

Discussion Questions  
*The Pursuit of Elena Bradford*  
By Ann H. Gabhart

1. Elena thinks she has missed out on romance and that she might be facing life as the spinster aunt finding a place in a relative's home. Do you think that is what most unmarried women faced in the 1800's? How are things different for single women today?
2. Elena has always felt she lacked beauty. Why do you think that was true? Do you think we often don't see ourselves as others see us?
3. Kirby Frazier intended to marry a rich woman to enable him to go west and concentrate on his art. He planned to be a faithful husband to whoever that woman turned out to be. Do you think he would have been able to keep those promises if he married for money and not love?
4. Andrew had sunk into a melancholy mood because of his fiancée leaving him. Do you think his feelings were more bruised than his heart? Did you feel an "oh no" moment when Gloria showed up at Graham Springs?
5. Did you know before the end which man Elena would choose? Did you think she might end up marrying the General or were you sure that wouldn't happen from the very beginning? Did you like the General?
6. Elena's mother was sure that their family's fortune was completely dependent on Elena making a good match at Graham Springs. Do you think she was fair to Elena or should have tried to find other options?
7. The sister relationship between Elena and Ivy is an underlying emotional thread in the story. Do you like reading about sisters? How do you feel about the sister relationships, by blood or friendship, in your life?
8. Were you surprised when you found out that the character Vanessa was inspired by a real person? How did you feel about Vanessa? While she made a short appearance in the story, her part in the story was important to the outcome. How was that true?
9. The story's setting was based on a real place, the Graham Springs Hotel. It was considered the Saratoga of the West at that time. Could you imagine being one of the fortunate guests taking the "waters" and enjoying all the special entertainments?
10. Stage travel in the early 1800s was dusty, uncomfortable, and full of jolts and bounces. It could also be dangerous when the stagecoaches had problems or made problems as the drivers did in this story. Yet, somehow stage traveling seems somewhat romantic. Why do you think that's true?
11. Did you like the appearance of the gray cat with eyes the same color as Vanessa's? Have you ever had an experience where you felt the Lord sent you a special blessing during a difficult time in your life?
12. Which character did you like best? Why?