

from THE CRUCIBLE

by Arthur Miller

BACKGROUND

"The Crucible" is based on a real event. The story involves the witch trials that took place in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692, after several girls started acting strangely. When no medical cause for their behavior could be found, doctors declared that the girls must be victims of witchcraft. The girls started naming townspeople whom they claimed had cursed them. More than 100 people were jailed for practicing witchcraft. Most saved themselves by naming more people as witches. In all, 27 people were convicted of being witches, 20 of whom were executed.

Arthur Miller wrote this play during a part of the Cold War when the fear of communists gripped the United States as much as the fear of witches had gripped Salem. During the "Red hunts" of the 1950s, many people were accused of being communists and pressured to name other communists. Miller saw similarities between the "witch hunts" of 1692 and the "Red hunts" of his era.

ACT ONE

(An Overture) **A**

A small upper bedroom in the home of REVEREND SAMUEL PARRIS, Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of the year 1692.

There is a narrow window at the left. Through its leaded panes the morning sunlight streams. A candle still burns near the bed, which is at the right. A chest, a chair, and a small table are the other furnishings. At the back a door opens on the landing of the stairway to the ground floor. The room gives off an air of clean sparseness. The roof rafters are exposed, and the wood colors are raw and unmellowed.

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A VOCABULARY

Word Study

A play's *overture* is an introduction that offers information leading up to the story. What specific kinds of information might be helpful to learn in an overture?

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A LITERARY FOCUS

To be *inert* is to be unable to move. With this in mind, explain what might be **motivating** Reverend Parris to pray.

B QUICK CHECK

Underline the sentence in this paragraph that describes the size of Salem.

C LITERARY ANALYSIS

Based on this description, what can you tell about the religious beliefs of the people of Salem?

As the curtain rises, REVEREND PARRIS is discovered kneeling beside the bed, evidently in prayer. His daughter, BETTY PARRIS, aged ten, is lying on the bed, inert. **A**

At the time of these events Parris was in his middle forties. In history he cut a villainous path, and there is very little good to be said for him. He believed he was being persecuted wherever he went, despite his best efforts to win people and God to his side. In meeting, he felt insulted if someone rose to shut the door without first asking his permission. He was a widower with no interest in children, or talent with them. He regarded them as young adults, and until this strange crisis he, like the rest of Salem, never conceived that the children were anything but thankful for being permitted to walk straight, eyes slightly lowered, arms at the sides, and mouths shut until bidden to speak.

His house stood in the “town”—but we today would hardly call it a village. The meeting house was nearby, and from this point outward—toward the bay or inland—there were a few small-windowed, dark houses snuggling against the raw Massachusetts winter. Salem had been established hardly forty years before. To the European world the whole province was a barbaric frontier inhabited by a sect of fanatics who, nevertheless, were shipping out products of slowly increasing quantity and value. **B**

No one can really know what their lives were like. They had no novelists—and would not have permitted anyone to read a novel if one were handy. Their creed forbade anything resembling a theater or “vain enjoyment.” They did not celebrate Christmas, and a holiday from work meant only that they must concentrate even more upon prayer. **C**

Which is not to say that nothing broke into this strict and somber way of life. When a new farmhouse was built, friends assembled to “raise the roof,” and there would be special foods cooked and probably some potent cider passed around. There

was a good supply of ne'er-do-wells in Salem, who dallied at the shovelboard in Bridget Bishop's tavern. Probably more than the creed, hard work kept the morals of the place from spoiling, for the people were forced to fight the land like heroes for every grain of corn, and no man had very much time for fooling around. **D**

50 That there were some jokers, however, is indicated by the practice of appointing a two-man patrol whose duty was to "walk forth in the time of God's worship to take notice of such as either lye about the meeting house, without attending to the word and ordinances, or that lye at home or in the fields without giving good account thereof, and to take the names of such persons, and to present them to the magistrates, whereby they may be accordingly proceeded against." This predilection for minding other people's business was time-honored among the people of Salem, and it undoubtedly created many of the suspicions which
60 were to feed the coming madness. It was also, in my opinion, one of the things that a John Proctor would rebel against, for the time of the armed camp had almost passed, and since the country was reasonably—although not wholly—safe, the old disciplines were beginning to rankle. But, as in all such matters, the issue was not clearcut, for danger was still a possibility, and in unity still lay the best promise of safety. **E**

70 The edge of the wilderness was close by. The American continent stretched endlessly west, and it was full of mystery for them. It stood, dark and threatening, over their shoulders night and day, for out of it Indian tribes marauded from time to time, and Reverend Parris had parishioners who had lost relatives to these heathen.

The parochial snobbery of these people was partly responsible for their failure to convert the Indians. Probably they also preferred to take land from heathens rather than from fellow Christians. At any rate, very few Indians were converted, and the Salem folk believed that the virgin forest was the Devil's last preserve, his home base and the citadel of his final stand. To the

D READING FOCUS

What **conclusions** can you **draw** about the daily lives of people in Salem?

E LITERARY FOCUS

What do you think **motivated** the leaders of Salem to try to control people's behavior so tightly?

A READING FOCUS

What **conclusions** can you **draw** about the people of Salem's attitudes towards freedom of religion?

B LITERARY ANALYSIS

How might a belief such as the one that Miller describes be hurtful?

