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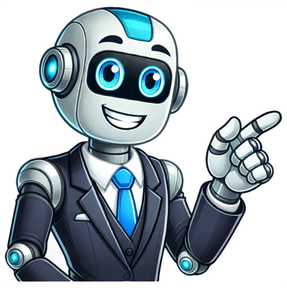

John Proctorreturns home from work.Elizabethlays out some stew for him and they make a conscious effort to discuss topics that would not cause disharmony. John suspects Elizabeth might be depressed again and tries to allay her concerns about his affair withAbigail. Elizabeth steers past this discussion and starts talking about the witch trials instead. She mentions that fourteen women have been arrested and charged with practicing witchcraft. Those found guilty and those refused to confess are to be hanged, she adds. She mentions that Abigail herself is the star of the proceeding. All it took to convict someone was for Abigail to scream in fearwhile the other girls imitated her.The judge would then deem the teenagers bewitched and would sentence the accused to death. Elizabeth begs John to inform Ezekiel Cheever, the clerk of the court, that Abigail and the girls dancing had nothing to do with witchcraft. Mary Warren enters; she had attended the trials and claims that thirty-nine women have now been arrested for witchcraft. She hands Elizabeth a ragdoll she had made while in court. Mary explains that Goody Osburn had attempted to choke her during the trial and that the old woman was unable to recite the Ten Commandments on command and thus had been sentenced to death by hanging. Mary also announces that Elizabeth herself had been accused of being a witch. Elizabeth once again pleads to John to inform Cheever of Abigails lies. Reverend Halevisits the accused to assess the extent of their Christian beliefs. He asks John why he only rarely attends church, to which John explains that he feelsReverend Parrisis not a godly man and that he should be busy attending to his sick wife instead of attending church. He informs Hale that he instead prays and reads the Bible at home. Reverend Hale asks the couple to recite the Ten Commandments. John is able to list all, except the commandment on adultery until his wife reminds him. Elizabeth begs John to inform Hale about Abigail. At first, Hale does not believe Johns story because several women have confessed to witchcraft. John tells the Reverend that the people had no choice but to accept the charges that were falsely brought against them. The Reverend is impressed by Johns statement as well as his belief in the Bible. Elizabeth demands that Abigail be questioned regarding her beliefs. Giles Coreyand Francis Nurse enter and inform Hale that their wives have been arrested. Hale is stunned, but assures them that they could rely on the court to uphold justice. Soon, Cheever and Marshal Herrick arrive to arrest Elizabeth, their evidence being the ragdoll Mary had given her earlier, which had a needle embedded in its stomach. They also cite the fact that, during dinner with the Parris family, Abigail fell to the floor screaming with a needle protruding from her stomach. Mary attempts to explain that she had made the ragdoll solely out of boredom and had stuck the needle in it so that she would not lose it. Hale admits that it is Abigail who had charged Elizabeth with witchcraft. After his wife is taken away, John insists that Mary tell the court the truth regarding Abigails attempts to control the narrative surrounding the event. Mary informs him that she is terrified of Abigail and that she would not be able to tell the truth. Two issues dominate the opening segment of Act II: Johns affair with Abigail and the towns ongoing witch trials. John attempts to earn forgiveness and build trust, but Elizabeth still nurtures some doubt, which subsequently creates tension between them. When Mary Warren informs them that Elizabeth has been accused of witchcraft, John and Elizabeth endure another quarrel, causing more strain on their marriage. The witch trials assume that the defendant is guilty until proven innocent. The trials generate a vicious cycle by fueling peoples fears of witchcraft with suggestions and interpretations of actions based on preconceived judgments. The authorities combine their understanding of Biblical texts regarding witchcraft with subjective accounts of troublesome behavior they are either unable to explain or do not wish to because it differs from their preconceived notions. In one week alone, thirty-nine citizens who had been previously consideredlaw-abiding and moralhave been accused of practicing witchcraft. No one questions this because they have been brainwashed to assume that any person who disagrees is a Devil worshiper. The complainants names are deliberately kept anonymous, but those accused are challenged publicly and without restraint. Over one week alone, dozens of people have been convicted of witchcraft based on conjecture, not facts. By the time Hale stops by the Proctors home, his words and demeanor begin to reflect his misgivings about the proceedings. Throughout Johns interactions with his wife, Hale, Cheever, and Mary, he remains honest in his responses; he does not deflect or blame another person. Elizabeth also shines in this scene: she remains largely unperturbed by Hales interrogation and she also reminds her husband that he had forgotten the Commandment concerning adultery. She denounces Abigail in Hales presence, the courts appointees, and other townsfolk. Her strong Christian beliefs seem to be her greatest strength. On the other hand, Mary Warren is deeply