

# Symbol of the prison and the rose bush in the scarlet letter

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



Located in Boston Massachusetts, during the 17th century, the Scarlet Letter begins with a gathering of Puritan colonists around a local prison. The colonists in the story seem to be waiting for some sort of public punishment of a prisoner. The mood expressed during this very first chapter of the Scarlet Letter is filled with melancholy and somberness. The only sense of beauty in this chapter is from the wild rose bush rooted at the threshold of the prison door, which brought the residents and prisoners of Boston a feeling of wishful hope.

Hester Prynne, the first character revealed in the Scarlet Letter, stumbles and struggles through a crowd, attempting to reach a designated area near the prison. People begin to surround Hester as they publicly criticize and condemn her, for she is wearing an embroidered badge with a scarlet letter A across her chest. This letter's purpose was to publicize her wrongdoing as an adulterer. Hester is called forth to the scaffold by a church official as she envisions her parents back in England and what they would think of the ghastly situation.

As Hester Prynne glances at the excoriating crowd, she recognizes a familiar man among the people. This man is Roger Chillingworth, her husband. He gestures to Hester not to reveal his identity to the governor and church officials. Chillingworth turns to a stranger standing near him in the horde and asks about Hester's punishment. The stranger explains that Hester is the wife of an Englishman who lived with her in Amsterdam until he decided to make a move to America. He sent her off to the New World and stayed behind in Amsterdam to resolve affairs, but never ended up joining her in

America. Chillingworth, acknowledging his mistakes, realizes that the stranger is indirectly describing him. Reverend Dimmesdale, a minister praised for his knowledge and advice, demanded Hester to reveal her baby's father. She dismisses his question and chooses not to expose him. She is shortly returned to the prison.

Roger Chillingworth is later called by church officials to provide medical assistance to Hester in her prison cell. This is the first time Chillingworth and Hester meet face to face in a long time. He offers her a cup of medicine, but Hester refuses to take it because she fears he has poisoned it in attempt to make her ill or even to kill her. Chillingworth affirms her that he would never do such a thing and urges her to take the medicine. He also asks Hester to reveal the baby's father, and after much pleading, she gives in and discloses to him that it may be the Black Man. Roger Chillingworth sets off to seek revenge on the man.

After several years, Hester Prynne is released from the prison. She is given the freedom to flee from Boston, Massachusetts, but she decides to stay instead. Hester settles down in an abandoned cabin at the border of town. Although being an outcast to Boston, Hester made a living through her needlework. Through her work of embroidery and sewing, she incorporated memories and events of her life into her masterpieces, except marriage. Regardless of her needlework's success in the city of Boston, she still felt a sense of loneliness and isolation from everyone around her. Chapter six of the Scarlet Letter introduces Hester's daughter Pearl as a new character. She was her mother's only treasure and was purchased with all Hester had. Pearl

appears to be an outcast to the rest of the children in Boston. Theyd poke fun at Pearl and her mother whenever they had the chance to. One day, while being rested upon her mothers chest, Pearl began to play with the Scarlet Letter on her mother. She questioned Hesters mysterious letter, asking where it came from. Hester, knowing that her daughters existence itself is in odds with the Puritan society, stays silent and avoids the topic of the origin of her cursed Scarlet Letter.

Hester later pays a visit to Governor Bellingham in his glorious mansion. She was there to deliver a pair of embellished gloves she had made for him and to find out if Pearl would be taken from her due to the rumors that she bore a demon child. Pearl, who was fascinated by the shining armor in the mansion of the governor, began to prance around Bellinghams residence. A wild rose planted on a bush outside the mansion caught Pearls eye as she began to holler for it. A group of four men entered the home, quieting Hesters daughter, for her obnoxious clamoring rung throughout the household.

Bellingham, Wilson, Dimmesdale, and Chillingworth stood in front of Hester as she nervously tried to silence young Pearl. The men began to tease Pearl, calling her names such as demon child, and question Hester as to why she should have the authority to keep her child after her wrongdoings. Hester answers the men, telling them that if she keeps her daughter, chances are that Pearl will never make the same mistakes she did. After contemplating the situation, Dimmesdale decides to side with Hester and Pearl and concludes that the mother and child shouldnt be separated for both of their sake. Bellingham and Wilson agree with Dimmesdales decision, but

Chillingworth suggests that they further investigate Hester and the mystery of her unknown lover. The men refuse to listen to Chillingworth's suggestions by responding that God will reveal Hester's lover in His timing, and His timing only.

