

Chapter 14 Guided Analysis

Activity One

Reread Hester and Chillingworth's conversation in chapter 14. Record details that explain Chillingworth's revenge plan.

"...his spirit lacked the strength that could have borne up, as thick has, beneath a burden like thy scarlet letter." and "What art can do, I have exhausted on him. That he now breathes, and creeps about on earth, is owing all to me!" (155). Chillingworth has done everything within his power as a physician to keep Dimmesdale alive to feel the full weight of his guilt. He has also acted like a malevolent spirit, following the minister around under the guise of friendship, but wishing him ill in all circumstances.

Activity Two

Fill in the chart with details and quotes from the text about Hester's sin on the left and Chillingworth's sin on the right. Write in order to compare the two.

Hester's sin	Chillingworth's sin
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "It was myself" (Her sin made him a fiend). • "Whose bane and ruin have I been" • "Red-hot iron entering into the soul" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "What art can do, I have exhausted on him" • "Undertake a devil's office" • "Analysis of a heart full of torture...deriving enjoyment thence" • "Fiery tortures" • "Burrow and rankle his heart" • "Perpetual poison of direst revenge"
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Which sin is worse- Hester or Chillingworth's? Why? Use the text to support your response.

Because Hester was the one who initially committed adultery as well as refused to name Dimmesdale as her fellow adulterer, she is to blame for the current state of each party.

For example, students believing Hester is to blame may write: Hester even admits her own blame to Chillingworth when she says, "It was myself... Why hast thou not avenged thyself on me?" (156).

Activity Three

Fill in the sentence stem to create a thesis statement, or claim, for your timed writing.

- Because Hester was the one who initially committed adultery as well as refused to name Dimmesdale as her fellow adulterer, she is to blame for the current state of each party.

In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the character of Hester _____ commits a

greater sin than Chillingworth because Hester was the one who initially committed adultery as well as refused to name Dimmesdale as her fellow adulterer.

Additionally, your essay should include a counterclaim which addresses the opposing side of your position. This is generally included in your body paragraph.

While some may believe Chillingworth is more to blame because he is plotting an evil revenge,

Hester or Chillingworth

Why might people believe the other side?

actually Hester is more to blame because her adultery is the impetus for Chillingworth's revenge.

Hester or Chillingworth

Why is your side despite this?

Activity Four

Compose a response to the following prompt in the time allotted in class:

Consider who is most to blame- Hester or Chillingworth- for their current state of affairs. Whose sin is worse- Hester for cheating on her husband and not revealing her fellow adulterer, or Chillingworth for letting revenge control his heart and taking advantage of Dimmesdale? Make a claim and use evidence from chapter 14 as well as other parts of the text as evidence to support your claim.

Hester Prynne, a young New England woman in pre-colonial America, is guilty of committing adultery with minister Arthur Dimmesdale while her husband Roger Chillingworth is away. Hester and Dimmesdale's adultery results in the birth of a child, Pearl, and as Hester is punished for her adultery, she refuses to name her lover by name. This prompts Chillingworth, when confronting Hester, to swear to achieve revenge for this betrayal. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, the character of Hester commits a greater sin than Chillingworth because Hester was the one who initially committed adultery as well as refused to name Dimmesdale as her fellow adulterer.

_____ Hester's devotion to Dimmesdale is the drive for Chillingworth's revenge plan. Chillingworth elaborates, "Better had he died at once! Never did mortal man suffer what this man has suffered" (Hawthorne 14). However, even though Chillingworth exacerbated Dimmesdale's guilt, Hester is the reason for it. While some may believe Chillingworth is more to blame because he is plotting an evil revenge, actually Hester is more to blame because her adultery is the impetus for Chillingworth's revenge. Hester herself admits her fault as she cries, "It was myself... It was I, not less than he. Why hast thou not avenged thyself on me?" (Hawthorne 14). Hester understands that by refusing to confess Dimmesdale's name, she has taken his sin upon herself. This, in turn, has made Dimmesdale's life miserable as he suffers from the guilt of his hidden sin.

_____ Hester ultimately is the root of all conflict in *The Scarlet Letter*. While she and Dimmesdale both committed adultery, Hester is the one who took Dimmesdale's sin upon herself, denying him atonement. Additionally, she kept Chillingworth's identity a secret which enabled him to create a parasitic relationship with Dimmesdale which ruined Dimmesdale's life.