dejected to learn that many women she had known have been hanged.The second act takes place in the common room of Proctor's house eight days later. John Proctor returns from a day in the fields and greets his wife, Elizabeth. They make small talk about dinner and the crops, but there is an awkwardness between them. Elizabeth thinks that he went to Salem that afternoon, but Proctor says he thought better of it. Elizabeth tells him that Mary Warren is there today, and although Elizabeth tried to forbid her, Mary frightened her strength away. Mary is now an official in the court, formally accusing people of witchcraft, along with Abigail and the other girls. Elizabeth tells John to go to Ezekiel Cheever and tell him what Abigail said last week - namely that Betty's sickness had nothing to do with witchcraft. Proctor tells her that nobody will believe him, as Proctor was the only one to hear.Elizabeth is disturbed to realize that Proctor and Abigail were alone together, but Proctor angers at her suspicion. He has tiptoed around the house for the seven months since Abigail left, and has confessed to his sin openly, but Elizabeth remains cold. She claims she does not judge him. Proctor replies that her justice would freeze beer.Mary Warren enters, and gives Elizabeth a poppet that she made in court that day. Mary reports that thirty-nine people are arrested, and Goody Osburn will hang, but not Sarah Good because she confessed. Mary Warren claims that Goody Osburn sent her spirit out in court to choke them, and often mumbles whenever others turn her away when she begs. Proctor demands proof that Goody Osburn is a witch, and forbids Mary Warren to go to court. Mary says that it is amazing that Proctor does not realize the importance of her work, and insists that she is a court official. Incensed, Proctor threatens her with a whip. Mary reveals that she saved Elizabeth's life today, for Elizabeth was accused in court. Proctor orders Mary to go to bed. Elizabeth realizes that Abigail wants her dead. Proctor reassures her that he will find Ezekiel Cheever and tell him what Abigail said, but Elizabeth thinks that more than Cheever's help is needed now. She tells him to go to Abigail and firmly renege on whatever promise she may think he made her. Elizabeth believes Abigail must plan to profit from Elizabeth's death, for accusing a respected member of society like her is more dangerous than accusing a drunk or indigent woman like Good or Osburn.Mr. Hale arrives at the house as Elizabeth and John argue over Abigail. He now has a quality of deference and even guilt. Hale tells them that Elizabeth's name was mentioned in court and Rebecca Nurse was charged. Proctor finds it impossible to believe that so pious a woman could be in the service of the devil after seventy years of prayer, but Hale reminds him that the Devil is wily and strong. Hale questions Proctor on his churchgoing habits, and Proctor claims that he prays at home and criticizes Parris for his wasteful spending habits in church. Hale also notes that only two of Proctor's children are baptized, and asks Proctor to state the Ten Commandments. He names nine of them, but needs Elizabeth to remind him of the tenth adultery. Proctor says that between the two of them they know all of the Commandments, but Hale says that no crack in the fortress of theology can be considered small. Proctor says there is no witchcraft happening, and tells Hale how Abigail said Parris discovered the girls sporting in the woods. Hale claims that it is nonsense, as so many have confessed, but Proctor says that anyone would confess if they will be hanged for denying it. Hale asks if Proctor will testify to this in court, and asks if he believes in witches. Proctor answers that he does not believe that there are witches in Salem, but Elizabeth denies any belief in witches at all. When Hale asks Elizabeth if she questions the gospel, she retorts that he should question Abigail Williams about the gospel and not her.Giles Corey arrives with Francis Nurse, and they tell the Proctors that their wives were taken away. Rebecca has been charged with the supernatural murder of Ann Putnam's babies. Hale, who is deeply troubled, claims that if Rebecca Nurse is tainted, there is nothing to stop the whole world from burning. Walcott charged Martha Corey for the rumor that Giles proposed about his wife reading books.Cheever arrives to charge Elizabeth. He asks if she keeps any poppets in the house, and she says no. Cheever spies the poppet that Mary Warren made, and finds a needle in it. Abigail had testified that Elizabeth's familiar spirit pushed a needle into her at dinner that night. Mary Warren tells them how the poppet got into the house, and claims that she stuck the needle in it, but Hale questions whether or not her memory is accurate or supernatural. Elizabeth, upon hearing that Abigail has charged her with murder, calls Abigail a murderer who must be ripped out of the world. Proctor rips up the warrant, and asks if the accuser is always holy now. He says that he will not give his wife to vengeance. Hale insists that the court is just, but Proctor calls him a Pontius Pilate. Cheever takes Elizabeth away. Proctor demands that Mary Warren come to court with him and charge murder against Abigail. She warns Proctor that Abigail will charge him with lechery, but Proctor insists that his wife shall not die for him. Mary