

The market place of the scarlet letter: hawthorne and hester

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



Hester is described in the chapter "The Market Place" when a group of townspeople gathered outside the jail to witness her release. The woman in the crowd have a poor opinion of Hester, calling her a malefactress, a female criminal (Hawthorne Pg 35). Hester is described as a beautiful woman.

"Had there been a Papist among the crowd of Puritans, he might have seen in this beautiful woman, so picturesque in her attire and mien, and with the infant at her bosom, an object to remind him of the image of the Divine Maternity... something which should remind him, indeed, but only by contrast, of that sacred image of sinless motherhood, whose infant was to redeem in the world" (Hawthorne Pg 39). Despite of her public shaming, there is a beauty about Hester which people can not help but notice.

Hawthorne compares her beauty and elegance while on the scaffold to an image of Divine Maternity. Hester is also described as a humble and caring person brings the poor food and clothes and does not want anything in return.

"Hester bestowed all her superfluous means in charity, on wretches less miserable than herself, and who unfrequently insulted the hand that fed them". "She employed in making coarse garments for the poor. It is probable that there was an idea of penance in this mode of occupation, and that she she offered up a real sacrifice"(Hawthorne Pg 57). Even after she is punished for her crime of adultery and publically humiliated by being forced to wear a scarlet A, Hester does not give in.

Chillingworth is first described as a person of intellect. "There was a remarkable intelligence in his features, as of a person who had so cultivated his mental part that it could not fail to mould the physical to itself, and

become manifest by unmistakable tokens” (Hawthorne Pg 42). Later on the book Chillingworth is described as a person who is empty on the inside and a person who lived his life in vain. “ It was my folly! I have said it. But, up to that epoch of my life, I had lived in vain” (Hawthorne Pg 51). In the next page Chillingworth is consumed by revenge to find the person who had an affair with his wife. “ I shall seek this man, as I have sought truth in book; as I sought gold in alchemy (Hawthorne Pg 52). Chillingworth’s obsession with revenge affects his appearance. Although he is unattractive at the beginning of the novel, with crooked shoulders and an aged appearance, the hatred and vengeance transformed him into a devilish figure. Chillingworth’s primary motivation and driving force is revenge. When he arrives in town, he expects to find his wife waiting for him and to start a family with her. Later he finds out his wife had an affair with someone else. Instead he is left with nothing but the desire of revenge. In Chapter 10 Hawthorne describes Chillingworth as a person who had lost their free will. Chillingworth is trying to dig into the clergyman’s heart like a miner searching for gold. “ But, as he proceeded, a terrible fascination, a kind of fierce, though still calm, necessity seized the old man within its gripe, and never set him free again, until he had done all its bidding” (Hawthorne Pg 88).

A characteristic that Dimmesdale has is that he is a coward because he does not say his name when he asking Hester who is the father of the child. In a way he is a hypocrite because he is a minister and the fact that he had an affair with Hester and knowing that having an affair is a big sin. Dimmesdale privately acknowledges his sin, but until acknowledges it publicly, he cannot

begin to repent for his sin. In chapter 11, The Interior of a Heart, Dimmesdale was more than once in want to tell of telling his congregation. He tell his congregation that he was a vile person and is the worst of sinners. After his congregation had heard this he became more respected by his church because they believed that he very humble. Despite the fact that Dimmesdale declines to recognize his transgression, regardless he looks for types of penance. He tries to lessen his guilt by whipping himself repeatedly with a bloody scourge but only causes himself additional pain. Dimmesdale is being consumed with guilt. He continually was fighting an inner battle between telling the truth and saving his reputation as a spiritual leader within the town. Dimmesdale is too frightened and selfish to reveal his sin and to bear the the burden of punishment with Hester

Pearl is described as having an innocent life and has a native grace (pg 61). Pearl is the living, breathing scarlet letter, the token of her mother's adultery. She is the being that made her mother's sin known. Pearl's birth comes with great joy but also terrible pain. Hester loves her daughter but she is also a physical reminder of Hester's sin. Pearl is a blessing to Hester because she saves her life from the snare of the Devil. After being told that Hester may keep her daughter, Mistress Hibbins requests Hester to go with her into the forest with " the Black Man". Hester denies the request, but instead she must " tarry at home, and keep watch over her little Pearl". Had the town leaders taken Pearl from Hester, she would willingly have gone with Mistress Hibbins into the forest, and sign her name in the Black Man's book and that with her own blood (Hawthorne Pg 80) Pearl is described as outcast

of the infantile child because she different child from the rest of the other kinds. Pearl was born outcast of the infantile world. An imp of evil, emblem and product of sin, she had no right among christened infants (Hawthorne Pg 64)