

Name:

Miss Collier: AP Lang & Comp

The Crucible Act I study guide

Act I

1. What does the “spareness” of the Puritan setting reveal about the lives of the townspeople of Salem?
2. Explain the significance of the forest to the Puritans.
3. Explain the irony in the Puritans’ pilgrimage to Salem to escape persecution.
4. When Abigail enters, she is described as “a strikingly beautiful girl...with an endless capacity for dissembling.” What does the phrase an “endless capacity for dissembling” suggest?
5. When Susanna exits, Abigail makes a confession to Parris, which she recants near the end of the Act. What is the confession, and why does she change her mind?
6. Why does Rev. Parris become upset at the thought that Betty’s illness is a result of unnatural causes? What negative aspect of his character does this reveal?

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7. What innuendo does Rev. Parris make about Abigail's character?

8. Explain the relationship between Abigail and Goody (Elizabeth) Proctor.

9. Why does Mrs. Putnam believe there are witches in Salem?

10. What are Putnam's motivations for his actions in Salem?

11. Explain the dramatic irony when Parris says, "I know that you—you least of all, Thomas, would ever wish so disastrous a charge laid upon me."

12. What do we learn from the conversation that Mercy, Abigail, and Mary Warren have while alone?

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13. How do we see that Abigail is the acknowledged leader of this group?

14. What role did Ann Putnam play in the dancing in the forest?

15. Explain briefly how Putnam coerces Parris to declare witchcraft.

16. What does Betty's information about dancing in the forest reveal about Abigail's true motivation?

17. What does the threat of a "pointy reckoning" reveal about Abigail's true nature?

18. Describe Mary Warren's personality.

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19. In his stage directions, Miller tells us that despite, or perhaps due to, his upright appearance, John Proctor feels he is a fraud because he knows he is a sinner. What does his conversation with Abigail tell us about the nature of his sin?

20. Explain Proctor and Abigail's relationship.

21. Describe Rebecca Nurse physically and by reputation.

22. What three grudges could the Putnams have against the Nurses?

23. What is Rebecca's solution to Betty's and Ruth's ailments, and why does this solution anger Ann Putnam?

24. How does Proctor's subsequent comment on Parris' fiery sermons cause an outburst from Rev. Parris?

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25. In this argument the theme of authority explicitly arises. What are the two points of view?

26. What is Reverend Hale's motivation?

27. Hale says, "They [the books] must be [heavy]; they are weighted with authority." What is the significance of this remark?

28. Why has Abigail turned on Tituba and accused her of these things?

29. What does Putnam say that terrifies Tituba and causes her to say that she told the devil she did not want to work for him?

30. Why does Tituba come up with the names Goody Good and Goody Osburn as the two women she saw consorting with the devil?

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31. What question does Giles ask Hale that shows his comical, innocent personality.

32. What effect does Miller create by lowering the curtain for this act during the girls' cries of witchcraft?

33. What motivates Abby and Betty to begin denouncing everyone?

In a 1-chunk, 1:2 paragraph, predict what you think will happen in Act II.