

THE CRUCIBLE

Quick Summaries

ACT 1 SCENE 1...

The scene starts out in the house of Reverend Parris. His daughter, Betty, lies unconscious in a bed. Parris had discovered his daughter, his niece Abigail, Mary Warren, and his servant Tituba dancing in the forest outside of Salem at midnight.

Since their gathering in the forest, Betty has lost consciousness. The town physician, Doctor Griggs has not been determined why Betty is ill and suggests witchcraft as a possible cause.

ACT 1 SCENE 2...

Abigail and Mercy try to wake Betty. Abigail tells Mercy what to say when she is questioned about what they were doing in the forest. Abigail tells Mercy that Parris knows that they were dancing in the forest.

Mary Warren enters the room and tells Abigail that everyone in Salem blames witchcraft for Betty's illness. Mary is worried that everyone in the town will label Abigail and the other girls as witches. The three girls begin to argue and Betty starts to wake up.

Abigail tells Betty that Parris knows everything they did in the woods. Betty confronts Abigail and accuses her of not admitting that she drank blood. She also accuses Abigail of casting a spell on Elizabeth Proctor, in an attempt to kill her.

ACT 1 SCENE 2 CONTINUED...

Threatening to practice witchcraft on Betty, Mercy, and Mary Warren if they tell anyone about the spell, Abigail instructs them to say that they only danced, that Tituba raised Ruth's sisters from the dead, and that nothing else happened in the forest. Betty collapses again, unconscious.

ACT 1 SCENE 4...

The scene starts out with Betty screaming. Mrs. Putnam interprets Betty's behavior as a sign of witchcraft. Rebecca Nurse (The Nurses on our character map) tells everyone to be quiet and stands by Betty until she calms down.

Ruth (The Putnam's daughter who had also fallen ill in scene 1) is unconscious. Mr. Putnam asks Rebecca Nurse to visit with Ruth and attempt to wake her. Rebecca tells Mr. Putnam and the others that Betty and Ruth's condition will pass, and she warns Parris that looking to witchcraft would be a dangerous explanation for the girls' behavior.

Mr. Putnam says that witchcraft is to blame for the loss of his 7 infants that have died. Mrs. Putnam becomes enraged towards Rebecca. She is suspicious because Rebecca hasn't lost any of her children.

ACT 1 SCENE 4 CONTINUED...

Proctor criticizes Parris for preaching about money rather than God. Putnam, Proctor, and Giles Corey argue with Parris about his salary and his expectations as the minister of Salem. Parris is convinced that a faction within Salem is determined to get rid of him.

The men start discussing lawsuits and land rights. Putnam accuses Proctor of stealing wood from his land, but Proctor says he bought the land five months before from Goody Nurse's husband. Mr. Putnam states that Goody Nurse's husband did not own the land because it belonged to Putnam's grandfather. Proctor counters Putnam.

ACT 1 SCENE 5...

Reverend Hale arrives at Parris' house. The Putnams want Hale to see to Ruth's condition but he tends to Betty first. Hale tells everyone that he will not see to Betty's condition unless everyone accepts the fact that witchcraft might not be to blame.

Mrs. Putnam mentions that Tituba can raise spirits from the dead. Mrs. Putnam admits that she sent Ruth to Tituba so that Tituba would raise Ruth's sisters from the dead in order to figure out who murdered them.

ACT 1 SCENE 5 CONTINUED...

Abigail blames Tituba for everything that took place in the woods.

Hale tells Tituba that she can redeem herself by admitting that she has been working with the Devil and telling him the names of the others who were involved. She admits that she has seen the Devil and that Sarah Good and Goody Osburn were with him.

ACT 1 SCENE 5 CONTINUED...

Abigail admits that she has given herself to the Devil by writing her name in his book. Abigail renounces the Devil and wants to be redeemed as well. She says that she also saw Sarah Good and Goody Osburn with the Devil as well as Bridget Bishop.

Betty wakes up and claims that she saw George Jacobs and Goody Howe with the Devil. Act 1 ends with Abigail and Betty naming people they have seen with the Devil.

NEW CHARACTERS...

Sarah Good—Beggar in Salem. First accused of witchcraft.

Goody Osburn—Ann Putnam accuses her of witchcraft at the end of Act 1.

Giles Corey—Resident of Salem. Defends his wife who is accused of witchcraft.

