



CHAPTER 1

The Old Pyncheon Family

The House of the Seven Gables was an old, wooden house on Pyncheon Street in a New England town. Its seven gables seemed to reach up to the sky and a large elm tree stood outside the door. The house, also known as Pyncheon House, had a long, dark history. Although it was a very old house, it was not the first house on that location. At the end of the seventeenth century Pyncheon Street was known as Maule's Lane, because Matthew Maule had built a small, simple hut there. He was a wizard and practiced witchcraft,¹ which was a crime in the Puritan community.

Colonel Pyncheon was a clever and powerful man in town. He

1. **witchcraft** : the use of magic powers, especially bad ones.

liked Matthew Maule's property and wanted it for himself, but Maule refused to sell it to him. The Colonel was a very determined man and Maule was very stubborn so the disagreement lasted for a long time. After several years, Colonel Pyncheon accused Matthew Maule of witchcraft and decided to hang² him. It was a horrible death sentence. On the day of the hanging all of the important people from the town came to watch and cried out passionately against witchcraft. Colonel Pyncheon was there sitting on his horse shouting loudly too. Matthew Maule pointed a finger at him and said, "God will give him blood to drink!" This was Maule's curse, which followed the Pyncheon family for centuries.

After Maule's death Colonel Pyncheon built a huge family home where Maule's small hut had been. The townspeople couldn't understand why he wanted to build a house on a place which was cursed. But the Colonel was a determined man and he began living there.

One day when the governor went to visit Colonel Pyncheon, he found him dead in his study. The Colonel was sitting at his desk with a pen in his hand and some letters and other papers in front of him. There was blood on his beard, shirt collar and neck. The doctor said he had died of a heart attack, but people talked about murder since the window near the Colonel's chair was open and a man was seen running away.

The Pyncheon family became less important over the years. Most of the Colonel's family were not happy about owning the House of the Seven Gables, because they knew about Maule's curse.

2. **hang** :



The House of the Seven Gables

CHAPTER 1

At the time of our story, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, a direct descendant of Colonel Pyncheon, was a rich and important member of society. He was similar to his ancestor because he was a clever and powerful politician. There were few other Pyncheons left: a seventeen year old girl, a murderer who was in prison and his sister.

Hepzibah Pyncheon was about sixty years old and had never married. Her old, pale face always had an angry expression because she could not see well. She lived alone in the House of the Seven Gables, except for a young artist who was a lodger³ in one of the gables. Through the years the house and its furniture had become old and broken. It had a life and secrets of its own.

Hepzibah had lived alone for almost twenty-five years and she had never worked or socialized with other people. She now needed money and decided to open a shop on the ground floor of the house, where one of her ancestors had also had a shop. She had cleaned the shelves and floor of the old shop and had some flour, sugar, apples, soap and other things to sell. Working was a loss of dignity for her, and dignity was the only thing that remained in her life. One morning, before opening the shop for the first time, she opened a secret drawer and looked at a miniature of a young man. Tears filled her eyes. Then she went to the dark living room where she stopped to look at a portrait of old Colonel Pyncheon.

Finally she opened the shop, letting in the sunlight for the first time in many years. It wasn't long before her first

3. **lodger** : person who pays rent to live in someone else's house.





customer arrived. It was Mr Holgrave, the young lodger, who offered to help Hepzibah with her preparations. Mr Holgrave was a thin man with a brown beard and a short brown moustache. He was a daguerreotype⁴ artist and took pictures of people.

“Oh, Mr Holgrave, I simply can’t do this. I’m too old and I’m only a woman. I’ve been living here for twenty-five years and I’ve never worked! I’d rather be dead than working here,” said Hepzibah, and she started crying.

“Oh, no!” the young man said. “This is a lucky day for you. Work is important because it gives life a purpose. I wasn’t born a gentleman. I’ve always worked and I’m happy about it.”

Holgrave wanted to buy some biscuits, but Hepzibah would not accept money from her only friend. He took the biscuits and left. Hepzibah felt happier, for a short time.

The shop door opened again and Ned Higgins, a young schoolboy, came in. He wanted a biscuit but Hepzibah did not accept money from her customer. He came back again and asked for another biscuit, and this time Hepzibah took his money — one cent. For the first time in her life she had earned one cent.

In the afternoon a tall, well-dressed old gentleman stopped outside the shop window and smiled at Hepzibah, but he did not come in. It was her cousin, Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon, and she did not like him because he looked like her ancestor, Colonel Pyncheon, whose portrait was hanging in the living room. She felt angry after seeing him.

4. **daguerreotype** : one of the first kinds of photographs.

