

FREE PRINTABLE QUIZ

The Scarlet Letter

Chapter 19

Nathaniel Hawthorne · 11 questions with a full answer key and explanations

What's inside

- **11 multiple-choice questions**, including passage analysis with the original text printed above it — the way your English class asks it.
- **Answer key** on its own page so you can take the quiz first.
- **Explanations** for every question, so a wrong answer teaches you something.
- Written from LumLysia's study edition of the book — not scraped summaries.

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The quiz

The Scarlet Letter — Chapter 19. Answers begin on the answer key page.

PLOT & EVENT

1. What action does Pearl immediately take after Arthur Dimmesdale kisses her forehead?

- A. She runs to the brook and washes the kiss from her brow with water.
- B. She throws her wreath of wild-flowers directly at his feet in anger.
- C. She screams for Governor Bellingham to arrest the minister in the forest.
- D. She hides behind a mossy tree-trunk and refuses to speak to Hester.

PLOT & EVENT

2. What does Hester do immediately after refastening the scarlet letter upon her bosom?

- A. She puts her hair back up and confines it beneath her cap.
- B. She leads Dimmesdale across the brook to seize Pearl by the hand.
- C. She drops to her knees and asks Dimmesdale for a formal blessing.
- D. She gathers a fresh handful of forest flowers to place in her hair.

CHARACTER

3. Why has Arthur Dimmesdale previously experienced alarm when seeing Pearl in public at Hester's side?

- A. He feared his own facial features were so visibly repeated in Pearl that onlookers would recognize them.
- B. He feared Pearl would repeat secrets she might have overheard during his private pastoral visits.
- C. He worried Pearl's unruly public behavior would cause the magistrates to banish Hester permanently.
- D. He dreaded that Pearl would recognize his clerical voice and point him out in the marketplace.

CHARACTER

4. According to Hester, what is the underlying cause of Pearl's violent fit of passion across the brook?

- A. Pearl refuses to accept any alteration in Hester's customary appearance, specifically the missing scarlet letter.
- B. Pearl feels jealous of Dimmesdale's ministerial authority and refuses to be commanded by him.
- C. Pearl is terrified by the gloomy forest shadows and fears crossing running water.
- D. Pearl believes Hester intends to leave her behind in the forest to return to England alone.

MICRO-DETAIL

5. How does Dimmesdale describe the typical reaction of infants and young children to his presence?

- A. They stand apart and eye him strangely, and infants weep bitterly when he holds them.
- B. They ask him childish theological questions and pull at his dark ministerial robe.
- C. They run away into the streets and refuse to receive his pastoral blessings.
- D. They crowd around him playfully until their Puritan parents pull them away.

MICRO-DETAIL

6. When Hester points to the scarlet letter on the ground and orders Pearl to bring it, how does Pearl respond?

- A. "Come thou and take it up!"
- B. "Cast it into the running water!"
- C. "Let the dark minister touch it!"
- D. "Thou art no mother of mine!"

MICRO-DETAIL

7. What specific inquiry does Pearl make regarding Dimmesdale's public commitment to Hester and herself?

- A.** Whether he will walk back hand in hand with them into town and always keep his hand over his heart.
- B.** Whether he will renounce his pulpit before the congregation and sail away with them.
- C.** Whether he will purchase them a new home in the settlement and give Pearl fine jewels.
- D.** Whether he will openly defend Hester against Mistress Hibbins and Governor Bellingham.

ANALYTICAL

8. How does Hawthorne use the boundary of the brook and Pearl's reflected image to develop a major theme in this chapter?

- A.** The brook functions as a symbolic divide separating the parents' transient dream of escape from the inescapable reality of their sin.
- B.** The brook represents a spiritual baptism that purifies Hester and Dimmesdale from their past moral transgressions.
- C.** The reflection serves as proof that Pearl is a supernatural demon sent exclusively to torture Dimmesdale.
- D.** The flowing water symbolizes the passage of time that will easily wash away the community's judgment.

ANALYTICAL

9. What thematic point is underscored by the sudden transformation in Hester's physical appearance when she resumes wearing the scarlet letter?

- A.** Her identity and vital womanhood are inextricably bound to her suffering and cannot be discarded through mere willpower.
- B.** Her physical beauty is purely artificial and requires the letter's gold embroidery to be noticeable.
- C.** Her submission to Puritan social codes instantly restores her spiritual harmony and inner peace.
- D.** Her maternal authority over Pearl is only effective when supported by symbols of civil law.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

There was both truth and error in the impression; the child and mother were estranged, but through Hester's fault, not Pearl's. Since the latter rambled from her side, another inmate had been admitted within the circle of the mother's feelings, and so modified the aspect of them all, that Pearl, the returning wanderer, could not find her wonted place, and hardly knew where she was.

