

**The Custom House and Chs. 1-6**

**Note:** If you are here for the first part of the film of *The Scarlet Letter*, you do not have to read the section called “The Custom House”; you may simply start with Chapter 1 of the novel.

- Hawthorne begins by saying how he found the \_\_\_\_\_ and its story while he was working at the \_\_\_\_\_.
- True/False.** All the spectators at the scaffold think that Hester should have been killed or at least branded.
- The ministers and Governor want Hester to tell them who the \_\_\_\_\_ of the \_\_\_\_\_ is.
- True/False.** Hester says she does not know the answer to this question (in #3).
- Chillingworth is a(n) \_\_\_\_ (circle one letter).  
a. magician                      b. doctor/physician                      c. sailor/ship’s captain                      d. artist
- Chillingworth forces Hester not to reveal that he is or was \_\_\_\_\_.
- True/False.** Chillingworth acknowledges that Hester’s disgrace is partially his own fault.
- What does Chillingworth vow to find out?
- Hester Prynne does not leave New England and start a life elsewhere partly because this was the scene of her \_\_\_\_\_ and should also be the scene of her \_\_\_\_\_, but also because the \_\_\_\_\_ of her \_\_\_\_\_ is still there (though she doesn’t even like to admit this to herself).
- How does Hester support herself and her child?
- What is the item which Hester has never been asked make?
- How does Hester’s dress now differ from that of Pearl?
- How do the public and the town officials treat Hester?

**Chapters 7-14**

- When questioned on religion, Pearl says she came from \_\_\_\_ .  
a. the rose bush in the Governor’s garden                      b. her Heavenly father  
c. the Scarlet Letter                      d. the rose bush by the prison door
- True / False.** People want to take Pearl away from Hester because they fear Pearl will hinder her mother’s penance.

3. **True / False.** People want to take Pearl away from Hester because they fear Hester is not Godly enough to raise Pearl properly.

4. To whom does Hester turn to plead her case before the governor?

5. **True / False.** The governor eventually decides to let Hester keep Pearl.

6. During the scene at the Governor's mansion, Chillingworth \_\_\_\_ .

- a. probably starts to suspect that Dimmesdale is Pearl's father
- b. suggests that they try to guess who is Pearl's father
- c. insists that they must find out who Pearl's father is
- d. a and b
- e. a, b, and c

7. Pearl calls Chillingworth \_\_\_\_ .

- a. "my Heavenly father"                      b. "The Black Man"                      c. "yonder Witch Man"                      d. all of these

8. When he looks at \_\_\_\_ Chillingworth knows that \_\_\_\_ is the man for whom he has been searching. Chillingworth then dances around like \_\_\_\_ .

- a. the results of his potion... the governor... a witch                      b. Dimmesdale's chest... Dimmesdale... Satan upon winning a soul
- c. Hester's expression... Dimmesdale... a fiend                      d. the Bible... Christ... he's celebrating his redemption

9. Dimmesdale feels \_\_\_\_ about himself now.

- a. terrible                      b. at peace                      c. confident                      d. uncertain

10. Dimmesdale goes to the \_\_\_\_, where he is joined by \_\_\_\_ .

- a. the scaffold at midday ... Hester and Pearl                      b. the forest at midday ... Hester and Pearl
- c. the scaffold at night ... Chillingworth, who tries to hang him                      d. the scaffold at night ... Hester and Pearl

11. Throughout this part of the story, Dimmesdale has made attempts (sort of) to \_\_\_\_ but cannot because \_\_\_\_ .

- a. repent or confess... he's a moral coward
- b. run away to England... he needs the medicine Chillingworth is giving him
- c. find another place to live ... then everyone would suspect the truth
- d. see Hester ... she despises his cowardice and will not meet with him

12. How has the community's attitude towards Hester changed by Ch. 13?

On the other hand, what would the reaction of the community leaders be if they knew that Hester practiced free thought? (See the passage beginning "Much of the marble coldness..." in Ch. 13).

12. **True/False.** Hester believes it would have been better for Dimmesdale to have died at once.

13. **True/False.** Hester now feels she must never reveal to Dimmesdale the fact that Chillingworth was her husband.

## Chapters 15-19

1. Dimmesdale says he would have to have been an \_\_\_\_\_ in order to have found peace during the past 7 years.

2. **True/False.** Dimmesdale at first says he will not forgive Hester for not telling him the truth about Chillingworth sooner.

3. What does Dimmesdale say here about his sin, Hester's sin, and Chillingworth's sin?

4. During the scene in the forest, Hester tells Dimmesdale not to forget that they said to each other that their love affair had a

\_\_\_\_\_ of its own. When she reminds him of this, Dimmesdale tells her to "\_\_\_\_\_."

5. **True/False.** Hester and Dimmesdale agree to go away together.

