



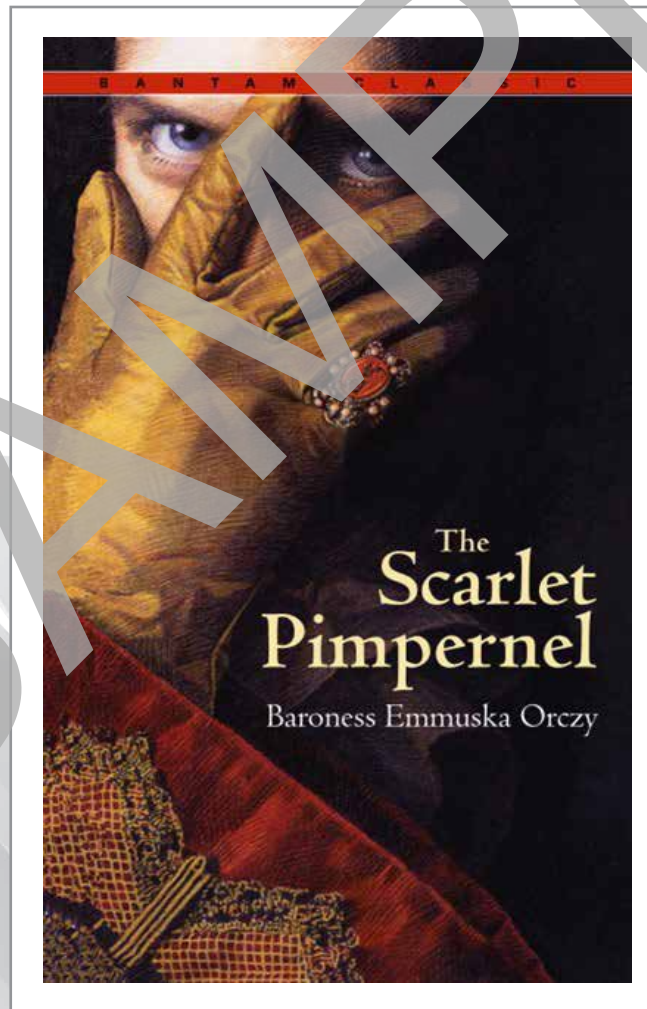
TEACHER GUIDE

GRADES 9-12

COMPREHENSIVE CURRICULUM BASED LESSON PLANS

The Scarlet Pimpernel

Emmuska Orczy



READ, WRITE, THINK, DISCUSS AND CONNECT

The Scarlet Pimpernel

Emmuska Orczy

TEACHER GUIDE

NOTE:

The trade book edition of the novel used to prepare this guide is found in the Novel Units catalog and on the Novel Units website. Using other editions may have varied page references.

Please note: We have assigned Interest Levels based on our knowledge of the themes and ideas of the books included in the Novel Units sets, however, please assess the appropriateness of this novel or trade book for the age level and maturity of your students prior to reading with them. You know your students best!

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Skills and Strategies

Thinking

Brainstorming, compare/
contrast, research

Writing

Compare/contrast, report,
poetry

Literary Elements

Symbolism, simile,
metaphor, allusion,
personification

Listening/Speaking

Discussion, dialogue

Comprehension

Predicting, cause/effect,
sequencing

Other

Geography, music, movie,
drama, current events, art,
language study

Summary of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*

Genre: Historical fiction

Setting: France and England, 1792

Point of View: Third-person omniscient

Themes: Courage, compassion, love, betrayal, loyalty

Conflict: man against man; man against anarchy; husband against wife

Summary: The year is 1792, and France is engulfed in the bloody Reign of Terror in the midst of the Revolution. Daily, “Madame Guillotine” claims more French aristocracy victims. In defiance of the French revolutionaries, one mysterious Englishman rescues numerous men, women and children from the guillotine. His name, the Scarlet Pimpernel, comes from his “calling card,” a small star-shaped flower drawn in red. His archenemy from France, Chauvelin, determines to discover his identity and track him down. A sub-plot reveals the strife between the wealthy Englishman, Sir Percy Blakeney, and his beautiful French-born wife, Marguerite.

