

## CHAPTER 6 “PEARL”

### WORDS:

acuteness	garb	penance
amenable	gesticulation	phantasmagoric
arrayed	imbibe	pomp
betwixt	imbue	preternatural
caper (v.)	inexplicable	russet
clad	labyrinth	rustic
deportment	luster	smote (smite)
dismal	malicious	weeds
epoch	morbid	

### QUESTIONS:

1. Characterize the diction in the opening paragraph.
2. Why did Hester name her child “Pearl”?
3. Give at least two reasons why Hester does not leave the colony.
4. How does Hester dress Pearl?
5. What motivates Pearl’s being over all others?
6. How are Pearl and Hester’s souls intertwined (use Hawthorne’s exact words; there are many examples)?
7. Describe Hester’s home.
8. What words does the narrator use to describe Pearl? How many are positive; negative?
9. What happens when Pearl is taunted by other Puritan children?
10. What games do the Puritan children play? What is the narrator’s tone?
11. What does the Scarlet Letter mean to Pearl?
12. What sort of hallucinations plague Hester when she looks into her child’s eyes?
13. Summarize the narrator’s attitude towards the Puritans of Boston in this chapter.
14. Identify at least two paradoxes.
15. Identify at least one antithesis.
16. Identify at least two similes.

17. *Explicate:*

Hester could only account for the child’s character—and even then, most vaguely and imperfectly—by recalling what she herself had been, during that momentous period while Pearl was imbibing her soul from the spiritual world, and her bodily frame from its material of earth. The mother’s impassioned state had been the medium through which were transmitted to the unborn infant the rays of its moral life; and, however white and clear originally, they had taken the deep stains of crimson and gold, the fiery luster, the black shadow, and the untempered light, of the intervening substance. Above all, the warfare of Hester’s spirit at that epoch, was perpetuated in Pearl.

18. *Explicate:*

But this could never be. Pearl was a born outcast of the infantile world. An imp of evil, emblem and product of sin, she had no right among christened infants. Nothing was more remarkable than the instinct, as it seemed, with which the child comprehended her loneliness; the destiny that had drawn an inviolable circle round about her...

**NOTES:**

*All this enmity and passion had Pearl inherited by inalienable right, out of Hester's heart:* The narrator here employs the language of the Declaration of Independence. It seems odd, or ironic(?), that he would be quoting a document that claimed a break with the past (the severing of colonial political ties from England) in order to emphasize the intensity of inherited feeling (from Hester to Pearl).

*sowing broadcast the dragon's teeth whence sprung a harvest of armed enemies:* according to one of the legends of Thebes, after the world had been destroyed by flood

*Luther:* Martin Luther, monk, priest, and theologian. Leader of the Reformation in the German states. Hawthorne's narrator interestingly connects Hester's Puritan gossip with Luther's Catholic critics/enemies.