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Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Scarlet Letter

by Nathaniel Hawthorne

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ISBN 10: 1-58049-038-7
ISBN 13: 978-1-58049-038-2
Reorder No. 300980

The Scarlet Letter

BACKGROUND LECTURE

Nathaniel Hawthorne 1804-1864

- Born in Salem, Massachusetts
- His ancestors were wealthy, influential people. One, William Hathorne, became a judge who persecuted Quakers; another, John Hathorne, sentenced many Salem women to death for witchcraft. Hawthorne was obsessed with the sins of these ancestors who reflected the religious intolerance of a puritanical society.
- The death of Hawthorne's father when Nathaniel was four resulted in a series of unfortunate circumstances that created a lonely childhood for the boy.
- Hawthorne graduated from Bowden College, Maine, and spent the next twelve years in seclusion as he struggled to become a writer.
- In 1837 he published *Twice Told Tales* and earned great national fame. His stories won the admiration of Edgar Allan Poe, who considered Hawthorne a genius.
- Another contemporary of Hawthorne, Herman Melville, who wrote *Moby Dick*, became Hawthorne's close friend. They both reacted to the Transcendental philosophers of the nineteenth century.
- During his life, Hawthorne was friendly with the Transcendentalists Ralph Waldo Emerson and Henry David Thoreau; however, Hawthorne could not accept what he considered the overly optimistic ideas of the Transcendentalists.

Characteristics of Hawthorne's Style

1. In spite of Hawthorne's opposition to Transcendentalism, he is typical of the nineteenth century romantics. Like them, his stories
 - a. deal with the strange and the mysterious.
 - b. involve symbolic imagination.
 - c. turn to the past for subject matter (Puritan New England).

2. Hawthorne focuses his attention on the problem of evil and the nature of sin. He is not a moralist, but like a psychologist he analyzes the inner world of the human mind and heart; Hawthorne's stories begin with a simple idea, like guilt. This idea is developed by complex personal relationships between the characters and by symbolism. This symbolic story eventually leads to a probing of the mysteries within the human mind. In *The Scarlet Letter* Hawthorne analyzes the effect of one sin on the four main characters who are closely intertwined because of that sin (Hester, Pearl, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth).
3. *The Scarlet Letter* has a unity of place. All action occurs in the center of Boston and the outskirts of this village. There are three scaffold scenes: one in the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end. In each of these scenes the four main characters are present, and the changes in each are shown.
4. Hawthorne displays a formal use of language with a precise word choice; although the sentences are long and complex, they are logical and clear.
5. Hawthorne uses images frequently to create the mood and emphasize his ideas.
6. The narrator tells most of the story in the form of a summary. Between the passages of explanation by the narrator are poignant, dramatic scenes. At times Hawthorne interrupts the narration to give background information that explains ideas about the time. On other occasions, speaking directly to the reader, Hawthorne even gives a choice of interpretations. The reader can decide what is literally true and what is a device to create a supernatural or symbolic effect.

Setting of *The Scarlet Letter*: Puritanism in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, 1642

1. Accurate historical allusions are made to the actual governors, ministers, and practices of the Massachusetts Bay Colony of 1642-1650. Hawthorne selected specific details only to develop the mood and the ideas. Students should be reminded that Hawthorne did not live during that time and was not a Puritan. Hawthorne wants the reader to react to these attitudes.
2. Puritan ideas that are alluded to in the novel are as follows:
 - a. The role of both the ministers and the magistrates was to enact the laws of God. The church and state cooperated in serving God. In fact, the people of the Massachusetts Bay Colony felt they had a covenant with God to establish a community of under His laws.
 - b. As a result, all members of this community of God were judges of the faith and works of every other member. They insisted on a pure lifestyle of self-discipline, which zealously avoided the temptations of the devil and followed the will of God, as expressed in the Ten Commandments and the Bible. The people were completely intolerant of sin. Puritans believed that any sin committed in the community would cause God's wrath to be visited on them. An illness or misfortune would show God's disapproval. Puritans looked for sins that had been committed so that the sin could be brought out in the open and the members of the community could express their scorn for that sin. Hawthorne's scaffold scenes show this public condemnation of sin. These solemn people lived a simple lifestyle, dressed in gray and black, and avoided worldly pleasures. Hawthorne's descriptions of Puritans are true to this concept; Hester and Pearl are the exceptions. Some historians explain that the cults of witchcraft in this area were a rebellion against this obsession with sin and rigid lifestyle. One practice used to secure the proper discipline of children was to "put out" or transfer children from one family to another. That way, a child could not be spoiled by natural parents. In *The Scarlet Letter*, the main character, Hester, fears her child will be taken from her.
3. The Puritans felt that humans were too sinful to earn salvation by performing good works. People could go to heaven only if they received God's grace in the process of conversion. During conversion, saving grace enters people's hearts, and they are released from sin. Some critics feel this happens to one of Hawthorne's characters at the end of the story.

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Notes on Theme

1. When society creates laws that deny the expression of the inner needs of individuals, rebellion is a natural outcome. The society of the Puritans forbids the expression of passion; Hester and Dimmesdale's act of passion was a reaction against this rigidity.
2. The novel explores the psychological effects of sin on the individual. Sin results in the physical deterioration of the sinner. Acts become sinful not only because they violate others, but also because they violate the individual's inner laws. Hester feels her unacceptability to others as a result of her sin; she deliberately becomes less beautiful. Dimmesdale's guilt and self-defeat lead to his physical illness. Chillingworth's revenge results in his warped ugliness. In general, the sinner becomes lonely, confused, and weakened against further temptation. Sin can also strengthen and humanize the sinner. Hawthorne allows for the possibility of redemption, but only through the individual's acknowledgment of guilt and repentance. The idea that atonement (peace) can come through doing good deeds is in question.
3. Another thematic aspect of *The Scarlet Letter* is Hawthorne's reaction to several Romantic ideas. Hawthorne explores the individual's relationship to society. As humans, we need to feel a connection to others. Pearl, the child of nature who knows no rules, is trapped outside of society. To become a part of human society, however, she must share in the sorrow of other humans. Only after joining humanity is Pearl able to cry.

People cannot be self-reliant. They have a sense of others, which creates their self-image and need for approval. Dimmesdale's torment comes from his misrepresentation of himself to others. Although Hawthorne has the reader sympathize with Hester, the individual who rebels against society, she lives a solitary life on the edge of a forest. He points out the loneliness and shame that are associated with breaking a law.

Hawthorne also rejects the Romantic idea that humans are born innocent. The natural impulses of Hester and Dimmesdale lead to the sin of adultery.

Hawthorne does, however, agree with Romantics in his glorification of the heart above the intellect. Chillingworth represents the cold, calculating logic that is untempered by feelings of the heart.

The Scarlet Letter

OBJECTIVES

By the end of the unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the Puritan setting of this novel and discuss at least three features of the Puritan community.
2. explain how this story has relevance for modern readers. In your explanation, discuss these two points:
 - a. *The Scarlet Letter* is a psychological story about sin and the consequences of sin.
 - b. *The Scarlet Letter* is a morality story about sin and redemption.
3. identify and discuss at least three characteristics of Hawthorne's writing that are part of the Romantic tradition.
4. recognize the following literary elements:
 - a. protagonist
 - b. antagonist
 - c. rising action
 - d. climax
5. identify at least three symbols in the novel and explain how each one is developed.
6. discuss the style of narraion in *The Scarlet Letter*.
7. explain and discuss the following themes and motifs:
 - a. The town's representation of social restriction versus the forest's representation of freedom and advancement.
 - b. The psychological effects that sin has on the four major characters in this story
 - c. The moral consequences of sin and how one may achieve redemption
 - d. The dual aspects of Hester's punishment:
 - i. the psychological stigmatism of the scarlet letter.
 - ii. Pearl's role as a living symbol.
 - e. The conflict of good versus evil.
 - f. Hester Prynne as one of literature's first feminists.
 - g. Chillingworth as a personification of evil.
8. discuss the significance of the title.
9. explain aspects of dramatic irony found in the novel.
10. describe the prevalent mood of the novel and how it changes.
11. expound authentic elements of the novel such as historical figures, events, and setting.

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QUESTIONS FOR ESSAY AND/OR DISCUSSION

1. Identify the sin of Hester, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth, and trace the consequences of that sin on the person's life and character.
2. It is hard to believe today that a community would treat one of its members the way in which Hester was treated. What features of the Boston society in 1642, however, make the actions of the Puritans quite understandable?
3. Despite the difference in clothing and customs, how do the psychological and moral aspects of this story make it very relevant for today's readers?
4. Identify and explain at least three ways in which Hawthorne is part of the Romantic tradition and at least two ways in which he repudiates that tradition.
5. For what reasons would Hawthorne call his story a romance rather than a novel?
6. Name three characteristics of Hawthorne's style and cite examples of each.
7. Identify and explain the symbolism for each of the following items:
 - a. light and shadow
 - b. the scaffold
 - c. the rosebush and the weeds
 - d. the letter "A"
 - e. colors
 - f. the forest
 - g. the town
8. Explain Hawthorne's view on human nature regarding passion.
9. According to Hawthorne, what are the moral consequences of sin and how does one become redeemed? Cite incidents from the story.
10. Show that Hester is one of literature's first feminists using examples from the text.
11. Explain how the second scene on the scaffold serves as the novel's climax.

