

WILLOUGHBY'S REGRET

Episode 1 "Reunited" Opening

Written by

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A sequel to Jane Austen's *Sense and Sensibility*.

FADE IN:

SUPER - BANK OF ENGLAND, LONDON, TUESDAY MAY 17, 1814.

INT. BANK OF ENGLAND GREAT HALL - DAY 11:00

A WOMAN (39) in a regency style black dress wears a wide hat with plumes that block the view of her face. She seems to have shrunk out of her dress a bit but her determined poise compensates for it.

She nears the bottle neck of people going in and out the double doors.

A MAN (47) in tall black hat and quality, but aged, regency black suit files in beside her.

They each press, on either side, through the body dense doorway.

Once through, the room opens wide like a grand welcome. The man and woman, unaware of each other, look up to survey the immense ceiling.

While in this attitude a well-dressed FATHER(54) passes them while conversing with his SON(22).

Trailing behind, engrossed in her small light brown book is his awkward DAUGHTER(29). She wears fine, but horrid for her, clothes. Her father turns, expecting her to be right behind him. She is lagging. Then, distracted, she bumps into another patron.

DAUGHTER/PATRON

Oh!

The girl looks with fear at her father as he impatiently rips the book from her. He sees, on the spine in gold lettering, the words "SENSE AND SENSIBILITY." He glowers at his daughter then smacks the book into the chest of a passing custodian.

FATHER

Come!

He exits with his compliant son following.

The bewildered custodian immediately has the book snatched from him. He looks up to see the girl shoving it under her hat as she hurries to catch up to her father and brother.

The woman and man are too distracted to notice this exchange. Each looks toward the row of tills stretched along the back wall.

CLERKS BUZZ like bees as they assist patrons. One gentleman leaves his spot. Both the man and the woman, their faces still out of view, move toward the space. The man, unaware of the woman, gets there first. The woman waits.

CLERK 1
Good day sir.

MAN
Good day.

He hands a paper to the Clerk

MAN (CONT'D)
I'd like a bank note for this amount... He points to the top.

MAN (CONT'D)
...and the rest in the prescribed denominations.

The patron beside the man leaves and the Woman steps in.

CLERK 2
Good day madam.

The woman sounds tense, or perhaps tired, but polite.

WOMAN
Good day. A with-drawl please.

Clerk 1 looks at the paper. His eyes widen a little.

CLERK 1
Are these numbers correct?

MAN
Yes.

CLERK 1
I shall be a few minutes.

MAN
Thank-you.

The Man's hand reaches into his suit pocket to retrieve a carefully folded paper.

His fingers are well kept, cuticles clean, though the right middle and pointing fingers are a bit stained from ink.

There are evidences of callouses, mostly healed, plus some old scars. He wears no ring. The paper is opened to reveal a long list written in beautiful penmanship.

The first items read:

"LONDON."

"HARRIS-BANKNOTE."

"LORD AND LADY GRAY."

"GRAVESITE."

"MRS. HAMMOND-ASK ABOUT B."

EXT. THREADNEEDLE STREET - DAY

Large stone buildings line the street teeming with serious faces and some less so.

Hackney coaches pulled by teams of horses manned by disgruntled drivers fill the road. Sounds of HOOFS, TURNING WHEELS, CHATTER of vendors, DEBATING business men, and GOSSIPING ladies fill the air as much as the dust.

ELIANNA (21) fair, with rosy cheeks and green eyes looks about with curiosity. She spots a lady selling flowers across the road and is about to venture over when she hears...

PAPER BOY (O.S.)
(with east Indian accent)
Get your paper!

A little East Indian PAPER BOY (10) with rolled up pants and suspenders, holds up a paper. A man walks by, takes it, and drops a coin into the boy's hand. The boy puts the coin in his pocket.

ELIANNA (O.S.)
May I have one?

The boy hands her a paper. She holds out a coin.

PAPER BOY
(surprised)
Oh!

The boy seems a bit worried.

PAPER BOY (CONT'D)

Um...

He pulls out his coins, checking his change.

