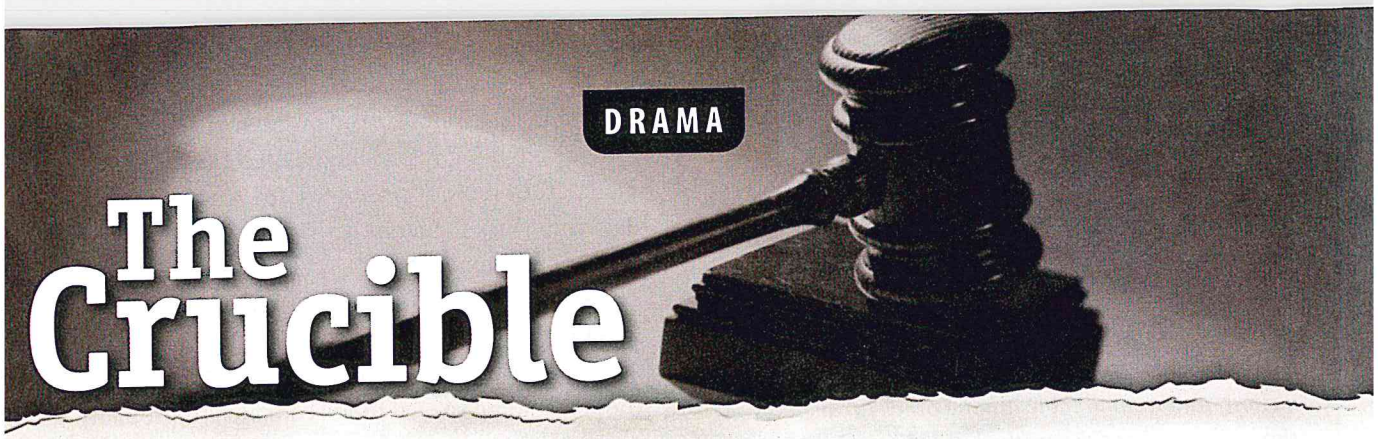


DRAMA

The Crucible

by **Arthur Miller**

Read with a Purpose

Read this play to discover how dialogue and actions reveal a character's values, emotions, motivations, and personal history.

Build Background

The Crucible is based on the witch trials that took place in 1692, in Salem, Massachusetts. Elizabeth Parris, daughter of Reverend Samuel Parris, and Abigail Williams, his niece, began acting strangely. Since no medical cause for their behavior could be found, doctors concluded that the girls were bewitched. Soon other girls began exhibiting the same behavior, crying out the names of women they knew and sparking the witch hunt. Over the next eight months, twenty-seven people were convicted, nineteen were hanged, one was crushed to death, and more than one hundred were imprisoned.

The Crucible *was first presented by Kermit Bloomgarden at the Martin Beck Theatre, New York City, January 22, 1953, with the following cast.*

Cast of Characters *(in order of appearance)*

Reverend Parris, *Fred Stewart*
Betty Parris, *Janet Alexander*
Tituba, *Jacqueline Andre*
Abigail Williams, *Madeleine Sherwood*
Susanna Walcott, *Barbara Stanton*
Mrs. Ann Putnam, *Jane Hoffman*
Thomas Putnam, *Raymond Bramley*
Mercy Lewis, *Dorothy Joliffe*
Mary Warren, *Jennie Egan*
John Proctor, *Arthur Kennedy*
Rebecca Nurse, *Jean Adair*
Giles Corey, *Joseph Sweeney*
Reverend John Hale, *E. G. Marshall*
Elizabeth Proctor, *Beatrice Straight*
Francis Nurse, *Graham Velsey*
Ezekiel Cheever, *Don McHenry*
Marshal Herrick, *George Mitchell*
Judge Hathorne, *Philip Coolidge*
Deputy Governor Danforth, *Walter Hampden*
Sarah Good, *Adele Fortin*
Hopkins, *Donald Marye*

Staged by Jed Harris
Settings by Boris Aronson
Costumes made and designed by Edith Lutyens

The play is set in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692.

Act One (An Overture)
Home of Rev. Samuel Parris.

Act Two
John Proctor's house, eight days later.

Act Three
Salem meeting house, serving as the General Court.

Act Four
A cell in Salem jail, fall 1692.

Act One (An Overture)

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 spareness. The roof rafters are exposed, and the wood colors are raw and unmellowed.

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.*

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. A

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.

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.

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.

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 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

A Reading Focus Drawing Conclusions About Characters What can you infer about Parris from the statement, "he felt insulted if someone rose to shut the door without first asking his permission"?

Literary Perspectives

Analyzing Credibility in Literature At its heart, *The Crucible* is a legal drama. The characters in this play make claims and accusations that starkly contradict one another. As a reader, you get to sit in the jury box and judge the characters. Using details from the text, you can analyze the credibility, or believability, of each character. Who is telling the truth? Who has hidden motives?

As you read, notice the questions in the text, which will guide you in using this perspective.

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.

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 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 Jerusalem[1] be defiled and corrupted by wrong ways and deceitful ideas.

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. 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. B

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.

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 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.

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. It was forged for a necessary purpose

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

B **Literary Perspectives** **Analyzing Credibility** What do you think Miller is saying about the beliefs of the characters in his play and of some of his contemporaries?

Vocabulary **theocracy** (thee AHK ruh see) *n.:* a government ruled by religious authority.

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.

When one rises above the individual villainy displayed, one can only pity them all, just as we shall be pitied someday. 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 so inclined to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims. It suddenly became possible—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 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. C

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.*

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.*

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 . . .
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. Now she is all worry and apprehension and propriety.*

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?
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

C **Literary Perspectives** **Analyzing Credibility** How could this desire for vengeance cloud the credibility of the witchcraft claims that people made?

Vocabulary **dissembling** (dih SEHM blihng) *v.* used as *n.*: the hiding of one's feelings or motives.

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. Ⓓ

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.

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?

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?

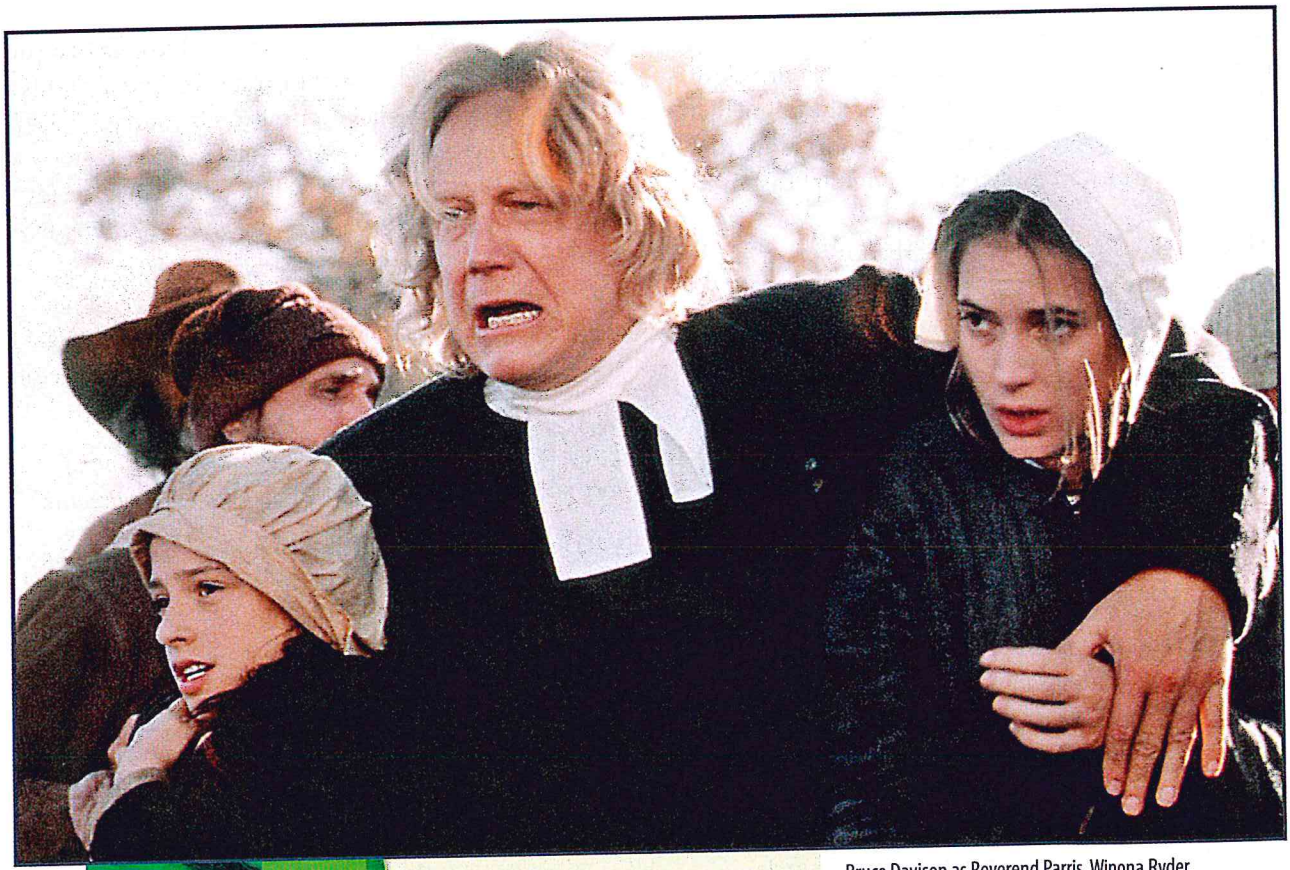
Abigail: We did dance, uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there's the whole of it.