Warren sobs that she cannot go against Abigail.AnalysisWhile the first act takes place in the "public" setting of Reverend Parris' home, the second act moves into what should be considered the private sphere of the Proctors' home. The conversation between John and Elizabeth Proctor is highly mundane, illustrating the significant tension remaining in the relationship since Proctor's affair with Abigail Williams. Elizabeth Proctor is intensely suspicious of her husband, worrying when he arrives at home late for dinner and adopting a condescending tone when her husband admits that he was momentarily alone with Abigail Williams. Miller establishes Elizabeth Proctor as a morally upright woman, respectable and dignified, yet with an air of superiority that renders her frigid and distant. Proctor feels that Elizabeth has made her home into a repressive atmosphere, continually punishing her husband for his wrongdoing. Still, if Elizabeth adopts a tone of moral superiority it is because she is the superior of her contemporaries, with an unwavering belief in the capability of persons to remain moral.Miller creates an atmosphere of guilt within the Proctor household that mirrors the similar conditions within larger Puritan society. Proctor has expressed contrition for his infidelity and asked for forgiveness, yet there is no sense of catharsis within his marriage nor ability for full reconciliation. The Proctor marriage is stagnant and stifling, as the fact of John's adultery lingers in every conversation like a giant white elephant. Miller demonstrates this, in particular, when Proctor is unable to recall the commandment against adultery it is a moment of humor, but it also reflects the crisis of the Proctor marriage. Miller seems to indicate that, like the rest of their Puritan society, the Proctors need an outlet to expiate John's sins and without this means for redemption they are committed to a perpetual obsession with past infidelity.Two major themes emerge in the second act of The Crucible. The first of these is the line between public and private. The act itself moves from the intimate conversation between husband and wife to more public matters, but the division between these two spheres becomes obscure. Even in this setting, the public discussions of the Proctors' guilt or innocence occurs within the home. More importantly, Reverend Hale and the other court officials use private information for their public matters, such as information about the frequency with which they attend church and their belief in the existence of witches. The court officials investigate all aspects of the suspects' private lives. Under such intense scrutiny, these officials are able to find any information that may be may interpreted as evidence of guilt not unlike the House Unamerican Activities Commission using everything from religion and sexuality to, in the case of the Rosenbergs, a discarded box of Jell-o as evidence of un-American behavior. The second major theme of the act is the ambiguity of evidence. This begins even before Hale arrives at the Proctors' home, when Elizabeth, as a betrayed wife, suspects her husband's excuses for coming home late. This continues with Reverend Hale's interpretation of John's forgetfulness of one of the Ten Commandments and the evidence against Martha Corey, which deemed her a witch for reading books. The most significant symbol of this theme in the second act is Mary Warren's poppet. Miller makes it clear to the audience that Elizabeth did not use the poppet as a charm against Abigail Williams, but its presence in her house is quite damning in the view of the court.The poppet demonstrates that Abigail Williams is more villainous than earlier indicated. In the first act she behaved solely out of self-interest. She was ready to do harm to others, but only to save herself. However, in this instance she purposely frames Elizabeth Proctor out of revenge, planting the poppet as a means to engineer Elizabeth's murder. This event even breaks the icy exterior of Elizabeth Proctor, who deems that Abigail must be "ripped out of the world."Miller creates a situation of bleak irony in this chapter with the arrest of Rebecca Nurse and Elizabeth Proctor. These characters are the most upright in the play, yet are accused of witchcraft by two of the most ignoble, Thomas Putnam and Abigail Williams. The dynamic of the witchcraft hysteria has created a situation in which the accuser of witchcraft is automatically presumed holy, as Proctor notes, while even the most spiritual character may be suspected of Satanic influence. In this situation the evil of Salem may raise their reputations at the expense of the good.An additional irony that Miller constructs in the act is in the plot structure. The Proctors and their allies can rely on a single person to save themselves from Abigail Williams' treachery. Yet this person, Mary Warren, is the weakest and most pliable character in The Crucible. She alone has the power to stop the hysteria of the witchcraft trials, but neither the strength nor resolve to do so. Mary requires intense coercion from John Proctor to even consider admitting to the falsehood in court. However, despite her weakness Mary Warren is as dangerous as Abigail, for the guileless girl betrays none of Abigail's malicious bearing and thus appears more overtly innocent. She is a pawn who may be used by the Proctors to prove