Arthur Miller 1915–2005

Arthur Miller once paid playwright Edward Albee a compliment, saying that his plays were “necessary.” Albee replied: “I will go one step further and say that Arthur’s plays are ‘essential.’” Miller’s plays explore family relationships, morality, and personal responsibility. Many critics consider him the greatest American dramatist of the 20th century.

A Born Playwright Miller was born in New York City in 1915 into an upper-middle-class family. However, the family’s comfortable life ended in the 1930s when Miller’s businessman father was hit hard by the Great Depression. Unable to afford college, Miller worked in a warehouse to earn tuition money. He eventually attended the University of Michigan.

While in college, Miller won several awards for his plays. These successes inspired him to pursue a career in the theater. His first Broadway hit, All My Sons (1947), was produced when Miller was still in his early 30s. However, it was his masterpiece Death of a Salesman in 1949 and earned rave reviews from both critics and the public.

Dramatic Years Miller’s rise to fame occurred during a difficult period in American history. In the 1940s and 1950s, a congressional committee was conducting hearings to identify suspected Communists in American society. Miller himself was called before the congressional committee and questioned about his activities with the American Communist Party. Although Miller admitted that he had attended a few meetings years earlier, he refused to implicate others. For his refusal, he was cited for contempt of Congress—a conviction that was later overturned.

The hearings provided the inspiration for his 1953 play The Crucible, set during the Salem, Massachusetts, witch trials of 1692. Miller wrote the play to warn against mass hysteria and to plead for freedom and tolerance.

The Curtain Closes In the 1970s, Miller’s career declined a bit. The plays he wrote did not earn the critical or popular success of his earlier work. In the 1980s and 1990s, however, he enjoyed a resurgence with revivals of Death of a Salesman on Broadway. He even directed a production of the play in Beijing.

To the end of his life, Miller continued to write. “It is what I do,” he said in an interview. “I am better at it than I ever was. And I will do it as long as I can.”
What fuels a MOB?

Visualize a mob of people rampaging through the streets, whipped into a frenzy by hysteria. The fear, anger, and panic produced by hysteria can make otherwise reasonable people do irrational things. In The Crucible, for example, the hysteria created by the Salem witch trials makes neighbor turn against neighbor.

DISCUSS What makes people act as a mob? What are some of the results of mob action? Think about news reports or historical accounts of mobs that you’ve come across. In a small group, discuss what caused these mobs to form and how they behaved.

Teach

What fuels a MOB?

After students speculate on what fuels a mob, ask them to think about the difference between a mob and a crowd. After groups complete the DISCUSS activity, invite students to share their ideas about mob behavior.
**Practice and Apply**

**SUMMARY**
In this play, Arthur Miller traces the hysteria in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692, as several girls begin to accuse their neighbors of associating with the Devil. Suspicion and ill will spread as the townspeople bring up current disputes and past grudges, implicate one another in the charge of witchcraft, and witness court proceedings against those so charged. By the time the witch trials end, Salem has been forever stained.

**READ WITH A PURPOSE**
Help students set a purpose for reading. Tell them to read to discover what happens to a community when rumors influence people’s beliefs.

**TEXT ANALYSIS**

**CONVENTIONS OF DRAMA**
All the characters in a drama usually are presented in a list at the beginning of the play. If you were watching this play in a theater, which character would you expect to see first on the stage? **Answer:** Reverend Samuel Parris would be first on the stage, because the cast is listed in the order of appearance.

**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**
**Vocabulary Support** Explain that the word *crucible* has more than one meaning. A crucible is a container that can withstand great heat, such as for melting metal. It is also a severe test or trial. Explain that an actual crucible does not appear in the play. (Refer students to the Background note on p. 137 and discuss the concept of metaphor.)

**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**
In combination with the Audio Anthology CD, use one or more Targeted Passages (pp. 137, 147, 156, 162) to ensure that students focus on key story events and concepts. Targeted Passages are also good for English learners.

**Targeted Passage [BACKGROUND]**
This passage introduces the play’s historical context and Miller’s approach to the culture and troubled tone of Salem in that era.
BACKGROUND

The Crucible is based on the witch trials that took place in the Puritan community of Salem, Massachusetts, in 1692. At these trials, spectral evidence—the testimony of a church member who claimed to have seen a person's spirit performing witchcraft—was enough to sentence the accused to death. Miller studied the court records of the trials to gain insight into his characters—all of whom were real people—and get a feel for the Puritan way of speaking. Above all, he wanted to capture the mood of a time when no one was safe.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(\textit{in order of appearance})

Reverend Samuel Parris
Betty Parris
Tituba
Abigail Williams
John Proctor
Elizabeth Proctor
Susanna Walcott
Mrs. Ann Putnam
Thomas Putnam
Mercy Lewis
Mary Warren
Rebecca Nurse
Giles Corey
Reverend John Hale
Francis Nurse
Ezekiel Cheever
Marshal Herrick
Judge Hathorne
Martha Corey
Deputy Governor Danforth
Girls of Salem
Sarah Good

Themes Across Time

A Metaphorical Title

Arthur Miller chose wisely when he gave this play its title. Literally, a crucible is a container that can withstand high heat. A crucible most often is associated with the melting of metal, allowing for impurities in the metal to be identified and removed. Metaphorically, crucible refers to a severe test—a test that puts great stress upon people, revealing their weaknesses and strengths. As students will see, the situation that Miller develops in The Crucible will put great stress upon the characters. The stress, like a fire, will burn away characters' pretenses and bring their true natures to light. Which characters will be shattered by the experience? Which will be purified? Urge students to keep these questions in mind as they read.

