



Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*

Written for the Stage by Liam Macik

November 1, 2019 - November 10, 2019

The courage and strength of Hester Prynne will lift your spirits and captivate you in this timeless classic that is relevant today.

Prime Stage Theatre Performances are located at the New Hazlett Theater Center for Performing Arts, Pittsburgh, PA

Welcome to Prime Stage Theatre's 2019-2020 Season
See Me for Who I Am

Bringing Literature to Life!



illustrated by Lidia De Rosa

Dear Educator,

We are pleased to bring you the World Premiere play of *The Scarlet Letter* written for the stage by Liam Macik from the book by Nathaniel Hawthorne, our first exciting production of the season.

All literature produced by Prime Stage is always drawn from middle and secondary Reading Lists and themes are in the current Pennsylvania curriculum.

This Resource Guide is designed to provide historical background and context, classroom activities and curricular content to help you enliven your students' experience with the literature and the theatre. We encourage you to use the theatrical games and creative thinking activities, as well as the Theatre Etiquette suggested activities to spark personal connections with the themes and characters in the story of *The Scarlet Letter*.

If you have any questions about the information or activities in the guide, please contact me and I will be happy to assist you, *and* I welcome your suggestions and comments!

Linda Haston, Education Director & Teaching Artist
Prime Stage Theatre
lhaston@primestage.com

The activities in this guide are intended to enliven, clarify and enrich the text as you read, and the experience as you *watch* the literature.



artwork by SunNeko Lee



OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING

Literacy In ACTION Program (LACT)
Student Matinee Field Trips
Global Classroom
Creative Arts Showcase
Young Women's Collaborative
Technical Theatre Interns
Professional Development
Teen Dating Awareness
Summer Camps/Workshops

OUR EDUCATION PROGRAMMING IS FUNDED IN PART BY THE FOLLOWING FOUNDATIONS

Allegheny Regional Asset District
American Eagle Outfitters
Jack Buncher Foundation
Philip Chosky Charitable Education Fund
Edith L. Trees Charitable Trust
The Fine Foundation
Henry C. Frick Education Fund of the Buhl Foundation
The Grable Foundation
Heinz Endowments
Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh
Macy's Corporation
Massey Charitable Trust
Moe's Southwest Grill
Howard & Nell E. Miller Foundation
W.I. Patterson Charitable Foundation
Pennsylvania Council on the Arts
People's Natural Gas
PNC Charitable Foundation
Donald & Sylvia Robinson

PRIME STAGE THEATRE EDUCATION STAFF

Wayne Brinda, Ed.D.
Producing Artistic Director

Linda Haston
Education Director

Ken Lutz
Global Learning Coordinator

Monica Stephenson
Education Coordinator

Ryan Pontzloff
Education Intern

Heather Sendera
Student Matinee Field Trips

Tina Cerny
Technical Theatre Intern Director

TEACHER ADVISORY COUNCIL

Education Staff, John Dolphin, Brooke Kosar, Michael Perry, Jennifer Wells, Linda Withrow, and Suzeanne Zoratto



Featured National Standards:

English/Language Arts

Standards Developed by International Reading Association and National Council of Teachers of English

1. Students read a wide range of literature from many periods in many genres to build an understanding of the many dimensions (e.g., philosophical, ethical, and aesthetic) of human experience.
2. Students apply a wide range of strategies to comprehend, interpret, evaluate, and appreciate texts. They draw on their prior experience, their interactions with other readers and writers, their knowledge of word meaning and of other texts, their word identification strategies, and their understanding of textual features (e.g., sound-letter correspondence, sentence structure, context and graphics).
3. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
4. Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, and video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.
5. Students participate as knowledgeable, reflective, creative, and critical members of a variety of literacy communities.
6. Students use spoken, written, and visual language to accomplish their own purposes (e.g., for learning, enjoyment, persuasion, and the exchange of information).

Theatre

NA 5-8.3 Designing by developing environments for improvised and scripted scenes

Students analyze improvised and scripted scenes for technical requirements.

NA5-8.7 Analyzing, evaluating, and constructing meanings from improvised and scripted scenes and from theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and support the meanings constructed from their and others' dramatic Performances Students use articulated criteria to describe, analyze, and constructively evaluate the perceived effectiveness of artistic choices found in dramatic performances.

NA 9-12.2 Acting by developing, communicating, and sustaining characters in improvisations and informal or formal productions

Students analyze the physical, emotional, and social dimensions of characters found in dramatic texts from various genres and media.



NA 9-12.3 Designing and producing by conceptualizing and realizing artistic interpretations for informal or formal productions

Students analyze a variety of dramatic texts from cultural and historical perspectives to determine production requirements.

NA9-12.5 Researching by evaluating and synthesizing cultural and historical information to support artistic choices

Students identify and research cultural, historical, and symbolic clues in dramatic texts, and evaluate the validity and practicality of the information to assist in making artistic choices for informal and formal productions.

NA9-12.7 Analyzing, critiquing, and constructing meanings from informal and formal theatre, film, television, and electronic media productions

Students articulate and justify personal aesthetic criteria for critiquing dramatic texts and events that compare perceived artistic intent with the final aesthetic achievement.

Students analyze and critique the whole and the parts of dramatic performances, taking into account the context, and constructively suggest alternative artistic choices.

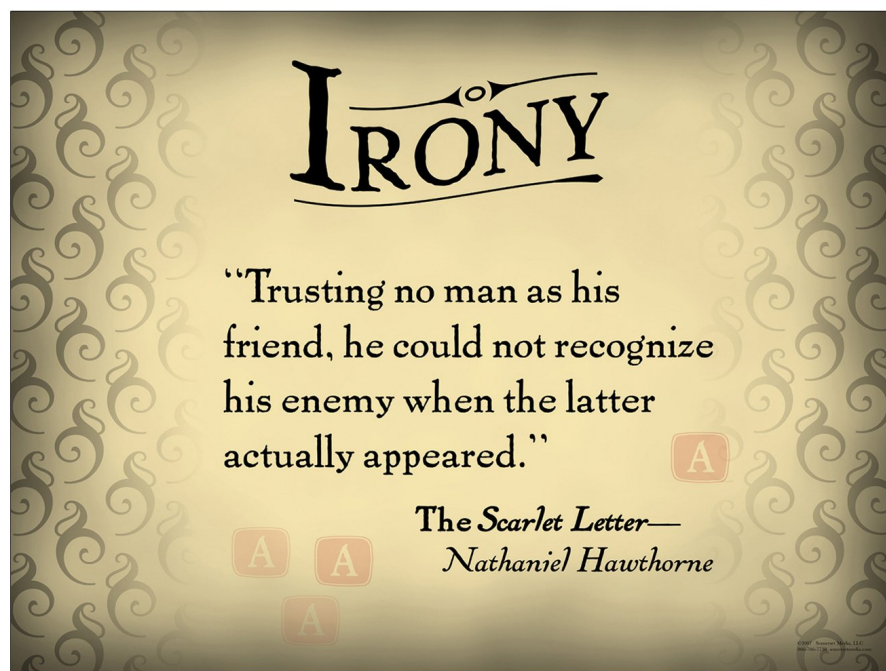


Image by Somerset Media



All Prime Stage productions and Resource Guides address the following:

**Pennsylvania Common Core Standards for *The Scarlet Letter*:
Pennsylvania Academic Standards for Reading, Writing, Listening, Speaking**

CC.1.3.9-10.A: Determine a theme or central idea of a text and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text, including how it emerges and is shaped and refined by specific details; provide an objective summary of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.C: Analyze how complex characters develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme.

CC.1.3.9-10.D: Determine the point of view of the text and analyze the impact the point of view has on the meaning of the text.

CC.1.3.9-10.E: Analyze how an author's choices concerning how to structure a text, order events within it and manipulate time create an effect.

CC.1.3.9-10.F: Analyze how words and phrases shape meaning and tone in texts.

CC.1.3.9-10.G: Analyze the representation of a subject or a key scene in two different artistic mediums, including what is emphasized or absent in each treatment.

CC.1.3.9-10.H: Analyze how an author draws on and transforms themes, topics, character types, and/or other text elements from source material in a specific work.

CC.1.3.9-10.K: Read and comprehend literary fiction on grade level, reading independently and proficiently.

CC.1.5.9-10.A: Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grades level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

CC.1.5.9-10.G: Demonstrate command of the conventions of standard English when speaking based on grade 9-10 level and content.

CC.1.6.11.A: Listen critically and respond to others in small and large group situations. Respond with grade level appropriate questions, ideas, information or opinions.

CC.1.6.11.C: Demonstrate awareness of audience using appropriate volume and clarity in formal speaking presentations.

CC.1.6.11.D: Listen to and acknowledge the contributions of other students well introducing ideas and opinions to enrich the discussion.



Theatre Etiquette and House Rules

Going to a play is a special experience, one that you will remember for a long time.

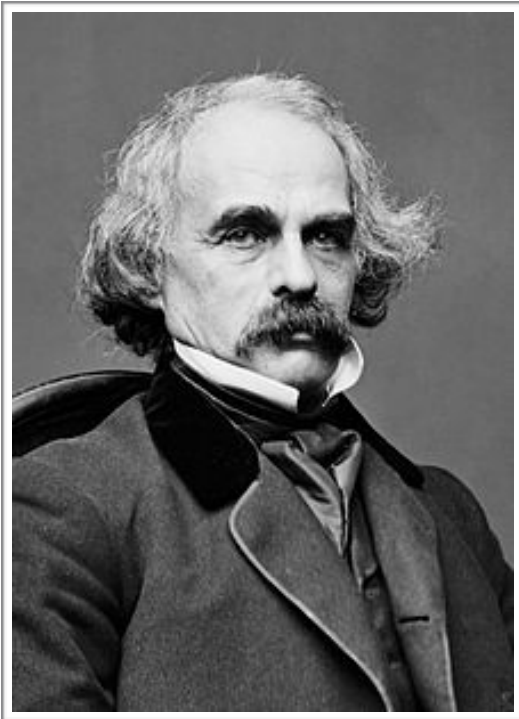
Everyone in the audience has been looking forward to seeing the performance. The production team put in many long hours and hard work to mount this performance. If you keep in mind common courtesy for the performers as well as your fellow audience members, everyone's theatre experience will be terrific.

