

## Forgiveness

Forgiveness is an evident part of life, showing who a person truly is by the way they show mercy to one who has wronged them. When the main characters of the story are faced with opportunities to forgive, or to hold a grudge against another, they must decide which they will choose. In Nathaniel Hawthorne's, *The Scarlet Letter*, true freedom is found in forgiveness and is obtained through the true compassion of a merciful heart. Good thesis, but the introductory sentences could use some work. Think of your introduction as an opportunity to set up your argument so that the thesis is the final puzzle piece. Give context for your argument, and your reader will be better able to understand you.

Owning up to their sin, Hester and Arthur discover forgiveness as they reveal their mutual burdens. When Hester is stricken with grief in the dim forest, she begs for Arthur Dimmesdale's forgiveness, feeling as though nothing that has happened to her would be as agonizing as to have him hold a grudge against her. "I do forgive you, Hester," replied the minister, at length, with a deep utterance out of an abyss of sadness, but not anger. "I freely forgive you now. May God forgive us both! We are not the worst sinners in the world" (Hawthorne 169). At this moment, both realize that their sin has imprisoned them for too long and they have forgiven each other, as well as themselves, and through forgiveness they have found freedom. While Prynne and Dimmesdale's exchange opens their hearts to find their clemency, Arthur still feels despondent because of the threat of Roger Chillingworth hanging over him. Look at comment #3 and use this sentence to deal with that idea.

Ian Andrews 11/24/2015 2:49 PM

**Comment [1]:** This is a pretty obvious statement—enough so that it doesn't help you set up your argument. Maybe say, "their decision indicates the state of their heart" or something?

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**Comment [2]:** Choose between "owning up to their sin" and "reveal their mutual burdens." Using both is redundant.

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**Comment [3]:** Is this the moment where the freedom that the prompt asks you to define is found? Or is it rather a moment in which the author foreshadows a more complete moment of freedom that an even more open moment of confession will bring at the scaffold?

Arthur Dimmesdale's conscience has caused him to become wracked with guilt and he has begun to **give up on himself**. Arthur Dimmesdale has found out that Roger Chillingworth is Hester's husband

and he has submitted to Roger's evil eye hovering over his heart, while Hester feels sorry for the ruin that has befallen him. "The judgement of God is on me," answered the conscience-stricken priest. "It is too mighty for me to struggle with!" "Heaven would show mercy," rejoined Hester, "hast thou but the strength to take advantage of it?" (171). Hester **tells** Arthur Dimmesdale that heaven would show mercy and forgiveness even when he thinks he has done an unthinkable wrong. Although Hester tells Dimmesdale he is worthy of forgiveness, Arthur knows he still needs to deal with Mr. Chillingworth. **His very**

**presence challenges Arthur's bravery.** *You haven't, at any point in this paragraph, given me an analysis of the role of Chillingworth. Saying that Dimmesdale is about to "give up on himself" or that Chillingworth "challenges Arthur's bravery" doesn't tell me in explicit language how the author uses Chillingworth in the story. Part of the problem is that your quotation doesn't pertain to Chillingworth directly (because you haven't drawn out the idea that Chillingworth represents God's judgment in the story...). As it stands now, this paragraph needs either a new topic sentence that addresses the quotation you offer, or a new piece of evidence that deals more directly with Chillingworth.*

Arthur Dimmesdale **finds** the true courage inside of him to publicly confess his sins, setting him free from his tormenter, Roger Chillingworth, and revealing his own true change of heart. Arthur Dimmesdale is weak and dying, **but** despite his bodily weakness, **he stands to confront Roger**

Chillingworth for his unearthly doings, **and...** "Thou hast escaped me," he repeated more than once.

"Thou hast escaped me!" "May God forgive thee!" said the minister. "Thou too hast deeply sinned" (221).

After years of chasing after Arthur Dimmesdale mercilessly, Roger Chillingworth is now surprised to find that he is the one who needs the freedom of forgiveness the most. Aside from all the evil deeds of Roger Chillingworth, Arthur Dimmesdale has found **that because he has been forgiven himself**, he has forgiveness to give to his worst enemy. **He** has been saved by repentance.

Nathaniel Hawthorne's, *The Scarlet Letter*, Hester, Arthur and Roger come to understand that freedom is found in forgiveness and can be gained by the compassion of a merciful heart. In this book,

Ian Andrews 11/30/2015 9:09 AM

**Comment [4]:** What does this mean? Remember, your topic sentence is for stating that which you will spend your paragraph proving. Make sure this summarizes your argument instead of vaguely hinting at your argument.

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**Comment [5]:** This sentence needs to tell your reader which portion of the scene you're interested in talking about. As it stood, you simply listed all the different things that happened in the scene. Is Chillingworth's shock the main thing you want to focus on? Or would you rather spend time talking about Dimmesdale's attitude towards him? Your call, but you need to choose.

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Nathaniel Hawthorne shows that forgiveness is a part of everyone's life and he suggests it is more difficult to do than it seems. The protagonists come to find that even though forgiveness is a trying struggle, it is better to show mercy than to resentment one for their wrongdoings when forgiveness could set both parties free from their burdens.

Jan Andrews 11/30/2015 9:23 AM

**Comment [6]:** These two sentences are only slightly different, and sound redundant. Decide what extra thing you are trying to say in the second sentence, and say only that, rather than restating the first sentence also.

#### Work Cited

Hawthorne, Nathaniel. *The Scarlet Letter*. 1850. New York; Barnes and Noble, 1998. Print.

Good work! I think you have the bones of a good paper here. Let me know if any of my comments are unclear.

Looking forward to your final draft!

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Element	Grade
Thesis	4
Supports	3
Structure	3
Mechanics	3
Style	4