

I reread the second session's reading in 50-page chunks and could have spent an hour on each "chunk". I tried to keep track of what was most important and useful to discuss in each chunk.. I don't know if it's useful to anyone but me. See the very end!

1. Game Playing

- chapter 25--(Speculation game)--Notice all the "speculations" (esp. MC's) and what is revealed about each character from the way they play the game: Edmund, Henry, Mary, Fanny, Lady Bertram, William. (See 229)
- chapter 26-- Edmund's doubts, see esp. 236. The Necklace--the game begins?
- chapter 27-- Edmund's chain, William's cross--how much of a gift was Edmund's (see esp. 243-244, 248-249) "the stab"!
- chapter 28-- the ball (Is Mary just playing with Edmund's feelings (257)? Is Sir Thomas playing games using Fanny (259)?
- chapter 30--Henry reveals his "love" to his sister. Is Henry playing at love here? Is he a cad who simply wants to win the game of putting a little hole in her heart? Or is he genuinely in love with Fanny See esp. 271. What would a first time reader think? What about a multiple-time reader--would there be a difference? Do also notice Mary's sense of the Admiral's influence and Mary's attitude toward her brother's and Fanny's marriage. See esp. 272-273.

3. The Proposal and the Pressures [Note how often "gratitude" is said. Also "constancy"]

- chapter 31--(Henry's Proposal, Fanny's rejection) (esp 282) [c/c to Collins/Darcy]
- chapter 32--Sir Thomas's pressure (esp. 293-294--**is this the crisis point of the novel?**),
- chapter 33--Henry's renewed proposal (note military terms (301). Lady B's pressure.
- chapter 34--Henry reads Shakespeare. Is Edmund at all jealous?
- chapter 35--Edmund's pressure (How much is he thinking about Fanny's responses? How does he explain Henry's flirtatious behavior with Maria (235)?)
- chapter 36--Mary Crawford's pressure and defense of her brother (see esp. 236-7)

4. Portsmouth [compare to Mansfield Park]: Home?

- chapter 37--Sir Thomas' and Fanny's hopes-note language of "healing" (see 342-3)
- chapter 38-39--Disillusionment and comparisons to MP (see esp.363)--how accurate?
- chapter 41-43--Henry's visit. Has Fanny's attitude to him changed? (see esp. 377, 389). BUT do notice the narrator's attitude in last pp of 42 (383)— Is it suspicious????
- chapter 44--Letter from Edmund. MC's character; Edmund's response; Fanny's response (esp. 291-294)
- chapter 45--Tom's dangerous illness and Mary's letter --Fanny's reaction. (402-4)

5. Return to Mansfield Park

chapter 46--SCANDAL. Is Fanny's reaction appropriate or OTT (esp. 470)?

Edmund's reaction OTT or as it should be (413-414)?

chapter 4-- Edmund tells Fanny about Mary's attitude (422-426, ending with a "saucy playful smile"); also Edmund's declaration about future marriage plans (427).

chapter 48—Narrative wrap up:

*Think about the narrative voice--what do you make of it? Is it Austen's?

*Consider the importance of Sir Thomas' role throughout the novel--is he the main character (430)? Is Fanny? or is Mansfield Park itself?

*Is Edmund worthy of Fanny, given his flaws?

*What do you make of the possible alternative ending (433-435)? Is it preferable (to you? Is the non-alternative ending a fairy tale?

Which ending does Austen lean toward? Consider tone.

Food for thought: Following up on Riva's question last time: Tony Tanner, a British literary critic wrote in 1985 :

"Elizabeth Bennet and Emma Woodhouse are among the most beloved figures in English fiction. But nobody falls in love with Fanny Price. What, then, was Jane Austen doing in this book? The question is worth asking because, if Fanny Price is her least popular heroine, it is arguable that Mansfield Park is her most profound novel (indeed, to my mind, it is one of the most profound novels of the nineteenth century.) And what such a poor sort of heroine is doing in such a great book is a matter worth examining in some care." (Tony Tanner, *Jane Austen*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985) 143-144.

[Hint: Tanner admires Fanny Price]

Mansfield Park vs. Pride and Prejudice????