A few reminders for attending the theatre.

- When you arrive, stay with your group at all times, and wait for the ushers to help you find your seat.
- Gum, food, drinks, or candy, are **never** allowed in the theatre.
- Please go to the restroom before seating for performance or at intermission.
- **TURN OFF ALL** cell phones, pagers, beepers, alarms, **anything** that can disturb the production, actors and the audience during the performance.
- Lights will dim just before a performance and then go dark. Show your knowledge by sitting quietly and calmly.
- **Listen without speaking.** The actors on stage can hear you which is why you can hear them so well. Laughter is permissible at appropriate times.
- Pictures or video recording is not allowed.
- **Stay in your seat until the cast has taken their curtain call at the end.** Show your appreciation by clapping. The actors love to hear applause. This shows how much you enjoyed the performance!



Nathaniel Hawthorne



Hawthorne in the 1860s

Nathaniel Hawthorne did not like autobiography and refrained from writing one. In fact, his wife once said, “He had a horror that his life would be written.” Although Hawthorne did not write the story of his life, he did leave behind journals, letters, unfinished manuscripts, and published works— that reveal who he was and how he lived.

Hawthorne was born on July 4, 1804 in Salem, Massachusetts. Hawthorne's father was a sea captain and descendant of the Puritan Judge, John Hathorne, who oversaw the Salem Witch Trials in 1692. Hawthorne lived with the knowledge that his great-great-grandfather was responsible for the deaths of men and women who were accused witches and was so ashamed that he added a “w” to his given last name (Hathorne) to hide his true lineage. Many scholars conclude that Hawthorne felt the heavy burden of his ancestry and assumed the guilt of his Puritan grandfathers.

When Hawthorne was four years old, his father died while on a voyage at sea. Hawthorne’s mother, Elizabeth, took the boy and his two sisters to live with her affluent brothers. In this chaotic, crowded, multiple-family home, young Hawthorne somehow managed to foster a love of reading.

After graduating from Bowden College in Maine, Hawthorne was determined to become a writer. His first literary work, begun during college, was titled *Fanshawe*. He used his own money to have it published, but soon decided it simply wasn’t good enough to be made public, and so he tried to destroy all the copies that had been printed. All told, Hawthorne spent a dozen years after college reading and writing. He lived with his mother in Salem during this period. Gradually, he met with success and sold some short stories. Finally, in 1837, he published *Twice-Told Tales*, a collection of short stories, under his own name.

Hawthorne continued to write short stories for magazines, but only made a modest living. After marrying Sophia Peabody in 1842, he appealed to

Did you Know?

Nathaniel Hawthorne went to college with future President Franklin Pierce. The two became fast friends, and in 1852 he wrote the campaign biography. With Pierce's election as president, Hawthorne was rewarded in 1853 with the position of United States consul in England.



photo of President Pierce



friends for help in finding a job, and was appointed surveyor (determining the quantity and value of imported goods) at the Salem Custom House. Due to political changes, however, he lost his job in 1848. The bitterness he felt over his dismissal can be read in “The Custom-House,” the introductory chapter of *The Scarlet Letter*. Soon after Hawthorne lost his job, his mother died. In his grief, he wrote *The Scarlet Letter*, which was published in 1850. Hawthorne was concerned that it was a gloomy story about a risky subject, but the book met with some success, ensuring Hawthorne’s place in literary history.



Portrait of Nathaniel Hawthorne by Charles Osgood, 1841 (Peabody Essex Museum)

Though Hawthorne achieved fame, he was not necessarily comfortable with his status. He was shy and avoided making eye contact with people. At home, he was likely to head out the back door if he knew a guest had arrived at the front door. Yet he was a good friend to other authors, including Henry Longfellow and Herman Melville, who dedicated *Moby Dick* to him. More than a century after his death, Hawthorne is still revered as a father of American literature. He died in his sleep on May 19, 1864, in Plymouth, New Hampshire.

For More Information

Nathaniel Hawthorne: The Critical Heritage. Contributors: J. Donald Crowley - Editor. Publisher: Routledge. Place of publication: London. Publication year: 1997.

A Historical Guide to Nathaniel Hawthorne. Contributors: Larry J. Reynolds - Editor. Publisher: Oxford University Press. Place of publication: New York. Publication year: 2001.

The Transcendentalist movement, Though at times critical, Nathaniel Hawthorne was nevertheless powerfully impacted by it, as evidenced by his most famous novel. Centered upon the development of a personal, highly individualized relationship with God, **transcendentalism** views nature as a means of getting closer to this divine spirit, while rejecting all forms of formal education to organized religion. Civilization, the transcendentalists argue, does nothing more than stunt and deform the individual's spiritual, mental, and emotional development, taking him away from God and from himself.

Such themes play a vital role in Hawthorne's 1850 masterpiece, *The Scarlet Letter*. Set in 1640s Massachusetts Bay Colony, it tells the story of Hester Prynne and the punishment she endures at the hands of the **Puritan community**, a community dedicated to purifying society through a strict interpretation of Christian scriptures. The novel examines Hester's spiritual and emotional growth as she endures and eventually transcends her outcast state.



Meet Playwright and Director, Liam Macik

What does it take to turn a work of fiction into a stage play?
Prime Stage Education recently sat down Liam to discuss his experience.



Liam Macik's first produced play, *Bastards and Fools*, was the recipient of the Peterson Award for Emerging Playwrights in 2005. In addition to playwriting and directing, Liam is an established actor, most recently appearing as Leny in *Of Mice and Men* at Prime Stage!

What inspired you to adapt the *Scarlet Letter*? I honestly wish I could claim the inspiration as my own. Prime Stage approached me about writing a new adaptation asking that I keep the spirit of the novel and be engaging to the audience. I was far from a diligent student back in high school, so I couldn't even claim to have read the book when I was supposed to; "tried and immediately gave up" might be a more honest assessment. But going back to the book for the first time since, and with an eye for seeing what could be put on the stage, I was immediately taken with it, even with Hawthorne's self-indulgent and pontificating prologue. So I guess my inspiration for the script was to recreate for an audience the genuinely riveting experience I had in reading it for the first time.

What was your biggest challenge in adapting the book for the stage? One of the biggest challenges was bringing the ending to the stage. It is a highly dramatic scene, but so much that leads up to it are things that happen off stage. Dimmesdale's climactic sermon is never included in the book, only Hester's reaction to hearing it. There is a swirling crowd of people in the town center with a parade and martial music and all sorts of pageantry, but with a cast of thirteen people that is difficult to portray on a stage. Finding a way to convey the events of the book in a mostly visual medium and adapting Hawthorne's description of Hester's reactions into actual, playable moments for the actor was about the hardest part of the writing process.

I understand that Prime Stage did a workshop of your adaptation. Could you share a little about that experience?

After this first draft was completed and I had gone through a couple of rounds of rewrites, we called in some favors with actors we knew very well and had a table reading. It was important to me to get the lines out of my own head and hear them how somebody else would think to say them. After hearing it all the

way through and after a thorough discussion with the group, I realized I had the ending completely wrong, that Dimmesdale needed a lot of work, and that some of the longer speeches and monologues needed to be broken up and made more conversational. The next draft of the script is the one we started rehearsals with.

As the playwright and director, what do you hope this production will offer to audiences today? I hope this will be an engrossing, visceral experience for a modern audience. It is full of vivid characters and high melodrama and complex relationships and uncertain motives - everything you can think of to make a great story. So initially I hope it offers them a thrilling evening of theatre, but I also hope they are able to see themselves in these characters. Thematically, *The Scarlet Letter* is incredibly relevant to our world today. These Puritan communities are the blueprint for our society, and we haven't evolved culturally as far beyond our ancestors as we would like to think. I hope they see Hester's strength and honor in themselves, and I hope they are able to cast a critical eye inward and recognize the moments when they might be thinking and speaking and acting like the townspeople.



Actors rehearsing a scene in Prime Stages "The Scarlet Letter" October 2019.



SCENIC DESIGN

The scenic designer is responsible for the visual appearance and function of the scenic elements used in the production. To translate the scenic design from the concept to the stage, the designer produces colored sketches or renderings of the sets and properties, scale models of the various sets, and scale mechanical drawings that fully describe the settings. (Based on the description in J. Michael Gillette's *Theatrical Design and Production*, 6th ed.).

“As the set designer, I was inspired by the director's vision that he developed as he was writing this version of the story. He asked that the set be evocative of a 17th century New England house - that could also be a blank canvas for creating the play from found objects within it. I took that idea and stripped my image research down to it's essential shapes.”

-MK Hughes, Scenic Designer

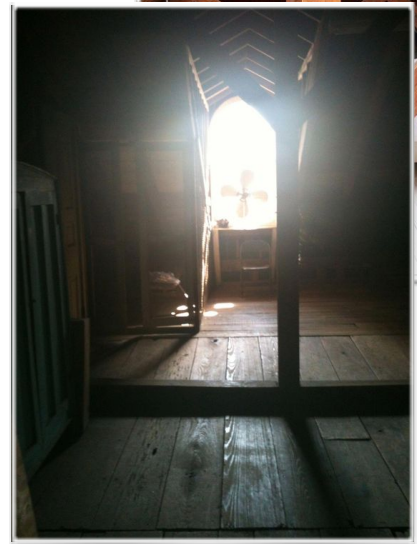
*Prime Stage production of “The Scarlet Letter,”
November, 2019*



Research pictures of essential shapes and images that inspired MK's Scenic Design.



