

The Scarlet Letter: Chapters 7-12

- For each of the following chapters, identify 3 key vocabulary terms
- In each of the following chapters, identify 2 key rhetorical devices that are listed on your Great Rhetoric Project. Cite your findings and explain how Hawthorne employs this particular rhetorical device.
- Answer the following questions for each chapter:

Chapter 7:

1. Describe the way the children treat Pearl. How does Pearl react?
2. Describe Pearl's dress and comment on its significance.
3. What does the construction and furnishing of Governor Bellingham's mansion signify about him, and about Puritan culture?

Chapter 8:

1. Dimmesdale is the only person who supports Hester's plea to keep Pearl. Is this the position expected of a Puritan minister? Do you think Dimmesdale is an effective religious leader?
2. How does Pearl behave towards Dimmesdale in the garden? Why is this important?
3. What is the purpose of the interaction between Hester and Mistress Hibbons in the end of the chapter?

Chapter 9:

1. How does Chillingworth make a place for himself in Boston society? Why are we as readers suspicious of his social and professional motivations? Why does this suspicion seem to be absent from the narrator's tone?
2. What Biblical stories are portrayed in the decoration of Dimmesdale's rooms? What themes or issues are suggested by these stories?

Chapter 10:

1. The title of Chapter 10 is "The Leech and His Patient." Explain why 'the leech' is a description of Chillingworth.
2. What does Chillingworth suggest is the cause of Dimmesdale's illness?
3. What discovery does Chillingworth make while Dimmesdale is sleeping? How does the narrator describe his joy and why is this description meaningful?

Chapter 11:

1. How and why does Chillingworth change his purpose in light of his discussion?
2. How does Dimmesdale's suffering affect his work as a clergyman? What is the public reaction when Dimmesdale 'confesses' his sinfulness at the pulpit? Describe and analyze the narrator's tone towards Dimmesdale's confession.
3. Through what practices does Dimmesdale seek penance for his sins? What is the narrator's tone as he relates these practices?

Chapter 12:

1. Why does Dimmesdale go to stand on the scaffold?

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2. Which two people come to the window when Dimmesdale shrieks? What symbolism might be involved in Hawthorne's choice of these characters?
3. What question does Pearl ask Dimmesdale and what is his answer? Why are these interactions significant?

Overall question on the reading so far... Hawthorne came from a long line of Puritans (one of his forefathers was a judge during the Salem witch trials), and Puritan beliefs about subjects like guilt, repression, original sin, and discipline inform the book on every level. What is your impression of how the Puritan worldview is taken up and treated by Hawthorne in *The Scarlet Letter*?"