Questions and Topics for discussion

1. Who are the poets whose works are to be read by Rachel? Proust has modified the program a bit from the first list of authors that he gave.

2. Which poem by the famous seventeenth-century author does Rachel recite? What is the theme of the poem and how does it relate to Proust’s themes?

3. Who are the real actress and the real singer that the duchess would like to meet but hesitates to do so because she fears her husband’s anger?

4. What fee does Rachel receive for her performance?

5. Where did Rachel make her debut as an actress in a salon? How was her performance received? She recited a scene by which playwright, a playwright considered then to be in the avant-garde?

6. Which painter did the duchess consider to be “the most delectable of the masters revered by art nouveau”?

7. How do the butler’s and Françoise’s attitude differ concerning the nature of Marcel’s work?

8. When Françoise refers to “copiators” (plagiarists) which particular character does she think of first?

9. As an example of the kind of social obligation that can take him away from his work Marcel gives the example of writing a sympathy letter. Who is the addressee and who died?

10. What is the particular appeal for Proust and Marcel of The Arabian Nights and the Memoirs of Saint-Simon? What do these works have in common Proust and In Search of Lost Time?