

Character & Plot Comparisons

<i>A Gossip's Story,</i> by Jane West	<i>Sense & Sensibility,</i> by Jane Austen
<p>Louisa Dudley</p> <p>The eldest daughter; sensible, economical, emotionally reserved; lived with her father in the Caribbean, where she received an unconventional yet “superior” education.</p> <p>After a prior (rejected) proposal from Sir William Milton <i>and</i> a prior (rejected) proposal between Mr. Pelham and Marianne, Louisa marries Mr. Pelham for love and prudence.</p>	<p>Elinor Dashwood</p> <p>The eldest daughter; sensible, economical, emotionally reserved; effectively runs the household with/for her mother.</p> <p>After some misunderstandings over prior engagements, marries Edward Ferrars for love.</p>
<p>Marianne Dudley</p> <p>The middle daughter; romantic and emotional; lived with her wealthy, indulgent grandmother and “educated” poorly on a diet of frivolous novels.</p> <p>After rejecting the sensible Mr. Pelham, marries the romantic (and disastrous) Mr. Clermont and winds up heartbroken.</p>	<p>Marianne Dashwood</p> <p>The middle daughter; romantic and emotional; intelligent but sometimes frivolous.</p> <p>After being heartbroken from the cad Willoughby, marries the sensible Col. Brandon.</p>
<p>Mr. Pelham</p> <p>Sensible friend of the Dudley family.</p> <p>Initially proposes to Marianne but, after she rejects him, falls for Louisa at her father’s deathbed and then marries her.</p>	<p>Edward Ferrars / Col. Brandon</p> <p>Ferrars, the sensible brother-in-law of the John Dashwood. Initially engaged to Lucy Steele but falls for Elinor, whom he marries when Lucy marries Edward’s brother Robert</p> <p>Brandon, a friend of Sir John Middleton and second rescuer of Marianne. Courts Marianne throughout, but she only falls for him later, after her illness.</p>

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<p>Sir William Milton</p> <p>A dashing, romantic man who turns out to be a philanderer.</p> <p>Initially courts Louisa until he is outed by a letter from Mary Morton as having fathered illegitimate children and ruined a young girl; he is subsequently rejected by Louisa in favor of a more respectable marriage.</p>	<p>John Willoughby</p> <p>A dashing, romantic man who turns out to be a philanderer.</p> <p>Initially courts Marianne until he is outed by Brandon as having fathered an illegitimate child and ruined a young girl; he is subsequently disinherited and rejects Marianne in favor of a rich wife.</p>
<p>Mrs. Alderson</p> <p>The Dudley girls' wealthy maternal grandmother, who raises Marianne and overindulges her romantic sensibilities and her expectations for a wealthy life.</p> <p>We include her here, alongside Mr. Dudley, to contrast with the financially and socially powerful and assertive women in <i>S&S</i>.</p>	<p>Mrs. Ferrars / Mrs. Smith</p> <p>Mrs. Ferrars is the matriarch of the Ferrars family (she is the mother of Fanny Dashwood and Edward and Robert Ferrars). She is powerful and socioeconomically ambitious. She disowns her eldest son in retaliation for agreeing to marry Lucy Steele; it's possible she also disinherited the younger Robert for then marrying Lucy Steele.</p> <p>Mrs. Smith is Willoughby's wealthy aunt, who disowns him for ruining young Eliza Williams.</p>
<p>Tonnereau / Pirates</p> <p>Tonnereau is "an artful, ungenerous friend," and pirates are French privateers. Each, in their way, bring about the initial financial ruination of the Dudleys by stealing the financial support from Mr. Dudley's overseas businesses.</p>	<p>John & Fanny Dashwood</p> <p>John Dashwood is the son of Henry Dashwood and his greedy wife, Fanny.</p> <p>Fanny Dashwood brings about the financial ruination of the Dashwood women by effectively "stealing" the financial support Henry Dashwood had intended for his second wife and daughters.</p>

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<p>Miss Prudentia Homespun / Mrs. Medium</p> <p>Prudentia is the narrator of the novel and seemingly a neighbor. She is a prolific gossip who relates the romantic intrigues of young women.</p> <p>The vicar's wife, Mrs. Medium delights in the romantic intrigues of the young and is obsessed with marrying off her daughter.</p>	<p>Mrs. Jennings</p> <p>Mother of Lady Middleton and Charlotte Palmer.</p> <p>She is a prolific gossip who delights in the romantic intrigues of the young and is obsessed with marrying off eligible women.</p>
<p>Mr. Alsop / Capt. Target / Mr. Inkle</p> <p>Caricatures of suitors. The first two are vain (Alsop is foppish, Target is mock-heroic); Inkle is handsome and quiet.</p> <p>At the end of the book, Alsop is linked to Dolly Medium, and Target is attached to Eleanor Singleton. Inkle is married to Miss Cardamum.</p>	<p>Robert Ferrars</p> <p>The younger brother of Edward Ferrars and Fanny Dashwood, vain and obsessed with appearance and fashion. At the end of the book, he is married to Lucy Steele.</p>
<p>Mary Morton / Miss Morton</p> <p>The mother, Mary, is a coffeehouse proprietress whose daughter, Miss Morton, was "ruined" by Sir William Milton, who fathered her two children before abandoning them.</p>	<p>Eliza Williamses (mother / daughter)</p> <p>The mother Eliza was an early, unrequited love interest of Col. Brandon; he took her daughter Eliza under his protection. Young Eliza was then "ruined" by Willoughby, who fathered her child before abandoning her.</p> <p>(NOTE: In S&S, we also hear of a Miss Morton, this time a wealthy woman whom the Mrs. Ferrars intends first for Edward and then for Robert, though neither marries her.)</p>