

CHAPTER 2 “THE MARKET-PLACE”

WORDS:

abashed	indubitably	remonstrance
Antinomian	infamy	rigidity
augured	iniquity	rotundity
brazen	malefactress	scaffold
contrive	matron	scornful
contumely	Meagre	scourged
countenance	mien	solemnity
demeanour	mock	spectral
disdainful	murmur	spurn
dismal	Papist	stripes
eminence	petrified	sumptuary
evanescent	phantasmagoric	token
gallows	physiognomy	transgressor
grim	picturesque	trifling
grisly	pillory	trow
haughty	preternaturally	venerable
heterodox	proneness	visage
ignominy	purport	
impediment	quarrel	

QUESTIONS

1. Name 3 crimes and the punishments that the Puritans might witness.
2. What is the relationship between religion and law in Puritan New England?
3. Describe the Puritan women. Use one quote from the book to support your answer. What seems to be Hawthorne’s attitude towards the Puritan women and contemporary women of New England?
4. What punishments would the Puritan women have given Hester Prynne if it were left to them?
5. Describe the appearance of Hester Prynne.
6. What does she do (in regards to the beadle) when crosses the threshold of the prison?
7. How old is her baby?
8. What detail is given to suggest the baby was born in jail?
9. What is Hester’s sin? Punishment?
10. What is astonishing about the “A” on her bodice?
11. What are the scarlet letter’s powers?
12. Why is Hester taken to the scaffold in the market-place?
13. How does Hawthorne draw a connection between the Virgin Mary and Hester?
14. What words does Hawthorne use to describe Hester’s nature?
15. What is Hester’s family’s background?

16. What things does Hester think about while she is on the scaffold? This sequence is dreamlike and difficult to follow; sketch the order of events in Hester's consciousness.

NOTES:

Antinomian: one who professes antinomianism, a form of religious enthusiasm that frees the individual from control of the moral and civil law (man-made law) because he has surrendered to God's law. In preaching her doctrine of the covenant of grace, Anne Hutchinson expressed antinomianism. The opposing group was called 'Legalists'.

Mistress Hibbins: Hibbins, Ann née Bellingham (? -1656). Her second husband, William Hibbins, was a wealthy merchant of Boston. In 1655 she was accused of being a witch, but though the jury found her guilty, the magistrates refused to accept the verdict. Her case then went to the Grand Court. She was condemned and hanged on 19 June 1656. Notice that her brother is none other than Governor Bellingham.

Goodwives: goodwife: the mistress of a house

gossip: originally a godfather or godmother from the Old English *godsibb* [*god* = God + *sibb* = related]. In the 1600s the term meant 'familiar acquaintance' or 'friend'.

Marry: originally the name of the Virgin Mary used as an oath. Later a mild ejaculation.

trou: believe

town-beadle: town-crier

sumptuary regulations of the colony: laws regulating expenditures, especially with a view to restraining excess in food or equipage (ie., clothes).

Boston's earliest church: First Church, originally organized in Charlestown and then moved to Boston. Ultimately it became Unitarian Universalist. It was destroyed by fire in 1968.

terrorists of France: Interesting that Hawthorne labels the leaders of the French government as terrorists. A "Reign of Terror" was executed under the guidance of the Robespierre led government.