Roger Chillingworth has hidden his identity from everyone in Boston, except for Hester. He becomes a doctor in order to be respected and valued by the townspeople, which would also help secure his current identity and keep anyone from knowing who he truly is to Hester. Having knowledge of various remedies and medicines advanced his success as a doctor. Later on, Dimmesdale becomes ill and Chillingworth wishes to cure him of his sickness. The people of Boston start to become suspicious of the situation, believing that Roger Chillingworth is actually a devil trying to capture Dimmesdale's soul instead of curing him.

Regardless of the townspeople's opinions of him, Chillingworth attempts to find the cause of Dimmesdale's health problem. Dimmesdale, on the other hand, begins to question and speculate Chillingworth's every move, taking the people's beliefs of Chillingworth into consideration. One afternoon, Dimmesdale and Chillingworth glimpsed Pearl dancing around a graveyard through the window of Dimmesdale's home. When Pearl catches Chillingworth spying on her, she warns her mother of his presence and suggests they leave before he tries to attempt to take her away from Hester. Chillingworth remarks that Hester isn't a woman of burying sin, yet she wears it openly across her chest. Dimmesdale is disgruntled with Chillingworth's words. Chillingworth then begins to question Dimmesdale's physical health,

suggesting he may have committed a sin that lead to the consequence of his illness. Dimmesdale is infuriated by Chillingworths questioning and leaves his room. This causes Chillingworth to become more suspicious of Dimmesdales actions. One day, while Dimmesdale lay resting on his bed reading a sermon, Chillingworth pushes Dimmesdales shirt up to see an object upon Dimmesdales chest. Chillingworth is left in both horror and excitement of what he had just witnessed.

Chillingworth begins to taunt Dimmesdale and the minister begins to lose trust for him. Dimmesdale continues in his suffering, but the trials he faces help guide him into writing his best sermons. Dimmesdale is holding onto a certain burden of sin that makes him become both physically and emotionally weary and he refuses to reveal it to anyone. He begins to see visions in his sleep. In one of them, he glimpses Hester and Pearl. Hester then puts her hand upon her scarlet letter and points to Dimmesdales chest. This causes Dimmesdale to treat himself harshly by whipping himself, fasting, and holding vigils.

One night, Dimmesdale decided to hold a vigil upon the scaffold where Hester stood for her punishment. During his vigil, he begins to illusion, perceiving Reverend Wilson in front of where he stood. He also began to imagine what he would face if everyone in the town of Boston saw him upon the platform. Both Hester and Pearl approached Dimmesdale after returning from visiting Reverend Winthrop, whom had unfortunately passed away. Dimmesdale invited Hester and Pearl to join him on the scaffold. The three of them joined hands as Pearl playfully asked if they would repeat the process

over again the next day at noon. Dimmesdale explained to Pearl that they wouldnt be joining on the scaffold until the day of judgment. Out of nowhere, a meteor lit the night sky, bringing forth a letter A in red lighting. Visible to the rest of Boston, the townspeople believed the A to be a sign from God that symbolized the angel Winthrop was to the people of Boston. From a distance, Chillingworth observed the conversations between Hester and Dimmesdale.

During this chapter of the Scarlet Letter, Pearl is seven years old. Hester becomes more sociable with her acquaintances and puts her needleworking skills to good use. She feeds the needy and gives aid to the sick and suffering. She is still viewed as an outcast to some townspeople of Boston but is accepted and respected as a person by most of the people. Although being seen differently than before, Hester develops a harsher personality.

During an outing to the beach, Hester stumbled upon Chillingworth, whom she wasnt entirely pleased to see. She approached him to discuss the subject of revealing Chillingworths true identity to Dimmesdale. Attempting to change the topic of conversation, Chillingworth mentioned that he had overheard the town fathers plan to remove her scarlet letter. Hester remarked that her letter wasnt able to be moved by anyone or anything until the time was right. She returned to talking about Dimmesdale and how she found it appropriate to let him know who Chillingworth was to her. Hester also pleads with Chillingworth to let his plan to seek vengeance against Dimmesdale go. Chillingworth, however, was impassive about their

conversation and still believed that revenge against Dimmesdale was his fate.

After speaking to Chillingworth regarding Dimmesdale, Hester finds Pearl playing inside a tide pool along the beach's coast. Pearl, who had sculpted a letter A out of eelgrass and placed it upon her chest, was pretending to be an enchanted mermaid. Hester was appalled with Pearl's actions and questioned why she would do such a thing. She also explained to Pearl that the letter's symbolism was not of good meaning. This conversation with her mother only caused Pearl to become more curious of what the letter really stood for.

