

## Literature Guide

### *The Scarlet Pimpernel* by Baroness Orczy

#### Chapter 1

1. What is the setting of this book? Paris. September 1792, French Revolution
2. What was the French Revolution about? The peasants rose up above the aristocracy and killed them by means of the guillotine
3. How were the aristocrats trying to escape? By disguising themselves as peasants as they tried to escape to England
4. Who was Sergeant Bibbot? One of the republicans who searched out aristocrats in disguise. He guarded the West Barricade
5. Who was Citoyen Fouquier-Tinville? A patriot who presided over the Committee of Public Safety (a group who sentenced the aristocrats who tried to escape)
6. What is a Scarlet Pimpernel? A star-shaped flower
7. What rumor was causing grief among the Committee? That a group of Englishmen were helping aristocrats escape to England, very successfully
8. Who was spreading this rumor? Someone who signed the notes with a Scarlet Pimpernel
9. Why did Citoyen Gropierre go to the guillotine? He let an entire family escape via a cart driven by the Scarlet Pimpernel himself
10. What did the French citizens think of the guillotine? They thought it was great amusement and fun to watch. Why do you think that is?
11. How did the old Hag trick Bibbot into letting her leave? He saw her there a few days before. She seemed to be enjoying the guillotine. She mentioned small-pox and taunted the guard that he was afraid of it.
12. Who was the old Hag and what was she carrying? The Scarlet Pimpernel (SP). The Comtesse de Tournay and her two children

#### Chapter 2

1. The setting changes in this chapter, describe it. A pub The Fishermen's Rest in Dover, England
2. Who is Mr. Hempseed? A frequent visitor at the pub
3. Who is Sally? Mr. Jellyband's, the owner, daughter
4. Who takes the side of the French aristocrats? Mr. Jellyband

#### Chapter 3

1. Although it is not explicit, who can we assume are the foreign visitors? Refugee aristocrats from France
2. Who is Lord Anthony? An English gentleman somehow connected to the SP

3. Why was he concerned about the two strangers? He was bringing in the refugees and didn't want to be discovered

#### **Chapter 4**

1. What was the Comtesse most worried about? The safety of her husband and his arrival in England
2. Describe the SP and his team. A man who did not want to be identified. Sir Anthony and Sir Andrew were both on his team. Would send a letter to Fouquier-Tinville every time they helped someone escape.
3. How many worked for the SP? 19
4. Why did they help the French, according to Sir Anthony? For the thrill of it
5. What did the Comtesse reveal about Marguerite St. Just? Most fashionable woman in London, married to Sir Percy. She turned in the de St. Cyr family to the tribunal

#### **Chapter 5**

1. Why didn't the Comtesse want to see Marguerite? Because she turned in the de St. Cyr family. She considered her one of the enemy.
2. Describe Marguerite? Beautiful, regal, tall, 25
3. How did Marguerite know Suzanne? They were school chums
4. How did the Comtesse insult Marguerite? She told Suzanne she could not speak to her
5. How did Suzanne respond? She ran up and hugged Marguerite
6. How did Marguerite respond? She mocked the Comtesse and made fun of her

#### **Chapter 6**

1. Describe Sir Percy. Handsome, tall, massively built, a perpetual silly laugh, late 20's, very wealthy, friend of the Prince of Wales
2. Why was everyone so surprised Marguerite married Sir Percy? He was very dull and she was very interesting. It happened so quickly. His mother was an imbecile. So people thought he was stupid too.
3. How did Marguerite feel about Sir Percy? She had good natured contempt for him. She sharpened her ready wit at his expense.

#### **Chapter 7**

1. Who came to the Fishermen's Wharf? Armand, Marguerite's brother
2. Where was he going? To France
3. Why did Percy have contempt for her wife according to Marguerite? He found out that she played a role in sending the de St. Cyr to the guillotine
4. Why did Marguerite marry Sir Percy? Because he worshipped her. He loved her so much.

