

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Complete the following study guide and reading strategies as you read The Scarlet Letter by Nathaniel Hawthorne. Be certain to use complete sentences, detail for support, and thoughtful responses for the “Interpreting Questions.” In addition, make certain to include page numbers for your responses! **HINT:** If you do not buy your novel, use sticky notes to take notes, make comments, or ask questions as you read.

### **Chapters 1 – 4**

How are the Puritans of Boston first portrayed?

What is significant about the rosebush outside the prison door?

Describe Hester’s demeanor as she emerges from her prison cell.

What is the significance to Hester’s viewing the crowd from atop the scaffold?

Describe Roger Chillingworth in the scene in which he visits Hester in jail.

Why does Chillingworth ask Hester to keep his identity a secret?

### **INTERPRETING QUESTIONS**

Why does Hawthorne introduce all the main character so early?

Why does Hester refuse to reveal her partner’s sin?

## **Chapters 5 – 8**

Why does Hester remain in Boston?

How does Hester support herself and her daughter?

How is Hester treated by the townspeople?

Why does Hester name her daughter Pearl?

How is Pearl first described?

How is Pearl treated by the children of Boston?

How does Pearl amuse herself?

What does Pearl first notice as a baby?

Why does Hester visit Governor Billingham's mansion?

What reason does Hester give for her need to keep Pearl?

Who supports Hester in her pleas to keep Pearl and by what argument?

How does Pearl behave toward Dimmesdale in the Governor's garden?

**INTRPRETING QUESTIONS:**

Why does Dimmesdale speak so eloquently on Hester's behalf?

What function does Mistress Hibbins serve in the story?

**Chapters 9 – 12**

How does Roger Chillingworth come to be Dimmesdale's personal physician?

How has Roger Chillingworth changed since Hester first knew him?

What does Chillingworth suggest is the cause of Dimmesdale's suffering?

How does Pearl's behavior in the cemetery express a link between Dimmesdale and Hester?

How does Chillingworth finally discover the cause of Dimmesdale's suffering?

What reason is given for Dimmesdale's ability to touch the soul of others?

What effect does public veneration have upon the Reverend Dimmesdale?

How does Dimmesdale seek penitence?

Describe Dimmesdale's first vigil on the scaffold.

What meanings are given to the apparition in the sky?

What effect does the midnight vigil have on Hester?

What has Hester's A come to mean to many of the townspeople?

Describe the changes in Hester's appearance and temperament wrought by the scarlet token.

In what way has the A freed Hester?

**INTERPRETING QUESTIONS:**

Why does Dimmesdale go to the scaffold?

Why does Chillingworth torture the minister?

**Chapters 13 – 15**

How does Hester come to view womanhood?

Why does Chillingworth refuse to leave Dimmesdale alone?

What does Hester discover after her interview with Chillingworth?

How does Hester respond when Pearl makes an A for herself of eel-grass?

When asked what the A truly means, what does Hester say?

**INTERPRETING QUESTIONS:**

What does Hawthorne mean when he says that “the scarlet letter had not done its office”?

Why does Hawthorne NOT make Chillingworth totally devilish?

**Chapters 16 – 19**

How does Pearl explain the sun’s refusal to shine on Hester?

What answer does Hester give Pearl when she asks if Hester has met the Black Man?

How does Dimmesdale react when Hester reveals Chillingworth’s true identity?

What does Hester suggest they do?

What does Hester do to signal the beginning of a new life?

How does Pearl act when she sees her mother without the A?

How is Dimmesdale affected by his interview with Hester?

**INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS:**

How is Dimmesdale's sin different from Chillingworth's?

Why does Dimmesdale conceal his sine for seven years?

**Chapters 20 – 24**

How does Dimmesdale treat Chillingworth when the two meet?

What does Chillingworth do when he sees Dimmesdale's transformation?

How does Dimmesdale finally escape Chillingworth?

What becomes of Chillingworth after Dimmesdale's death?

How do the townspeople react to Dimmesdale's confession?

What becomes of Hester and Pearl?

**INTERPRETIVE QUESTIONS:**

Why does Dimmesdale act so strangely upon his return from the forest?

Why doesn't Hawthorne clearly explain what is on Dimmesdale's chest?

**FINAL THOUGHT:**

Whose story is it: Dimmesdale's or Hester's? Justify your response.