

The Scarlet Letter

Nathaniel Hawthorne

What happens when the symbol meant to humiliate Hester becomes the most beautiful thing she wears?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Hester and the embroidered A
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FIND THE ANCHOR TEXT

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

SECTION / LOCATION	Chapter II · The Market-Place
START	The door of the jail being flung open from within
END	It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself.
PASSAGE ID	sec-sl-01

THE MOVE

Track the conflict between punishment and self-presentation

WHY THIS PASSAGE

The scarlet letter is designed by the community to reduce Hester to a single shameful identity, but Hester’s elaborate embroidery makes the punishment visually complicated. The symbol carries the community’s sentence and Hester’s artistry at the same time.

MARK

Underline the language that describes what the authorities intend the letter to mean. Circle the details of Hester’s embroidery and appearance. In the margin, write PUNISHMENT or SELF-PRESENTATION beside each description.

NOTICE

- What does the community want people to see when they look at the letter?
- Which details make the letter beautiful enough to resist that intended meaning?
- Does Hester's embroidery erase the punishment, intensify it, or make the symbol mean two things at once?

THINK

Answer provisionally: What happens when the symbol meant to humiliate Hester becomes the most beautiful thing she wears? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: What happens when the symbol meant to humiliate Hester becomes the most beautiful thing she wears? Use at least two details from the assigned passage and explain how they support your interpretation.

CLOSE

Name the single detail that most changed or sharpened your interpretation, and explain why.

STRONG ANSWER	The letter remains a punishment, but Hester's elaborate embroidery prevents the community from controlling its meaning completely. The same object carries public shame and Hester's artistry/self-presentation at once.
EVIDENCE	Use the authorities' intended function of the A alongside details of its beauty, craftsmanship, and Hester's appearance. Strong answers explain the tension rather than claiming she simply cancels the punishment.
WATCH FOR	Do not say the beautiful embroidery 'turns the A positive' immediately. The power of the passage comes from two meanings coexisting.
SOLO	Read the exact passage independently.
SUPPORTED	Use narration and sentence highlighting while reading the same passage.
LISTENING	Listen to the exact passage; visual following is optional. Same question and evidence demand.

STUDENT PAGE · SAME PASSAGE, SAME THINKING

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What happens when the symbol meant to humiliate Hester becomes the most beautiful thing she wears?

START ANCHOR	The door of the jail being flung open from within
END ANCHOR	It had the effect of a spell, taking her out of the ordinary relations with humanity, and enclosing her in a sphere by herself.

Use the Anchor Text Table of Contents in the Enhanced Reader to open the START anchor. Then use the dropdown to select the END anchor.

OPEN THE MARKED PASSAGE IN TUMBLELIT

SOLO: read independently. SUPPORTED: use narration + highlighting. LISTENING: listen to the exact passage. The question and evidence task stay the same.

1. **MARK** - Underline the language that describes what the authorities intend the letter to mean. Circle the details of Hester's embroidery and appearance. In the margin, write PUNISHMENT or SELF-PRESENTATION beside each description.
2. **NOTICE** - What does the community want people to see when they look at the letter? Which details make the letter beautiful enough to resist that intended meaning? Does Hester's embroidery erase the punishment, intensify it, or make the symbol mean two things at once?
3. **THINK** - Answer provisionally: What happens when the symbol meant to humiliate Hester becomes the most beautiful thing she wears?
4. **WRITE** - Write a short response using at least two pieces of evidence from this passage.

Use evidence from the assigned passage. Show what you noticed and how the text supports your interpretation.