

THE CRUCIBLE by Arthur Miller

Plot Questions: You do not need to answer these questions on paper but you must know the answers to them all. They will be useful revision questions later in the year when your memory fades.

Act 1

1. What does Parris suspect is wrong with his daughter?
2. What has Parris seen in the forest?
3. What does Abigail say about her old employer, Goody Proctor?
4. What does Goody Putnam say is wrong?
5. What does Betty say she saw Abigail do in the forest?
6. How does Abigail act when Proctor enters?
7. How does Abigail seize her chance when Hale arrives?
8. Why is Parris keen to have Abigail confess?

Act 2

9. How do the Proctors act towards one another?
10. What reason do we learn of for this?
11. What does Mary Warren give to Elizabeth?
12. How has Mary saved Elizabeth's life?
13. What are the Proctors' reactions to this?
14. What commandment does Proctor forget?
15. For what reason is Elizabeth arrested?
16. What does Proctor force Mary Warren to do?

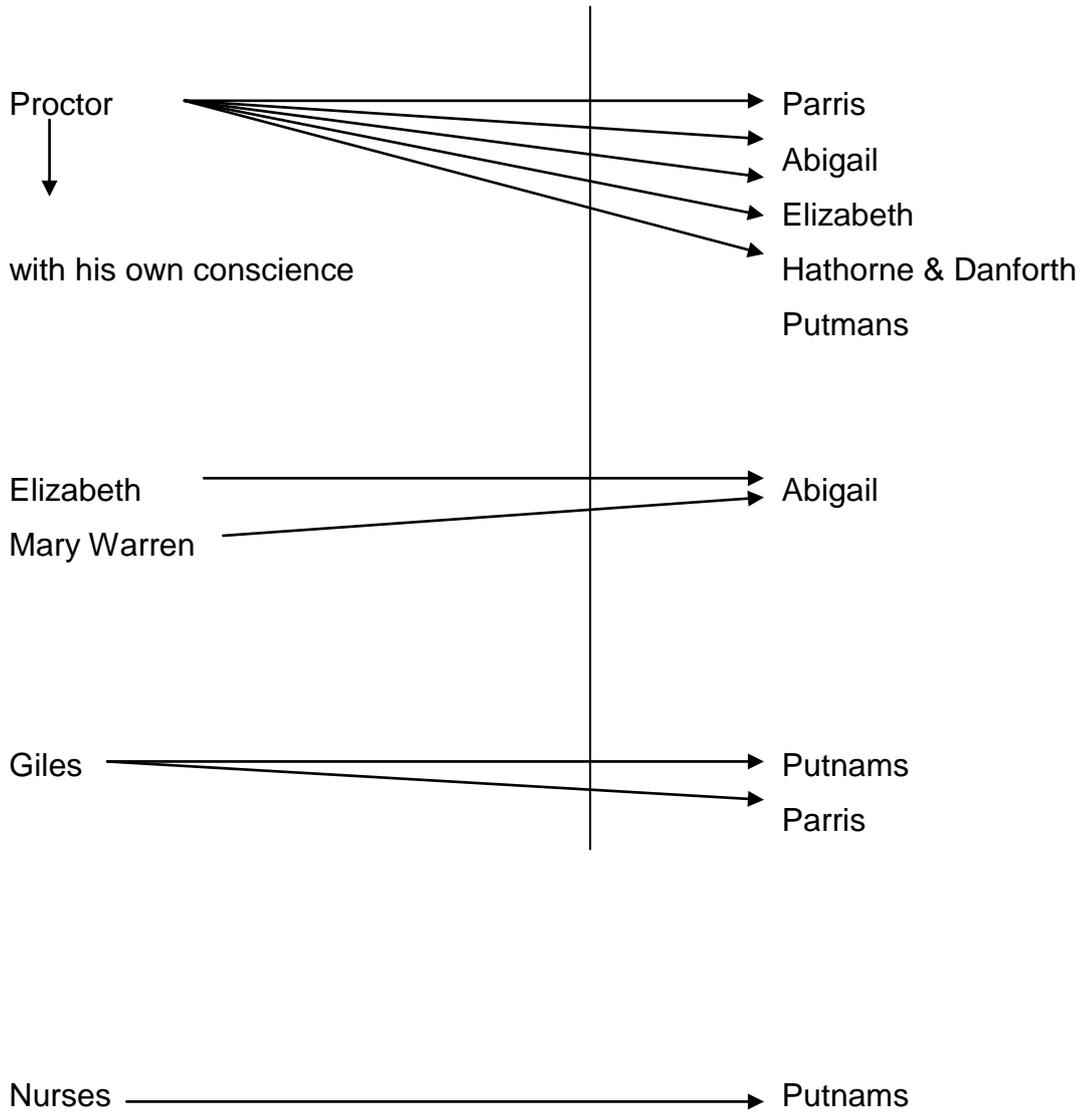
Act 3

17. Who is the Chief Judge?
18. Why is Elizabeth safe for a year?
19. Why will Proctor not rest his case at this point?
20. What does Mary admit to Danforth?
21. What does Proctor admit in court?
22. What lie does Elizabeth tell and why does she tell it?
23. How does Abigail break down Mary Warren?
24. What are Proctor and Hale's reactions to this?

Act 4

25. What has happened to Abigail?
26. Why is Parris worried about the situation?
27. What has happened to Giles?
28. What reason does Proctor give for deciding to confess?
29. Why does he change his mind?
30. How do the Proctors act together now?
31. Why does Hale plead with Elizabeth to get Proctor to confess?
32. Why does Elizabeth not do this?

CONFLICT BETWEEN CHARACTERS



THE CRUCIBLE - Themes

In discussing the following ideas which run through this play, keep in mind that it is important for you to be able to say clearly how Miller develops his ideas - through characterisation? plot structure? language? setting (esp. historical)? conflicts between characters? You need to provide examples of these things to illustrate general points you make about theme.

1. **The Need For Social Responsibility, A 'Human Bond', Integrity:**

We all have an obligation to combat perceived evil in society yet characters like Parris, the Putnams, the judges, Abigail, shirk this responsibility in favour of promoting personal ends.

* Show how they do this and contrast their behaviour with that of John Proctor, who in placing the well-being of his fellows above his own interests shows Miller's belief in a need for personal integrity.

2. **Societal Problems Can Often Be Traced To Individual Human Failings:**

Though the trial has religious and supernatural implications, Miller tends to show the troubles as stemming from recognisable human failings.

* Discuss how the following failings are manifested in the play - greed, vengeance, jealousy, ambition, fear, hysteria.

3. **Societies Often Try to Suppress Individual Freedom In Order To Maintain Social Order:**

* Discuss how this idea is brought out in the play especially through Proctor's struggle in the final act - the judges' insistence on pinning his written confession on the church door and his resistance to this. Also through Giles Corey who tries to maintain his individual rights (but note the contrast with Proctor's motives).

4. **Often People Tend To Think In Black Or White:**

(e.g. good or evil, god-like or devilish, capitalist or communist)

* The upholders of the social order like Danforth are forced into this sort of thinking. How?

* Even Elizabeth Proctor associates John's sexual transgression with evil but what does she come to see?

Think about contemporary examples of the issues raised in The Crucible (eg. The Peter Ellis Case)

Are you able to make a link between any of these issues and:

- (a) the need for social responsibility as expressed by Miller?
- (b) Miller's contention that social problems can often be traced back to individual failings?
- (c) the ideas about individual freedom contained in *The Crucible*?
- (d) Miller's contention that people tend to think in black and white?