About the Author

Personal Information: A Hungarian by birth, Baroness Orczy (pronounced Awr’ tsih) was born in 1865 and died in 1947. Her full name was Emmuska Magdalena Rosalia Marie Josepha Barbara, Baroness Orczy. Her father, Baron Felix Orczy, was a well-known composer and conductor. She received her education in Brussels, Paris and London. Her family moved to London when she was fifteen, and she and illustrator Montagu Barstow were married in 1894.

Career: Baroness Orczy wrote for children’s magazines and authored several children’s books in the 1890s. She wrote her first novel, *The Emperor’s Candlesticks*, in 1899. Her most famous work, *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, was originally rejected by every publisher to whom it was submitted. After she and her husband successfully produced the novel as a play, it was published in book form in 1905. She became a popular writer of romantic and detective tales and wrote several sequels to *The Scarlet Pimpernel*, as well as numerous other works of fiction. None of her other works, however, attained the status and durability of *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

Background Information

Brief explanation of the French Revolution (1789-1799)

Precipitated by a financial crisis that evolved into a movement of reform marked by violence, the Revolution began in Paris when a crowd captured the Bastille, a royal fortress representative of government oppression. Revolutionaries assumed control of the government, introducing the Reign of Terror. Napoleon Bonaparte took over the government in 1799 to end the Revolution.

Attribute Web

Directions: Select a character from the book to tell about using the blocks below.

<i>Who is the character?</i>			
<i>What did the character do?</i>		<i>Why did s/he do it?</i>	
<i>Why is the character's name well chosen?</i>	<i>What is the nature of this character's actions? (reactive, active, important, consequential, secondary)</i>	<i>What is the significance of the book's time and place to the character?</i>	
<i>What is unusual or important about the character?</i>	<i>How does the character change in the story?</i>	<i>Does the character remind you of another character from another book? Who?</i>	<i>Do you know anyone similar to this character?</i>

Chapter 1 (pp. 1-10)

Vocabulary

vengeance (1)

carnage (1)

audacity (5)

precursors (10)

Summary

The retribution against the aristocracy of France, “the knife of the guillotine,” is vividly portrayed. In the midst of the carnage, one Englishman, the Scarlet Pimpernel, and his men are rescuing numerous innocent people from the clutches of death.

Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the meaning of the phrase, “crowd of beings that are human in name only.” [p. 1] (*hate-filled, savage creatures driven by vile passions and a desire for vengeance; take pleasure in watching executions at the guillotine*)
2. What does Sergeant Bibot represent? [p. 3] (*the unrelenting determination of the common people to allow no one to escape and their delight in catching, tormenting and executing French aristocrats*)
3. Discuss the role of the Scarlet Pimpernel and his methods. [p. 5] (*an Englishman who, with his band of men, arranges the escape of many French aristocrats; uses a variety of disguises; leaves his “calling card”—a drawing of a red, star-shaped flower called a scarlet pimpernel*)
4. Discuss the point of view of the “common” people toward the aristocracy. What is the author’s opinion of the commoners? [pp. 1-10] (*Commoners view the aristocracy as traitors whose descendants suppressed and crushed commoners to supply their own lavish lifestyle. Commoners: human in name only; savage; filled with vengeance and hate; delight in viewing deaths at the guillotine; guilty of executing numerous innocent people.*)

Supplementary Activities

1. Locate on map: France, West Barricade, Dover
2. Research actual involvement in the Revolution of Robespierre and Danton. [p. 4]
3. **Literary devices:** symbolism [pp. 1-2] crushed under scarlet heels of dainty buckled shoes and knife of the guillotine; simile [p. 3] Bibot would look at his prey as a cat looks upon the mouse; personification [p. 3] fond embrace of Madame la Guillotine; metaphor [p. 4] Bourbons: right food for the guillotine; alliteration [p. 5] repetition of “s” sound.

Chapter 2 (pp. 11-22)

Vocabulary

insularity (14)

foil (16)

preemptory (18)

equanimity (21)

Summary

The conversation in “The Fisherman’s Rest” reveals the two opinions Englishmen hold toward the French Revolution. Two strangers are obviously interested in the political views of the Englishmen.

Discussion Questions

1. Describe Mr. Jellyband and explain his role. [pp. 13-14] (*prosperous; landlord of “The Fisherman’s Rest,” a place of refuge for aristocrats rescued from execution.*)