

Name _____

Closure and Consequences: Chapters 20-24 of 'The Scarlet Letter'

Short Answer Key

1. The scaffold serves as a symbol of public judgment and spiritual renewal in Chapter 23. It is the place where Reverend Dimmesdale reveals his sin to the townspeople, marking a moment of catharsis and transformation.
2. Reverend Dimmesdale's confession in Chapter 23 shocks and horrifies the townspeople, as they had held him in high regard as their spiritual leader. Some may be moved by his confession, while others may struggle to reconcile his public sin with their religious beliefs.
3. Hester and Pearl decide to leave the Puritan settlement and start a new life elsewhere. This decision signifies their desire to escape the judgment and constraints of their past and seek a fresh start together.
4. The scarlet letter "A" takes on new meaning in the conclusion of the novel, symbolizing not only sin and shame but also the potential for forgiveness and redemption. It becomes a symbol of Hester's strength and resilience.
5. The closing reflections on good and evil in the novel emphasize the complexity of human nature. They suggest that every individual possesses both good and evil qualities, highlighting the novel's exploration of moral ambiguity and the capacity for change.

