Questions and Topics for discussion

1. What are Swann’s weaknesses? How do these relate to similar traits in Marcel?
2. Social satire, especially in the Verdurin salon.
3. What roles do music and painting play in the relationship between Swann and Odette?
4. Who is Mme Verdurin? How does she operate her salon? Who are the faithful? How do you become one of the faithful? Who are the bores?
5. Who is Odette? What is Swann's first impression of her? How does Swann fall in love with Odette?
6. What is Swann’s relationship to Vermeer and his paintings?
7. Why does Mme Verdurin find it difficult to listen to certain musical selections?
8. Notice how Swann listens to the “little phrase.” What is the effect of music on him? Does Swann know that Vinteuil is the composer? What is the role of the music in the relationship between Swann and Odette?
9. What portrait does Odette remind Swann of? How does the portrait influence his opinion of her? Where does he place the reproduction?
10. At what precise moment does Swann fall in love with Odette? Who is the new Swann?
11. Why is Swann so shy with Odette? How do they first make love?
12. What does the gesture that Swann frequently makes indicate about his abilities?
13. Notice M. Verdurin's laugh. How does it compare to his wife's?