12. Consider the characters Pearl, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth. How are their names symbolic?
13. Hawthorne uses historical characters—Governor Bellingham, John Wilson, and Mistress Hibbins—and true depictions of Puritan society and beliefs to add authenticity to his work. Explain the effects that these elements make.
14. Compare Hester's scarlet letter to Dimmesdale's letter.
15. Describe Hawthorne's use of dramatic irony, and cite examples for support.
16. How does Hester's attitude change from when she emerges from jail to the last scene of the novel? What major events assist in her transformation?

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TEST

I. Multiple Choice:

1. Who makes the following statement: "The magistrates are God-fearing gentlemen, but merciful overmuch...At the very least, they should have put the brand of a hot iron on Hester Prynne's forehead"?
 - A. Roger Chillingworth
 - B. Arthur Dimmesdale
 - C. One of the elderly women in the crowd
 - D. One of the town beadle
 - E. Mistress Hibbins
2. After being separated for over two years, the first time Hester sees Roger Chillingworth is when
 - A. he visits her and Pearl in the jail.
 - B. she spots him standing in the marketplace crowd around the scaffold.
 - C. he goes up on the balcony and shouts at her to reveal her partner.
 - D. they accidentally meet in the graveyard.
 - E. he returns to their home.
3. After Hester is directed to reveal her partner, what character says, "Wondrous strength and generosity of a woman's heart! She will not speak!"?
 - A. Reverend Arthur Dimmesdale
 - B. Reverend John Wilson
 - C. Governor Bellingham
 - D. the town beadle
 - E. Roger Chillingworth
4. During Hester's prison meeting with Chillingworth, Hester
 - A. blames Chillingworth for staying away so long.
 - B. begs him to forgive her.
 - C. suggests that they resume their married relationship.
 - D. offers to tell him her partner's name if he promises not to hurt the baby.
 - E. asks him if he is going to harm her baby.

5. What is the one promise that Hester makes to Roger Chillingworth?
 - A. One day she will reveal her lover's name.
 - B. She will raise Pearl as a good Christian.
 - C. She will never again be with another man as long as Chillingworth is alive.
 - D. She will not reveal Chillingworth's identity.
 - E. Both B and C

6. Hester supports herself and Pearl primarily through
 - A. gathering nuts and food in the forest.
 - B. making and selling the medicine made from wild herbs.
 - C. doing whatever work she can get.
 - D. sewing garments for the townspeople.
 - E. contributions from a secret friend.

7. The story suggests that the letter "A" is
 - A. a sign of Hester's crime.
 - B. a source of anguish for Hester.
 - C. a symbol of pride for some of the young women in town.
 - D. Both B and A
 - E. A, B, and C

8. Hester calls the child Pearl because the baby
 - A. has the calm, white, luster of a pearl.
 - B. is purchased at a great price.
 - C. is named after Hester's own mother.
 - D. will grow up to be an important and valuable person.
 - E. will shine brightly and bring a lasting peace to Hester.

9. Pearl can be best described as
 - A. a warm, loving child.
 - B. a wild child who follows no rules but her own.
 - C. a fun-loving, happy child.
 - D. a model child.
 - E. a very wise child.

10. At the Governor's Hall, Pearl tells the Reverend Wilson that
 - A. her father is dead.
 - B. she has no father.
 - C. God made her.
 - D. Satan made her.
 - E. she was not made, but was plucked from a rose bush.

11. In her forest meeting with Dimmesdale, Hester symbolizes her intention to begin a new life by
 - A. falling at Dimmesdale's knees and kissing his hand.
 - B. throwing away her scarlet letter.
 - C. dressing Pearl in bright, scarlet clothing.
 - D. throwing her hands towards heaven and declaring that the past is behind her.
 - E. Both B and C
12. During her years of public shame, Hester is sustained by
 - A. Pearl's warm, loving nature.
 - B. her own pride.
 - C. her deep religious faith.
 - D. her repentance.
 - E. Both C and D
13. Before he sails to England with Hester, the minister decides that he must
 - A. win Pearl's love.
 - B. defeat Chillingworth.
 - C. confess his sin publicly.
 - D. make amends to Hester.
 - E. deliver his last Election Sermon.
14. After his meeting with Hester in the forest, Dimmesdale tells Chillingworth
 - A. that he and Hester are going to Europe.
 - B. that he knows Chillingworth is Hester's husband.
 - C. that he needs no more of Chillingworth's drugs.
 - D. that Chillingworth has committed a worse sin than he and Hester.
 - E. that Chillingworth must move out of his house.
15. The shocking news that the sea captain gives Hester that shocks her is that
 - A. Dimmesdale has canceled his ticket.
 - B. Chillingworth will also be sailing with them.
 - C. he cannot take Pearl or Hester on his ship unless he gets more money.
 - D. Magistrate Bellingham has forbidden him to take any passengers this trip.
 - E. the ship's departure will be delayed for one month.
16. When Hester sees Dimmesdale in the procession, she feels
 - A. sorrow because he seems too remote and detached.
 - B. happy because he looks happy.
 - C. sad because he seems ill and weak.
 - D. relief because she wasn't sure he would turn up.
 - E. anger because he seems so carefree and reckless.

17. When Pearl sees Minister Dimmesdale in the procession, she
- A. runs up and kisses him.
 - B. tells Mistress Hibbins that he is her father.
 - C. throws a crushed flower at him.
 - D. is very unhappy because he does not say "hello."
 - E. is not sure that he is the same minister she and her mother met in the forest.
18. While running around the marketplace during the procession, Pearl is asked to take a message to her mother by
- A. Arthur Dimmesdale.
 - B. Roger Chillingworth.
 - C. Mistress Hibbins.
 - D. the sea captain.
 - E. the magistrate.
19. As Dimmesdale walks to the scaffold to make his confession, who says the following to him: "Madman, hold! What is your purpose?...All shall be well! Do not blacken your fame, and perish in dishonor! I can yet save you! Would you bring infamy on your sacred profession?"
- A. Reverend Wilson
 - B. Roger Chillingworth
 - C. Hester
 - D. Pearl
 - E. Mistress Hibbins
20. What act breaks the spell on Pearl and makes her capable of joy and sorrow?
- A. kissing the cheek of her dying father
 - B. taking the minister's hand in public
 - C. hugging her mother and sharing her sorrow
 - D. kneeling on the scaffold and raising her eyes and hands heavenward
 - E. All of the above are offered as possible explanations by the narrator.
21. After Dimmesdale's death, Chillingworth
- A. goes back to England.
 - B. loses the energy to live.
 - C. is finally able to forgive the minister.
 - D. becomes doctor in the Indian wilderness.
 - E. becomes a wealthy businessman and a popular politician.

II Paragraphs

22. In Chapter 20, Dimmesdale makes the following statement to Chillingworth: “Nay, I think not so...I think to need no more of your drugs, my kind physician, good though they be, and administered by a friendly hand.” State why this comment is an example of irony. Your answer must be put in the context of the story and state what precedes Dimmesdale’s comment.
23. The following passage is an example of a stylistic technique that Hawthorne uses frequently. Describe the technique and offer your opinion as to why it is used. In Chapter 24 Hester returns to Boston and walks to her old cottage door. “In all those years it had never once been opened; but either she unlocked it, or the decaying wood and iron yielded to her hand, or she glided shadow-like through these impediments—and, at all events, went in.”
24. “Pearl kissed his lips. A spell was broken...Towards her mother, too, Pearl’s errand as a messenger of anguish was all fulfilled.” (Pg. 198) Write a short paragraph in which you explain precisely how Pearl is “a messenger of anguish” to her mother and Dimmesdale. Briefly note incidents in the story to support your answer.

III. Essay Questions (Choose one)

1. A symbol is used to represent an idea. Often, a concrete object represents an abstract concept. Choose two of the symbols listed below and write a well-supported essay that explains their symbolism.
 - a. light and shadow
 - b. the forest
 - c. the scaffold
 - d. the rose bush and the weeds
 - e. the letter “A”
 - f. the colors red, gray, and black
 - g. the character of Hester, Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, or Pearl
2. Choose one of the characters Dimmesdale, Chillingworth, or Pearl, and write a character analysis essay. State what idea Hawthorne is suggesting through the character. Describe the character at the opening of the novel, explaining his or her personality, attitude, and values. What incidents or comments reinforce your view of the character? Explain how this character changes in the novel, why he or she changes, and describe the character’s situation at the end of the novel.

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Answer Key

- | | | | |
|------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. C | 6. D | 11. B | 16. A |
| 2. B | 7. D | 12. B | 17. E |
| 3. A | 8. B | 13. E | 18. D |
| 4. E | 9. B | 14. C | 19. B |
| 5. D | 10. E | 15. B | 20. A |
| | | | 21. B |

The Scarlet Letter

Notes on the language of Hawthorne

The language of *The Scarlet Letter* is frequently difficult to understand. With that in mind, we have provided a vocabulary list, defined so that the meanings fit in the context in which the words are found. Some words, which have no modern meaning, were left out, and some words, though difficult, were omitted because their context made the definitions easily discernible.

The style, however, is another matter. Hawthorne uses long complicated sentences, convoluted phrasings, and lengthy passages of description. It may seem, at times, almost indecipherable. Upon a second or third, slower, careful re-reading, it is quite possible that Hawthorne's meaning will become clear. Students are encouraged not to read this novel casually, but slowly and closely.

The Scarlet Letter

Terms and Definitions

Antagonist - the person or force that is in conflict with, or opposes, the protagonist. **Example:**

Nurse Ratched opposes McMurphy throughout *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*.

Climax - the point of greatest dramatic tension or excitement in a story. **Examples:** Othello's murder of Desdemona. In *To Kill a Mockingbird*, the person chasing Scout is killed.

Foreshadowing - the use of hints or clues in a story to suggest what action is to come.