C QUICK CHECK

According to Miller, what did the Puritans do that helped them to succeed where Jamestown had failed?

80 best of their knowledge the American forest was the last place on earth that was not paying homage to God.

For these reasons, among others, they carried about an air of innate resistance, even of persecution. Their fathers had, of course, been persecuted in England. So now they and their church found it necessary to deny any other sect its freedom, lest their New Jerusalem¹ be defiled and corrupted by wrong ways and deceitful ideas. **A**

They believed, in short, that they held in their steady hands the candle that would light the world. We have inherited this belief, and it has helped and hurt us. **B** It helped them with the discipline it gave them. They were a dedicated folk, by and large, and they had to be to survive the life they had chosen or been born into in this country.

100 The proof of their belief's value to them may be taken from the opposite character of the first Jamestown settlement, farther south, in Virginia. The Englishmen who landed there were motivated mainly by a hunt for profit. They had thought to pick off the wealth of the new country and then return rich to England. They were a band of individualists, and a much more ingratiating group than the Massachusetts men. But Virginia destroyed them. Massachusetts tried to kill off the Puritans, but they combined; they set up a communal society which, in the beginning, was little more than an armed camp with an autocratic and very devoted leadership. It was, however, an autocracy by consent, for they were united from top to bottom by a commonly held ideology whose perpetuation was the reason and justification for all their sufferings. So their self-denial, their purposefulness, their suspicion of all vain pursuits, their hard-handed justice were altogether perfect instruments for the conquest of this space so antagonistic to man. **C**

110 But the people of Salem in 1692 were not quite the dedicated folk that arrived on the *Mayflower*. A vast differentiation had taken place, and in their own time a revolution had unseated

1. **New Jerusalem:** in the Bible (Revelation 21), the holy city of Heaven.

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the royal government and substituted a junta which was at this moment in power. The times, to their eyes, must have been out of joint, and to the common folk must have seemed as insoluble and complicated as do ours today. It is not hard to see how easily many could have been led to believe that the time of confusion had been brought upon them by deep and darkling forces. No hint of such speculation appears on the court record, but social disorder in any age breeds such mystical suspicions, and when, as in Salem, wonders are brought forth from below the social surface, it is too much to expect people to hold back very long from laying on the victims with all the force of their frustrations. **D**

The Salem tragedy, which is about to begin in these pages, developed from a paradox. It is a paradox in whose grip we still live, and there is no prospect yet that we will discover its resolution. Simply, it was this: for good purposes, even high purposes, the people of Salem developed a theocracy, a combine of state and religious power whose function was to keep the community together, and to prevent any kind of disunity that might open it to destruction by material or ideological enemies. **E** It was forged for a necessary purpose and accomplished that purpose. But all organization is and must be grounded on the idea of exclusion and prohibition, just as two objects cannot occupy the same space. Evidently the time came in New England when the repressions of order were heavier than seemed warranted by the dangers against which the order was organized. The witch-hunt was a perverse manifestation of the panic which set in among all classes when the balance began to turn toward greater individual freedom. **F**

When one rises above the individual villainy displayed, one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday. **F** It is still impossible for man to organize his social life without repressions, and the balance has yet to be struck between order and freedom.

The witch-hunt was not, however, a mere repression. It was also, and as importantly, a long overdue opportunity for everyone

D LANGUAGE COACH

The suffix *-ly* usually shows that a word is an adverb, and the suffix *-tion* usually shows that a word is a noun. Circle one adverb with the suffix *-ly* and underline one noun with the suffix *-tion* in this paragraph.

E VOCABULARY

Selection Vocabulary

A *theocracy* is a government ruled by a religious authority. Why might a theocracy have been a better choice than other forms of government for the people of Salem?

F LITERARY ANALYSIS

What do you think Miller means when he writes, "just as we shall be pitied someday"?

A LITERARY FOCUS

What does the author suggest were the real **motivations** behind many of the accusations of witchcraft?

B LITERARY ANALYSIS

What do you think is meant by the phrase, “trouble in this house eventually lands on her back”?

so inclined to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims. It suddenly became possible—
150 and patriotic and holy—for a man to say that Martha Corey had come into his bedroom at night, and that, while his wife was sleeping at his side, Martha laid herself down on his chest and “nearly suffocated him.” Of course it was her spirit only, but his satisfaction at confessing himself was no lighter than if it had been Martha herself. One could not ordinarily speak such things in public.

Long-held hatreds of neighbors could now be openly expressed, and vengeance taken, despite the Bible’s charitable injunctions. Land-lust, which had been expressed by constant
160 bickering over boundaries and deeds, could now be elevated to the arena of morality; one could cry witch against one’s neighbor and feel perfectly justified in the bargain. Old scores could be settled on a plane of heavenly combat between Lucifer and the Lord; suspicions and the envy of the miserable toward the happy could and did burst out in the general revenge. **A**

REVEREND PARRIS *is praying now, and, though we cannot hear his words, a sense of his confusion hangs about him. He mumbles, then seems about to weep; then he weeps, then prays again; but his daughter does not stir on the bed.*

170 *The door opens, and his Negro slave enters. TITUBA is in her forties. PARRIS brought her with him from Barbados, where he spent some years as a merchant before entering the ministry. She enters as one does who can no longer bear to be barred from the sight of her beloved, but she is also very frightened because her slave sense has warned her that, as always, trouble in this house eventually lands on her back.* **B**

Tituba, *already taking a step backward*: My Betty be hearty soon?

