

## ACT 1, Part 2: Study Questions

**DUE: Wednesday, July 21**

*Please note:* **TF** = Textual Feature – I have indicated the **textual feature** for some questions so you can get into the hang of answering questions with a discussion of textual features embedded – as this is what is expected for the essay.

For example: **TF** = **dialogue** (most of the information in the play comes through **dialogue** – which is a textual feature – therefore mentioning the word “dialogue” in your response means you are demonstrating an understanding of how textual features are used to create and convey information)

If you have a printed 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 you find interesting.

Act 1: from page 9 until page 17 mid-way down; **OR** – when **Mercy Lewis** enters the scene, the Putnams “fat, sly, merciless” servant...

(her character description doesn’t seem to foreshadow positive tidings!)

Extension: wherever you can, try to use details and quotes from the text in your answer (collecting evidence for SAC).

1. Who is Betty and what seems to have happened to her?
2. Who is Abigail Williams, and what are your initial impressions of her?
3. Why do people seem to think that witchcraft is afoot?
4. Thinking question (just do your best):

Why do you think this particular group of girls might be out in the woods doing what they are/were doing?

**Theme note: fear:** Betty seems to be in her current state because “Betty was frightened and then she fainted. That’s the whole of it.” Fear seems to be an important theme in the text...

**Fear:** Parris is afraid “my enemies will bring it out” – surely a tightknit **community** all working together shouldn’t have enemies within their ranks... ?

**Idea/Miller’s view:** An austere, rigidly religious society such as this breeds fear and discontentment – not necessarily a ‘love of thy neighbour’.

5. **TF: acting directions:** p.12 of Methuen copy.

Why do you think it is “very hard to say” for Parris to say “A dress” ?

6. **TF: metaphor/symbol:** When Parris asks Abigail “Your name... it is entirely white?”

For what might “white” be a symbol ? What do you think he’s accusing her of?

Record/important quote: Theme – **role of women in society**

**“They want slaves, not such as I.”** - here Abigail seems to be saying the Proctors treat her like a slave, but can be read as Miller conveying his **view** that: women in this society are treated like slaves, or “chattel”; in particular, the young unmarried women.

**TF: acting directions:** note Abigail’s *“ill-concealed resentment at [Parris]”* – does this seem to be the attitude we might expect from a meek, religious woman in this society? Or might Abigail be symbolic of a growing resentment amongst a group of people (young women/women) in such a **repressive** culture?

How might this anger and resentment manifest itself? *Thinking questions only...*

7. How would you describe Mrs. Putnam? (use quotes if are reading and have acting directions available.)

Why is Mrs. Putnam so bitter about the world? (this information becomes a bit later)

Why does she think witchcraft is afoot?

8. Why does Parris seem to not want it to be witchcraft “I pray you, leap not to witchcraft” ?

**Note:** Tituba, the black slave, is most easily associated with the devil for these people – as she seems to represent everything they are not. Her own background is from Barbados – in the West Indies – where voodoo and other pagan practices were performed.

**Note: Theme: misunderstanding of young women: Mrs Putnam (and the others) don’t seem to understand what it was/is like to be a teenager** “my Ruth... I see her turning strange. A secret child she has become this year” and so she thinks devilry/witchcraft is the most likely reason for this... ..

**Theme note: fear and paranoia:** once Abigail is put on the spot under the intense questioning of everyone in the room, she starts looking for someone else to blame, to take the focus off herself, hence: “Not I sir – Tituba and Ruth. This is an important **turning point** in the narrative – once the finger pointing and shifting of blame begins, it does not stop...