**Chapter 4 *The Interview***

After returning to prison, Hester is so upset that the jailer brings a physician to her cell. It is the same man that Hester noticed in the crowd, and the jailer announces that his name is Roger Chillingworth. When Hester and Chillingworth are alone, he turns his attention to Pearl, who is crying and writhing on her trundle bed. He tells Hester that he learned many natural remedies from the Indians while he was their captive. Chillingworth prepares medicine for Pearl and gives it to the baby himself when Hester hesitates. Pearl calms down and goes to sleep. Then Chillingworth prepares another cup of medicine for Hester, but she thinks it may be poison and won’t drink it. He tells her that the best revenge he could have is for her to live and suffer the consequences of her sin. She drinks the cup.

Then he blames himself for thinking that a beautiful young woman like Hester could be happy with an old, deformed man like himself. She responds that she was honest with him because she told him then that she didn’t love him and she never pretended to.

Chillingworth wants to know the name of the man “who has wronged us both,” but Hester refuses to tell. He says that he will find this man by reading his sin on his heart, even if the man hides “himself in outward honor.”

Chillingworth tells her that he doesn’t want to be known as a husband whose wife cheated on him, so she is not to reveal in any way that Chillingworth is her husband. Hester swears an oath that she will keep Chillingworth’s secret as she has kept secret the identity of Pearl’s father. Chillingworth tells her that if she breaks her oath, the fame, position, and life of the unnamed man will be in his hands.

Looking at Chillingworth, Hester asks if he is the Devil in disguise who has come to trick her into a bond that will ruin her soul. Chillingworth replies, “Not thy soul...No, not thine.”

**Chapter 5 *Hester at Her Needle***

Hester is released from jail, and now she must face the ordeal of daily life. No longer an individual, she is instead a symbol of “woman’s frailty and sinful passion,” and when she is buried, the only mark on her gravestone will be the scarlet letter.

It is strange that Hester remains in Boston when she could return to England or to a country in Europe. However, her sin is the chain that binds her to Boston, and that chain will never be broken. Also, although she hides this idea even from herself, she stays because the man she feels married to is in Boston.

Hester moves into an abandoned cottage on the edge of town, far from other houses. She supports herself with her skill at needlework and sewing. Wearing plain clothing herself, Hester dresses Pearl in fanciful scarlet outfits. Part of her time is devoted to sewing for the poor, who insult her when she delivers the clothes to them.

Hester is an outcast, and wherever she goes, people stare and heap scorn upon her, clergymen criticize her, and children mock her. Hester never responds or acknowledges the insults.

**Chapter 6 *Pearl***

As Pearl grows, she becomes more beautiful and intelligent. She is named Pearl because she is “of great price--purchased with all she had--her mother’s only treasure.” Pearl has inherited all of Hester’s defiance and passion and will not comply with rules, so Hester worries about her and tries to teach her about God.

Pearl accompanies her mother everywhere, and people, especially children, are cruel to her, as well. Pearl treats the children with the “bitterest hatred,” throwing stones and screaming at them.

The scarlet letter fascinates Pearl, and sometimes she seems to torment Hester by playing with it. One time Pearl threw flowers at the scarlet letter and danced when she hit it, causing Hester to ask her, “Child, what art thou?” Pearl turned the question back at her mother and asked to know what she is and who sent her. Hester replied that her Heavenly Father sent Pearl, but Pearl said that she has no Heavenly Father. This worried Hester, and she wondered if her child might be “a demon offspring,” as many people in the town believe her to be.

**Chapter 7 *The Governor’s Hall***

Hester goes to Governor Bellingham’s mansion for two reasons: to deliver a pair of gloves she made for him, and to learn whether the rumor that Pearl, now three, will be taken from her is true. The townspeople think that if Pearl is a demon-child, she should be taken away to save Hester, but if Pearl is a human child, she should be taken away to save Pearl.

After they are admitted into the Governor’s mansion, they go into the garden where Pearl begins to cry for a red rose and will not be calmed down. However, when she hears men approaching, her curiosity makes her become silent.

**Chapter 8 *The Elf-Child and the Minister***

Governor Bellingham and Reverend Wilson enter and begin to tease Pearl. They are followed by Chillingworth and Reverend Dimmesdale.

