**Notes on *Silas Marner:***

**Chapter 1:**

* What is the setting of this story? What kind of place is Raveloe? What are the people like?
* What was Silas’s relationship with the rest of the village? What did the people think of him? Why? (He was a stranger, a weaver, his appearance, rumors about his trance, knowledge of herbs and medicines.)
* What did the people of Raveloe conclude about Silas’s “fit”?
* What do you call it when a story goes back in time to give the reader background? Where does this book start the flashback?
* Where had Silas come from? What kind of group had Silas been a part of there?
* How had the religious group understood the “fit” he had during a service? What was the one exception?
* What was the earthquake that completely dismantled Silas’s life in Lantern Yard?
* How did the betrayal and backstabbing of his friend and church affect Silas? Do you understand what the author says on page 16 about Silas’s inability to separate his beliefs from the actions of his church? What did Sarah do?
* What would you have done if you had been in Silas’s place? Did he have any other alternatives?

**Chapter 2:**

* Describe the difference in attitude toward God and religion between Raveloe and Lantern Yard.
* Moving to a new location can make the past seem unreal…How did moving to Raveloe affect Silas’s belief and thoughts toward God?
* All of Marner’s energy focused on what? (first weaving, then money) Why did money begin to grow more and more important for Silas? What did Silas intend to do with the money? What metaphor does the author use for the money? (unborn children) What are the connotations of this metaphor?
* The effect of his values and lifestyle showed its effects on his person—bentness and withering
* Notice that he retained his honesty
* Did healing Sally Oates improve Silas’s reputation in the community?
* Vocab: loom-p. 21, erudite-p. 24, squire-p. 28, prosaic-p. 39, compunction-p. 40

**Chapter 3**

* This chapter says that Squire Cass was the greatest man in Raveloe…would you have wanted to be a part of his family? Why or why not? What were some of the problems in his household?
* Do you expect most wealthy people to have their act together?
* What were some of Dunstan’s weaknesses? (lack of discipline, drinking, betting, self-centered)
* Why did local people expect more of Godfrey?
* Who can summarize the pieces of the plot that come to light in this chapter? What do we called a story that runs parallel to a novel’s main story? (the money, the blackmailing, the secret marriage, the desire for Nancy, selling Wildfire)
* What do we know of Molly Farron? Godfrey had long liked Nancy; why had he married Molly?
* What did Godfrey have to lose if his secret would be found out? (a disgraced family name, being disinherited, losing land and money, losing Nancy)

**Chapter 4:**

* How is dealing in horses like dealing in used cars? How did Dunstan do as a salesman?
* What happened to Wildfire?
* Commentary on Dunstan’s character—being more concerned about the immediate than about the long term, p. 46. What actions show Dunstan to be a dunce? (note the parallels between these two words)
* When Dunstan finds Silas’s cottage empty, what does he conclude about Silas?
* What we see happening to Dunstan is a classic example of how the devil leads people into temptation and sin. What is the progression of Dunstan’s thoughts? Does he start out with the intent of stealing the money?

**Chapter 5:**

* Do you agree that our sense of security often comes from the fact that our routines become familiar to us? Where does true security come from?
* Where had Silas gone and why?
* Why was supper Silas’s favorite meal?
* Did you feel sorry for Silas when he discovered the loss? Did you also feel sorry for Dunsey when he lost the horse? Why do you feel sympathy for Silas? (Knowing his history, his sense of weakness, his so-pathetic response to the theft)
* What possibility besides theft occurred to Silas as an explanation for his missing money? Why did theft seem like the most desirable explanation?
* Where did Silas go for help?
* Do you think that this might be a good thing for Silas?

**Chapter 6:**

* What were the two categories of men sitting together at the Rainbow?
* Men at the Rainbow:
  + Mr. Snell—landlord and the keeper of the peace
  + Ben Winthrop—wheelwright, big, joker
  + Mr. Macey—old white-haired man, tailor and parish clerk
  + Mr. Tookey—young, somewhat insecure deputy clerk
  + Mr. Dowlas—the farrier, combative, fierce, and ill-tempered
  + Bob--The butcher

**Chapter 7**

* What caused the people at the Rainbow to believe Silas’s story?
* This is a new kind of interaction between Silas and the Raveloe community—what are some of the ways in which it is new? Read bottom of page 75 (notice the metaphors)
* Whom did some of the Rainbow crowd suspect of the theft?
* Why did the constable (Kench) need a deputy? Who was chosen?

**Chapter 8**

* What happened to the village folk’s recollections of the peddler?
* Is this what you call “herd mentality”?
* Tell me how Godrey finds out what happened to Wildfire?
* Why does Godfrey think the jig is up?
* Why is Godfrey able to think of himself as more than a scoundrel?
* What happened with Godfrey’s determination to confess everything to his father? Have you ever experienced something like this?
* What do you think of Godfrey’s decision to keep quiet about the matter, to continue to hide his dirty secret? What can we learn from this?

**Chapter 9**

* What’s the name of the Squire’s house? What do you think of the Squire?
* What’s with the talk of war? (p. 93)
* Notice Godfrey’s comment on discipline on top of page 97.
* What does he say Godfrey should do about Nancy? What does the Squire threaten to do?
* What does the Squire think about women?

