*Scarlet Letter* Questions name\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

p. 271

List/know the four types of novel that *Scarlet Letter* illustrates.

p. 272

Read background on author Nathaniel Hawthorne.

Ch. 1 Prison Door

Ques. 1-5, p 274

Ch. 2 Market Place

1. What are some typical crimes (trials) for which this group might have assembled to witness the verdict?
2. Comment on the insights the women’s conversation gives to their character and Puritannical attitudes.
3. Describe Hester’s appearance and character as she comes into public view. Include in your answer some explanation for how/ why she “repels” the town beadle’s hand from her shoulder and steps forward “as if by her own free will.” (p. 276, right top)
4. Comment on some symbols already used in chapters 1 & 2.
5. Write some comments of your own on insights or expressions in this chapter.

Ch. 3 Recognition

1. Describe the “stranger’s” reaction to seeing Hester Prynne and her reaction to his recognition.
2. Describe Mr. Dimmesdale and his appeal to Hester, and her response to him.
3. Point out five figurative comments or expressions in ch. 2 or 3.

Ch. 4 Interview

This is a dramatic chapter. Summarize it, including the key background information, motives, and vows along with their possible implications.

Ch. 5 Hester & Her Needle

Ques. 1-5, p 297

Ch. 6 Pearl

1. At what price did Hester receive Pearl (What did it actually cost Hester)? Explain the double meaning here.
2. What fears did Hester have for Pearl?
3. Describe & explain some contrasting ways Pearl responded to her mother. (p 299, right)
4. Describe Pearl’s relationship with other children.
5. What did Hester see in Pearl’s eyes?
6. What was the first thing Pearl noticed about her mother? Why is this so painful to Hester?

Ch. 7 Governor’s Hall

1. For what 2 reasons did Hester visit the governor’s hall?
2. What 2 reasons were advanced for possibly removing Pearl from her mother?
3. How did Pearl herself symbolize or duplicate the scarlet letter?
4. How did the street children respond to Pearl? What does this response reveal?
5. Briefly describe the governor’s mansion.
6. What 2 things does the convex mirror distort and accentuate?

Ch. 8 Elf Child & Minister

1. What were the governor’s stated reasons for taking Pearl from Hester?
2. How did Hester defend keeping Pearl?
3. What’s ironic about the effects of Pearl on her mother?
4. Which two adults have changed markedly over the last 3 years?

Describe how they have changed, and what might have caused the change.

1. On what logic is Dimmesdale’s rationale for Hester’s keeping of Pearl based?
2. Comment on Pearl’s reaction to the young minister after his speech had been given.
3. How might the chapter have ended if Pearl had been taken from Hester?
4. What clues do you notice in this chapter?

Ch. 9 Leech

1. What had Roger Chillingworth done about his background?
2. Why were the people eager to have him live among them?
3. What was the people’s attitude toward Mr. Dimmesdale?
4. Why did they think he was so weak and ill?
5. What reasoning did Dimmesdale give for not having doctor’s help?
6. Why does he accept help?
7. Why did the two men get along so well, in some ways?
8. What dark purposes did some people suspect for Chillingworth’s interest in Dimmesdale?
9. Point out several interesting clues or symbols in this chapter.

Ch. 10 Leech & His Patient

1. What imagery is used to portray the doctor’s delving into Dimmesdale’s inner self?
2. What’s the essence of their conversation about the pros and cons of revealing guilt in this life?
3. What purpose does Hester’s appearance in this chapter serve?
4. Why doesn’t Dimmesdale reveal his inner self to Chillingworth?
5. Comment of the events of the last page (323). What do you think happened?

Ch. 11 Interior of a Heart

1. What new power does Chillingworth’s knowledge gained at the end of chapter 10 give him over Dimmesdale?
2. How were his parishioners responding to Dimmesdale? Point out the irony here.
3. When he confessed his vileness and iniquity from the pulpit, what was the effect on the congregation?
4. What three things does he repeatedly do for penance?
5. What clues do you see?

Ch. 12 Minister’s Vigil

1. What does Dimmesdale do? What is he trying to accomplish? Does it give him relief? Why?
2. Six other previously met characters are seen in this chapter. Although it is hard to imagine why each should show up in the middle of the night, each does. Name the six and tell why he/she appears.
3. What does Pearl want Dimmesdale to do? Why won’t he?
4. What two interpretations were given to the letter ***A*** caused by the meteor in the cloud?
5. What excuse does Chillingworth give for leading Dimmesdale home?
6. Point out several examples of symbolism in this chapter.

Ch. 13 Another View of Hester

Ques. 1-5, p 338.

Ch. 14 Hester & the Physician

1. What change did Hester note in Chillingworth? What caused it?
2. What does Chillingworth admit having done to Dimmesdale?
3. What does Chillingworth say has happened to himself?
4. He claims Dimmesdale is more in debt to him now than before. What does he mean—why so?
5. For what does Chillingworth pity Hester?
6. Chillingworth ends up blaming everything on \_\_\_\_\_\_\_. What word does he use, and what does he mean by that?

Ch. 15 Hester & Pearl

1. Why does Hester hate Chillingworth so much?
2. What’s the difference between winning a woman’s hand and winning her heart?
3. Why did Hester almost share with Pearl the meaning of the scarlet letter?
4. How was she false to the symbol?
5. Why has Hester found no relief for her sin?

