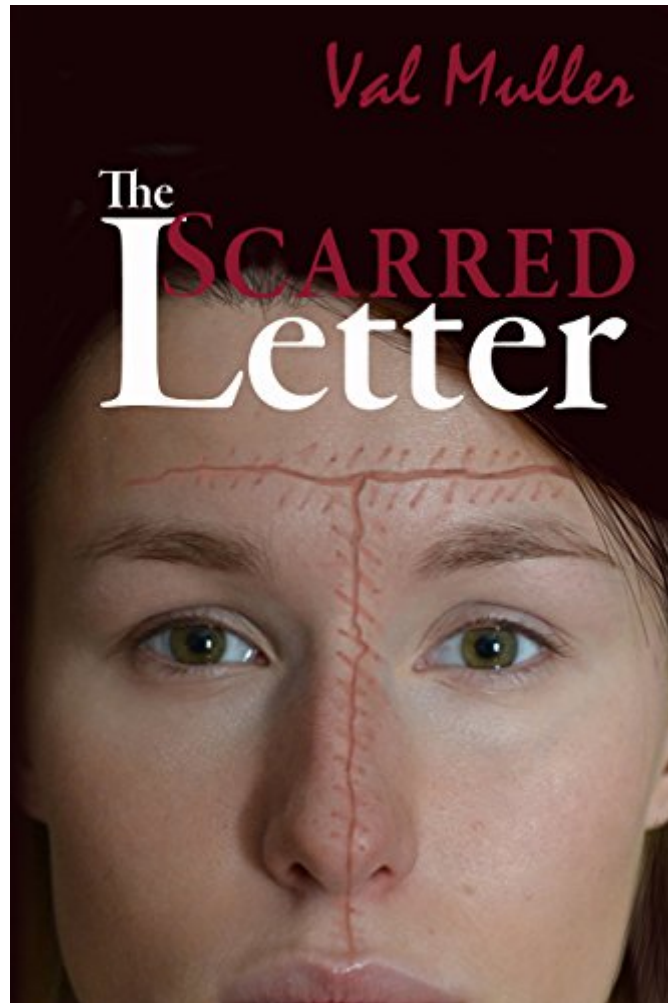




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The Scarred Letter



Synopsis

Heather Primm never anticipated that a single blog post could ruin her life. Heather's scoop about steroid use by key players on the school football team sets off an investigation that strips the Orchard Valley Thunderbolts of their state title and earns Heather a coveted journalism prize. Hated by those involved in the scandal, despised by jealous members of the newspaper staff, ignored by her newly-popular ex-boyfriend, and even berated by her mother, Heather is attacked and a chilling "T" is carved into her face. Now stigmatized as a traitor, she becomes the object of scorn for nearly all of Orchard Valley High. But when the school offers to send her to a private academy to hush up the matter, Heather is forced to make a decision. Should she refuse to allow fear to control her life by holding to the truth, or accept the chance to escape and build a new life? Written by a veteran English teacher, *The Scarred Letter* weaves themes from Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* into an accessible, intelligent tale of modern isolation and a young woman's quest for truth and acceptance. "Authentic reboot of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* for today's readers. Heather Primm publishes the truth on her blog and pays an appalling price. It's up to Heather's younger sister to remind her what's true and what's not and help her find a way forward. A powerful book." —Adele Abbot, author, *Of Machines & Magics* and *Postponing Armageddon* "High school becomes the perfect substitute for Hawthorne's Puritan society in this accessible take on *The Scarlet Letter*. Surrounded by ruthless cliques and wannabe outsiders, Heather finds out just how hard standing up for yourself and your beliefs can be. A powerful message for readers of all ages." —Sheri S. Levy, author, *Seven Days to Goodbye*

Book Information

File Size: 3732 KB

Print Length: 250 pages

Simultaneous Device Usage: Unlimited

Publisher: Barking Rain Press; First edition (July 28, 2014)

Publication Date: July 28, 2014

Sold by: Â Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00M8B70QQ

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Screen Reader: Supported

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #2,173,068 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #49

in Kindle Store > Books > Teens > Historical Fiction > United States > 21st Century #822 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Teen & Young Adult > Historical Fiction > United States #7194 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Classics > Literary

Customer Reviews

This modern retelling of *The Scarlet Letter* is well-done and relevant to today's teen audience. It would be interesting to have a class read both the original and this version. Muller stays true to the pacing and plot of the original story, but saves a few twists for the ending that will differentiate the new work from the old. The downside? The main characters often lapsed into the speech patterns that were appropriate in the original work, but seem stilted in a modern high school setting. That pulled me out of the narrative and made me wish the author had reworked the dialogue more. Minor characters spoke with typical teen slang and jargon, but the three main characters tended to sound too much like their Puritan counterparts. Even so, an engaging story.