Analyze Visuals

Activity

Ask students how this photograph suggests the atmosphere of suspicion alluded to in the BACKGROUND note. Possible answer: The photograph suggests suspicion because it shows a group of men who appear ready to judge others. Visually, the men are intimidating: They stand close together, wearing stern expressions that suggest a united front in a matter of great seriousness.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

\begin{itemize}
  \item What events provide the historical basis for this play?
  \item What is “spectral evidence”?
  \item Why was no one safe in Salem during the time period covered in the play?
  \item Are the characters in the play purely fictional, or are they based on real people?
\end{itemize}

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Make Judgments

Begin a class discussion by asking students to think about how important it is for a community to rely on a justice system and the law than to allow mob rule. What are the drawbacks and benefits of a justice system based on law? What are the drawbacks of mob rule? Encourage students to use specific examples when sharing opinions.
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 sparseness. The roof rafters are exposed, and the wood colors are raw and unpolished.

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.

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 nèr-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

1. meeting house: the most important building in the Puritan community, used both for worship and for meetings.
2. shovelboard: a game in which a coin or disc is shoved across a board by hand.
**Thematic Analysis**

**Model the Skill:**

**CONVENTIONS OF DRAMA**

Model the skill by walking students through the opening stage directions on p. 138. Point out that the stage directions describe the set (a small, simply furnished bedroom in Parris's house) and identify the play's setting (Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of 1692). They also identify the characters on stage (Parris and Betty, his ten-year-old daughter) and provide direction about what these characters should be doing (Parris, kneeling in prayer; Betty, lying motionless in bed).

**Reading Skills**

**Model the Skill:**

**DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS**

Model how to draw conclusions by making a list of Reverend Parris' actions, words, and traits. For example, point out that his praying suggests that he is worried about his daughter; however, in the mini-essay, Miller says that Parris is not interested in children and does not understand them. Lead students toward the conclusion that Parris's motivation for his concern is self-centered fear.

**If Students Need Help . . .**

Work with them to use the chart introduced on page 135 to draw a conclusion about Reverend Parris. Help them cite evidence to support their ideas.

**Differentiated Instruction**

**For Struggling Readers**

**Preview** Ask students to listen carefully as you read the Summary aloud. Then help them begin a Sequence Chain to organize the plot events in The Crucible.

Betty Parris is ill—perhaps bewitched.

**Best Practices Toolkit—Transparency**

Sequence Chain p. B21

**For English Language Learners**

**Culture:** Clarify Explain that the word *creed* in the third paragraph refers to a religious group's statement of beliefs. Invite students to respond to Miller's statement that the Puritans, a Christian sect, did not include a Christmas celebration in their culture; then explain that the Puritans felt that the ways in which most people celebrated the holiday were overindulgent and heathen. Urge students to consider these questions as they read The Crucible:

- Which characters in the play show the strongest support for Puritan beliefs and behavior? Which characters seem to find the Puritan way of life difficult?
- What evidence in the play suggests that there can be divisions even among people with a common culture?
- Why might having a common culture make it easier for problems to spread? for problems to be solved?

**Image:** Daniel Day-Lewis as John Proctor
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 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 clear-cut, 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 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.

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

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3 New Jerusalem: in Christianity, a heavenly city and the last resting place of the souls saved by Jesus. It was considered the ideal city, and Puritans modeled their communities after it.

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DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Concept Support Make sure students understand the symbolic importance of the forest. Point to details in the left column that indicate that the Puritans thought that only they had true belief in God. Help students make the connection between the forest, the Native Americans (who sometimes attacked from the forest and who generally were not Christians), and the Devil. Elicit that the forest represented things that are mysterious and evil.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Related Vocabulary Make sure students understand that some charges of witchcraft originated in a desire for revenge rather than in a fear of Satan. Discuss these interrelated terms from the concluding paragraph of the mini-essay:

- Long-held hatreds, “Bitter resentments toward others that people refuse to resolve”
- Vengeance, “harmful, punishing action taken against someone who has harmed you”
- Land-lust, “A deep desire to own a neighbor’s land”
- Constant bickering, “arguing continuously about unimportant matters”
- Cry witch, “to accuse someone of being a witch”
- Old scores, “Complaints or resentment that people have had for a long time”
- Envy of the miserable, “the jealousy that unhappy people feel toward happy people”
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 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 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 and accomplished that purpose.

The crucible: act one

The stage directions Miller provides concrete instructions for the characters’ movements, but he also presents clues about the characters’ emotions. What emotions do these stage directions suggest?

Possible answer: The stage directions refer to Parris’s “confusion” (line 2). He weeps (lines 3–4), an action that suggests that he is upset. Tituba is anxious about Betty, whom she loves (lines 9–11); she also is “frightened” because she fears being treated harshly (lines 11–13).

Extend the Discussion Reread the stage directions regarding Tituba. What do you think her life with the Parris family has been like up to this point? Explain your answer.
REVISIT THE BIG QUESTION
What fuels a mob?