Foreshadowing is frequently used to create interest and build suspense. **Example:** Two small and seemingly inconsequential car accidents predict and hint at the upcoming, important wreck in *The Great Gatsby*.

Mood - the emotional aspect of the work, which contributes to the feeling the reader gets from the book. **Example:** Gothic novels like *Frankenstein* have a gloomy, dark quality to them, which the author reflects through the depiction of nature, character, and plot.

Motif - a situation, incident, idea, or image that is repeated significantly in a literary work.

Examples: In *Hamlet*, revenge is a frequently repeated idea. In *The Catcher in the Rye*, Holden continually comments on the phoniness of people he meets.

Narrator - the one who tells the story. The narrator must not be confused with "author," the one who writes the story. If the narrator is a character in the book, the proper term is "first-person narration." **Example:** *Moby Dick* is narrated by Ishmael, a crewmember. If the narrator is not a character in the book, the correct term is "third-person narration." **Example:** *Sense and Sensibility*.

Personification - a figure of speech in which an object, abstract idea, or animal is given human characteristics. **Examples:** The wall did its best to keep out the invaders.

"Because I could not stop for Death,
He kindly stopped for me."

—Emily Dickinson

Point of View - the position or vantage point, determined by the author, from which the story seems to come to the reader. The two most common points of view are First-person and Third-person. **Examples:** First-person point of view occurs in *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*; the reader receives all information through Huck's eyes. An example of third-person point of view is Dickens' *Hard Times*, in which the narrator is not a character in the book.

Protagonist - the central or main character in a story around whom the plot centers.

Examples: Hester Prynne in *The Scarlet Letter*; David Copperfield in *David Copperfield*.

Rising Action - the part of the story's plot that adds complications to the problems and increases the reader's interest.

Setting - when and where the short story, play, or novel takes place. **Examples:** *Macbeth* takes place in the eleventh century in Scotland. *The Old Man and the Sea* has its main setting on the ocean outside Havana, Cuba, in an unspecified time in the middle-to-late 20th-century.

Symbol - an object, person, or place that has a meaning in itself and that also stands for something larger than itself, usually an idea or concept; some concrete thing which represents an abstraction. **Example:** The sea could be symbolic for "the unknown." Since the sea is something that is physical and can be seen by the reader, and also has elements that cannot be understood, it can be used symbolically to stand for the abstraction of "mystery," "obscurity," or "the unknown."

Theme - the central or dominant idea behind the story; the most important aspect that emerges from how the book treats its subject. Sometimes theme is easy to see, but, at other times, it may be more difficult. Theme is usually expressed indirectly, as an element the reader must figure out. It is a universal statement about humanity, rather than a simple statement dealing with plot or characters in the story. Themes are generally hinted at through different methods: a phrase or quotation that introduces the novel, a recurring element in the book, or an observation made that is reinforced through plot, dialogue, or characters. It must be emphasized that not all works of literature have themes in them. **Example:** In a story about a man who is diagnosed with cancer and, through medicine and will-power, returns to his former occupation, the theme might be: "Real courage is demonstrated through internal bravery and perseverance." In a poem about a flower that grows, blooms, and dies, the theme might be: "Youth fades, and death comes to all."

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STUDY GUIDE TEACHER'S COPY

Note to teacher: Because *The Custom-House* is for the purpose of relaying Hawthorne's thoughts on writing *The Scarlet Letter*, we have decided not to include any questions in this Study Guide pertaining to the introduction. The following is a list of vocabulary words that can be found in the section. All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press Edition of *The Scarlet Letter*, copyright 2005.

The Custom-House

Vocabulary

decorous – proper

prolix – wordy

bark – boat

edifice – building

truculence – cruelty

rankling – irritating

discern – perceive

venerable – respected; sacred

besom – broom

laudable – worthy of praise

natal – native

tempestuous – stormy

tenacity – persistence

indolent – lazy

vicissitude – wavering; ups and downs

torpid – sluggish

sagaciously – wisely

obtuseness – unclearness

vigilance – watchfulness

alacrity – readiness; eagerness

eulogium – a statement of praise

paternal – fatherly

mouldering – rotting

dotage – old age

florid – ruddy; rosy

hale – hearty; healthy

impalpable – unable to be touched

gourmandism – deep appreciation of fine food and drink

vitiated – impaired; made ineffective

expatiate – to speak at length

unmalleable – unchangeable
polemical – controversial
martial – war-like
evanescent – tending to vanish
uncouth – awkward
stalwart – strong
dexterity – skill; deftness
esoteric – limited to a small circle
impunity – freedom from punishment
exhorted – urged
filial – family-related
traversing – walking
unobtrusive – out of the way; hardly noticeable
fathomed – understood; measured
enervating – draining
ignominiously – dishonorably; degradingly
lucubrations – studies
appellations – names or titles

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

edifice – building

utopia – place or state of political or social perfection

allot – to divide or distribute in shares

sepulchers – burial vaults

ponderous – weighty

congenial – pleasant, friendly

inauspicious – not prosperous or promising

1. What is the setting of *The Scarlet Letter*?

The novel is set in Boston in June, 1642.

2. Nathaniel Hawthorne describes a prison, a cemetery, ugly weeds, and a wild rosebush. Explain the symbolism of each of these items.

The prison serves as a place of punishment for condemned and disgraced people; the community is concerned with penalty and penance. The cemetery symbolizes death, and the ugly weeds represent decay and repulsiveness. The wild rosebush indicates that beauty and independence can blossom among dreariness and repression.

3. What is the mood of *The Scarlet Letter*?

The mood reflects the gloom that comes from the ugliness of guilt and sin through the somber outlook of the Puritans.

Chapter 2

Vocabulary

physiognomies – facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their configuration or expression.

augured – foretold.

indubitably – unquestionably

antinomian – one who rejects a socially established morality

heterodox – holding unorthodox opinions or doctrines

scourged – subjected to severe criticism

infamy – fame for something evil

farthingale – a support worn beneath a skirt to expand it at the hip line

rotundity – roundness

behoof – advantage

trou – believe

abashed – embarrassed

sumptuary – designed to regulate habits on moral or religious grounds

gentility – the upper class

evanescent – tending to vanish, like vapor

ignominy – disgraceful or dishonorable conduct, quality, or action

brazen – bold

meridian – midday; noon

iniquity – wickedness

visage – face

mien – appearance; aspect

countenances – looks; expressions

preternatural – exceeding what is natural

remonstrance – objection

cloister – area within a monastery

etymologist – one who studies word derivations

1. For what sin is Hester Prynne condemned?

Hester Prynne is guilty of adultery.

2. What is the public view of Hester's sin as expressed by the women outside the prison? What do their comments suggest about this society?

Some women are more compassionate than others, but, generally, they feel that Hester's punishment is too lenient. The women's comments suggest that the society is deeply religious and extremely strict.

3. What is Hester's punishment?

Hester is to stand on the scaffold as a "spectacle of guilt and shame" for three hours and to wear a scarlet "A" for the rest of her life. (Pg. 48)

4. What is Hester's attitude towards her sin and punishment?

Hester feels both pride and shame. The lavish design of her embroidered letter reflects her pride. Her shame is apparent when she clutches the infant to her bosom.

5. One way Hester endures her punishment is by dreaming of her past. What does the flashback reveal about Hester's past?

In England, Hester's childhood was happy but poverty-stricken, and her parents were loving and refined. She married an aged scholar and came to the new world.

Chapter 3

Vocabulary

furrows – wrinkles

heterogeneous – different in kind

abate – to put an end to or lessen

sojourn – a temporary stay

expound – to explain in detail

peradventure – perhaps

halberds – weapons consisting of a battle ax and pike mounted on a long handle

sagacity – shrewdness

obstinacy – stubbornness

fervor – intensity; passion

lurid – gruesome; sensational

1. Who appears in the crowd as Hester stands on the scaffold? What is Hester's reaction?

Hester recognizes her husband in the crowd. She tightly clutches her baby in fright when she recognizes her husband.

2. Where has Chillingworth been? What motion does he make to Hester?

Chillingworth has been with the Indians in the wild. He motions her for not to show any recognition of him by placing his finger against his lips.

3. Who is Dimmesdale? What appeal does he use to convince Hester to reveal the baby's father?

Dimmesdale is the young, local minister. Dimmesdale argues that Hester would be doing the baby's father a justice by revealing him, for then he would no longer live with hypocrisy and sin.

Chapter 4

Vocabulary

sagamores – subordinate chiefs of the Algonquin Indians

amenable – willing to yield; agreeable

peremptory – leaving no opportunity for denial or refusal

alchemy – power or process of transforming something common into something precious

paramour – lover

1. Why does Hester fear Chillingworth?

Hester fears that Chillingworth may try to poison her baby as revenge for her sin against him.

2. Explain Chillingworth's attitude toward Hester?

Chillingworth says that he will not harm her. He takes partial blame for her situation and realizes that he should not have married a young woman and expected her to be faithful.

3. What does Chillingworth intend to do and why?

Chillingworth is intent on knowing the baby's father because he wants to take his revenge on the man who has violated his marriage.

4. What does Chillingworth ask Hester to promise? Why does she agree?

Chillingworth wants Hester to conceal his identity. Hester agrees because he promises not to kill the baby's father or reveal the name to anyone.

5. Explain Hester's comment to Chillingworth, "Thy acts are like mercy....But thy words interpret thee as a terror!" (Pg. 63) What details does reinforce the image of Chillingworth as someone to be feared?

Chillingworth says that he will not murder or reveal the father to authorities, which seems merciful. His manner, however, chills Hester. Hester is disturbed by Chillingworth's villainous smile and sarcastic expression; she compares him to the Black Man, Satan.

