



CHAPTER 3

The Guest

The next morning Phoebe woke up to the sound of two birds in the pear tree outside her window. She went down to the kitchen and found Hepzibah reading a cookbook. She held it close to her nose because her eyesight was very poor.

Phoebe, who was very good in the kitchen, made the coffee and cooked something hot for breakfast. There were flowers and three chairs at the breakfast table in the living room.

“Why are there three chairs this morning?” Phoebe asked herself. “And why is Hepzibah behaving so strangely?” The old woman was upset and soon started crying.

“Oh, forgive me, dear child,” said Hepzibah, crying.

“What’s happening?” asked Phoebe.

Hepzibah took the young girl’s hand in her own and said, “He’s

coming! Let him see you first, Phoebe. You’re young and cheerful. He has always liked bright faces! And mine is old now. Pull the curtains so that the sunshine can come in. He likes the light! I can hear him; he’s coming! Whatever happens, be cheerful!”

Hepzibah threw open the door and there was an old man with long gray hair. Was this the man in Hepzibah’s picture?

“Dear Clifford, this is our cousin Phoebe Pyncheon,” said Hepzibah. “She is Arthur’s only child and she is visiting us from the country.”

“I don’t remember Phoebe — Phoebe Pyncheon?” said Clifford, who was confused.

“Come, dear Clifford, take this chair,” said Hepzibah, leading her brother to his place. “Now let’s have breakfast.”

Clifford moved slowly and did not talk much, but he liked the food and the coffee.

Phoebe looked at him carefully and thought, “Yes, it’s the same man I saw in the miniature. But where did he come from?”

“Is this you, Hepzibah?” he said sadly. “How you have changed! Are you angry with me?”

“Angry?” she repeated. “Angry with you, Clifford? Oh, no! There’s nothing but love here. You’re home now!”

Clifford smiled weakly and tasted his coffee.

“More, more!” he cried. “This is what I need! Give me more!”

He drank the coffee, sat back in his chair and looked out of the open window.

“How pleasant! How beautiful! An open window, the sunshine, the flowers. This must be a dream! A dream!”

Clifford had always loved beautiful things, and now he needed them because he had been in prison for the past thirty years. Suddenly his face became sad and Phoebe thought quickly.

“Cousin, here’s a rose from the garden,” she said, giving him a red flower.

“Ah, let me hold it!” he said eagerly. “Thank you, my kind young girl. This rose makes me feel young again.”

He looked around and saw the painting of old Colonel Pyncheon on the wall.

“Hepzibah!” he cried. “Why do you keep that horrible portrait on the wall? He’s the evil man of this house! Take it down!”

“Dear Clifford,” said Hepzibah sadly, “you know I can’t take it down.”

“Then please cover it. I don’t want to see that face!”

A noise came from the shop. It was the shop bell. “Phoebe, please go and see our customer,” Hepzibah said.

She looked at her brother and said, “Clifford, I opened a shop in the front room because we’re very poor. We need money for food.”

“Are we so poor, Hepzibah?” he asked sadly, and he fell asleep in his chair.

Phoebe’s first customer was the schoolboy Ned Higgins. He bought some things for his mother and left. Then a tall gentleman dressed in an expensive black suit came into the shop.

“Excuse me. I’m looking for Miss Hepzibah Pyncheon,” he said smiling. “Do you work here?”

“Yes, I do,” said Phoebe. “I’m Miss Hepzibah’s cousin. I’m visiting her.”

“Her cousin? From the country?” said the gentleman, smiling. “Let me see, you’re... Phoebe Pyncheon, my cousin Arthur’s only child! I’m Judge Pyncheon, your cousin.”



He wanted to kiss Phoebe but she moved back. Why? Then, suddenly, she remembered that he was Judge Pyncheon, the man in Mr Holgrave's daguerreotype. He was the man with old Colonel Pyncheon's face! The old Colonel had been a greedy, cruel man, and the judge had the same characteristics as his ancestor, although he tried to be friendly.

"Is something wrong?" the judge asked. "Are you afraid of anything?"

"Oh, no," Phoebe said nervously. "You came to see cousin Hepzibah. Let me get her for you."

"No, wait a moment, please," said the judge with a friendly voice. "You seem a bit nervous. Perhaps the town air doesn't agree with you. Or is there a strange guest in the house who disturbs you?"