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

10. In this passage, what is the meaning of the phrase 'another inmate had been admitted within the circle of the mother's feelings'?

- A.** Hester has allowed Arthur Dimmesdale into her primary emotional sphere, shifting her exclusive bond with Pearl.
- B.** A demonic forest spirit has taken possession of Hester's soul during her time away from the Puritan settlement.
- C.** Hester is burdened by the memory of Roger Chillingworth's vindictive threats against her family.
- D.** The community's judgment has permanently imprisoned Hester's capacity to show affection to her daughter.

READ THIS PASSAGE, THEN ANSWER

In a mood of tenderness that was not usual with her, she drew down her mother's head, and kissed her brow and both her cheeks. But then—by a kind of necessity that always impelled this child to alloy whatever comfort she might chance to give with a throb of anguish—Pearl put up her mouth, and kissed the scarlet letter too!

PASSAGE ANALYSIS

11. Based on the excerpt, what does Pearl's gesture of kissing the scarlet letter reveal about her character?

- A.** She instinctively compounds moments of tenderness with sharp reminders of her mother's underlying pain.
- B.** She views the badge as a beautiful decorative toy rather than a badge of public ignominy.
- C.** She is attempting to show reverence for the strict moral laws of the Puritan magistrates.
- D.** She is expressing deep jealousy toward Dimmesdale by clinging to Hester's garment.

Answer key

Check your answers here, then read the explanations on the next page.

1. A	2. A	3. A	4. A	5. A
6. A	7. A	8. A	9. A	10. A
11. A				

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Answers explained

Why the right answer is right — and what the question is really testing.

1. A. She runs to the brook and washes the kiss from her brow with water.

After Dimmesdale bends forward and kisses Pearl's brow, Pearl breaks away, runs to the brook, and bathes her forehead until the kiss is washed off.

2. A. She puts her hair back up and confines it beneath her cap.

Following the resumption of the letter, Hester gathers her heavy tresses and hides them beneath her cap, which causes her youthful warmth and beauty to fade.

3. A. He feared his own facial features were so visibly repeated in Pearl that onlookers would recognize them.

Dimmesdale confesses that he felt dread because he fancied his own physical features were reflected so strikingly in Pearl's face that the community might discover his paternity.

4. A. Pearl refuses to accept any alteration in Hester's customary appearance, specifically the missing scarlet letter.

Hester explains to Dimmesdale that young children cannot tolerate changes in familiar surroundings, and that Pearl is distressed because Hester is not wearing the scarlet letter.

5. A. They stand apart and eye him strangely, and infants weep bitterly when he holds them.

Dimmesdale states that children do not climb his knee or smile at him, but rather stand apart and stare, while babes cry whenever he takes them in his arms.

6. A. "Come thou and take it up!"

When Hester tells Pearl, 'Bring it hither!', Pearl refuses to touch the token and commands Hester to come fetch it herself.

7. A. Whether he will walk back hand in hand with them into town and always keep his hand over his heart.

Pearl pointedly asks if the minister will walk hand in hand with them into the town and whether he will continue to hold his hand over his heart.

8. A. The brook functions as a symbolic divide separating the parents' transient dream of escape from the inescapable reality of their sin.

The brook stands as a barrier between two worlds; Pearl and her reflection remain on the side of uncompromising truth, refusing to allow Hester to escape the reality and consequences of her past.

9. A. Her identity and vital womanhood are inextricably bound to her suffering and cannot be discarded through mere willpower.

When Hester reattaches the letter and conceals her hair, her warmth and beauty instantly vanish, demonstrating that the doom of her sin has become an indelible part of her earthly existence.

10. A. Hester has allowed Arthur Dimmesdale into her primary emotional sphere, shifting her exclusive bond with Pearl.

The 'inmate' is Arthur Dimmesdale, whose emotional reunion with Hester has altered Hester's inner life and disrupted Pearl's accustomed central place.

11. A. She instinctively compounds moments of tenderness with sharp reminders of her mother's underlying pain.

Hawthorne highlights Pearl's innate drive to 'alloy whatever comfort she might chance to give with a throb of anguish' by kissing the very symbol of Hester's shame right after kissing her face.

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