Mr Venner, a strange old man, came to visit the shop. He was well-known in the town and Hepzibah had known him for many years. “I’m glad to see that you’re working, Hepzibah! It’s good for you. And remember that you should smile at the customers, too. It’s important!”

How could she smile when she was so terribly unhappy!

“When is he coming home?” Mr Venner asked.

“Who?” asked Hepzibah with a white face.

“Ah, you don’t want to talk about it. That’s alright, but everyone in town is talking. I remember him, you know. Well, goodbye, Hepzibah.”

More customers came into the shop during the afternoon but Hepzibah made a lot of mistakes and at the end of the day’s business there was very little money.

That evening, after Hepzibah had closed the shop for the day, a young girl knocked at the front door of the old house.

“Who could it be?” thought Hepzibah. “I’m not expecting anyone.”

She opened the door and saw her cousin Phoebe, a pretty young girl with a bright smile. She lived in the country in New England and was part of the Pyncheon family.

“Cousin Phoebe! What are you doing here?”

“Didn’t you receive my letter?” said Phoebe. “I’ve come to visit you for a week or two.”

“Please come in, little Phoebe,” said Hepzibah. “You can stay for tonight, but this isn’t the right place for you. You’re young and cheerful, but this house is dark and cold and... sad. And I’m just an old woman.”



"Oh, cousin Hepzibah, I want to work and help you with many things."

"I know you're a good girl, but I must ask the master of the house about this."

"Who is the master of the house?" Phoebe asked.



"Have you ever heard of Clifford Pyncheon? He's my brother!"

"Yes, I've heard that name, but isn't he dead?"

"Perhaps he was," Hepzibah said sadly, "but in this old house dead people return!"

The text and **beyond**

FCE 1 Comprehension check

For questions 1-7, choose the answer (A, B, C or D) which you think fits best according to the text.

- 1 The House of the Seven Gables
 - A was the location of a hanging.
 - B had a long history.
 - C was built for a wizard to practice witchcraft in.
 - D was built when Colonel Pyncheon bought land from Matthew Maule.

- 2 Matthew Maule was hanged because
 - A he killed a member of the Pyncheon family.
 - B the Pyncheon family had put a curse on him.
 - C he lived on Colonel Pyncheon's property.
 - D Colonel Pyncheon wanted his property and accused him of witchcraft.

- 3 Which member of the Pyncheon family was most similar to Colonel Pyncheon?
 - A Hepzibah Pyncheon
 - B a convicted murderer
 - C Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon
 - D a 17-year-old girl

- 4 Hepzibah Pyncheon was
 - A the sister of a man who was in prison.
 - B a widow.
 - C the wife of a judge.
 - D a wealthy and distinguished member of society.

- 5 Hepzibah decided to open a shop
 - A to show her cousin she was a good shopkeeper.
 - B because she loved the company of other people.
 - C because she thought work gave life a purpose.
 - D because she was poor.

- 6 Which customer gave Hepzibah advice on how to behave in the shop?
 - A Mr Holgrave
 - B Ned Higgins
 - C Mr Venner
 - D Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon

- 7 Why did Phoebe arrive at the house?
 - A She had come to visit her cousin.
 - B Hepzibah had invited her.
 - C Mr Holgrave had invited her.
 - D She had received a letter from Clifford Pyncheon asking her to come.

2 Characters

Read the descriptions. Which characters from Chapter One do they refer to?

- 1 He/She put a curse on the Pyncheon family.
.....
- 2 He/She was found dead in the study.
.....
- 3 He/She was rich and powerful.
.....
- 4 He/She couldn't see very well.
.....
- 5 He/She took pictures of people.
.....
- 6 He/She spent one cent in the shop.
.....
- 7 He/She was a strange, old person.
.....
- 8 He/She was young and happy.
.....

3 Opposites

A Find the opposites of these words in Chapter One and then look for them in the word square.

agreed alive enemy generous poor powerless
sad short unlucky weak young

A	C	D	P	O	W	E	R	F	U	L
U	G	F	R	I	E	N	D	H	I	R
O	L	U	C	K	Y	P	S	Q	S	E
L	T	R	D	U	V	Z	T	X	Y	F
D	E	T	E	R	M	I	N	E	D	U
A	B	U	A	C	D	E	R	H	F	S
G	H	N	D	I	J	K	F	A	L	E
W	E	A	L	T	H	Y	E	P	M	D
N	O	T	A	L	L	P	E	P	Q	R
S	T	E	G	R	E	E	D	Y	W	T

B Would you classify the words in the square above as good, neutral or bad? Compare your answers with a partner. Do you agree? Why/why not?

good	neutral	bad

4 Adjectives

Find the adjectives in Chapter One which describe the appearance and personality of the following characters.

