

Discussion Questions & Recommended Reading for MANUFACTURING A DUCHESS

1. Re-read the Keats poem at the beginning of the novel. Can you draw any connections between the poem and the people and actions in the story?
2. How does the inclusion of Marjorie disrupt the standard narrative of a Regency romance?
3. Talk about the relationship between Alec and his daughter. Do you have any favorite father-daughter moments—or moments when you were frustrated with one or both?
4. Take a look at the inclusion of poetry, literary quotes, and music. How do these elements contribute to the novel?
5. What did you think about the Menagerie at the Tower? Did you know the story of the polar bear is true?
6. Did you have a favorite moment? If so, what was it and why?
7. Did you ever imagine that women could struggle with their societal roles during this time period? Where do you think any preconceptions about how women 'really' behaved come from?
8. Alec undergoes quite a life journey, including marriage, war, and single parenthood—all before meeting Aurora, who challenges his views. Talk about his journey, and how it aligns or contrasts from hers.
9. What does Finn realize over the course of the novel? Does he break the mold of how you thought Regency-era men should behave?
10. Discuss Missie's development over the course of the novel. What aspects drove her behavior? Do you sympathize with her at all?

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11. The novel does not dwell on the fact that Alec and Finn were veterans of the Napoleonic wars, nor does it go into detail about the continued global conflicts between Great Britain and other European countries, the relatively recent American Revolution, or the War of 1812. Does knowing that these conflicts were very much a part of the characters' worldview change your sense of their behavior and/or actions? Does it cast new light on the story?
12. How does the relationship between Aurora and her mother change over the course of the novel? Does it influence Aurora's choices?
13. The Industrial Revolution was well underway in England during the time of the Regency, though most romance novels set in this era do not address it. How does Aurora's connection to the world of a factory and business affect how you think about the late 19th century?
14. Would you like to hear more of Finn's story? What did you think of him and his relationship with Alec?

Further reading suggestions:

- Georgette Heyer, *Friday's Child*
- Carla Kelly, *Summer Campaign*
- Gill Hornby, *Miss Austen*
- Elizabeth Gaskell, *North and South* and/or *Wives and Daughters*
- Devoney Looser, *Wild for Austen: A Rebellious, Subversive, and Untamed Jane*
- Andrea Penrose, *The Diamond of London: A Fascinating Historical Novel of the Regency Based on True History*
- Kasey Stockton, *To Forge Her Fate: A Clean Regency Romance*
- Sabrina Jeffries, *A Duke for Diana: A Witty and Entertaining Historical Regency Romance*
- Jane Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*