

The scarlet letter questions



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In this novel Hester Prynne is represented in several different ways. Before this story starts she was sent to Boston by her husband (Roger Chillingworth) who was supposed to be meeting her there shortly. He never makes it, she assumes he died at sea. While in Boston she meets Rev.

Dimmesdale she has an affair with him and gets pregnant. He then starts to ignore her. Months later when everyone finds out about her illegitimate daughter (Pearl) and that she is unmarried. She is looked upon with great sin. When she is first introduced into the novel she is in the prison.

She emerges wearing an elaborately embroidered scarlet letter "A" (meaning adultery) on her breast, and carries her 3 month old infant in her arms. She is led onto the scaffold where she has to stand in front of the whole town as part of her punishment. While on the scaffold she has flashbacks of her old life, this is where we first learn about the real Hester Prynne. The rest of her punishment is that she has to wear the scarlet "A" for the rest of her life. The Rev. Mr.

Dimmesdale pleads with Hester to tell the name of the man she had a sexual affair with, but she will not. After the 3 hours she is led back to the prison with Pearl. At this point in the novel we learn that back in England Hester was married to a man, Roger Chillingworth. This man is now in Boston and comes to visit Hester's prison cell. Hester and Dimmesdale discuss who is at fault for her affair. He admits that he will find the father though. When Hester is released from prison she has the choice to go anywhere in the world, but she chooses to stay in Boston where she committed her sin and where she will have her punishment. She starts sewing and sells her garments but puritan society never accepts her. Believes "A" allows her to see sinful and

immoral feelings in other people. Hester's strength is most seen when she goes to the Governor's mansion to plead for her daughter. In the following years Hester and Dimmesdale start speaking again. Now you will be able to see her weaker side. She falls in love with him all over, they plan to leave Boston and move to Bristol, England and live the rest of their lives there. But they never make it, when Hester dies she is buried next to Dimmesdale. Physically Hester at the beginning of the novel is a tall young woman with a figure of perfect elegance on a larger scale. Her most impressive feature is her dark and abundant hair so glossy that it threw off the sunshine with a gleam. Her complexion is rich, her eyes are dark and deep, and her regular features give her a beautiful face. Seven years later after all her torture she looks much different. Her hair is now hidden under her cap, her beauty and warmth are gone, buried under the burden of the elaborate scarlet letter on her bosom. In chapter 13 when she removes the cap and takes off that letter her beauty comes back. Hester is very strong willed as well as very lonely, those two are a horrible combination. Hester's image becomes to be known through the "A." In her whole life Pearl was her best companion.

Through all of the suffering Hester just became stronger and Dimmesdale is the young, pale, and physically delicate minister. Whose character changes many times through out the novel. He has large eyes and a tremulous mouth. He is well educated and thinks with a philosophical turn of mind. He is very devoted to God. Even though he sins as much as anyone in this novel. Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold and tells Hester to release the name of her husband, but she will not.

Later Dimmesdale be-friends Roger Chillingworth the two move in together when Dimmesdale's health begins to slip. Dimmesdale meets Hester on the scaffold at midnight and acknowledges Pearl. Pearl begins to question why he won't be seen with them during daylight on the scaffold! He begins to get weaker and weaker by the day, but his congregation learns to love him more each day. He is now the most popular of the local ministers and the most honorable. This just makes him feel more guilty that everyone is respecting him for something he does not deserve. He feels as if they knew the truth that they would no longer love and respect him.

Hester goes and meets him in the woods and the two make plans to leave Boston and move to Bristol, England. But tragedy strikes during his Election day sermon he knows he must die, he invites Hester and Pearl on the scaffold with him...and dies! He is a coward and a hypocrite. He knows what he has to do to still the voice of his conscience and make his peace with God. He simply cannot bring himself to do it. He is somewhat pale and weak from the first moment we see him. And he grows paler and weaker by the minute, as he lives ridden with guilt. By the time the minister comes to the forest, he barely has the strength to throw himself down on the leaves in the hope that he can lie there forever. He lacks the will even to wish to live or die. When he leaves the forest he has more charisma than ever before, he is jubilant and walks with energy. But not long after he is back to his feeble walking and negative attitudes.

Dimmesdale carves the letter A onto himself this tells us he We first see Roger Chillingworth in this novel when he comes to Boston and sees Hester standing on the scaffold he asks someone why she is standing there and what

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the "A" means! When he finds out, his main goal is to find out who the father is. We learn that Chillingworth had been married to Hester back at home. He sent her here and then planned to join her. But he fails to join her quickly, for he is captured by Indians from whom he gathers a knowledge of herbal medicine. He is an old, evil, vicious, ugly, and deformed man. He becomes obsessed with finding out who it is. Even if that means destroying Dimmesdale's life.

Chillingworth is evil in this novel. He starts out being evil by making Hester not tell anyone they are married. Then he sets out to destroy Dimmesdale. His evilness leads to the death of Dimmesdale. Chillingworth is a tricky character that we think could be all bad but turns out to have some good in him. Taking the best out of his bad situation with his encounter with the Indians he learns much information about medicine. He also takes half of the blame for Hester's affair, even though he wasn't even there. Even his name resembles a chill. He is an evil type that observes but does not feel. He never REALLY takes on human characteristics in this novel until the end where he gives Pearl the large sum of money, and shrivels from guilt. He has a brave and adventurous mind. He also has the gift of irony. It is no accident that the doctor takes Boston by storm. He has the capacity- rare in any age, unheard of in Puritan New England- to observe the world without preconceptions, and then to put his observations to work. Bibliography: