

Midday Book Club



The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne

1. According to the view of the community, whose sin is worse: Hester's or Dimmesdale's? Why?
2. What proof can you find that there is strong belief in the depravity of man?
3. Why do you think the author placed such dramatic emphasis on hypocrisy in this novel?
4. What is the psychological effect on the minister (chapter XX) as reflected in his relations with his fellow humans?
5. Why do you think Chillingworth is shown as the worse sinner of all? Can you show that he is not "all bad"?
6. In the chapter, "The Interior of a Heart", note the great contrast of humanitarianism as practiced by two different people.
7. What references to mercy do you find in this work?
8. In Chapter XI compare the analysis of motives and inner conflicts. How does this chapter compare with the rest of the novel in motives and inner conflicts?
9. Make a close study of the changes or the development in the character of Dimmesdale.
10. Do the same thing for Chillingworth. Note the steps by which these changes are brought about and the means used to make them credible.
11. What is the unifying physical object in the plot pattern of the novel?
12. How does Hawthorne manage the color, light, and shade at the scaffold?
13. In seven scenes, mirrors play a part. How do they contribute to the psychology Hawthorne wishes to develop?
14. In the concluding chapter, Hawthorne poses the "curious" inquiry "whether hatred and love be not the same thing at bottom." What do you think he means?
15. What is the author's theological point of view in this work?