Set Design Model for Prime Stage's "The Scarlet Letter" November 2018



COSTUME DESIGN

The costume designer is responsible for the visual appearance of the actors, including what is seen (clothes, shoes, wigs, makeup, etc.) as well as what isn't (corsets, character elements, etc.). Designs consist of colored sketches depicting the clothing and accessories that will be worn by the actor. (Based on the description in J. Michael Gillette's *Theatrical Design and Production*, 6th ed.)

"In 1630, (ten years after the Mayflower brought Pilgrims) a fleet of ships landed the group of Pilgrims to found the Massachusetts Bay Colony. It is the setting of Nathaniel Hawthorne's cast of conflicted characters.

It must be understood that Puritans sought to establish this new world. They came prepared to live in close knit communities with a theology that included how to live virtuously in a world of evil.

Hawthorne explores these themes as well as original sin; the idea that grace led one to do good deeds through conversion and that community needs came before individual interests.

These tenants, as well as an accommodating view of Hawthorne's Victorian view of Puritans, are important for a designer seeking to do historical justice to the characters in "The Scarlet Letter". In 1634, for instance, the general court in Plymouth banned lace and silver and gold thread as well as the wearing of embroidered or needlework. Hawthorne clearly takes liberty then with Hester Prynne's dramatic emblem as this ban was not lifted until the mid-1650 after his story concludes in 1649. Similarly, the notion of a child dressed in red is a romantic one, but that will be our trajectory for staying true to this classic.

The script from Liam Macik hits important character descriptions from then novel. Be prepared to find Chillingworth with a padded shoulder deformity, the Beadle with a walking stick and Mistress Hibbons (of higher station) in velvet and a "ruff done up with yellow starch". The Puritans wore vegetable dyed clothing in burgundy, indigo blue, browns, tans, and greens. Black was reserved for the wealthy as black dye was expensive. Cloaks were common and will be worn in this production (pre-climate change!), cosmetics were condemned as well.

It can be noted that the colors of Puritan garb, including Hester's dress of "coarse grey fabric" were called "sad colors" and they still continue to appear today in Harvard's crimson, Brown University's dark sable and Dartmouth's forest green. All of these shades were on the 1638 list and like the Puritan values of hard work, self-reliance and education, they still exist today. So grab your steeple hat, we got a great story to tell!"

-Kim Brown, Costume Designer

Prime Stage production of "The Scarlet Letter," November, 2019



Costume pieces worn in Prime Stage's "The Scarlet Letter." November 2019



LIGHTING DESIGN

The lighting designer is responsible for the design, installation, and operation of the lighting and special electrical effects used in a theater production.

“The job of the lighting designer, along with the rest of the design team, is to transport the audience to the time and place of the story being told by the actors on stage. The lighting designer has to play both artist and technician, much like an architect does when a building is designed. The LD is sort of a bridge between the artistic and technical side of a production.

When I design lighting for a play the first thing I’ll do is read the script a few times. The first time I read it, basically, for entertainment. I learn the story and find the theme(s) and mood of the story. For the Scarlet Letter it didn’t take me long to figure out that I wanted to make the lighting for this show generally darker and more naturalistic. Next I read the script again and break down specific locations. I have to communicate with the director to get his or her vision of the show and work that into the lighting design. Also, he or she will let me know any specific “special” lighting or effects that may be required. Once I have all this information I examine the set and costume design and pick colors, patterns or gobos, and angles that will compliment them.

As a lighting designer, I also have to be aware of the effect light has on people’s feelings and use this in the design to help make the audience feel the story better. After the design is complete I’ll work close with the show’s Master Electrician, or chief lighting technician, to set up and focus all the lights and program all the cues into the console. Cueing is an important part of the design because the movement of lighting helps move the action of the show or focus the audience’s attention where it needs to be. Throughout the whole design process I, as the LD, have to be sure that I’m sticking to the director’s vision of the show, I have to keep the rig within budget, and I have to be aware of the technical limitations of the space. If any changes need to be made, the LD has to have a plan to be ready for that. While it is an especially stressful position (mainly during tech week) the process of designing lighting for a theatrical production is very rewarding when you get to see the finished product, knowing that your design is helping to tell the story.”

-Mike Pilyih, Lighting Designer

Prime Stage production of “The Scarlet Letter,” November, 2019



The pictures above depict a lighting instrument, a gobo pattern used in “The Scarlet Letter”, Mike’s technical theater table and Scarlet Letter Inspiration. ‘light through an attic window.’



SOUND DESIGN

The sound designer is basically responsible for everything related to sound for a theater production. They provide the designs for all pre-recorded music, sound effects, and the reinforcement of live voices, musical instruments and sound elements.

“When I design sound for a play, I think about how I can create the world around us. Along with seeing the world, you learn a lot about where you are by listening. Do you hear animals and the sound of wind blowing through trees, or do you hear honking and crowds of people walking to work? My goal is to recreate the world around us through sound. When it comes to specific sounds, I consider two things: The purpose of the sound and the location of the sound. Is the sound coming from a character’s alarm clock? If so, I may put a speaker near the alarm clock to make it sound like it’s coming from there. To me, sound design is building a world on stage for you to enter, whether you focus on it or not. That’s how I designed this show. I wanted the world the characters live in to be as realistic to you in the audience as possible, as if you’re watching real events.”



Original illustration by Chris Martin

-Max Imants Pelna, Sound Designer

Prime Stage production of “The Scarlet Letter,” November, 201



A typical sound design table used to program sound cues during technical rehearsal.



Introducing “THE SCARLET LETTER”

Hawthorne wrote *The Scarlet Letter* in an astonishingly short period of time—between the fall of 1849 when his mother died and February 3, 1850, when he repeatedly read the conclusion of the novel to his wife.

It is set in the mid-1600s in Boston, when newly arrived Puritans established settlements in the Massachusetts area. It tells the story of a young woman who has committed adultery and is forced to wear the letter “A” on her chest for the rest of her life.

These residents of Boston in the mid-1600s were much as Hawthorne depicts them—hard working and devoted to be an ideal Christian community. They believed God had chosen a few people, "the elect," for salvation. But no one really knew if he or she was saved or damned; They



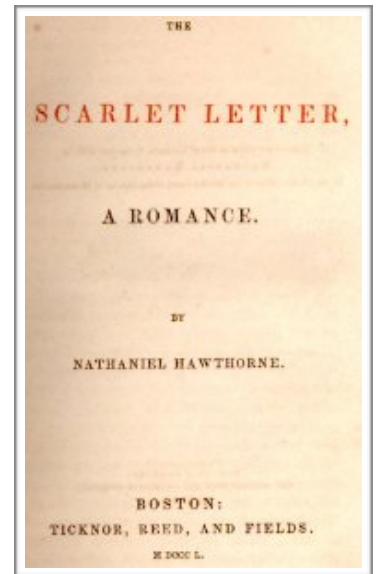
Nathaniel Hawthorne, regarded this painting, by Hugues Merle in 1859, as the finest illustration of his novel. By depicting Hester and her daughter, Pearl, in a pose that recalls that of the Madonna and Child, Merle underlines “The Scarlet Letter”’s themes of sin and redemption.

<https://art.thewalters.org/detail/25737/the-scarlet->

were always searching for signs of God's favor or anger. Faith, not good works, was the key to salvation. The community as a whole was paramount as well, for it was the community that honored and kept the covenant with God.

Using these circumstances as the framework for his novel, Hawthorne weaves around his characters a powerful tale of the consequences of breaking the moral code. Hawthorne investigates how guilt and sin operate on the innermost workings of his characters’ minds..

Preferring to concentrate on the darker parts of human mind, Hawthorne inspects the thought processes and emotions that occur within the mind of the individual. Even Hawthorne admitted that “some portions of the book are powerfully written.” Readers and reviewers agreed with him in spite of its subject matter, which was considered very risqué in the mid-1800s.



Title page, first edition, 1850

Sources: The McGraw-Hill Companies, Inc, <https://www.u-s-history.com> & <https://www.history.com/topics/colonial-america/puritanism>



Summary - The Scarlet Letter, the novel

The Scarlet Letter... A Quick Summary!

A young Puritan woman is marked with a letter "A" for an adulterous affair leading to the birth of a daughter. Her older husband vows to discover the identity of her lover and seek revenge. Her lover, the preacher, suffers from his secret anguish and eventually dies from heartache.

Illustration of the Custom House from early edition of *The Scarlet Letter* (courtesy of James R. Osgood and Co.)



The *Scarlet Letter* opens with an explanation about how the book came to be written. The nameless narrator was the surveyor of the customhouse in Salem, Massachusetts. Here, he finds a manuscript that was bundled with a scarlet, gold-embroidered patch of cloth in the shape of an "A." When the narrator lost his customs post, he decided to write a fictional account of the events recorded in the manuscript. The *Scarlet Letter* is the final product.

The story begins in a puritan village near Boston in the summer of 1642. A young and beautiful woman, Hester Prynne, is led from prison with her infant daughter, Pearl, in her arms and the scarlet letter "A" on her breast. An old, hunched stranger appears in the crowd to ask about the woman's crime. He is told that Hester's husband had stayed behind in Europe, but was assumed lost at sea. Hester became pregnant from an affair and will not reveal the name of the baby's father. She is led to the town scaffold and hassled by the town elders, but still refuses to identify her child's father.



Drawing of Dimmesdale, Pearl, Hester and Chillingworth
source: <https://drrogerchillingworth.blogspot.com/2015/12/an-open-letter-to-arthur-dimmesdale.html>

It is revealed that the old stranger is Hester's husband, a medicine man going by the name Roger Chillingworth. He tells Hester that he can not blame her for being unhappy married to an old, intellectual man. But he swears vengeance against her lover, vowing to discover his identity.

Several years pass and although Hester is forced to live on the outskirts of the community, she supports herself through her seamstress work. Pearl has grown into a willful and troublesome girl. The elders wish to take Pearl away from Hester, but the eloquent preacher Dimmesdale convinces them that Pearl's rightful place is with her mother.

