely acquainted with your sister-in-law's mother, Mrs. Ferrars?

ELINOR. No. I have never met her.

LUCY. Truly? Oh. I supposed she might have visited Norland sometimes.

ELINOR. No, I am afraid not.

LUCY. You must think me very strange for enquiring about her. I wish I could tell you why I ask; but I do not wish you to think me impertinent.

ELINOR. I-

LUCY. I could not bear to have you think me impertinent. I would rather anything in the world than be thought impertinent by a person like you.

ELINOR. I assure you-

LUCY. -And I do wish, so much, that I could tell you my reasons and I would indeed be very glad of your advice in a trying matter. But I do not want to trouble you. I am sorry that you do not happen to know Mrs. Ferrars.

ELINOR. I am sorry that I do not. But I confess, I did not know that you were at all connected with that family.

LUCY. Forgive me, it was an odd question. Do not think of it any more.

Pause.

ELINOR. Tea?

LUCY. Dearest Miss Dashwood, can I trust you?

ELINOR. Pardon?

NOTE: all characters will use a "proper" or Received English accent.

LUCY. Can you-would you-keep a very great and grave and important secret? If I unburdened myself to you entirely, would you solemnly promise never ever ever to tell anyone what I will tell you now?

Elinor nods, nonplussed.

Mrs. Ferrars is indeed nothing to me at present-but the time will come-when we may be very intimately connected indeed!

ELINOR. Good heavens! Have you an understanding with (*Lowering her voice.*) Mr. Robert Ferrars?

LUCY. No-I never saw him in my life; but I am engaged (*Fixing her eyes upon Elinor.*) to his eldest brother.

Pause.

I dare say he never dropped the smallest hint of it to you or your family? It is a great secret, for I have no fortune, and we fear his mother will take away all his inheritance if he chooses to marry a girl with no money.

ELINOR. I beg your pardon, but there must be some mistake. We cannot mean the same Mr. Edward Ferrars.

LUCY. I assure you, I am not mistaken about the name of the man on whom all my happiness depends. Mister. Edward. Ferrars.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Sir John & Mrs. Jennings (Page 22-23)

SIR JOHN. (*From outside the cottage.*) Hallllloooo!

MRS. JENNINGS. (*Echoing.*) Halllloooooooo, halllloooo!

Sir John Middleton and Mrs. Jennings sweep in-they don't stop moving the whole time. Sir John is a boisterous middle-aged man; Mrs. Jennings, his even more boisterous mother-in-law. She has a herd of noisy lapdogs-represented by the Gossips, yapping like dogs throughout. It is a circus. They constantly interrupt each other and overlap portions of lines throughout.

SIR JOHN. Mrs. Dashwood! Welcome, welcome! May I present my mother-in-law, Mrs. Jennings?

MRS. JENNINGS. Hallo, how d'ye do? Always so thrilling to meet

MRS. DASHWOOD. Sir John. My daughters, Elinor, Marianne, and Margaret.

SIR JOHN. (*To Mrs. Jennings.*) Have you ever seen prettier girls in all the world? (*To the dogs.*) HUSH, HUSH, YOU!

MRS. JENNINGS. I am sure they have left many broken young gentlemen in Devonshire! HUSH!

Marianne is repulsed.

SIR JOHN. You must, of course, dine at Barton Park every day until you are settled. HUSH!

Mrs. Dashwood opens her mouth to politely refuse. The dog barking reaches a crescendo.

MRS. JENNINGS. Come! You must come! SIR JOHN. Come, come! You must come! HUSH

We shall not leave until you agree to come – HUSH!

MRS. DASHWOOD. We shall wait on you for dinner, if it is no inconvenience.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

SIR JOHN. Lady Middleton will be so pleased. We expect you tonight!

MRS. JENNINGS. Oh, she shall be frantic with excitement!

MRS. JENNINGS. Tonight! HUSH! HUSH!

SIR JOHN. The prettiest girls in all England! HUSH!

They sweep off as quickly as they swept on.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Mrs. Jennings, Margaret and Marianne (Page 24-25)

MRS. JENNINGS. Miss Margaret, surely you can tell us the name of the young man who is Miss Elinor's particular favorite in Sussex?

Pause as Margaret considers this.

MARGARET. I must not tell, may I, Elinor?

MARIANNE. Margaret. Remember that whatever conjectures you may have, you have no right to repeat them!

MARGARET. I never had any conjectures about it, it was you who told me of it yourself.

Marianne discreetly stomps on her foot under the table.

Ow!

This increases the mirth of the company.

MRS. JENNINGS. Pray, Miss Margaret, let us know all about it. What is the gentleman's name?

MARGARET. I must not tell, ma'am. But I know very well what it is; and I know where he is too.

MRS. JENNINGS. We can guess where he is; in Norland to be sure. He is the curate of the parish, I dare say?