Parris: Child. Sit you down.

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

Ⓓ **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why is Parris adamant that there is "no unnatural cause here"?



Analyzing Visuals

Viewing and Interpreting How do facial expressions and body language in this movie still contribute to the mood the playwright establishes in Act One? Explain your response.

Bruce Davison as Reverend Parris, Winona Ryder (right) as Abigail Williams in film version of *The Crucible.* 1996.

the forest I must know it now, for surely my enemies will, and they will ruin me with it. E

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 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!

Parris, *pointing at* BETTY: You call this sport? *She lowers her eyes. 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.

Parris: I cannot blink what I saw, Abigail, for my enemies will not blink it. I saw a dress lying on the grass.

Abigail, *innocently:* A dress?

Parris—*it is very hard to say:* Aye, a dress. And I thought I saw—someone naked running through the trees!

Abigail, *in terror:* No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle!

Parris, *with anger:* I saw it! *He moves from her. Then, resolved:* Now tell me true, Abigail. And I pray you feel the weight of truth upon you, for now my ministry's at stake, my ministry and perhaps your cousin's life. Whatever abomination you have done, give me all of it now, for I dare not be taken unaware when I go before them down there.

Abigail: There is nothin' more. I swear it, uncle.

Parris, *studies her, then nods, half convinced:* Abigail, I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when some good respect is rising for me in the parish, you compromise my very character. I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back—now give me upright answer. Your name in the town—it is entirely white, is it not?

Abigail, *with an edge of resentment:* Why, I am sure it is, sir. There be no blush about my name.

Parris, *to the point:* Abigail, is there any other cause than you have told me, for your being discharged from Goody[2] Proctor's service? I have heard it said, and I tell you as I heard it, that she comes so rarely to the church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled. What signified that remark?

Abigail: She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It's a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman!

Parris: She may be. And yet it has troubled me that you are now seven month out of their house, and in all this time no other family has ever called for your service. F

Abigail: They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them! *With ill-concealed resentment at him:* Do you begrudge my bed, uncle?

Parris: No—no.

Abigail, *in a temper:* My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!

Enter MRS. ANN PUTNAM. *She is a twisted soul of forty-five, a death-ridden woman, haunted by dreams.*

Parris, *as soon as the door begins to open:* No—no, I cannot have anyone. *He sees her, and a certain deference springs into him, although his worry remains.* Why, Goody Putnam, come in.

Mrs. Putnam, *full of breath, shiny-eyed:* It is a marvel. It is surely a stroke of hell upon you.

Parris: No, Goody Putnam, it is—

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

E **Literary Focus** **Motivation** If Parris claims Betty is not sick from "unnatural causes," why would he accuse her and Abigail of "trafficking with spirits"? Explain.

F **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters** What might Parris be accusing Abigail of? Why is it so troubling that she has been out of work for seven months?

Mrs. Putnam, *glancing at* BETTY: How high did she fly, how high?
Parris: No, no, she never flew—
Mrs. Putnam, *very pleased with it:* Why, it's sure she did. Mr. Collins saw her goin' over Ingersoll's barn, and come down light as bird, he says!
Parris: Now, look you, Goody Putnam, she never—
Enter THOMAS PUTNAM, *a well-to-do, hard-handed landowner, near fifty.* Oh, good morning, Mr. Putnam.
Putnam: It is a providence the thing is out now! It is a providence. *He goes directly to the bed.*
Parris: What's out, sir, what's—?

MRS. PUTNAM *goes to the bed.*

Putnam, *looking down at* BETTY: Why, *her* eyes is closed! Look you, Ann.
Mrs. Putnam: Why, that's strange. *To* PARRIS: Ours is open.
Parris, *shocked:* Your Ruth is sick?
Mrs. Putnam, *with vicious certainty:* I'd not call it sick; the Devil's touch is heavier than sick. It's death, y'know, it's death drivin' into them, forked and hoofed.
Parris: Oh, pray not! Why, how does Ruth ail?
Mrs. Putnam: She ails as she must—she never waked this morning, but her eyes open and she walks, and hears naught, sees naught, and cannot eat. Her soul is taken, surely.

PARRIS *is struck.*

Putnam, *as though for further details:* They say you've sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly?
Parris, *with dwindling conviction now:* A precaution only. He has much experience in all demonic arts, and I—
Mrs. Putnam: He has indeed; and found a witch in Beverly last year, and let you remember that.
Parris: Now, Goody Ann, they only thought that were a witch, and I am certain there be no element of witchcraft here.

Putnam No witchcraft! Now look you, Mr. Parris—
Parris: Thomas, Thomas, I pray you, leap not to witchcraft. I know that you—you least of all, Thomas, would ever wish so disastrous a charge laid upon me. We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.

My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!

A word about Thomas Putnam. He was a man with many grievances, at least one of which appears justified. Some time before, his wife's brother-in-law, James Bayley, had been turned down as minister of Salem. Bayley had all the qualifications, and a two-thirds vote into the bargain, but a faction stopped his acceptance, for reasons that are not clear.

Thomas Putnam was the eldest son of the richest man in the village. He had fought the Indians at Narragansett, and was deeply interested in parish affairs. He undoubtedly felt it poor payment that the village should so blatantly disregard his candidate for one of its more important offices, especially since he regarded himself as the intellectual superior of most of the people around him.

His vindictive nature was demonstrated long before the witchcraft began. A former Salem minister, George Burroughs, had had to borrow money to pay for his wife's funeral, and, since the parish was remiss in his salary, he was soon bankrupt. Thomas and his brother John had Burroughs jailed for debts the man did not owe. The incident is important only in that Burroughs succeeded in becoming minister where Bayley, Thomas Putnam's brother-in-law, had been rejected; the motif of resentment is clear here. Thomas Putnam felt that his own name and the honor of his family had been smirched by the village, and he meant to right matters however he could. G

G **Literary Focus** **Motivation** How might Putnam's family history prejudice the way Putnam sees Parris, or any other minister?