Dimmesdale appears to be wasting away. Chillingworth moves in with him to take care of his health. While the minister sleeps, Chillingworth discovers a mark on the man's breast, which convinces him that his suspicions are correct.

Hester sees Dimmesdale's pain and vows to help. They decide to run away to Europe together where they can live with Pearl as a family.

The day before they are set to leave, Dimmesdale gives his final sermon, impulsively mounts the scaffold with his lover and his daughter, confesses publicly and exposes a mark of the scarlet letter seared into the flesh of his chest. He falls dead, as Pearl kisses him.

Chillingworth dies a year later, frustrated that he was not able to carry out his revenge. Hester and Pearl leave the village for a while, but Hester returns several years later with the "A" on her chest. She exchanges letters with Pearl, now married and raising her own family. Hester is buried next to Dimmesdale, a single letter "A" marking their shared tombstone.



Summary - The Scarlet Letter, by Liam Macik

Much like Hawthorne's novel, Macik begins the play with a narrator. Hawthorne shares of his time working at a customhouse and how he came upon a bundle. In it contained a scarlet embroidered patch of cloth in the shape of an "A" and a manuscript detailing events that occurred some two hundred ago. Hawthorne goes on to share the story of Hester Prynne. Throughout the play, Hawthorne enters and exits commenting on the story and serving as bridge between the audience and the action on stage.

At the start, Hester is being lead to the scaffold in the center of town. She carries her infant daughter, Pearl, in her arms and has the scarlet letter "A" on her breast. As the goodwives of the town gossip loudly, Roger Chillingworth, a stranger to the town appears in the crowd. He learns that Hester has had an affair and will not reveal the name of the baby's father. As Chillingworth catches Hester eye, the town's leaders Wilson, Governor Bellingham and Dimmesdale enter and plead with Hester to speak the name of the child's father. Hester does not speak.

Chillingworth, posing as a doctor, visits with Hester in jail cell. It is revealed that he is her husband. Chillingworth understands that she was unhappy in their marriage but swears vengeance against her lover and vows to discover his identity.

Four years pass to find Hester and Pearl, living in a cottage on the outskirts of the town. Hester supports them both with her needlework. Together they walk to Governor Bellingham's house to deliver a pair of gloves. The governor along the elders wish to take Pearl away from Hester, but Dimmesdale, who appears ill, convinces them otherwise. Chillingworth becomes suspicious that he is Pearl's father.

On the way home, Hester and Pearl are stopped by Ms. Hibbons, the Governor's sister rumored to be a witch. She asks Hester to join her in the forest but Hester refuses. Later, Chillingworth, who has convinced Dimmesdale to live with him, discovers a mark on his chest that proves his suspicions. Chillingworth laughs maniacally at the end of Act 1.

Act 2 begins as Dimmesdale stands by his window. He is haunted by the voices of the townspeople. Chillingworth interrupts Dimmesdale asking if he sees Hester and Pearl. When he leaves, Dimmesdale takes off his shirt to reveal his back torn apart with scars from self-afflicted lashing. He is tormented with guilt.

In a scene not from the novel, Wilson, Chillingworth, Hester and Pearl are gathered at the bedside of the one Master Winthrop to keep vigil by his deathbed. On their way home, Hester and Pearl find



"The Scarlet Letter" Cast, Prime Stage Theatre 2019

Dimmesdale atop the town scaffold. He is in deep anguish over his affair yet refuses Pearl's request to acknowledge her publicly. Suddenly, a meteor marks the night sky with a dull "A." Hester vows to help Dimmesdale. She goes to Chillingworth and asks that he stop adding to Dimmesdale's torment but he refuses.

Hester catches Dimmesdale in the forest and reveals Chillingworth's identity. The two decide to run away together on passage to Europe and live with Pearl as a family.

The next day, Dimmesdale's exuberance is noted by the townspeople. Later he tells Chillingworth that he no longer needs his service and exits to re-write his election sermon.

The town gathers for the new Governor's procession. Meanwhile, Hester learns that Chillingworth has booked passage to Europe on the same ship as she, Pearl and Dimmesdale.

Dimmesdale gives his most passionate sermon and burst out of the meeting house calling for Hester and Pearl. The town gathers while he mounts the scaffold and publicly confesses along side Hester and Pearl. Dimmesdale exposes a mark on his chest seared into his flesh and falls dead.

After many days, the townspeople gossip about Dimmesdale, Hester and the death of Chillingworth calling him the devil with, "Not a drop on Christian blood in him."

Hawthorne enters in an epilogue describing the fate of the town and that of Hester Prynne who after years and years is presumed to be mysteriously buried in an old sunken grave next to Dimmesdale.

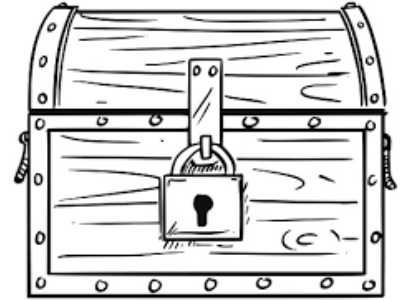


BEFORE

Pre-show Activities

Try these activities to spark curiosity before reading the book or attending the performance.

Story Box: Just as the narrator uncovers information about a woman named Hester from the past, invite your students to create a story of their own based on artifacts. Present a box containing clues from the story. These might include: a red cloth letter “A,” a record of a trial and/or imprisonment for a woman named Hester Prynne, a birth certificate for Pearl with no father listed, a cemetery record of a burial of Hester Prynne near Rev. Arthur Dimmesdale, a ship log from Chillingworth’s boat, letters between Hester and Chillingworth, Pearl’s red hair ribbon, etc. (These can be made to look authentic, but can be just as effective if done informally.) Ask students to piece together the clues to create a story of what they think might have happened. What can they guess about the characters and society based on the clues?



Purpose: *Students will become intrigued by the juicy clues in the box and their imagination will carry them into the story. Instead of feeling like an outdated novel, students will recognize their own ideas within Hawthorne’s story. As students read the book, continue to compare their story with Hawthorne’s and use the students’ own writing to illuminate difficult text.*

Being Alienated: Students will have a label pin to their back and will be unable to see what is written on it. Some labels say “COMMUNITY MEMBER,” while others say “OSTRACIZED.” The teacher or facilitator will ask specific students (those with the “OSTRACIZED” label) to step outside of the classroom for a moment. This may seem random to them. Before stepping outside they will be given a sheet of paper explaining that they are to shake hands with everyone in the room and try to make conversation. While the “OSTRACIZED” students are in the hallway reading their instructions, the teacher or facilitator will quickly explain that “COMMUNITY MEMBERS” are to avoid eye contact and any physical touch (such as handshakes) with “OSTRACIZED” class members. All students will be called into the room and instructed to mill about and talk. After students have been given sufficient time to interact, lead a classroom room discussion about the experience. Ask the “OSTRACIZED” members what it felt like to be shunned by their classmates. Have student write about a time when they may have felt lonely or left out.

Purpose: *This is another activity that gives students a tangible way to relate to the characters of Hester, Pearl, Ms. Hibbons and even Dimmesdale to an extent. Though it can be humorous, this give students a chance to be up on their feet, activity learning and interacting with one another.*



DURING

READING ACTIVITY!

Try the following activity to enliven and enrich the text as they read the novel or play.

Write a Script: Liam Macik's stage adaptation includes Hawthorne's original text. Have student read the following excerpt and discuss Macik's choice to include the original language. What does it sound like to read each passage out loud? Consider what word or phrases could be changes and why? Ask your students to re-write this scene in their own way. How would the style change if it included modern language or slang? What do you feel are the most important points to include? Have students perform their re-written scenes for the class. **The Scarlet Letter was published in 1850, but Hawthorne wrote the story in the Puritan writing style of mid 1600s. It was a period piece!*

ACT 2, Page 44 of "The Scarlet Letter" adapted from Chapter XIV, Hester and the Physician

HESTER

Since that day no man is so near him as you. You tread behind his every footstep. You are beside him, sleeping and waking. You search his thoughts. You burrow and rankle his heart! Your clutch is on his life, and you cause him to die daily a living death, and still he knows you not. In permitting this I have surely acted a false part by the only man to whom the power was left me to be true!

CHILLINGWORTH

What choice had you? My finger pointed at this man would have hurled him from his pulpit into a dungeon, thence, peradventure, to the gallows!

HESTER

It had better been so!

CHILLINGWORTH

What evil have I done the man? I tell thee, Hester, the richest fee that ever physician earned from monarch could not have bought such care as I have wasted on this miserable priest! But for my aid, his life would have crumbled away within the first two years after the perpetration of his crime. His spirit lacks the strength that could have borne up, as thine has, beneath a burden like thy scarlet letter. Oh, I could reveal a goodly secret! But enough. What art can do, I have exhausted on him. That he now breathes and creeps about on earth is owing all to me!

HESTER

Better he had died at once!

Purpose: By making their own choices about language and style, students will be able to decipher the nuances of Hawthorne style. Using Macik's example of adaptation, students will have a model on which to build their own writing. As students listen to the performances of their peers, they will think critically about the creative choices of others.



AFTER

POST READING ACTIVITY!

Try these activities to provide reflection and make personal meaning after they have read the text or attended the performance.

Reflection Snapshots: After your students attend the performance, ask your students to recall highlights by using their bodies to create frozen “snapshots” of what they saw. Prompts may include: Show me a moment when Hester was isolated from the community. Show me a moment that surprised you. Show me a moment in which you saw Dimmesdale’s guilt. As students create the moment, ask them to explain their ideas. Pay attention to physical details such as posture or facial expression. Discuss in detail how the actors used physicality to bring the characters to life.