ELIANNA

(in Indian)

You may keep it.

She places the coin into his hand. His eyes grow wide.

PAPER BOY

(in Indian)

Thanks! Thanks a lot miss!

Elianna steps away, then looks at her paper. "THE CHRONICLE." Below is a picture of a particularly handsome man 30.

JONATHAN CASTLE-INVESTOR RETURNS AND THE SPOILS OF WAR.

FURSEY (O.S.)

Now aren't we an odd pair.

Elianna looks up to see a smiling FURSEY (20), holding a lilac, his eyes bright beneath his dark curly hair defying the confines of his stylish hand-me-down hat. His neck is swan-like and graceful. He smells the lilac. She looks at his flower, then her paper.

ELIANNA

I prefer "refreshing."

FURSEY

Well said!

She tries to read.

FURSEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I've been on a boat for weeks and

I'm incredibly curious... With a playful demeanor, she looks back at her paper.

ELIANNA

Well, England is...

(shocked)

...is not at war with France?

ELIANNA/FURSEY

What?

FURSEY
When did it end?

ELIANNA
In (scanning the paper)...April it
seems.

FURSEY
And you're only now hearing of it?

ELIANNA
I just arrived from India.

FURSEY
And I Barbados!

INT. BANK OF ENGLAND GREAT HALL - DAY

Clerk 1 returns. He hands the note to the Man.

CLERK 1
There you are.

MAN
Thank-you.

The clerk also has cash and starts counting it out, however,
the conversation beside them is hard to ignore.

WOMAN
I don't understand. The death
certificate is right before you.

CLERK 2
We expected you Thursday.

WOMAN
Why is arriving early an obstacle?

CLERK 2
I have my orders...

WOMAN
To keep my money from me?

CLERK 2
To protect it madam.

WOMAN
From others, not me.

CLERK 2

You may return with your steward or attorney.

WOMAN

As a widow I own this account.

CLERK 2

I'm sorry.

WOMAN

"I'm sorry" isn't going to pay for my cab!

CLERK 2

Please lower your voice.

CLERK 1

Is that all sir?

MAN

Yes, thank-you.

He takes the funds.

WOMAN

I demand to speak to the director!

CLERK 2

He made the order.

WOMAN

This is preposterous!

CLERK 2

The last with-drawl was 21 years ago.

WILLOUGHBY (O.S.)

So was mine.

The man turns to Clerk 2. We finally see his face. He is WILLOUGHBY (47) a little worse for wear but still possessing presence.

The clerk and the Woman turn. She is MARIANNE (39) lovely with blonde hair graying ever so slightly, her face somewhat weary and agitated. Her eyes widen in disbelief. Willoughby does not yet notice her. He focuses on Clerk 2.

WILLOUGHBY (CONT'D)

I had no trouble. Why must a widow endure it?

CLERK 2
This is a particular circumstance.

WILLOUGHBY
And I find you particularly rude.

Are you really going to leave this woman stranded?

CLERK 2
It's out of my hands.

WILLOUGHBY
And directly into mine I assume.
(turning to her)
Madam...

His face registers shock.

WILLOUGHBY (CONT'D)
Marianne?

MARIANNE
Willoughby!

CLERK 2
You know this woman?

WILLOUGHBY
Without a doubt!

Clerk 2 motions to Clerk 1 to get the director.

CLERK 2
What is her name?...Sir?

WILLOUGHBY
Uh...Marianne. Mrs. Marianne

Brandon. The DIRECTOR (41) austere and impatient approaches.

CLERK 2
This gentlemen identified the lady

as Mrs. Brandon.

DIRECTOR
(sarcastic)
I'm sure he did.

CLERK 2
But...

DIRECTOR
Our instructions were strict.

No with-drawl till we speak to Mr. Ferrars or Mr. Harris.

INT. THREADNEEDLE STREET - DAY

Fursey and Elianna leisurely walk amidst the bustle of the street to the front of the bank. He is still holding his lilac and she her paper.

ELIANNA

Are you always this forthright?