their innocence, but Miller foreshadows that Mary Warren may be used by Abigail to serve her own purposes as well.Among the characters in the play, it is Reverend Hale who demonstrates the most prominent character development. While the other characters remain fixed in their particular allegiances and beliefs, Hale demonstrates the debilitating effects of the witchcraft trials by the change in his character. When he reappears in the third act he has none of his old enthusiasm. Although he clings to his belief that proof of witchery can be found in Salem, Hale appears more and more tentative about the results. He demonstrates a strong feeling of guilt for his actions, as shown by his reliance on what he grasps as indisputable evidence. Like Pontius Pilate, to whom Proctor compares Hale, he wants to play only a passive role in the proceedings without any feeling of personal responsibility. Hale's growing disillusionment foreshadows his later repudiation of the court's actions. The setting is the Proctors house, in the common room (or the living room, as we call it today). Elizabeth and Proctor discuss farm business items, while Proctor eats. He tells her he wants to please her, but when he tries to kiss her, she simply receives it. Hes disappointed and returns to eat. They continue discussing everyday things, until Proctor suggests that she seems sad.Elizabeth admits that she is worried that he had gone to Salem that day. Proctor says no, he did not go, and she says that Mary Warren had gone. Proctor wants to know why, when he had forbidden her to leave the farm, but Elizabeth says she could not stop her. She is now part of the court in Salem, an official, and there are fourteen people in jail because of the witch trials. Abigail is leading the entire group of accusing girls.Elizabeth suggests that Proctor must go to Salem and tell them it is a fraud. Ezekiel Cheever is the person to tell, and to let them know what Abigail told him last week, that she knew it was not witchcraft.Proctor says hell think about it. He just knows that if shes considered a saint now, his word might not be enough. And they were alone when she mentioned it.Elizabeth asks Proctor to confirm whether Abigail and he were alone together. Proctor admits that for a minute they were, but then the others came.Then, Elizabeth realizes, he must have lied to her the first time he told the story.Irritated, he says he wont have her suspicion anymore. She tells him he should try not to earn it, then.They continue on this conversation. It becomes clear that Proctor wants her to forget Abigail as he has. He feels she doubts him every minute of the day.Elizabeth says she doesnt judge him, only the magistrate sits in your heart judges him.As they argue, Mary Warren enters.When Proctor grabs her by the wrist, she cries out that shes sickthe proceedings have worn her outand she hopes Proctor wont hurt her.He asks her how the proceedings went and in response Mary goes to Elizabeth and gives her a small rag doll, called a poppet. She says she spent many hours making it earlier that day in court and hopes shell enjoy it.Elizabeth thanks her.Mary says shes tired and needs to sleep, but that shell clean the house in the morning. Proctor stops her to ask if its true that fourteen women have been arrested. Mary says there are now thirty-nine women. She begins to weep.And Sarah Good, Mary continues, confessed that she made a compact with Lucifer to torment Christians.Proctor expresses his doubt and Mary says that she somehow managed to almost choke her and the other girls in court, by sending her spirit out. Apparently, Sarah Good has tried to kill her many times before but until that day, Mary herself didnt know it.The proof of Sarah Goods witchery? She was unable to say her ten commandments. And so she was condemned.Proctor says she will not go to court again, and Mary says she must. Proctor suggests this is no proper work (i.e., hanging women) and Mary says they will not hang a woman if she confesses.They try to convince her not to go again. Then Mary claims to have saved Elizabeths life today.Elizabeth hasnt been accused, only mentioned, but Mary said she had never seen Elizabeth send her spirit out. Elizabeth wants to know who accused her and Mary says she cannot tell, by law.Mary goes to bed, and Proctor and Elizabeth stay where they are, horrified. Elizabeth says she has known all week this would happen, that she (Abigail) wants Elizabeth dead.Proctor says he will talk to Cheever, and Elizabeth says he needs to talk to Abigail. She says that he made promises with his body, in bed, and he needs to let Abigail know that this promise can never be fulfilled.Proctor is angry, claiming that he gave no promiseno more promise than a stallion gives a mareand he believes Elizabeth will never forgive him for this one mistake.