

The House of the Seven Gables

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Why is the ticking watch more frightening than a dramatic description of the Judge's death?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	The watch keeps ticking in a dead hand
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Chapter XVIII · Governor Pyncheon
START	This was to have been such a busy day.
END	this little, quiet, never-ceasing throb of Time's pulse, repeating its small strokes with such busy regularity, in Judge Pyncheon's motionless hand
PASSAGE ID	sec-h7g-04

THE MOVE

Let ordinary time expose the failure of worldly plans

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The Judge has plans, appointments, status, and a schedule, yet the watch continues measuring ordinary minutes in his motionless hand. The quiet ticking makes worldly urgency look absurd because time continues after the person organizing it has stopped.

MARK

Underline the plans and obligations the Judge was supposed to carry out. Circle the descriptions of his stillness. Star every reference to the watch or ticking and connect it to the unfinished plans.

NOTICE

- Why might a loud or violent death scene be less unsettling than the ordinary sound of a watch?
- What does the watch continue to do that the Judge cannot?
- How does measured time reduce the importance of the plans that seemed so urgent before his death?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why is the ticking watch more frightening than a dramatic description of the Judge's death? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why is the ticking watch more frightening than a dramatic description of the Judge's death? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The watch is frightening because it continues ordinary measured time while the Judge's plans, appointments, and ambitions have stopped absolutely. The mundane ticking exposes how little worldly urgency matters to death.
EVIDENCE	Use the Judge's accumulated schedule or plans and contrast them with his still body and the watch that continues.
WATCH FOR	Do not focus only on the watch as a death symbol. Explain why ordinary continuation is more unsettling than dramatic description.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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START ANCHOR	This was to have been such a busy day.
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OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. MARK - Underline the plans and obligations the Judge was supposed to carry out. Circle the descriptions of his stillness. Star every reference to the watch or ticking and connect it to the unfinished plans.
2. NOTICE - Why might a loud or violent death scene be less unsettling than the ordinary sound of a watch? What does the watch continue to do that the Judge cannot? How does measured time reduce the importance of the plans that seemed so urgent before his death?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Why is the ticking watch more frightening than a dramatic description of the Judge's death?
4. WRITE - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.