#### **Chapter 8**

1. Why did Marguerite hate the Marquis de St. Cyr? Her brother was in love with his daughter. He sent her a poem and the Marquis had him thrashed for his impudence in talking to an aristocrat, him being a plebian
2. How did she get him sent to the guillotine? She dropped some information to her friends which ended up getting him convicted, arraigned for treason, and sent to the guillotine
3. How did Marguerite feel after that? Horrified. She didn't mean for that to happen
4. Who did Marguerite happen upon on her way back to the Fisherman's Rest? Chauvelain, a man she knew from Paris
5. What did she say plagued her? Boredom. What was his remedy? Work. Spying for the French Republican and trying to figure out any information on the SP
6. How did Marguerite respond? No, she had a soft heart and affection for the SP because of his bravery

### **Chapter 9**

1. What were Sir Andrew and Lord Antony discussing? The next assignment from the SP
2. What was it? Getting the Comte de Tournay out of France, along with Armand St. Just who was on his way to meet the Comte
3. What did they discuss regarding Chauvelain? That he was in England with an army of spies and they would need to be careful
4. What happened as they were trying to decipher a scrap of paper from the SP? They were both knocked out and tied up. Presumably, who was behind this? Chauvelain

### **Chapter 10**

1. What did the English women warn the Comtesse of? Being mean to Marguerite. Why? Because she was perceived very highly by English society and insulting her would only make the Comtesse look foolish
2. Who else was at the opera, entertained by Lord Grenville? Chauvelain. What did he want? For Marguerite to get involved in finding out information on the SP
3. What did he use to entice her? Her brother's involvement with the SP. He would grant Armand safety in exchange for information
4. How was Chauvelain proposing to bait the SP? He released Sir Andrew and Lord Anthony so that they could go to Lord Grenville's ball where they were supposed to receive instructions from the SP
5. What did Marguerite want in return? The letter from her brother
6. Did Marguerite agree to help? Yes

### **Chapter 11**

1. How did the Prince encourage the Comtesse to be kind to Marguerite? By introducing them and fawning over Marguerite
2. When mention of the SP, how did everyone refer to him? As a shadow, no one knew his identity

## Chapter 12

1. What did Marguerite hope for from Sir Percy? Support, guidance, help with the situation involving her brother. What did she get? He made up a silly poem and went to play cards
2. What did Marguerite observe at the ball? Lord Hastings passed Sir Andrew a note
3. How did Marguerite contrive to see the note? She followed Sir Andrew into a room, as he was burning the note, she snatched it away pretending it was just the remedy for her illness and stole a glance
4. What did Sir Andrew think? Of course, he was concerned that she had it especially because of her involvement with the de St. Cyr's
5. What happened to the note? Marguerite returned it after looking at it briefly and Sir Andrew burnt it

## Chapter 13

1. What were the contents of the note? The SP would be in the supper room at 1:00 am and he would leave himself tomorrow
2. Why was Marguerite conflicted? She loved her brother above all else and wanted to save him from the guillotine, but she admired the work and bravery of the SP and did not want to send him to the guillotine either

## Chapter 14

1. What did Marguerite decide? That she would help Armand and leave the SP to his own cunning devices
2. What did Marguerite tell Chauvelain? The contents of the note
3. What did Chauvelain promise? Armand's letter and eventual return to England
4. What did Chauvelain find in the supper room? Deserted except for Sir Percy asleep on a sofa
5. What did Chauvelain do? Stretched out on another sofa pretending to sleep

## Chapter 15

1. What errand did Marguerite send Lord Fancourt on? To locate her husband and tell him she was ready to leave
2. Where did he find Sir Percy? Asleep in the dining room. Who was with him? Chauvelain also asleep
3. What did Marguerite find out from Chauvelain? No one came into the room. He only promised Armand's safety when he had captured the SP

## Chapter 16

1. When they reached Richmond, their home, what did Marguerite do? Tried to appeal for help from Sir Percy
2. How did he respond? He would not trust her. He questioned why she didn't tell him all this before. Threw back at her how she had treated him.

3. What did she withhold? Her conversations with Chauvelain
4. What did she ask him to do? Help Armand
5. What did he say he would do? Try
6. What kept him from comforting her? His pride and lack of trust
7. How do we know he still loved her? He kissed the stones where she stood and ran up to her room.

### **Chapter 17**

1. What did Marguerite realize about Percy? She loved him. He had just put on a mask. All of the inane talk, laziness, etc. were just an act.
2. What did she vow? She would win his love back. It was the only way she could find happiness
3. What did the letter say? Sir Percy had to leave town for a week
4. What did Marguerite do upon receipt of the letter? Ran downstairs to talk with Percy before he left
5. What did Percy say he was going to do? Help Armand
6. How did he treat Marguerite? Still formally, less coldly than before
7. How did she feel after he left? At peace, knowing he would help Armand. Confident that she could win him back.