Discuss After students read lines 57–59, ask them the following discussion question: What role do you think rumor has in the creation of hysteria in a community? Possible answer: Rumor may be the first step in the creation of a hysterical response. Rumors often consist of falsehoods that are embellished in ways that trigger people’s fears and then are taken as fact as the rumor spreads. The fear or fanaticism triggered by rumors can contribute to a community’s frenzied response to an issue.

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! (He is overcome with sobs. He clamps his teeth against them and clenches 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 in 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 (running around Parris to get a look at Betty). He bid me come and tell you, reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.
Parris. Then he must search on.

Susanna. Aye, sir, he have been searchin’ his books since he left you, sir. But he bid me tell you, that you might look to unnatural things for the cause of it.
Parris (his eyes going wide). No—no. There be no unnatural cause here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mr. Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be none.

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

Abigail. But we never conjured spirits.
Parris. Then why can she not move herself since midnight? This child is desperate! (Abigail lowers her eyes.) It must come out—my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done 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—
Winona Ryder as Abigail Williams

**READING SKILLS**

**DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS**

What do the stage directions in line 73 tell you about how Abigail is feeling? Explain. **Possible answer:** The stage directions describe Abigail as “quavering,” or shaking. She seems anxious about her cousin Betty’s health and nervous about discussing what she and Betty did in the forest.

**DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHARACTER**

Parris expresses concern for his daughter, but his comments to Abigail suggest that he has another motive for wanting to know what happened in the forest. What does his conversation with Abigail suggest about his personality? **Possible answer:** The conversation suggests that Parris is self-interested, concerned mainly about his reputation in the village. He also may be difficult to get along with, because he is on the verge of losing his job (lines 86–87). He may be pressuring Abigail for a full, truthful report so that he can counter charges that enemies may make against him.

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

**Vocabulary Support** Ask students to work in pairs and use a dictionary for the definitions and parts of speech of the words that follow. Have students create flash cards for the words. *capacity* (line 30), *consult* (line 541), *contract* (line 594), *plus* (line 603), *definite* (line 754), *process* (line 953).

**BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT—Transparency**
New Word Analysis p. E8

**FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP**

**Analyze Dialogue and Stage Directions** Have students reread Parris’s conversation with Abigail in lines 57–151, envisioning Parris’s movement around the stage, tone of voice, and so on. Then ask pairs of students to collaborate on a detailed set of stage directions that present their ideas in the form of instructions to an actor. Students might consider questions such as these:

- How do Parris’s tone and gestures change when he talks about his enemies (beginning at line 78)?
- When Parris talks about Abigail’s “name in the town” (beginning at line 127), does he move closer to her, or farther away?

After students have presented a reading that illustrates their stage directions, discuss whether Miller’s limited stage directions make the actor’s work more difficult or free him to interpret the role as he wishes.
Abigail. It was sport, uncle!

Parris (pointing at Betty). You call this sport? (She lowers her eyes. He pleas’d.) 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 was 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’ 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.

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—

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—

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6. There be . . . my name: There is nothing wrong with my reputation.

7. Goody: short for Goodwife, the Puritan equivalent of Mrs.
Putnam's chief complaints and their effect. 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 ears naught, sees naught, and cannot eat. Her soul is taken, surely.

(Parris is struck.)

Putnam (as though for further detail). 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 us. We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.

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. Another 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.

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 among the witnesses of witchcraft after they read lines 190–205:

Possible answer: Parris realizes that people know that he has asked Reverend Hale to come to Salem (lines 190–191). The realization may weaken his confidence that witchcraft is not involved in the girls’ condition. Why does Parris try to change the Putnams’ view about witchcraft at this point? Possible answer: Parris wants to win the Putnams to his side before Hale arrives, to minimize the chance that he will be forced to leave Salem (lines 201–205).

Putnam’s observation that Reverend Hale “found a witch in Beverly last year” (lines 195–196)? Possible answer: The observation is significant because it foreshadows the finding of witches in Salem.

Themes Across Time

Tiered Discussion Prompts

Use these prompts to help students understand the characters’ growing concerns about witchcraft after they read lines 190–205:

Connect Think about a time when you or someone you know tried but failed to change someone’s opinion. How might it feel to have your argument rejected—and to know that the other person continues to hold a view that you do not? Students should note the frustration and possible suspicion that both parties might feel in such a situation.

Analyze Why does Parris speak “with dwindling conviction now” (line 192)? Possible answer: Parris realizes that people know that he has asked Reverend Hale to come to Salem (lines 190–191). The realization may weaken his confidence that witchcraft is not involved in the girls’ condition. Why does Parris try to change the Putnams’ view about witchcraft at this point? Possible answer: Parris wants to win the Putnams to his side before Hale arrives, to minimize the chance that he will be forced to leave Salem (lines 201–205).

Synthesize On the basis of what you have learned about these characters so far, what do you think is the significance of Mrs. Putnam’s observation that Reverend Hale “found a witch in Beverly last year” (lines 195–196)? Possible answer: The observation is significant because it foreshadows the finding of witches in Salem.

For Struggling Readers

Explore Cause and Effect Help students grasp the key points of Miller’s discussion of Thomas Putnam. Summarize the main idea—namely, that Putnam will be a “problem” character because he has complaints against many people of Salem. Then work with students to complete a cause-and-effect diagram that notes Putnam’s chief complaints and their effect.