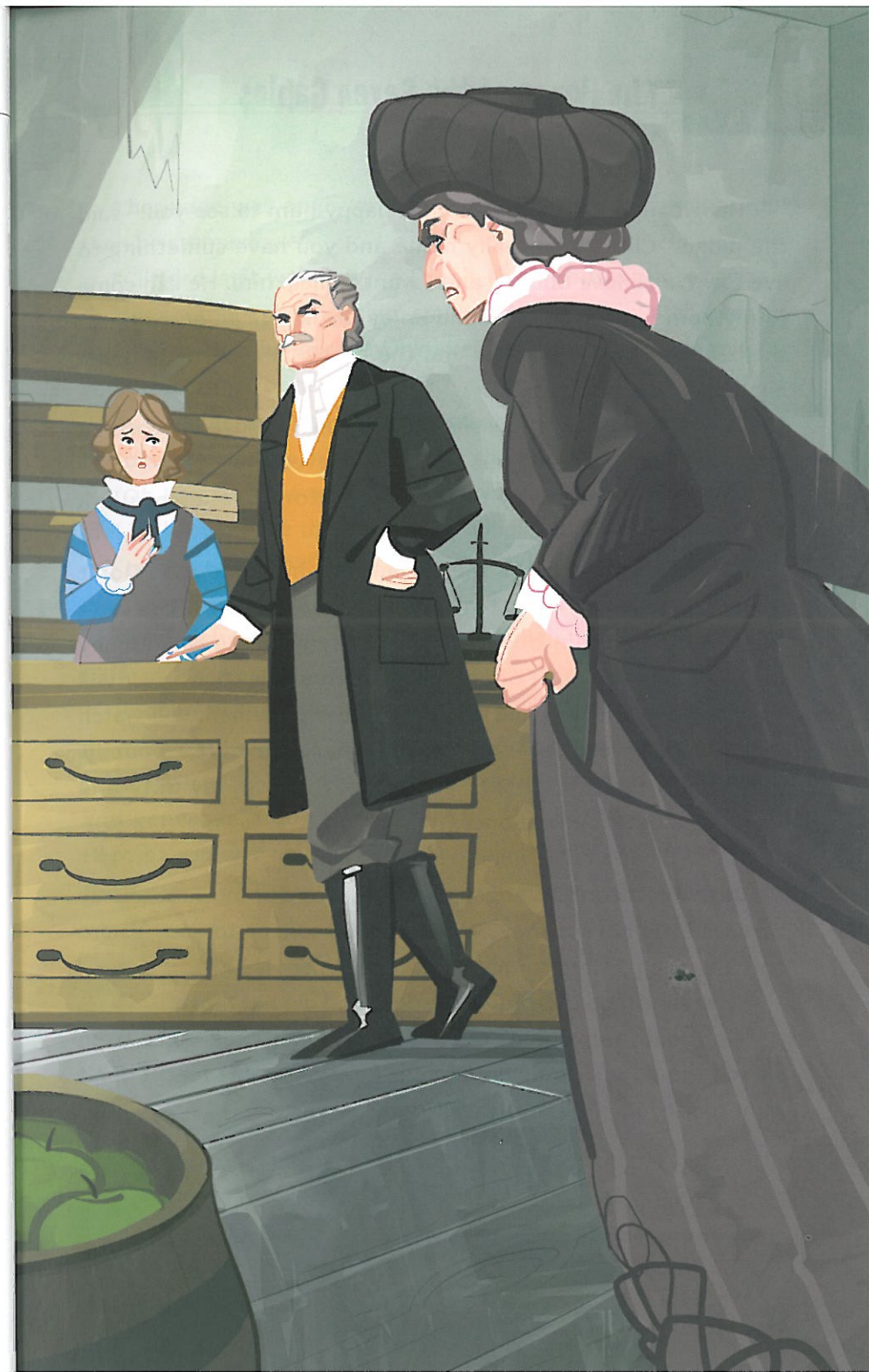
"There aren't any strange guests in the house," said Phoebe. "There's only cousin Hepzibah's brother, Clifford, who is a quiet, gentle man. I'm not afraid of him."

"You're not afraid of Clifford Pyncheon?" the judge asked kindly. "Then you don't know about his past. He did something very bad. We were good friends many years ago. But now I must see him. Where is he?"

"Let me call my cousin Hepzibah," said Phoebe. "I think Clifford's sleeping now."

"No, no, Miss Phoebe!" said Judge Pyncheon with a deep, angry voice. "Stay here! I know this house well and I know Hepzibah and Clifford. I'm at home here and *you're* the stranger. Ah, here is Hepzibah!"