Another reason to believe him a deeply embittered man was his attempt to break his father's will, which left a disproportionate amount to a stepbrother. As with every other public cause in which he tried to force his way, he failed in this.

So it is not surprising to find that so many accusations against people are in the handwriting of Thomas Putnam, or that his name is so often found as a witness corroborating the supernatural testimony, or that his daughter led the crying-out at the most opportune junctures of the trials, especially when—But we'll speak of that when we come to it.

Putnam—*at the moment he is intent upon getting* PARRIS, *for whom he has only contempt, to move toward the abyss:* Mr. Parris, I have taken your part in all contention here, and I would continue; but I cannot if you hold back in this. There are hurtful, vengeful spirits layin' hands on these children.

Parris: But, Thomas, you cannot—

Putnam: Ann! Tell Mr. Parris what you have done.

Mrs. Putnam: Reverend Parris, I have laid seven babies unbaptized in the earth. Believe me, sir, you never saw more hearty babies born. And yet, each would wither in my arms the very night of their birth. I have spoke nothin', but my heart has clamored intimations. And now, this year, my Ruth, my only—I see her turning strange. A secret child she has become this year, and shrivels like a sucking mouth were pullin' on her life too. And so I thought to send her to your Tituba— H

Parris: To Tituba! What may Tituba—?

Mrs. Putnam: Tituba knows how to speak to the dead, Mr. Parris.

Parris: Goody Ann, it is a formidable sin to conjure up the dead!

Mrs. Putnam: I take it on my soul, but who else may surely tell us what person murdered my babies?

Parris, *horrified:* Woman!

Mrs. Putnam: They were murdered, Mr. Parris! And mark this proof! Mark it! Last night my Ruth were ever so close to their little spirits; I know it, sir. For how else is she struck dumb now except some power of darkness would stop her mouth? It is a marvelous sign, Mr. Parris!

Putnam: Don't you understand it, sir? There is a murdering witch among us, bound to keep herself in the dark. PARRIS *turns to* BETTY, *a frantic terror rising in him.* Let your enemies make of it what they will, you cannot blink it more.

Parris, *to* ABIGAIL: Then you were conjuring spirits last night.

Abigail, *whispering:* Not I, sir—Tituba and Ruth.

Parris, *turns now, with new fear, and goes to* BETTY, *looks down at her, and then, gazing off:* Oh, Abigail, what proper payment for my charity! Now I am undone.

Putnam: You are not undone! Let you take hold here. Wait for no one to charge you—declare it yourself. You have discovered witchcraft— I

Parris: In my house? In my house, Thomas? They will topple me with this! They will make of it a—

Enter MERCY LEWIS, *the* PUTNAMS' *servant, a fat, sly, merciless girl of eighteen.*

Mercy: Your pardons. I only thought to see how Betty is.

Putnam: Why aren't you home? Who's with Ruth?

Mercy: Her grandma come. She's improved a little, I think—she give a powerful sneeze before.

Mrs. Putnam: Ah, there's a sign of life!

Mercy: I'd fear no more, Goody Putnam. It were a grand sneeze; another like it will shake her wits together, I'm sure. *She goes to the bed to look.*

Parris: Will you leave me now, Thomas? I would pray a while alone.

Abigail: Uncle, you've prayed since midnight. Why do you not go down and—

Parris: No—no. *To* PUTNAM: I have no answer for that crowd. I'll wait till Mr. Hale arrives. *To get* MRS. PUTNAM *to leave:* If you will, Goody Ann . . .

Putnam: Now look you, sir. Let you strike out against the Devil, and the village will bless you for it! Come down, speak to them—pray with them. They're thirsting for your word, Mister! Surely you'll pray with them.

Parris, *swayed:* I'll lead them in a psalm, but let you say nothing of witchcraft yet. I will not discuss it. The

H **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters** What kind of mother might Mrs. Putnam be to her only child Ruth?

I **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Should Parris take this advice? Why or why not?

cause is yet unknown. I have had enough contention since I came; I want no more.

Mrs. Putnam: Mercy, you go home to Ruth, d'y'hear?

Mercy: Aye, mum.

MRS. PUTNAM *goes out.*

Parris, *to* ABIGAIL: If she starts for the window, cry for me at once.

Abigail: I will, uncle.

Parris, *to* PUTNAM: There is a terrible power in her arms today. *He goes out with* PUTNAM.

Abigail, *with hushed trepidation:* How is Ruth sick?

Mercy: It's weirdish, I know not—she seems to walk like a dead one since last night.

Abigail, *turns at once and goes to* BETTY, *and now, with fear in her voice:* Betty? BETTY *doesn't move. She shakes her.* Now stop this! Betty! Sit up now!

BETTY *doesn't stir.* MERCY *comes over.*

Mercy: Have you tried beatin' her? I gave Ruth a good one and it waked her for a minute. Here, let me have her.

Abigail, *holding* MERCY *back:* No, he'll be comin' up. Listen, now; if they be questioning us, tell them we danced—I told him as much already.

Mercy: Aye. And what more?

Abigail: He knows Tituba conjured Ruth's sisters to come out of the grave.

Mercy: And what more?

Abigail: He saw you naked.

Mercy, *clapping her hands together with a frightened laugh:* Oh, Jesus!

Enter MARY WARREN, *breathless. She is seventeen, a subservient, naïve, lonely girl.*

Mary Warren: What'll we do? The village is out! I just come from the farm; the whole country's talkin' witchcraft! They'll be callin' us witches, Abby!

Mercy, *pointing and looking at* MARY WARREN: She means to tell, I know it.

Mary Warren: Abigail, we've got to tell. Witchery's a hangin' error, a hangin' like they done in Boston two year ago! We must tell the truth, Abigail! You'll only be whipped for dancin', and the other things!

Abigail: Oh, *we'll* be whipped!

Mary Warren: I never done none of it, Abigail. I only looked!

Mercy, *moving menacingly toward* MARY: Oh, you're a great one for lookin', aren't you, Mary Warren? What a grand peeping courage you have!

BETTY, *on the bed, whimpers.* ABIGAIL *turns to her at once.*

Abigail: Betty? *She goes to* BETTY. Now, Betty, dear, wake up now. It's Abigail. *She sits* BETTY *up and furiously shakes her.* I'll beat you, Betty! BETTY *whimpers.* My, you seem improving. I talked to your papa and I told him everything. So there's nothing to—

Betty, *darts off the bed, frightened of* ABIGAIL, *and flattens herself against the wall:* I want my mama!

Abigail, *with alarm, as she cautiously approaches* BETTY: What ails you, Betty? Your mama's dead and buried.

Betty: I'll fly to Mama. Let me fly! *She raises her arms as though to fly, and streaks for the window, gets one leg out.*

Abigail, *pulling her away from the window:* I told him everything; he knows now, he knows everything we—

Betty: You drank blood, Abby! You didn't tell him that! (J)

Abigail: Betty, you never say that again! You will never—

Betty: You did, you did! You drank a charm to kill John Proctor's wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor!

Abigail, *smashes her across the face:* Shut it! Now shut it!

Betty, *collapsing on the bed:* Mama, Mama! *She dissolves into sobs.*

Abigail: Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go

(J) **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters**
How does Betty know that Abigail didn't tell Parris about the blood?

down! *She goes to* BETTY *and roughly sits her up.* Now, you—sit up and stop this! K

But BETTY *collapses in her hands and lies inert on the bed.*

Mary Warren, *with hysterical fright:* What's got her? ABIGAIL *stares in fright at* BETTY. Abigail, she's going to die! It's a sin to conjure, and we—

Abigail, *starting for* MARY: I say shut it, Mary Warren!

