

PROSE FICTION (ACT)

This passage is adapted from The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne.

5 The truth was that the little Puritans, being of the most intolerant brood that ever lived, had got a vague idea of something outlandish, unearthly, or at variance with ordinary fashions, in the mother and child, and therefore scorned them in their hearts, and not infrequently reviled them with their tongues. Pearl felt the sentiment and requited it with the bitterest hatred that 10 can be supposed to rankle in a childish bosom. These outbreaks of a fierce temper had a kind of value, and even comfort for the mother; because there was at least an intelligible earnestness in the mood, instead of the fitful caprice that so often thwarted her in the child's manifestations. It appalled her, nevertheless, to discern here, again, 15 a shadowy reflection of the evil that had existed in herself. All this enmity and passion had Pearl inherited, by inalienable right, out of Hester's heart. Mother and daughter stood together in the same circle of seclusion from human society; and in the nature of the child seemed to be perpetuated those unquiet elements that had distracted Hester Prynne before Pearl's birth, but had since begun to be soothed away by the softening influences of maternity.

30 At home, within and around her mother's cottage, Pearl wanted not a wide and various circle of acquaintance. The spell of life went forth from her ever-creative spirit, and communicated itself to a thousand objects, as a torch kindles a flame wherever it may be applied. The unlikeliest materials—a stick, a bunch of rags, a flower—were the puppets of Pearl's witchcraft, and, without undergoing any outward change, became spiritually adapted to whatever drama occupied the 40 stage of her inner world. Her one baby-voice served a multitude of imaginary personages, old and young, to talk withal. The pine trees, aged, black, and solemn, and flinging groans and other melancholy utterances on the breeze, needed little transformation to

figure as Puritan elders; the ugliest weeds of the garden were their children, whom Pearl smote down and uprooted most unmercifully. It was wonderful, the vast variety of forms 50 into which she threw her intellect, with no continuity, indeed, but darting up and dancing, always in a state of preternatural activity—soon sinking down, as if exhausted by so rapid and feverish a tide of life—and succeeded by other shapes of a similar wild energy. It was like nothing so much as the phantasmagoric play of the northern lights. In the mere exercise of the fancy, however, and the sportiveness of a growing mind, there 60 might be a little more than was observable in other children of bright faculties; except as Pearl, in the dearth of human playmates, was thrown more upon the visionary throng which she created. The singularity lay in the hostile feelings with which the child regarded all these offsprings of her own heart and mind. She never created a friend, but seemed always to be sowing broadcast the dragon's teeth, whence sprung a harvest of armed 70 enemies, against whom she rushed to battle. It was inexpressibly sad—then what depth of sorrow to a mother, who felt in her own heart the cause—to observe, in one so young, this constant recognition of an adverse world, and so fierce a training of the energies that were to make good her cause in the contest that must ensue.

Gazing at Pearl, Hester Prynne often dropped her work upon her knees, and cried 80 out with an agony which she would fain have hidden, but which made utterance for itself betwixt speech and a groan—"O Father in Heaven—if Thou art still my Father—what is this being which I have brought 85 into the world?" And Pearl, overhearing the ejaculation, or aware through some more subtle channel, of those throbs of anguish, would turn her vivid and beautiful little face upon her mother, smile with sprite-like 90 intelligence, and resume her play.

1. According to the passage, the little Puritans did all of the following to Pearl and Hester EXCEPT:

- A) thought of them as outlandish and unearthly.
- B) reviled them with their tongues.
- C) prayed for their repentance.
- D) scorned them in their hearts.

2. As it is used in line 19, the word *enmity* most nearly means:

- A) hostility.
- B) defiance.
- C) opposition.
- D) forgiveness.

3. Based on the first paragraph (lines 1-28), it can be inferred that, regarding Pearl's behavior, Hester feels:

- A) sympathy toward Pearl and her difficulty with the Puritan children.
- B) horror that Pearl has inherited the evil that she once felt in herself.
- C) isolation because she is raising Pearl alone.
- D) embarrassment at Pearl's hatred of other children.

4. The main point of the second paragraph (lines 29-77) is that:

- A) Pearl used various pieces of nature in her play.
- B) Pearl's play reflected her emotions, particularly her rancor toward others.
- C) Pearl has an active imagination and is very creative.
- D) Pearl's playmates included Puritan elders and children.

5. According to the second paragraph (lines 29-77), Pearl used all of the following items as props for her dramatic play EXCEPT:

- A) trees.
- B) weeds.
- C) rags.
- D) grass.

6. In line 49, the word *wonderful* most nearly means:

- A) astonishing.
- B) admirable.
- C) excellent.
- D) marvelous.

7. In the passage, the author focuses on Pearl's and Hester's:

- A) close mother-daughter relationship.
- B) interactions with other Puritans.
- C) spiritual relationships with God.
- D) internal struggles with emotions.

8. Based on the passage, it can be inferred that:

- A) Pearl's behavior isolated her from all people, including her mother.
- B) Pearl's behavior, though bad, was outshone by her intelligence.
- C) Pearl's behavior separated her from other children, making her mother her only friend.
- D) Pearl's behavior demonstrated creativity, which was recognized by her mother.

9. It can be reasonably inferred from the passage as a whole that, with respect to her relationships with other people, Pearl:

- A) had a secret longing for companionship, especially with other children.
- B) was confused about how to make acquaintances and maintain friendships.
- C) harbored deep hostility and suffered from a reluctance to gain acquaintances.
- D) had a strong desire for attention and friendship that manifested itself in outlandish, attention-seeking behavior.

10. In lines 82-85, when Hester cries out, "O Father in Heaven—if Thou art still my Father—what is this being which I have brought into this world?" she is exhibiting:

- A) confusion about Pearl's playtime actions.
- B) puzzlement over how she can help Pearl.
- C) despair over Pearl's behavior and emotions.
- D) faith in God during a difficult time with Pearl.