

The Scarlet Letter

Book Annotations—Chapters 1-3

Write the following Annotations inside of your text. Details should be highlighted or CLEARLY underlined, and the margin notes should be placed at the BOTTOM of the page that most corresponds with the margin note.

***PLEASE REMEMBER a few times in each chapter, you should write a brief scene description at the TOP OF THE PAGE. A few words will suffice. You just need enough to give yourself a brief guidepost when we flip back through the book later.**

Chapter One

- Chapter one describes the drab, somber setting of the narrative. As the narrator tells us, this place ultimately proves to be a prison or a cemetery for most of its inhabitants. Find and underline/highlight at least five SPECIFIC DETAILS that reinforce the idea that this place is a prison.
- Chapter one establishes one of the most important symbols in this book, the rosebush that grows next to the prison door. Highlight the section of text that describes the rosebush. In a **margin note** at the bottom of the page, explain your thoughts about the rosebush. How does this symbol contrast with the rest of the chapter?

Chapter Two

- Find and underline/highlight at least three specific comments that the women in the crowd make about Hester Prynne.
- Find and underline/highlight at least three references to Hester Prynne's child.
- **Margin Note:** In addition to judging Hester for committing adultery, the crowd judges Hester Prynne in other ways. What do the women in the crowd say about the construction of the letter "A" on Hester's dress? Ultimately, what do you think motivates the women's hatred of Hester Prynne?
- Find and underline/highlight at least three specific references to Hester Prynne's past
- **Margin Note:** What exactly do you think is the purpose of the large scaffolding in the center of the town square?

Chapter Three

- Find and underline/highlight at least three specific descriptions of Hester Prynne's husband, Roger Chillingworth.
- **Margin Note:** Why doesn't Chillingworth immediately reveal that he is Hester Prynne's husband?
- Find and underline/highlight the details of Hester Prynne's punishment.
- Find and underline/highlight at least one detail that describes the personality of each of the town fathers.
- **Margin Note:** Summarize the point of Reverend Wilson's sermon as Hester stands on the scaffold.
- During the sermon, the town seems to think that the scarlet letter is glowing. Find and underline/highlight a reference to the "glowing" letter.

The Scarlet Letter

Book Annotations—Chapters 4-8

Write the following Annotations inside of your text. Details should be highlighted or CLEARLY underlined, and the margin notes should be placed at the BOTTOM of the page that most corresponds with the margin note.

***PLEASE REMEMBER a few times in each chapter, you should write a brief scene description at the TOP OF THE PAGE. A few words will suffice. You just need enough to give yourself a brief guidepost when we flip back through the book later.**

Chapter Four

- Chillingworth clearly makes Hester afraid and uncomfortable. Find and Highlight at least three specific details that show Hester's fear and discomfort.
- Find and highlight the section of the text where Chillingworth chastises himself for believing that he would be able to make a beautiful woman like Hester happy.
- **Margin Note:** What do you think it means that Hester says that Chillingworth may be "The Black Man"?
- **Margin Note:** Given the tone of Chillingworth's "interview" with Hester, it is clear that while he is angry with her, he does not plan on hurting Hester directly. What does Chillingworth want to do?

Chapter Five

- Find and underline/highlight at least three specific details that demonstrate Hester's status as an outcast in the town.
- Find and underline/highlight three specific descriptions of Hester's needlework.
- Hester's needlework is in high demand from the townspeople for all major functions and life events except for one. Find and underline the section that describes this solitary life event.
- **Margin Note:** Why is it ironic and hypocritical that Hester's needlework is in such high demand?

Chapter Six

- Most of this chapter is dedicated to describing Pearl. Find and underline/highlight at least three SPECIFIC details that highlight DIFFERENT elements of Pearl's personality.
- Find and underline/highlight at least three examples of the townspeople or the other children being cruel to Pearl.
- Find and underline/highlight the section of the text that describes Pearl touching/playing with the Scarlet Letter.
- **Margin Notes:** What specific personality traits has Pearl inherited from her mother?