**Chapter 10**

* What were the two schools of thought that continued about the theft of Silas’s money?
* Did Silas feel energy for earning a new hoard of money? Why not?
* Describe Silas’s life after the theft.
* How did his neighbors’ opinion of him change through this time?
* What kind of comfort and sympathy did the community offer Silas?
* Who is the Old Harry that Mr. Macey refers to?
* Who took a special interest in Silas besides Mr. Macey? What is Mrs. Winthrop like?
* The little cakes with Jesus’ initials on them—it’s almost as if Dolly is serving Silas Communion
* Point out quote on top of 113
* Look at Dolly’s theology on p. 114.
* What did Silas do on Christmas day?
* What was the greatest event of the year at the Red House?
* What are the two opposing voices inside of Godfrey? (This dialogue between hope and anxiety set up a showdown. It foreshadows a conflict and a resolution.)

**Chapter 11**

* Have each student pick out a passage or quote that is interesting or noteworthy in some way and read it to the class
* What do you think of “high society” and their goings-on? Did you see the artificiality of much of their interactions?
* Contrast the Squire and Mr. Lammeter
* What does Mr. Lammeter mean with his saying that “breed is stronger than pasture”?
* What does Nancy think about Godfrey and feel about him?
* Nancy is pretty and has class—but what is her character like? Does it match her good looks? (consider the exchange with Priscilla)
* Introduction to Priscilla
* Go through chapter and take note of any significant portions that haven’t drawn attention yet
* Vocab word: veracity-p. 128

**Chapter 12**

* What else do we learn about Molly’s background in this chapter? What was her plan here in this chapter?
* Point out the struggle between her addiction and her mother’s instinct
* What was your response to the scene of Molly’s death and the child’s abandonment?
* Why was Silas’s door standing open to the freezing weather?
* What all did the child stir up and bring to life in Silas’s mind?
* The child still showed attachment and affection for Molly in spite of her awful life—isn’t the love of a child amazing? How old was this child?

**Chapter 13**

* When Silas showed up at the Cass party, who recognized the child he was carrying? How long had it been since he had seen the child?
* Describe Godfrey’s reaction
* Remember the saying, “sin will take your farther than you want to go, keep you longer than you want to stay, and cost you more than you want to pay”?
* In what ways does Godfrey try to justify his decision to keep his secret hidden?
* Why does Silas want to keep the child?

**Chapter 14**

* What does Dolly want to make sure that Silas does for Eppie? What is christening? How is it different from the baptism that Silas had known about?
* In what ways did Eppie expand Silas’s life? (Eppie is to Silas what water and sunlight are to plants)
* Is Silas’s approach to discipline realistic? Is it possible to go through life without running into trouble and experiencing painful things? Discipline is causing a little pain at the right times in order to help a person avoid much more painful experiences later in life.
* The transformation of Silas’s interaction with the community—children do give people an excuse to talk to you.
* Read last part of chapter-p. 182
* What allusion is used in the last paragraph of the chapter?

**Chapter 15**

* Do you agree with the author’s comment that people with humble stations in life are often happier that the wealthy and prestigious?
* What is this thing about a ring? p. 183
* A hint of what is to come—paragraph on the bottom of p. 183.
* So Godfrey got his life straightened out and was making something of his life, right?

**Chapter 16**

* Have the sixteen year that have passed been good to Silas and Eppie?
* Notice the personification of time, p. 185
* How old would Eppie be now? Who is sweet on her?
* Reconciliation with the past—middle of p. 194; how do we make reconciliation with the past? Discuss the danger of living with unresolved conflict, hurt, or unforgiveness.
* Discuss Dolly’s understanding of how to make sense of the suffering and evil in the world; why does God allow injustice?
* Did Eppie know about her own past?

**Chapter 17**

* Was Nancy a happy woman? A woman at peace? What about Godfrey?
* Did Godfrey and Nancy have a good marriage?
* What were Nancy’s and Godfrey’s perspective on their childlessness? What were their views on adopting Eppie?

**Chapter 18**

* Godfrey’s quote on p. 219. This is a huge moment.
* Godfrey actually humbles himself and asks forgiveness—he is finally going to find freedom.
* Godfrey finds freedom and openness but his regret is so bitter and heartwrenching. Would he have been better off to have cleared himself earlier? Little problems become big problems.

**Chapter 19**

* Discuss the development of plot

**Chapter 20**

* Where do Godfrey and Nancy end up? Note Godfrey’s decisiveness and firmness—good sign.

**Chapter 21**

* Return to Lantern Yard
* Declaration of trust in God

**Chapter 22**

* Aaron and Eppie’s wedding
* The Casses are still looking out for her
* Happy ending—resolution is achieved

**Whole Book Review:**

* Who is the protagonist?
* Who is the antagonist?
* What is the plot? And subplot?
* Where is the climax of the book?
* What is/are the theme(s)?
  + Love of money vs. love of people
  + Results of deceit vs. honesty or truth
  + A person reaps what he sows
  + The redeeming power of love