Parris: Out of here!

Tituba, *backing to the door*: My Betty not goin’ die . . .

180 **Parris**, scrambling to his feet in a fury: Out of my sight! She is gone. Out of my— He is overcome with sobs. He clamps his teeth against them and closes the door and leans against it, exhausted. Oh, my God! God help me! Quaking with fear, mumbling to himself through his sobs, he goes to the bed and gently takes BETTY'S hand. Betty. Child. Dear child. Will you wake, will you open up your eyes! Betty, little one . . .

He is bending to kneel again when his niece, ABIGAIL WILLIAMS, seventeen, enters—a strikingly beautiful girl, an orphan, with an endless capacity for dissembling. **C** Now she is all worry and apprehension and propriety.

190

Abigail: Uncle? He looks to her. Susanna Walcott's here from Doctor Griggs.

Parris: Oh? Let her come, let her come.

Abigail, leaning out the door to call to SUSANNA, who is down the hall a few steps: Come in, Susanna.

SUSANNA WALCOTT, a little younger than ABIGAIL, a nervous, hurried girl, enters.

Parris, eagerly: What does the doctor say, child?

200

Susanna, craning around PARRIS to get a look at BETTY: He bid me come and tell you, reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.

Parris: Then he must search on.

Susanna: Aye, sir, he have been searchin' his books since he left you, sir. But he bid me tell you, that you might look to unnatural things for the cause of it.

Parris, his eyes going wide: No—no. There be no unnatural cause here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mr. Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be none. **D**

210

Susanna: Aye, sir. He bid me tell you. She turns to go.

Abigail: Speak nothin' of it in the village, Susanna.

Parris: Go directly home and speak nothing of unnatural causes.

C

VOCABULARY

Selection Vocabulary

Why might Abigail's "capacity for dissembling," or hiding her feelings, make it difficult for others to understand her motivations?

D

LITERARY FOCUS

What do you think is Reverend Parris's **motivation** for strongly insisting that there is "no unnatural cause" for his daughter's illness?

A READING FOCUS

Based on what you have learned about Salem society and Reverend Parris, **draw a conclusion** about why Betty became frightened and fainted when her father caught the girls dancing.



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Susanna: Aye, sir. I pray for her. *She goes out.*

Abigail: Uncle, the rumor of witchcraft is all about; I think you'd best go down and deny it yourself. The parlor's packed with people, sir. I'll sit with her.

Parris, pressed, turns on her: And what shall I say to them? That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?

220 **Abigail:** Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it—and I'll be whipped if I must be. But they're speakin' of witchcraft. Betty's not witched.

Parris: Abigail, I cannot go before the congregation when I know you have not opened with me. What did you do with her in the forest?

Abigail: We did dance, uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there's the whole of it. **A**

Parris: Child. Sit you down.

230 **Abigail, quavering, as she sits:** I would never hurt Betty. I love her dearly.

Parris: Now look you, child, your punishment will come in its time. But if you trafficked with spirits in the forest I must know it now, for surely my enemies will, and they will ruin me with it.

Abigail: But we never conjured spirits.

Parris: Then why can she not move herself since midnight?

This child is desperate! ABIGAIL *lowers her eyes*. It must come out—my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done
240 there. Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?

Abigail: I have heard of it, uncle.

Parris: There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit. Do you understand that?

Abigail: I think so, sir.

Parris: Now then, in the midst of such disruption, my own household is discovered to be the very center of some obscene practice. Abominations are done in the forest—

Abigail: It were sport, uncle! **B**

Parris, pointing at BETTY: You call this sport? *She lowers her eyes.*
250 *He pleads:* Abigail, if you know something that may help the doctor, for God's sake tell it to me. *She is silent.* I saw Tituba waving her arms over the fire when I came on you. Why was she doing that? And I heard a screeching and gibberish coming from her mouth. She were swaying like a dumb beast over that fire!

Abigail: She always sings her Barbados songs, and we dance. **C**

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT Parris insists that Abigail tell him the truth about what the girls were doing that night in the forest. Abigail tells him they were simply having fun. When Parris asks why Goody² Proctor dismissed Abigail from service, Abigail says she will not be a slave to anyone. Ann and Thomas Putnam, members of a prominent family in Salem, come to see Parris and tell him that their daughter Ruth is also ill. They believe it is due to witchcraft. Mrs. Putnam has had seven of her own babies die, and sent Ruth to Tituba, who she claims can speak to the dead. Abigail confirms that Ruth and Tituba were “conjuring spirits.” When the others have left the room, Mercy, the Putnam’s servant; Mary Warren; and Abigail discuss the night. Abigail warns the others not to reveal that she drank

2. **Goody:** formerly a title (short for *goodwife*) for a woman, especially a housewife or older woman.

B VOCABULARY

Word Study

The word *sport* is used here as a slang term for “fun.” What is the more common meaning of the word?

C READING FOCUS

What **conclusion** does Reverend Parris **draw** about what he saw in the forest? How is his conclusion different from Abigail’s explanation?

