

The Girl in the Gatehouse Discussion Questions

Had you known that Jane Austen's name never appeared on her books during her lifetime? Did it surprise you that novel writing was considered (at least by some) improper and unladylike? In what ways might those attitudes continue today?

Mariah's situation (sent away after an indiscretion to live in relative isolation) was loosely based on the fate of one of Jane Austen's characters in *Mansfield Park* (although Maria Bertram was a married woman who had an affair). Did you think Mariah Aubrey's father treated her unfairly? How have attitudes toward "virtue and vice" changed since the early 1800s?

Did you learn anything new from the historical quotes at the beginning of each chapter? What quote in particular did you like? Why?

Did you figure out the mystery of Captain Prince early on? What about the "treasure" of the gatehouse? Did you spot any red herrings (false clues) that led you to believe there might be real treasure (say, jewels or gold) in the gatehouse?

Captain Bryant spent many years trying to gain the approval of his father. Can you relate? How so? What makes father/child relationships so important?

Did you find yourself growing fond of any character that you did not care for at the outset? Which character was your favorite? Why?

What was your reaction to Amy Merryweather's red yarn as a symbol of our life to come? (As a reminder, she said, "Don't hold onto the knots and forget the life ahead.") Have you had knots in your own life to get past?

Mariah did not blame God for her problems, but she no longer felt worthy of His love. Have you or someone you've known had difficulty embracing forgiveness? How did that affect your relationships and/or self-esteem?

Go back and read the first two words and the last two words of the book. Any thoughts on why the author may have chosen them?

If you could ask the author one question, what would it be? (Note: Feel free to e-mail any such questions to julie@julieklassen.com and she will do her best to answer them.)