Hepzibah had heard the judge's deep voice and came to the entrance. She looked at him with her small, cold eyes.



"Hepzibah, my dear cousin, how happy I am to see you!" said the judge. "Clifford is finally home and you have something to live for. We all love Clifford and I want to help him. He can come to my home in the country and enjoy his life. I can give him all the beautiful things he likes and the best food. I want to make him happy. Let me see him!"

When Phoebe heard this she wanted to give Judge Pyncheon a kiss. But Hepzibah's face was darker than ever.

"Clifford is not ready to receive visitors," said Hepzibah angrily.

"Visitors? Do you call me a visitor? I'm his cousin. Don't refuse my generous offer. I'm here with an open heart. You can't keep your brother in this dark, old house when he could enjoy the beauty and comfort of my country home. The country air will do wonders¹ for him. And you and I, dear Hepzibah, will watch together and work together, to make our dear Clifford happy. Why should we talk further about what is both my duty and pleasure? Come to me at once!"

"Clifford has a home *here!*" Hepzibah said.

Judge Pyncheon was angry. "Woman, why do you want to stay here? Do you have money? No! Why am I talking to you? You're only a woman. I want to talk to Clifford. Where is he?"

Hepzibah stood in front of the door and did not move.

"Hepzibah! Hepzibah!" cried a weak, frightened voice from behind the door. "Go down on your knees; kiss his feet! I don't want to see him! Please, please!"

1. do wonders : be very good, help.

The judge was angry and took a step towards the door, but then he stopped.

"Clifford isn't well now, so I can't think of insisting. I can talk to him another time," he said, smiling. "But I shall watch over his well-being, as if he were my own beloved brother. I wish only for your acceptance of my kind offer."

As soon as the judge left, Hepzibah's face became white and she put her head on the young girl's shoulder.

"Oh Phoebe," she said. "That man has been the horror of my life! Will I ever have the courage to tell him this?"

"Is he very bad?" asked Phoebe, who was confused. "His offers were generous and kind."

"He doesn't have a heart!" said Hepzibah. "Now go and talk to Clifford. He likes you. I'm going to work in the shop."

Phoebe did not know what to think. "Is the judge an evil man?" she thought. "Can men of his respectability be anything other than correct and fair? He's important and seems to be kind and generous. I don't know what to believe! Perhaps Cousin Hepzibah is just old and bitter, and lives with her memories of the past."

The text and beyond

1 Comprehension check

Answer the following questions.

- 1 Why was Hepzibah disturbed that morning?
- 2 How was Clifford related to Phoebe?
- 3 What sort of things did Clifford admire?
- 4 What did he want Hepzibah to do with the painting on the wall?
- 5 Who did Judge Pyncheon look like?
- 6 What did he offer to do?
- 7 Was his offer accepted?
- 8 What did Hepzibah think of Judge Pyncheon?

2 Vocabulary

A Complete the following sentences. Then put the words in the puzzle.

- 1 The woke Phoebe up in the morning. _ _ _ _ _
- 2 Phoebe coffee for breakfast. _ _ _ _ _
- 3 Hepzibah was that morning. _ _ _ _ _
- 4 There were chairs at the table. _ _ _ _ _
- 5 The guest was a man with long, gray _ _ _ _ _
- 6 Hepzibah was Clifford's _ _ _ _ _
- 7 Phoebe gave Clifford a red _ _ _ _ _
- 8 Phoebe recognized the judge from the _ _ _ _ _
- 9 didn't want the judge to see Clifford. _ _ _ _ _
- 10 Phoebe know what to believe in the end. _ _ _ _ _

B Now complete this sentence with the word hidden in the puzzle.

Clifford had been for thirty years.

3 Sentence transformation

Here are some sentences from Chapter Three. For questions 1-8, complete the second sentence so that it has a similar meaning to the first sentence, using the word given. **Do not change the word given.** You must use between **two** and **five** words, including the word given. There is an example at the beginning (0).

- 0 She held the cookbook close to her nose because her eyesight was very poor.
so
Her eyesight was very poor so she held the cookbook close to her nose.
- 1 The next morning Phoebe woke up to the sound of two birds.
woke
The sound of two birds the next morning.
- 2 "This must be a dream."
has
"Surely this a dream."
- 3 "Why are there three chairs this morning?" Phoebe asked herself.
that
Phoebe asked herself why morning.
- 4 "This is our cousin Phoebe Pyncheon," said Hepzibah.
introduce
"..... our cousin Phoebe Pyncheon," said Hepzibah.
- 5 "Come, dear Clifford, take this chair," said Hepzibah.
down
"Come, dear Clifford, and, " said Hepzibah.
- 6 "You know I can't take it down."
allowed
"You know take it down."
- 7 "Is something wrong?"
matter
"What's,?"
- 8 "Will I ever have the courage to tell him this?"
brave
"Will to tell him this?"