- 1 Colonel Pyncheon
- 2 Hepzibah Pyncheon
- 3 Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon
- 4 Phoebe Pyncheon

5 Speaking

Work in pairs. Choose one of the characters from activity 4 and describe him/her to your partner without saying his or her name. Your partner must name the character. Then swap roles.

6 Discussion

Who do you think Mr Venner is referring to in the following quote?

“When is he coming home?’ Mr Venner asked.”

FCE 7 Writing

You have received an email from your English-speaking friend, Jack, who is planning to open a shop. Read Jack’s email and the notes you have made. Then write an email to Jack, using all your notes. Write your answer in 120-150 words in an appropriate style.

The screenshot shows an email window titled "New Message". The header includes "From: Jack Thompson", "Sent: 22nd November 2008", and "Subject: Shop". The email body contains the following text:

I've finally decided to change jobs and open a shop selling traditional things from all over the world. I'd like to come to your country for some ideas. When can I come to see you?

Do you have any suggestions of any typical objects that people generally buy when they're on holiday in your country?

I'd like to see some shops which sell these types of traditional objects. Can you recommend one?

Will you be free to come to the grand opening of the shop in February?

Please write back soon.

Jack

Handwritten notes and red circles are present:

- "Make suggestions" with a red circle around "suggestions" in the second paragraph.
- "Say when and why" with a red circle around "When can I" in the first paragraph.
- "Yes, give details" with a red circle around "Will you be free" in the fifth paragraph.
- "No, because..." with a red circle around "Will you be free" in the fifth paragraph.

Before you read



1 Listening

Listen to the first part of Chapter Two. For questions 1-6, choose the best answer – A, B or C.

- Why did Phoebe go into the garden to pick some white roses?
 - They reminded her of her garden at home.
 - She wanted to make her room look more cheerful.
 - Hepzibah had asked her to do so.
- What did Hepzibah show Phoebe?
 - a small picture of her brother
 - a small picture of a child
 - a small picture of her ancestor, Colonel Pyncheon
- When did the shop bell ring?
 - while Phoebe was in the garden
 - while Phoebe and Hepzibah were looking at a picture
 - while Phoebe and Hepzibah were having breakfast
- What was Phoebe good at in the shop?
 - selling tea
 - serving people
 - ringing the shop bell
- What was Phoebe's reaction when she saw Colonel Pyncheon's portrait?
 - She didn't like it.
 - She liked it immediately.
 - She was frightened by it.
- What did Phoebe learn about Alice Pyncheon?
 - She had escaped from the house and no one saw her again.
 - She had worked in a shop.
 - She had died mysteriously.



CHAPTER 2

Young Phoebe

The pale morning light woke Phoebe up. For a moment she didn't know where she was, but then she remembered as she looked around the room at the heavy curtains and tall, uncomfortable-looking chairs. She got up, went to the window and looked down at the garden, where she saw a tall rose bush. The wonderful smell of roses came in through her window.

"What a beautiful garden! I want to look after it," she thought.

She got dressed and went to the garden, where she picked some white roses for her room. She moved the furniture around, opened the window and let the morning light in. The room, which had been gloomy,¹ suddenly looked bright and cheerful.

1. gloomy : sad, dark.

She was ready to go downstairs again when Hepzibah called her. "Cousin Phoebe, come to my room!" Phoebe went to her room.

"I don't think it's a good idea for you to stay here with me," Hepzibah said. "This house is too sad for a young person."

"But, dear cousin," Phoebe replied, "I think that we'd live together very happily."

"You'd waste away your young days and anyway *I* can't decide who lives at Pyncheon house. Its master is coming!" Hepzibah said and she showed Phoebe a small picture of a handsome young man.

"He has the sweet face of a child!" said Phoebe.

"He's Clifford Pyncheon," said Hepzibah.

They went downstairs to the kitchen, where Phoebe made breakfast. The young girl worked well in the kitchen and Hepzibah was pleased.

During breakfast the shop bell rang and Hepzibah put down her cup of tea.

"Oh, don't trouble yourself, cousin Hepzibah," said Phoebe with a cheerful smile. "I'll be the shopkeeper today."

"You!" said Hepzibah. "What can a country girl know about a shop?"

"You'll see how well I do!" said Phoebe as she walked out of the kitchen.

Hepzibah watched Phoebe working hard in the shop. She could see that Phoebe was a much better shopkeeper than she was. She said, "My dear cousin, you're good in the shop and you're good in the kitchen, so you can stay!"

"Oh, thank you, cousin Hepzibah!" said Phoebe.

Hepzibah looked at her young cousin and thought, "She's not an educated lady, but she's a nice girl."