Enter JOHN PROCTOR. *On seeing him,* MARY WARREN *leaps in fright.*

Proctor was a farmer in his middle thirties. He need not have been a partisan of any faction in the town, but there is evidence to suggest that he had a sharp and biting way with hypocrites. He was the kind of man—powerful of body, even-tempered, and not easily led—who cannot refuse support to partisans without drawing their deepest resentment. In Proctor's presence a fool felt his foolishness instantly—and a Proctor is always marked for calumny therefore.

But as we shall see, the steady manner he displays does not spring from an untroubled soul. He is a sinner, a sinner not only against the moral fashion of the time, but against his own vision of decent conduct. These people had no ritual for the washing away of sins. It is another trait we inherited from them, and it has helped to discipline us as well as to breed hypocrisy among us. Proctor, respected and even feared in Salem, has come to regard himself as a kind of fraud. But no hint of this has yet appeared on the surface, and as he enters from the crowded parlor below it is a man in his prime we see, with a quiet confidence and an unexpressed, hidden force. Mary Warren, his servant, can barely speak for embarrassment and fear.

Mary Warren: Oh! I'm just going home, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: Be you foolish, Mary Warren? Be you deaf? I forbid you leave the house, did I not? Why shall I pay you? I am looking for you more often than my cows!

Mary Warren: I only come to see the great doings in the world.

Proctor: I'll show you a great doin' on your arse one of these days. Now get you home; my wife is waitin' with your work! *Trying to retain a shred of dignity, she goes slowly out.*

Mercy Lewis, *both afraid of him and strangely titillated:* I'd best be off. I have my Ruth to watch. Good morning, Mr. Proctor.

MERCY *sidles out. Since* PROCTOR*'s entrance,* ABIGAIL *has stood as though on tiptoe, absorbing his presence, wide-eyed. He glances at her, then goes to* BETTY *on the bed.*

Abigail: Gah! I'd almost forgot how strong you are, John Proctor!

Proctor, *looking at* ABIGAIL *now, the faintest suggestion of a knowing smile on his face:* What's this mischief here?

Abigail, *with a nervous laugh:* Oh, she's only gone silly somehow.

Proctor: The road past my house is a pilgrimage to Salem all morning. The town's mumbling witchcraft.

Abigail: Oh, posh! *Winningly she comes a little closer, with a confidential, wicked air.* We were dancin' in the woods last night, and my uncle leaped in on us. She took fright, is all.

Proctor, *his smile widening:* Ah, you're wicked yet, aren't y'! *A trill of expectant laughter escapes her, and she dares come closer, feverishly looking into his eyes.* You'll be clapped in the stocks before you're twenty.

He takes a step to go, and she springs into his path.

Abigail: Give me a word, John. A soft word. *Her concentrated desire destroys his smile.*

Proctor: No, no, Abby. That's done with. L

Abigail, *tauntingly:* You come five mile to see a silly girl fly? I know you better.

Proctor, *setting her firmly out of his path:* I come to see what mischief your uncle's brewin' now. *With final emphasis:* Put it out of mind, Abby.

K **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Is this an admission that Abigail is a witch, or is she just trying to scare them? Why?

Vocabulary **partisan** (PAHR tih zuhn) *n.:* a strong supporter in a cause.

L **Literary Focus** **Motivation** What is "done with"? Why is Abigail comfortable teasing Proctor this way? Explain.

"We never touched, Abby." Abigail Williams, played by Winona Ryder, with John Proctor, played by Daniel Day-Lewis (right).

Abigail, *grasping his hand before he can release her:* John—I am waitin' for you every night.

Proctor: Abigail, I never give you hope to wait for me.

Abigail, *now beginning to anger—she can't believe it:* I have something better than hope, I think!

Proctor: Abigail, you'll put it out of mind. I'll not be comin' for you more.

Abigail: You're surely sportin' with me.

Proctor: You know me better.

Abigail: I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion when ever I come near! Or did I dream that? It's she put me out, you cannot pretend it were you. I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now!

Proctor: Abby, that's a wild thing to say—

Abigail: A wild thing may say wild things. But not so wild, I think. I have seen you since she put me out; I have seen you nights. Ⓜ

Proctor: I have hardly stepped off my farm this sevenmonth.

Abigail: I have a sense for heat, John, and yours has drawn me to my window, and I have seen you looking up, burning in your loneliness. Do you tell me you've never looked up at my window?

Proctor: I may have looked up.

Abigail, *now softening:* And you must. You are no wintry man. I know you, John. I *know* you. *She is weeping.* I cannot sleep for dreamin'; I cannot dream but I wake and walk about the house as though I'd find you comin' through some door. *She clutches him desperately.*

Proctor, *gently pressing her from him, with great sympathy but firmly:* Child—

Abigail, *with a flash of anger:* How do you call me child!

Proctor: Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby.

Abigail: Aye, but we did.

Ⓜ **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters**
Why does Abigail characterize herself as a "wild thing"?

Proctor: Aye, but we did not.
Abigail, *with a bitter anger:* Oh, I marvel how such a strong man may let such a sickly wife be—
Proctor, *angered—at himself as well:* You'll speak nothin' of Elizabeth!
Abigail: She is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me! She is a cold, sniveling woman, and you bend to her! Let her turn you like a—
Proctor, *shaking her:* Do you look for whippin'?

A psalm is heard being sung below.

Abigail, *in tears:* I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet! *He turns abruptly to go out. She rushes to him.* John, pity me, pity me!

The words "going up to Jesus" are heard in the psalm, and BETTY *claps her ears suddenly and whines loudly.*

Abigail: Betty? *She hurries to* BETTY, *who is now sitting up and screaming.* PROCTOR *goes to* BETTY *as* ABIGAIL *is trying to pull her hands down, calling "Betty!"*
Proctor, *growing unnerved:* What's she doing? Girl, what ails you? Stop that wailing!

The singing has stopped in the midst of this, and now PARRIS *rushes in.*

Parris: What happened? What are you doing to her? Betty! *He rushes to the bed, crying, "Betty, Betty!"* MRS. PUTNAM *enters, feverish with curiosity, and with her* THOMAS PUTNAM *and* MERCY LEWIS. PARRIS, *at the bed, keeps lightly slapping* BETTY*'s face, while she moans and tries to get up.*
Abigail: She heard you singin' and suddenly she's up and screamin'.
Mrs. Putnam: The psalm! The psalm! She cannot bear to hear the Lord's name!
Parris: No, God forbid. Mercy, run to the doctor! Tell him what's happened here! MERCY LEWIS *rushes out.* N

Mrs. Putnam: Mark it for a sign, mark it!

REBECCA NURSE, *seventy-two, enters. She is white-haired, leaning upon her walking-stick.*

Putnam, *pointing at the whimpering* BETTY: That is a notorious sign of witchcraft afoot, Goody Nurse, a prodigious sign!
Mrs. Putnam: My mother told me that! When they cannot bear to hear the name of—
Parris, *trembling:* Rebecca, Rebecca, go to her, we're lost. She suddenly cannot bear to hear the Lord's—

GILES COREY, *eighty-three, enters. He is knotted with muscle, canny, inquisitive, and still powerful.*

Rebecca: There is hard sickness here, Giles Corey, so please to keep the quiet.
Giles: I've not said a word. No one here can testify I've said a word. Is she going to fly again? I hear she flies.
Putnam: Man, be quiet now!

Everything is quiet. REBECCA *walks across the room to the bed. Gentleness exudes from her.* BETTY *is quietly whimpering, eyes shut.* REBECCA *simply stands over the child, who gradually quiets.*

And while they are so absorbed, we may put a word in for Rebecca. Rebecca was the wife of Francis Nurse, who, from all accounts, was one of those men for whom both sides of the argument had to have respect. He was called upon to arbitrate disputes as though he were an unofficial judge, and Rebecca also enjoyed the high opinion most people had for him. By the time of the delusion, they had three hundred acres, and their children were settled in separate homesteads within the same estate. However, Francis had originally rented the land, and one theory has it that, as he gradually paid for it and raised his social status, there were those who resented his rise.