A LITERARY ANALYSIS

Notice that in several parts of the play, a person in authority strongly suggests an answer they want from a person they are questioning. Do you think Hale’s questioning may have influenced Parris’s answers? Explain.

a charm to kill Goody Proctor. When John Proctor arrives, he tells Abigail privately that though they were once lovers, the relationship is over. At the sound of a psalm being sung, Betty stirs. The Putnams claim this is a sign of witchcraft. Rebecca Nurse and Giles Corey, older residents of Salem, join the conversation. Rebecca’s gentle presence calms Betty. Bickering among the residents shows their long-standing grudges leading to increasing paranoia. Reverend Hale soon joins them and consults books filled with descriptions of spirits. He is determined to learn whether the Devil has come among them. Giles claims that when his wife is reading books, he is unable to pray; he is suspicious of witchcraft. Reverend Hale begins to speak to Betty.

Hale: Does someone afflict you, child? It need not be a woman, mind you, or a man. Perhaps some bird invisible to others comes to you—perhaps a pig, a mouse, or any beast at all. Is there some figure bids you fly? *The child remains limp in his hands. In silence*
260 *he lays her back on the pillow. Now, holding out his hands toward her, he intones:* In nomine Domini Sabaoth sui filii que ite ad infernos.³ *She does not stir. He turns to ABIGAIL, his eyes narrowing.* Abigail, what sort of dancing were you doing with her in the forest?

Abigail: Why—common dancing is all.

Parris: I think I ought to say that I—I saw a kettle in the grass where they were dancing.

Abigail: That were only soup.

Hale: What sort of soup were in this kettle, Abigail?

270 **Abigail:** Why, it were beans—and lentils, I think, and—

Hale: Mr. Parris, you did not notice, did you, any living thing in the kettle? A mouse, perhaps, a spider, a frog—?

Parris, fearfully: I—do believe there were some movement—in the soup. **A**

Abigail: That jumped in, we never put it in!

3. *In nomine Domini Sabaoth sui filii que ite ad infernos:* Latin for “In the name of the Lord of Hosts and his son, get thee to hell.”

Hale, *quickly*: What jumped in?

Abigail: Why, a very little frog jumped—

Parris: A frog, Abby!

Hale, *grasping* ABIGAIL: Abigail, it may be your cousin is dying.

280 Did you call the Devil last night?

Abigail: I never called him! Tituba, Tituba . . . **B**

Parris, *blanched*: She called the Devil?

Hale: I should like to speak with Tituba.

Parris: Goody Ann, will you bring her up? MRS. PUTNAM *exits*.

Hale: How did she call him?

Abigail: I know not—she spoke Barbados.

Hale: Did you feel any strangeness when she called him? A sudden cold wind, perhaps? A trembling below the ground?

Abigail: I didn't see no Devil! *Shaking* BETTY: Betty, wake up.

290 Betty! Betty!

Hale: You cannot evade me, Abigail. Did your cousin drink any of the brew in that kettle?

Abigail: She never drank it!

Hale: Did you drink it?

Abigail: No, sir!

Hale: Did Tituba ask you to drink it?

Abigail: She tried, but I refused.

Hale: Why are you concealing? Have you sold yourself to Lucifer? **C**

300 **Abigail**: I never sold myself! I'm a good girl! I'm a proper girl!

MRS. PUTNAM *enters with* TITUBA, *and instantly* ABIGAIL *points at* TITUBA.

Abigail: She made me do it! She made Betty do it!

Tituba, *shocked and angry*: Abby!

Abigail: She makes me drink blood!

Parris: Blood!!

Mrs. Putnam: My baby's blood?

Tituba: No, no, chicken blood. I give she chicken blood!

Hale: Woman, have you enlisted these children for the Devil?

B LITERARY FOCUS

What possible **motivation** might Abigail have had for mentioning Tituba at this point in the questioning?

C READING FOCUS

What **conclusions** has Hale **drawn** about what happened that night? Why do you think he believes this?

A READING FOCUS

Draw a conclusion about the reason behind Abigail's laughter during prayer.

B LITERARY FOCUS

What do you think is Tituba's motivation for suddenly confessing that she saw the Devil?

310 **Tituba:** No, no, sir, I don't truck with no Devil!
Hale: Why can she not wake? Are you silencing this child?
Tituba: I love me Betty!
Hale: You have sent your spirit out upon this child, have you not? Are you gathering souls for the Devil?
Abigail: She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!
Parris: She have often laughed at prayer! **A**
Abigail: She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!
Tituba: You beg *me* to conjure! She beg *me* make charm—

320 **Abigail:** Don't lie! *To HALE:* She comes to me while I sleep; she's always making me dream corruptions!
Tituba: Why you say that, Abby?
Abigail: Sometimes I wake and find myself standing in the open doorway and not a stitch on my body! I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with—
Tituba: Mister Reverend, I never—
Hale, resolved now: Tituba, I want you to wake this child.
Tituba: I have no power on this child, sir.

330 **Hale:** You most certainly do, and you will free her from it now! When did you compact with the Devil?
Tituba: I don't compact with no Devil!
Parris: You will confess yourself or I will take you out and whip you to your death, Tituba!
Putnam: This woman must be hanged! She must be taken and hanged!
Tituba, terrified, falls to her knees: No, no, don't hang Tituba! I tell him I don't desire to work for him, sir. **B**
Parris: The Devil?