6. What is implied in Chillingworth's last line, "No, not thine"? (Pg. 63)

The implication is that Chillingworth is after her lover's soul, not Hester's.

Chapter 5

Vocabulary

vivify – to make lively; to animate

assimilate – to be absorbed into the dominant cultural tradition

progenitors – forefathers

plebeian – of the common people

emoluments – advantages

contumaciously – stubbornly disobedient; rebellious

1. In this chapter, the narrator summarizes months of Hester's life. Describe Hester's home, including any symbolism of its location. How does she earn a living?

Hester lives in a cottage on the edge of town, removed from social scrutiny. A cluster of trees also serves as a partial shield behind which she can hide her shame. Hester works as a seamstress.

2. Give two reasons why Hester decides to remain in instead of moving to a less-restrictive colony.

Hester wishes to remain close to her secret lover. She also feels that remaining in Boston will help purge her soul of the sin.

3. How do the townspeople treat Hester, and how does she react?.

Hester is an object of scorn and ridicule: clergymen admonish her; townspeople stare at her; and children mock her. While she feels the pain of insult, Hester never responds or acknowledges the insults.

4. How does Hester change?

Hester becomes more serious and humble, and spends her free time doing charitable work. She begins to realize that no one is infallible, and she develops "a sympathetic knowledge of the hidden sin in other hearts." (Pg. 70)

5. Describe the difference between Hester's clothing and her child's.

Hester's garments are plain and coarse, but her daughter's clothes are ornate and fashionable.

6. Why do people allow Hester to sew for them?

Answers may vary. Example: Hester is a good seamstress, and people are drawn to her fashionable work. They may also be curious about her, or wish to feel and act superior.

Chapter 6

Vocabulary

efficacy –effectiveness

mutability – changeableness

caprice – whim

infantile – characteristic infants; babyish

dearth – scarcity; lack

gesticulation – expression through gestures

enmity – established hatred.

1. Describe Pearl.

Pearl is a lively, beautiful little girl whose wild behavior is similar to “an airy sprite.”
(Pg. 75)

2. How is Pearl’s wild and anti-social behavior explained?

Pearl is an exceptionally intelligent child, and she displays the passions that Hester once possessed. The child instinctively understands her mother’s loneliness and sorrow, which causes Pearl to reject society in a hostile manner.

3. Explain the ambiguity concerning Pearl’s background.

Townspeople believe that Pearl is the incarnation of a demon from hell, but Hester thinks that she is the physical embodiment of her sin?

4. Why does Hester ask Pearl, “Art thou my child?” (Pg. 79)

Hester wonders whether Pearl is truly human.

5. Hester believes that, while society punishes her for sinning, God has a different reaction. How does Hester explain Pearl’s existence?

Hawthorne writes, “God...had given her [Hester] a lovely child, whose place was...to connect her parent for ever with the race and descent of mortals, and to be finally a blessed soul in heaven!” (Pg. 73)

Chapter 7

Vocabulary

eminence – prominence; superiority

pristine – uncorrupted; pure

intrinsic – originating or situated within

imperious – commanding; dominant

wan – pale or sickly

pallid – pale; dull

extant – not destroyed or lost

cabalistic – of an esoteric doctrine or mysterious art

tome – volume forming part of a larger work

relinquish – to leave behind; to give up

subsistence – existence

1. Why does Hester go to the governor's house?

Hester delivers a pair of gloves, and she wants to ask about the rumors that Pearl will be taken away from her.

2. How is Pearl dressed, and what is her dress compared to?

Pearl is dressed in a scarlet dress with elaborate gold embroidery. She is described as “the scarlet letter endowed with life.” (Pg. 82)

3. Explain the incident with the breastplate.

The breastplate magnifies and distorts the “A” on Hester's dress, making it appear as if she is hiding behind the scarlet letter. Pearl's expression is also exaggerated, giving the effect “of an imp who was seeking to mould itself into Pearl's shape.” (Pg. 85)

Chapter 8

Vocabulary

behest – earnest request

albeit – although or even if

indefeasible – not to be annulled or made void

mountebank – charlatan; quack

adduced – brought forward as evidence

vehemence – forcefulness

1. Consider the descriptions of the governor's house. What is Hawthorne suggesting about the governor?

Answers may vary. Example: The governor likes luxurious items and expensive comforts, all of which reflect English style. The governor seems unable to relinquish his love for England.

2. How do the magistrates react to Pearl and why?

The magistrates are shocked because Hester seems to be raising Pearl in defiance of proper behavior.

3. How does Hester behave towards the magistrates and why?

Hester is determined to keep Pearl, and passionately claims that she will keep her child or die. Pearl is her only link to love and humanity.

4. How are the magistrates convinced to let Hester keep Pearl?

Hester appeals to Dimmesdale, who points out that Pearl is both a blessing and a punishment. He says that Hester's responsibility to Pearl keeps her from becoming an evil woman.

5. Explain Pearl's response when asked by the governor, "Canst thou tell me, my child, who made thee?" (Pg. 89) Explain the symbolism in her answer.

Pearl says that she is a wild rose taken from the bush by the prison door. Pearl gives this answer because she sees the red roses in the governor's garden. The implied symbolism is that she grows wildly, apart from the laws of society.

6. What happens at the end of the chapter that illustrates Dimmesdale's point about the child helping Hester?

Mistress Hibbins invites Hester to a meeting of witches that evening, but Hester refuses because she has to care for Pearl.

7. Describe how Dimmesdale has changed since Hester's public punishment.

Dimmesdale's health appears to be failing because he seems weak and overly thin. His face also wears a pained and haunted expression.

8. Describe how Chillingworth has changed over the last few years.

Chillingworth's complexion is darker and more ugly.

9. What dual role does Dimmesdale say Pearl plays?

Pearl has been sent to Hester by God to be a blessing and a retribution.

Chapter 9

Vocabulary

erudition – knowledge acquired chiefly from books

commodiousness – spaciousness; roominess

incantations – chants; verbal charms

guise – manner or fashion

sanctity – godliness or sacredness

emissary – messenger

1. A difference of opinion arises over the cause of Dimmesdale's failing health. Compare the townspeople's opinion to that of Dimmesdale's.

The townspeople feel that Dimmesdale is too earnest and good; his study, vigils, and fasting have weakened him. They believe that, if he dies, the world is not worthy enough for him. Dimmesdale, however, feels that his death is proof of his unworthiness to serve God on earth.

2. Why does Dimmesdale reject Chillingworth's offer of help? What finally persuades him to accept the offer?

Dimmesdale believes that, if it is God's will for him to die, he is willing to die. He accepts the help because the elder ministers and deacons feel that God sent Chillingworth to save him.

3. Explain the meaning of the chapter's title, "The Leech."

At this time, doctors were called leeches because they used leeches to suck blood from the patient and rid the body of toxins. Chillingworth has become a parasite; he will feed on Dimmesdale's emotional suffering.

4. Describe Chillingworth's method of approach for treating illness.

Chillingworth attempts "to look into the character and qualities of the patient" in order to make an accurate diagnosis. (Pg. 98) Chillingworth "strove to go deep into his patient's bosom, delving among his principles, prying into his recollections, and probing every thing" to find the source of the physical problem. (Pg. 99)

5. Describe the relationship between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth.

An intellectual intimacy develops between the men as they spend a great deal of time discussing ideas. As Chillingworth probes Dimmesdale's heart, Dimmesdale is intellectually drawn to Chillingworth's liberal views.

6. Some people in the community feel that God has sent Chillingworth to heal their minister, but other people have a different view. Explain the second view about Chillingworth.

When Chillingworth first comes to the settlement, his expression is "calm, meditative, [and] scholar-like." In time, his appearance becomes more ugly and evil looking. People begin to feel that Chillingworth is an agent of Satan sent to test the minister.

7. How do the people explain "the gloom and terror in the depth of the poor minister's eyes"? (Pg. 102)

The people believe that Chillingworth is the devil's agent, sent to enter Dimmesdale's soul through close friendship. Dimmesdale is experiencing great agony as he struggles against the devil, but people are confident of the minister's victory.

Chapter 10

Vocabulary

propagate – publicize

abasement –a lowering in rank, office, or esteem.

sooth – truth; reality

somniferous – hypnotic

vestment – a robe of ceremony or office

piety – religious faithfulness

1. Why does Dimmesdale seem to be hiding something during his conversation with Chillingworth?

Dimmesdale passionately defends sinners who do not confess their sins for retribution, and places his hand over his heart as he speaks.

2. How do the black flowers initiate a discussion on hidden sins?

Chillingworth claims that the black flowers grew out of the heart of a man who had died with a hidden sin.

3. What explanation does Dimmesdale offer for not confessing a hidden sin?

Dimmesdale points out that some people, in order to do God's work, hide their sin. If people knew of the sin they would not let the sinner perform good works. He claims, therefore, that "no good can be achieved by them; no evil of the past be redeemed by better service." (Pg. 105)

4. What does Chillingworth mean when he mutters, "A strange sympathy betwixt soul and body! Were it only for the art's sake, I must search this matter to the bottom!"? (Pg. 109)

Chillingworth suspects that Dimmesdale's illness is not physical but spiritual. The problem intrigues him, and despite his ulterior motive, is worth investigating.

5. What does Chillingworth do while Dimmesdale sleeps, and what does his action symbolize? Describe Chillingworth's reaction and what his response reveals about his character.

