

The scarlet letter

Business



In the early sixteen hundreds crimes such as arsenal, theft, adultery and others were dealt with the most utmost retribution.

Especially if the accused were a woman, for in those times, women were supposed to be the perfect example of a mother and loyal to their husbands even if the husband were deceased. In the novel *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, a couple of the same crimes were committed, although with different intention, by the characters in this book. Hester Prynne, Authur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingsworth the three main characters are the main wrong doers in the scarlet letter and by the end of the novel their crimes had an extreme impact on the course of their lives. Hester Prynne was the most effected character because of his or her crime in this novel. Adultery was Hester's crime and as punishment for her heinous act the Massachusetts Bay colony's law forces her to wear a large, red " A" on her chest.

" On the breast of her gown, in fine red cloth, surrounded with an elaborate embroidery and fantastic flourishes of gold thread, appeared the letter A"(Hawthorn 42). That is not the only scarlet " A" she will have in her life. With her daughter Pearl, Hester dresses her up in fancy, red clothing, which as some may think is another way of reminding herself for her wrong doing daily. " The child's attire, on the other hand, was distinguished by a fanciful, or, we may rather say, a fantastic ingenuity, which served, indeed, to heighten the airy charm that early began to develop itself in the little girl, but which appeared to have also a deeper meaning." (Hawthorne 66). This marked woman feels extreme shame, thus heavily burdened with the guilt and for seven years, Hester will feel like so.

But even though she is shamed, she is really belligerent to the poor, who also scorn her, even though she is poor herself. She is devoted to her daughter Pearl and will do anything to keep Pearl as her own. Towards the end of the novel, Hester learns of what Chillingworth has been doing to her lover Dimmesdale and feels a greatening in her shame, for she had caused her once husband to become evil and twisted and for Dimmesdale to be tortured daily because of her wrong doing. Along with Hester Prynne a man named Arthur Dimmesdale committed adultery. Dimmesdale is the minister of the puritan church of the Massachusetts Bay colony when he met the “widowed” Hester.

The two fell in love and committed the most heinous crime known back in those days. “...Reverend Mr. Dimmesdale—young clergyman, who had come from one of the great English universities, bringing all the learning of the age into our wild forest land.” (Hawthorne 52) When Hester’s ex-husband finds out that Dimmesdale was the one who Hester cheated on him with, he turned hostile and tortured Dimmesdale psychologically daily. “ We are not, Hester, the worst sinners in the world. There is one worse than even the polluted priest! That old man’s revenge has been blacker than my sin.

He has violated, in cold blood, the sanctity of a human heart. Thou and I, Hester, never did so!”(Hawthorne) That quote was talking about Chillingworth’s crime against Dimmesdale. We do not find out until the end of the novel where Dimmesdale takes Hester and Pearl onto the Pulpit and showed the surrounding crowd the scarlet “ A” on his chest. “ Most of the spectators testified to having seen, on the breast of the unhappy minister, a SCARLET LETTER—the very semblance of that worn by Hester Prynne—
<https://assignbuster.com/the-scarlet-letter/>

imprinted in the flesh. As regarded its origin there were various explanations, all of which must necessarily have been conjectural.” (Hawthorne 210).

And as it says in the last quote, it is not told how Dimmesdale got the bloody letter on his chest, whether he did it to himself or if it just appeared there one day remains a mystery. “ Again, at the first instant of perceiving that thin visage, and the slight deformity of the figure, she pressed her infant to her bosom with so convulsive a force that the poor babe uttered another cry of pain.” (Hawthorne 47). As it said in the last quote, Chillingworth is small in stature and very deformed in the shoulders and back. I believe that his deformity portrays the appearance and make-up of his soul and psychological self, which is evil and demented. Chillingworth was Hester’s husband when she crossed the Atlantic to the new world and when he was informed that Hester had committed adultery against him, he was very cross.

Hester was forced to keep secret his identity by Chillingworth at the threat of him compromising her lover’s position in business and life. “ Recognize me not, by word, by sign, by look! Breathe not the secret, above all, to the man thou wottest of. Shouldst thou fail me in this, beware! His fame, his position, his life will be in my hands. Beware!”(Hawthorne 60). Revenge and mental is Chillingworth’s crime, his resentment towards Hester and Dimmesdale are shown clearly throughout the novel, for Chillingworth does not hide what he is doing. “ I shall seek this man, as I have sought truth in books: as I have sought gold in alchemy.

There is a sympathy that will make me conscious of him. I shall see him tremble. I shall feel myself shudder, suddenly and unawares. Sooner or later, he must needs be mine.”(Hawthorne 60) In that quote Roger swore his revenge on Hester’s lover and that he would not fail to reveal his identity. Roger found out it was Dimmesdale and psychologically abused him.

However I believe that when Dimmesdale died from all his built up grief, he lost all energy that came from his plot to have revenge and died himself. Hester Prynne, Authur Dimmesdale, and Roger Chillingsworth the three main characters are the main wrong doers in the scarlet letter and by the end of the novel their crimes had an extreme impact on the course of their lives. And change they did. However, their crimes are different in some ways. For instance, both Hester and Dimmesdale committed adultery and Chillingsworth revenge and manipulation. The adultery committed was really in, all essence , out of love and loneliness for Hester and Dimmesdale.

Chillingsworth’s sinned because he was just twisted and messed up inside because of the adultery. All crimes, even today are not committed with ill intentions but sometimes out of an extreme neediness to fulfill a person’s desire. Works Cited Hawthorne, Nathaniel. The Scarlet Letter. Boston, London: Ticknor and Fields, 1850.

Print.