### **Chapter 18**

1. How did Marguerite plan to spend the day? With Suzanne. How did she manage that? She asked the Comtesse in the presence of the Prince and he promised to visit them that afternoon
2. Why did Marguerite go into Percy's study? It was often locked and off limits for all the staff (but not for her she thought). She wanted to see what was inside.
3. What did she realize? Her husband put on an act to make everyone think he was stupid, whereas he couldn't be because of the way he managed the large fortune his father left him
4. Why did she muse that he acted this way? Out of pride/contempt for the way Marguerite treated him
5. What did she find upon leaving the room? A ring with the SP insignia

### **Chapter 19**

1. Did Marguerite think Percy was the SP? Not at first
2. What secret did Suzanne reveal? She wanted to marry Sir Andrew, once her father was safe
3. What did Marguerite realize? That the SP and Sir Percy were the same person and that she betrayed him to Chauvelain the previous night.
4. What did the letter contain? Armand's letter. What did it mean? That Chauvelain was on the track of the SP
5. What did Marguerite plan to do? Go to Calais and warn Percy, help him. She would enlist Sir Andrew's help first.
6. Do you believe that Percy was aware of Chauvelain's plan?

## Chapter 20

1. Why did Marguerite go and see Sir Andrew? She knew she needed help. She felt because of her connection with Suzanne he was the one to help
2. Did Sir Andrew know that Sir Percy was the SP? Yes
3. What plan did the two concoct? They would travel to Calais together, with Andrew as her servant, via Dover on a Schooner. Trying to beat Chauvelain to Calais.

## Chapter 21

1. What did Jellyband assume regarding Marguerite and Sir Andrew? They were running away together
2. Why were they unable to cross the channel that night? A storm was brewing. How did that help them? Chauvelain could not cross either. Or he would not fare well if he met the storm.

## Chapter 22

1. Think of the description of Marguerite at the beginning of the book. Compare that to her now. Beginning: Calm, collected, always able to say the right thing, clever. Now: Terrified, worried, hopeless
2. What news did Sir Andrew have of their departure? The storm had not abated. They may have to wait 10-12 hours if the wind did not change
3. How did Marguerite find the French people of Calais? Distrustful, fearful, hateful. Wondering who was an aristocrat and would betray them.
4. Describe Chat Gris. This was where they were to find the SP. It was a dirty, squalid place, smelled awful, owner was rude.
5. What news did they hear of Percy? He was there earlier that day and planning to return for dinner

## Chapter 23

1. What did Andrew tell Marguerite about Chauvelain? He too was on the beach disguised, ready to embark less than an hour after they did
2. What did Andrew remind Marguerite about her plan? Sir Percy knew the operation was compromised. But he still vowed to bring the fugitives (including her brother and the Comte to safety). Even if they were able to warn Percy, he still had to get the fugitives past Chauvelain and out of France
3. What did Marguerite suggest they do? She wait there while Sir Andrew search for Percy in the village
4. What did Sir Andrew warn? That Marguerite not reveal herself to Percy unless they were alone for sure

## Chapter 24

1. Who showed up at the inn? Chauvelain and his secretary Desgas

2. What did Marguerite find out from their discussion? Chauvelain had spies set out everywhere looking for Percy and the fugitives. They were not to go after Percy until he had the fugitives. He wanted Percy alive
3. What animal was Percy compared to? A brave eagle
4. What did Marguerite hear? Someone singing "God Save the King"

### **Chapter 25**

1. How did Sir Percy enter the pub? No disguise, finely dressed, signing. Immediately greeted Chavelain.
2. How did Percy act? Inanely, kept calling Chauvelain the wrong name, asking him if he had an appointment
3. How did Percy escape? By offering Chauvelain a pinch of snuff that was really pepper. Leaving Chauvelain sneezing, blind and deaf for a moment