(Click the summary infographic to download.)As they argue, Reverend Hale appears in the door. He says he is there to see for himself what is going on.He has just come from Rebecca Nurses houseshe was also mentioned at court, like Elizabeth. He thinks it is possible that Rebecca Nurse has had dealings with the Devil, but he is clearly uneasy.The Proctors both think it is impossible.Hale says he wants to question them both, and he proceeds to question why Mr. Proctor has missed so much church in the last seventeen months.Proctor says his wife has been sick this winter. He could come alone, he admits, but he does not like the minister. He believes the minister is materialistic and greedy.Hale then wants to know why only two of their three children are baptized. Proctor says he has no interest in Reverend Parris baptizing his child.Hale asks them both if they know the Ten Commandments, and then requires Proctor to recite them. Proctor cites nearly allbut fails to remember one, of which Elizabeth reminds him: the commandment against adultery.Proctor reassures Hale that between the two of them (Proctor and Elizabeth), they know all ten. He tells Hale that forgetting one commandment is a small fault; and Hale replies by saying that no crack in a fortress is small.Before Hale goes, Proctor tells him that Abigail Williams told him that the childrens sickness had nothing to do with witches.Hale is suspicious and wants to know why Proctor kept this information for so long.Proctor says that until today, he didnt know the world had gone mad.Hale gets defensive and says that people have confessed.Proctor says anybody will confess if it prevents them from getting hangedand Hale admits he has thought of that.Hale wants to know if Proctor will testify in court and Proctor, reluctant, says he will. Hale then questions him about whether he believes in witches, and Proctor says he has questioned it then Elizabeth says she cannot believe in witches, not if he thinks she is a witch.She thinks Hale should question Abigail Williams about the Gospel, not herself; she believes every word of it.Proctor can see where this is going, and he begins to defend his wife.At that moment, Giles Corey appears. He says they have taken his wife.Then Francis Nurse enters and Giles says theyve also taken Rebecca. Francis wants to know if Reverend Hale cant speak to the Deputy Governor because it seems like the world has gone mad. Its absurd to think that his wife could be a murderershes been charged with killing the Putnamss babies.Hale is now clearly troubled. But he reminds the men that until Lucifer fell from heaven, he was a beautiful angel.Giles Corey angrily says he wondered about his wife reading booksbut he never said she was a witch!Then Giles explains that Walcott, who bought a pig from them and then came back for the money when the pig died, has claimed that his wife Martha Corey has bewitched him so he cant keep a pig alive for more than four weeks.Ezekiel Cheever, the constable, enters. Everybody is silent, shocked. He is there, he says, on business of the court. Marshal Herrick also enters, but he looks ashamed. They are there to get Elizabeth Proctor. Abigail Williams charged her.Proctor wants to know what proof he has, and Cheever says hes supposed to look for a poppet that his wife may have. She says she hasnt kept poppets since she was a little girl. But they all look around and theres the poppet, the one Mary Warren brought, on the mantel.Elizabeth goes to get it and says this is Marys. They want to know what a poppet signifies.But Cheever doesnt explain.Proctor tells his wife to go get Mary, but Cheever says he cant let Elizabeth out of his sight. Proctor pushes his hand away and tells his wife to go get Mary.Hale wants to know what a poppet means, and Cheever starts to explain, while lifting the poppets skirt. Then he notices that it has a long needle stuck in it.Cheever calls Herrick to him. He then tells Proctor that the Williams girl fell to the floor at dinner this evening, and when the Reverend Parris went to her, he drew out a needle stuck deep in her belly. When he asked how she was stabbed, she said it was Elizabeth Proctors familiar spirit that did it.Proctor denies that this is proof, but Cheever insists that it is. When Mary and Elizabeth return, Proctor demands that she explain how the poppet got into the house.Mary says it is hers, and even says she stuck the needle in herself, but she meant no harm. Hale wants to know if some spirit might be forcing her to say this, but she says shes herself.Then she says they should ask Susanna or Abigail, both of whom saw her making it.Hale tells Mary that she is charging Abigail with murderbecause if Abigail is faking it, then she is trying to get Elizabeth Proctor killed.Proctor rips up the arrest warrant, despite protests. He tells them all to get out of his house.Hale protests that if she is innocent, the court But here, Proctor points out that Abigail and Parris may not be innocent.Elizabeth says shell go, and Herrick says he has nine men outside.Indeed, she says, she will go.Proctor promises his wife that hell bring her home soon, and Elizabeth goes out the door, followed by Herrick and Cheever.Mary Warren starts to weep, and Giles Corey starts taunting Hale, saying that it is all a fraud and yet he is silent.When Herrick and Cheever leave with Elizabeth, Proctor tells Hale to get out of his sight. Hale says he will testify in her favor, but he doesnt know if she is guilty or innocent.Hale urges Proctor to think about causes. He prays that God will open up their eyes.Then he leaves.Proctor, Francis, and Giles are left alone, shaken. They wonder if all is lost. When the latter two leave, Mary Warren says that theyll probably let her come home.Proctor replies that she is going with him to the courthouse, and shell testify exactly how the poppet came to the house and who stuck the needle in.Mary resists, saying shell kill Mary for that, and that Abigail will charge Proctor with lechery.Proctor realizes this is a good thing. Abigail's saintliness is over and done with.Proctor is even more determined to expose the truth and insists that Mary will help him.Proctor and Mary head outside and toward the town, Mary sobs I cannot, I cannot, I cannot as they walk away.The curtain falls.