340 **Hale:** Then you saw him! *TITUBA weeps.* Now Tituba, I know that when we bind ourselves to Hell it is very hard to break with it. We are going to help you tear yourself free—
Tituba, frightened by the coming process: Mister Reverend, I do believe somebody else be witchin' these children.
Hale: Who?

Tituba: I don't know, sir, but the Devil got him numerous witches.

Hale: Does he! *It is a clue.* Tituba, look into my eyes. Come, look into me. *She raises her eyes to his fearfully.* You would be a good
350 Christian woman, would you not, Tituba?

Tituba: Aye, sir, a good Christian woman.

Hale: And you love these little children?

Tituba: Oh, yes, sir, I don't desire to hurt little children.

Hale: And you love God, Tituba?

Tituba: I love God with all my bein'.

Hale: Now, in God's holy name—

Tituba: Bless Him. Bless Him. *She is rocking on her knees, sobbing in terror.* **C**

Hale: And to His glory—

360 **Tituba:** Eternal glory. Bless Him—bless God . . .

Hale: Open yourself, Tituba—open yourself and let God's holy light shine on you.

Tituba: Oh, bless the Lord.

Hale: When the Devil comes to you does he ever come—with another person? *She stares up into his face.* Perhaps another person in the village? Someone you know.

Parris: Who came with him?

Putnam: Sarah Good? Did you ever see Sarah Good with him? Or Osburn? **D**

370 **Parris:** Was it man or woman came with him?

Tituba: Man or woman. Was—was woman.

Parris: What woman? A woman, you said. What woman?

Tituba: It was black dark, and I—

Parris: You could see him, why could you not see her?

Tituba: Well, they was always talking; they was always runnin' round and carryin' on—

Parris: You mean out of Salem? Salem witches?

Tituba: I believe so, yes, sir.

Now HALE takes her hand. She is surprised.

C LITERARY ANALYSIS

In plays, italicized passages serve as directions to the actors on how to play the role. Why do you think the author mentions several times how frightened Tituba is?

D LITERARY FOCUS

What do you think may be Putnam's **motivation** for suggesting the names of certain people to Tituba?

A VOCABULARY

Academic Vocabulary

What message does this statement *transmit*, or communicate, about Hale's beliefs?

B QUICK CHECK

How have Tituba's feelings and Hale's behavior towards Tituba suddenly changed?

C VOCABULARY

Word Study

Goody is used here as a polite term of address for a woman. What word might be used today in place of *Goody*?

380 **Hale:** Tituba. You must have no fear to tell us who they are, do you understand? We will protect you. The Devil can never overcome a minister. **A** You know that, do you not?

Tituba—*she kisses HALE's hand:* Aye, sir, oh, I do.

Hale: You have confessed yourself to witchcraft, and that speaks a wish to come to Heaven's side. And we will bless you, Tituba.

Tituba, deeply relieved: Oh, God bless you, Mr. Hale! **B**

Hale, with rising exaltation: You are God's instrument put in our hands to discover the Devil's agents among us. You are selected, Tituba, you are chosen to help us cleanse our village. So speak

390 utterly, Tituba, turn your back on him and face God—face God, Tituba, and God will protect you.

Tituba, joining with him: Oh, God, protect Tituba!

Hale, kindly: Who came to you with the Devil? Two? Three? Four? How many?

TITUBA *pants and begins rocking back and forth again, staring ahead.*

Tituba: There was four. There was four.

Parris, pressing in on her: Who? Who? Their names, their names!

400 **Tituba, suddenly bursting out:** Oh, how many times he bid me kill you, Mr. Parris!

Parris: Kill me!

Tituba, in a fury: He say Mr. Parris must be kill! Mr. Parris no goodly man, Mr. Parris mean man and no gentle man, and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! *They gasp.* But I tell him "No! I don't hate that man. I don't want kill that man." But he say, "You work for me, Tituba, and I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear, and put you way high up in the air, and you gone fly back to Barbados!" And I say, "You lie, Devil, you lie!" And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, "Look! I have *white* people belong to me." And I look—and there was

410 Goody Good. **C**

Parris: Sarah Good!

Tituba, rocking and weeping: Aye, sir, and Goody Osburn.

Mrs. Putnam: I knew it! Goody Osburn were midwife to me three times. I begged you, Thomas, did I not? I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared her. My babies always shriveled in her hands!

420 **Hale:** Take courage, you must give us all their names. How can you bear to see this child suffering? Look at her, Tituba. *He is indicating BETTY on the bed.* Look at her God-given innocence; her soul is so tender; we must protect her, Tituba; the Devil is out and preying on her like a beast upon the flesh of the pure lamb. God will bless you for your help.

ABIGAIL rises, staring as though inspired, and cries out.

Abigail: I want to open myself! *They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured, as though in a pearly light.* I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw
430 Bridget Bishop with the Devil! **D**

As she is speaking, BETTY is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.

Betty, staring too: I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!

Parris: She speaks! *He rushes to embrace BETTY.* She speaks!

Hale: Glory to God! It is broken, they are free!

Betty, calling out hysterically and with great relief: I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

440 **Abigail:** I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! *It is rising to a great glee.*

Putnam: The marshal, I'll call the marshal!

PARRIS is shouting a prayer of thanksgiving.

Betty: I saw Alice Barrow with the Devil!

The curtain begins to fall.

