

ACT 1, Part 3: Study Notes & Questions

DUE: Monday, July 26

Hopefully now you have a printed/your copy of the text: please highlight interesting bits of dialogue or directions and leave **keyword notes** e.g. "COMMUNITY", or "SETTING" or "METAPHOR" – if you can find any features that seem important.

- **Make sure you put a TITLE for your work: "Act 1, Part 3"**
- Tip 1: Highlight your script whenever a Character is introduced, e.g. "*Mary Warren... 17, a subservient, naïve, lonely girl*" and next to it annotate "MARY". These are excellent quotes to use when you describe characters in an essay.
- Tip 2: Look for all of the author's *directions* – the parts *written in italics* – e.g. "*Abigail has stood as though on tiptoe, absorbing [John's] presence, wide eyed.*"
And highlight and annotate any that give any information about a character or theme, like the one above. These are excellent **textual features** to use in an essay.
- Tip 3: try highlighting all of the quotes in this document, using Microsoft Word if you need to.

Remember the **main themes** when you answer the questions (if you can, put your own ICON next to a question whenever it is connected to one of the themes).

Conflict between faith/God and nature
Dangers of isolation, both physical and social
Fear, madness and desperation
Individual will VS Social customs and norms (individuality vs. community)
The role of authority and leadership
Use of 'witchcraft' and 'devilry' to label bewildering events
Conflict between 'commoners' and those with loftier titles or aspirations
Backlash against overt female sexuality

- Some questions will ask for you to use quotes. Extension: use quotes as often as you can.
- **Remember**: you can only do what you can do – just try your best and do what you can do. Do that and I promise you'll be fine.

Act 1: from page 17 mid-way down (Methuen Edition);

OR: when **Mercy Lewis** enters the scene, the Putnam's "*fat, sly, merciless*" servant...

OR: for the 'Better Version' of the script I have uploaded: ¼ of the way through page 4 (when "Parris, Putnam, and Mrs. Putnam go out").

1. Why was Abigail asked to leave the Proctor's home? What are Abigail's feelings for John Proctor? For Elizabeth Proctor?

2. Why do the Putnams start talking about witchcraft? What do they and others mention as signs of witchcraft?
3. How is Proctor described as he first enters the stage (in the Author's Commentary)? Be sure to include his view of himself. *This should be a paragraph or series of dot-points; he is perhaps the main character in the text.*

Motif: violence. Note how inherent violence is to this culture, with adults allowed to beat the unmarried young women who work for them, and people often resorting to threats of violence when upset. Doesn't sound very Christian to me...

Note also that Abigail's parents were brutally murdered by Native Americans, which she witnessed (goes some way to explaining her later actions).

4. How does John seem to feel about Abigail?
5. Using a short quote or two, what impression is given of Rebecca Nurse? (page 25-26 Methuen edition)

My note on Rebecca: she seems to be the only character with any wisdom in the whole text.

Extension 1: *if you know this one please do it/as much as you can.*

Why does Mr. Putnam oppose Reverend Parris? Despite his opposition to Parris, why does he take his side when Parris mentions calling Reverend Hale?

6. Why does Proctor dislike Reverend Parris?
7. What might Proctor mean when he says, "Society will not be a bag to swing around your head, Mr. Putnam."? **TF:** Try to the word 'metaphor' or 'symbolism' in your response.

Extension 2: Discuss the significance of Rebecca Nurse's line: "There is prodigious danger in the seeking of loose spirits. I fear it, I fear it. Let us rather blame ourselves..." Consider characterisation, themes/ideas, foreshadowing...

Extension 3: Discuss the importance of this dialogue between Parris and Proctor:

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

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

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

Proctor: I may speak my heart, I think!

Parris: What, are we Quakers*...?

* **Quakers** are friendly people who speak their mind and believe that everyone can find their way to God through their own Inner Light (Divine). They did not have the same theological government as Massachusetts had. ... The **Puritans** did not like the Catholics very much, but the **Quakers** were just intolerable.

8. How is Hale described when he comes to Salem? (Specifically deal with his attitude and view of himself) – Include some short quotes in your answer.

VVC:

Miller's Views: Miller believes that humanity has an innate belief in 'the devil' (or something similar). He believes that it is innate, because we have sin in our world; goodness cannot exist without it; and that it has, and will continue to be used as a weapon to manipulate people's behaviours, through fear and because the devil is a scapegoat we blame so that we don't take responsibility for our own actions. This is weaponised by the Church.

9. Why is the story about Hale not **indicting** (research meaning of this word) the woman in Beverly for being a witch important?

Extension 4 / Thinking Question: Hale maintains that the hunt for witches is a "most precise science" based on evidence. In reality, how predisposed is he to discovering witchcraft?

10. Why does Reverend Hale believe Abigail over Tituba?

11. How is Tituba led into confessing and naming people? Is it fair?

Extension: try to include some **ideas** that the author seems to be exploring/communicating here, e.g. regarding the nature of accusation, coercion, manipulation, fear, and even torture (more a psychological kind of torture) – to the limits that individuals will go to protect themselves when afraid/facing what Tituba was forced to face...

12. By the end of Act 1, the girls dancing in the woods (and dabbling in other things they should perhaps not have been doing) has turned into a litany of people being charged with witchcraft. **Who, in your opinion, is most responsible?** You may pick up to two people, but you must explain, using both quotations and actions/events from the Act. Whom do you blame for the hysteria that occurs, and why do you blame him/her/them?

Thinking question: are Betty and Ruth really sick? Does it seem strange that they both have the same conditions/symptoms... Even when Betty is alone with the other girls, she still acts bizarrely, talks of her dead mother and of flying, suggesting her actions/behaviours are not part of a plan concocted with Abigail and the other girls...

So... have Betty and Ruth carefully planned this between them...? or if not, then she, and Ruth, seem to have been 'possessed' by something...

By what? By Witchcraft??

The good news: Act 1 is the biggest in terms of the amount of questions you will have to answer. The next Acts will have fewer questions as they do not introduce as many new characters or themes. The focus will be on how the themes and ideas are developed/deepened into.