4 Speaking

Work in pairs. Act out the conversation between Judge Pyncheon and Hepzibah in the shop.

Student A: You are Judge Pyncheon.

Student B: You are Hepzibah.

5 Writing

You are Phoebe. Write a note to your mother about this morning's events. In your note remember to:

- tell her about Hepzibah's behavior
- tell her about the guest
- tell her about Judge Pyncheon

6 Discussion

What's your opinion of Judge Pyncheon in this chapter? Why?

Before you read**1 Reading pictures**

In the story so far, we have been introduced to Hepzibah, Mr Holgrave, Judge Pyncheon, Phoebe and Clifford. Look at the pictures on pages 56/57 and 59. Who can you see in the pictures? Describe them. What are they doing? Do they look happy or sad?

If the pictures were scenes from today, how different would the people look in appearance, clothes, etc.? Would they be doing the same type(s) of activity/activities in the pictures? If not, suggest what they could be doing.

2 Discussion

What do you think the relationship between Phoebe and Clifford will be like?



CHAPTER 4

Clifford and Phoebe

For years Hepzibah had looked forward to spending her life with the brother she loved so dearly. She had waited patiently for him and now she wanted to make his life warm and happy. She opened an old bookcase and took out several books that she had enjoyed reading many years before. She tried reading to Clifford, but he wasn't interested in the books and he did not like the sound of her hoarse¹ voice. She tried to find other things to interest Clifford, but he was not grateful and that made her sad.

But, worst of all, Clifford did not like Hepzibah's appearance. She had never been beautiful, but now with age and sadness, she was ugly and bitter. Clifford did not like her old dress and

beauty.

the flow.

at birth.

1. **hoarse** : rough and unclear.



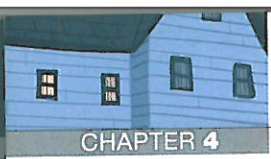
turban,² her strange ways and her angry look. He liked beautiful things and Hepzibah knew it. She wanted to improve her appearance with some ribbons on her turban but she knew that it wouldn't change anything. Therefore, she turned to Phoebe, who was young, lovely and cheerful.

To Clifford, Phoebe represented all women, with her youth, beauty, and laughter. Phoebe gave him the warmth and attention that he had lacked throughout his life ~~his life~~ and Clifford was content just to know that she was near.

2. **turban** : a kind of head wear made from a long piece of cloth which is wrapped around the head many times.

As the days passed Phoebe's presence became necessary to the daily lives of Clifford and Hepzibah. She brought hope and beauty to the dark old house with its curse and its ghosts.

Clifford liked to sleep late in the morning, so Hepzibah stayed with him while Phoebe worked in the shop. There were always more customers in the shop during the morning hours because Phoebe was there. In the afternoons Hepzibah worked in the shop and Phoebe stayed with Clifford. She often took him into the garden, where they talked about flowers and things of beauty. Clifford had forgotten about the wonders of nature – the flowers, the vegetables, the birds – but he rediscovered



The House of the Seven Gables

CHAPTER 4

them. Phoebe also read to him with her musical voice. It was not easy for Phoebe to understand this child-like man with a mysterious and terrible past and no future — all he had was the present.

On Sundays in the summer, Phoebe, Hepzibah, Clifford, Mr Holgrave and Mr Venner always met in the garden, and enjoyed the flowers, the sunshine and the conversation.

One Sunday, while they were all talking in the garden, Mr Venner said, “Miss Hepzibah, I’d like you to come and visit my house in the country.”

“Mr Venner is always talking about his house in the country,” said Clifford.

“Everyone would like to have a house in the country!” said Phoebe.

Phoebe and Clifford did not always go to the garden. Sometimes Phoebe used to take him upstairs to a room with a big window. Phoebe wanted him to look at life outside the House of the Seven Gables. The window looked down onto the street. Phoebe opened it and Clifford watched the street. He spent a lot of time sitting by this window and he saw how everything was different in Pyncheon Street now. He saw people coming and going and children playing games. He liked children because he was like a child. The noise of the train frightened him, but other things made him smile.