(Click the summary infographic to download.) In order to continue enjoying our site, we ask that you confirm your identity as a human. Thank you very much for your cooperation. John Proctorreturns home from work.Elizabethlays out some stew for him and they make a conscious effort to discuss topics that would not cause disharmony. John suspects Elizabeth might be depressed again and tries to allay her concerns about his affair withAbigail. Elizabeth steers past this discussion and starts talking about the witch trials instead. She mentions that fourteen women have been arrested and charged with practicing witchcraft. Those found guilty and those refused to confess are to be hanged, she adds. She mentions that Abigail herself is the star of the proceeding. All it took to convict someone was for Abigail to scream in fearwhile the other girls imitated her.The judge would then deem the teenagers bewitched and would sentence the accused to death. 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Act 2 of The Crucible takes us to the Proctor household, where we learn just how crazy things have gotten in Salem after the initial flood of accusations. We'll also find out the extent to which John Proctor's relationship with Elizabeth has suffered after his affair. By the end of Act 2, characters who were thought to be beyond reproach will find themselves in mortal peril as a result of unchecked hysteria. I'll provide two different summaries. The first is a short summary intended for quick review of the plot, and the second is a long summary (the "oops I didn't read it" summary) for those of you who want more specific details on exactly what happened, including smaller side conversations and minor plot points. The Crucible Act 2 Summary Short Version John and Elizabeth discuss the trials in Salem, and they both realize things are getting out of hand (though John still believes the court would never actually hang anyone). Elizabeth tells John he has to go into town and inform them that Abigail is lying. John's hesitance leads to an argument rooted in his affair and the lack of trust that continues to pervade their marriage.Mary Warren, who went to Salem to testify against the Proctors' wishes, returns to the house and gives Elizabeth a poppet (doll) she made in court. Mary reveals that Elizabeth was accused in court, but she spoke up in her defense. It's clear that Abigail is accusing Elizabeth because she hopes to take her place as John Proctor's wife. This leads to another argument where Elizabeth urges John to tell Abigail that there's absolutely no possibility of them ever being together.Hale arrives and questions the Proctors about their religious devotion based on the accusations levied against Elizabeth. John tells him that the girls are frauds, and Hale actually starts to doubt the validity of the accusers' claims. Giles Corey and Francis Nurse come to the house in distress, revealing that both of their wives have been arrested for witchcraft. Then, Ezekiel Cheever and Marshal Herrick arrive with a warrant for Elizabeth's arrest. They find the doll that Mary gave her and notice that it has a needle stuck in it. This matches up with the "attack" on Abigail allegedly perpetrated by Elizabeth's spirit.Proctor gets Mary to tell the truth about the doll. She says that she made it in court and stuck the needle in herself with Abigail sitting right next to her. However, the authorities are not convinced by this story. Proctor tears up the arrest warrant in frustration, but Elizabeth agrees to go peacefully.When everyone else has left, Proctor tells Mary that she must testify on Elizabeth's behalf in court. Mary is terrified to do this because she knows that Abigail will turn the rest of the court against her. Proctor begins to feel a sort of relief because he senses that he and all the other hypocrites are finally being punished for their sins. Judgment, both internal and external, is a constant throughout The Crucible. The Crucible Act 2 Summary "Oops, I Didn't Read It" Version Act 2 takes place at the Proctor household eight days after Act 1. Elizabeth Proctor serves John dinner, and they chat about his day. There's some tension between them because of the lingering effects of John's affair with Abigail. Elizabeth says that Mary Warren went to Salem that day, and John is angry because he forbid her to go. Elizabeth claims she tried to stop her, but Mary insisted on participating in the court proceedings.Elizabeth then reveals the full extent of the situation in Salem to John. Four judges have been summoned from Boston to preside over the trials, and fourteen people are jailed on accusations of witchcraft. Abigail has been exercising a great deal of power in court and continues to feign being attacked by witches. Elizabeth says John must go to Salem to tell the court that Abigail is a fraud. He has some reservations because it will be his word against hers. She thinks he wouldn't be so hesitant to do this if he had to discredit a different girl. John gets angry that Elizabeth still won't fully trust him around