

THE SCARLET LETTER VOCABULARY

CHAPTER ONE

THRONG: a great number of persons crowded together.

EDIFICE: a large, usually impressive building.

UTOPIA: a place or state of political or social perfection. Comes from a novel by Sir Thomas Moore about a perfect society.

ALLOT: to divide or distribute in shares.

SEASONABLE: timely or opportune.

SEPULCHRES: a burial vault built of rock or stone.

PONDEROUS: weighty or clumsy.

CONGENIAL: pleasant, friendly.

INAUSPICIOUS: not prosperous.

PORTAL: a doorway of imposing appearance.

CHAPTER TWO

PHYSIOGNOMIES: the facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their configuration or expression.

AUGURED: foretold.

BETOKENED: given evidence of.

TRIBUNAL: a court of forum of justice.

INFERENCE: the act of passing from one proposition, statement, or judgment considered as true to another whose truth is believed to follow from that of the former.

INDUBITABLY: unquestionably.

ANTINOMIAN: one who rejects a socially established morality.

HETERODOX: holding unorthodox opinions or doctrines.

SCOURGED: to subject to severe criticism or satire.

FIREWATER: strong alcoholic beverage.

MAGISTRATE: a local official exercising administrative and often judicial functions.

GALLOWS: the punishment of hanging.

VENERABLE: made sacred especially by religious or historical association.

MEAGRE: lacking desirable qualities; meager.

TRANSGRESSOR: violator.

SCAFFOLD: a platform on which a criminal is executed.

INFAMY: evil reputation brought about by something grossly criminal, shocking, or brutal.

IMPROPRIETY: the quality or state of being improper.

FARTHINGALE: a support worn in the 16th century beneath a skirt to expand it at the hip line.

FIBRE: basic toughness.

ROTUNDITY: rounded.

BEHOOF: advantage, profit.

MALEFACTRESSES: a person who violates the law or does evil.

TROW: believe.

AUTUMAL: a period of maturity or incipient decline.

BAGGAGE: a worthless or contemptible woman; prostitute.

HEATHENISH: barbarous.

BEADLE: a minor parish official whose duties include ushering and preserving order at services and sometimes civil functions.

ABASHED: to destroy the self-confidence of.

SUMPTUARY: designed to regulate habits on moral or religious grounds.

GENTILITY: the members of the upper class.

EVANESCENT: tending to vanish like vapor.

IGNOMINY: disgraceful or dishonorable conduct, quality, or action.

BRAZEN: marked by contemptuous boldness.

HUSSY: a saucy or mischievous girl.

MERIDIAN: midday; noon.

INIQUITY: wickedness.
VISAGE: appearance.
SPURN: stumble.
PILLORY: a means to expose one to public scorn and humility.
FLAGRANT: extremely or purposefully conspicuous usually because of uncommon objectionable or evil.
MIEN: appearance; aspect.
VIED: exchanged in rivalry.
TAINTED: contaminated mark or influence.
CONTUMELY: rude language or treatment arising from haughtiness and contempt.
COUNTENANCES: looks; expressions.
MERRIMENT: lighthearted gaiety or fun making.
PRETERNATURAL: exceeding what is natural or regular.
HEWN: strictly conformed.
PHANTASMAGORIC: a scene that constantly changes.
REMONSTRANCE: objection.
CLOISTER: an area within a monastery or convent to which the religious are normally restricted.
ETYMOLOGIST: studies word derivation.
DEMEANOR: behavior toward others; outward manner.

CHAPTER THREE

FURROWS: wrinkles.
HETEROGENEOUS: different in kind.
ABATE: put an end to.
WRITHING: (to twist in pain; to suffer keenly).
INTERVOLUTIONS: twists between
SOJOURN: a temporary stay.
INIQUITY: wickedness.
MARRY: to express amused or surprised agreement.
EXPOUND: to explain in careful and elaborate detail.
PERADVENTURE: perhaps.
BETWIXT: between.
HALBERDS: a weapon consisting typically of a battle ax and pike mounted on a handle about six feet long.
TUNIC: a hip-length or longer blouse or jacket.
SAGACITY: of keen mind: shrewd.
MIEN: bearing: aspect
OBSTINACY: fixed and unyielding; stubborn.
ALBEIT: although.
FERVOR: intensity of feeling or expression.
LURID: gruesome; sensational.
GARB: clothing.
IGNOMINIOUS: shameful.

