

The Scarlet Letter is a story written by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The story's setting is in the 1850's during the puritan times in Boston, Massachusetts. Roger Chillingworth was one of the main characters along with Hester Prynne and Author Dimmesdale.

Roger Chillingworth was a small, thin, and was slightly deformed in appearance with one shoulder being higher than the other. He was described on page fifty-six by Hester Prynne as being "remarkable intelligence in his features, as of a person who had so cultivated his mental part that it could not fail to mold the physical to itself, and become manifest by unmistakable tokens." He spent so much of his time gaining knowledge he seemed to cut himself off from humanity.

He is a victim even before his arrival to the American Colony's, first by being captured by savage Indians. While being held captive he was presumed dead his wife Hester had a child by another man out of wedlock.

By the end of the book we see that Chillingworth's sins are far greater than either Hester's or Author's. This is first evident in the fact that he married Hester knowing she would never love him and yet he made her marry him anyway. He admits this while talking to her in the jail cell. "Mine was the first wrong, when I betrayed thy budding youth into a false and unnatural relation with my decay." His second sin is allowing himself to become obsessed with vengeance against Dimmesdale].

"But, as he proceeded, a terrible fascination, a kind of fierce, though still calm, necessity seized the old man within its gripe, and never set him free again until he had done all its bidding. He now dug into the poor clergyman's heart, like a miner searching for gold; or, rather, like a sexton

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delving into a grave, possibly in quest of a jewel that had been buried on the dead man's bosom, but likely to find nothing save mortality and corruption. Alas, for his own soul, if these were what he sought!

Sometimes a light glimmered out of the physician's eyes, burning blue and ominous, like the reflection of a furnace, or, let us say, like one of those gleams of ghastly fire that darted from Bunyan's awful door-way in the hill-side, and quivered on the pilgrim's face. The soil where this dark miner was working had perchance shown indications that encouraged him." (Pg. 122,123) He uses Dimmesdale's conviction to destroy his sanity, Chillingworth tries to blame Dimmesdale for his destruction instead of taking responsibility for his own actions and allowing for a peaceful agreement to come between him and Hester.

Author Dimmesdale was a victim to his conviction of his affair with Hester Prynne. This conviction eventually killed him by tearing him apart from the inside out, but he was unable to admit his sin publicly because as a preacher it would ruin his reputation. This fact is very evident by how harsh the puritan people were with Hester's adulterous act and how they punished her for her sin. So this left him with two choices either to admit to the colony that he had sinned and be ruined publicly or to keep it to himself and let it eat him alive. This fierce hatred toward himself by his acts of penance were he would lash himself with a whip. After seven years of living in agony with his sin he triumphs over his sin in his election day sermon where he confesses to the whole colony that he committed adultery and calls Hester and his daughter Pearl up on the scaffold. This allowed him to die in Hester's arms peacefully.

The plot finishes to show how Roger and Author became victims to their sin and by trying to hide it, it led to their demise. I feel the Hawthorne weaved this into his story to tell us

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that we are to confess our sin.