Martha Corey—Giles Corey's wife. Accused of witchcraft.

Francis Nurse—Farmer and landowner in Salem. He is a respected member of the community often called upon to settle disagreements between individuals.

NEW CHARACTERS CONTINUED...

Ezekiel Cheever—Appointed by the court to assist in arresting accused individuals.

Marshal Herrick—Appointed by the court to arrest the accused individuals.

ACT 2 SCENE 1...

The scene starts out at the house of John Proctor. John and Elizabeth are having dinner. Elizabeth starts to question John about why he is late to dinner and where he has been. Elizabeth tells John that their servant Mary Warren has been in Salem all day. This angers John because he told Mary not to go to Salem. Elizabeth tells John that Mary has been named an official of the court. John learns that four magistrates have been named to the General Court and the Deputy Governor of the Province is serving as the judge. Four people have been arrested for witchcraft.

ACT 2 SCENE 1 CONTINUED...

Elizabeth tells John that he must go to Salem and reveal that Abigail is a fake. Proctor is hesitant about this and says that he can't prove what Abigail said because they were alone when they talked. Elizabeth gets upset that John admits he had been alone with Abigail. John becomes angry because he feels that Elizabeth is accusing him of being dishonest and is suspicious that he has become involved with Abigail again. Elizabeth is angry because she feels that John is not being honest with her.

ACT 2 SCENE 2...

Mary Warren returns to the Proctors from Salem. John is furious that she has been gone. Mary tells him that she will be gone every day because she is now an official of the court. Mary gives Elizabeth a poppet (doll) she made while in court. Mary goes on to tell the Proctors that 39 people are now in jail and Goody Osburn will hang because she didn't confess to witchcraft. This angers Proctor because he feels that people are being condemned without solid evidence. Mary informs them that Elizabeth was accused of being a witch but she defended her and the court dismissed the accusation.

ACT 2 SCENE 2 CONTINUED...

Elizabeth tells John that Abigail wants to get rid of her. Elizabeth now believes Abigail will accuse her of witchcraft and have her executed. Elizabeth realizes that Abigail wants to get rid of her so that she can take her place as John's wife.

Elizabeth asks John to speak to Abigail and tell her that no chance exists of him marrying Abigail if something were to happen to her. The scene ends with the Proctors arguing.

ACT 2 SCENE 3...

Hale visits the Proctors. Hale tells them that Elizabeth was named in court. Hale questions Proctor about his church attendance. Hale asks John to recite the Ten Commandments. John can only recall nine of them and Elizabeth reminds him of the one that he forgot. The one forbidding adultery. John doesn't unintentionally forget this commandment. This creates irony because the audience, along with John and Elizabeth, realizes that he really forgot the commandment when he became involved with Abigail. John hasn't incorporated this commandment into his life, so it doesn't remain in his memory.

ACT 2 SCENE 3 CONTINUED...

John informs Hale that Abigail admitted to him that witchcraft wasn't responsible for Betty and Ruth's ailments. Hale asks John to testify that Abigail is a fraud. Hale then questions Elizabeth in an attempt to see if she believes in witchcraft. Giles Corey and Francis Nurse arrive to tell John, Elizabeth, and Hale that the court has arrested both Martha Corey and Rebecca Nurse for witchcraft.

ACT 2 SCENE 4...

Ezekiel Cheever and Marshal Herrick (appointed by the court to arrest those who are accused of witchcraft) come to the Proctor's residence with a warrant for Elizabeth's arrest. Cheever discovers the poppet that Mary Warren made for Elizabeth. He finds a needle inside of the doll. Cheever tells John and Hale that Abigail has charged Elizabeth with attempted murder. Cheever says that Abigail claims she was stabbed with a needle while eating at Parris' house. Abigail accused Elizabeth's spirit of stabbing her.

Mary Warren tells Hale that she made the doll while she was in court and stored the needle inside of it. Mary Warren also says that Abigail saw her sewing because she sat next to her.

ACT 2 SCENE 4 CONTINUED...

The men take Elizabeth into custody and Hale, Corey, and Nurse leave.

John tells Mary Warren that she must testify against Abigail. Mary tells John that she fears testifying against Abigail because Abigail and the others will turn against her. John discovers that Mary knows that he was once involved with Abigail.

ACT 3...