CHAPTER FOUR

SAGAMORES: a subordinate chief of the Algonquian Indians of the north Atlantic coast.
AMENABLE: willing to yield or submit: agreeable.
PEREMPTORY: leaving no opportunity for denial or refusal.
ALCHEMY: a power or process of transforming something common into something precious.
AVENGE: to exact satisfaction for a wrong by punishing the wrongdoer.
INQUEST: inquiry, investigation.
AUGHT: nothing.
PARAMOUR: an illicit lover.
WOTTEST: to have knowledge of or to know.

CHAPTER FIVE

VIVIFY: to endure with life or renew life: animate.
CLAUSE: a separate section of a discourse or writing.

ASSIMILATE: to absorb into the cultural tradition of a population or group.
TINGE: an affective or modifying property or influence: touch.
UNCONGENIAL: unfriendly.
THATCHED: a house used as a sheltering cover made of a plant material.
FAIN: rather.
PROGENITORS: an ancestor in the direct line: forefather.
PLEBEIAN: one of the common people.
EMOLUMENT: advantage.
COMMISERATION to feel or express sympathy: condole.
CONTUMACIOUSLY: stubbornly disobedient: rebellious.
TALISMAN: something producing apparently magical or miraculous effects.

CHAPTER SIX

EFFICACY: effective as a means of remedy.
RUSSET: a coarse brownish homespun cloth.
IMBUED: inspired as with feelings, opinions, etc.
MUTABILITY: subject to change.
EPOCH: a point in time marked by the beginning of anew development or state of things.
REGIMEN: to organize.
CAPRICE; a sudden, impulsive change: whim.
INFANTILE: characteristic of infancy or infants: babyish.
SMOTE: having struck something.
DEARTH: scarcity, lack, or famine.
GESTICULATION: expression through gestures.
LABYRINTH: any intricate or perplexing set of difficulties: maze.
AMENABLE: agreeable.
NURTURE: care for; raise up.
ENMITY: established hatred.
PATERNITY: father.

CHAPTER SEVEN

LUDICROUS: amusing or laughable through obvious absurdity, incongruity, exaggeration, or eccentricity.
EMINENCE: position of prominence or superiority.
PRISTINE: uncorrupt by civilization.
INTRINSIC: originating or situated within the body or part acted on.
IMPERIOUS: commanding; dominant.
AKIN: similar.
TUNIC: a hip-length or longer blouse or jacket.
WAN: pale or sickly.
PALLID: deficient in color: dull.
DAUNTLESS: fearless, undaunted.
EXTANT: not destroyed or lost.
CABALISTIC: esoteric doctrine or mysterious art.
CAPER: a joyful, bounding leap.
FLANKED: to be situated on the side: border.
FORSOOTH: indeed.
EMBOWED: arched.
FOLIO: a book of the largest size.
TOME: a volume forming part of a larger work.
GILDED: to overlay with or as if with a thin covering of gold.
MAIL: armor made of metal links or sometimes plates.
BURNISHED: polished.
PANOPLY: full suit of armor.
MUSTER: formal military inspection.
EXIGENCES: a state of affairs that makes urgent demands.
PHYSIOGNOMY: facial features held to show quality of mind or character by their configuration or expression.

BREADTH: something of full width.
VISTA: a distant view through or an avenue or pathway.
RELINQUISH: leave behind.
SUBSISTENCE: real being: existence.
ANNALS: historical records: chronicles.

