

# The significance of the letter in the scarlet letter

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The Scarlet Letter was written in 1850, by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The book takes place in a 17th century village in Boston, which is a Puritan town. The main character of the book, Hester Prynne, has a child out of wedlock because she believed her husband to be dead because he sent her to America but never arrived in Boston and it was thought that he was lost at sea.

In reality, years after Hester arrives to Boston he arrives as well, but conceals his identity so no one will know he is there. Taking this into consideration, it is revealed that Hester has committed adultery, which is looked down upon in the Puritan community. As a punishment for her crime, Hester is forced to wear the letter A on all of her clothing and is shunned by everyone in her town. Hester begins to work towards earning the respect of the village people again by doing charitable deeds and living out her life quietly, without causing any problems. The longer this goes on, the more respect the village people have for her and eventually she is able to travel around the village without being scorned and shunned by everyone.

Easy A follows the same premise as The Scarlet Letter; however, the movie is modern, so the actions and consequences will be quite different than the book. Olive Penderghast was a very quiet and lonely high schooler until one day everything turned upside down. One day, Olive was talking to her best friend in the bathroom and had lied to her about losing her virginity to a nonexistent college boy because she didn't want to fit in with the rest of the school. This backfired because a religious girl at her school heard her fake story and spread it as a rumor around the whole school. People at her school begin to slut-shame her and try to avoid her at all cost. Instead of letting the

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comments get to her, she decides to take matters into her own hands and changes the way she dresses and acts as well as sewing a red A onto all of her clothes. She then embraces that people believe she is a slut and pretends to sleep with guys and in return she gets gift cards, money, and other gifts. Eventually, Olive loses all of her friends and wants to tell the truth, but none of the boys that paid her for her virginity will come forward and tell the truth. She decides that she wants to come forward with the truth and does so by announcing everything she has done on her webcast. Now, the whole school knows all the stories they have been told are fiction and eventually she earns her friendships back and gets a date with a guy who really likes her.

Obviously, there are some similarities between the book and the movie, but there are major differences between Hester Prynne and Olive Penderghast. One of the major differences between Olive and Hester is why they have the red A sewn onto their clothes. For Hester, the A represents the adultery that she committed and she has to wear it as a punishment for the crime she has committed, so everyone in the village can know what she has done. On the other hand, Olive chose to sew the red A onto all of her clothes, not as a punishment but because she wanted to attention of everyone at her school. Olive changed everything about her because she enjoyed the attention she had been getting since everyone thought she was sleeping around. She had never had attention like this before, so she wanted to do everything she could to continue it. Olive adds more fuel to the rumor by make a false statement that she was being paid to sleep with many different men all to gain more attention. This is different than Hester because she does not want

any more attention than the attention she already has. She instead tries to change the villages opinion of her and wants them to see her as a strong, independent mother instead of an adulterer.

Another other major difference between Hester and Olive is that in the beginning of the movie, Olive is someone that does not get attention from anyone at her school and has a deep desire to become popular and like by her peers. In order to achieve this popularity, Olive decides to let the rumors grow because she wants to fit in, but eventually the rumors become too big and she is isolated by all of her classmates. Hesters situation is completely different. She was born a Puritan and as a Puritan she was born into a society that had strict rules and if one deviated from them then they would be punished. Hester becomes an outcast of the Puritan community and she slowly finds her way back through hard work.

The way the two characters decide to resolve their problems is also vastly different. Olive realizes the negative effects that the rumors have had on her life and friendships and decides to finally tell the truth, which is that everything she has been saying about herself was a complete lie. Whereas, Hester admits to the crime she has committed and does hard work around her village to pay off those crimes. Although both the book and the movie have a happy ending with Olive getting her friendships back and Hester being able to be with the man of her dreams, the way they had to get to this point is different. These differences are a result of the different societies and time periods they live in. Hester could not just admit to her crime and then immediately be accepted back into society, but with hard work and

determination she was able to. Olive; on the other hand, was simply able to admit to her wrongdoings and everything in her life went back to normal and no hard work was needed to put her in that position.