Chillingworth looks under Dimmesdale's vestment that keeps Dimmesdale's chest hidden. Symbolically, he looks into Dimmesdale's heart, and sees Dimmesdale's sin, which is not specifically revealed. Chillingworth's reaction is of demonic ecstasy. By this intrusion into Dimmesdale's heart, against Dimmesdale's will, Chillingworth has given himself over to evil. That he takes pleasure from knowing of another's sin makes him more sinful.

Chapter 11

Vocabulary

malice – ill will

latent – present but not visible or active; dormant

odious – deserving of hatred

machination – a scheming or crafty action

1. Explain the statement, "He [Chillingworth] became, thenceforth, not a spectator only, but a chief actor, in the poor minister's interior world." (Pg. 112)

Chillingworth is aware of Dimmesdale's inner world—his sins and thoughts. Chillingworth uses his knowledge to make remarks that arouse pain, guilt, and fear within Dimmesdale.

2. What makes Dimmesdale a good minister?

Dimmesdale's daily torment over his guilty conscience makes him an extremely popular minister because of "his power of experiencing and communicating emotion" and his moral awareness. (Pg. 112)

3. Why are Dimmesdale's public assertions of guilt ironic?

The more sinful Dimmesdale claims to be, the more holy he appears. As he tries to convince others of his sinfulness, they are convinced only of his Godliness. He is aware of the effect he is having, which makes him feel like a hypocrite.

4. Explain the ways that Dimmesdale tortures himself.

Dimmesdale beats himself with a bloody scourge, fasts until he is weak, and keeps vigils at night in which he imagines ghostly horrors. His mental focus is on his sinfulness, but he does not confess his sin.

5. How is Chillingworth more pitiable than Dimmesdale?

Answers may vary. Example: Chillingworth is described as the "poor, forlorn creature that he was, and more wretched than his victim." (Pg. 112) He is consumed with hatred and the desire for revenge, whereas Dimmesdale still has compassion and hope.

6. What is Hawthorne suggesting about the effects of sin?

Hidden sin torments and destroys Dimmesdale and Chillingworth both physically and emotionally. Sin may also humble the sinner, as it does to Dimmesdale.

Chapter 12

Vocabulary

somnambulism – sleepwalking

dank – cold and damp

expiation – atonement

defunct – dead or inactive

scurrilous – grossly and offensively abusive

firmament – vault of the sky; heavens

1. Why does Dimmesdale climb the scaffold at night? What is the source of his chest pain?

Dimmesdale is tormented because he did not stand beside Hester on the scaffold seven years ago. His action is a dramatic way of revealing his hidden sin. The sin, represented by a scarlet "A," has been gnawing at his heart and causing him pain.

2. Discuss how Dimmesdale's behavior on the scaffold reveals his psychological stress.

Dimmesdale is unable to stop himself from releasing a shriek full of "misery and terror." (Pg. 118) To reveal his guilt, Dimmesdale wants to call out to Reverend Wilson, but his fear of confession stops him. The minister begins to imagine being discovered in the morning by the townspeople; they are shocked by his shamed and half-dead appearance. The image makes Dimmesdale, "to his own infinite alarm, burst into a great peal of laughter." (Pg. 120)

3. What other characters are walking around late at night and why?

Governor Winthrop has died and Hester has to take measurements for a robe. Reverend Wilson and Chillingworth are with the governor when he dies.

4. How does Dimmesdale feel as he holds Pearl's hand and why?

He feels a rush of new life because he is doing what he believes is right.

5. Why does Pearl pull away from Dimmesdale?

Pearl pulls away because Dimmesdale refuses to take her hand there at noontide.

6. Describe the two seemingly supernatural occurrences. What effect do they have?

A meteor illuminates the atmosphere and the entire village is lit up. Then Dimmesdale sees an "A" in the sky. When Dimmesdale looks away from the sky, he sees Chillingworth watching him and Pearl with a fiendish smile on his face. Dimmesdale is overcome with terror.

7. How do the townspeople explain the nighttime phenomenon?

Townspeople believe that the nighttime "A" symbolizes the deceased governor, who is entering heaven and becoming an angel.

8. How does Dimmesdale behave the next day?

Dimmesdale preaches his most powerful sermon and brings divine grace to many people.

Chapter 13

Vocabulary

gibe – to tease with taunting words.

foliage – leaves, flowers, and branches

imbibed – received; took in

obviated – anticipated and made unnecessary

ethereal – celestial, heavenly

chasm – a marked division, separation, or difference

acquiescing – accepting or complying passively

1. What is Hester's position in the community now that years have past?

Hester is now a "Sister of Mercy." (Pg. 126) She comforts and cares for those who suffer, and her services have earned her great respect in the community.

2. How is the scarlet letter now interpreted?

The letter now represents Hester's ability to accomplish good deeds.

3. Compare the feelings of the general public to those of the community leaders regarding Hester Prynne. Explain why the groups view her differently.

The public willingly forgives Hester and welcomes her into the community, but the leaders are much slower at forgiving her sin. Hester's seemingly humble behavior softens the hearts of her neighbors. Forgiving Hester also inflates the town's pride because the people feel benevolent from their generous acquittal. The wise leaders, however, are hardened "by an iron framework of reasoning." (Pg. 127)

4. Why is Hester's natural beauty diminished, and what could bring it back?

Hester's beauty fades because her life has no affection or tenderness. Without passion, "some attribute had departed from her, the permanence of which had been essential to keep her a woman." (Pg. 128) The severity of her life crushes her tenderness. If she were loved again, however, her vitality could return.

5. In what way is Hester an emancipated feminist?

Now that Hester is "standing alone in the world" she has the freedom to think and "the world's law was no law for her mind." (Pgs. 128) She asks whether a woman's existence is worthwhile and answers in the negative. Hester decides that society needs complete restructuring and thought modification in order for women to gain equality.

6. Explain the statement: "It is remarkable, that persons who speculate the most boldly often conform with the most perfect quietude to the external regulations of society. The thought suffices them..."

Radical thinkers have no need to reveal their thoughts through actions, and easily conform to society's regulations.

7. Compare the initial intent behind the scarlet letter to the actual effect on Hester.

The letter is meant to break Hester's spirit through shame, but, instead, she becomes more rebellious.

8. What does Hester resolve to do and why?

Hester is going to talk with Chillingworth in an attempt to rescue Dimmesdale from the doctor's vengeful scheme. She feels that she is responsible for Dimmesdale's near lunacy because she has withheld Chillingworth's identity from Dimmesdale.

Chapter 14

Vocabulary

propinquity – nearness in place or time

usurp – to seize by force

1. In what way does Chillingworth look like a devil?

Chillingworth's false smile cannot cover the darkness of his soul. His countenance is fierce and his eyes emit a red glare.

2. Why does Chillingworth think he has a double reason for punishing Dimmesdale?

Chillingworth blames Dimmesdale for seducing Hester and for transforming him into a cruel person.

3. What pleas of Hester's arouse sympathy and admiration in Chillingworth?

Hester reminds Chillingworth that he should have avenged himself on her, too, and not just Dimmesdale. She also says that she will reveal his identity, and Chillingworth respects her courage. She wants him to forgive so that he can be human again.

4. What does Hester ask of Chillingworth? What is his response?

Hester wants Chillingworth to forgive them and forget his revenge. Chillingworth claims that he does not have the power; he is a victim of fate. He regrets that Hester's good nature was wasted.

5. Does Chillingworth seem to be in control of his fate or controlled by his fate?

Answers may vary. Example: Chillingworth claims that he has no control over his actions. He says, "Ye that have wronged me are not sinful, save in a kind of typical illusion; neither am I fiend-like, who have snatched a fiend's office from his hands. It is our fate." (Pg. 135)

Chapter 15

Vocabulary

sere – withered

verdure – condition of health and vigor

sedulous – diligent; careful and busy

petulant – insolent or rude

precocity – the quality of exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age

acrid – bitter

enigma – something hard to understand or explain; mystery

propensity – intense inclination

asperity – harshness

upbraided – criticized; scolded

1. How does Hester feel about Chillingworth?

Hester hates Chillingworth because she was forced to marry him. She blames him for manipulating her at a young age and marrying her when he had not won "the utmost passion of her heart." (pg. 138)

2. The narrator asks, "Had seven long years, under the torture of the scarlet letter, inflicted so much of misery, and wrought out no repentance?" (Pg. 138) Has Hester repented her sin?

Answers may vary. Example: Hester seems to be blaming Chillingworth for her sin, even though he was not present. She believes that her poor marriage made her run to another man, so she is not truly repentant.

3. How does Pearl imitate her mother? How does Pearl explain Hester's scarlet letter?

Pearl devises a costume with a large "A" made from eel-grass. Pearl says that her mother wears the "A" for the same reason the minister keeps his hand over his heart.

4. Hester refuses to answer Pearl's question about the meaning of the "A." Why does Hester not confide in Pearl?

Answers may vary. Example: Hester fears that she will lose her self-control by expressing too much emotion. She decides not to share the secret with Pearl because of the child's unpredictable temperament.

Chapter 16

Vocabulary

scintillating – brilliant; shining

scrofula – a form of tuberculosis

loquacity – talkativeness

cadence – rhythmic sequence or pattern

1. Hester is determined to warn Dimmesdale about Chillingworth, but she will only meet him in the woods. Why will she not see Dimmesdale at his home?

Hester does not go to Dimmesdale's home because she is afraid of interference from Chillingworth. Hester also worries about creating suspicion, and she feels that "the minister and she would need the whole wide world to breathe in." (Pg. 143)

2. Hester contemplates upon her surroundings as she walks through the forest. Explain what the footpath symbolizes in her mind.