Another suggestion to explain the systematic campaign against Rebecca, and inferentially against Francis, is the land war he fought with his neighbors, one of whom was a Putnam. This squabble grew to the proportions of a battle in the woods between partisans of both sides, and it is said to have lasted for two days. As for Rebecca herself, the general

N **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why would Parris instruct Mercy to get the doctor at this time?

opinion of her character was so high that to explain how anyone dared cry her out for a witch—and more, how adults could bring themselves to lay hands on her—we must look to the fields and boundaries of that time.

As we have seen, Thomas Putnam's man for the Salem ministry was Bayley. The Nurse clan had been in the faction that prevented Bayley's taking office. In addition, certain families allied to the Nurses by blood or friendship, and whose farms were contiguous with the Nurse farm or close to it, combined to break away from the Salem town authority and set up Topsfield, a new and independent entity whose existence was resented by old Salemites.

That the guiding hand behind the outcry was Putnam's is indicated by the fact that, as soon as it began, this Topsfield-Nurse faction absented themselves from church in protest and disbelief. It was Edward and Jonathan Putnam who signed the first complaint against Rebecca; and Thomas Putnam's little daughter was the one who fell into a fit at the hearing and pointed to Rebecca as her attacker. To top it all, Mrs. Putnam—who is now staring at the bewitched child on the bed—soon accused Rebecca's spirit of "tempting her to iniquity," a charge that had more truth in it than Mrs. Putnam could know.

Mrs. Putnam, *astonished:* What have you done?

REBECCA, *in thought, now leaves the bedside and sits.*

Parris, *wondrous and relieved:* What do you make of it, Rebecca?

Putnam, *eagerly:* Goody Nurse, will you go to my Ruth and see if you can wake her?

Rebecca, *sitting:* I think she'll wake in time. Pray calm yourselves. I have eleven children, and I am twenty-six times a grandma, and I have seen them all through their silly seasons, and when it come on them they will run the Devil bowlegged keeping up with their mischief. I think she'll wake when she tires of it. A child's spirit is like a child, you can never catch it by running after it; you must stand still, and, for love, it will soon itself come back.

Proctor: Aye, that's the truth of it, Rebecca.

Mrs. Putnam: This is no silly season, Rebecca. My Ruth is bewildered, Rebecca; she cannot eat.

Rebecca: Perhaps she is not hungered yet. *To* PARRIS: I hope you are not decided to go in search of loose spirits, Mr. Parris. I've heard promise of that outside.

Parris: A wide opinion's running in the parish that the Devil may be among us, and I would satisfy them that they are wrong.

Proctor: Then let you come out and call them wrong. Did you consult the wardens before you called this minister to look for devils?

Parris: He is not coming to look for devils!

Proctor: Then what's he coming for?

Putnam: There be children dyin' in the village, Mister!

Proctor: I seen none dyin'. This society will not be a bag to swing around your head, Mr. Putnam. *To* PARRIS: Did you call a meeting before you—?

Putnam: I am sick of meetings; cannot the man turn his head without he have a meeting?

Proctor: He may turn his head, but not to Hell!

Rebecca: Pray, John, be calm. *Pause. He defers to her.* Mr. Parris, I think you'd best send Reverend Hale back as soon as he come. This will set us all to arguin' again in the society, and we thought to have peace this year. I think we ought rely on the doctor now, and good prayer.

Mrs. Putnam: Rebecca, the doctor's baffled!

Rebecca: If so he is, then let us go to God for the cause of it. There is prodigious danger in the seeking of loose spirits. I fear it, I fear it. Let us rather blame ourselves and—

Putnam: How may we blame ourselves? I am one of nine sons; the Putnam seed have peopled this province. And yet I have but one child left of eight—and now she shrivels!

Rebecca: I cannot fathom that.

Mrs. Putnam, *with a growing edge of sarcasm:* But I must! You think it God's work you should never lose a child, nor grandchild either, and I bury all but one? There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!

Putnam, *to* PARRIS: When Reverend Hale comes, you will proceed to look for signs of witchcraft here.

Proctor, *to* PUTNAM: You cannot command Mr. Parris. We vote by name in this society, not by acreage.

Putnam: I never heard you worried so on this society, Mr. Proctor. I do not think I saw you at Sabbath meeting since snow flew.

Proctor: I have trouble enough without I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody

damnation. Take it to heart, Mr. Parris. There are many others who stay away from church these days because you hardly ever mention God anymore.

Parris, *now aroused:* Why, that's a drastic charge!

Rebecca: It's somewhat true; there are many that quail to bring their children—

Parris: I do not preach for children, Rebecca. It is not the children who are unmindful of their obligations toward this ministry.

Rebecca: Are there really those unmindful?

Parris: I should say the better half of Salem village—

Putnam: And more than that!

Parris: Where is my wood? My contract provides I be supplied with all my firewood. I am waiting since November for a stick, and even in November I had to show my frostbitten hands like some London beggar!

Giles: You are allowed six pound a year to buy your wood, Mr. Parris.

Parris: I regard that six pound as part of my salary. I am paid little enough without I spend six pound on firewood.

Proctor: Sixty, plus six for firewood—

Parris: The salary is sixty-six pound, Mr. Proctor! I am not some preaching farmer with a book under my arm; I am a graduate of Harvard College.

Giles: Aye, and well instructed in arithmetic!

Parris: Mr. Corey, you will look far for a man of my kind at sixty pound a year! I am not used to this poverty; I left a thrifty business in the Barbados to serve the Lord. I do not fathom it, why am I persecuted here? I cannot offer one proposition but there be a howling riot of argument. I have often wondered if the Devil be in it somewhere; I cannot understand you people otherwise.

Proctor: Mr. Parris, you are the first minister ever did demand the deed to this house—

Parris: Man! Don't a minister deserve a house to live in?

Proctor: To live in, yes. But to ask ownership is like you shall own the meeting house itself; the last meeting I were at you spoke so long on deeds and mortgages I thought it were an auction.

Parris: I want a mark of confidence, is all! I am your third preacher in seven years. I do not wish to be put out like the cat whenever some majority feels the whim. You people seem not to comprehend that a minister is the Lord's man in the parish; a minister is not to be so lightly crossed and contradicted—

Putnam: Aye!

Parris: There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning!

Proctor: Can you speak one minute without we land in Hell again? I am sick of Hell!

Parris: It is not for you to say what is good for you to hear!

Proctor: I may speak my heart, I think!

Parris, *in a fury:* What, are we Quakers?[3] We are not Quakers here yet, Mr. Proctor. And you may tell that to your followers!

Proctor: My followers!

Parris—*now he's out with it:* There is a party in this church. I am not blind; there is a faction and a party.

Proctor: Against you?

Putnam: Against him and all authority!

Proctor: Why, then I must find it and join it.

There is shock among the others.

Rebecca: He does not mean that.

Putnam: He confessed it now!

Proctor: I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this "authority."

Rebecca: No, you cannot break charity with your minister. You are another kind, John. Clasp his hand, make your peace.

A minister is the Lord's man in the parish; a minister is not to be so lightly crossed and contradicted.

3. **Quakers:** Most Quakers believe that no rite or formally trained priest is needed to commune with God; instead, divine truth can be found in one's "inner light."

O **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why does Parris make such an abrupt change in the subject here? What does this action reveal?

Proctor: I have a crop to sow and lumber to drag home. *He goes angrily to the door and turns to* COREY *with a smile.* What say you, Giles, let's find the party. He says there's a party.

Giles: I've changed my opinion of this man, John. Mr. Parris, I beg your pardon. I never thought you had so much iron in you. Ⓟ

Parris, *surprised:* Why, thank you, Giles!