Bellingham asks Hester why Pearl should be allowed to stay with her. Hester replies that she can teach Pearl the lesson she has learned from her shame. Reverend Wilson asks Pearl questions to determine if the child has received religious instruction from Hester, but she refuses to answer his questions and finally tells him that she “had been plucked off the bush of wild roses that grew by the prison-door.” Appalled by Pearl’s response, the governor seems ready to take Pearl away. Desperate, Hester begs Dimmesdale to speak for her and her child. Dimmesdale reminds the men that God sent Pearl to Hester so that the child could be both a curse and a blessing. Convinced by his speech, the governor and Wilson agree that Hester may keep her child. Pearl goes over to Dimmesdale, takes his hand, and lays her cheek against it.

Chillingworth urges the men to find the identity of Pearl’s father, but they refuse, saying that God will reveal his name at the appropriate time.

As Hester and Pearl leave the mansion, Mistress Hibbins, the governor’s “bitter-tempered sister,” invites Hester to go to the forest where there will be a witches’ gathering. Hester tells her that she will not go because she must watch over Pearl. Then she adds that if she had lost Pearl, she would willingly go to the forest and sign her name in the Devil’s book.

**Chapter 9 *The Leech***

Because he wants to pursue his new dark purpose to discover Hester’s secret, Roger Chillingworth presents himself as a physician, having learned about medical science from his studies in the past. Besides his other medical training, he learned natural remedies from the Indians who had captured him. The people welcome and value him, sometimes referring to him as a “leech,” which is a common name for a physician in that era.

The townspeople are very concerned about Dimmesdale, whose health is suffering. He frequently puts his hand over his chest as if his heart pained him.

After a hint from Chillingworth, Dimmesdale’s friends arrange for the minister and Chillingworth to take rooms in a widow’s home so that the physician could keep a closer watch on him. The home is next to a cemetery, so the men often contemplate sin and death. The minister’s room has tapestries on the walls showing the biblical story of David and Bathsheba, while Chillingworth’s room has a laboratory where he can compound drugs and chemicals.

The townspeople at first consider this arrangement to be a miracle of God to help Dimmesdale; however, as time passes, people spread rumors about Chillingworth. They begin to see “something ugly and evil in his face.” Most people believe that Chillingworth is the Devil in disguise, and he has come to “plot against [Dimmesdale’s] soul.”

**Chapter 10 *The Leech and His Patient***

Chillingworth suspects that some trouble in Dimmesdale’s soul is contributing to his declining health, and he mercilessly and relentlessly searches for the truth.

Chillingworth and Dimmesdale discuss confession, redemption, and the idea of keeping sins secret. Dimmesdale says that some men hide their sins because of “the constitution of their nature” or because they want to continue God’s work, even though hiding the sin leads to “unutterable torment.”

As they speak, they hear Pearl’s laughter and see through the window that Pearl is covering the scarlet letter with burrs. When Pearl sees the two men, she draws her mother away, saying that the “Black Man” has already caught the minister, and they must leave before he catches her mother. She adds, “But he cannot catch little Pearl!”

Chillingworth asks if Hester is less miserable because she wears her sin openly, and Dimmesdale says that it is better for the person to show his pain than to “cover it all up in his heart.” Chillingworth tells Dimmesdale that he must be open about his spiritual health if his body is to be healed. Upset, Dimmesdale says that he will not tell Chillingworth about his spiritual troubles and rushes from the room.

Dimmesdale’s behavior strengthens Chillingworth’s suspicions about the minister. A few days later, as Dimmesdale sleeps, Chillingworth sneaks up to him and pushes aside his shirt, where he sees something on Dimmesdale’s chest that causes him to rejoice. He now knows that Dimmesdale is Hester’s partner in adultery and Pearl’s father.

**Chapter 11 *The Interior of a Heart***

Chillingworth makes Dimmesdale the unsuspecting victim of his evil revenge. Dimmesdale begins to hate everything about Chillingworth, but he can determine no rational reason for his feelings, so he ignores them and continues to suffer.

Ironically, even as he suffers guilt, Dimmesdale’s reputation as a minister rises higher and higher. He is considered to be “a miracle of holiness.” This public reverence tortures Dimmesdale even more, especially because “it was his genuine impulse to adore the truth” and hate the lie; therefore, “above all things else, he loathed his miserable self” because he doesn’t have the courage to confess. As punishment, Dimmesdale scourges himself, fasts until his knees tremble, and keeps vigils night after night, during which he meditates on his sin and sees visions.

One night, he thinks of something he can do to give himself some peace. After dressing himself as if he were going to preach, he leaves the house.