

## CHAPTER 1 “THE PRISON DOOR”

### WORDS:

borne	pertain	subsequently
edifice	ponderous	Utopia
inauspicious	sepulcher	
nucleus	steeple	

### QUESTIONS:

1. Which colony is the setting [time and location] for the novel? Chapter?
2. Where within the town does the opening chapter take place?
3. For what two “practical necessities” did the new colony set aside land?
4. How is the prison described? Why does it look so old for only being there for twenty years?
5. How does Hawthorne personify nature? What does this imply about “her”?
6. Who is Anne Hutchinson? How does Hawthorne feel about her? What details support your inference?
7. What two possible symbols does the rose have for the reader?
8. Explain the chapter’s metaphoric importance to the rest of the story. (*Hint: look for “threshold of our narrative”.*)
9. Identify four ironic statements, descriptions, situations from this chapter. (There are close to a ten.)

### NOTES:

*Isaac Johnson*: he came to America with Winthrop in 1630 a few months before he died. He was one of the four founders of the first church at Charlestown, and when the Colony move to Shawmut (later Boston), he supervised the resettlement. He was the richest man in the settlement. Hawthorne identifies him as the first man to die in Boston.

*King’s Chapel*: established in 1754, King’s Chapel was the first Episcopal Church in New England. It became the first Unitarian church in America in 1785. Governor Winthrop is buried in the graveyard.

*Cornhill [St.]*: a street in Boston, now Washington St.

*Burdock*: a coarse weed with prickly burrs.

*Pig-weed*: any of certain amaranths.

*Apple-peru*: usually called Apple-of-Peru; an annual herb of the nightshade family.

*black flower of civilization*: the weeds grow so abundantly where the prison, the black flower, is founded.

*wild rose-bush*: this seems to form a symmetry with both the unruly (and unsightly) weeds on one side, the beautiful and wild rose bush on the other of the threshold of Hawthorne’s metaphorical named prison.

*Ann Hutchinson:* Hutchinson, Anne (1591-1643). She immigrated to Massachusetts with her family in 1634. Interested from youth in religion, she was a thorough student of the Bible. In Massachusetts she formed a religious discussion group in which she advocated a 'covenant of grace' as opposed to a 'covenant of works'. Sentenced to banishment and ultimately excommunicated for her religious beliefs, she emigrated in the spring of 1638 to Rhode Island where her husband died in 1642. She then moved with her family to Long island and eventually to the mainland on Long Island Sound near what is now Pelham Bay, where she and all but one of their household were massacred by the Indians. A daughter was carried away by the Indians.