



Scarlet Letter  
Reading Check Ch. 4 – 6

USE SEPARATE PAPER, PLEASE!

1. Upon their return to the prison, what ailments or disorders affect Hester and Pearl?
2. When offered a soothing draught (medicine) by “Dr.” Chillingworth, what is Hester’s initial response? What is Chillingworth’s reply?
3. While Chillingworth more or less “forgives” Hester, what does he vow to do, no matter what?
4. What secret does Chillingworth swear Hester to agree to?
5. Hawthorne writes: *...giving up her individuality, she [Hester] would become the general symbol...* What does he mean? What sort of life is foreshadowed for Hester and Pearl?
6. Explain the symbolism in the following excerpt: *...cottage...abandoned because the soil about it was too sterile for cultivation...remoteness...it stood on the shore, looking...across the sea...towards the west...a clump of scrubby trees...*
7. Hester sewed and embellished ceremonial robes, funeral apparel, baby linen, fashionable dresses – what article of clothing was she NOT asked to fashion and sew?
8. Using specific examples, explain what day-to-day “trials and tribulations” Hester had to endure?
9. Why did Hester name the baby “Pearl?” If you are able, briefly explain what this alludes to.
10. Hawthorne’s witty sarcasm strikes again! Explain the “humor” in the following excerpt: *She saw the children of the settlement...playing at going to church, or at scourging Quakers; or taking scalps in a sham-fight with the Indians; or scaring one another with freaks of imitative witchcraft.*