Chapter Seven

- Find and underline/highlight Hester's two reasons for visiting the Governor's mansion.
- Find and underline/highlight the section of the text that describes Pearl scaring off the children that fling mud.
- Find and underline/highlight the section describing the reflection of the Scarlet letter in the suit of armor.
- **Margin Notes:** What causes Pearl to scream and cry as she looks out the window? Why is this significant?

Chapter Eight

- Find and underline/highlight at least three details that demonstrate Reverend Wilson's dislike for Pearl and Hester.
- Find and underline/highlight Chillingworth's reaction to the news that Hester will keep custody of Pearl.
- Find and underline/highlight Mistress Hibbins' invitation to Hester.
- **Margin Notes:** Compare and Contrast Reverend Dimmesdale's reaction to Hester Prynne with the other members of the town council (Bellingham and Wilson)

The Scarlet Letter

Book Annotations—Chapters 9-12

Write the following Annotations inside of your text. Details should be highlighted or CLEARLY underlined, and the margin notes should be placed at the BOTTOM of the page that most corresponds with the margin note.

***PLEASE REMEMBER a few times in each chapter, you should write a brief scene description at the TOP OF THE PAGE. A few words will suffice. You just need enough to give yourself a brief guidepost when we flip back through the book later.**

Chapter Nine

- The chapter is entitled “The Leech.” Find and highlight the reference in the text that explains this title.
- Because of his recent past, Chillingworth actually has some knowledge of alternative medicines. Find and highlight the section that describes Chillingworth’s “alternative” or “natural” medical knowledge.
- **Margin Note:** Briefly describe Dimmsdale’s failing health. What do you think is the root of his illness?
- Find and underline the description of the tapestries within Dimmsdale’s bedroom.
- **Margin Notes:** At first, the townspeople are glad that Chillingworth has arrived. How does their perception of Chillingworth change over time?

Chapter Ten

- Dimmsdale notices a strange-looking plant that Chillingworth has found. **Margin Notes:** Where did Chillingworth find this plant, and why does he believe the weeds are so dark?
- When the men here a cry from outside, they see Pearl playing in the graveyard. Find and highlight the description of Pearl playing in the cemetery.
- **Margin Note:** What is Pearl’s reaction when she sees the two men in the window?
- Find and underline Dimmsdale’s comment that Hester’s sin is not a “buried” sin.
- **Margin Note:** What does Chillingworth do while Dimmsdale is sleeping, and what is his reaction? We are kept in the dark as to what Chillingworth sees. What do you think he saw?

Chapter Eleven

- Find and highlight at least two details that show how Dimmsdale’s sermons have changed.
- Find and highlight at least three specific details describing Chillingworth’s psychological torture of Dimmsdale.
- **Margin Note:** Summarize Dimmsdale’s vision of Hester. What do you think this vision means?
- Find and highlight at least two specific ways that Dimmsdale punishes himself physically.
- **Margin Notes:** What is Dimmsdale’s idea to finally alleviate himself of the pain of his sin?

Chapter Twelve

- Find and highlight three details that demonstrate Dimmsdale’s delirium (his crazy, erratic behavior).
- Find and highlight Pearl’s question to Dimmsdale. (What does Pearl want him to do the following day at noon?)
- **Margin Note:** What do you think is the significance of the meteor that flies by in the sky?
- **Margin Note:** The townspeople have a different understanding of “A” left by the meteor. What is the townspeople’s understanding?

The Scarlet Letter

Book Annotations—Chapters 13-19

Write the following Annotations inside of your text. Details should be highlighted or CLEARLY underlined, and the margin notes should be placed at the BOTTOM of the page that most corresponds with the margin note.

***PLEASE REMEMBER a few times in each chapter, you should write a brief scene description at the TOP OF THE PAGE. A few words will suffice. You just need enough to give yourself a brief guidepost when we flip back through the book later.**

Chapter Thirteen

- Find and highlight the new meaning some of the townsfolk have begun to use for Hester's scarlet letter.
- Find and highlight at least two ways that Hester has changed over the years.
- **Margin Notes:** Describe some of Hester Prynne's worries, specifically worries regarding Pearl and worries regarding Dimmesdale and Chillingworth.

