

Pyncheon family misfortune:

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Pyncheon Family Misfortune: Curse or Character Flaws? By Anthony Doyle

Throughout the history of the Pyncheon family, they have been plagued by misfortune. The misfortunes include early, unexplained deaths, loss of wealth, insanity, and familial turmoil. Some attribute these misfortunes to a "curse" that Matthew Maul placed on the family immediately prior to his hanging for being accused of witchcraft. I, however, believe that the problems the Pyncheon family experienced is due to character flaws that were passed from parents to their children. Colonel Pyncheon was a wealthy man from the eastern United States, and was looking for property to build a long lasting house upon. He heard of a poor carpenter named Matthew Maul who owned a piece of land that contained a natural spring that produced water of incredible pureness and sweetness. Colonel Pyncheon immediately coveted the poor man's property, and attempted to gain it by first offering to buy it. Maul declined, but Pyncheon's desire for the land did not fade. When legal means failed to produce the effects that Pyncheon desired, he accused Maul of witchcraft, resulting in his hanging. When asked if he had any last words, Maul responded, " God will give him (Colonel Pyncheon) blood to drink! " Due to the fact that Maul had not written a will, Colonel Pyncheon seized the land. The family of Matthew Maul was accused of witchcraft, and was believed to have the ability to control people through their dreams, and to be able to read people's minds. I believe that the Maul's were actually just excellent judges of character, not true mind readers. As for their supposed supernatural power to control others through dream, I believe that they were just excellent manipulators of people. Because of these family traits, Matthew Maul was able to see the greed that consumed Colonel Pyncheon,

and predicted that it would be his downfall. Maul also probably knew that parents that are greedy tend to raise greedy children. Evidence of this, is the strife that Judge Jaffrey Pyncheon caused his family. His father, who was going to die soon, had written two wills. The earliest will would give Jaffrey his father's possessions when he passed away, but the second was in favor of Jaffrey's cousin, Clifford Pyncheon. Clifford was a young man that was a lover of things beautiful, and had a completely innocent nature. Judge Pyncheon, displaying the same greed as his ancestor, Colonel Pyncheon, murdered his father and framed Clifford for the crime. Judge Pyncheon then burned the second will, so when Clifford went to jail, he would be free to inherit his father's property. Clifford spent thirty years in jail, which destroyed his mind, and drove him practically insane. Because of his crime, Clifford and his sister, Hepzibah, felt much animosity towards Judge Pyncheon. This animosity predictably caused turmoil in the Pyncheon family. There were many unfortunate events that befell the Pyncheon family, but they can all be attributed to the same cause. Greed is the character flaw that plagued the Pyncheon's for hundreds of years, and caused much strife in their family.