Either side of the path is dark, and the crooked trail does not reveal what lies ahead. In Hester's mind, the dense, mysterious path symbolizes "the moral wilderness in which she had so long been wandering." (Pg. 144)

3. How is Pearl compared to the babbling brook?

Like the brook, Pearl's life sprung from a mysterious source, "and had flowed through scenes shadowed as heavily with gloom." (Pg. 146) Unlike the brook, Pearl is spirited and whimsical.

4. In what way does Hester acknowledge her sin to Pearl?

Hester says that she met the Black Man, and the scarlet letter is his mark.

Chapter 17

Vocabulary

contiguity – the quality or state of being next or near to

misanthropy – hatred or distrust of humankind

consecration – the act of making or declaring sacred

satiating – satisfying fully

1. Hester tries to comfort Dimmesdale when she says, “You have deeply and sorely repented. Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past.” (Pg. 151) How does Dimmesdale respond?

Dimmesdale describes the agony of his heart and of his mock holiness. He says, “Happy are you, Hester, that wear the scarlet letter openly upon your bosom! Mine burns in secret!” (Pg. 151)

2. Describe Dimmesdale’s reaction when Hester reveals Chillingworth’s identity.

Dimmesdale looks at Hester with a “violence of passion... Never was there a blacker or a fiercer frown, than Hester now encountered.” (Pg. 152)

3. Why does Dimmesdale forgive Hester? According to Dimmesdale, who is a worse sinner than “the polluted priest” and why? (Pg. 153)

Hester embraces Dimmesdale and will not release him until he forgives her. He feels her desperation to be forgiven and he submits to her pleas. Dimmesdale says that Chillingworth’s sin of revenge is worse than their sin because Chillingworth “has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart.” (Pg. 134)

4. What “new horror” occurs to Dimmesdale? (Pg. 154)

Dimmesdale asks, “What will be the course of his [Chillingworth’s] revenge?” (Pg. 154) Chillingworth knows that Hester intends to reveal his identity, and Dimmesdale fears that Chillingworth will expose their sin in retribution.

5. Explain Hester’s statement to Dimmesdale, “Wilt thou die for very weakness?” (Pg. 154)

Dimmesdale feels that he is too weak to deal with Chillingworth, and he sees death as the only escape.

6. What does Hester give Dimmesdale? What is suggested in the last two lines?

Hester gives him strength; Dimmesdale feels her spirit and energy. The hint is given that they will run off together.

Chapter 18

Vocabulary

colloquy – conversation

choleric – bad tempered; irritable

1. What contrast does the narrator point out between Hester and Dimmesdale's ability to leave town?

Hester is a free thinking social outlaw. Her suffering helps to prepare and strengthen her for a new life. Dimmesdale is hemmed in by his Puritan conformity; he is weakened by his desire to not sin and he is not prepared for new freedom.

2. Why does Dimmesdale decide to flee with Hester?

Dimmesdale feels that he is "irrevocably doomed" and should take "the solace allowed to the condemned culprit." (Pg. 158) He also hopes that perhaps, this is the path to a better life. Dimmesdale realizes that he can no longer live without Hester's companionship.

3. Describe the "exhilarating effect" that the decision to leave has on Hester and Dimmesdale. How does Hawthorne use symbolism to reinforce this effect? (Pg. 158)

Dimmesdale feels joy again. Hester removes the letter, takes off her cap, and becomes beautiful again. As Hester removes the scarlet letter, "the burden of shame and anguish departed from her spirit." (Pg. 159) Sunlight is also symbolic of the couple's exhilaration when it surprisingly bursts into the forest "as with a sudden smile of heaven." (Pg. 159)

4. How does Hawthorne reinforce his idea that nature is sympathetic with the union of Hester and Dimmesdale?

Pearl is welcomed by the forest, which "recognised a kindred wildness in the human child." (Pg. 161) The forest creatures are extremely amiable towards Pearl, to the point of obvious exaggeration.

5. What idea is suggested by Pearl's slow approach and Dimmesdale's fear of Pearl?

Answers may vary. Example: The bliss found in the forest will not last.

Chapter 19

Vocabulary

accosting – attacking

prattle – to babble meaninglessly

inured – accustomed to accept something undesirable

mollified – soothed

1. Why does Pearl “burst into a fit of passion” when she stands across the brook from her mother? (Pg. 165)

Hester is not wearing the scarlet letter.

2. Why does Pearl make Hester don the scarlet letter again, and why must Hester pick it up?

Pearl forces Hester to put the letter back on because it is a source of comfort and recognition for Pearl. Pearl's insistence that Hester retrieve the letter signifies that the sin is a permanent mark on Hester and is still a burden.

3. How does Pearl react to her mother's assertion that Dimmesdale loves them?

Pearl asks, “Will he go back with us, hand in hand, we three together, into the town?” (Pg. 167)

4. Explain Pearl's behavior towards the minister.

Answers may vary. Example: Pearl refuses to accept Dimmesdale; she misbehaves and washes away his kiss. Perhaps she does trust him because he will not walk with them to town, or maybe she feels threatened by him.

Chapter 20

Vocabulary

vicissitude – changing circumstances.

introspection – the examination of one's own mental and emotional state

irrefragable – not to be disputed or contested

comport – to conduct or behave

obeisance – a bodily gesture, such as a bow, that expresses respect

grandam– old woman; grandmother

potentate – one who wields controlling power

stupefied – astonished

gratuitous – without apparent reason or justification

1. Describe the minister's wicked impulses as he returns to town.

Dimmesdale has urges to swear, to question eternal life, and to corrupt the innocent.

2. Why is Dimmesdale suddenly behaving wickedly?

Dimmesdale feels that he has given himself over to sin because he has consciously broken with all that he believes.

3. What does Dimmesdale wonder when he pauses in the street?

Dimmesdale questions if he has sold his soul to the devil.

4. Has Dimmesdale committed a deadly sin by planning to escape with Hester?

Answers may vary. Example: Dimmesdale needs to face his sin, not run from it; turning his back on what he has done will make him more ashamed. His plan to escape is more cowardly than sinful.

Chapter 21

Vocabulary

quaff – drink deeply

wormwood – something bitter and grievous; bitterness

lees – dregs

effervesce – to bubble; to show liveliness

buckler – a shield worn on the left arm

probity – moral uprightness

animadversion – adverse and typically ill-natured or unfair criticism

1. In this chapter, Hawthorne makes frequent mention of the colors gray, black (sable), and brown. What does the emphasis on those colors suggest?

The Puritans are severe and depressing.

2. What bad news does Hester receive from the ship captain?

Chillingworth has booked passage on the same ship with Hester and Dimmesdale.

3. In addition to providing more information, what other purpose does this chapter serve?

The chapter adds suspense to the plot, especially when the captain informs Hester that Chillingworth will be aboard ship.

4. Explain the significance of Pearl's comment on the behavior of Reverend Dimmesdale.

Pearl asks her mother why the minister will talk to them only at night or in the dark, but not during daylight in town. The child realizes that the minister is ashamed of them or hiding something, and her observation associates darkness with disgrace.

5. What do darkness and light symbolize?

Darkness is associated with sin, shame, and deceit. Light is associated with pride, honesty, and purity.

Chapter 22

Vocabulary

clarion – trumpet-like horn

morbid – gloomy

necromancy – magic, sorcery

pathos – sympathetic pity

indefatigable – incapable of being fatigued

requital – something given in return or retaliation

smite – to attack or afflict suddenly and injuriously

surmise – to imagine or infer on slight grounds

1. Explain three things that depress Hester.

Hester becomes depressed because Dimmesdale shows her no recognition. Then Chillingworth sends the message that he will bring Dimmesdale on board ship, as though he has taken control of the situation. Finally, the seamen, Indians, and other newcomers stare at Hester's scarlet letter, which makes her feel shame more intensely than ever.

2. What is different about Dimmesdale?

Dimmesdale keeps up with the procession, showing a new energy and strength.

3. What does Pearl want from Dimmesdale?

Pearl wants Dimmesdale to accept her publicly.

4. Explain the remarks, "The sainted minister in the church! The woman of the scarlet letter in the market-place!" (Pg. 192)

These statements portray the social contrast between two sinners of equal offense, and highlight the irony of the minister's position.

Chapter 23

Vocabulary

apotheosis – elevation to divine status

intimations – hints

nether – situated down or below; lower

1. Why does Dimmesdale stand "on the very proudest eminence of superiority" before the crowd? (Pg. 194)

Dimmesdale's intellect, eloquence, and pure reputation has earned him the respect of all people; they look upon him with awe.

2. What does Dimmesdale do when he leaves the church and approaches Hester?

He joins Hester and Pearl, and supported by Hester, ascends the scaffold.

3. What is Chillingworth's reaction when Dimmesdale approaches the scaffold? Explain Chillingworth's statement, "There was no one place...where thou couldst have escaped me,—save on this very scaffold!" (Pg. 197)

Chillingworth attempts to stop Dimmesdale from revealing the truth. By accepting his shame, Dimmesdale can no longer be tortured by Chillingworth; Dimmesdale has resisted temptation and repented.

4. What does Hester answer when Dimmesdale says, "Is not this better...than what we dreamed of in the forest?" (Pg. 197)

Hester says, "Better? Yea; so we may both die, and little Pearl die with us!" (Pg. 197)

5. What does Dimmesdale dramatically reveal to the crowd?

Dimmesdale tears open his shirt and shows them the burning symbol on his chest.

6. What does Dimmesdale ask from Pearl? What effect does this have on Pearl?

Dimmesdale asks for a kiss, which she grants. When Pearl kisses him "a spell was broken." (Pg. 198) Pearl is no longer a social outcast, and she will no longer torment Hester as a reminder of the sin.

