

How does your understanding of the character deepen or change through what he reveals about his feelings and thoughts?

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As the officers led me through the mall, I sensed a hundred pairs of eyes staring at me. My face flushed and I broke out in a sweat. Now everyone knew I was a criminal. In their eyes I was a juvenile delinquent, and thank God the cops were getting me off the streets. The worst part was thinking my grandmother might be having the same thoughts. The humiliation at that moment was overwhelming. I felt like Hester Prynne being put on public display for everyone to ridicule.

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That short walk through the mall seemed to take hours. But once we reached the squad car, time raced by. I was read my rights and questioned. We were at the police station within minutes. Everything happened so fast I didn't have a chance to feel remorse for my crime. Instead, I viewed what was happening to me as if it were a movie. Being searched, although embarrassing, somehow seemed to be exciting. All the movies and television programs I had seen were actually coming to life. This is what it was really like. But why were criminals always portrayed as frightened and regretful? I was having fun. I thought I had nothing to fear—until I was allowed my one phone call. I was trembling as I dialed home. I didn't know what I was going to say to my parents, especially my mother.

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"Hi, Dad, this is Jean."

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"We've been waiting for you to call."

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"Did Susie tell you what happened?"

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"Yeah, but we haven't told your mother. I think you should tell her what you did and where you are."

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"You mean she doesn't even know where I am?"

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"No, I want you to explain it to her."

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There was a pause as he called my mother to the phone. For the first time that night, I was close to tears. I wished I had never stolen that stupid pin. I wanted to give the phone to one of the officers because I was too ashamed to tell my mother the truth, but I had no choice.

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"Jean, where are you?"

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"I'm, umm, in jail."

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"Why? What for?"

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"Shoplifting."

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"Oh no, Jean. Why? Why did you do it?"

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"I don't know. No reason. I just did it."