

Words from Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel*



Avocabo Word List 13

ANATHEMA, ARISTOCRAT, BOHEMIAN, CAVALIER,
DASTARDLY, ENIGMATIC, FACTOTUM, GUILLOTINE,
HAGGARD, HISTRIONIC, INDEFATIGABLE,
IGNOMINIOUS, FOPPISH, MONARCHY,
NONCHALANCE, OBSEQUIOUS, PIMPERNEL,
REPUBLICAN, RUBICUND, VAGARIES, WITTICISM

A surging, seething, murmuring crowd of beings that are human only in name, for to the eye and ear they seem naught but savage creatures, animated by vile passions and by the lust of vengeance and of hate. The hour, some little time before sunset, and the place, the West Barricade, at the very spot where, a decade later, a proud tyrant raised an undying monument to the nation's glory and his own vanity.

During the greater part of the day the guillotine had been kept busy at its ghastly work: all that France had boasted of in the past centuries, of ancient names, and blue blood, had paid toll to her desire for liberty and for fraternity. The carnage had only ceased at this late hour of the day because there were other more interesting sights for the people to witness, a little while before the final closing of the barricades for the night.

And so the crowd rushed away from the Place de la Greve and made for the various barricades in order to watch this interesting and amusing sight.

The opening paragraphs of Baroness Orczy's The Scarlet Pimpernel.

The text and the sentences used in Exercise 13-1 come from the Project Gutenberg etext of the novel. You can find the full web version on the Internet - <http://www-2.cs.cmu.edu/People/rgs/scarp-table.html> or download a copy in Zip or Text formats at <http://digital.library.upenn.edu/webbin/gutbook/lookup?num=60>

Exercise 13-1: Fill-in-the-blanks

Complete each sentence with the most appropriate word from those in the word list. Write your choice in the space provided.

1. Laughingly, in the olden days, she used to call him the shadowy king of her heart, and now she had suddenly found that this _____ personality whom she had worshipped, and the man who loved her so passionately, were one and the same: what wonder that one or two happier visions began to force their way before her mind?

2. Every _____ was a traitor, as his ancestors had been before him: for two hundred years now the people had sweated, and toiled, and starved, to keep a lustful court in lavish extravagance; now the descendants of those who had helped to make those courts brilliant had to hide for their lives—to fly, if they wished to avoid the tardy vengeance of the people.

3. The *Day Dream* it was, Sir Percy Blakeney's yacht, which was ready to take Armand St. Just back to France into the very midst of that seething, bloody Revolution which was overthrowing a _____, attacking a religion, destroying a society, in order to try and rebuild upon the ashes of tradition a new Utopia, of which a few men dreamed, but which none had the power to establish

4. Evidently satisfied that this _____ outrage had remained unheard, he once more opened the door and pointed peremptorily down the passage. The four men lifted Sir Andrew and Lord Antony from the ground, and as quietly, as noiselessly as they had come, they bore the two pinioned young gallants out of the inn and along the Dover Road into the gloom beyond.

5. A chorus of good-humoured laughter greeted this _____, which gave the company there present food for many jokes, for some considerable time.

6. If Marguerite had not taken up his time, if the soldiers had had a grain of intelligence, if . . . it was a long "if," and Chauvelin stood for a moment quite still, and enrolled thirty odd people in one long, overwhelming _____.

7. In him Marguerite at once recognized Desgas, Chauvelin's secretary and confidential _____, whom she had often seen in Paris, in days gone by.

8. Their ancestors had oppressed the people, had crushed them under the scarlet heels of their dainty buckled shoes, and now the people had become the rulers of France and crushed their former masters—not beneath their heel, for they went shoeless mostly in these days—but a more effectual weight, the knife of the _____.

9. After supper, dancing was resumed. His Royal Highness had left, and there was general talk of departing among the older guests; the young were _____ and had started on a new gavotte, which would fill the next quarter of an hour.

10. Her self-control had been absolutely perfect—she was a finer actress at this moment, and throughout the whole of this minuet, than she had ever been upon the boards of the Comedie Francaise; but then, a beloved brother's life had not depended upon her _____ powers.

11. The next night he was waylaid just outside Paris by the valets of Marquis de St. Cyr, and _____ thrashed—thrashed like a dog within an inch of his life—because he had dared to raise his eyes to the daughter of the aristocrat.

12. How strange it all was! She loved him still. And now that she looked back upon the last few months of misunderstandings and of loneliness, she realized that she had never ceased to love him; that deep down in her heart she had always vaguely felt that his foolish inanities, his empty laugh, his lazy _____ were nothing but a mask; that the real man, strong, passionate, willful, was there still—the man she had loved, whose intensity had fascinated her, whose personality attracted her, since she always felt that behind his apparently slow wits there was a certain something, which he kept hidden from all the world, and most especially from her.