Vocabulary: Multiple-Meaning Words Explain that some words have more than one meaning and that students must determine the appropriate definition for a given use. Have students use a dictionary and context clues to figure out the meaning of sport (line 93), dumb (line 101), compromise (line 125), white (line 128), discharged (line 132), cold (line 138), element (line 198), pray (line 201).
TEXT ANALYSIS

Drama

According to the stage directions in lines 206–208, why does Putnam continue to talk about witches? Possible answer: Putnam continues to talk because he wants to cause Parris’s downfall in the community. Putnam seeks revenge because his relative was not chosen to be the town’s minister.

Extend the Discussion: Given this information, how might you interpret Putnam’s advice to Parris in lines 249–251 and 272–276?

GRAMMAR AND STYLE

Use Realistic Dialogue: Miller used examples of writing from the late 17th century as models for his writing; he wanted the characters’ language and sentence structures to sound realistic for that time period. Reread lines 272–282. What repeated phrase sounds dated? Answer: “Let you” (lines 272, 277). What word choice adds to the realism in line 281? Answer: the contraction “d’y’hear.” In what sense is “Now look you, sir” (line 272) an example of an inverted sentence? Possible answer: Speakers of modern English would probably say, “Now [you] look, sir.”

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

For English Language Learners

Language: Conversational English Patterns

Explain that some contractions in the text, especially contractions that replace the final g in the -ing ending, recreate the sound of informal, excited speech. Point out these examples: layin’ (line 211), nothin’ (line 218), pullin’ (line 221), beatin’ (line 296), comin’ (line 299), talkin’ (line 312), callin’ (line 313), hangin’ (line 317), dancin’ (line 319).
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?

Mary Warren. Abby, 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, Abby! 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, Abby. I only looked!
READING SKILLS

DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS

What new conclusions can you draw about Abigail, given her comments in lines 353–364? Possible answer: Abigail is a take-charge person, for she dominates the conversation. Her threats to harm the other girls if they do not support her story (lines 355–363) reveal that she is intimidating to the point of being cruel.

IF STUDENTS NEED HELP . . . Work through the passage, sentence by sentence. Help students choose at least one revealing comment to add to the chart on page 135.

Extend the Discussion How did Abigail’s parents die? How might that information affect your thinking about her personality?

TEXT ANALYSIS

CONVENTIONS OF DRAMA

On the basis of Miller’s mini-essay, what role do you think John Proctor will play: hero, villain, major figure, minor figure, foil (character used as a contrast to another character)? Explain. Possible answer: Proctor will be a major character, perhaps even the hero. Miller indicates that Proctor has integrity and is strong and even-tempered. These traits could be called “heroic.” Furthermore, Miller says that Proctor has “a sharp and biting way with hypocrites” and that he is “not easily led.” These traits could put him in conflict with major figures in the story.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Synthesize “In Proctor’s presence,” Miller writes, “a fool felt his foolishness instantly—and a Proctor is always marked for calumny therefore.” Ask students to reflect upon those comments and to consider situations that they have experienced or read about in which they think that “a Proctor” has been present. Then have students write and share a paragraph that responds to these questions:

- What is “a Proctor”?
- What traits does a person need to make a fool feel his foolishness instantly?
- Why is this kind of person “marked for calumny” (in other words, lied about in an effort to destroy his reputation)?

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, whispers. 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 whispers.) 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!

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.10 And you know I can do it; I saw nothing to—

Abigail, darts off the bed, frightened of Mary Warren. (Mary). Oh, you’re moving menacingly toward Mary Warren! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor’s wife! You drank a charm to kill John Proctor’s wife! You drank a charm to kill Goody Proctor! (Betty attempts to pull her away from the window.)

Abigail, rigorously shakes her.

I’ll beat you, Betty! (Betty raises her arm. Abigail roughly sits her up.)

Betty. I told him everything; he knows now, he knows everything we—

Goody Proctor! Mary Warren! (She raises her arm. Abigail, in a great one for lookin’, aren’t you, Mary Warren? What a grand peeping courage you have!

Abigail. Betty? Now, Betty, dear, wake up now. It’s Abigail. (She sits Betty up and furiously shakes her.) I’ll beat you, Betty! (Betty whispers.) My, you seem improving. I talked to your papa and I told him everything. So there’s nothing to—

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Abigail, rigorously shakes her.
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 exhilarated). I'd best be off. I have my Ruth to watch. Good morning, Mr. Proctor.

(Mercy sides out. Since Proctor's entrance, Abigail has stood as though on tip toe, 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 you? (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.

Abigail (tauntingly). You come five mile to see a silly girl fly? I know you better.

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, with great sympathy but firmly.) Child—

Abigail (with a flash of anger). How do you call me child?

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.

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

Proctor. Abby, 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. Abby, 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 whenever 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 seven month.

Abigail. I have a sense for heat, John, and yours has drawn me to your 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!

Themes Across Time

DRAW CONCLUSIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS

Reread the stage directions in lines 391–404. What does Proctor's facial expression reveal about his attitude toward Abigail as he first addresses her? Possible answer: Proctor's smiling (lines 391–392 and 401) reveals that he is familiar with Abigail. The nature of that familiarity becomes clear in the dialogue that develops between them.

TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use these prompts to help students understand Abigail and Proctor's relationship as they read lines 401–428:

Summarize

Why does Abigail grow angry with Proctor? Possible answer: Abigail wants physical intimacy with Proctor (beginning at line 402). She grows angry because he repeatedly refuses her advances (lines 408, 416, 419–420, and 422).

