

WILLOUGHBY

Col. Brandon is just the kind of man who-

ELINOR

His faults are enhanced by your imaginations.

WILLOUGHBY

That may be so – I have an artful imagination. He is a man whom everybody speaks well of-

ELINOR

He's respectable!

MARIANNE [*disgusted*]

Respectable-!

WILLOUGHBY

--and nobody cares about; everyone is delighted to see him, but nobody remembers to talk to him.

MARIANNE

That is exactly what I think of him.

ELINOR

That is harsh of *both* of you. He's -

WILLOUGHBY

*Forgettable?*

ELINOR

He's interesting—he's traveled extensively-!

MARIANNE

That is to say, he has told you that in India the climate is hot, and the mosquitoes are troublesome.

ELINOR

*His* observations have stretched farther than your candor. But why should *you* dislike him, Will?

WILLOUGHBY

I consider him a very '*respectable*' man—if not –

WILLOUGHBY, ELINOR & MARIANNE

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MARIANNE

- *boring!* There is nothing wrong with being boring, but we are saddled with him socially, everywhere we go! You cannot escape him in this small town!

WILLOUGHBY

Elinor, you must not deny me the privilege of disliking him despite the fact I believe his character to be irreproachable. And in return for an acknowledgment of such, *Elinor*, you must allow me to continue as I am-

ELINOR

A man who can hate without grounds?

WILLOUGHBY

I never said 'hate.'

MARIANNE

A man who knows who he *is* and requires taste in the people with whom he surrounds himself.

WILLOUGHBY

Marianne, I adore your adoration for me. *[he kisses her hand and then her directly- it is more intimate than the group expected and ALL are a little embarrassed]*

MARIANNE

Would you like another?

WILLOUGHBY

Love it.

MARIANNE

EI?

ELINOR

No, thank you.

*[MARIANNE exits with her and WILL's glasses.]*

WILLOUGHBY

You don't approve of my gift do you?

ELINOR

No. You can blame me for that.

WILLOUGHBY

Why?

ELINOR

Do women often accept cars from you?

WILLOUGHBY

The only person to whom I have gifted an automobile is my aunt. And she loved it. *[pause]* I have taken it back.

ELINOR

Thank you. Marianne was very flattered, though.

WILLOUGHBY

I know. But she cares what you think.

ELINOR

Marianne has never shown much concern for my approval.

WILLOUGHBY

You think *I'm* too extravagant.

ELINOR

Yes. But you have the means to do it. That's not necessarily a bad thing.

WILLOUGHBY

Bad for your sister, though.

ELINOR

Will, what is it you want to ask me?

WILLOUGHBY

I don't think you like me and I want to know why.

ELINOR

You give no reason for disliking the Colonel. Why should I?

WILLOUGHBY

That's not fair.

ELINOR

Upon our *very short* acquaintance, I can say that I like you, Will. The little I know of you, at least.

WILLOUGHBY

I see.

ELINOR

Do you really?

WILLOUGHBY

I see that you must allow me to remedy our lack of acquaintance.

ELINOR

You're not afraid you'll become tiresome?

WILLOUGHBY

Elinor, I pride myself on my likability. The cure is maximum absorption. I promise to make sure you and your sister *both* find me someone worth *liking* whole-heartedly.