Giles: It suggests to the mind what the trouble be among us all these years. *To all:* Think on it. Wherefore is everybody suing everybody else? Think on it now, it's a deep thing, and dark as a pit. I have been six time in court this year—

Proctor, *familiarly, with warmth, although he knows he is approaching the edge of* GILES' *tolerance with this:* Is it the Devil's fault that a man cannot say you good morning without you clap him for defamation? You're old, Giles, and you're not hearin' so well as you did.

Giles—*he cannot be crossed:* John Proctor, I have only last month collected four pound damages for you publicly sayin' I burned the roof off your house, and I—

Proctor, *laughing:* I never said no such thing, but I've paid you for it, so I hope I can call you deaf without charge. Now come along, Giles, and help me drag my lumber home. Ⓠ

Putnam: A moment, Mr. Proctor. What lumber is that you're draggin', if I may ask you?

Proctor: My lumber. From out my forest by the riverside.

Putnam: Why, we are surely gone wild this year. What anarchy is this? That tract is in my bounds, it's in my bounds, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: In your bounds! *Indicating* REBECCA: I bought that tract from Goody Nurse's husband five months ago.

Putnam: He had no right to sell it. It stands clear in my grandfather's will that all the land between the river and—

Proctor: Your grandfather had a habit of willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain.

Giles: That's God's truth; he nearly willed away my north pasture but he knew I'd break his fingers before he'd set his name to it. Let's get your lumber home, John. I feel a sudden will to work coming on.

Putnam: You load one oak of mine and you'll fight to drag it home!

Giles: Aye, and we'll win too, Putnam—this fool and I. Come on! *He turns to* PROCTOR *and starts out.*

Putnam: I'll have my men on you, Corey! I'll clap a writ on you!

Enter REVEREND JOHN HALE *of Beverly.*

Mr. Hale is nearing forty, a tight-skinned, eager-eyed intellectual. This is a beloved errand for him; on being called here to ascertain witchcraft he felt the pride of the specialist whose unique knowledge has at last been publicly called for. Like almost all men of learning, he spent a good deal of his time pondering the invisible world, especially since he had himself encountered a witch in his parish not long before. That woman, however, turned into a mere pest under his searching scrutiny, and the child she had allegedly been afflicting recovered her normal behavior after Hale had given her his kindness and a few days of rest in his own house. However, that experience never raised a doubt in his mind as to the reality of the underworld or the existence of Lucifer's many-faced lieutenants. And his belief is not to his discredit. Better minds than Hale's were—and still are—convinced that there is a society of spirits beyond our ken. One cannot help noting that one of his lines has never yet raised a laugh in any audience that has seen this play; it is his assurance that "We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise." Evidently we are not quite certain even now whether diabolism is holy and not to be scoffed at. And it is no accident that we should be so bemused.

Like Reverend Hale and the others on this stage, we conceive the Devil as a necessary part of a respectable view of cosmology. Ours is a divided empire in which certain ideas and emotions and actions are of God, and their opposites are of Lucifer. It is as impossible for most men to conceive of a morality without sin as of an earth without "sky." Since 1692 a great but superficial change has wiped out God's beard and the Devil's horns, but the world is still gripped between

Ⓟ **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters**
What has changed Giles's opinion of Parris?

Ⓠ **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters**
Why do you think Giles and Proctor can fight amicably, but Proctor and Putnam cannot?

two diametrically opposed absolutes. The concept of unity, in which positive and negative are attributes of the same force, in which good and evil are relative, ever-changing, and always joined to the same phenomenon—such a concept is still reserved to the physical sciences and to the few who have grasped the history of ideas. When it is recalled that until the Christian era the underworld was never regarded as a hostile area, that all gods were useful and essentially friendly to man despite occasional lapses; when we see the steady and methodical inculcation into humanity of the idea of man's worthlessness—until redeemed—the necessity of the Devil may become evident as a weapon, a weapon designed and used time and time again in every age to whip men into a surrender to a particular church or church-state.

Our difficulty in believing the—for want of a better word—political inspiration of the Devil is due in great part to the fact that he is called up and damned not only by our social antagonists but by our own side, whatever it may be. The Catholic Church, through its Inquisition,[4] is famous for cultivating Lucifer as the arch-fiend, but the Church's enemies relied no less upon the Old Boy to keep the human mind enthralled. Luther[5] was himself accused of alliance with Hell, and he in turn accused his enemies. To complicate matters further, he believed that he had had contact with the Devil, and had argued theology with him. I am not surprised at this, for at my own university a professor of history—a Lutheran, by the way—used to assemble his graduate students, draw the shades, and commune in the classroom with Erasmus.[6] He was never, to my knowledge, officially scoffed at for this, the reason being that the university officials, like most of us, are the children of a history which still sucks at the Devil's teats. At this writing, only England has held back before the temptations of contemporary diabolism. In the countries of the Communist ideology, all resistance of any import is linked to the totally malign capitalist succubi,[7] and in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell. Political opposition, thereby, is given an inhumane overlay which then justifies the abrogation of all normally applied customs of civilized intercourse. A political policy is equated with moral right, and opposition to it with diabolical malevolence. Once such an equation is effectively made, society becomes a congerie of plots and counterplots, and the main role of government changes from that of the arbiter to that of the scourge of God.

The results of this process are no different now from what they ever were, except sometimes in the degree of cruelty inflicted, and not always even in that department. Normally the actions and deeds of a man were all that society felt comfortable in judging. The secret intent of an action was left to the ministers, priests, and rabbis to deal with. When diabolism rises, however, actions are the least important manifests of the true nature of a man. The Devil, as Reverend Hale said, is a wily one, and, until an hour before he fell, even God thought him beautiful in Heaven.

The analogy, however, seems to falter when one considers that, while there were no witches then, there are Communists and capitalists now, and in each camp there is certain proof that spies of each side are at work undermining the other. But this is a snobbish objection and not at all warranted by the facts. I have no doubt that people *were* communing with, and even worshiping, the Devil in Salem, and if the whole truth could be known in this case, as it is in others, we should discover a regular and conventionalized propitiation of the dark spirit. One certain evidence of this is the confession of Tituba, the slave of Reverend Parris, and another is the behavior of the children who were known to have indulged in sorceries with her. R

4. **Inquisition:** techniques of suppression and punishment used in the thirteenth century by the Roman Catholic Church against people thought to hold heretical beliefs.
5. **Luther:** Martin Luther (1483–1546), a German theologian and leader of the Protestant Reformation.
6. **Erasmus** (ih RAZ muhs) (c. 1466–1536): Dutch scholar and humanist, who came into conflict with Luther over predestination. (Erasmus believed in free will.)
7. **succubi** (SUHK yoo by): plural of *succubus,* the term for a female evil spirit or demon thought in medieval times to have sexual intercourse with sleeping men.

R **Literary Perspectives** **Analyzing Credibility** How does Miller's assertion that "there were no witches then" affect your view of the children in the play? Why does Miller tell us this outright?

There are accounts of similar *klatches* in Europe, where the daughters of the towns would assemble at night and, sometimes with fetishes, sometimes with a selected young man, give themselves to love, with some bastardly results. The Church, sharp-eyed as it must be when gods long dead are brought to life, condemned these orgies as witchcraft and interpreted them rightly, as a resurgence of the Dionysiac[8] forces it had crushed long before. Sex, sin, and the Devil were early linked, and so they continued to be in Salem, and are today. From all accounts there are no more puritanical mores in the world than those enforced by the Communists in Russia, where women's fashions, for instance, are as prudent and all-covering as any American Baptist would desire. The divorce laws lay a tremendous responsibility on the father for the care of his children. Even the laxity of divorce regulations in the early years of the revolution was undoubtedly a revulsion from the nineteenth-century Victorian immobility of marriage and the consequent hypocrisy that developed from it. If for no other reasons, a state so powerful, so jealous of the uniformity of its citizens, cannot long tolerate the atomization of the family. And yet, in American eyes at least, there remains the conviction that the Russian attitude toward women is lascivious. It is the Devil working again, just as he is working within the Slav who is shocked at the very idea of a woman's disrobing herself in a burlesque show. Our opposites are always robed in sexual sin, and it is from this unconscious conviction that demonology gains both its attractive sensuality and its capacity to infuriate and frighten.

