



The Crucible

ACT 1 STUDY QUESTIONS

Record your answers on a separate sheet of paper. You must answer in complete sentences.

1. Early in the play, Rev. Parris is greatly concerned with his "enemies," whom he fears will use Betty's mysterious illness against him. What does this show us about Parris? Would you say he's a good father? Give evidence to support your answer.
2. Why does Elizabeth Proctor only rarely come to church these days?
3. When Abigail relates her version of what happened in the forest, what lends credibility to her story? Does Parris believe her? Why is he interested if her name is "entirely white" in the village?
4. Abigail describes Elizabeth Proctor as "a lying, cold, sniveling woman." What's ironic about this?
5. Ann Putnam says that her daughter, Ruth, has been acting strange this year. Describe Ruth's behaviors. Ann Putnam says this is evidence of dark forces pulling on her child, whose age we're not told but who is probably around 10 years old. What is a different, more likely explanation for Ruth's behaviors?
6. When a Bible psalm is sung, Betty Parris wails. Ann Putnam concludes that this shows the child has been touched by the Devil. Explain why this is a logical fallacy. What is the actual cause of Betty's wailing?
7. Describe Mercy Lewis. Describe Mary Warren. What does Abigail threaten to do to the girls if they tell about the casting of spells in the woods? Why is Abigail so dark?
8. Rebecca Nurse is able to quickly calm Betty when others could not comfort the girl. There are two different ways (one good, one not) of viewing Nurse's power here. Explain them both.
9. How many children and grandchildren does Rebecca Nurse have? How many does Ann Putnam have? Explain how people in Salem might view this as the hand of God working in the two women's lives.
10. What reason does John Proctor give for his reluctance to regularly attend church? What is another likely reason he hasn't been attending?
11. Mrs. Putnam says that there "are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!" Explain what she means.
12. In his opening remarks, how does Hale establish his authority?
13. Explain how Tituba is in a no-win situation. How does Tituba defend herself?
14. Why, do you suppose, Tituba gives the names of Sarah Good and Goody Osburn? What does this move show us about Tituba?
15. How does Hale contribute to the emotional fever of the end of the act, when the girls begin naming individuals who were seen with the Devil?