MARGARET. He is of no profession at all.

MARIANNE. Margaret, you know that this is all your own invention, and that there is no such person in existence.

MARGARET. Well, then, he is lately dead, Marianne, for I am sure there was such a man once, and his name begins with an F.

MRS. JENNINGS. F! F, F, F.

SIR JOHN. F, hey? F-f-f-f!

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

COL. BRANDON. (*Heroically creating a diversion.*) It...has rained very hard recently. It has rained every day for the last fortnight, I believe. (*To Lady Middleton.*) Do you not find the weather unusually inclement of late, ma'am?

LADY MIDDLETON. Rain. Shocking. Rain.

COL. BRANDON. Yes. It has been a very wet spring.

MARIANNE. Margaret, please be so good as to join me at the pianoforte.

MARGARET. Why?...

Marianne pinches her beneath the table.

Owww!

MRS. JENNINGS. Ohhhh, Miss Marianne, d'you play?

Marianne, by way of an answer, flips open the piano covering rather loudly.

ELINOR. Please do excuse my sister's...enthusiasm.

SIR JOHN. No, pound away, by all means!

MRS. JENNINGS. Yes, we are all prepared to be charmed!

LADY MIDDLETON. Very fond. Of. Music.

Marianne sings very simply and plays the piano. Colonel Brandon stands watching Marianne. He is deeply, though not ostentatiously, affected. The rest of the party continues to chatter to each other, oblivious to the music. The Gossips drift in and listen-Mrs. Jennings turns suddenly and speaks to them.

MRS. JENNINGS. Oh, Colonel Brandon is VERY much in love with Miss Marianne Dashwood! I rather suspected it to be so, on the first evening they met, from his listening while she sang; and on the second visit, when he listened to her sing again! It is an excellent match, for HE is rich, and SHE is handsome-and I am sure he need not wait any longer!

NOTE: all characters will use a "proper" or Received English accent.

Marianne & Elinor (Page 64-65)

ELINOR. And so you see that we never really knew Willoughby at all.

Pause.

...Marianne.?

MARIANNE. I would sooner think myself deceived by all the world than by Willoughby.

ELINOR. He has practiced nothing but deceit, from beginning to end!

MARIANNE. I cannot explain his behavior towards that poor girl, but whatever his sins, I know that he loved me. He loves me. That much is true.

ELINOR. Did he tell you that he loved you?

MARIANNE. Yes-no. Never absolutely. It does not matter. ELINOR. Of course it does. He is the worst kind of villain.

MARIANNE. No, he isn't! Not at heart. You say that we never knew him, Elinor, but I did, I knew him as I know myself! If he is wicked, then perhaps so am I. He and I are the same.

ELINOR. You are not being reasonable!

MARIANNE. You do not understand.

ELINOR. Perhaps I don't! Marianne, how could you have written to him?

MARIANNE. I felt myself to be as solemnly engaged to him, as if the strictest legal covenant had bound us!

ELINOR. Obviously, he did not feel the same.

MARIANNE. He DID! Elinor, I may have been cruelly used; but not by Willoughby.

ELINOR. Who else but Willoughby?

MARIANNE. I do not know!

NOTE: all characters will use a "proper" or Received English accent.

ELINOR. Well, whoever may have been your enemy, let them be cheated of their t

MARIA E. I care not who knows that I am wretched! It is easy for those who have no sorrow to talk of calmness and exertion!

ELI OR. Do you think I have no sorrow, Marianne? (*Restraining herself.*) ... Can you believe me capable of being at ease, when I see you in this state?

MARIANNE. Forgive me: I know that you feel for me, and I am very sorry to make you unhappy. But mine is a misery which nothing can ever do away.

Beat.

I want to go home.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

The Dashwood Women (Page 26-28)

MARIANNE. Colonel Brandon is nearly old enough to be my father, and if he was ever animated enough to be in love, has long outlived the sensation. When is a man to be safe from such wit, if age and infirmity do not protect him?

ELINOR. Infirmity! Do you call Colonel Brandon infirm?

MARIANNE. Yesterday he spoke of his flannel waistcoat!

ELINOR And?

MARIANNE. A flannel waistcoat for his aching joints! The commonest signifier of declining life!

MRS. DASHWOOD. My dearest child, if you estimate the colonel thus, I imagine you must be in continual terror of MY decay. It must seem to you a miracle that I still live.

MARIANNE. Mamma, you are not doing me justice. I know that Colonel Brandon is not in any danger of immediate expiration; he may live twenty years longer. But a man of his age should have nothing to do with matrimony.

ELINOR. Perhaps a man of his age and a lady of your age should not have anything to do with matrimony together. But if there were a woman who was single at thirty, I do not think anyone would object to the colonel marrying HER.