### **Chapter 26**

1. When the soldiers arrived did they see Percy? No, the moon was not yet up
2. What did Chauvelain instruct them to do? Shadow any stranger or tall person. Meet at Pere Blanchard's hut so they could go about as before
3. Who was Reuben? A man who lived close by that a tall stranger had arranged to rent a horse and cart from at 11:00 pm
4. Describe the Jew. Poor, dirty, came in place of Reuben. He said an Englishman came and took Reuben's nag (lame) and cart. Claimed that he was paid by Percy for not talking about where they went.
5. What did the Jew agree to do? Take Chauvelain to Pere Blanchard's hut

### **Chapter 27**

1. What did Marguerite decide to do? Follow the Jew's cart on foot
2. What did the 2 men on horseback report to Chauvelain? They had discovered an empty fisherman's hut, found an old and young man going inside. They listened to their conversation and the two talked about a plan and a rendez-vous point. No sign of the SP.
3. What did Marguerite conclude? That it was Armand and the Comte. They were heading into a trap.

### **Chapter 28**

1. When they reached the footpath, what was Chauvelain's plan? The soldier would lead them to the hut and figure out if the traitor royalists were there. If the SP was there, the soldier would give a whistle, then rush in, seize the men. Strict orders not to kill the SP. If no SP, wait until he arrived but only rush in when he is inside.
2. What orders did he give the Jew? Stay there with the horse and cart until they return, no noise.
3. How did the Jew respond? He was old and likely to scream or run if he was frightened.

4. What did Chauvelain do with him instead? Gagged him and took him with them
5. What did Marguerite do? Follow along silently behind
6. What did Marguerite see from a distance? Percy's yacht
7. In desperation, what did Marguerite do? Ran ahead, trying to get to the hut before Chauvelain to warn the men. What happened instead? She was captured and gagged by Chauvelain.

### **Chapter 29**

1. What did the soldiers report from the hut? Four men inside waiting quietly. The tide coming in. An English schooner waiting. No SP.
2. What did Chauvelain threaten Marguerite with if she screamed? He would shoot all 4 men in the hut.
3. At this point does it seem like Chauvelain knows the identity of the SP? What makes you think that? Answers will vary
4. How did the SP reveal himself? By singing God Save the King

### **Chapter 30**

1. What did Marguerite do? Started shrieking
2. What did Chauvelain order? Kill everyone in the hut
3. What did they find inside the hut? No one
4. How did the men escape? They crept out of the hut after the soldiers took cover. Because of Chauvelain's orders to wait for the SP, they did not go after them. The men crept along the side of the cliff and now were safely on board the schooner
5. What did the note say? The SP would be at the creek near Calais opposite Chat Gris
6. What was Marguerite doing? Laying on the ground, half dead
7. What was the Jew doing? Laying on the ground, half dead and terribly frightened
8. What did Chauvelain order to be done with the Jew and Marguerite? Beat the Jew for breaking his promise not to overtake the SP. Leave the two of them to fend for themselves until morning.
9. What did Chauvelain plan to do? Go through the cliffs back to Calais hoping to find the SP

### **Chapter 31**

1. What was Marguerite thinking in despair? She knew not what happened to either Percy or her brother. She thought Percy was captured and her brother dead
2. Where was Percy? Disguised as the Jew
3. Describe Percy's escape. As the Jew he called out God Save the King. He planted the note in the hut to send Chauvelain on a wild goose chase.
4. Who came to Percy and Marguerite's rescue? Sir Andrew. How? By way of circuitous road that Chauvelain's men would not suspect.
5. What other trick did Percy play on Chauvelain? He gave two notes to Armand. The first told him to leave behind the 2<sup>nd</sup> which sent Chauvelain running back to Calais. The first note said Percy would meet the boat beyond Gris Nez.

6. How did Percy respond to Marguerite coming? He loved her even more. She described what had happened with the de St. Cyr.

**Wrap-up (Answers will vary)**

1. Who is your favorite character?
2. At what point did you realize Percy was the Jew?
3. What changed Marguerite's heart towards Sir Percy?
4. What changed Percy's heart towards Marguerite?
5. Compare the Fisherman's Rest with the Chat Gris.
6. What does Liberte-Egalite-Fraternite mean? Liberty, Equality, Fraternity. How was this ironic for the French?
7. How are Percy's disguises used to help the aristocrats escape?
8. At what point did you realize Percy was the Scarlet Pimpernel.