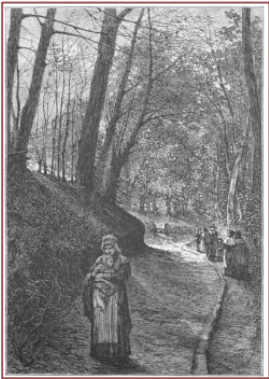
Purpose: *This activity is a great assessment of the students’ attention to the performance and comprehension of details. It provides struggling writers another means in which to convey their ideas.*

Bio Poem: The novel and stage adaptation of “The Scarlet Letter” is filled with symbolism: the letter, a rose, the forest, the meteor and Pearl just to name a few. Write a bio-poem about one of the main characters: Hester, Pearl, Dimmesdale, or Chillingworth, and attach it to a symbol that is appropriate to his/her character.



Include 11 lines and follow this pattern:

- Line 1: Your character’s first name
- Line 2: Four words that describe your character
- Line 3: Brother or sister of...
- Line 4: Lover of...(three ideas or people)
- Line 5: Who feels...(three ideas)
- Line 6: Who needs...(three ideas)
- Line 7: Who gives...(three ideas)
- Line 8: Who fears...(three ideas)
- Line 9: Who would like to see...
- Line 10: Resident of
- Line 11: His or her last name



Source: http://www.studyguide.org/bio_poem.htm

Illustrations from: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/25344/25344-h/25344-h.htm>



Putting it in Context: The Puritans in America

Source: <http://www.ushistory.org/us/3d.asp>

New England life seemed to burst with possibilities.

The life expectancy of its citizens became longer than that of Old England, and much longer than the Southern English colonies. It is often said that New England invented grandparents, for it was here that people in great numbers first grew old enough to see their children bear children. Literacy rates were high as well. Puritans wanted their children to be able to read the Bible, of course.

Massachusetts Bay Colony was a man's world. Women did not participate in town meetings and were excluded from decision making in the church. Puritan ministers furthered male supremacy in their writings and sermons. They preached that the soul had two parts, the immortal masculine half, and the mortal feminine half.

It was believed that women who were pregnant with a male child had a rosy complexion and that women carrying a female child were pale. Names of women found in census reports of Massachusetts Bay include Patience, Silence, Fear, Prudence, Comfort, Hopestill, and Be Fruitful. This list reflects Puritan views on women quite clearly.



"Mary Dyer led to execution on Boston Common, June 1660", by an unknown 19th century artist

Mary Dyer was executed for defying Puritan law

Church attendance was mandatory. Those that missed church regularly were subject to a fine. The sermon became a means of addressing town problems or concerns. The church was sometimes patrolled by a man who held a long pole. On one end was a collection of feathers to tickle the chins of old men who fell asleep. On the other was a hard wooden knob to alert children who giggled or slept. Church was serious business indeed.

The Puritans believed they were doing God's work. Hence, there was little room for compromise. Harsh punishment was inflicted on those who were seen as straying from God's work. There were cases when individuals of differing faiths were hanged in Boston Common.

Made famous by Nathaniel Hawthorne, the Scarlet Letter was a real form of punishment in Puritan society. Adulterers might have been forced to wear a scarlet "A" if they were lucky. At least two known adulterers were executed in Massachusetts Bay Colony. Public

whippings were commonplace. The stockade forced the humiliated guilty person to sit in the public square, while onlookers spat or laughed at them.

Puritans felt no remorse about administering punishment. They believed in Old Testament methods. Surely God's correction would be far worse to the individual than any earthly penalty.

Contrary to myth, the Puritans did have fun. There were celebrations and festivals. People sang and told stories. Children were allowed to play games with their parents' permission. Wine and beer drinking were common place. Puritans did not all dress in black as many believe. The fundamental rule was to follow God's law. Those that did lived in peace in the Bible Commonwealth.



Puritan Religious Beliefs

The Puritan religion developed out of dissatisfaction with the Church of England. Its members believed that the Church of England was polluted by politics and man-made doctrines, so they strove towards religious, moral and societal reforms. Their name stems from their desire to “purify” the church and bring it back to its foundation in the Bible. In order to escape persecution for their dissent against the church leadership and the King, they came to America. As the Puritans settled in the New England area, their numbers rose from 17,800 in 1640 to 106,000 in 1700. As they dealt with the challenges of living in an untamed, foreign land, their spiritual bond helped them survive.



Oliver Cromwell, 1599 - 1658, preaching to a Puritan congregation.

Their interpretation of the Bible was strict and harsh. They felt that although God could forgive anything, man could forgive only by seeing a change in behavior. Actions spoke louder than words, so actions had to be constantly controlled. Although Puritans believed that God had predetermined whether they would be sent to heaven or hell, they had no way of knowing which group they were in. Therefore, they worked to do good in this life in order to be chosen for the next eternal one.

The Puritans believed that the devil was behind every evil deed. Eloquent ministers warned the persuasiveness of the devil's power. Children were constantly reminded of the devil's presence and were quizzed on Bible at home and school. The education of the next generation was important to further "purify" the church and perfect social living.

Puritan Education

Puritans formed their first formal school in 1635, which was the first free schooling for children in history. Four years later, the first American College was established; Harvard in Cambridge. The first printing press arrived in 1638 and by 1700 Boston became the second largest publishing center of the English Empire. The Puritans were the first to write books for children, and to consider how to communicate appropriately with children. At a time when other Americans were physically blazing trails through the forests, the Puritans efforts in areas of study were advancing our country intellectually.

“Without the heart it is no worship. It is a stage play. It is an acting of the part without being that person really. It is playing the hypocrite.”

STEPHEN CHARNOCK, Puritan Theologian

Adapted from: <http://www.nd.edu/~rbarger/www7/puritans.html> and <http://public.wsu.edu/~campbelld/amlit/purdef.htm> in PST Resource Guide Volume 3, Issue 1

Want to learn more? Check out these helpful resources:

<https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Scarlet-Letter/> (Awesome study guide that includes a infographics, context summaries, a character map and more!)

<https://www.penguin.com/static/pdf/teachersguides/scarletletter.pdf> (Good before, during and after reading questions and suggested supplemental reading.)



Putting it in Context: Hester, the First American Heroine

“See Me For Who I Am”

Literary scholars have hailed Hester Prynne as the first true heroine of American literature. Hawthorne writes her as a whole person — woman, mother, sinner, and member of the Puritan community — rather than as a stereotype, as so many writers at that time and even today have characterized their female character

(The following is from <https://thefeministletter.weebly.com/hester-prynne-is-a-heroine.html>)

It is widely debated among those who study early American literature whether Hester Prynne, Nathaniel Hawthorne’s ex-adulteress protagonist, is the first fictional heroine in popular American literature or if she even deserves the title of heroine to begin with. To accurately determine her status as "heroic," one must first become familiar with the definition of the word. Merriam-Webster Dictionary describes a heroine as:

1. A woman noted for courage and daring action.
2. A woman noted for special achievement in a particular field.
3. The principal female character in a novel, poem, or dramatic presentation.

1. The first piece of criteria is obvious throughout the novel. From the very moment we meet Hester in chapter 2 “The Market Place,” we already are astounded by her courage. Townspeople, chiefly women, gathered at the grass plot in front of the jail to watch the adulteress emerge, and Hester must know this. What else did Puritans have to do? Dancing would get them hanged for witchcraft. Making other peoples’ business their business was evidently the fad of the time. As she steps out of the prison with an armful of baby, the guards try to lead her out, but she has none of it. Instead, she proudly steps into the light, exposing her radiant beauty that seemed to have become even more so radiant hidden away in the prison and a richly-colored, embroidered letter “A” affixed to her bosom. Her entrance—or exit, rather—is rather grand for a woman sentenced to a lifetime of public humiliation. As for her “daring action,” let’s forget about her affair with Dimmesdale for a moment and appreciate her other daring moments. In chapter 3 “The Recognition,” on page 75, she—a woman!—defies the governor and Reverend Wilson by not disclosing the identity of Pearl’s father. She holds fast to this resolve up until the very end, never fulfilling her “duty” to the people as a sinner by giving them what they want, which is in this case, the other third of the cuckoldry.



Anglo-American painter George Henry Boughton was popular for landscapes and for studies of the lives of New England Puritans. He imagined the character of Hester Prynne for an 1881 edition of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s novel.





Movie Star Lillian Gish plays Hester Prynne "The Scarlet Letter" a 1926 American Drama based on the Novel.

Did you Know?

MGM was initially reluctant to Lillian Gish's suggestion that they film an adaptation of "The Scarlet Letter." Church and women's groups considered the book unsuitable for movies. Writers suggested that the plot be altered to be wholesome by dispensing with the letter "A" altogether or by writing a happy ending. Luckily, Lillian's good reputation and Frances Marion's script changed their minds and the film was made.

2. The second portion of the definition refers to success or achievement in a particular field. In chapter 5 "Hester at Her Needle," we find out how she independently supports Pearl and herself—not an easy task for women at the time. Referencing back to the remarks of critical onlookers towards the intricacy of her scarlet letter in chapter 2, Hester becomes a seamstress for the town, providing beautiful, ornate garments despite Puritan opinions against such. Hawthorne describes her achievement in the area of soft production as such: "She had in her nature a rich, voluptuous, Oriental characteristic— a taste for the gorgeously beautiful, which, save in the exquisite productions of her needle, found nothing else, in all the possibilities of her life, to exercise itself upon"(87).

3. As for the third criteria, it should be obvious to any reader than Hester is not only the principle female character, but also the main character altogether. The novel follows a young single mother supporting her baby and living her life outside of the shadow of guilt others try to push on her.

Hester Prynne, the woman who faced hatred and hypocrisy and spit in its great eye, the woman who lived her life as a free agent in Puritan society exempt from self-entitled patriarchal figures and social norms, fills all three definitions, so it is clear that Hester Prynne is a heroine. Is she a feminist icon? Perhaps in her own right she is, despite Hawthorne's unnecessarily sexist remarks towards her (such as my all-time favorite: "Women derive a pleasure, incomprehensible to the other sex, from the delicate toil of the needle"(87). But as a whole, Hester is a remarkably strong-willed, strongly-written heroine that was extremely uncommon in the 19th century, especially coming from a male author.

