

# Sense & Sensibility

## *Audience Study Guide*

by Melissa Henderson



# Synopsis

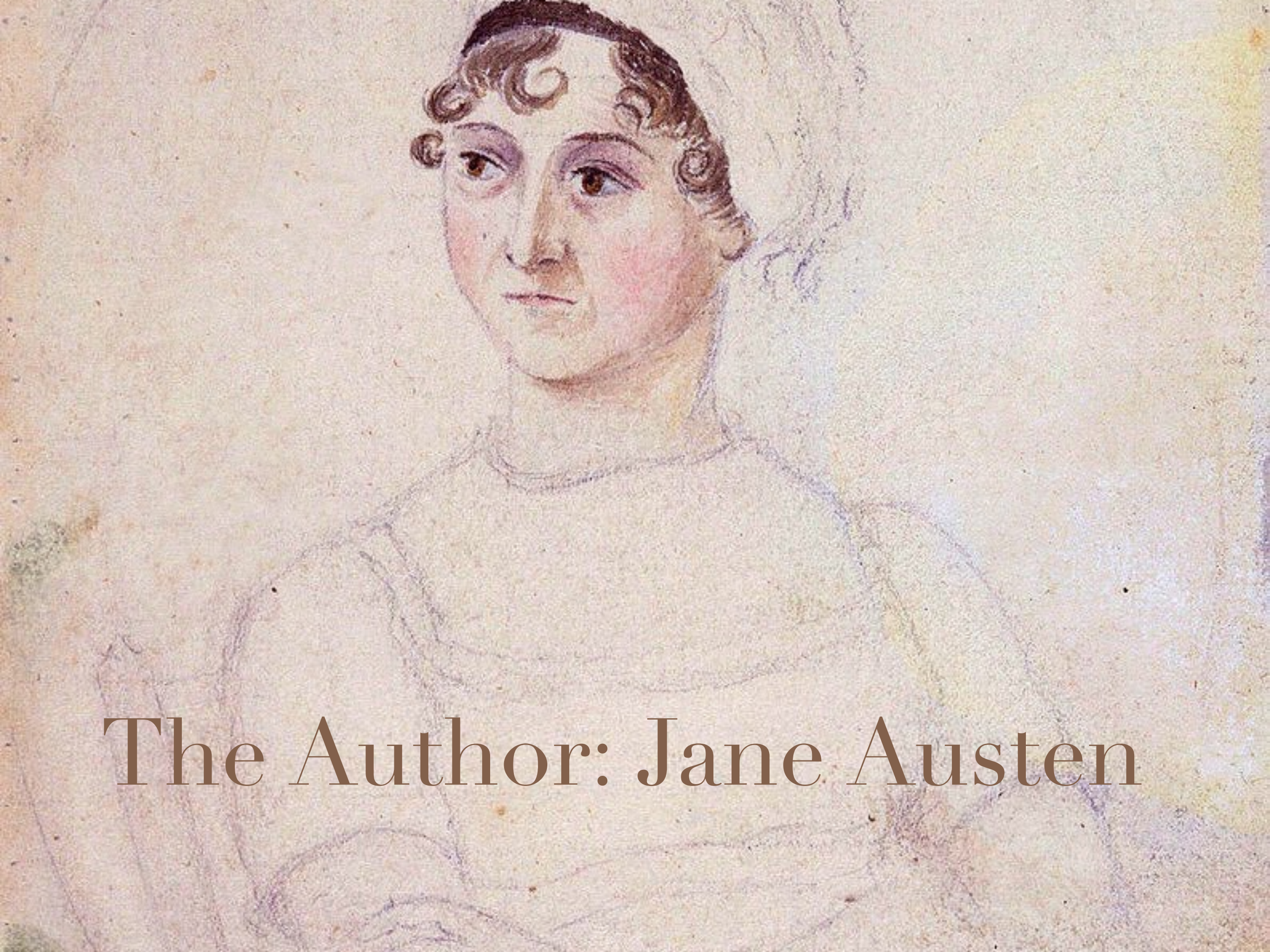
This version is a fun adaptation of the classic Jane Austen novel. The three Dashwood sisters lose their fortune when their father dies suddenly. Who will marry them now and secure their future?



