

Name _____

Hester Prynne's Arrival and the Scarlet Letter: Chapters 1-4

Open-Ended Response Answer Key

1. The early chapters of "The Scarlet Letter" highlight the theme of public judgment and humiliation. Hester Prynne defies societal expectations by enduring her punishment with dignity and refusing to reveal the father's name. Her calm demeanor challenges the harshness of the Puritan judgment, raising questions about the nature of sin and the consequences of societal condemnation.
2. Roger Chillingworth's character undergoes a transformation from a seemingly innocent physician to a vengeful antagonist. His quest for revenge is driven by his belief that the man who wronged Hester is responsible for his suffering. Chillingworth's obsession with revenge shapes his actions and adds complexity to the story, as readers question the morality of his actions and the consequences of seeking vengeance.
3. The scarlet letter "A" and the scaffold are powerful symbols in the novel. The scarlet letter represents Hester's sin of adultery and serves as a mark of shame. The scaffold symbolizes a place of public judgment and punishment. These symbols shape the narrative and the characters' experiences, emphasizing themes of sin, judgment, and redemption.
4. Nathaniel Hawthorne creates tension and conflict in the early chapters of the novel through the public humiliation of Hester Prynne and the curiosity surrounding the identity of Pearl's father. Themes of sin, judgment, and societal expectations emerge as readers grapple with the consequences of Hester's actions and the harshness of the Puritan society. The initial events set the stage for the exploration of these themes throughout the novel.