Absolutely marvelous rendition of channeling Hawthorne's classic tale of *The Scarlet Letter* up to today's teens.

It was a good remake of the *Scarlet Letter* tale.

Rating: 5/5 Stars
Quick Reasons: an awesome modern-day retelling of *The Scarlet Letter* (Nathaniel Hawthorne); powerful, haunting depiction of high school and the pressures that come with it; realistic, endearing characters, creepy loners, and an interesting glimpse into the world of secrets and betrayals we walk through; an examination of what happens when no one is brave enough to take a stand. I was approached by Barking Rain Press to try out one of the books from their publications. I chose this one, and received a copy from them for review. This in no way affected how I read the book or will be reviewing it now. Thank you, Barking Rain Press and Val Muller for this opportunity! We read *The Scarlet Letter*, by Nathaniel Hawthorne,

in high school, and I remember being enthralled by the characters and the story woven into the pages. It remains, to this day, one of my favorite classics and altogether favorite reads, though I don't talk about it often (I should amend this; the book is great!) When I read the blurb for this novel by Val Muller, I was immediately intrigued. Having felt so strongly drawn to the character's plight in *The Scarlet Letter*, I was SURE this modern-day depiction would speak to me just as much. I settled on this being my chosen title almost instantly after doing a small bit of research—the idea of taking such an emotional, harrowing tale and reproducing it into a plight more understood by a different generation was just too interesting to pass up! I was hooked from page one. Heather Primm is a stubborn, set-in-her-ways, down to earth and true to her heart kind of girl—exactly my type of protagonist. From the start, her voice woven between chapters of an outside perspective in the form of blog/journal entries is captivating, insightful, and haunting. Val Muller wrote this to be both gut-wrenching and lyrical, drawing inspiration for her characters and the story from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel. The juxtaposition of the beautiful and almost-grotesque paint an intriguing, accurate picture of life in the halls of a school made famous for sports achievements and what it's like to be an outsider. The climax of Heather's story "before" and introduction to the "after" —the branding of her as a traitor in the form of a large "T" drawn across the middle of her face—tugs at readers hearts while putting into perspective what happens when otherwise good people stand by and let others speak (or, in this instance, react) for them. It also helps highlight the fact that we all, at some points in our lives, allow darker, more selfish motives to emerge. This is a gripping, human, horrifying look at a world of corruption, secrets, and betrayals. Sure to captivate and churn the stomachs of even the strongest-willed readers, this is one modern-day retelling I wouldn't recommend missing out on! I highly suggest everyone pick this up—you won't be disappointed!

The Scarred Letter by Val Muller Heather Primm has a dream of becoming a journalist and starts her own blog. When she writes of some popular football players using steroids, she wins a prize for the article, but loses popularity through out the school. She soon falls victim to a vicious attack and a letter "T" is carved on her faced, marring her for life as a "traitor". She is literally shunned by the entire school, including some teachers. She refuses to name her attackers, a true journalists move. Even the Principal wants her to transfer schools. But Heather holds her head high and stands her

ground. She is determined to stand strong on her beliefs. I liked this story a lot. This is something that could happen in real life. We see how Heather is treated for revealing an unpopular truth. How the students and teachers feel the importance in winning athletic awards versus winning journal awards based on honesty. I highly recommend to (upper) middle school readers, young adult, and adults as well. A well written fantastic story. A must read for all. (*This book was given to me as a gift)

The Scarred Letter by Val Muller A remake or retelling of Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, Val Muller's book, *The Scarred Letter* is stock full of other analogies, metaphors and similes. For an example the scar, or letter T on the protagonist, Heather Prim's face, standing for Truth, Traitor, Tutor and Thunderbolts at different times in the story. A pleasure to read, *The Scarred Letter* had me fascinated as each time another metaphor, simile or analogy was revealed to me, the reader. The story was cleverly crafted. The theme of the book, that of the importance of telling the truth is evident in every scene. The reader is invited inside the main characters mind through her private blog. I loved how Muller used social networking and cell phones in her book making this truly contemporary and something valuable for teens of today. I highly recommend this book as a fun, educational read exposing bullying to be the evil thing it is.

Using the Hawthorne classic *The Scarlet Letter* as a guide, Val Muller has given her readers a modern version with all the emotional torment and social isolation that characterize the original novel. Using blogs, cell phones, and social media, the very real and very modern moral questions of bullying, the use of performance enhancing drugs, the duty of a journalist to report the truth, and protect his or her sources are brought up in this well-written book. The book is fascinating as the characters become real to the reader and the plot unfolds. Reading it made me want to revisit the *Scarlet Letter* because it points out what makes a book a classic. It isn't the details of daily life, which change from decade to decade, but the truth of human emotions and human failings that are never outdated.

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