

Name _____
Instructor _____
Class _____
Date _____

The Scarlet Letter
Chapter Questions

Instructions

Put an MLA format heading on your paper and label it with the appropriate author, title and chapter numbers. Answer the following questions in complete sentences.

Due Date

Chapters 1-4

1. What is the setting of the story?
2. What legend accounts for the existence of the rose bush by the prison door?
3. What is the mood of the crowd, and why is their attention focused on the door?
4. What reasons are given as to why Hester Prynne was not executed for her crime? What would the Puritan women have done to her if given the power?
5. What are Hester's specific actions as she walks from the prison to the scaffold?
6. What memories does Hester review during her three-hour ordeal?
7. Tell where each of the following are located while Hester is on the scaffold:
 - a. her daughter Pearl
 - b. the Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale
 - c. Roger Chillingworth.
8. What specifically is Dimmesdale's plea to Hester?
9. During their interview, what is Chillingworth's attitude toward Hester and her act of infidelity?
10. What promise does Chillingworth exact from Hester?

Due Date

Chapters 5-8 Questions

1. After her ordeal, where did Hester choose to live? Why?
2. What occupation did Hester take up?
3. Describe Hester's appearance and mental state during this time period.
4. Give at least three examples of Hester's treatment by the community.
5. Describe Pearl's personality and appearance.
6. What is Pearl's reaction to the scarlet letter?
7. Why does Hester go to the Governor's house?
8. Describe the luxury of the Governor's home, especially in contrast to an ordinary Puritan's lifestyle.
9. How does Pearl behave when questioned by the men?
10. How does Hester succeed in her mission, and how does this relate to her conversation with Mistress Hibbins?

Due Date

Chapters 9-12 Questions

1. What are the townspeople's reactions to Chillingworth's lodging in the same house as Dimmesdale?
2. What changes have taken place in Chillingworth over the years?
3. What actions does Dimmesdale take to punish himself?
4. Why is Chillingworth called a "leech," and why, at another point, does the narrator compare him to a miner?
5. What is the significance of Chillingworth's examining Dimmesdale's chest?
6. What is the reaction of Dimmesdale's parishioners to his sermons?

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7. For what reasons are the major characters at the scaffold during the night?
8. Why does Dimmesdale cry out while on the scaffold?
9. Where is each major character located when the meteor is seen?
10. What are the various interpretations the characters attribute to the shape of the meteor?

Due Date **Chapters 13-15 Questions**

1. What are the effects of the letter on Hester Prynne over this seven year interval?
2. What crime has Hester committed which, if known to the Puritans, would have resulted in her death?
3. What value does Hester place upon her life?
4. What does Hester see as necessary before women would be treated equally in society?
5. What is the meaning of the line, "the scarlet letter had not done its office"?
6. Why does Hester feel responsible for Dimmesdale's physical condition?
7. What favors does Chillingworth feel he has done for Dimmesdale?
8. Why is Chillingworth even more vengeful towards Dimmesdale?
9. When is Hester untrue to the scarlet letter?
10. What is the current relationship between Hester and Pearl?

Due Date **Chapters 16-19 Questions**

1. Why does Hester prefer to meet with Dimmesdale in the forest rather than in the settlement?
2. What significance can be attributed to the play of sunlight on Pearl and Hester?
3. What story does Pearl hear of her mother's involvement with the Black Man of the Forest?
4. What are Dimmesdale's reactions when Hester tells him Chillingworth's true identity?
5. What effect does Hester have upon Dimmesdale?
6. How does Pearl fit into the forest setting?
7. Why does Pearl refuse to retrieve the scarlet letter herself?
8. Why does Pearl insist that the scarlet letter be replaced?
9. What is the effect on Hester when she replaces the letter on her bosom?
10. What is the significance of Pearl's reaction to the minister?

Due Date **Chapters 20-22 Questions**

1. What is Hester's plan for Dimmesdale, Pearl, and herself?
2. What is Dimmesdale tempted to do as he returns to his room? Why?
3. What decision does he make as he reaches his lodging?
4. What does the Puritan celebration tell about their values?
5. How has Chillingworth interfered with Hester's plan?
6. What does the procession show about Puritan values?
7. What is the minister's mental state as he walks to the meeting-house? What effect does he have upon Hester?
8. Where is Hester standing during Dimmesdale's sermon?
9. Why does Hester become the center of the crowd's attention? What irony does the narrator see in the scene?
10. What is Pearl doing during the sermon?

Due Date **Chapters 23-24 Questions**

1. What is the topic and mood of Dimmesdale's sermon?
2. Describe the minister's condition after the speech, and tell which people offer him assistance.
3. Where are the four major characters during the final scaffold scene?
4. What changes occur in Pearl? What does she accept from Dimmesdale?
5. What moral does the narrator say is central to the story?
6. What are the various versions of what was seen on Dimmesdale's chest?
7. What is the effect of Dimmesdale's confession on Chillingworth?
8. What is the effect of Chillingworth's legacy to Pearl?
9. Describe the circumstances of Hester's return to Salem.
10. Are the two lovers ever united?