

QUESTIONS ON *MANSFIELD PARK*, VOLUME 1 (CHAPTERS 1-18)  
(Please bring these questions with you on September 12)

NOTE: Austen began *Mansfield Park* while she was still revising *Pride and Prejudice*. Some readers are disappointed because it is so different from *Pride and Prejudice*, but I think Austen intended it to be different. Her first three novels—*Northanger Abbey*, *Sense and Sensibility*, and *Pride and Prejudice*—were begun when she was in her late teens and early twenties. Now in her mid-thirties, she was ready to take on new artistic challenges.

1. *Emma*, which we read last month and which was written after *Mansfield Park*, introduced us to Austen's only independently wealthy heroine. Fanny Price, the heroine of *Mansfield Park*, is, by contrast, a poor relation with no money of her own at all. How does her dependent status affect her relationships with the various members of the Bertram family?

2. Much of the first volume of *Mansfield Park* is devoted to two extended episodes—the trip to Sotherton and the production of “Lovers’ Vows.” Austen uses each of these episodes to explore the minds and hearts of her principle characters. What does the trip to Sotherton reveal about each of the following characters:

- Maria Bertram
- Julia Bertram
- Edmund Bertram
- Henry Crawford
- Mary Crawford
- Mr. Rushworth
- Fanny Price
- Mrs. Norris

3. Later in volume 1 the young people decide to amuse themselves by putting on a play. On September 26th (our second session on *Mansfield Park*) local actors will perform the three scenes from “Lovers’ Vows” which are most crucial to understanding this section of the novel. To prepare yourself for this performance, consider the following questions:

a. Why does the group have such a hard time selecting a play?

b. When they finally decide on “Lovers’ Vows” what role does each of the following characters select, and why?

- Mr. Yates
- Tom Bertram
- Maria Bertram
- Mr. Rushworth
- Henry Crawford
- Mary Crawford
- Edmund Bertram

c. Why do Julia Bertram and Fanny not have parts in the play?