6. **True/False.** During the scene on the forest, Pearl will not come to Hester right away because Hester is not wearing her letter and has her hair down. Dimmesdale demands that Hester wear the letter again to make Pearl stop screeching.

## Chapters 20-22

1. As Dimmesdale comes back from the forest and walks through the town, he seems \_\_\_\_ .

- a. like a different man                      b. very ill                      c. to feel better than usual                      d. a/c

2. When he meets various people, such as church members, he \_\_\_\_ .

- a. will not speak to them                      b. says or does irreligious things  
c. cautions them not to go to the forest                      d. first a and then c

3. Dimmesdale rejects \_\_\_\_ once he returns home.

- a. Hester's plan                      b. Pearl's love                      c. Chillingworth's "medicine"                      d. all of these

4. Dimmesdale is to preach the \_\_\_\_\_ before he leaves with Hester.

- a. Election Sermon                      b. Last Supper                      c. May Day Sermon                      d. Awakening

5. Mistress Hibbins seems to know all about \_\_\_\_ .

- a. Dimmesdale's sermon                      b. Hester's plans to kill Chillingworth  
c. Dimmesdale's secret sins                      d. Pearl's future

6. **True/False.** Dimmesdale himself thinks his plans with Hester are sinful.

7. Find the ¶ in Ch. 21 beginning, "Then, too, the people were countenanced..." Look at the description of the various activities people are involved in during the election day festivities, and take a look at what activities Hawthorne tells us they are NOT engaged in. Explain how the Puritan influence can still be seen in America today, based on this description and your knowledge of American pastimes.

8. Find the ¶ beginning, "It may not be too much to affirm..." on p. 227. What social commentary does Hawthorne engage in here, concerning this generation of Puritans, the next one, and Americans in his own time?

9. On Election Day, why is there renewed interest in Hester and her letter?

10. What is Chillingworth planning to do?

## Chapters 23-24

1. How is Dimmesdale feeling as he comes out of the church after giving his sermon?

- a. energetic and lively                      b. very ill                      c. serious but still friendly                      d. a/c

2. **True/False.** Dimmesdale rejects the help and support of Reverend Wilson at this point.

3. As Dimmesdale takes \_\_\_\_ to the \_\_\_\_, Chillingworth offers \_\_\_\_ .

- a. Hester's plan... congregation... a human sacrifice                      b. Hester and Pearl ... scaffold ... to cure him  
c. his sermon ... the people ... to repent                      d. first c, then a

4. The only place that Dimmesdale could "escape" Chillingworth was on \_\_\_\_ .

- a. his deathbed                      b. board a ship to England                      c. the scaffold                      d. his way to hell

5. The above is true because \_\_\_\_ .
- only by public confession can Dimmesdale break Chillingworth's hold over him
  - adultery was not illegal on the seas
  - Dimmesdale must die before he can face God
  - Chillingworth will not die for another 30 years

**Match the character in the box with his/her fate in *The Scarlet Letter*. Some names will be used more than once.**

- \_\_\_\_\_ inherited property from Chillingworth
- \_\_\_\_\_ was eventually seen as wise and strong
- \_\_\_\_\_ died because his/her purpose in life was gone
- \_\_\_\_\_ did not believe Hester and Dimmesdale would be together in the afterlife
- \_\_\_\_\_ was buried next to Dimmesdale
- \_\_\_\_\_ probably married well; never returned to New England
- \_\_\_\_\_ left New England for several years and then returned
- \_\_\_\_\_ left property to Pearl
- \_\_\_\_\_ was still thought by a few people to be without sin

**Important quotations:**

- In our nature, however, there is a provision, alike marvelous and merciful, that the sufferer should never know the intensity of what he endures by its present torture, but chiefly by the pang that rankles after it.
- Trusting no man as his friend, he could not recognize his enemy when the latter actually appeared.
- To the untrue man, the whole universe is false.
- No man for any considerable period can wear one face to himself and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true.
- Let men tremble to win the hand of woman, unless they win along with it the utmost passion of her heart!
- But a lie is never good, even though death threaten on the other side!
- It is to the credit of human nature, that, except where its selfishness is brought into play, it loves more readily than it hates. Hatred, by a gradual and quiet process, will even be transformed to love, unless the change be impeded by a continually new irritation of the original feeling of hostility.
- But there is a fatality, a feeling so irresistible and inevitable that it has the force of doom, which almost invariably compels human beings to linger around and haunt, ghostlike, the spot where some great and marked event has given the color to their lifetime; and still the more irresistibly, the darker the tinge that saddens it.
- What we did had a consecration of its own. We felt it so! We said so to each other!
- The law we broke! — the sin here so awfully revealed! — let these alone be in thy thoughts!... It may be that, when we forgot our God, — when we violated our reverence each for the other's soul, — it was thenceforth vain to hope that we could meet hereafter, in an everlasting and pure reunion.