Study Guide for *In the Time of the Butterflies* by Julia Alvarez.

In the Time of the Butterflies is historical fiction recalling the lives of the four infamous Mirabal sisters in the Dominican Republic during the late 1950s and early 1960s. Due to their involvement with underground political opposition groups attempting to overthrow the Dominican Republic's dictator, Rafael Leonidas Trujillo, three of the sisters were killed in the early 1960s. The four sisters have become a legend in the Dominican Republic; in many Latin American countries, the day the three sisters were murdered is observed as the International Day Against Violence Towards Women. In this novel, each sister tells the story of her youth, her education, her love life, and her opposition to the Dictator Trujillo.

It is strongly recommended that students keep a character list for this book. There are many characters and this will help keep everyone straight. Also, students should note that each chapter is written from a different Mirabal sister's point of view and it is important to keep track of this as it helps shape the personality and experiences of each.

PART ONE:
Chapter One:

1. What has Dedé been referred to as for all of these years?
2. Who is coming to talk to Dedé and why?
3. During the conversation, what group of people does Dedé think about?

Chapter Two:

1. Why does Papá agree to allow the girls to go to school?
2. What is Sinita's secret?
3. What happened to Lina?
4. What did Sinita do at the performance for Trujillo?

Chapter Three:

1. What is María Teresa's nickname?
2. What does Mate say to the principal to help out Minerva?
3. Who is Hilda and how is she connected to Minerva? Why is the connection between these two important to note?
4. What does the demise of Mate's Little Book suggest to the reader about what is happening?

Chapter Four:

1. What did Patria and her family assume she would become? What changed her mind?
2. What happened to Patria's baby?
3. Patria's states "I fooled them all!" To what is she referring?
4. Where did Patria go with her mother and sisters? Why?

PART TWO:
Chapter Five:

1. Who is Virgilio Morales? What it the author telling the reader when she writes, "No matter what Mamá said later, she was at first very taken with Virgilio Morales."
2. After agreeing to marry Jaimito, what does Dedé do with the envelope from Virgilio for Minerva? What is her justification?
3. Lio eventually goes into hiding. What was he hiding from, and what does this suggest to the reader about the situation in the Dominican Republic?
4. Dedé is in tears over some of the new regulation imposed by the regime. Why did the author include her reaction and her conversations with Jaimito? How does it help the reader understand the two and their relationship?

Chapter Six:

1. Who did Minerva discover in the small yellow house on the edge of the property?
2. What did Minerva find in Papá's pockets? What was her reaction to this discovery and that of the yellow house?
3. What does Minerva leave behind at the party? How can this be connected to what happens to Papá?

Chapter Seven:

1. What is María Teresa writing in? Does this give the reader a different perspective of her character than that of the others?
2. What is so unusual about the street names in the capital?
3. What does Minerva discover at her law school graduation?
4. What/who convinced María Teresa to join the National Underground?

Chapter Eight:

1. For whom did Patria name her baby?
2. Why was Patria so worried about Nelson?
3. Minerva asked Patria do so something for her with regards to her son Manolito. What was it? Did she agree?
4. What happened at the retreat? How did it change Patria?
5. What did Patria and Pedrito's house eventually become?

PART THREE:
Chapter Nine:

1. Who is Dedé talking to at the beginning of the chapter?
2. Who is Minou? Who is Fela?
3. What did Dedé's sisters ask her to do? What did she say?
4. What did Jaimito do when he thought Dedé had joined her sisters? How did Dedé respond?
5. "The roundup started by the end of the following week" (p 190). To what is this quote referring?

Chapter Ten:

1. Who is Pena?
2. Why were they attending Mass so often? What position did the Church take on national events?
3. What did she ask Pena for? Did she get it?

Chapter Eleven:

1. From where is María Teresa writing?
2. Why didn't María Teresa and Minerva accept a pardon?
3. What was the importance of María Teresa's braid?
4. Who is Magdalena? Amantina?

Chapter Twelve:

1. Who was released from jail? Were they completely free?
2. What news does Elsa give Minerva?
3. Who is Rufino?
4. Who do the sister's keep visiting in jail?
5. Why were Manalo and Leandro moved to Puerto Plata?
6. What did the note in the purse say? Who put it there?
7. What happened on the mountain pass?

Epilogue:

1. Dedé is the only one writing in this portion of the book. Why?
2. Who were the Butterflies?
3. This novel is "historical fiction." What does that suggest about the story you have just read?