

Mansfield Park

1. *Mansfield Park* can be seen as a “Cinderella story.” Identify the elements of this kind of story as they appear in this novel and film. If Fanny Price is Cinderella, who is her Fairy Godmother? Does Edmund find and rescue her, or does she rescue him?
2. The Crawfords come down from fashionable London and shake up the more conservative country world of Mansfield Park. Are Mary and Henry likeable? Why is Mary attracted to Edmund, and how does she want to change him? Why does Henry become interested in Fanny, and how does he hope she’ll change him? What other films or works of literature feature a “good” character that redeems a “bad” one? Why do you think that doesn’t happen in this story? Do you wish it had?
3. Fanny Price is often called the least likeable of Austen’s heroines because she is too passive, consistent, and good. Do you agree or disagree? Why? What do you think of the performance of Billie Piper, the actress who plays Fanny in this film version? Do you think she was a good choice? What other actresses might you cast in the role of Fanny?
4. In *Mansfield Park* Austen uses the device of a “play within a play” with “Lovers’ Vows.” How does this play “play” upon what is happening among the characters in the novel? What does it reveal about their relationships?
5. What role does setting play in this novel? What are the “improvements” that Crawford and Rushworth want to make? What do you think these might symbolize?
6. At different points in the novel and the film, several male characters have moments when they look at Fanny and “see” her as they have not before. Which characters see Fanny anew, and what do they recognize in her that they were blind to before?

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