Phoebe worked in the shop all day with customers that came



and went. When the shop closed for the night, she said, "Cousin, we need biscuits, fruit, toys and candy. We've sold a lot today. Look at the mountain of coins!"

Whilst Phoebe was counting the coins, Hepzibah said, "Well done! You're a good worker, Phoebe!"

"Yes, well done! Well done!" said Mr Venner, who was in the shop for the third or fourth time that day. "What a clever girl. You are lucky, Hepzibah, to have such a bright, young worker."

"Yes! Phoebe is a nice girl," replied Hepzibah. "But, Mr Venner, you've known the family a great many years. Can you tell me whether there ever was a Pyncheon like her?"

"I don't believe there ever was," answered the old man. "Or if there was, it never was my luck to see them. I've seen a lot of the world and I never knew anyone to work so well as this child Phoebe does!"

That evening Hepzibah showed her young cousin around the gloomy house and told her of the ancient curse and other family legends. Phoebe saw the old portrait of Colonel Pyncheon, which she immediately disliked because of his cruel face.

Hepzibah told Phoebe about beautiful Alice Pyncheon, who had lived there a century before, and who had loved the white flowers in the garden. Alice, whose ghost now haunted² the House of the Seven Gables, died mysteriously, perhaps because of the curse.

Then Hepzibah began talking about Mr Holgrave and his strange friends. "You know, Phoebe, I think he practices black magic in his room. I'm afraid of him."

2. **haunted** : (when referring to a ghost) was present.

"But if you think he is dangerous, why don't you send him away?" asked Phoebe.

"I have thought about it, but he's a kind person and he's the only friend I have."

One day after tea, Phoebe went to the garden and looked at the flowers and vegetables that were growing in the black earth. It was clear that someone looked after the garden.

"I wonder who works here?" said Phoebe, talking to herself. "It certainly isn't cousin Hepzibah."

"It's me," said the voice of a man behind her.

She turned around and saw a handsome young man.

"Hello, my name's Holgrave. I live in one of the gables and I like working in the garden when I have time."

"My name's Phoebe Pyncheon. Are you a gardener?"

"No, but I like nature and it's refreshing to work here. I'm a daguerreotype artist. I take pictures of people. Daguerreotypes bring out the secret character of a person; a painting can't do that."

He took a daguerreotype miniature³ out of his pocket. Phoebe looked at it and said, "I know that face because its cold eyes follow me all day. It's my Puritan ancestor whose portrait is in the living room. You copied it without its black cap and gray beard, and you gave it modern clothes. But I don't think he looks any better with your changes."

3. **daguerreotype miniature** : a very small photograph.

“No, I didn’t copy it. This miniature is the picture of a member of your family who is still living. He looks like a kind, friendly man, but the miniature shows his true nature. Look at his eyes and his mouth. He’s cold and evil.”

Holgrave and Phoebe worked together in the garden until it was almost dark.

“It’s time to stop working,” said Holgrave. “Goodnight, Miss Phoebe Pyncheon. One day, if you put a flower in your hair and come to my studio in Central Street, I’ll take a picture of you.”

Phoebe went into the dark house and found her cousin sitting in the living room. “Shall I light a lamp, cousin Hepzibah?”

“Yes, if you please, dear child,” answered Hepzibah. Phoebe lit the lamp but the corners of the room were still dark. She thought she heard a strange voice coming from one of the dark corners.

“Cousin,” said Phoebe, “did you speak to me just now?”

“No, Phoebe,” said Hepzibah. “Please go to bed now. You must be very tired.” She kissed her young cousin and this pleased Phoebe.

“Goodnight, Cousin,” said Phoebe. She went to bed but did not sleep well that night. She could hear heavy footsteps on the stairs outside her room and Hepzibah’s voice.

The text and beyond

1 Comprehension check

What happened in Chapter Two? Are these sentences true (T) or false (F)? Correct the false ones.

- | | T | F |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1 When Phoebe woke up she was a bit confused at first. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2 She immediately liked the atmosphere in her room. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3 She thought Clifford looked very serious in the miniature. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4 Phoebe was very useful to Hepzibah on her first day. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5 Hepzibah had a great number of friends. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6 Mr Holgrave was able to look at people’s secret characters. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7 Mr Holgrave showed Phoebe a picture of one of her relatives. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8 Phoebe’s sleep was disturbed that night. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

2 Vocabulary

Use the clues to complete this crossword.

Across

- Beautiful flowers which are a symbol of love.
- A small picture of a person.
- Tables, chairs, beds, etc. belong to this group.

Down

- A person who buys something in a shop.
- A painting representing a person, often showing just the face.
- Matthew Maule put this on Colonel Pyncheon.

