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Literature Teaching Unit

Chapter-by-Chapter Study Guide



The Scarlet Pimpernel

by Baroness Orczy

- Learning objectives
- Study Guide with short-answer questions
- Background information
- Vocabulary in context
- Multiple-choice test
- Essay questions
- Literary terms



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The Scarlet Pimpernel

Note to Teacher

The Scarlet Pimpernel is an adventure story which fits beautifully into an interdisciplinary unit. Under the guidance of an English teacher, students could easily connect this novel with *A Tale of Two Cities*, and both novels would enhance the study of the French Revolution in Social Studies. The Theatre teacher could present material on the Comedie Françoise to broaden the students understanding of Marguerite's occupation. Additionally, the students would have a much greater understanding of the novel and the time period if a French teacher discussed or analyzed the idioms used in the book.

All page references come from the Dover Thrift Edition of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, copyright 2002.

Objectives

By the end of the Unit, the student will be able to:

1. identify the genre to which the work belongs
2. define and cite examples of various literary terms, including:
 - Conflict
 - Dynamic Character
 - Foreshadowing
 - Irony
 - Metaphor
 - Mood
 - Plot
 - Setting
 - Simile
 - Static Character
 - Symbol
3. discuss the character of Marguerite and chart the changes she undergoes.
4. understand why the author describes the clothing of the characters in such great detail.
5. compare and contrast the French Revolution and the American Revolution.
6. discuss the inner conflicts of the major characters.
7. infer the author's feelings about the portrayal of Jews in literature.
8. cite examples of irony in the story.
9. explain the importance of the static character of the villain.
10. identify the internal and external conflicts in the story.
11. explain the importance of loyalty in the story.
12. describe third-person narration.
13. discuss the symbol of the pimpernel.
14. identify the author's tone and explain how the tone sets the mood for the story.
15. identify where the author's sympathies lie regarding the French Revolution.
16. identify and discuss the style of this novel.

Questions for Essay and Discussion

1. What is the significance of the title of the book? Why is the book not entitled *Sir Percy*?
2. Why did Sir Percy choose a flower as his signature?
3. Why do you think Sir Percy choose to assume the persona of a fop?
4. Do you think Percy was aware that he was viewed as a fool by society and his wife? Do you think he ever considered revealing his true identity?
5. Why do you think Sir Percy fell in love with Marguerite?
6. Why would Armand not reveal to his sister that he is working with the Scarlet Pimpernel?
7. Before her marriage, Marguerite was an actress. Why would the author assign that particular career to her character?
8. The author gives us a detailed account of Sir Percy's wardrobe. Why would that be important?
9. What do Chauvelin's clothes reveal about him?
10. Marguerite claims to have been tricked into denouncing the M. de St. Cyr. Do you believe her?
11. Why did the author name Sir Percy's schooner *The Day Dream*?
12. The author mentions several times that Marguerite is considered to be the most brilliant woman in Europe. Why is that important? How does that enhance her as a character?
13. Armand was, at one time, an agent for the French government. What do you think changed his mind about the Revolution?
14. Percy was a rich English nobleman. Why do you think he would bother to risk his life for French aristocrats?
15. When the Comtesse de Tournay meets Marguerite in England she is very rude. The Comtesse forbids her daughter, Suzanne, to speak to Marguerite. Do you feel the Comtesse was being fair? Why or why not?
16. At what point in the story did you realize the identity of the Scarlet Pimpernel? Explain how you strung together the facts.

The Scarlet Pimpernel

Note

VOCABULARY

culmination – a collection
disparaging – critical, demeaning
enraptured – captured the imagination
farces – plays in which the action is ridiculous
melodramas – plays that depict exaggerated emotions
penchant – a preference
theatricality – entertaining exaggeration

1. What influenced Baroness Orczy to write?

2. What did she introduce in her early pieces?

3. How many books did Orczy write?

3. Describe Lady Blakeney.

4. How does Lady Blakeney react when she sees the de Tournay family?

5. Which social group did the aristocracy hate above all others and why?

6. Who is Armand St. Just?

7. What was the cause of St. Just's feud?

8. How does the Comtesse de Tournay greet Lady Blakeney?

9. How does Lady Blakeney respond to this encounter?

Chapter VII. The Secret Orchard

VOCABULARY

bereft – stripped of
disillusionment – sadness
exonerated – proven innocent
foreboding – a premonition of the future
ineradicably – steadfast, never changing
lofty – high minded
Utopia – a perfect society
vagaries – flights of fancy, imagination
waning – diminishment, fading

1. How does Sir Percy's absence foreshadow the discovery of the identity of the Scarlet Pimpernel?

2. What was the purpose of the French Revolution?

3. How do Marguerite and Armand feel about the Revolution?