Analyze

What caused Abigail to lose her job with the Proctors? Possible answer: Abigail lost her job because she and Proctor had an affair. Proctor's wife (“she,” line 427) learned of it, or suspected it, and sent Abigail away.

Synthesize

Why might Abigail resist Proctor's decision to end their affair? Possible answer: Abigail has shown herself to be a quick-tempered young woman who tries to make others do what she wants. She has also displayed a streak of vindictiveness, so she may seek revenge against Proctor.

FOR STRUGGLING READERS

Paraphrase

Remind students that some of the characters' ways of speaking may seem awkward or out of date to speakers of modern English. Have students work in pairs to paraphrase Proctor's first words (lines 374–376). After volunteer pairs have shared their paraphrases with the class, discuss which version allows them to read more expressively.

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Language: Conversational English Patterns

Discuss these words and phrases that Miller includes to add to the conversational feel of the dialogue on these pages: you're a great one for lookin' (lines 323–324); shut it (lines 349, 350, and 370); Gah! (line 389); she's . . . gone silly (lines 393–394); Oh, posh! (line 397); aren't y'! (line 402); I'll not be comin' for you (lines 419–420).
**TEXT ANALYSIS**

**CONVENTIONS OF DRAMA**

Miller’s mini-essays create two worlds: the world inhabited by the play’s characters, and the world that contains him and his readers. Notice how this time Miller begins by speaking of “we,” as if he and his readers are talking behind the characters’ backs. Is Miller’s strategy of inviting the reader into his confidence effective? Why or why not? Possible answers: Yes, the strategy is effective, for it is exciting to be taken into the playwright’s confidence. No, the fact that the mini-essays shift the play’s focus might cause some readers to lose contact with the plot and characters.

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456 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.

459 Mrs. Putnam. The psalm! The psalm! She cannot bear to hear the Lord’s name!

---

Mr. 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 quiet.

---

Mrs. Putnam. Mark it for a sign, mark it! (Rebecca Nurse, seventy-two, enters. She is white-haired, leaning upon her walking-stick.)

---

Mrs. Putnam. My mother told me that! When they cannot bear to hear the name of—

---

Putnam. (pointing at the whimpering Betty). That is a notorious sign of witchcraft afoot, Goody Nurse, a prodigious sign!

---

Mrs. Putnam. That is (pointing at the whimpering Betty). Aye, but we did.

---

Mrs. Putnam. That is (pointing at the whimpering Betty). Aye, but we did not.

---

Mrs. Putnam. That is (pointing at the whimpering Betty). Do you look for whippin’? (A psalm is heard being sung below.)

---

Mrs. Putnam. That is (pointing at the whimpering Betty). 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—

---

Mrs. Putnam. That is (pointing at the whimpering Betty). Do you look for whippin’? (A psalm is heard being sung below.)

---

Mrs. Putnam. That is (pointing at the whimpering Betty). I look for John Proctor that took his words and the stage directions about Elizabeth in lines 457–463, what about Elizabeth in lines 457–463, what

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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 parties of both sides, and it is said to have lasted for two days. As for Rebecca herself, the general 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 abstained 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 time of the delusion. As for Rebecca itself, the general 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.

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The complaints that Parris is not properly supplied with firewood (lines 594–597) and that he lives in relative poverty (lines 609–611) may be divided; that is, at the same time that he has not been awarded the deed to his house (lines 618–619), and that his congregation is too quick to fire its ministers (lines 624–629).

**Analyze**

What do Parris’s complaints suggest about how he thinks of himself? Explain. **Possible answer:** The complaints suggest that Parris is a proud man. He feels that he deserves the firewood, a better salary, home ownership, and greater job security—perhaps because of his education (line 604–606) or his status as a servant of God (lines 627–629).

**Synthesize**

How might Parris’s attitude harm his ability to deal effectively with the witchcraft scare? **Possible answer:** Parris’s prideful comments suggest that his attention may be divided; that is, at the same time that he is trying to deal with the witchcraft scare, he also is trying to defend himself and his ministry.

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 any more.

**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!

**Proctor.** 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.** 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.
BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Scene Selection  Point out that film directors often consider the text of the play a starting point and feel free to omit or add scenes, depending upon the story elements that they want to emphasize. Adding the scene between Proctor and Abigail clarifies their relationship. Similarly, dramatizing the scene in the forest shows the audience that the girls’ actions are deeply important to the story. Note that film directors also may add a scene primarily because it lends itself to visual representation.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Create an Original Scene  Ask students to review the play and choose a scene that is only referred to, not dramatized on stage. Here are a few examples:

- a scene between Abigail and Elizabeth Proctor in which Abigail loses her job
- a scene showing Ruth Putnam and her mysterious illness
- a scene from the past that Miller describes in one of the informative mini-essays

Have students, either individually or in small groups, write a dramatization of the chosen scene. Remind them to include dialogue for the characters and any stage directions necessary to bring the scene to life. After volunteers perform their scenes, discuss whether each scene would contribute to or distract from the action of the play.
TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

Use these prompts to help students understand the hostility between Parris and Proctor, which boils to the surface in lines 638–654:

**Connect** Have you ever been in a situation in which someone blurted out a confession or other piece of secret information? What happened as a result of the revelation? Accept all responses.