CHAPTER EIGHT

EXPATIATING: enlarging in discourse or writing.
ANTIQUATE: obsolete.
UNFEIGNEDLY: not pretending.
BEHEST: an earnest request.
BENEVOLENCE: desiring to do good to others.
BEDIZEN: to dress in a gaudy or vulgar manner.
ALBEIT: although or even if.
WARILY: cautiously.
PIOUS: of or pertaining to religious devotion.
IMBIBES: to take or receive into the mind.
AMISS: improper.
INDEFEASIBLE: not to be annulled or made void.
EMACIATED: to make very thin, as to lack of nutrition or to disease.
MOUNTEBANK: any charlatan or quack.
BOON: a favor sought.
ADDUCED: to bring forward as in argument or as evidence.
VEHEMENCE: forceful or violent.
UNOBTRUSIVE: not conspicuous.
CHARGER: plate or platter.

CHAPTER NINE

APPELLATION: an identifying name or title.
CONTAGION: the spread as of an idea, emotion, etc.
CHIRURGICAL: surgical.
INTRICACIES: having many interrelated parts or facets: intricate.
COUNTENANCE: to extend approval or toleration of.
PARISHIONER: a member or inhabitant of a parish.
PROPOUND: to offer up for discussion or consideration.
DELVE: to make careful or detailed search for information.
SAGACITY: the quality of keen and farsighted penetration and judgment.
TUMULT: uproar and confusion: commotion, riot.
ERUDITION: extensive knowledge acquired chiefly from books.
COMMODIOUSNESS: comfortable or conveniently spacious: roomy.
INCANTATIONS: a use of spells or verbal charms spoken or sung as a part of a ritual of magic.
BLACK ART: magic practiced by or as if by conjurers and witches.
CONJURER: someone who calls up spirits or ghosts: magicians.
GUISE: manner or fashion.
SANCTITY: Godliness or sacredness.
EMISSARY: messenger.
DIABOLIC: devilish.

CHAPTER TEN

SEXTON: an official charged with maintaining church property.
DEEM: to believe or judge.
ASPIRATION: strong desire, longing, or ambition: goal.
GHASTLY: terrifyingly horrible to the senses: frightening.
STEALTHILY: slow, deliberate, and secret in action or character.
INIMICAL: having the disposition of an enemy: hostile.
ASKANCE: with a side-glance: obliquely.

PERFORCE: by force of circumstances.
SOLACE: alleviation of grief or anxiety.
BRETHREN: fellow members of a profession, society, or sect; plural of brothers.
PROPAGATE: publicize.
ABASEMENT: to lower in rank, office, prestige, or esteem.
SOOTH: truth, reality.
ARMORIAL: of, relating to, or bearing heraldic arms.
DECOROUSLY: marked by propriety and good taste: correct
IMP: a small demon: fiend.
MIRTH: gladness or gaiety as shown by or accompanied with laughter.
PALLIATE: to cover by excuses or apologies.
ASSENTED: to agree to something.
SOMNIFEROUS: hypnotic.
VESTMENT: an outer garment; a robe of ceremony or office.
PIETY: reverence to God.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

MALICE: desire to see another suffer.
LATENT: present and capable of becoming though not now visible or active: dormant.
BALKED: to stop short and refuse to proceed.
ODIOUS: exciting or deserving hatred or repugnance.
MACHINATION: a scheming or crafty action or artful design intended to accomplish some usually evil end.
LORE: traditional knowledge or belief.
ETHEREALIZED: celestially.
ATTESTATION: to be proof of: manifest.
AVOWAL: an open declaration or acknowledgment.
IMPALPABLE incapable of being felt by touch.
VENERATION: commanding respect because of great age or associated dignity.

CHAPTER TWELVE

SOMNAMBULISM: sleepwalking.
DANK: cold and damp.
EXPIATION: to atone for; to make amends for.
DEFUNCT: dead or inactive.
SCANTLY: scarcely enough.
JUTTING: to extend beyond the main portion.
ARCHFIEND: a chief fiend: Satan.
SCURRILOUS: grossly and offensively abusive.
GRISLY: inspiring horror or intense fear.
TUMULT: a turbulent uprising: riot.
AWRY: out of right or hoped-for cause.
FIRMAMENT: the vault or arch of the sky: heavens.
MALEVOLENCE: arising from intense or vicious ill will, spite, or hatred.
ERUDITE: possessing or displaying erudition; learned.
REPLETE; fully or abundantly provided or filled: complete.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

PAUPER: a very poor person.
GIBE: to tease with taunting words.
MEED: a fitting return or recompense.
DESPOTS: a ruler with absolute power and authority.
FOLIAGE: a cluster of leaves, flowers, and branches.
SEMBLANCE: outward and often specious appearance or show.
IMBIBED: to receive into the mind and retain.
OBVIATED: to see beforehand and dispose of; making unnecessary.
ETHEREAL: celestial, heavenly.