When the organ grinder made music in the street, Clifford was delighted and said, “I can hear music! Beautiful music!” The organ grinder had a monkey on his shoulder. It went up to the people and held out its hat waiting for them to give it some





money. Clifford moved closer to the window because he wanted to see the people walking to the sound of the music.

“Now I’m going to walk with them,” Clifford decided. He stood in front of the open window and started to climb out. When Hepzibah saw him she screamed and Phoebe pulled him back. Hepzibah started crying.

“Clifford, are you mad?” cried his sister.

“I don’t know,” Clifford said calmly. “I wanted to walk with the people.” Clifford needed to be part of human life. Up until now he had just been a frightened spectator.³

One Sunday morning Phoebe was getting ready to go to church. The church bells were ringing loudly, calling out to the people. When Phoebe went out, Clifford and Hepzibah were sitting at the window watching her and the neighbors walk towards the church. Phoebe turned around and waved at them.

“Hepzibah, do you ever go to church?” asked Clifford.

“No, Clifford,” she replied. “I haven’t been for many, many years.”

“I’d like to go to church because other people are there. I think I could pray with them,” said Clifford.

Hepzibah looked into his eyes and she suddenly felt great affection for her brother. She wanted to take his hand and go to church to be among people and with God again after so many years. She said, “Dear brother, let’s go. We don’t belong anywhere, but let’s join the others and pray.”

So they put on their best old clothes and went downstairs together. They opened the front door and took a step outside. They felt that the whole world was watching them. They could not take another step.

3. **spectator** : a person who watches other people doing things.

“It’s too late, Hepzibah,” said Clifford sadly. “We’re ghosts! We can’t live among human beings, because we would frighten them. If we had lived like human beings all these years, we would have walked down the street like everyone else. But now we can only live in this old house with Maule’s curse on it.”

Hepzibah understood her brother. They went back home and closed the door. Now the house seemed much gloomier than before.

However, Clifford was not always unhappy. He enjoyed sitting at the window and watching the children play. He dreamed a lot about when he was a child and sometimes he told Hepzibah and Phoebe about his dreams. One afternoon he decided to blow soap bubbles.⁴ He had often blown soap bubbles with his sister when they were children. So he began blowing soap bubbles happily at the window just as Judge Pyncheon was passing by.

“Cousin Clifford!” he said. “Still blowing soap bubbles!” The judge’s comment frightened Clifford and he felt weak and confused.

4. **blow soap bubbles** :



The text and beyond

FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-6, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

- What do we learn about Hepzibah in this chapter?
 - She wanted to buy some new books for Clifford.
 - She started to buy beautiful things for Clifford.
 - She wanted to look after Clifford and cheer him up.
 - She wanted to sing to Clifford.
- What did Clifford think of Phoebe?
 - She was boring.
 - She was affectionate and feminine.
 - She was cold and ugly.
 - She only thought about herself.
- What do we learn about Mr Venner?
 - He invited Hepzibah to his country house.
 - He offered to take Clifford to church.
 - He played organ music.
 - He read many books.
- How does Clifford behave in this chapter?
 - He wants to make new friends.
 - He is able to act very reasonably.
 - He shows that he has problems adjusting to the world.
 - He wants to show the others that his prison experience has made him strong.
- Why didn't Hepzibah and Clifford get to church?
 - They were too tired to go out.
 - They decided to watch the children playing in the street.
 - They wanted to listen to the organ grinder.
 - They realized there was no life for them outside the old house.

- 6 How did Judge Pyncheon affect Clifford?

- He scared him.
- He made him laugh.
- He encouraged him to blow soap bubbles.
- He made him feel like a happy young child again.

“If we had lived like human beings all these years, we could have walked down the street like everyone else”

In the above sentence, Clifford says that he and Hepzibah had not lived like human beings in the past and therefore they could not now behave in the same way as everyone else.

We use the third conditional when we talk about past situations which can't now be changed. We imagine what would have happened if things had been different.

If and past perfect, + *would/could/might* + *have* + past participle in the main clause

e.g. *If the exam had been shorter, I would have finished it.*

2 The third conditional

Write out the following sentences in the third conditional.

- Hepzibah/not have such a hoarse voice/Clifford/be happy for her to read to him
- Phoebe/not be young and beautiful/she/not represent all women to Clifford
- Phoebe/not work in the shop/there be few customers
- Clifford/not like beautiful things/Phoebe/know what to discuss with him
- window/be closed/Clifford/not start to climb out
- it be winter/Phoebe and the others/not sit in the garden