Abigail, and he feels liks he's always being judged. Elizabeth points out that it's really his internal guilt about the affair that's making him feel judged.At this point, Mary arrives back from Salem appearing drained from the day's proceedings. She gives Elizabeth a poppet (a rag doll, essentially) that she made in court. Mary tells the Proctors that there are now 39 people arrested. She breaks down and starts crying. Mary reveals that Goody Osburn is set to hang, but Sarah Good confessed, so she will live. Mary is genuinely convinced that Sarah Good tried to kill her by sending out her spirit. She then claims to remember other times that she was bewitched by Sarah Good. Sarah Good was ultimately condemned after being unable to recite her commandments.Mary insists on going back to court the next day because she feels that she's doing God's work. John Proctor tries to whip Mary for her insolence, but Mary interjects that she saved Elizabeth's life by defending her against accusations in court. Proctor dismisses Mary. After this, Elizabeth is pretty sure that Abigail wants her dead. She thinks Abigail is trying to take her place as Proctor's wife and will continue to accuse her until she is arrested. Proctor tries to allay these suspicions even though he knows that she's probably right. Elizabeth insists that John go to Abigail and tell her explicitly that there is no possibility of them ever being together in the future. John gets angry (again) that Elizabeth presumes that he's still attached to Abigail and is leading her on in some way.At this point, Reverend Hale arrives at the house to speak with the Proctors about the accusations made against Elizabeth. He has just come from questioning Rebecca Nurse, who was accused despite her solid reputation in town. Hale asks why John doesn't go to church often, and he says it's because his wife has been sick and he dislikes Parris' displays of materialism. Hale asks Proctor to say his commandments, and, ironically, the only one he forgets is adultery. Hale is not satisfied.Elizabeth insists that John tell Hale that the girls are faking. After hearing what Proctor has to say, Hale starts to doubt the accusers as well. Still, Proctor balks at testifying in court because the atmosphere sounds so hysterical ("I falter nothing, but I may wonder if my story will be credited in such a court." pg. 65). Elizabeth says she actually doesn't believe in witches at all, and Hale is taken aback because witches are specifically mentioned in the Bible.Giles Corey enters the house accompanied by Francis Nurse. They reveal to Hale and the Proctors that their wives have been arrested and sent to jail. Rebecca Nurse is suspected of murdering Ann Putnam's babies. Hale says if Rebecca Nurse has fallen under the control of the Devil, no one is safe. Corey now realizes he made a mistake by voicing his suspicions about his wife's reading habits in the previous act. The man who accused Martha Corey bought a pig from her that died soon after. He was bitter that Martha wouldn't refund him the money, so to get revenge he accused her of casting spells with her books.Ezekiel Cheever and Marshal Herrick then arrive at the house. They have a warrant for Elizabeth Proctor's arrest, and they confirm that she was accused by Abigail. Cheever orders Elizabeth to hand over any dolls she has in the house. Elizabeth is confused and says she hasn't had dolls since she was a kid. She forgot about the one Mary gave her earlier, which Cheever sees and examines. John Proctor tells Elizabeth to go get Mary so she can confirm that the doll was a gift. Cheever finds a needle in the doll, which he takes as proof of Elizabeth's guilt. Abigail fell on the floor screaming at dinner and pulled a needle out of her stomach, claiming that Elizabeth's familiar spirit stabbed her.Mary and Elizabeth return, and Mary admits she made the doll in court while Abigail was sitting next to her. John Proctor thinks that this makes it pretty clear that Abigail is lying, but it's not enough for Hale to discount the "proof." Hale warns Mary that she's making severe accusations against Abigail.Proctor is fed up with the court's blind trust in Abigail and the other accusers. He rips up the arrest warrant and tells everyone to leave. Elizabeth sees that there is no way out of the current situation and agrees to go with the marshal to avoid a scene. John promises to bring her back soon and calls Hale a coward for being too passive about the situation. Hale counsels patience and reason so that they can get to the bottom of what's really happening.Everyone exits the house except Mary and John Proctor. Proctor tells Mary she must testify in court about the real story behind the doll. She is concerned about Abigail's potential reaction. Mary knows about the affair, and she thinks Abigail will come clean about it and ruin Proctor's reputation if Mary tries to discredit her. Mary also believes that the court will turn against her if she tells the truth. Proctor is adamant that Elizabeth will not die for his mistakes with Abigail and starts getting aggressive with Mary to scare her into telling the truth. Mary continues to insist that she can't testify because of the potential consequences.Does your target always get stabbed with the same implement that you used to poke the voodoo doll? And does that mean you can only use voodoo dolls to give people you hate superficial