**Analyze** What can you infer about Proctor’s personality and attitudes from his remark in line 646? **Possible answer:** Proctor is not easily led by others. He does not like people who abuse power in an attempt to control others. He is not afraid to say what he thinks, even if his words seem rebellious.

**Synthesize** What do you think Rebecca means when she says, “You are another kind, John” (line 653)? Explain. **Possible answer:** Proctor seems willing to go against the group’s view; he would rather live by his own code of ethics than follow a minister or other piece of secret information. What is Proctor’s individualism—a trait that she views as dangerous, which is why she urges him to make peace with Parris.

**Tiered Discussion Prompts**

**Tier 1**

- **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.
- **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 is a party.

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**Tier 2**

- **Proctor:** If you are another kind, John, I feel a sudden will to work coming on. My north pasture but he knew I’d break his fingers. Against you? I may speak my heart, I think! Proctor. Giles. I’ve changed my opinion of this man, John. What can you infer about Proctor’s personality and attitudes from his remark in line 646? **Possible answer:** Proctor is not easily led by others. He does not like people who abuse power in an attempt to control others. He is not afraid to say what he thinks, even if his words seem rebellious.

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**Tier 3**

- **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.
- **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 is a party.

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**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

**Vocabulary Support** Have students reread the lines containing these unusual terms. After you define each one, have students paraphrase the lines.

- **a party in this church** (lines 642–643), “a group of church members who have organized to gain power (in opposition to the existing authority)”
- **iron** (line 661), “firmness (in speaking out with criticism)”

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**FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP**

**Research Land Ownership** Have students work in pairs to research the laws and traditions of land ownership at this time in colonial America. Students should locate information about who could own land, how land was transferred from one person to another (inheritance, buying and selling, and so on), and how land disputes were settled. Ask students to prepare and share a paragraph or bulleted list that presents their main points.
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.18 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 two diametrically opposed absolutes.

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18. cosmology (kəˈsmal-ə-jē): a branch of philosophy dealing with the structure of the universe.

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FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Vocabulary Support  Point out that the words will, willing, and willed all occur within lines 692–699. Have Jigsaw groups of mixed language ability investigate the meanings and usages of these words. Ask them to report their findings and explain each word in the context of the passage.

BEST PRACTICES TOOLKIT

Jigsaw Reading p. A1

Related Vocabulary  As students read and discuss this mini-essay, point out and clarify Miller’s use of terminology that refers to forces of good and evil, as in these examples: Lucifer; society of spirits; superstition; diabolism; holy; God’s beard and the Devil’s horns; diametrically opposed absolutes; arch-fiend; Old Boy; moral right . . . diabolical malevolence.
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, 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 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—Luther, the way—used to assemble his graduate students, draw the shades, and commune in the classroom with Erasmus. 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, 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 congeries 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, according to Christian belief, Lucifer was God's favorite angel until the angel rebelled and was cast out of Heaven.

19. Inquisition: a former tribunal in the Roman Catholic Church dedicated to the discovery and punishment of heresy.
20. Luther: Martin Luther (1483–1546), the German theologian who led the Protestant Reformation.
22. succubi: demons that assume female form. Demons that assume male form are called incubi.
23. The Devil . . . beautiful in Heaven: According to Christian belief, Lucifer was God's favorite angel until the angel rebelled and was cast out of Heaven.
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. 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 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 are 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.

(He appears loaded down with half a dozen heavy books.)

Hale. Pray you, someone take these!

710 Parris (delighted). Mr. Hale! Oh! it’s good to see you again! (taking some books) My, they’re heavy!

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.

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720

Possible answer:

Hale views himself as a great intellect, equal to Europe’s best thinkers and superior to the average villager (whom he finds rather humorous). Hale’s goal is to restore Salem to a great spiritual state, and he will do anything—even fight the Devil—to succeed in that goal.

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24. **Dionysiac** (dī′ə-nis′ək) forces: forces associated with Dionysus, the Greek god of wine and ecstasy.

25. **Slav**: a generic reference to Russians and other Slavic-speaking peoples of Eastern Europe who were under the control of the Soviet Union.

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**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

**Vocabulary Support** As Miller waxes philosophical in his mini-essays, his diction becomes more difficult. Discuss the meanings of some or all of these terms from this page:

- **propitiation**, “an act that calms or pleases someone”
- **klatches**, “gatherings”
- **fetishes**, “objects believed to have magical power”
- **resurgence**, “return,” “revival”
- **mores**, “accepted standards of behavior”
- **prudent**, “careful to avoid danger”
- **laxity**, “looseness”
- **atomization**, “breakup”
- **yeomanry**, “farmers (as a group)”
- **tracts**, “religious writings”
TIERED DISCUSSION PROMPTS

After students read lines 707–758, use these prompts to help students explore the initial impression of Reverend Hale:

Recall What heavy items has Reverend Hale brought with him to Salem, and why? 
Answer: Hale has brought several heavy books with him; they are reference sources that he might consult as he conducts his investigations (lines 707–716).

Analyze What evidence suggests that Hale may not be as quick to believe a charge of witchcraft as some of the Salemites seem to be? Possible answer: Proctor calls Hale “a sensible man” (line 741), suggesting that Hale will apply reason to the situation. Furthermore, even when Hale is presented with reports of Betty Parris’s bewitchment, he says that he will not proceed in the investigation unless the people promise to accept his ruling if he rules against bewitchment (lines 754–756).