Hester is a remarkably strong-willed, strongly-written heroine that was extremely uncommon in the 19th century, especially coming from a male author.

For more info about Hester Prynne check out:

Hester Prynne: Sinner, Victim, Object, Winner on All Things Considered.

<https://www.npr.org/2008/03/02/87805369/hester-prynne-sinner-victim-object-winner>



Putting it in Context: Literary Elements in The Scarlet Letter

Symbols

Nathaniel Hawthorne is one of the most prolific symbolists in American literature. A study of his symbols is necessary to understanding his novels. Generally speaking, a symbol is something used to stand for something else — often a moral, religious, or philosophical concept or value. They give literary work depth and interest because they allow us, as readers, to supply our own meanings. We're required to look beneath the surface to figure out what is truly being said and meant. Below are important symbols in “The Scarlet Letter.”

The Prison Door

The novel begins with a description of the door. Like the jail itself, it symbolizes punishment. The "iron spikes" reinforce the cruel harshness of Puritan punishment. The prison also is the reader's introduction to Puritan society as a judgmental community.

The Rose Bush

The rose bush, also introduced in Chapter 1, symbolizes Hester and hope. It shows Hester's beauty and wildness, as well as the ability to survive in even in the harshest circumstance.

The Scarlet Letter

At first the letter shows the world that Hester committed adultery. It is a mark of her sin and disgrace. By the end, however, the “A” comes to stand for able and angel as well as adultery.

The Forest

The forest has two opposite meanings: a moral wilderness and the loving embrace of nature. To the Puritans the forest was a terrifying place, filled with wild animals, Native Americans, and, at night, Satan and witches. It was a place where the outcasts wandered.



The Characters. Even Hawthorne's Characters are symbols.

Pearl: Her name symbolizes the great price that Hester paid for her affair. Pearl herself is beyond value because she is Hester's child and nothing is more valuable to a parent than a child.

Dimmesdale: His name suggests of ‘dimming’ of his vitality and spirit. ‘Dale’ refers to a meadow, with associations of fresh, green nature.

Chillingworth: The name suggests his icy center. Driven by revenge, he loses his humanity. Ultimately, destroying himself because Chillingworth is unable to love, he becomes the Devil.

The Black Man

The Black Man is a symbol for the Devil and evil. The name derives its meaning because the devil often hides in the shadows or in the dark. He uses his cunningness and intelligence to conceal his true nature. In the novel, Hester even asks Chillingworth, "Why dost thou smile so at me? ... Art thou like the Black Man that haunts the forest round about us?"



**There are other symbols in “The Scarlet Letter.”
Have students identify them and discuss what they might represent!**

Allegory

An allegory is a story that represents a bigger idea about human behavior. Characters, objects, and events have a hidden meaning and are used to present some universal lesson. Hawthorne knew the Puritans saw the world through allegory. For them, simple patterns, like the meteor streaking through the sky, became religious or moral interpretations for human events. Objects, such as the scaffold, were ritualistic symbols for such concepts as sin and penitence.

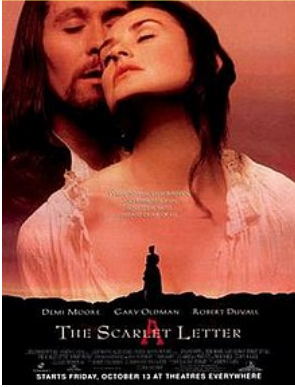
The Scarlet Letter is an allegory for Hawthorne's ideas about Puritan belief, the concept of sin and the deep hypocrisy often associated with identifying and condemning it.

Sources: www.cliffnotes.com & <https://www.coursehero.com/lit/The-Scarlet-Letter/symbols/>



Putting it in Context: The Scarlet Letter in Art

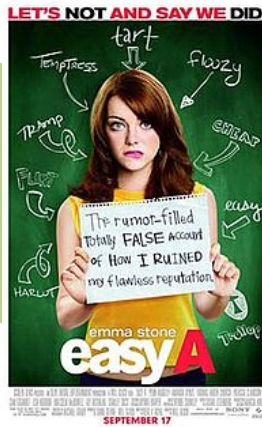
One of the most notable paintings on Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* is T.H. Matteson's. Here he depicts the scene in chapter 12 where the meteor crosses the sky, forming a bright "A" while Dimmesdale stands on the scaffold. -1860



There have been numerous adaptations of *The Scarlet Letter*, though the 1995 version directed by Roland Joffé and starring Demi Moore remains the most popular, despite its poor reception. (Watch trailer)



The film entitled *Easy A*, starring Emma Stone, was released in 2010 and was inspired by *The Scarlet Letter*. It offers a more modern portrayal of similar themes. (Watch trailer)



This work, by Kim Radatz, is titled "The Scarlet Letter (99 Lashes)." It refers, in part, to the story of an Iranian woman that was facing stoning for the crime of adultery. It is a delicate dress, with bright, blood-red accents around the collar, and running down its length to the stones below. The Iranian penal code specifies that the guilty are to be partially buried, and the stones to be used must not be too big, "so as not to kill the victim immediately" (quote taken directly from KR's tag for the work) <http://art-taco.blogspot.com/2011/03/artists-invitational-franklin-street.html> & <http://kimradatz.com>



&

*In the Tyler Swift song "New Romantics" the line, "We show off our different scarlet letters. Trust me, mine is better" is a reference to the novel.

*The Music Man character Harold Hill sings a line in the song "The Sadder But Wiser Girl" about his desire for a strong-willed woman: "I smile, I grin, when the gal with a touch of sin walks in. / I hope, and I pray, for a Hester to win just one more 'A'."



Vocabulary

Hawthorne uses a rich and complex language throughout *The Scarlet Letter*. We have listed some of the words that are infrequently utilized today.

Have students record unfamiliar words as they encounter them while reading the book. Students should then look up definitions.

Vocabulary activities could include a word wall, word ball or new sentence generation.

PDE Academic Standards 1.7-1.8

ADDUCED: to bring forward as in argument or as evidence

ANIMADVERSION: adverse and typically ill-natured or unfair criticism.

***ANTINOMIAN:** one who rejects a socially established morality.

APOTHEOSIS: elevation to divine status.

BAGGAGE: a contemptible woman; prostitute.

COLLOQUY: an especially formal conversation.

EMOLUMENT: advantage.

EPOCH: a point in time marked by the beginning of anew development or state of things.

ESCUTCHEON: a protective or ornamental shield.

EXTANT: not destroyed or lost.

FAIN: rather

GULES: the heraldic color red

HEATHENISH: barbarous.

HETERODOX: holding unorthodox opinions or doctrines.shameful.

LEES: the settling of liquor during fermentation and aging: dregs.

LOQUACITY: exceedingly talkative.

MEED: a fitting return or recompense.

MISANTHROPY: a hatred or distrust of mankind.

MOUNTEBANK: any charlatan or quack.

NUGATORY: having no force: inoperative.

OBEISANCE: a bodily gesture, as a bow, expressing respect.

PARAMOUR: an illicit lover.

PERADVENTURE: perhaps.

PHYSIOGNOMIES: the facial features held to show qualities of mind or character by their configuration or expression.

PLEBEIAN: one of the common people.

QUAFF: to drink (a beverage) deeply.

SCURRILOUS: grossly and offensively abusive.

SOMNAMBULISM: sleepwalking.

SOMNIFEROUS: hypnotic.

TROW: believe.

TRAMMELED: something that restricts activity or free movement: hindrance.

WORMWOOD: something bitter and grievous: bitterness.

WOTTEST: to have knowledge of or to know.



John Winthrop (1587-1649) was the first governor of the Massachusetts Bay colony. A self proclaimed "Saint of God", Winthrop became angered in 1636 when **Anne Hutchinson (1591-1643)** began to hold Bible study meetings in her home which offered her own interpretations of the scripture, including the story of Adam and Eve. She spoke against inequality for women, racial prejudice and the legal authority of the clergy. For these beliefs, she was charged with ***ANTINOMIANISM**, as well as "lewd and lascivious conduct" for having men and women in her house at the same time during her Sunday meetings. Hutchinson was banished from the colony and the Puritan Church. She still considered one of the leaders in women's rights and religious freedom.



LESSON PLANS FOR

The Scarlet Letter

These lesson plans are set up into three workshops. Feel free to pick and choose which ones you wish to use at any given time during your academic periods. There are lessons of varying lengths so that if you have a short time left you can choose one of those. There are also longer lessons that can fill nearly an entire class period.

WORKSHOP I

Theatrical Warm-Up and Getting Students Engaged

Learning Goal: Being able to conceptualize the concept of “Who Am I In This World” will help individuals understand their place in the world as well as the place of others.

Procedure:

Students will begin with a sound and movement exercise that will help to reinforce the Learning Goal.

The Machine (Sound and Movement)

5-10 Minutes

1. Students should create a large circle facing inward. The larger the interior of the circle the better.
2. For this exercise, they will be creating a large machine using their bodies.
3. One student should be chosen to begin the exercise. Tell that student that they should decide what this machine will be making and then enter the circle and begin their movement. These movements should be simple, since each student will be repeating this movement until all of the students have joined the machine.
4. Students should not use any sounds for this initial level of the Sound and Movement exercise. Just body movements.
5. Allow the first student to establish their movement before putting other students into the circle.
6. As each new student enters the circle they should focus on creating a movement that complements the movement of ALL of the other students who are in the machine.
7. When all of the students have entered the circle, let it go for 30 seconds or so and then tell them to stop. Tell them to not move. Then go around the group asking students to tell the group what the machine was making. Inevitably they will have different answers. Finally, ask the first student what it was that they were making.
8. At this point you should discuss with the group why each person came up with a different answer. You should focus on the idea that each of the students is an individual, yet also a member of a larger group. When they went into the circle, they were attempting to figure out who they were in the world of the machine.
9. Repeat this a couple more times, making sure that you are reinforcing the concept of “Who Am I In This World.”
10. If you have time, or would like to take this exercise to the next level, students can add sound to their simple movements. The sound should be simple as well. It is not recommended that sound be added until students can make a clear and distinct connection with each other during the movement phase of this exercise.