puncture wounds? Luckily for Abigail, no one is in the right state of mind to care about how little sense all of this makes. The Crucible Act 2 Quotes This section lists the most important quotes in Act 2. I've written short explanations for each that elaborate on their significance. "I have not moved from there to there without I think to please you, and still an everlasting funeral marches round your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!" (John Proctor pg. 52)In this quote, John Proctor criticizes his wife for continuing to mistrust him after he ended things with Abigail. He claims that "an everlasting funeral marches round [her] heart," meaning that she insists on continuing to mourn for the damage the affair did to their relationship rather than allowing him to repair it. He feels that Elizabeth is constantly suspicious of him now, to the point where he can't do anything without being judged. In fact, Elizabeth doesn't show many signs of being overly judgmental of John (she's actually doing pretty well considering he just had an affair with a teenager), and most of these issues are a projection of his own guilt. "I do not judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you." (Elizabeth Proctor pg. 52)The real court in Salem is mirrored by a metaphorical court within the mind of John Proctor. Here, Elizabeth points out that John is his own harshest judge. If anyone is judging him, it's a mini-John Proctor with a judge wig banging a tiny gavel right on his heart strings. Since he's unable to forgive himself for the affair, he projects his guilt onto her even when she's not acting particularly judgmental. "I am amazed you do not see what weighty work we do." (Mary Warren pg. 56)Mary uses "weighty" as a synonym for "important" or "vital." She feels that she's doing God's work, and she is given a sense of purpose and duty through her participation in the trials. In a sense, the trials really are "weighty work" because they overhaul the entire community. They provide an outlet for the repressed resentments and jealousies that were simmering under the surface. "Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in the fortress may be accounted small." (Reverend Hale pg. 64)This quote from Hale is a testament to the power of the church in this community and the perception of religion at the time. There is an "either you're with us or you're against us" mentality that encourages persecution of anyone who deviates even slightly from accepted Christian behavior. One misstep can derail a reputation completely, so everyone is eager to conform out of concerns for self-preservation. "There is a misty plot afoot so subtle we should be criminal to cling to old respects and ancient friendships. I have seen too many frightful proofs in court - the Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points!" (Reverend Hale pg. 68)This quote from Hale sums up the atmosphere of hysteria that has emerged in Salem. Everyone is afraid to question any of the accusers because that might mean falling for the Devil's tricks. They feel that the consequences of doubting these accusations could be more dire than the risk of having some innocent people caught up in the mix. Reputation has been conquered by paranoia.Both Parris and Hale will cite different theological examples over the course of the play where someone who was once thought to be virtuous turned out to be evil. In this case, it's "Man, remember, until an hour before the Devil fell, God thought him beautiful in Heaven" (Reverend Hale pg. 68). In the next act, Parris will say "You should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel" (Reverend Parris pg. 85). On some occasions in the Bible, people who were thought to be good turned out to be bad. This shaky precedent is extrapolated to the current situation and gives the church leaders reason to mistrust even the most well-reputed citizens of Salem. "Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Were they born this morning as clean as God's fingers? I'll tell you what's walking Salem - vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law!" (John Proctor pg. 73)John is incredibly frustrated because the accusers are all taken at their word, and the accused are denied a fair opportunity to defend themselves. He points out that many of these accusations are clearly driven by revenge. Though that desire for vengeance was always there within the people of Salem, it has only now begun to affect judicial processes and societal power structures in dramatic ways. "The little crazy children" are the accusers, mostly teenage girls who previously had no power in Salem. They are now "jangling the keys of the kingdom," or testing their ability to provoke widespread chaos that favors their own agendas. "Now Hell and heaven grapple on our backs, and all our old pretense is ripped away - make your peace! Peace. It is a providence, and no great change; we are only what we always were, but naked now." (John Proctor pg. 76)This an aside John makes to himself at the end of Act 2. He views the witch trials as an unveiling of the true nature of the people of Salem. No one has suddenly become vengeful, paranoid, and unjust - they were always like this underneath a shallow layer of decorum. Proctor has also been burdened by the secret of his affair with Abigail and the guilt he has about it. He sees himself as an immoral