FURSEY

I find confidence endearing don't

you? That is, as long as one is not cocky. My nanny would always say, "De higha de monkey climb, de more he show he tail."

ELIANNA

Translation?

FURSEY

The more you show off, the more you show your faults.

ELIANNA

Oh, so you would never show off.

FURSEY

No.

ELIANNA

Uh.

FURSEY

Too risky.

ELIANNA

What's your name?

FURSEY

Fursey Willoughby. At your service.

ELIANNA

Fursey?

FURSEY

It's old Celtic.

ELIANNA

And means...?

FURSEY

Virtue.

ELIANNA

There's a name to live up to.

FURSEY

That was my father's intention.

Marianne hurries out, Willoughby right behind.

MARIANNE

Dearest we must go...

(seeing Fursey) (GASP!)

Oh!

ELIANNA

This is Fursey Willoughby mama.

MARIANNE

(to Willoughby)

You had a son?

WILLOUGHBY

And you a daughter?

MARIANNE

(to Elianna)

You ought to be in the coach.

ELIANNA

It's stuffy.

(to Willoughby)

You're old friends?

WILLOUGHBY

...Long ago.

ELIANNA

It's a pleasure to meet you sir!

Mother should tell me more about her friends.

FURSEY

May I present my father Mr. John Willoughby.

Elianna curtsies then looks at her Mother to prompt her.

MARIANNE

My daughter, Miss Brandon.

ELIANNA

Elianna Louisa Brandon.

WILLOUGHBY

What a lovely name. It's very musical.

ELIANNA

That's why my father chose it.

WILLOUGHBY

When did the Colonel pass?

Marianne's face falls.

ELIANNA

The General passed a year ago.
Just.

Willoughby removes his hat, Fursey following suit.

WILLOUGHBY

I'm deeply sorry.

MARIANNE

Thank-you. Now we must be going.

WILLOUGHBY

But your coach.

MARIANNE

Elianna has enough to pay for it.

ELIANNA

I don't.

MARIANNE

What?

ELIANNA

I bought a paper.

MARIANNE

For a six pence?

ELIANNA

The boy needed it.

She points. Marianne softens and seems to understand.

ELIANNA (CONT'D)

What's happened?

Marianne hesitates.

WILLOUGHBY
 A complication.
 (to Marianne)
 The director mentioned Mr. Harris.

I have a meeting with him soon.

MARIANNE
 Really?

FURSEY
 Let's go together!

They look at the coaches waiting on the street, both are full with luggage.

WILLOUGHBY
 In our respective coaches perhaps?

MARIANNE
 Very good.

WILLOUGHBY
 Where's your escort?

MARIANNE
 (with distain)
 I dismissed him.

She heads for the coach. Willoughby gets ahead of her and opens the door.

WILLOUGHBY
 Allow me?

He offers his hand. Marianne buckles under the pressure of being watched but once inside pulls away quickly. Fursey hands Elianna the lilac.

FURSEY
 In truth, I bought it for you.

ELIANNA
 Really? Thank-you.

She hands him the paper. He tips his hat in thanks and helps her into the coach. Willoughby heads to his coach looking quite out of sorts. Fursey shuts the ladies door and hurries to join his father.

INT. MARIANNE'S COACH - DAY

Elianna breathes in the scent.

ELIANNA

Mmm. I've missed smelling flowers.

She holds out the lilac to Marianne.

MARIANNE

No thank-you.

ELIANNA

We'll sort everything out.

MARIANNE

It's not that.

ELIANNA

Then what?

MARIANNE

The Willoughbys!

INT. THE WILLOUGHBY'S COACH - DAY

Willoughby sits, his mind visibly reeling. He looks winded. Fursey hops in and plops down. The coach takes off.

INTERCUT: MARIANNE'S COACH/THE WILLOUGHBY'S COACH - DAY

FURSEY

How fortunate!...What is it?

WILLOUGHBY

The Brandons!

MARIANNE

I never dreamed I would see him. Of all people!

WILLOUGHBY

We must help them.

MARIANNE

We must escape them!