

THE CRUCIBLE STUDY GUIDE

Directions: All Study Guide questions must be answered in complete sentences in your journal.

ACT ONE

1. Why did the Salem settlement need a theocracy? Why had the settlers begun to turn toward individualism?
2. How does Miller characterize Parris? How does Parris feel about his parishioners?
3. Why is Thomas Putnam willing to speak of witchcraft? How does Mrs. Putnam know what Ruth was doing in the woods?
4. Why does Abigail “admit” that Tituba and Ruth were conjuring spirits? Why is Abigail afraid the others will confess what they were doing in the woods? How does Abigail treat the other girls? How does she treat her uncle?
5. What are Abigail’s feelings towards John Proctor? Why is she antagonistic toward Elizabeth Proctor? Why has she been asked to leave her home? Why does she tell John what happened to Betty?
6. Why do Proctor and Rebecca speak out against Hale’s coming? Why has Proctor set himself against Parris? How does Rebecca’s departure affect those waiting at the bedside?
7. Why does Abigail accuse Tituba? Why does Hale believe Abigail rather than Tituba? How does he lead Tituba into naming names? Why do Abigail and Betty name names?

ACT TWO

1. Why doesn’t Proctor go to Salem to report what Abigail has told him? Why does Elizabeth want him to go? Why does Elizabeth mistrust him?
2. How does Proctor feel about the court and Mary Warren’s part in the proceedings? How has Mary Warren changed?
3. How has Hale changed since his arrival in Salem? Why is he testing Proctor and Elizabeth? Why hasn’t Proctor been in church?
4. Why is Cheever looking for a poppet? What is the significance of the one they find?
5. Hale says: “Mary—you charge a cold and cruel murder on Abigail.” What does he mean?
6. Why does Proctor insist that Mary Warren testify in Elizabeth’s defense? Why does Mary Warren refuse?

ACT THREE

1. Why is Giles Cory expelled from court? Why won’t Danforth hear his evidence? Why is Cory arrested?
2. Why is Mary Warren in court? What does she tell Danforth? Why is Danforth suspicious of her and of Proctor? Why does Proctor remind her of the angel Raphael?
3. How does Parris nullify Proctor’s testament? How is Giles’s deposition turned against him?
4. What is the professed purpose of the court? Why doesn’t the court need witnesses? What does this suggest about the proceedings?
5. Why does Proctor confess lechery? Why does he think Danforth and Hathorne will believe his confession? Why don’t they believe him?
6. How is Elizabeth’s testimony used against Proctor? Why is this an unfair test of Elizabeth’s word against John’s?
7. How does Abigail turn the court against Mary Warren?
8. Why does Hale denounce the proceedings? What should have been the effect of his denunciation? Why is it not?

ACT FOUR

1. What is the effect of Sarah Good’s and Tituba’s talk about flying south? Why does Miller include it?
2. How has Parris changed? Why doesn’t the news that Abigail and Mercy have left town affect the decision of the court? How is Danforth a victim of his own logic?
3. Why has Hale returned? How has he changed? Why has he changed?
4. Why does Danforth allow Elizabeth to speak to John Proctor? How has she changed toward her husband? Why doesn’t she take Hale’s advice?
5. How and why does Giles die? Why wasn’t he hanged?
6. Why does Proctor confess? Why will he not name names? Why will he not let Danforth have his signed paper?
7. Why does John Proctor choose to hang? What does he thereby accomplish?