CLEW: clue.
CHASM: a marked division, separation, or difference.
LUNACY: wild foolishness; insanity.
ACQUIESCING: to accept or comply tacitly or passively.
STAFF: a long stick carried in the hand for support in walking.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

WIRY: lean and strong.
BEHEST: an earnest request.
RANKLE: to cause persistent keen irritation or bitter resentment.
PROPINQUITY: nearness in place or time.
USURP: to seize and hold (a position, power, etc.) by force or without legal right.
RETRIBUTION: punishment given in return for some wrong committed; judgment.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

SERE: withered.
VERDURE: condition of health and vigor.
SEDULOUS: diligent in application or pursuit.
HORNBOOK: a child's reading book consisting of a sheet of parchment or paper protected by a sheet of transparent horn.
PETULANT: insolent or rude in speech or behavior.
PRECOCITY: exhibiting mature qualities at an unusually early age.
ACRID: deeply or violently bitter.
ENIGMA: something hard to understand or explain: mystery.
PROPENSITY: an intense and often urgent natural inclination.
BENEFICENCE: an office to which the revenue from an endowment is attached: fief.
VIVACITY: being lively in temper or conduct: sprightly.
TALISMAN: something producing apparently magical or miraculous effects.
ASPERITY: roughness of manner or of temper: harshness.
UPBRAIDED: criticized.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

SCINTILLATING: to be brilliant or keen, as in talent.
VIVACITY: being lively in temper or conduct: sprightly.
SCROFULA: a form of tuberculosis.
LOQUACITY: exceedingly talkative.
STREAMLET: a small stream.
PRATTLE: to talk in a foolish or simpleminded way.
CADENCE: rhythmic sequence or flow of sounds in language.

CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

SPECTRE: something that haunts or perturbs the mind; specter.
MALEVOLENT: having, showing, or arising from intense often vicious ill will, spite, or hatred.
CONTIGUITY: the quality or state of next or near in time or sequence.
MISANTHROPY: a hatred or distrust of mankind.
INVIGORATED: to give life and energy to; animate.
RECOIL: to fall back under pressure.
CONSECRATION: the act of making or declaring sacred.
SATIATING: to satisfy fully.
SENTINEL: one that watches or guards.
BUOY: to support or sustain.
TARRY: stay, sojourn.

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

ESTRANGED: to alienate the affections of.
COLLOQUY: a conversation especially formal one.

AMISS: out of proper order: wrong.
TRAMMELED: something that restricts activity or free movement: hindrance.
MACHINATIONS: a crafty, intricate, or secret plot, usually intended to achieve an evil purpose.
BREACH: a violation as of a law or obligation.
CITADEL: a stronghold.
SOLACE: comfort in sorrow or distress; consolation.
HEATHEN: an irreligious, uncivilized, or unenlightened person.
SUBJUGATED: to bring under dominion: conquer.
DENIZENS: an inhabitant: resident.
CHOLERIC: bad tempered; irritable.

CHAPTER NINETEEN

ACCOSTING: address, greeting.
PRATTLE: to utter meaningless sounds suggestive of the chatter of children: babble.
INURED: accustomed to accept something undesirable.
MOLLIFIED: soothed in temper or disposition.
GESTICULATING: making gestures especially when speaking.
PRETERNATURAL: existing outside of nature: abnormal
ALLOY: to reduce the purity of by mixing with something debasing.

