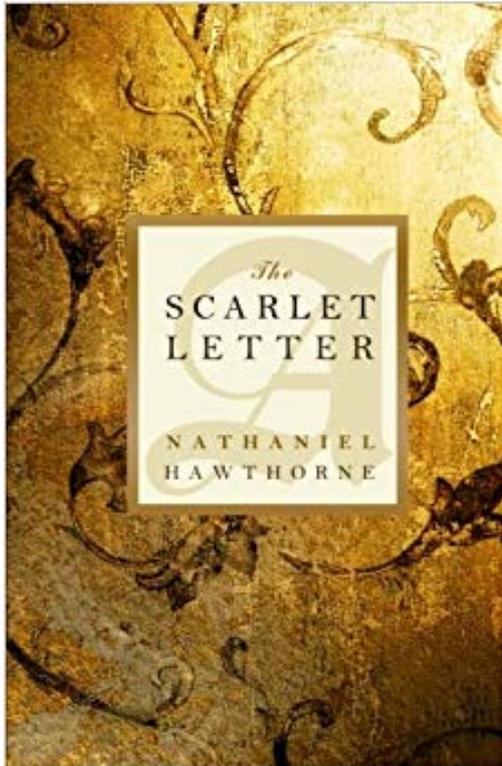


The Scarlet Letter *by* Nathaniel Hawthorne



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THE SCARLET LETTER is considered Nathaniel Hawthorne's most famous novel-and the first quintessentially American novel in style, theme, and language.



Reviews of the *The Scarlet Letter* *by* Nathaniel Hawthorne

- **Moralsa**

Hester Prynne is my favorite literary heroine!

I know that's not how others may characterize her but all I saw was a woman of immense internal strength in the face of shame and suffering.

I found myself admiring her and suffering alongside this brave and beautiful woman.

I never had the chance to read this in high school and I'm so glad I waited. Any book assigned as a school project made me approach it as a prison meal... but this time I was able to approach it as a 5 star banquet spread.

I took my time savoring the archaic language and the poetic phraseology. I lingered as Hester was forced to bear the shame of youth and religiosity. I tried to absorb the despair and find the strength that she was forced to find and soon I learned to love her as though I had known her and her agony personally.

Nathaniel Hawthorne has brilliantly critiqued the human condition and masterfully described the burden of shame, hypocrisy, vengeance and triumph.

This book is one for the ages!

A must buy if ever there was one.

- **Camper**

This rating need only apply to the quality of the publisher (Millenium Publishers) - not Mr. Hawthorne's writing itself.

Simply put: do not buy this addition of the book. Setting aside the totally unaesthetic cover art, which quite frankly looks like a compressed google image superimposed upon a black background, and lack of a synopsis or any key information on the back cover, the pages themselves are difficult to read as there are no clear paragraph indentations or chapter breaks thus making scansion difficult. Likewise, I have noticed editing errors as well. Stick with Penguin or any of the other staple publishers other than this disgraceful Millenium publication.

- **Swordsong**

The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne is a classic ... which is the main reason I chose to read it. But, besides being a classic, it is also a very good book, and I enjoyed it immensely, though the ending was disappointing in that it was a little vague as to the fates of some of the characters.

The book starts off with Hester Prynne, the main character, being led up on the scaffold for the public to gawk at. She has been charged with adultery, which is obviously true because she has a baby and her husband hasn't been around in ages. However, she refuses to give up the name of her fellow adulterer. To her dress is pinned a scarlet letter, and she is released, but she'll spend the rest of her life being shunned and stared at.

The real beauty of The Scarlet Letter is the rich language never found in contemporary works. It gives you a real mental workout, and it's absolutely beautiful.

The characters are well-developed and interesting. The story is also interesting, though very sad. It shows the strictness of Puritan beliefs in the 1600s, it shows the difference between a person bearing shame and a person bearing secret guilt, it shows the price of sin and the gift of forgiveness. The Scarlet Letter is a true masterpiece.

~Kellyn Roth

- **Tamesya**

Of course, this is a classic piece of American literature. I had seen a dramatization of it on TV some years ago but until recently had not gotten around to reading it. The book is structured differently from the drama. Modern readers may find the sentences tryingly long and the sentiments unimaginable. However, clearly Hawthorne was a genius for he packs two or three reflections into every sentence and winds them about the characters flawlessly. If one can set aside modern

concepts of behavior and Hemingway model sentence structure it is a rewarding read. The book deals intimately with internal conflicts in the characters rather than actions, which principally serve only to divulge thoughts and feelings.

- **Amis**

I heard so many times that this book is incredibly boring, but I decided to give it a chance and it actually isn't that bad. It's the story of Hester Prynne, who has an affair and gets pregnant and the way that the Puritan community she lives in reacts to that. She is forced to wear a scarlet "A" on her dress so nobody ever forgets that she's a sinner.

It's always a bit strange reading books like these in the 21st century. On one hand, I understand that it was a different time and people had different values and I don't think we should pretend history was any better than it actually was. On the other hand, it makes me so mad when I think of the horrible way women used to be treated and the fact that there are still some places in the world where a woman like Hester would be punished even worse than she was in this book.

It's a short book, though it drags in some places because Hawthorne loves unnecessary details. But he's very good at making you understand exactly what the characters are feeling. The book is full of his observations about human nature and I'd say it's worth reading because of that even if you have no interest in the plot.

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