D LITERARY FOCUS

What do you think **motivates** Abigail to cry out in this scene?

A QUICK CHECK

What do most of the names that Betty and Abigail shout out have in common?

B LITERARY FOCUS

What does Proctor claim is his **motivation** for not going to church? Why do you think that Reverend Hale is so interested in Proctor's religious behavior?

C LANGUAGE COACH

Look up the word *angrily* in the dictionary. What part of speech is it? List some other forms of the word.

Hale, as PUTNAM goes out: Let the marshal bring irons!

Abigail: I saw Goody Hawkins with the Devil!

Betty: I saw Goody Bibber with the Devil!

Abigail: I saw Goody Booth with the Devil! **A**

On their ecstatic cries

The curtain falls

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT

In Act Two, Mary Warren, the Proctors' servant, tells them that 39 women have now been arrested for suspected witchcraft. She gives Elizabeth Proctor a rag doll she made while sitting in court for hours. Elizabeth asks her husband to go to Salem and tell the court that Abigail and the other girls are lying. Suspecting that Abigail wants her dead, Elizabeth asks John to go to Abigail and break the attachment the girl has to him. Reverend Hale visits the Proctors and asks John why he seldom goes to church and plows on Sundays. Proctor reveals that he does not like Parris. **B** Proctor tells Hale that Abigail said there was no witchcraft that night in the woods. Giles Corey arrives and announces that his wife and Rebecca Nurse have been taken to jail. After Abigail claims Elizabeth Proctor's spirit stuck a needle in her, the rag doll with a needle stuck in it is discovered, and Elizabeth is arrested. Angrily, John tears up the warrant for his wife's arrest. **C** Mary says that if she tells the court she gave Elizabeth the doll with the needle stuck in it that Abigail will charge John Proctor with lechery.

In Act Three, Giles Corey causes a commotion in the court over his wife's trial. Mary Warren tells the court that she and the other girls lied about participating in witchcraft. Tensions among the townspeople mount. Mary testifies in front of the other girls that she pretended to be harmed by the spirits of those accused of witchcraft. When Mary is unable to faint on purpose in front of the court, her credibility is undermined. With the court officials and townspeople

looking on, Abigail and the other girls pretend that Mary afflicts them with her spirit. Distressed at Abigail's deceit, Proctor confesses his affair with her. When Elizabeth Proctor lies to the court, claiming John did not commit adultery, she unknowingly causes him to seem to be a liar. Sympathetic to the Proctors, Hale pleads for mercy for them from the court but is largely ignored. The girls continue their pretense, acting as if they see a bird in the courtroom and alleging that Mary has sent her spirit to attack them. As if hypnotized, they begin to imitate her every word and motion until Mary can bear it no longer and turns on John Proctor, claiming he was plotting to overthrow the court. Through this "confession," Mary is welcomed back into the company of Abigail and the others. Proctor and Giles Corey are taken to jail. Hale, angry and upset, denounces the court. **D**

In Act Four, Parris reveals to the court officials that Abigail has taken his money and run away. Parris asks Danforth for a postponement of the hangings now that Hale has returned and may convince some of the accused to confess, but Parris's request is denied. The night before her husband is scheduled to hang, Elizabeth is brought out of her cell in the hopes that the sight of her will cause John to confess. Danforth asks if Elizabeth will plead for his confession, and she refuses to promise this. For the first time in months, John Proctor sees his wife.

Alone, PROCTOR walks to her, halts. It is as though they stood in a spinning world. It is beyond sorrow, above it. He reaches out his hand as though toward an embodiment not quite real, and as he touches her, a strange soft sound, half laughter, half amazement, comes from his throat. He pats her hand. She covers his hand with hers. And then, weak, he sits. Then she sits, facing him.

Proctor: The child?

Elizabeth: It grows.

Proctor: There is no word of the boys?

D LITERARY FOCUS

To *denounce* something is to criticize or deny it. What **motivation** might Reverend Hale have for behaving as he does here?

A LITERARY ANALYSIS

What do you think is meant by the stage direction, "She will not let herself be drowned in the sea that threatens her"?

B LITERARY FOCUS

What motivation might someone accused of witchcraft have for refusing to confess, even knowing the consequences?

C READING FOCUS

What **conclusion** can you **draw** about Giles's character from his refusal to even answer the indictment?

Elizabeth: They're well. Rebecca's Samuel keeps them.

Proctor: You have not seen them?

Elizabeth: I have not. *She catches a weakening in herself and downs it.*

Proctor: You are a—marvel, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: You—have been tortured?

460 **Proctor:** *Aye. Pause. She will not let herself be drowned in the sea that threatens her.* **A** They come for my life now.

Elizabeth: I know it.

Pause.

Proctor: None—have yet confessed?

Elizabeth: There be many confessed.

Proctor: Who are they?

Elizabeth: There be a hundred or more, they say. Goody Ballard is one; Isaiah Goodkind is one. There be many.

Proctor: Rebecca?

470 **Elizabeth:** Not Rebecca. She is one foot in Heaven now; naught may hurt her more. **B**

Proctor: And Giles?

Elizabeth: You have not heard of it?

Proctor: I hear nothin', where I am kept.

Elizabeth: Giles is dead.

He looks at her incredulously.

Proctor: When were he hanged?