Some more new characters!:

Deputy Governor Danforth: A special judge serving in the Salem court. He signs death sentences for those who refuse to confess their crimes. He refuses to delay any execution for fear that he will appear weak and unsure of how to proceed.

Judge Hathorne: A judge in the Salem court.

ACT 3 SCENE 1...

The scene begins at the Salem courthouse. The court questions and accuses Martha Corey of witchcraft. Giles Corey interrupts the proceedings and declares that Thomas Putnam is reaching out for land. He is taken to the vestry room.

Judge Hathorne, Deputy Governor Danforth, Ezekiel Cheever, and Parris enter the vestry room. Corey tells them that he owns six hundred acres of land and a large quantity of timber. Corey also states that the court is holding his wife by mistake. Corey tells Danforth that he asked Hale why Martha reads books, but never accused her of witchcraft.

ACT 3 SCENE 1 CONTINUED...

Corey Giles and Francis Nurse both state that they have evidence for the court. They have been waiting three days to present the evidence. Danforth tells them that they must file the appropriate paperwork in order for the court to hear them. Francis Nurse tells Danforth that the girls are pretending.

ACT 3 SCENE 2...

John Proctor and Mary Warren enter the vestry room. John tells Danforth that Mary didn't see spirits. Mary has a signed deposition but Danforth refuses to take it. He does agree to speak with her though.

Danforth asks Mary about the spirits she saw. She tells Danforth that she and the other girls only pretended to see spirits. Danforth questions John to see if he is trying to undermine the court. He warns John that anything he is hiding will come out. John states that the court is condemning people based on children's accusations.

ACT 3 SCENE 2 CONTINUED...

Danforth tells John that Elizabeth claims to be pregnant. The court said that this is not true. John tells Danforth that Elizabeth would never lie. Danforth agrees to let Elizabeth live for another year because of the unborn child.

John tells Danforth that Martha Corey and Rebecca Nurse are good, upstanding women. Ninety one people have signed a document saying so. Parris argues that the court should summon these people because they are questioning the court. Francis Nurse is upset because he said that no retaliation would come if they signed the document.

ACT 3 SCENE 2 CONTINUED...

Danforth reads Giles Corey's deposition. Thomas Putnam is brought into the room. Corey accuses Putnam of prompting his daughter to falsely accuse George Jacobs (landowner in Salem) of witchcraft. Corey claims that Putnam wants George Jacobs to hang because anyone hung for witchcraft loses all property rights. Putnam is the only one in Salem who can afford to buy Jacobs' land. Putnam denies this and Danforth demands that Giles Corey give him proof of this. Corey refuses to name the person he heard this from and ends up arrested for contempt of court.

Hales tells Danforth that people fear the court. This angers Danforth and he says that only people who are guilty should

ACT 3 SCENE 2 CONTINUED...

be afraid of the court. Hale disagrees and tells Danforth that not everyone the girls are accusing can be guilty.

Danforth reads Mary Warren's deposition. It states that she never saw the Devil and that the other girls are lying. Hale states that a lawyer should present John Proctor's claim. Hale and Danforth argue about this. After reading the deposition, Parris demands that the court allow him to question Mary Warren. Danforth becomes angry with Parris and denies his request.

Danforth tells Mary that she must tell the truth. He also tells her that she will go to jail for committing perjury whether during her previous testimony or now.

ACT 3 SCENE 3...

Danforth summons Abigail and three of the girls into the vestry room, where he questions Abigail. Abigail denies Mary Warren's claim that she is lying and that she falsely accused Elizabeth Proctor.

Danforth learns that the girls danced in the woods. Hathorne questions Mary Warren and asks her to pretend to faint. When she isn't able to, he insists that she is lying because she can't faint as she claims to have done before.

Danforth asks Abigail if she could have imagined the spirits. Abigail denies any possibility of this. Suddenly Abigail and the other girls claim that Mary Warren is sending out her spirit against them.

ACT 3 SCENE 3 CONTINUED...

John Proctor becomes angry with Abigail and tells the court about their affair. He then defends Elizabeth saying that she is not capable of lying. The court summons Elizabeth and she notices that John and Abigail both have their backs to her. When Danforth asks why Elizabeth fired Abigail she lies and doesn't tell of the affair between John and Abigail.

Abigail and the girl begin accusing Mary Warren and she claims that John forced her to say that Abigail is lying. Danforth asks John if he is in league with the Devil and places him under arrest. Hale denounces the proceedings and quits the court.