

ACT 2 Questions

DUE: Wednesday, July 28

Much easier questions today. I have provided some harder Extension questions – please try if you have an answer. Further Extension: Please try to collect and use quotes wherever possible.

Please download and read the Act 2 Analysis.pdf – this should help with answering some/most of the questions.

If you are struggling to follow the plot or what is happening, please also watch the following video:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TLpxwzlEzeE&t=102s>

On Wednesday we will feedback to the questions for Act 1 (Part 3), and Act 2.

Just do your best – that’s all I can ask.

1. Describe the setting for Act 2, and consider:

why might Miller have chosen this as a setting? *What does it allow, that a different setting might not?*

Extension 1: choose a detail from the *setting directions* and explain why you think the author has included it.

2. Watch/read the opening exchanges between the Proctors and write a summary of their relationship at this point, that considers the following:
 - Describe the **mood** between them and explain **why** the mood is the way it is.
 - Why is each character ‘angry’ or resentful towards the other?
 - How do they treat one another?
 - How is each character presented to the audience?
 - How are we supposed to feel about each character?Anything else... ?

Note: **p.50: Proctor** is put into an uncomfortable position: he **knows** Abigail is lying, as she told him as much in a conversation **that is hinted at** between Proctor and his wife, but to admit the truth would be to **blacken his name** (admit to being an adulterer and committing one of the 10 Sins). The actual scene between John and Abigail is printed at the end of the play as an Appendix – some plays perform this scene, but others do not. We will not study it – but you may use it for evidence if you wish.

3. What does Elizabeth mean when she says to John ““The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you” ?
 4. How has **fear** changed the town of Salem since the first accusations of witchcraft, 8 days earlier? *List as many things as you can*
- **Symbol:** Note the **poppet doll** that Mary Warren gives to Goody Proctor is a **complex symbol**: a symbol of childhood and innocence, it turns out to be a symbol of devilry and trickery (and of voodoo) – of a corrupted childhood – much like the girls in Salem. Even though it seems that Mary gave it to Goody Proctor innocently, the way Abigail uses it to incriminate her is pure evil.

5. What 'evidence' does Cheever use to arrest Elizabeth for witchcraft?
- **Note: Abigail's self-harm** shows a few things: how infatuated she is with John; that she has serious mental health issues (a symptom of the society she's been forced to exist in); but overall how committed she is to the course of action she has chosen: she is not going to back down, and tragedy seems the only possible outcome...
 - **HALE Character Note:** when Hale comes to visit them, he does so under his own guidance (not the Court's) because he wants to make up his own mind about the Proctors (before they are charged); this shows that he has a desire for **the truth** and suggests that perhaps he will fight for 'what is right'.
 - **Turning Point:** when Proctor rips the warrant – it is a show of **defiance** – and sets off a chain of defiance that **foreshadows** the eventual ripping up of the confession.
 - **Note:** how Proctor treats Mary Warren near the end of Act 2: how he threatens, rather than 'asks nicely' – is this the best way he could have asked for help? *Is he really angry at Mary, or at someone else?*
6. **Author's VIEW:** given the number of accusations that are made by the end of Act 2: what does Miller seem to be communicating about human nature? = 1 sentence answer:

VVC Extension 2: Can you think of anything else Miller might be trying to communicate in Act 2?

THINKING QUESTION: *everybody please consider*

How do Elizabeth's and John's attitudes towards one another, and towards Abigail, mirror the proceedings of the witch trials?

- **IMPORTANT PLOT NOTE:** Abigail has been carefully orchestrating *who* she accuses: those who might have questionable morals, or grudges with other villagers, those who will be 'easier' to accuse, as she understand **the power of strength in numbers** – once she has accused enough people (got the ball rolling) then when she finally accuses **Elizabeth Proctor** (and frames her with the Poppet Doll) – then the accusation will be more likely to stick.

The following are COMPREHENSION questions: you do **NOT** have to write anything for them. On Wednesday, as a Class, we will see if we can answer them, as a sort of a 'recap' of Act 2:

- Where does Elizabeth want John to go, and what does she want him to do there?
- What is John's response to her prodding?
- What gift did Mary give Elizabeth?
- What was the "evidence" against Sarah Good?
- Why doesn't Proctor want Mary to go back to court?
- Why does Elizabeth think Abigail wants to kill her?
- Why did Hale come to Proctor's house?
- What things are "suspicious" about Proctor and his family?
- On what charge(s) was Rebecca Nurse arrested?
- Why does Cheever come to the Proctor house?
- Explain the significance of the needle in the "poppet."
- What will happen to Proctor if he tries to discredit Abby?
- Why doesn't Mary want to testify about the doll?