480 **Elizabeth, quietly, factually:** He were not hanged. He would not answer aye or nay to his indictment; for if he denied the charge they'd hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law. And so his sons will have his farm. It is the law, for he could not be condemned a wizard without he answer the indictment, aye or nay. **C**

Proctor: Then how does he die?

Elizabeth, *gently*: They press him, John.

Proctor: Press?

Elizabeth: Great stones they lay upon his chest until he plead aye or nay. *With a tender smile for the old man*: They say he give them but two words. “More weight,” he says. And died.

490 **Proctor**, *numbed—a thread to weave into his agony*: “More weight.”

Elizabeth: Aye. It were a fearsome man, Giles Corey.

Pause.

Proctor, *with great force of will, but not quite looking at her*: I have been thinking I would confess to them, Elizabeth. *She shows nothing*. What say you? If I give them that?

Elizabeth: I cannot judge you, John.

Pause.

500 **Proctor**, *simply—a pure question*: What would you have me do? **D**

Elizabeth: As you will, I would have it. *Slight pause*. I want you living, John. That’s sure.

Proctor —*he pauses, then with a flailing of hope*: Giles’ wife? Have she confessed?

Elizabeth: She will not.

Pause.

Proctor: It is a pretense, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: What is?

510 **Proctor**: I cannot mount the gibbet⁴ like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man. *She is silent*. My honesty is broke, Elizabeth; I am no good man. Nothing’s spoiled by giving them this lie that were not rotten long before. **E**

Elizabeth: And yet you’ve not confessed till now. That speak goodness in you.

D LITERARY FOCUS

What do you think is John’s **motivation** for wanting Elizabeth to tell him what to do?

E LITERARY ANALYSIS

Remember that John Proctor told the truth in court. Why do you think he now says, “My honesty is broke”?

4. **gibbet** (JIH BIHT): gallows, or structure from which a person is hanged.

A LITERARY ANALYSIS

What does Elizabeth mean by, “You take my sins upon you, John”?

B READING FOCUS

Draw a conclusion about Elizabeth’s view of this situation from what she says here.

Proctor: Spite only keeps me silent. It is hard to give a lie to dogs. *Pause, for the first time he turns directly to her.* I would have your forgiveness, Elizabeth.

Elizabeth: It is not for me to give, John, I am—

520 **Proctor:** I’d have you see some honesty in it. Let them that never lied die now to keep their souls. It is pretense for me, a vanity that will not blind God nor keep my children out of the wind. *Pause.* What say you?

Elizabeth, upon a heaving sob that always threatens: John, it come to naught that I should forgive you, if you’ll not forgive yourself. *Now he turns away a little, in great agony.* It is not my soul, John, it is yours. *He stands, as though in physical pain, slowly rising to his feet with a great immortal longing to find his answer. It is difficult to say, and she is on the verge of tears.* Only be sure of this, for I know it now: Whatever you will do, it is a good man
530 does it. *He turns his doubting, searching gaze upon her.* I have read my heart this three month, John. *Pause.* I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery.

Proctor, in great pain: Enough, enough—

Elizabeth, now pouring out her heart: Better you should know me!

Proctor: I will not hear it! I know you!

Elizabeth: You take my sins upon you, John—

Proctor, in agony: No, I take my own, my own! **A**

540 **Elizabeth:** John, I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. It were a cold house I kept! *In fright, she swerves, as HATHORNE enters.*

Hathorne: What say you, Proctor? The sun is soon up.

PROCTOR, his chest heaving, stares, turns to ELIZABETH. *She comes to him as though to plead, her voice quaking.*

Elizabeth: Do what you will. But let none be your judge. There be no higher judge under Heaven than Proctor is! **B** Forgive me, forgive me, John—I never knew such goodness in the world! *She covers her face, weeping.*



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550 **PROCTOR** turns from her to HATHORNE; he is off the earth, his voice hollow.

Proctor: I want my life.

Hathorne, electrified, surprised: You'll confess yourself? **C**

Proctor: I will have my life.

Hathorne, with a mystical tone: God be praised! It is a providence! He rushes out the door, and his voice is heard calling down the corridor: He will confess! Proctor will confess!

Proctor, with a cry, as he strides to the door: Why do you cry it? In great pain he turns back to her. It is evil, is it not? It is evil.

560 **Elizabeth, in terror, weeping:** I cannot judge you, John, I cannot!

Proctor: Then who will judge me? Suddenly clasping his hands: God in Heaven, what is John Proctor, what is John Proctor? He moves as an animal, and a fury is riding in him, a tantalized search. I think it is honest, I think so; I am no saint. As though she had denied this he calls angrily at her: Let Rebecca go like a saint; for me it is fraud! **D**

Voices are heard in the hall, speaking together in suppressed excitement.

Elizabeth: I am not your judge, I cannot be. As though giving him release: Do as you will, do as you will!

C VOCABULARY

Word Study

Electrified has multiple meanings. Find the word in a dictionary. Which meaning of the word do you think is meant here?

D LITERARY FOCUS

What is Proctor's **motivation** for deciding to make a confession?

A READING FOCUS

What **conclusions** can you **draw** about John Proctor based on his refusal to name other people as witches?

B LITERARY ANALYSIS

What sins does Danforth think that Proctor is talking about? What sins is Proctor really talking about?