Synthesize Do you think that Hale will maintain his “sensible” attitude as the story unfolds? Why or why not? Possible answer: Hale’s “sensible” attitude may be shaken if hysteria rises in the community or if he witnesses repeated manifestations of possible demonic power.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP

Analyze Metaphor Have students reread Parris’s comment in lines 804–805. Instruct them to write a brief paragraph that explains the metaphor that Parris uses and that paraphrases the line. Then ask students to create a few original metaphors that would convey the same idea. As you lead a discussion about the metaphor, call on volunteers to share their original examples of figurative language.

FOR RELUCTANT READERS

Connect to the Text Remind students to think about their own communities as they read the play. Ask them, “How do rumors or gossip affect your community? What happens when rumors spread?” Have students write short journal entries in response to the questions. Ask volunteers to share their entries. Challenge the class to compare and contrast students’ experiences with those of the characters in the play.
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)

810 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 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 frightened you?” he was asked. He forgot everything but the word “frightened,” and instantly replied, “I do not know that I ever spoke that word in my life.”

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.) Hmm. (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 sit 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?

Giles. That’s deep, Mr. Parris, deep, deep!

830 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.26 (She does not stir.

860 Parris (turns to Abigail, his eyes narrowing). Abigail, what sort of dancing were you doing with her in the forest?

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26. In nomine . . . infernos Latin: “In the name of the Father and Son, get thee back to Hell!”
What fuels a MOB?
Discuss In lines 885–919, how does Reverend Hale help create the hysteria about witches that is starting to sweep through Salem? Possible answer: Hale helps create hysteria by asking leading questions that plant ideas for responses in the minds of Abigail and Tituba. He also pressures them so much that they feel trapped and start looking to shift the attention onto someone else.

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—?
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 . . .
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!
(Titus and Betty enter 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!
Parris. 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!
Parris. You have sent your spirit out upon this child, have you not? Are you gathering souls for the Devil?
Abigail. She sends her spirit on me in church; she makes me laugh at prayer!
Parris. She has 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 dreams!
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—
Parris. (resolved now). Tituba, I want you to wake this child.

DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION
FOR STRUGGLING READERS
Explore Stage Directions Point out that except for line 878, there are no stage directions describing Hale’s interrogation of Abigail. Have students work in pairs and read lines 885–908 aloud, choosing the facial expressions, vocal tones, and gestures that seem most appropriate for the dialogue. Have students make suggestions for stage directions that Miller could have included in these lines.

FOR ADVANCED LEARNERS/AP
Analyze Motive This scene is important to the plot because it sheds light on Abigail’s motives. Have students reread the exchange between Abigail, Hale, and Tituba in lines 905–937. Then instruct students to write a brief character analysis that answers these questions:
• What does Abigail say Tituba made her do?
• Why does Abigail accuse Tituba of witchcraft?

• Why would Abigail single out Tituba instead of one of the other girls?

Encourage students to make a connection between Abigail’s behavior and the general atmosphere in the town. Invite students to discuss their analyses with the class.
**Themes Across Time**

**FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS**

**Culture:** Clarify Remind students that Tituba is not a native speaker of English (line 886); thus, it is not surprising to hear her speak in dialect, reflecting her upbringing in the culture of Barbados. Have students express in standard English these comments that Tituba makes: "I give she chicken blood!" (lines 910–911); "I love me Betty!" (line 917); "She beg me make charm—" (lines 925–926); "Why you say that, Abby?" (line 929); "No, no, don't hang Tituba! I tell him I don't desire to work for him, sir" (lines 945–947); "Mister Reverend, I do believe somebody else be witchin' these children" (lines 953–955); "... the Devil got him numerous witches" (lines 957–958).

**Tiered Discussion Prompts**

**Use these prompts to help students explore lines 959–997.**

**Connect** Have you ever known someone who claimed to do or see something that he or she might not really have done or seen? How would that memory help you identify with this scene? **Possible answer:** Students may suggest that such a memory would help them sympathize with Tituba, who is distressed at the intense questioning and who makes questionable claims out of desperation.

**Analyze** What are Hale and Parris trying to get Tituba to do, and why? **Possible answer:** Hale and Parris are trying to get Tituba to name the witches to whom she has referred (lines 957–958). How do the approaches of the two ministers differ? **Possible answer:** Although Hale is firm, he treats Tituba kindly and points her to God instead of condemning her outright. Parris, however, is curt and demanding.

**Evaluate** How effective is Miller in creating suspense in this scene? **Possible answer:** Miller is very effective in creating suspense in this scene. Since the questioning of Tituba is drawn out, suspense builds as readers and audience members wait to discover how far the questioning will go and what it will reveal.
Hysteria feeds on fear, anger, and panic. How are the seeds of hysteria sown in lines 1023–1056? Possible answer: Hale seems to have convinced Tituba and the girls that they are doing God's will by naming others who associate with the Devil. Furthermore, the more afraid these characters become of being persecuted, the more willing they are to implicate others. Thus, panic and hidden anger (such as Tituba's for Parris) cause them to act irrationally. Even if the accusations are calculated and totally false, the emotional scene in which they are made encourages the growth of hysteria.

