

Dimmesdale is a coward

Literature, Russian Literature



Nathaniel Hawthorne portrays Arthur Dimmesdale, an eminently respected reverend in *The Scarlet Letter*, as a coward whose actions towards Pearl, Hester, and himself. By refusing to acknowledge Pearl as his daughter, allowing Hester to remain culpable for adultery, and by hiding behind his reputation, the reverend behaves cowardly. Invision this: you live your entire life being unaware of your paternity. Worse yet, your father refuses to accept you as his daughter. Unfortunately Pearl has to live with this tragic fate. As Pearl flourishes from infant to animated child her father, Reverend Dimmesdale, observes unobtrusively. Yet, he remains anonymous, refusing to affirm the truth, of his role. As if this abandonment is not bad enough, Dimmesdale constrains himself from interacting with Pearl. The inadvertency and desertion of a father contributes to Pearl's ideas regarding her earthly and heavenly father. Readers who conceive Dimmesdale as not a coward dispute that, despite his dismissal of Pearl, he endorses Hester as caregiver to sustain Pearl. Admittedly, keeping Pearl is a benefit, as " she [Pearl] is the only treasure in my [Hester's] life. " Nevertheless, Dimmesdale abstains from helping Pearl; monetarily, physically, emotionally. His actions leave Pearl indignant with fatherly figures. Readers detect the trait when Pearl renounces her heavenly father, and later when she hails her birth father as the devil. Pearl's etiquette is normal by the inexistence of a father figurehead, Dimmesdale. By being cowardly and not accepting Pearl as his own, Arthur sentences her to a rough life. What Dimmesdale does to Hester however is iniquitous. Dimmesdale possesses the capability to repent his sins and accept the accusations that transpired with his and Hester's infidelity. Instead, he becomes the utter embodiment of a coward, allowing

Hester to endure the burden alone. The adultery requires two people in order to take place. Therefore, why should only Hester undergo the punishment? She should not. Dimmesdale's resistance in affirming his wrongdoing leads to it. Not only is Dimmesdale a coward, but a hypocrite! Amidst the town square, where Hester is erect on the platform, Dimmesdale laments " Reveal whom the father is, and end all this madness! " Furthermore, he is the father. Why not avow it himself? He is a coward, that is why. Subsequently, Dimmesdale fears if/when he unveils the verisimilitude he will bear the punishment Hester endured. These thoughts lead to the next set of points condemning Dimmesdale's persona of being a coward. The utmost authoritative detail of Dimmesdale's being a coward is the verity of his hiding behind his reputation. Arthur disguises his sin by preaching weekly regarding the maliciousness of sin and the populace need to repent. Meanwhile, he atones for his sins. His eloquence and religious fervor have already given earnest of high eminence in his profession, fashioning his fear of losing everything all over one mistake. This apprehension possessed him to work harder in life, aspiring that his word will cause his mistake to disappear. Dimmesdale has gained a great deal of respect following his work as a well admired reverend. With this he feared admitting his affair would cause the loss of his respect, the trait he coveted overall. He states in chapter 3 " sinners can too disguise themselves. " This is his affirmation of being a sinner, however he hides behind his reputation. In the time period when The Scarlet Letter occurs, the worst sin a Puritan could commit is adultery, as interpreted by previous knowledge of the history of the Puritan people. Reader's argue this is the cardinal reason of Dimmesdale's secrecy

of the ordeal. But Dimmesdale is a reverend, contemplated as a " Godly" man. So if he truly is a godly man, he would confess his sin and deal with the consequences of his actions. But alas, he remains in silence. Revealing he is authentically a coward. The Scarlet Letter embodies a variety of characters with an assortment of character traits. Nathaniel Hawthorne acquired this talent for embodying different attributes into all of his characters.

Unfortunately, Arthur Dimmesdale's characteristic was being a complete coward. Dimmesdale's cowardice is observed by the refusal of Pearl, allocating the totality of the fault to collapse onto Hester, and hiding behind his elevated reputation. Granted, others defend Dimmesdale innocence, he still is a coward in the eyes of most readers.