570 **Proctor:** Would you give them such a lie? Say it. Would you ever give them this? *She cannot answer.* You would not; if tongs of fire were singeing you you would not! It is evil. Good, then—it is evil, and I do it!

WHAT HAPPENS NEXT Danforth and the others are relieved that Proctor has confessed to having seen the Devil. When gentle Rebecca Nurse enters the room, Proctor is ashamed of the confession he is making. Despite pressure from Danforth, he refuses to implicate Rebecca or any other accused townspeople in his confession. **A** When he is asked to sign his written testimony, Proctor hesitates, then signs it.

PROCTOR has just finished signing when DANFORTH reaches for the paper. But PROCTOR snatches it up, and now a wild terror is rising in him, and a boundless anger.

Danforth, perplexed, but politely extending his hand: If you please, sir.

Proctor: No.

580 **Danforth**, as though *PROCTOR did not understand*: Mr. Proctor, I must have—

Proctor: No, no. I have signed it. You have seen me. It is done! You have no need for this.

Parris: Proctor, the village must have proof that—

Proctor: Damn the village! I confess to God, and God has seen my name on this! It is enough!

Danforth: No, sir, it is—

Proctor: You came to save my soul, did you not? Here! I have confessed myself; it is enough!

590 **Danforth:** You have not con—

Proctor: I have confessed myself! Is there no good penitence but it be public? God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough! **B**

Danforth: Mr. Proctor—

Proctor: You will not use me! I am no Sarah Good or Tituba, I am John Proctor! You will not use me! It is no part of salvation that you should use me!

Danforth: I do not wish to—

600 **Proctor:** I have three children—how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?

Danforth: You have not sold your friends—

Proctor: Beguile me not! **C** I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence!

Danforth: Mr. Proctor, I must have good and legal proof that you—

Proctor: You are the high court, your word is good enough! Tell them I confessed myself; say Proctor broke his knees and wept like a woman; say what you will, but my name cannot—

610 **Danforth,** with suspicion: It is the same, is it not? If I report it or you sign to it?

Proctor —*he knows it is insane*: No, it is not the same! What others say and what I sign to is not the same!

Danforth: Why? Do you mean to deny this confession when you are free?

Proctor: I mean to deny nothing!

Danforth: Then explain to me, Mr. Proctor, why you will not let—

Proctor, *with a cry of his whole soul*: Because it is my name!

620 Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name! **D**

Danforth, *pointing at the confession in PROCTOR's hand*: Is that document a lie? If it is a lie I will not accept it! What say you? I will not deal in lies, Mister! PROCTOR *is motionless*. You will give me your honest confession in my hand, or I cannot keep you from the rope. PROCTOR *does not reply*. Which way do you go, Mister?

C VOCABULARY

Selection Vocabulary

To *beguile* is to mislead or deceive. Give an example from the play in which someone was beguiled.

D LITERARY FOCUS

What **motivation** does Proctor have for hiding his confession from the village?

A

READING FOCUS

Draw a conclusion about why it is important to Parris that Proctor, who doesn't even like Parris, be spared from death?

630 *His breast heaving, his eyes staring, PROCTOR tears the paper and crumples it, and he is weeping in fury, but erect.*

Danforth: Marshal!

Parris, *hysterically, as though the tearing paper were his life:*
Proctor, Proctor!

Hale: Man, you will hang! You cannot!

Proctor, *his eyes full of tears:* I can. And there's your first marvel, that I can. You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. Not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such
640 *dogs. ELIZABETH, in a burst of terror, rushes to him and weeps against his hand. Give them no tear! Tears pleasure them! Show honor now, show a stony heart and sink them with it! He has lifted her, and kisses her now with great passion.*

Rebecca: Let you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all!

Danforth: Hang them high over the town! Who weeps for these, weeps for corruption! *He sweeps out past them. HERRICK starts to lead REBECCA, who almost collapses, but PROCTOR catches her, and she glances up at him apologetically.*

Rebecca: I've had no breakfast.

650 **Herrick:** Come, man.

HERRICK escorts them out, HATHORNE and CHEEVER behind them. ELIZABETH stands staring at the empty doorway.

Parris, *in deadly fear,* to ELIZABETH: Go to him, Goody Proctor! There is yet time!

From outside a drumroll strikes the air. PARRIS is startled. ELIZABETH jerks about toward the window.

Parris: Go to him! *He rushes out the door, as though to hold back his fate. Proctor! Proctor!* A

Again, a short burst of drums.

660 **Hale:** Woman, plead with him! *He starts to rush out the door, and then goes back to her.* Woman! It is pride, it is vanity. *She avoids his eyes, and moves to the window. He drops to his knees.* Be his helper! What profit him to bleed? Shall the dust praise him? Shall the worms declare his truth? Go to him, take his shame away! **B**
Elizabeth, *supporting herself against collapse, grips the bars of the window, and with a cry:* He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!

The final drumroll crashes, then heightens violently. HALE weeps in frantic prayer, and the new sun is pouring in upon her face, and the
670 *drums rattle like bones in the morning air.* **C**

The curtain falls

B LITERARY FOCUS

What **motivates** Hale to tell Elizabeth to persuade her husband to confess?

C VOCABULARY

Academic Vocabulary

What qualities are *intrinsic*, or essential, to Proctor's character? Is he a good man, an evil man, or just a man? Explain.