Ch. 16 Forest Walk

Explain and/or comment on these symbols as they are used in this chapter…

1. Hester’s desire to speak with Dimmesdale *out in the open.*
2. The *narrow forest path*.
3. The *cloudy* day, with *sunlight withdrawing* as they approach.
4. Pearl wears “nothing on my bosom *yet*.”
5. Pearl’s ability to *stand in the sunbeam*.
6. The *Black Man* with a *book*.
7. The *sad brook.*
8. The hand *over the heart*.
9. The *forest* itself.

Ch.17 Pastor & His Parishoner

1. Comment on each of these events, expressions, or symbols…
   1. “Art thou in life?”
   2. their “chill handshakes”
   3. Arthur’s relief in meeting Hester
   4. Arthur collapses and lies with his cheek by the Scarlet Letter
   5. Being “true”
   6. Dimmesdale’s brief “violence of passion” when Hester reveals Chillingworth’s identity
   7. “What we did had a consecration of its own.”
   8. Hester’s desperation to have Arthur forgive her
2. Why do God’s gifts to Arthur torture him?
3. How does Hester try to convince Arthur that he’s OK?
4. What do we learn about Hester’s true feelings about Arthur?
5. Arthur feels God’s judgment upon him. How does he respond? How should he respond?

What does Hester say Heaven would do?

1. Arthur asks Hester for advice. What is her advice? Why could this never be successful, even if he took it?
2. What was the “all” that was spoken at the end of the chapter?

Ch. 18 Flood of Sunshine

1. Why is the chapter title so meaningful?
2. Why can Hester leave for a new “free” life so easily?
3. Why can’t Arthur do the same?
4. What 3 symbolic things happen when Hester avers that “the past is gone”?
5. Why does the “heathen Nature of the forest” seem to smile upon their plan?
6. How did the forest respond to Pearl?

Ch. 19 Child at the Brook-side

1. What’s symbolic about…
   1. Children and babies don’t usually take well to Arthur?
   2. The brook between Pearl and her parents?
   3. Pearl’s pointing at Hester’s breast?
   4. Hester’s blush changing to a deadly pallor?
   5. Pearl’s insistence that Hester pick up the letter herself?
   6. “Wilt thou come now that she is sad?”
   7. Pearl kisses the scarlet letter.
2. Why couldn’t Pearl come readily back to the accustomed place at her mother’s side?
3. How does Hester console herself as she puts the letter back on?

Ch. 20 Minister in a Maze

1. Why do they choose the Old World for a new life?
2. What had changed about the town to which Arthur returned?
3. What are some strange new temptations Arthur faces as he returns?
4. How does Mistress Hibbins fit into this chapter?
5. What bargain had Arthur made? How?
6. Comment on…
   1. “No man…can wear one face to himself, and another to the multitude, without finally getting bewildered as to which may be the true.”
   2. “It is singular, however, how long a time often passes before words embody things…”

Ch. 21 New England Holiday

1. Relate Pearl’s comments about Arthur to the scripture about how men

“love darkness rather than light.”

1. Why does the author say Puritans have a big celebration on election day?
2. How jovial are Puritans on a day like this?
3. Civil laws are only effective if…
4. What do the Puritans tolerate in sailors? Why?
5. What’s significant about Roger’s smile in the last paragraph?
6. What’s symbolic about Roger’s fleeing with them?

Ch. 22 Procession

1. What purpose does march music serve, as explained in the opening of this chapter?
2. What’s unusual about Arthur today?
3. What’s symbolic about the fact that Hester can hardly recognize Arthur today?
4. Interpret Mistress Hibbins’ conversation with Hester.
5. Who has taken charge of Arthur at the end of the chapter?
6. Does Arthur have any way out of his predicament? If so, what?
7. Who is standing around the scaffold at the end of the chapter?

Ch. 23 Revelation of the Scarlet Letter

1. What was the effect of Arthur’s sermon?
2. Why does Chillingworth try to keep Arthur off the scaffold?
3. What is Hester still hoping for at the end?
4. Has Arthur done what he knows he must?
5. Is he assured of salvation?
6. What terrible things does Arthur point out that have actually been God’s mercy upon him?
7. Explain the symbolism in each or interpret the expression…
   1. Arthur’s rejection of help by the governor and the minister.
   2. Pearl’s running to Arthur and clasping his knees as he beckons here and Hester to come.
   3. Putting in “his plea of guilty at the bar of Eternal Justice”
   4. Arthur steps forward a pace from Hester to reveal his breast.
   5. “May God forgive thee!”
   6. Pearl kisses Arthur’s lips.
   7. A spell was broken.
   8. Pearl cries.
   9. The sun shines brightly on the scaffold.

Ch. 24 Conclusion

1. State 4 explanations that are offered for the letter on Arthur’s breast.
2. What moral is stated to summarize Arthur’s life message?
3. Why does Roger soon die?
4. Why could Pearl have possibly married a devout Puritan?
5. What happens to Pearl?
6. Why does Hester return?
7. What new role does she serve in the community?
8. What’s symbolic about her tomb?
9. What are the 4 major sins that provide the theme for the “legend”?

**Concluding composition**—p 387

Write 500 words (total) on any one, two, or three topics.

Or, write your own 500 word composition on the book.

Or, write a creative piece related in some way to the book or it themes,

perhaps including some illustrative/interpretative art work.

Or. Write a 500 word alternate ending.