**READ WITH A PURPOSE** Now that students have read Act One of The Crucible, ask them to consider the effects of rumors on a small community. Possible answer: Rumors, even those that are highly unlikely, can sow seeds of doubt and suspicion and cause rifts in a community.

**CRITIQUE**

- Ask students to think about the events that have led up to the climax of Act One and to decide whether they think that the confessions from Tituba and the girls are believable. Why or why not?
- After completing the After Reading questions on page 163, have students revisit their responses and tell whether they have changed their opinions.

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1023 Abigail. I want to open myself! (They turn to her, startled. She is enwrapped, 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! (As she is speaking, Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.)

1024 Betty (staring too). I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! (Parris, I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!)

1025 Parris. She speaks! (He rushes to embrace Betty.) She speaks!

1026 Hale. Glory to God! It is broken, they are free!

1027 Betty (calling out hysterically and with great relief). I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

1028 Abigail. I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! (It is rising to a great glee.)

1029 Putnam. The marshal, I'll call the marshal! (Parris is showing a prayer of thanksgiving)

1030 Betty. I saw Alice Barrow with the Devil! (The curtain begins to fall)

1031 Hale (as Putnam goes out). Let the marshal bring irons!

1032 Abigail. I saw Goody Hawkins with the Devil!

1033 Betty. I saw Goody Bibber with the Devil!

1034 Abigail. I saw Goody Booth with the Devil! (On their ecstatic cries, the curtain falls.)

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**DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION**

**FOR STRUGGLING READERS**

- Targeted Passage [lines 1050–1076] In this passage, the climax of Act One, accusations boost the plot complexity and emotional intensity of the play.

- Whose example finally compels Betty to rise and speak? What does she say? (lines 1050–1060)

- Why does Betty cry out “with great relief”? Why does Hale seem relieved? (lines 1063–1065)

- Why does Hale want the marshal to come with “irons”? Which Salemites do you think the marshal will visit? (lines 1055–1076)
Comprehension
1. Recall What is the cause for concern in the Parris household?
2. Clarify What has occurred between John Proctor and Abigail Williams before the time in which the play begins?
3. Summarize Why does Reverend Hale come to Salem?

Text Analysis
4. Infer Character Motives Reread lines 1017–1056 at the end of Act One. Why do you think Tituba and Abigail admit to having practiced witchcraft? Why do they name others?
5. Draw Conclusions About Characters Review the traits you recorded in your chart for the characters you have encountered so far. How would you describe the most important character traits of the following?
   - Abigail Williams
   - John Proctor
   - Reverend Hale
6. Make Predictions Based on what you have learned about Abigail in Act One, whom do you think she might accuse as the play goes on? Cite specific evidence to support your answer.
7. Identify Beliefs What do the characters in the play believe about witches? List their beliefs in a concept web like the one shown.
8. Connect Setting and Mood The setting of a literary work refers to the time and place in which the action occurs. How do you think Miller uses setting to help create mood in Act One?
9. Analyze Conventions of Drama Review the stage directions that take the form of mini-essays in Act One. What insights about America after the Second World War does Miller convey? Use details from the mini-essays in your answer.

Text Criticism
10. Author’s Style The mini-essays in Act One are not usually included in a stage production of The Crucible. Why do you think this is so? Why do you think Miller included them in his drama?

Assess and Reteach

7. (1) exist and are the Devil’s agents, (2) can control people and harm children, and (3) can take the form of animals
8. All of Act One takes place in a small bedroom in Parris’s house that Miller describes as having “an air of clean spareness.” The unchanging setting creates a feeling of entrapment.
9. **COMMON CORE FOCUS** Conventions of Drama Miller discusses the Puritan traits of discipline and hypocrisy, the relationship between America’s political policy and religious beliefs, and Americans’ fear of communism and mistrust of the Soviet Union.
10. Including the mini-essays would disrupt the action of the play. Miller probably included them to help the director, actors, and readers understand the play’s characters and time period.

What fuels a MOB? Possible answers: Abigail is the first to accuse others of witchcraft. She inspires Betty to do the same.

Practice and Apply
For preliminary support of post-reading questions, use these copy masters:

**RESOURCES MANAGER—Copy Masters**
- Reading Check p. 202
- Conventions of Drama p. 197
- Question Support p. 203

Additional selection questions are provided for teachers on page 191.

**ANSWERS**

1. Reverend Parris’s daughter, Betty, lies in bed in a mysterious trance. Parris is concerned that witchcraft may be the cause.
2. Proctor and Abigail have had an illicit affair.
3. Hale comes to determine whether Betty’s condition is the result of witchcraft. If so, he intends to fight the Devil.

Possible answers:
4. Tituba and Abigail admit it because the pressure is so great, but they name others in order to deflect blame from themselves.
5. **COMMON CORE FOCUS** Draw Conclusions About Characters
   - Abigail Williams: willful, self-centered, controlling, devious, and vengeful
   - John Proctor: intelligent, skeptical, and courageous
   - Reverend Hale: intellectual, devout, and firm yet compassionate

**Assess**
- DIAGNOSTIC AND SELECTION TESTS
- Selection Test A pp. 61–62
- Selection Test B/C pp. 63–64

Interactive Selection Test on thinkcentral.com

**Reteach**
- Level Up Online Tutorials on thinkcentral.com
- Reteaching Worksheets on thinkcentral.com

Reading Lesson 9, Literature Lesson 1-2, 6, 23-24