PA Standards for Arts and Humanities: 9.1.8.A

Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



Character Interpretation

Learning Goal: Exploring/analyzing the individual characters in a novel/play can expand a person's understanding of the text and the world around them.

Procedure: Students will role-play the characters in *The Scarlet Letter* in order to better understand their motivations and the meaning of the work as a whole. This activity will help students better see how they interact with the community as individuals.

Character Cards

20-30 minutes

1. At the beginning of this exercise, the teacher should give each student a small stack of note cards. Each student should then write the name of the characters on one side of the note card. You may use all of the characters or just the characters that you want students to focus on. When they have finished, tell them that they are to write a character trait on the back of each card. They may write one character trait or several, if they feel they need to. These should be character traits that they feel fully explain that character and their motivations.
2. When all students are finished, choose one character for discussion. Students will share their character traits for each of the character. Have each student explore, through explanation, why they believe the trait they chose is a strong representation of that character and what place that character holds in understanding the meaning of the work as a whole. This should also spark questions and responses from the other students that will help springboard your class discussion of the novel/play.
3. Have students use their notebooks to take down their thoughts and ideas while others are speaking and throughout the discussion.

PA Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening: 1.2.L.C

PA Standards for Arts and Humanities: 9.4.8.B

VOCABULARY

Learning Goal: Vocabulary comprehension can enhance oral and written expression as well as reading comprehension.

Procedure: Students will create their own, individualized, flashcards to study the vocabulary words.

Mnemonic Vocabulary Cards

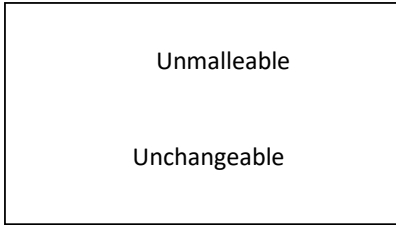
10-15 Minutes

1. Each student should be given the same number of note cards as there are vocabulary words.
2. On one side of the card, students should write the vocabulary word at the top of the card and the definition at the bottom.
3. On the other side of the card students should write a sentence that incorporates a character and/or setting or plot element from the play/novel.

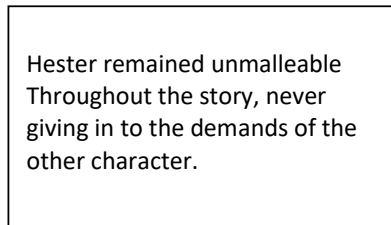
Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



FRONT



BACK



4. If they would like, students may add a visual aspect to the back side of their flashcards. This visual should be something that the student feels will aide them in remembering what the word and definition are. For instance, maybe they repeat the same, exact shape or picture to reinforce the idea that the visual is unchangeable.

5. When studying using these cards, students should be reading the sentences and allowing those to help them remember the vocabulary word and its definition.

6. There are vocabulary unit sheets at the end of this packet that you can use with this unit. They include: A vocabulary definitions sheet, a crossword puzzle and a crossword puzzle key.

PA Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening: 1.1.10.C, 1.1.11.C

End of Workshop I

WORKSHOP II

Learning Goal: Using theatrical techniques can help depth of understanding and allows students to utilize their individual talents to see a project through from inception to production.

Procedure: In this activity students will work in small groups to analyze, create and perform a short 1-2 minute performance.

STEAM Related Theatre Activity

30-40 Minutes

Give students about 20-30 minutes are so to complete the small group portion of this exercise and then 10 minutes for presentations.

1. Divide students into small groups of 5 or 6.
2. Using computers or pen and paper, students should talk collectively about what they believe the most important scene is in the novel/play.
3. After deciding on a scene, students should discuss how to best create their own scene. Below are some ideas that may help. However, students may create their scene in any way they feel comfortable with. For this exercise it is important that students utilize their own ideas and talents in order to complete the task.

Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



- They can stay true to the text and rewrite their scene using the original as a source. They should not simply copy the original. What words, lines or character MUST they include in the scene?
 - Rewrite the scene in modern times, using modern dialogue.
 - Place the scene in some future time and place.
 - Change the genders of each of the characters.
 - Write your scene having all of the characters be animals of some sort.
 - The characters are all adults and/or students at your school.
 - Set your scene in prehistoric times.
- ❖ These are only suggestions. Students should not be limited to this list. Allow students to be as creative and imaginative as they choose.

4. Students should work collaboratively as a group to write their script.

5. Students should then take roles: actors to take the parts, a director, and if there are students left without a job they should create props, decide on what furniture they might need to create their set, etc.

6. Groups should spend about 10 minutes rehearsing their scenes, working together to try and create a cohesive final product.

7. Finally, student should all sit in the area designated as the audience and each group should go up, one at a time, and perform their scenes.

8. When all groups are finished, the teacher should moderate a full-class discussion of the activity and its outcome.

PA Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening: 1.2.6.L.A, 1.2.L.C, 1.2.L.D, 1.3.L.A, 1.3.L.C, 1.4.12.A, 1.5.12.A

PA Standards for Arts and Humanities: 9.1.8.D, 9.1.12.H, 9.3.12.A, 9.3.12.E

Theatre Etiquette

15-20 Minutes

Learning Goal: Understanding behavioral expectations of a given activity allows individuals to prepare for and perform appropriately

Purpose: Students will explore what a theatrical experience is and learn what proper behavior is in this type of venue.

The Theatre As Space

1. Bring in a picture or a model of the set. Explain the importance of the space and that it is divided into the stage, which is the space that the actors occupy, and the audience which the audience occupies. These two spaces both have their purposes.

❖ Stage

Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



- Is designed to give the action of the play a visual perspective. The shapes, colors, textures that are used to create the set have all been chosen very carefully by the technical team in order to bring the vision of the piece to life.
- It is the space that is occupied by the actors the furniture and the props.
- The audience is not meant to occupy this space.
- There is an imaginary fourth wall that separates the stage from the audience. This places the actors into their own private space where the audience can view the action but is not to participate in the action either physically or verbally.

❖ Audience

- The seating for the audience is meant to give every audience member a clear view of the action on the stage.
- Audience members are to be respectful of the actors by remaining seated and quiet throughout the production. Applause and laughter relating to the performance are appropriate.
- Cellphones and electronic devices should be turned off since they may cause a distraction to the actors and may interfere with the electronic equipment used for the production.
- Recording of any kind of a theatrical performance is strictly forbidden.
- Audience members should remain seated at all times during the production.
- The audience is in the theater to observe, not to participate.

The Playbill

1. Bring in a Playbill

- Reading the contents of the Playbill is an important part of the audience's participation in the production.
- It will give you information about the play, its author, the director, actors and technical staff.
- Being familiar with the information given in the Playbill will enhance the audience's experience.

Observing the above theatre etiquette protocols will help the students to have an enjoyable experience and help them to ask intelligent questions during the Q&A after the performance.

PA Standards for Arts and Humanities: 9.4.8.C

END Workshop II

WORKSHOP III AFTER THE PRODUCTION

Evaluation, Reflection and Comprehension

ANALYZING THEME

Who Am I In This World

Each of the characters in *The Scarlet Letter* are questioning their place in the world that they inhabit. Some characters' struggles may seem to be more pronounced than others, but each is attempting to make sense of the world and what place they have in that world.

Learning Goal: Internalizing the experience of a literary or theatrical experience will help reinforce the greater social implications of the artistic piece.

Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



Procedure: Students will participate in a collaborative discussion of the various aspects of the novel/play.

Discussion Questions

20-30 Minutes

Use the following open-ended questions to initiate discussion. These questions may be addressed as a full class or in small groups.

- Is Hawthorne condoning or condemning Hester and Dimmesdale's adulterous relationship?
 - Why does Hester refuse to name the father of Pearl?
 - Why doesn't Chillingworth tell the town his true identity?
 - Choose a character from the play and explore how they enhance the meaning of the work as a whole. Be specific in your response.
 - Which character did you most relate to? Why?
 - How far should someone go to stand up for what they believe in?
 - What aspect of the play/novel most interested you? Why?
-
- ❖ A theme cannot be expressed in one word. It takes at least a short paragraph to fully explain the theme of a piece.
 - ❖ Make sure that students are fully explaining themselves when answering the above prompts.
 - ❖ If students are struggling, try this. Have them start with a one-word focus. To help them with this, tell them that if they were forced to explain the meaning of the work as a whole in one word what would that word be? They can then expand their explanation using that word as a focal point.
 - ❖ Emotionally charged words tend to be better choices for a one-word focus.

PA Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening:

PA Standards for Arts and Humanities:

Take-Away Activity

10-15 Minutes

Learning Goal: Being able to recognize and express your personal understanding of the novel/play helps to enhance the overall experience.

What I Most Remember

Use the following prompts to help students explore what they have taken away from this experience.

- The character I liked most was? Why?
- The aspect of the set that most intrigued me was? Why?
- The most interesting aspect of the lighting was? Why?
- What did you most enjoy about the sound effects/music? Why?
- The costume that I most liked was? Why?
- The prop that I found most interesting was? Why?
- What was your most memorable part of the production? Why?

