

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

The Scarlet Pimpernel

by Baroness Orczy

written by Janice Breen

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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?

1. Describe Sir Percy Blakeney. What kind of a character does he appear to be?

2. Describe Lady Blakeney's belief system.

3. Why were Lady Blakeney's friends in France shocked at her marriage?

4. What does "golden key" mean?

5. What did London society think of this marriage?

Chapter XI. Lord Grenville's Ball

VOCABULARY

amenities – services
amiable – social
annihilated – destroyed
compatriots – fellows; friends
dispersed – sent
entice – to lure
exult – to rejoice
flagrantly – openly
major-domo – a butler; servant
minuet – a popular dance
perchance – perhaps
suffused – covered
suite – a group, companions
unwarrantably – improperly

1. Who is Lord Grenville?

2. Why would Chauvelin expect to be isolated at the ball?

3. How is Chauvelin received by London society?

4. Give three reasons why Chauvelin did not care about the social amenities.

Chapter XIX. The Scarlet Pimpernel

VOCABULARY

ashen – grey
chérie – a term of endearment
devilry – joking
efface – to remove
hindrance – an obstacle
paltry – trivial, unimportant
poignancy – passion
propitiate – to persuade, appease
raiment – clothing
remorse – regret
wary – careful

1. What does Marguerite remember about Chauvelin?

2. Who will help the Comte to escape from France?

3. What does Marguerite finally figure out?

Chapter XXVI. The Jew

VOCABULARY

abject – hopeless
addle – confuse
deign – consent
gaberdine – a type of robe
hors de combat – disabled
interlocutor – a speaker
malicious – wicked
nag – an old horse
nil – nothing

1. This chapter, more so than any other, gives a picture of exactly how evil Chauvelin actually is. Give two examples of Chauvelin's despicable nature.