CHAPTER TWENTY

VICISSITUDE: unexpectedly changing circumstances.
ANTIQUITY: the quality of being ancient.
SOLACE: comfort in sorrow.
INTROSPECTION: the examination of one's own mental and emotional state.
IRREFRAGABLE: not to be disputed or contested.
UNCOUTH: awkward or clumsy.
WEATHERCOCK: a weather vane in the shape of a rooster.
MUTABILITY: being liable or subject to change.
COMPORT: to conduct or behave.
OBEISANCE: a bodily gesture, as a bow, expressing respect.
DEVOUT: sincere or hearty.
BARTER: to trade by exchanging one commodity for another.
ENSHRINED: preserved or cherished as sacred.
GRANDAM: an old woman: grandmother.
AUGHT: at all.
PITHY: having substance and point.
GILD: to give an attractive but often deceptive appearance to.
TARRY: stay, sojourn.
POTENTATE: one who wields controlling power.
STUPEFIED: astonished.
MALIGNANT: disposed to cause harm deliberately.
GRATUITOUS: without apparent reason or justification.
DELL: a secluded hollow or small valley usually covered with trees or turf.
REQUITE: to make return for: repay.
STEED: a spirited horse for state or war.

CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

BETIMES: at times: occasionally.
PLEBIAN: one of the common people.
QUAFF: (PG. 213) to drink (a beverage) deeply.
WORMWOOD: (PG. 213) something bitter and grievous: bitterness.
LEES: the settling of liquor during fermentation and aging: dregs.
EFFERVESCE: to show liveliness or exhilaration.
MIRTH: gladness or gaiety as shown by or accompanied with laughter.
QUARTERSTAFF: a long stout staff formerly used as a weapon and wielded with one hand in the middle and the

other between the middle and the end.

BUCKLER: a shield worn on the left arm.

BROADSWORD: a sword with a broad blade for cutting rather than thrusting.

SCRUPLE: an ethical consideration or principle that inhabits action.

QUAFFING: drinking (a beverage) deeply.

TEMPESTUOUS: turbulent, stormy.

PROBITY: adherence to the highest principles and ideals: uprightness.

UNBENIGNANTLY: (acting in a way that is not favorable or beneficial.

ANIMADVERSION: adverse and typically ill-natured or unfair criticism.

GALLIARD: gay, lively.

BERTH: safe distance.

CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

CLARION: a medieval trumpet with clear shrill tones.

MERCENARY: one that serves merely for wages.

MORION: high-crested helmet with no visor.

SOBRIETY: the quality or state of being sober.

MORBID: abnormally susceptible to or characterized by gloomy or unwholesome feelings.

NECROMANCY: Magic, sorcery.

PATHOS: an emotion of sympathetic pity.

GRADATIONS: a series forming successive stages.

ORB: something circular: circle, orbit.

INDEFATIGABLE: incapable of being fatigued: untiring.

REQUITAL: something given in return, compensation, or retaliation.

SWARTHY: being of a dark color, complexion, or cast.

SMITE: to attack or afflict suddenly and injuriously.

UNSCRUPULOUS: unprincipled.

SURMISE: to imagine or infer on slight grounds.

STIGMA: a mark of shame or discredit: stain.

CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

ORACLES: a person (as a priest) through whom a deity is believed to speak.

DEITY: Supreme Being: God.

LORE: something that is taught: lesson.

WROUGHT: deeply stirred: excited.

APOTHEOSIS: elevation to divine status.

INTIMATIONS: the act of making known: announce.

NETHER: situated down or below: lower.

CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

CONJECTURE: a conclusion deduced by surmise or guesswork.

NECROMANCER: a person who is believed to communicate with the spirits of the dead for purposes of magically revealing the future of influencing the course of events.

PORTENT: something that foreshadows a coming event: omen.

NUGATORY: having no force: inoperative.

BEQUEATHED: to hand down: transmit.

RECLUSE: marked by withdrawal from society: solitary.

PENITENCE: regret for sin or wrongdoing.

ESCUTCHEON: a protective or ornamental shield.

SABLE: the color black: dark.

GULES: the heraldic color red.