Chapter Fourteen

- Find and underline Hester's comment regarding "divine providence" taking away her scarlet letter.
- Find and underline at least two of Chillingworth's comments that make it clear he knows the identity of Hester's secret lover.
- **Margin Note:** Summarize Hester's conversation with Chillingworth regarding revenge and humanity.

Chapter Fifteen

- Find and highlight the description of Pearl's seaweed "A."
- **Margin Notes:** Although it seems far too perceptive for a girl so young, Pearl draws a connection between Hester's Scarlet Letter and Reverend Dimmesdale. Describe Pearl's comments about this connection.

Chapter Sixteen

- Find and highlight at least three separate references to the "Black Man"
- **Margin Notes:** Before Pearl scurries into the woods, she ponders a question about the "Black Man." What does she wonder about the "Black Man" and the minister?

Chapter Seventeen

- Find and highlight at least three details that demonstrate the fact that Hester and Dimmesdale still love each other.
- **Margin Notes:** Describe Dimmesdale's reaction when he learns that Chillingworth is Hester's husband.

Chapter Eighteen

- Find and highlight at least three specific details about Hester Prynne that change when she casts off her Scarlet Letter.
- **Margin Notes:** Ultimately, why do you think that Hester finally felt free to cast off the Scarlet Letter?

Chapter Nineteen

- **Margin Notes:** Explain the scene that occurs as Hester calls Pearl to come and join them. Why does Pearl refuse to come, and what must Hester do in order to get Pearl to join them?
- Find and highlight Pearl's question about Dimmesdale joining hands with Hester and Pearl as they return to town.
- **Margin Notes:** What is Dimmesdale's response to Pearl's question, and how does she react?

The Scarlet Letter

Book Annotations—Chapters 20-24

Write the following Annotations inside of your text. Details should be highlighted or CLEARLY underlined, and the margin notes should be placed at the BOTTOM of the page that most corresponds with the margin note.

***PLEASE REMEMBER a few times in each chapter, you should write a brief scene description at the TOP OF THE PAGE. A few words will suffice. You just need enough to give yourself a brief guidepost when we flip back through the book later.**

Chapter Twenty

- **Margin Notes:** Specifically explain Hester and Dimmesdale's plan to run away together.
- Clearly, the conversation with Hester changes Dimmesdale. Find and highlight at least three different details that suggest Dimmesdale's change in character.
- **Margin Notes:** Why do you think Dimmesdale throws away his original manuscript for the Election Day Sermon?

Chapter Twenty-One

- Find and highlight at least three details that remind you of the opening chapter.
- **Margin Notes:** What horrible piece of news does the sailor give to Hester?

Chapter Twenty-Two

- Find and highlight at least three details that describe the "majestic procession" (the march of the town fathers).
- **Margin Notes:** How has Dimmesdale changed over the last few days, according to many of the townspeople?
- Find and highlight Mistress Hibbons' comment about Dimmesdale's "mark" becoming plain to all.

Chapter Twenty-Three

- Find and highlight at least two descriptions from the townspeople regarding Dimmesdale's Election Day sermon.
- Find and highlight at least two details showing the crowd's reaction when Dimmesdale asks Hester to join him on the scaffolding.
- Find and highlight the description of the mark upon Dimmesdale's chest when he tears away his shirt.
- **Margin Notes:** Summarize the conversation between Hester Prynne and Dimmesdale on the scaffolding that occurs just before Dimmesdale dies.

Chapter Twenty-Four

- Though most people agree that they saw a scarlet letter "A" on Dimmesdale's chest, others argue that the minister did not sin at all. In a **margin note**, explain what these people think happened on the scaffolding.
- Find and highlight the description of Chillingworth's demise.
- Find and highlight at least three details that show how Hester Prynne's story becomes a legend in the town.
- **Margin Notes:** What is the significance of Hester Prynne's burial, including the location in the chapel graveyard, the distance from Dimmesdale's gravesite, and the unique headstone?