7. Explain Dimmesdale's parting words to Hester.

Dimmesdale wants Hester to recognize and regret her sin, and truly repent so that she may receive God's mercy.

Chapter 24

Vocabulary

portent – something that foreshadows a coming event; omen

nugatory – having no force; inoperative

recluse – one who has withdrawn from society

penitence – regret for sin or wrongdoing

escutcheon – a protective or ornamental shield

1. What theories are given about the scarlet letter imprinted in the minister's flesh?

The theories include that the mark is the result of Dimmesdale's self-torture; the mark is a result of Chillingworth's poisonous drugs; and that it is the effect of remorse, "gnawing from the inmost heart." (Pg. 201)

2. Some witnesses deny seeing a letter on Dimmesdale's chest, and they claim that his dying words do not imply guilt. According to these witnesses, why does Dimmesdale embrace Hester before he dies?

These particular witnesses believe that Dimmesdale's death acts as a parable; he embraces Hester to teach the lesson that "we are sinners all alike." (Pg. 202)

3. What happens to Chillingworth? What does he give Pearl?

Chillingworth quickly and unexplainably loses his vitality and dies. He leaves Pearl all his property in England and America.

4. What becomes of Pearl?

Hester takes Pearl to England. There, Pearl marries, has a child, and always remembers her mother with fine gifts.

5. Explain Hawthorne's conclusion for Hester.

Hester returns to Boston and takes up her former life in her cottage, wearing the scarlet letter. She counsels troubled women and makes known her belief that, in the future, men and women will have a "surer ground of mutual happiness." (Pg. 180)

Hester is buried next to Dimmesdale, their graves not touching but sharing the same tombstone. On the tombstone is the epitaph: "On a field, sable, the letter A, gules." [On a background, black, the letter "A," red] (Pg. 205)

The Scarlet Letter

STUDY GUIDE STUDENT COPY

Note to teacher: Because The Custom-House is for the purpose of relaying Hawthorne's thoughts on writing *The Scarlet Letter*, we have decided not to include any questions in this Study Guide pertaining to the introduction. The following is a list of vocabulary words that can be found in the section. All references come from the Prestwick House Literary Touchstone Press Edition of *The Scarlet Letter*, copyright 2005.

The Custom-House

Vocabulary

decorous – proper
prolix – wordy
bark – boat
edifice – building
truculence – cruelty
rankling – irritating
discern – perceive
venerable – respected; sacred
besom – broom
laudable – worthy of praise
natal – native
tempestuous – stormy
tenacity – persistence
indolent – lazy
vicissitude – wavering; ups and downs
torpid – sluggish
sagaciously – wisely
obtuseness – unclearness
vigilance – watchfulness
alacrity – readiness; eagerness
eulogium – a statement of praise
paternal – fatherly
mouldering – rotting
dotage – old age
florid – ruddy; rosy
hale – hearty; healthy
impalpable – unable to be touched
gourmandism – deep appreciation of fine food and drink
vitiated – impaired; made ineffective
expatiate – to speak at length

unmalleable – unchangeable
polemical – controversial
martial – war-like
evanescent – tending to vanish
uncouth – awkward
stalwart – strong
dexterity – skill; deftness
esoteric – limited to a small circle
impunity – freedom from punishment
exhorted – urged
filial – family-related
traversing – walking
unobtrusive – out of the way; hardly noticeable
fathomed – understood; measured
enervating – draining
ignominiously – dishonorably; degradingly
lucubrations – studies
appellations – names or titles

Chapter 1

Vocabulary

edifice – building

utopia – place or state of political or social perfection

allot – to divide or distribute in shares

sepulchers – burial vaults

ponderous – weighty

congenial – pleasant, friendly

inauspicious – not prosperous or promising

1. What is the setting of *The Scarlet Letter*?
2. Nathaniel Hawthorne describes a prison, a cemetery, ugly weeds, and a wild rosebush. Explain the symbolism of each of these items.
3. What is the mood of *The Scarlet Letter*?

Chapter 2

Vocabulary

physiognomies – facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their configuration or expression.

augured – foretold.

indubitably – unquestionably

antinomian – one who rejects a socially established morality

heterodox – holding unorthodox opinions or doctrines

scourged – subjected to severe criticism

infamy – fame for something evil

farthingale – a support worn beneath a skirt to expand it at the hip line

rotundity – roundness

behoof – advantage

trou – believe

abashed – embarrassed

sumptuary – designed to regulate habits on moral or religious grounds

gentility – the upper class

evanescent – tending to vanish, like vapor

ignominy – disgraceful or dishonorable conduct, quality, or action

brazen – bold

meridian – midday; noon

iniquity – wickedness

visage – face

mien – appearance; aspect

countenances – looks; expressions

preternatural – exceeding what is natural

remonstrance – objection

cloister – area within a monastery

etymologist – one who studies word derivations

1. For what sin is Hester Prynne condemned?
2. What is the public view of Hester's sin as expressed by the women outside the prison? What do their comments suggest about this society?

3. What is Hester's punishment?
4. What is Hester's attitude towards her sin and punishment?
5. One way Hester endures her punishment is by dreaming of her past. What does the flashback reveal about Hester's past?

Chapter 3

Vocabulary

furrows – wrinkles

heterogeneous – different in kind

abate – to put an end to or lessen

sojourn – a temporary stay

expound – to explain in detail

peradventure – perhaps

halberds – weapons consisting of a battle ax and pike mounted on a long handle

sagacity – shrewdness

obstinacy – stubbornness

fervor – intensity; passion

lurid – gruesome; sensational

1. Who appears in the crowd as Hester stands on the scaffold? What is Hester's reaction?
2. Where has Chillingworth been? What motion does he make to Hester?
3. Who is Dimmesdale? What appeal does he use to convince Hester to reveal the baby's father?

Chapter 4

Vocabulary

sagamos – subordinate chiefs of the Algonquin Indians

amenable – willing to yield; agreeable

peremptory – leaving no opportunity for denial or refusal

alchemy – power or process of transforming something common into something precious

paramour – lover

1. Why does Hester fear Chillingworth?
2. Explain Chillingworth's attitude toward Hester?
3. What does Chillingworth intend to do and why?
4. What does Chillingworth ask Hester to promise? Why does she agree?
5. Explain Hester's comment to Chillingworth, "Thy acts are like mercy....But thy words interpret thee as a terror!" (Pg. 63) What details does reinforce the image of Chillingworth as someone to be feared?
6. What is implied in Chillingworth's last line, "No, not thine"? (Pg. 63)

Chapter 5

Vocabulary

vivify – to make lively; to animate

assimilate – to be absorbed into the dominant cultural tradition

progenitors – forefathers

plebeian – of the common people

emoluments – advantages

contumaciously – stubbornly disobedient; rebellious

1. In this chapter, the narrator summarizes months of Hester's life. Describe Hester's home, including any symbolism of its location. How does she earn a living?
2. Give two reasons why Hester decides to remain in instead of moving to a less-restrictive colony.
3. How do the townspeople treat Hester, and how does she react?.
4. How does Hester change?
5. Describe the difference between Hester's clothing and her child's.
6. Why do people allow Hester to sew for them?

Chapter 6

Vocabulary

efficacy –effectiveness

mutability – changeableness

caprice – whim

infantile – characteristic infants; babyish

dearth – scarcity; lack

gesticulation – expression through gestures

enmity – established hatred.

1. Describe Pearl.
2. How is Pearl's wild and anti-social behavior explained?
3. Explain the ambiguity concerning Pearl's background.
4. Why does Hester ask Pearl, "Art thou my child?" (Pg. 79)
5. Hester believes that, while society punishes her for sinning, God has a different reaction. How does Hester explain Pearl's existence?

Chapter 7

Vocabulary

eminence – prominence; superiority

pristine – uncorrupted; pure

intrinsic – originating or situated within

imperious – commanding; dominant

wan – pale or sickly

pallid – pale; dull

extant – not destroyed or lost

cabalistic – of an esoteric doctrine or mysterious art

tome – volume forming part of a larger work

relinquish – to leave behind; to give up

subsistence – existence

1. Why does Hester go to the governor's house?
2. How is Pearl dressed, and what is her dress compared to?
3. Explain the incident with the breastplate.

Chapter 8

Vocabulary

behest – earnest request

albeit – although or even if

indefeasible – not to be annulled or made void

mountebank – charlatan; quack

adduced – brought forward as evidence

vehemence – forcefulness

1. Consider the descriptions of the governor's house. What is Hawthorne suggesting about the governor?
2. How do the magistrates react to Pearl and why?
3. How does Hester behave towards the magistrates and why?
4. How are the magistrates convinced to let Hester keep Pearl?

5. Explain Pearl's response when asked by the governor, "Canst thou tell me, my child, who made thee?" (Pg. 89) Explain the symbolism in her answer.
6. What happens at the end of the chapter that illustrates Dimmesdale's point about the child helping Hester?
7. Describe how Dimmesdale has changed since Hester's public punishment.
8. Describe how Chillingworth has changed over the last few years.
9. What dual role does Dimmesdale say Pearl plays?

Chapter 9

Vocabulary

erudition – knowledge acquired chiefly from books

commodiousness – spaciousness; roominess

incantations – chants; verbal charms

guise – manner or fashion

sanctity – godliness or sacredness

emissary – messenger

1. A difference of opinion arises over the cause of Dimmesdale's failing health. Compare the townspeople's opinion to that of Dimmesdale's.
2. Why does Dimmesdale reject Chillingworth's offer of help? What finally persuades him to accept the offer?
3. Explain the meaning of the chapter's title, "The Leech."