Hester and Pearl venture inside a forest, waiting for Dimmesdale to arrive. Hester is planning on revealing Chillingworth's true identity to the young minister. While waiting for his arrival, Pearl began to implore her mother to inform her of the Black Man. Pearl had eavesdropped a conversation about the man back in the suburbs of the city. Tired and frustrated of Pearl's constant questions, Hester explains to her daughter that the so-called Black Man isn't a dark, evil man at all.

Dimmesdale approached Hester and Pearl in the forest since Hester requested that he would meet them there. The minister and Hester sat alongside a stream to discuss the forbidden topic: Dimmesdale's identity. When Hester reveals who Chillingworth truly is to her, Dimmesdale becomes outraged and says it's her fault he is in such unbearable pain. She emotionally breaks down before him and begs for forgiveness. Dimmesdale



is quick to forgive Hester for not telling her ahead of time, but fears that Chillingworth wouldnt keep their affair a secret. Hester reassures him that everything will turn out alright if he tries to escape from Chillingworths evil watch.

Hester and Dimmesdale have decided that fleeing from the bondages of Boston to Europe with young Pearl would be the safest route to go. Hester releases her heavy burden of sin in front of the minister and her child by ripping the letter off her chest. Hester begins to feel a sense of relief as she gains her self-confidence and beauty back after burying it under her sorrows for so long. Hester looks forward to the fact that Pearl will not only have her heavenly father by her side, but her earthly father as well.

Pearl becomes doubtful of the situation and fears walking any further towards her mother and father. She is saddened to see that her mom has taken off her scarlet letter. Hester puts it back on, hoping Pearl would come closer to them. Pearl ran to her mothers arms and gave her a kiss. Hester asks Pearl to embrace Dimmesdale too. She hadnt yet revealed to Pearl that Dimmesdale is her biological father.

Hester, Dimmesdale, and Pearl return to the town feeling renewed and cleansed of all unrighteousness. Hester has found a ship to escape to Europe on. Ecstatic about their decision to leave Boston once and for all, he plans to let everyone hes ever known that he is a new man in Christ and isnt who he used to be; sorrowful and enslaved to his burdens of sin. On Dimmesdales way back to his home, he sees many familiar faces, but avoids conversation

with any of them. When he arrives home, Dimmesdale informs Chillingworth that he isn't in need of a care-giver anymore. This leads Chillingworth to fear that the minister knows of his real identity. Dimmesdale is set to give a teaching in three days for the elections, but he burns his sermon script in his fireplace and starts over since he is renewed of his faith and cleansed of his previous sins.

The Boston townspeople congregate around the scaffold that Hester was publicly shamed on in the beginning of the Scarlet Letter in extolation of a new governor. Pearl begins to ponder of Dimmesdale in hopes that he will hold her hand like he did back in the forest. During the celebration in Boston, a sailor approaches Hester to inform her that Roger Chillingworth will be taking the same voyage as her, Pearl, and Dimmesdale because he offered to serve as a medic onboard for them. Hester becomes despondent after hearing such news and begins to feel the same emptiness and sorrows as she did in her past.

During the procession in the marketplace, Hester begins to have second thoughts about her plan to escape Boston with Pearl and Dimmesdale. All of a sudden, Mistress Hibbins appears to Hester and Pearl in a crowd of uncountable townspeople. She asks Pearl to join her on a witch's ride due to her beliefs of Dimmesdale, Pearl's father, being the actual Devil. After conversating with Mistress Hibbins, Hester grabs Pearl and approaches the front of the scaffold to hear Dimmesdale's Election Day message more clearly. During Dimmesdale's teaching, Pearl reaches out to her mother to tell her of the news she was given by the ship overseer. Chillingworth had made

adjustments to their voyage, suggesting that only Hester and Pearl board the ship and leave the minister behind.

Dimmesdale continues to give his sermon and everyone listening seems to be impressed and moved by his words. During the conclusion of his teaching, he cries out to Hester and Pearl and asks them to climb onto the scaffold with him. Suddenly, Dimmesdale exposes his heavy burden of sin to the people of Boston, leaving every single person standing in the marketplace startled and horrified. He becomes weary and loses all strength and ability. Unfortunately, Dimmesdale takes his last breath upon the scaffold and passes away in front of thousands of Boston townspeople.

After Dimmesdale's passing, there was controversy about whether there appeared to be a scarlet letter A upon his chest or not because some claimed that they didn't see anything on his chest during his death on the scaffold. Not long after the minister's deceasing, Chillingworth became ill and eventually passed away as well. Hester and Pearl have fled Boston to live better lives away from the sorrows of the town. Years later, Hester returns to Boston to continue helping with charity through her needlework. She lives the rest of her life in the town until she passes away and is buried in the Kings Chapel graveyard alongside Dimmesdale. Both of their gravestones have scarlet letter As placed upon them.