PA Standards for Reading, Writing, Speaking and Listening: 1.2.12.D, 1.3.12.A, 1.3.11.A, 1.3.12.D

PA Standards for Arts and Humanities: 9.4.8.B, 9.3.8.A

Provided by Prime Stage Theatre





The Scarlet Letter Crossword Puzzle Key

Across

- 2. Laudable
- 8. Dotage
- 10. Dexterity
- 12. Alacrity
- 14. Paternal
- 16. Unmalleable
- 18. Venerable
- 19. Sagacious
- 20. Vigilance

Down

- 1. Abate
- 3. Decorous
- 4. Infamy
- 5. Edifice
- 6. Uncouth
- 7. Gentility
- 9. Scourged
- 11. Tempestuous
- 13. Impalpable
- 15. Congenial
- 17. Discern





The Scarlet Letter Crossword Puzzle Key

Across

- 2. Laudable
- 8. Dotage
- 10. Dexterity
- 12. Alacrity
- 14. Paternal
- 16. Unmalleable
- 18. Venerable
- 19. Sagacious
- 20. Vigilance

Down

- 1. Abate
- 3. Decorous
- 4. Infamy
- 5. Edifice
- 6. Uncouth
- 7. Gentility
- 9. Scourged
- 11. Tempestuous
- 13. Impalpable
- 15. Congenial
- 17. Discern



Name _____



The Scarlet Letter Vocabulary

- 1) Decorous – proper
- 2) Edifice – building
- 3) Discern – perceive
- 4) Venerable – respected; sacred
- 5) Laudable – worthy of praise
- 6) Tempestuous – stormy
- 7) Sagacious – wise
- 8) Vigilance – watchfulness
- 9) Alacrity – readiness; eagerness
- 10) Paternal – fatherly
- 11) Dotage – old age
- 12) Impalpable – unable to be touched
- 13) Unmalleable – unchangeable
- 14) Uncouth – awkward
- 15) Dexterity – skill; deftness
- 16) Congenial – pleasant; friendly
- 17) Scourged – subjected to severe criticism
- 18) Infamy – fame for something evil
- 19) Gentility – the upper class
- 20) Abate – to put an end to or lessen

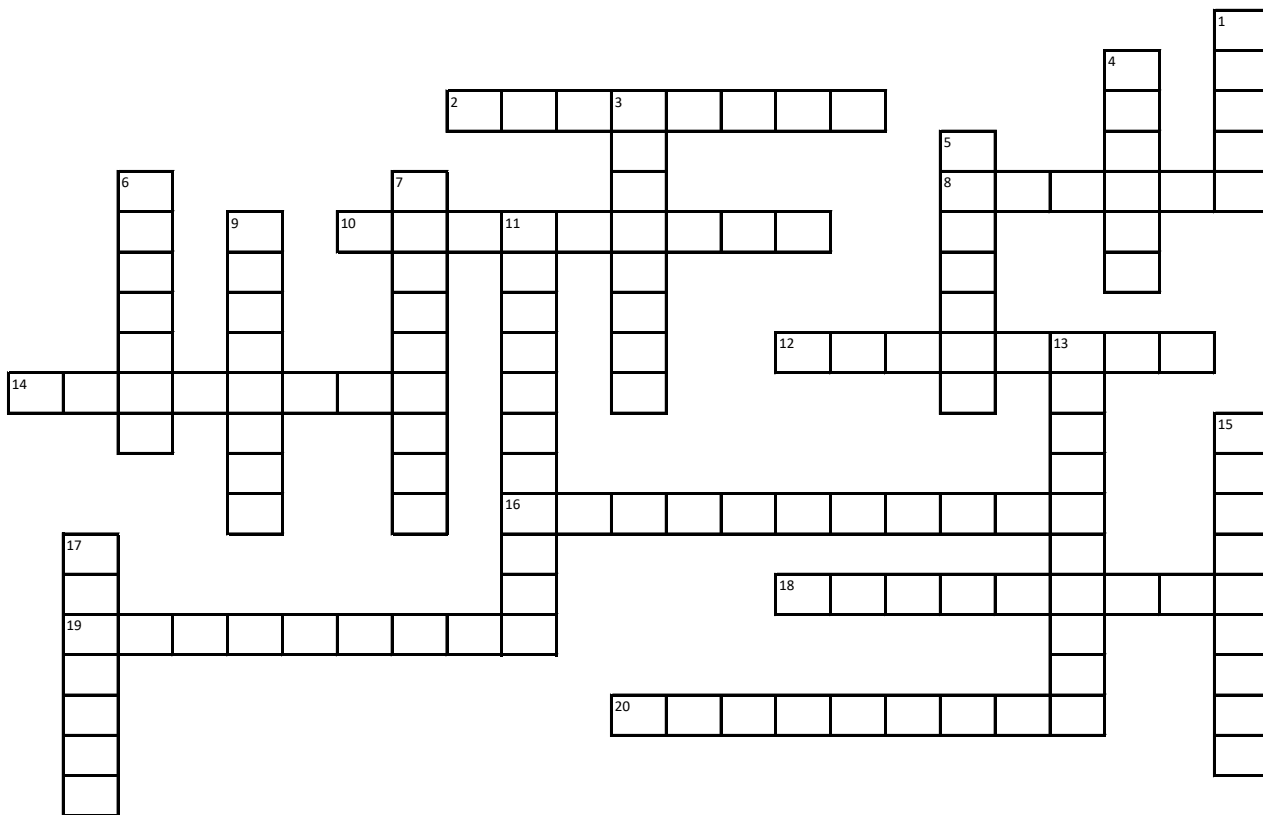
Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



Name: _____

The Scarlet Letter

Complete the crossword puzzle below



Across

- 2 worthy of praise
- 8 old age
- 10 skill; deftness
- 12 readiness; eagerness
- 14 fatherly
- 16 unchangeable
- 18 respected; sacred
- 19 wise
- 20 watchfulness

Down

- 1 to put an end to or lessen
- 3 proper
- 4 fame or something evil
- 5 building
- 6 awkward
- 7 the upper class
- 9 subject to sever criticism
- 11 stormy
- 13 unable to be touched
- 15 pleasant; friendly
- 17 perceive

Provided by Prime Stage Theatre



If this play has peaked your interest, why not check out a book or movie and explore more? Visit your local library to borrow one of these titles.



Library Info:

Shaler North Hills
Library
1822 Mt. Royal Blvd
Glenshaw PA 15116
Shalerlibrary.org
412-486-0211

Something Modern...

***Lilli de Jong* by Janet Benton**

A young woman finds the most powerful love of her life when she gives birth at an institution for unwed mothers in 1883 Philadelphia. She is told she must give up her daughter to avoid a life of poverty and shame. (Goodreads)

***When She Woke* by Hillary Jordan**

A fable about a stigmatized woman struggling to navigate an America of a not-too-distant future. She embarks on a path of self-discovery that forces her to question the values she once held true and the righteousness of a country that politicizes faith. (Goodreads)

***Call Me by Your Name* by Andre Aciman**

A novel that centers on a blossoming romantic relationship between an intellectually precocious and curious 17-year-old American-Italian Jewish boy named Elio Perlman and a visiting 24-year-old American Jewish scholar named Oliver in 1980s Italy. (Wikipedia)

***The Bird Artist* by Howard Norman**

A painter of the birds of his remote village on the coast of Newfoundland, the narrator of this novel—a finalist for the 1994 National Book Award—recounts the passion and betrayal that led him to murder a lighthouse keeper. (NPR)

YA Reads

***Speak* by Laurie R. King**

Melinda enters high school as a social outcast due to a tragic event at a summer party. Throughout the novel, readers see the damaging effects of isolation, gossip, and abuse.

***Exit, Pursued by a Bear* by E.K. Johnston**

In every class, there's a star cheerleader and a pariah pregnant girl. They're never supposed to be the same person. Hermione struggles to regain the control she's always had and faces a wrenching decision about how to move on. The assault wasn't the beginning of Hermione Winter's story and she's not going to let it be the end.

Try a Classic

***Love in the Time of Cholera* by Gabriel Garcia Marquez**

Can being in love be an illness? A disease? Follow the relationship of Florentino and Fermina over 50 years. What is the connection between physical and emotional pain? Considered by many to be one of the greatest love stories.

***Jude the Obscure* by Thomas Hardy**

Hardy's last novel features Jude Fawley, a working-class young man and stonemason, who dreams of becoming a scholar. Jude and Sue deeply suffer the financial and social consequences of brazenly defying the mores and morals of society. The novel questions issues of class, education, religion, morality and marriage and the freedom to choose your own destiny. (Wikipedia)

***The Handmaid's Tale* by Margaret Atwood**

With the new TV series, everyone is talking about this classic novel and its themes of morality, religion, and the role of women in society.

Movies

The Crucible

A teenage girl's accusation that she was bewitched wreaks havoc and hysteria in a small town in 17th-century New England.

She's All That

A high school jock makes a bet that he can turn an unattractive girl into the school's prom queen.

The Ballad of Jack and Rose

A father and daughter isolated on an island off the East Coast and living on a once-thriving commune grapple with the limits of family and sexuality. (IMDB)

Easy A

Prompted by her popular best friend to spill details of her boring weekend, Olive, a clean-cut teen, decides to spice things up by telling a little lie about losing her virginity.

Your library has FREE eBooks, magazines, streaming movies & TV shows too! Ask for help to get started with any of these great online resources.

Websites

"A Modern Day Letter A" Article and Radio Program About Cyberbullying

<https://www.wnyc.org/story/259398-sexual-cyberbullying-modern-day-letter/>

Ten Things You Didn't Know About The Scarlet Letter!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQuKJEn3BfQ>



Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE STUDENT EVALUATION FORM

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

GRADE _____ NAME OF TEACHER _____

What part/parts of this story did you enjoy when you were seeing the play?

What part/parts of this play confused you while reading or watching the play?

What part/parts of the stage version helped you understand the book?

What did you learn from reading or seeing this play?

Which character would you like to play?



Please go to our website: www.primestage.com to find this form and send it back directly online! Or you can mail it to us at: Prime Stage Theatre P.O. Box 99446 Pittsburgh, PA 15233.

THE RESOURCE GUIDE TEACHER EVALUATION FORM

Prime Stage constantly assesses the work provided by our education department. Your feedback is vital to our ongoing need for funding for this program. Please fill out the following forms and mail or email them to the address given below. Thank you.

YOUR NAME _____

NAME OF SCHOOL _____

EMAIL ADDRESS _____

Which part(s) of the play and experience you find most helpful for you and your students?

Was the guide useful to you?

Which part(s) did you find most helpful?

How can we improve the theatrical for the future?