4. Describe Chillingworth's method of approach for treating illness.
5. Describe the relationship between Dimmesdale and Chillingworth.
6. Some people in the community feel that God has sent Chillingworth to heal their minister, but other people have a different view. Explain the second view about Chillingworth.
7. How do the people explain "the gloom and terror in the depth of the poor minister's eyes"? (Pg. 102)

Chapter 10

Vocabulary

propagate – publicize

abasement – a lowering in rank, office, or esteem.

sooth – truth; reality

somniferous – hypnotic

vestment – a robe of ceremony or office

piety – religious faithfulness

1. Why does Dimmesdale seem to be hiding something during his conversation with Chillingworth?
2. How do the black flowers initiate a discussion on hidden sins?
3. What explanation does Dimmesdale offer for not confessing a hidden sin?
4. What does Chillingworth mean when he mutters, “A strange sympathy betwixt soul and body! Were it only for the art’s sake, I must search this matter to the bottom!”? (Pg. 109)
5. What does Chillingworth do while Dimmesdale sleeps, and what does his action symbolize? Describe Chillingworth’s reaction and what his response reveals about his character.

Chapter 11

Vocabulary

malice – ill will

latent – present but not visible or active; dormant

odious – deserving of hatred

machination – a scheming or crafty action

1. Explain the statement, “He [Chillingworth] became, thenceforth, not a spectator only, but a chief actor, in the poor minister’s interior world.” (Pg. 112)
2. What makes Dimmesdale a good minister?
3. Why are Dimmesdale’s public assertions of guilt ironic?
4. Explain the ways that Dimmesdale tortures himself.
5. How is Chillingworth more pitiable than Dimmesdale?
6. What is Hawthorne suggesting about the effects of sin?

Chapter 12

Vocabulary

somnambulism – sleepwalking

dank – cold and damp

expiation – atonement

defunct – dead or inactive

scurrilous – grossly and offensively abusive

firmament – vault of the sky; heavens

1. Why does Dimmesdale climb the scaffold at night? What is the source of his chest pain?
2. Discuss how Dimmesdale's behavior on the scaffold reveals his psychological stress.
3. What other characters are walking around late at night and why?
4. How does Dimmesdale feel as he holds Pearl's hand and why?

5. Why does Pearl pull away from Dimmesdale?
6. Describe the two seemingly supernatural occurrences. What effect do they have?
7. How do the townspeople explain the nighttime phenomenon?
8. How does Dimmesdale behave the next day?

Chapter 13

Vocabulary

gibe – to tease with taunting words.

foliage – leaves, flowers, and branches

imbibed – received; took in

obviated – anticipated and made unnecessary

ethereal – celestial, heavenly

chasm – a marked division, separation, or difference

acquiescing – accepting or complying passively

1. What is Hester's position in the community now that years have past?

2. How is the scarlet letter now interpreted?

3. Compare the feelings of the general public to those of the community leaders regarding Hester Prynne. Explain why the groups view her differently.

4. Why is Hester's natural beauty diminished, and what could bring it back?

5. In what way is Hester an emancipated feminist?
6. Explain the statement: "It is remarkable, that persons who speculate the most boldly often conform with the most perfect quietude to the external regulations of society. The thought suffices them..."
7. Compare the initial intent behind the scarlet letter to the actual effect on Hester.
8. What does Hester resolve to do and why?

Chapter 14

Vocabulary

propinquity – nearness in place or time

usurp – to seize by force

1. In what way does Chillingworth look like a devil?
2. Why does Chillingworth think he has a double reason for punishing Dimmesdale?
3. What pleas of Hester's arouse sympathy and admiration in Chillingworth?
4. What does Hester ask of Chillingworth? What is his response?
5. Does Chillingworth seem to be in control of his fate or controlled by his fate?

Chapter 15

Vocabulary

sere – withered

verdure – condition of health and vigor

sedulous – diligent; careful and busy

petulant – insolent or rude

precocity – the quality of exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age

acrid – bitter

enigma – something hard to understand or explain; mystery

propensity – intense inclination

asperity – harshness

upbraided – criticized; scolded

1. How does Hester feel about Chillingworth?
2. The narrator asks, “Had seven long years, under the torture of the scarlet letter, inflicted so much of misery, and wrought out no repentance?” (Pg. 138) Has Hester repented her sin?
3. How does Pearl imitate her mother? How does Pearl explain Hester’s scarlet letter?
4. Hester refuses to answer Pearl’s question about the meaning of the “A.” Why does Hester not confide in Pearl?

Chapter 16

Vocabulary

scintillating – brilliant; shining

scrofula – a form of tuberculosis

loquacity – talkativeness

cadence – rhythmic sequence or pattern

1. Hester is determined to warn Dimmesdale about Chillingworth, but she will only meet him in the woods. Why will she not see Dimmesdale at his home?
2. Hester contemplates upon her surroundings as she walks through the forest. Explain what the footpath symbolizes in her mind.
3. How is Pearl compared to the babbling brook?
4. In what way does Hester acknowledge her sin to Pearl?

Chapter 17

Vocabulary

contiguity – the quality or state of being next or near to

misanthropy – hatred or distrust of humankind

consecration – the act of making or declaring sacred

satiating – satisfying fully

1. Hester tries to comfort Dimmesdale when she says, “You have deeply and sorely repented. Your sin is left behind you, in the days long past.” (Pg. 151) How does Dimmesdale respond?
2. Describe Dimmesdale’s reaction when Hester reveals Chillingworth’s identity.
3. Why does Dimmesdale forgive Hester? According to Dimmesdale, who is a worse sinner than “the polluted priest” and why? (Pg. 153)
4. What “new horror” occurs to Dimmesdale? (Pg. 154)
5. Explain Hester’s statement to Dimmesdale, “Wilt thou die for very weakness?” (Pg. 154)
6. What does Hester give Dimmesdale? What is suggested in the last two lines?

Chapter 18

Vocabulary

colloquy – conversation

choleric – bad tempered; irritable

1. What contrast does the narrator point out between Hester and Dimmesdale's ability to leave town?
2. Why does Dimmesdale decide to flee with Hester?
3. Describe the “exhilarating effect” that the decision to leave has on Hester and Dimmesdale. How does Hawthorne use symbolism to reinforce this effect? (Pg. 158)
4. How does Hawthorne reinforce his idea that nature is sympathetic with the union of Hester and Dimmesdale?
5. What idea is suggested by Pearl's slow approach and Dimmesdale's fear of Pearl?

Chapter 19

Vocabulary

accosting – attacking

prattle – to babble meaninglessly

inured – accustomed to accept something undesirable

mollified – soothed

1. Why does Pearl “burst into a fit of passion” when she stands across the brook from her mother? (Pg. 165)
2. Why does Pearl make Hester don the scarlet letter again, and why must Hester pick it up?
3. How does Pearl react to her mother’s assertion that Dimmesdale loves them?
4. Explain Pearl’s behavior towards the minister.

Chapter 20

Vocabulary

vicissitude – changing circumstances.

introspection – the examination of one's own mental and emotional state

irrefragable – not to be disputed or contested

comport – to conduct or behave

obeisance – a bodily gesture, such as a bow, that expresses respect

grandam– old woman; grandmother

potentate – one who wields controlling power

stupefied – astonished

gratuitous – without apparent reason or justification

1. Describe the minister's wicked impulses as he returns to town.
2. Why is Dimmesdale suddenly behaving wickedly?
3. What does Dimmesdale wonder when he pauses in the street?
4. Has Dimmesdale committed a deadly sin by planning to escape with Hester?

Chapter 21

Vocabulary

quaff – drink deeply

wormwood – something bitter and grievous; bitterness

lees – dregs

effervesce – to bubble; to show liveliness

buckler – a shield worn on the left arm

probity – moral uprightness

animadversion – adverse and typically ill-natured or unfair criticism

1. In this chapter, Hawthorne makes frequent mention of the colors gray, black (sable), and brown. What does the emphasis on those colors suggest?
2. What bad news does Hester receive from the ship captain?
3. In addition to providing more information, what other purpose does this chapter serve?
4. Explain the significance of Pearl's comment on the behavior of Reverend Dimmesdale.
5. What do darkness and light symbolize?

Chapter 22

Vocabulary

clarion –trumpet-like horn

morbid – gloomy

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pathos – sympathetic pity

indefatigable – incapable of being fatigued

requital – something given in return or retaliation

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3. What happens to Chillingworth? What does he give Pearl?
4. What becomes of Pearl?
5. Explain Hawthorne's conclusion for Hester.

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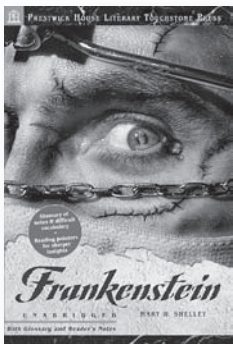
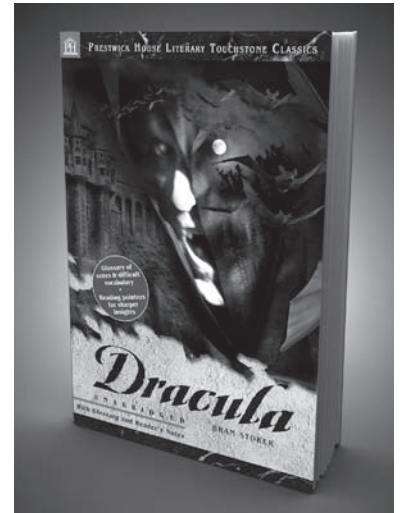
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