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The Author: Jane Austen



# The Author: Jane Austen

- Jane Austen is considered “...one of the originators of the modern, interiorized novel character”.
- Her work raises issues: money, property inheritance, the position of women in the Regency period & highlights the tension between society and the individual
- *Sense & Sensibility*: published anonymously in 1811, written in a popular style of the 1790s, a contrast between two hero characters with opposing beliefs & behavior



Kate Hamill





# The Playwright: Kate Hamill

- Kate Hamill wrote this play and starred as Marianne Dashwood in its 2014 premiere with Bedlam Theatre Company
- Hamill wanted to create more acting roles for women, especially in classical works
- On social pressure, the play asks “Do we follow the rules, or do we break the rules and follow...our own conscience?”



# The Cast





# The Cast

- GOSSIPS: a chorus of high-society figures, animals and other characters
- ELINOR DASHWOOD: the eldest Dashwood sister, responsible, practical
- MARIANNE DASHWOOD: the middle Dashwood sister, very emotional
- MARGARET DASHWOOD: the youngest Dashwood sister, desperate to grow up
- MRS. DASHWOOD: the Dashwoods' mother, protective, good-natured
- COLONEL BRANDON: wealthy bachelor, restrained, honorable
- JOHN WILLOUGHBY: handsome, romantic, charming
- JOHN DASHWOOD: Dashwood sisters' half-brother, wealthy, weak-willed
- FANNY DASHWOOD: wife of John Dashwood, selfish, manipulative



# The Cast

- ANNE STEELE: man-obsessed, socially unaware, chatterbox
- LUCY STEELE: insecure, uneducated, sly
- ROBERT FERRARS: Edward and Fanny's younger brother, conceited
- EDWARD FERRARS: Fanny and Robert's friendly, practical older brother
- MRS. JENNINGS: a well-meaning, boisterous dowager
- SIR JOHN MIDDLETON: a distant Dashwood relation, jovial, vulgar
- LADY MIDDLETON: Sir John's wife, over-bred
- MRS. FERRARS: Edward, John & Fanny's mother, manipulative



# Regency Time Period





# Regency Time Period

- Professions & financial independence for women were unthinkable. The only jobs available to women were educating wealthy girls.
- The financial future of women was solely dependent on the economic status of their fathers or husbands. They could own no legal property.
- Economic class divisions in Britain deepened as the Industrial Revolution brewed.



# Production History





# Production History

- Hamill's play premiered off-Broadway in 2014 at Bedlam's Theater Company
- "...an unconditional delight...invigorating...a bouncy, jaunty take on Austen...remains remarkably true to the values and priorities of its source. The classic Austen preoccupations with real estate, income, class, reputation and equilibrium in life are all rendered brightly and legibly here." —NY Times.
- "Perhaps the greatest stage adaptation of this novel in history." —Huffington Post.



# Theatre Etiquette





# Theatre Etiquette

- The ACU Theatre Department is thrilled that you are coming to see our production. We produce an average of 7 shows a year, and they're all open to students. As you prepare to attend *Sense & Sensibility*, please remember that certain etiquette is appropriate for live theatre performances.
- It is inappropriate to talk, text, or use any mobile device during the show. It is also inappropriate to bring food or drink into the theatre or make loud noises (chomping on gum, crumpling paper, etc.). Not only is that kind of behavior distracting to your fellow audience members, but it is also distracting to the actors. They do "feel" your energy, so, it is appropriate to laugh when something is funny or clap at the end of a scene or when the entire play is done. Your focused attention makes the performance better for everyone. Thank you!



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SENSE  
AND  
SENSIBILITY:

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

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BY A LADY.

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VOL. I.

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London:

PRINTED FOR THE AUTHOR,

*By C. Roworth, Bell-yard, Temple-bar,*

AND PUBLISHED BY T. EGERTON, WHITEHALL.

1811.



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