Coming into Salem now, Reverend Hale conceives of himself much as a young doctor on his first call. His painfully acquired armory of symptoms, catchwords, and diagnostic procedures is now to be put to use at last. The road from Beverly is unusually busy this morning, and he has passed a hundred rumors that make him smile at the ignorance of the yeomanry in this most precise science. He feels himself allied with the best minds of Europe—kings, philosophers, scientists, and ecclesiasts of all churches. His goal is light, goodness and its preservation, and he knows the exaltation of the blessed whose intelligence, sharpened by minute examinations of enormous tracts, is finally called upon to face what may be a bloody fight with the Fiend himself. S

8. **Dionysiac** (dy uh NIHS ee ak): like Dionysus (dy uh NIH suhs), the ancient Greek god of wine and revelry; wild, ecstatic, sensuous, frenzied.

S **Literary Perspectives** **Analyzing Credibility** How does the juxtaposition of Miller's beliefs about the McCarthy hearings with the introduction of Reverend Hale influence your view of the minister?

SCIENCE LINK

Ergot Poisoning and the Salem Witch Trials

Wheat infected with ergot.

Could the strange behavior exhibited by several members of Salem village in 1692 have been caused by a fungus that affects rye, wheat, and other cereal grasses? The fungus, called ergot, grows in warm, damp environments—the kind of environment found in parts of Salem village, where swampy meadows thrive. According to behavioral psychologist Linnda Caporael, the effects of ergot poisoning match the symptoms reported during the Salem witch trials. These symptoms include such things as violent muscle spasms, vomiting, delusions, hallucinations, and crawling sensations on the skin.

Ask Yourself

It is common for people to use scientific theories to explain bizzare events of the past. Why do you think they do so?

He appears loaded down with half a dozen heavy books.

Hale: Pray you, someone take these!

Parris, *delighted:* Mr. Hale! Oh! it's good to see you again! *Taking some books:* My, they're heavy! T

Hale, *setting down his books:* They must be; they are weighted with authority.

Parris, *a little scared:* Well, you do come prepared!

Hale: We shall need hard study if it comes to tracking down the Old Boy. *Noticing* REBECCA: You cannot be Rebecca Nurse?

Rebecca: I am, sir. Do you know me?

Hale: It's strange how I knew you, but I suppose you look as such a good soul should. We have all heard of your great charities in Beverly.

Parris: Do you know this gentleman? Mr. Thomas Putnam. And his good wife Ann.

Hale: Putnam! I had not expected such distinguished company, sir.

Putnam, *pleased:* It does not seem to help us today, Mr. Hale. We look to you to come to our house and save our child.

Hale: Your child ails too?

Mrs. Putnam: Her soul, her soul seems flown away. She sleeps and yet she walks. . . .

Putnam: She cannot eat.

Hale: Cannot eat! *Thinks on it. Then, to* PROCTOR *and* GILES COREY: Do you men have afflicted children?

Parris: No, no, these are farmers. John Proctor— U

Giles Corey: He don't believe in witches.

Proctor, *to* HALE: I never spoke on witches one way or the other. Will you come, Giles?

Giles: No—no, John, I think not. I have some few queer questions of my own to ask this fellow.

Proctor: I've heard you to be a sensible man, Mr. Hale. I hope you'll leave some of it in Salem.

PROCTOR *goes.* HALE *stands embarrassed for an instant.*

Parris, *quickly:* Will you look at my daughter, sir? *Leads* HALE *to the bed.* She has tried to leap out the window; we discovered her this morning on the high-road, waving her arms as though she'd fly.

Hale, *narrowing his eyes:* Tries to fly.

Putnam: She cannot bear to hear the Lord's name, Mr. Hale; that's a sure sign of witchcraft afloat.

Hale, *holding up his hands:* No, no. Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of Hell upon her.

Parris: It is agreed, sir—it is agreed—we will abide by your judgment.

Hale: Good then. *He goes to the bed, looks down at* BETTY. *To* PARRIS: Now, sir, what were your first warning of this strangeness?

Parris: Why, sir—I discovered her—*indicating* ABIGAIL—and my niece and ten or twelve of the other girls, dancing in the forest last night.

Hale, *surprised:* You permit dancing?

Parris: No, no, it were secret—

Mrs. Putnam, *unable to wait:* Mr. Parris's slave has knowledge of conjurin', sir.

Parris, *to* MRS. PUTNAM: We cannot be sure of that, Goody Ann—

Mrs. Putnam, *frightened, very softly:* I know it, sir. I sent my child—she should learn from Tituba who murdered her sisters.

Rebecca, *horrified:* Goody Ann! You sent a child to conjure up the dead?

Mrs. Putnam: Let God blame me, not you, not you, Rebecca! I'll not have you judging me any more! *To* HALE: Is it a natural work to lose seven children before they live a day?

Parris: Sssh!

REBECCA, *with great pain, turns her face away. There is a pause.*

Hale: Seven dead in childbirth.

Mrs. Putnam, *softly:* Aye. *Her voice breaks; she looks up at him. Silence.* HALE *is impressed.* PARRIS *looks to him. He goes to his books, opens one, turns pages, then reads. All wait, avidly.*

Parris, *hushed:* What book is that?

Mrs. Putnam: What's there, sir?

Hale, *with a tasty love of intellectual pursuit:* Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined, and calculated. In these books the Devil stands stripped of all

T **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters** Why might Parris refer to Reverend Hale as "Mr. Hale"?

U **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why does Parris tell Hale that Proctor and Corey are farmers?

his brute disguises. Here are all your familiar spirits—your incubi[9] and succubi; your witches that go by land, by air, and by sea; your wizards of the night and of the day. Have no fear now—we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face! *He starts for the bed.*

Rebecca: Will it hurt the child, sir?

Hale: I cannot tell. If she is truly in the Devil's grip we may have to rip and tear to get her free.

Rebecca: I think I'll go, then. I am too old for this. *She rises.*

Parris, *striving for conviction:* Why, Rebecca, we may open up the boil of all our troubles today!

Rebecca: Let us hope for that. I go to God for you, sir.

Parris, *with trepidation—and resentment:* I hope you do not mean we go to Satan here! *Slight pause.*

Rebecca: I wish I knew. *She goes out; they feel resentful of her note of moral superiority.*

Putnam, *abruptly:* Come, Mr. Hale, let's get on. Sit you here.

Giles: Mr. Hale, I have always wanted to ask a learned man—what signifies the readin' of strange books?

Hale: What books?

Giles: I cannot tell; she hides them.

Hale: Who does this?

Giles: Martha, my wife. I have waked at night many a time and found her in a corner, readin' of a book. Now what do you make of that?

Hale: Why, that's not necessarily—

Giles: It discomfits me! Last night—mark this—I tried and tried and could not say my prayers. And then she close her book and walks out of the house, and suddenly—mark this—I could pray again!

Old Giles must be spoken for, if only because his fate was to be so remarkable and so different from that of all the others. He was in his early eighties at this time, and was the most comical hero in the history. No man has ever been blamed for so much. If a cow was missed, the first thought was to look for her around Corey's house; a fire blazing up at night brought suspicion of arson to his door. He didn't give a hoot for public opinion, and only in his last years—after he had married Martha—did he bother much with the church. That she stopped his prayer is very probable, but he forgot to say that he'd only recently learned any prayers and it didn't take much to make him stumble over them. He was a crank and a nuisance, but withal a deeply innocent and brave man. In court, once, he was asked if it were true that he had been frightened by the strange behavior of a hog and had then said he knew it to be the Devil in an animal's shape. "What frighted you?" he was asked. He forgot everything but the word "frighted," and instantly replied, "I do not know that I ever spoke that word in my life."