MARIANNE. A woman of thirty can never hope to feel or inspire affection again. If her fortune is small, I suppose that she might bring herself to be a nurse, for the security of being a wife.

ELINOR. Must you doom Colonel Brandon to a slow decline because he happened to complain of an ache in his shoulder? If he had been in a violent fever, you would not despise him half so much. Confess, Marianne, is not there something thrilling to you in the flushed cheek, hollow eye, and quick pulse of a fever? (*Pause.*) I will take the letters to post.

Elinor exits.

MARIANNE. Margaret, will you go and get your boots on?

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

MARGARET. We're not still going for a walk, are we? It is goiiiiing to raiiiiiin!

MARIANNE. No, it is not. Now go and get your boots, please. MARGARET. Oh, boots. Boots boots boots!

Margaret exits.

MARIANNE. Mamma, I have had an alarum on the subject of sickness, which I must share with you. I am sure that Edward Ferrars is not well!

MRS. DASHWOOD. Oh?

MARIANNE. We have been here almost a fortnight, and he has not yet come. What else but grave illness could be keeping him away?

MRS. DASHWOOD. Does Elinor expect him?

MARIANNE. She must!

MRS. DASHWOOD. She has said nothing to me.

MARIANNE. It is all so strange! Do you know-I purposely left them alone together twice on our last morning at Norland, and each time he most unaccountably followed me out of the room!

Margaret reenters.

MRS. DASHWOOD. *(To Marianne.)* Shh.

MARGARET. ...What?

Elinor reenters.

ELINOR. Are you still walking? It looks as though it is going to rain.

MARGARET. Mariaaaaaanne!

MARIANNE. All this talk of a wet spring! It is NOT GOING TO RAIN, the day will be everlastingly fair! NOW COME ALONG!

They exit, Margaret dragging her feet

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Marianne & Willoughby (Page 31)

MARIANNE. Cowper!

WILLOUGHBY. Yes. I daresay that Scott or Pope is a more serious minded answer, but I am afraid that Cowper is my favorite poet of our time.

MARIANNE. Cowper may indeed be the greatest poet of any time. Pray, what is your favorite poem, Mr. Willoughby? Mine must be "Hope:"

WILLOUGHBY. (*Interrupting, quoting "Hope."*) Oh, see me sworn to serve thee, and command A painter's skill into a poet's hand!

MARIANNE. That, while I, trembling, trace a work divine Fancy may stand aloof from the design,

WILLOUGHBY. MARIANNE. And light, and shade, and ev'ry stroke, be thine.

Pause.

MARIANNE. Mr. Willoughby, won't you join us for dinner?

WILLOUGHBY. I beg your pardon, but I must dine with my cousin at Allenham. I had no idea it was so late. Might I enquire after you again tomorrow?

MARIANNE. Until tomorrow.

He bows to the ladies and exits.

MARIANNE. You must think, Elinor, that I have been too much at ease, too happy, too frank. I have been open and sincere when I ought to have been spiritless and dull! I suppose you think I should have talked solely of the weather, and the roads, and only spoken once every ten minutes-or better yet, never spoken at all?

NOTE: all characters will use a "proper" or Received English accent.

Margaret & Elinor (Page 39)

MARGARET. (*Dancing around.*) I have such a secret to tell you both about Marianne! I am sure she will be married to Mr. Willoughby very soon.

ELINOR. You have said that almost every day since they met, Margaret.

MARGARET. But indeed now I am sure they will be married very soon, for he has got a lock of her hair.

Mrs. Dashwood and Elinor exchange glances.

ELINOR. How do you know?

MARGARET. I know MANY secrets, Elinor.

ELINOR. Margaret.

MARGARET. I saw him take it! Last night after tea, when you and Mamma went out of the room, they were whispering together, and he took up her scissors and cut off a lock of her hair, and he kissed it, and put it into his pocketbook! And today she asked to stay at home, ALONE... I am sure that he must be visiting with her now!

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.

Elinor & Brandon (Page 56)

COL. BRANDON. Miss Dashwood... might I congratulate you on the acquisition of a brother?

ELINOR. What do you mean?

COL. BRANDON. Your sister's engagement to Mr. Willoughby.

ELINOR. If she is engaged to Mr. Willoughby, this is the first time I have heard of it.

COL. BRANDON. Their marriage is universally talked of.

ELINOR. Bywhom?

COL. BRANDON. By some of whom you know nothing, by others with whom you are most intimate. (*In pain.*) Is it true, Miss Dashwood?

ELINOR. I .. though they have never told me of their terms, of their mutual affection I have no doubt, and I am not surprised to hear of their engagement.

COL. BRANDON. To your sister I wish all imaginable happiness; to Willoughby, that he may endeavor to deserve her.

He bows and leaves.

NOTE: all characters will use a “proper” or Received English accent.