

The Scarlett Letter

Characters

- Hester Prynne: Protagonist, wears scarlett letter (commits adultery), beautiful, seamstress
- Pearl: Prynne's illegitimate child, mischievous child, moody
- Arthur Dimmesdale: theologian, Hester's lover, torments himself because of his sin, conflicted
- Governor Bellingham: wealthy, older, like an aristocrat, unaware that his sister is a witch
- Mistress Hibbins: Bellingham's sis, witch who rides w/ the "black man" (devil)
- Reverend Wilson: clergyman
- Dimmesdale symbolizes:
 - hypocrisy
 - hidden sin
 - his congregation doesn't believe him when he tries to confess
- Pearl symbolizes:
 - the human version of the scarlett letter
 - she can provoke adult characters in the book
- Hester Prynne:
 - scapegoat for Puritans' sins
 - strong-willed
 - can see everyone else's sin
- Roger Chillingworth
 - symbolizes the "black man" - puts the rest of his life into getting revenge
 - basically hates his life
 - deformity symbolizes moral deformity
 - eventually gives money to Pearl

The Rosebush!

- symbolizes nature's pity towards mankind
- symbolizes presence of beauty in darkness
- kindness, forgiveness / freedom

The black flower

- symbolizes darkness/fear
- symbolizes the prison

Background of the story

- 17th century New England
- Puritans have a cemetery and a prison
- Why the story happens in the first place? Hester commits adultery - mothers a child
- Hester's two punishments: wear the "A" - public humiliation, banished from society
- Chillingworth shows up the day of Hester's punishment
- Hester's kid's name is Pearl

Chapters 7-11

- Hester goes to Bellingham's house to deliver gloves, ask why Pearl may be taken from her
 - why? Hester may be bad mom, Pearl may be demon-child
- Dimmesdale lets Hester keep Pearl (obvi) (child from God)
- Chillingworth says the dad will be found
- Chillingworth lives w/ Dimmesdale (he wants revenge!)
- ppl think Chillingworth may be evil, they are correct
- Pearl knows Chillingworth is evil (she trusts Dimmesdale)
- Dimmesdale begins torturing himself (he believes his guilt is his punishment)

Chapters 12-17

- 7 years have passed (Pearl=7)
- Dimmesdale is a coward - stands on scaffold at night-time (Chill. sees him / finds his glove)
- "A" now means able
- Hester is respected
- Hester looks older
- Hester wants to save Dimm. - talks to Chill, Chill doesn't care
- Hester / Dimmesdale meet in the forest, agree to run away together