What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is the best the Devil wants.

Hale: Ah! The stoppage of prayer—that is strange. I'll speak further on that with you.

Giles: I'm not sayin' she's touched the Devil, now, but I'd admire to know what books she reads and why she hides them. She'll not answer me, y' see.

Hale: Aye, we'll discuss it. *To all:* Now mark me, if the Devil is in her you will witness some frightful wonders in this room, so please to keep your wits about you. Mr. Putnam, stand close in case she flies. Now, Betty, dear, will you sit up? PUTNAM *comes in closer, ready-handed.* HALE *sits* BETTY *up, but she hangs limp in his hands.* Hmmm. *He observes her carefully. The others watch breathlessly.* Can you hear me? I am John Hale, minister of Beverly. I have come to help you, dear. Do you remember my two little girls in Beverly? *She does not stir in his hands.*

Parris, *in fright:* How can it be the Devil? Why would he choose my house to strike? We have all manner of licentious people in the village!

Hale: What victory would the Devil have to win a soul already bad? It is the best the Devil wants, and who is better than the minister?

9. **incubi** (IHN kyuh by): plural of *incubus,* the term for an evil male spirit or demon thought in medieval times to have sexual intercourse with sleeping women.

Giles: That's deep, Mr. Parris, deep, deep!
Parris, *with resolution now:* Betty! Answer Mr. Hale! 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 he lays her back on the pillow. Now, holding out his hands toward her, he intones:* In nomine Domini Sabaoth sui filiique ite ad infernos.[10] *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, 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?
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—? V
Parris, *fearfully:* I—do believe there were some movement—in the soup.
Abigail: That jumped in, we never put it in!
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. Did you call the Devil last night?
Abigail: I never called him! Tituba, Tituba . . . W
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. 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?
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?
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?

10. **In nomine Domini Sabaoth sui filiique ite ad infernos:** Latin for "In the name of the Lord of Hosts and his son, get thee to hell."

V **Reading Focus** **Drawing Conclusions About Characters** How does Hale "lead" Parris to give particular answers? Explain.

W **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why does Abigail immediately call out "Tituba"?

Abigail: She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!
Parris: She have often laughed at prayer!
Abigail: She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!
Tituba: You beg *me* to conjure! She beg *me* make charm—
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.
Hale: You most certainly do, and you will free her from it now! When did you compact with the Devil? (X)
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.
Parris: The Devil?
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 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.*
Hale: And to His glory—
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?
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.*

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. 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!
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 utterly, Tituba, turn your

(X) **Literary Focus** **Motivation** What causes Hale to believe Abigail's testimony?

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!

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 Goody Good. Y

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!

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 Bridget Bishop with the Devil! Z

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!

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.

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!

On their ecstatic cries

The curtain falls

Y **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why might Tituba make this accusation?

Z **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why does Abigail change her story so abruptly and completely?

Applying Your Skills

The Crucible, Act One

PA 1.3.11.B Analyze the relationships, uses and effectiveness of literary elements used by one or more authors in similar genres including characterization, setting, plot, theme, point of view, tone and style. *Also covered* 1.3.11.C.2; 1.1.11.H.5

Respond and Think Critically

Reading Focus

Quick Check

1. When Abigail is alone with Proctor, what claim does she make?
2. Why are both Mrs. Putnam and Abigail interested in Tituba's "conjuring"?
3. What symptoms do Betty and Ruth display?

Read with a Purpose

4. Make a time line that places in rough chronological order events such as the murder of Abigail's parents, the dispute over the election of the minister, the battle over Francis Nurse's land, and the death of Mrs. Putnam's babies.

Reading Skills: Drawing Conclusions About Characters

5. Add a third column to the chart you created as you read the first act of the play. Label the column "Interpretation," and write about the characters' values, emotions, and motives.

Character	Dialogue (Act)	Interpretation
Parris	"I do not preach for children, Rebecca. It is not the children who are unmindful of their obligations toward this ministry." (Act One)	

Literary Focus

Literary Analysis

6. **Summarize** What is Hale's view of his mission in Salem? What does he mean when he says that the devil is "precise"?
7. **Compare and Contrast** What comparisons can you make between Abigail's relationship with the other girls and her relationship with Proctor?
8. **Literary Perspectives** Among the characters from Act One, which do you think is the most credible? The least credible? Explain.

Literary Skills: Motivation

9. **Hypothesize** What concerns might Reverend Parris have about Betty's affliction?
10. **Infer** What do you think is Abigail's motivation to "open" herself and begin naming names?

Literary Skills Review: Figures of Speech

11. **Analyze** A **figure of speech** describes one thing in terms of something else and is not meant to be taken literally. How does Miller's figurative language, "dark houses snuggling against the raw Massachusetts winter," lend to the mood of *The Crucible*?

Writing Focus

Think as a Reader/Writer

Use It in Your Writing Write a dramatic scene with at least three characters. Using Miller's play as a model, include stage directions to supplement your dialogue and transmit more information about the characters.

What Do You Think Now?

When someone is accused of a crime today, do people still have a tendency to side with the accuser? Explain your answer.

For CHOICES see page 1167.

DRAMA

The Crucible

Act Two

Read with a Purpose Read Act Two of *The Crucible* to learn what motivates the members of the Proctor household.

Act Two

The common room of PROCTOR*'s house, eight days later.*

At the right is a door opening on the fields outside. A fireplace is at the left, and behind it a stairway leading upstairs. It is the low, dark, and rather long living room of the time. As the curtain rises, the room is empty. From above, ELIZABETH *is heard softly singing to the children. Presently the door opens and* JOHN PROCTOR *enters, carrying his gun. He glances about the room as he comes toward the fireplace, then halts for an instant as he hears her singing. He continues on to the fireplace, leans the gun against the wall as he swings a pot out of the fire and smells it. Then he lifts out the ladle and tastes. He is not quite pleased. He reaches to a cupboard, takes a pinch of salt, and drops it into the pot. As he is tasting again, her footsteps are heard on the stair. He swings the pot into the fireplace and goes to a basin and washes his hands and face.* ELIZABETH *enters.*

Elizabeth: What keeps you so late? It's almost dark.
Proctor: I were planting far out to the forest edge.
Elizabeth: Oh, you're done then.
Proctor: Aye, the farm is seeded. The boys asleep?
Elizabeth: They will be soon. *And she goes to the fireplace, proceeds to ladle up stew in a dish.*
Proctor: Pray now for a fair summer.
Elizabeth: Aye.
Proctor: Are you well today?
Elizabeth: I am. *She brings the plate to the table, and, indicating the food:* It is a rabbit.
Proctor, *going to the table:* Oh, is it! In Jonathan's trap?
Elizabeth: No, she walked into the house this afternoon; I found her sittin' in the corner like she come to visit.
Proctor: Oh, that's a good sign walkin' in.
Elizabeth: Pray God. It hurt my heart to strip her, poor rabbit. *She sits and watches him taste it.*
Proctor: It's well seasoned. A
Elizabeth, *blushing with pleasure:* I took great care. She's tender?
Proctor: Aye. *He eats. She watches him.* I think we'll see green fields soon. It's warm as blood beneath the clods.
Elizabeth: That's well.

PROCTOR *eats, then looks up.*

Proctor: If the crop is good I'll buy George Jacobs' heifer. How would that please you?

A **Literary Focus** **Motivation** Why does Proctor compliment the dish when he has just added seasoning to the stew? Explain.