13. Yet even now, his own sister puzzled him. Life and love have such strange _____. Could it be that with the waning of her husband's love, Marguerite's heart had awakened with love for him? Strange extremes meet in love's pathway: this woman, who had had half intellectual Europe at her feet, might perhaps have set her affections on a fool.

14. Chauvelin sat down at the table, which had been prepared for the tall Englishman, and the innkeeper busied himself _____ round him, dishing up the soup and pouring out the wine. The man who had entered with

Chauvelin and whom Marguerite could not see, stood waiting close by the door.

15. For a moment, then, the awkwardness of her position struck Marguerite; alone at this hour, in a place where she was well known, and having made an assignation with a young _____ equally well known, and who arrived in disguise! What food for gossip to those mischievously inclined.

16. "Fugitives as they are, these men at this moment await with perfect confidence and unshaken faith the arrival of the Scarlet _____, who has pledged his honour to take them safely across the Channel.

17. Clever men, distinguished men, and even men of exalted station formed a perpetual and brilliant court round the fascinating young actress of the Comedie Francaise, and she glided through _____ revolutionary, bloodthirsty Paris like a shining comet with a trail behind her of all that was most distinguished, most interesting, in intellectual Europe.

18. She would not allow herself any more time to think. Her early, somewhat _____ training had made her something of a fatalist. She felt that events would shape themselves, that the directing of them was not in her hands.

19. "It is at your ladyship's service," said honest Jellyband, whose _____ face was set in its tightest folds, lest it should betray before "the quality" that boundless astonishment which the very worthy fellow had begun to feel.

20. But it also strengthened her in the now certain knowledge that, with his worldly inanities, his _____ ways, and foolish talk, he was not only wearing a mask, but was playing a deliberate and studied part.

21. Both the young men looked a little _____ and anxious, but otherwise they were irreproachably dressed, and there was not the slightest sign, about their courtly demeanour, of the terrible catastrophe, which they must have felt hovering round them and round their chief.

Exercise 13-2: Synonyms

From the three choices circle the one that is closest in meaning to list word (bold face) in the context displayed

1. The witch uttered an **anathema** with terrible conviction
a) blessing b) curse c) benediction
2. He was born an **aristocrat**
a) nobleman b) beggar c) plebian
3. **bohemian** lifestyle
a) artistic b) frugal c) quiet
4. The **cavalier** escorted the woman by the hand
a) king b) servant c) gentleman
5. **dastardly** plan
a) cowardly b) elaborate c) reckless
6. **enigmatic** personality
a) friendly b) ambiguous c) energetic
7. useful **factotum**
a) assistant b) multi-tasker c) co-worker
8. the relentless **guillotine**
a) knife b) execution blade c) machine
9. **haggard** old man
a) nasty b) refreshed c) gaunt
10. **histrionic** reenactment
a) melodramatic b) historical c) energetic
11. **indefatigable** horse
a) unsteady b) endless c) tireless
12. **ignominious** disgrace
a) despicable b) cowardly c) pointless
13. **foppish** young man
a) vain b) dandified c) stylish
14. solid **monarchy**
a) governed by an absolute ruler b) democracy c) free state
15. dignified **nonchalance**
a) unconcern b) distaste c) forgetfulness

16. an **obsequious** young woman
a) fawning b) rebellious c) stylish
17. beautiful **pimpernel**
a) flower b) birthmark c) zit
18. an unruly **republican**
a) sole proprietor b) monarch c) favoring a republic
19. **rubicund** colouration
a) ruddy b) pale c) distinguishing
20. **vagaries**
a) erratic notion b) extravagance c) tribulations
21. relentless **witticism**
a) joke b) comment c) insult

Exercise 13-3 Making Connections

In a few sentences, describe the relationship between each pair of words. Use a good dictionary to clarify unclear words. You will find Bartleby.com very helpful!

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|----|------------|----------|
| 1. | ANATHEMA | BUGBEAR |
| 2. | DASTARDLY | BRAVE |
| 3. | OBSEQUIOUS | BOOTLICK |
| 4. | FACTOTUM | EMPLOYEE |
| 5. | FOPPISH | DANDY |

Exercise 13-4 Antonyms

Provide an antonym for each of the following words:

1. rubicund _____
2. cavalier _____
3. foppish _____
4. haggard _____
5. nonchalant _____

*"We seek him here, we seek him there,
Those Frenchies seek him everywhere.
Is he in heaven? —Is he in hell?
That demmed, elusive Pimpernel"*