

The Crucible Act I

Points to consider when reading Act I:

- The various personalities of the girls: Who is the "leader"? How would you describe Mary Warren in relation to the other girls?
- What have the girls done that violate Puritan codes and could explain their behavior? How does Tituba figure in the event?
- What are some of the reasons behind Parris's insecurity? What is Parris's relationship with Thomas Putman?
- Why has Goody Proctor turned Abigail out of the Proctor household? How does this "rejection" figure in the build-up of the witch hysteria?
- Present summaries of Miller's assessment of Thomas Putman, Rebecca and Francis Nurse, Giles, and Reverend Hale as he delineates them in the "exposition" passages of the script (Explain to students that these prose passages would not be included in a stage presentation unless a director decided to use a narrator to infuse some of the vignettes into the production.)
- Collaborate on preparing a formal presentation of key points Miller makes about concepts of the Devil in his "exposition" passage introducing Reverend Hale.
- Note the role of Latin and books in relation to witchcraft as the play unfolds. (Consider sharing with students the role of these "agents" as defined in literature built on the Faustus legend, particularly the wonderfully dramatic passage from Christopher Marlowe's, *The Tragical History of Dr. Faustus* in which Faustus engages in "necromancy" (black magic) to call up the Devil so he can enter into a "bargain.")
- Call attention to the fact that some books were instructional in ways to become involved in "necromancy;" others, such as Rev. Hale's "heavy books," gave instruction in how to recognize signs of the Devil's presence in a community, animals, and/or individuals
- (Consider having a student versed in Latin read aloud a brief segment of Scene III - the "conjuring" scene in which Faustus calls up the Devil- from Marlowe's play to help set the tone for reading *The Crucible*.)
- What must the "accused" of witchcraft do to avoid hanging? Specifically, why does Tituba "open up"?
- What is the effect of Tituba's confession on Mrs. Putman, Betty and Abigail at the end of Act I?