

The Scarlet Letter

Nathaniel Hawthorne

Why does the natural world seem to change when Hester removes the letter?

TOTAL TIME

PASSAGE

30 minutes	Hester removes the letter
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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 XVIII · A Flood of Sunshine
START	So speaking, she undid the clasp that fastened the scarlet letter
END	And, as if the gloom of the earth and sky had been but the effluence of these two mortal hearts, it vanished with their sorrow.
PASSAGE ID	sec-sl-03

THE MOVE

Read setting as a response to character action

WHY THIS PASSAGE

When Hester removes the letter, Hawthorne lets the forest seem to participate in the release. Sunlight, shadow, and appearance change with her action, making setting function like an emotional response rather than neutral background.

MARK

Circle every change in light, color, or natural detail that occurs after Hester removes the letter. Underline the sentence describing the change in Hester herself. Draw a line between the physical setting and her emotional release.

NOTICE

- What changes first: Hester, the light around her, or the reader's sense of the scene?
- Why does sunlight matter in a novel where Hester has repeatedly been associated with public shame?
- What does the forest seem to 'approve' that the town does not?

THINK

Answer provisionally: Why does the natural world seem to change when Hester removes the letter? Choose the strongest interpretation you can defend from this passage alone.

WRITE

Write a short evidence-based response to: Why does the natural world seem to change when Hester removes the letter? 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 forest seems to respond because Hester's removal of the letter is immediately matched by changes in light, color, and natural atmosphere. Setting becomes an external version of release that the town's moral system would not grant her.
EVIDENCE	Use the action of removing the letter and at least two changes in sunlight, appearance, or natural imagery that follow it.
WATCH FOR	Do not claim the forest literally approves of Hester as a factual event. Explain how Hawthorne uses setting symbolically to make release feel visible.
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

The Scarlet Letter

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Why does the natural world seem to change when Hester removes the letter?

START ANCHOR	So speaking, she undid the clasp that fastened the scarlet letter
END ANCHOR	And, as if the gloom of the earth and sky had been but the effluence of these two mortal hearts, it vanished with their sorrow.

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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 - Circle every change in light, color, or natural detail that occurs after Hester removes the letter. Underline the sentence describing the change in Hester herself. Draw a line between the physical setting and her emotional release.
2. NOTICE - What changes first: Hester, the light around her, or the reader's sense of the scene? Why does sunlight matter in a novel where Hester has repeatedly been associated with public shame? What does the forest seem to 'approve' that the town does not?
3. THINK - Answer provisionally: Why does the natural world seem to change when Hester removes the letter?
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.