*Rita Hayworth and the Shawshank Redemption,* by Stephen King

Important Quotations for Analysis

Part I

1. “Have I rehabilitated myself, you ask? I don’t know what that word means, at least as far as prisons and corrections go. I think it’s a politician’s word. It may have some other meaning, and it may be that I will have a chance to find out, but that is the future…something cons teach themselves not to think about.” (01)

What does the term “rehabilitation” mean? Why does Red believe it has a different meaning as far as prisons go?

1. “I do it for the same reason that a good butcher will only sell you fresh meat; I got a reputation and I want to keep it.” (02)

Why do you think Red believes a reputation is so important?

1. “As I believe I have said, everyone in prison is an innocent man.” (03)

How does one make sense of this statement? What does it imply?

1. “Andrew Dufresne, he said, was not a wronged husband seeking a hot-blooded revenge against his cheating wife; that, the DA said, could be understood, if not condoned. But this revenge had been of a much colder type.” (3)

How does the concept of revenge help to shale the character of Andy Dufresne? Does it add tension to the story? How so?

1. “I knew him for thirty years, and I can tell you he was the most self-possessed man I’ve ever known. What was right with him he’d only give you a little at a time. What was wrong with him, he kept bottled up inside. If he ever had a dark night of the soul, as some writer or other has called it, you would never know.” (05)

What does Red mean by the description “self-possessed”?

1. “I think there was a lot of bad luck floating around that night. More than could ever get together in same short span of time again. I think it must have been some stranger, just passing through. Maybe someone who had a flat tire on that road after I went home. Maybe a burglar. Maybe a psychopath. He killed them, that’s all. And I’m here.” (09).

How does this quotation link to Stephen King’s mother’s inspirational advice? What was her advice?

1. “Getting a pass out of Shawshank when you’ve got murder stamped on your admittance-slip is slow work, as slow as a river eroding a rock.” (09)

How does this statement foreshadow later events in the story? Why is this imagery so effective?

1. “He set Jake free a day before he, Sherwood, that is was to walk, and Jake flew away just as pretty as you could want. But about a week after Sherwood Bolton left our happy little family, a friend of mine called me over to the west corner of the exercise yard, where Sherwood use to hangout, and my friend said, ‘Isn’t that Jake?’ It was. That pigeon was just as dead as a turd. (09)

What is the significance of this passage?

1. “In spite of the problems he was having, he was going on with his life. There are thousands who don’t or won’t or can’t, ad plenty of them aren’t in prison, either. And I noticed that, although his face still looked as if a twister had happened to it, his hands were still neat and clean, the nails well-kept.” (13)

Do you believe Andy is going on with his life at this point in the story? How is Red’s description of Andy ironic?

1. “He was a banker in the straight world – a man who understands better than the rest of us the ways in which money can become power.” (16)

How is power such a crucial element in this story?

1. “But in the bright morning sunlight there were dark slashes across her face – the shadow of the bars on his single slit-window.”(18)

What might this image symbolically represent?