

The Crucible by Arthur Miller

1. According to Miller on p. 2, what are some of the ways his play differs from the actual history of the witch trials?

2. What does Miller tell us on p. 4 about novelists and the Puritans?

What does this tell us about the Puritan mind set?

3. What does Miller say the Puritans “found it necessary to” do once they arrived in America?

Do you find this ironic or hypocritical? Explain.

4. What does Miller say on pp. 5-6 about *individuality*?

5. How and why did the Puritans of 1692 differ from those of earlier generations?

6. What is a “theocracy”?

7. What does Miller say the witch trials were “a perverse manifestation” of?

8. Explain what is meant by Miller’s statement that
It is still impossible for man to organize his social life without repressions, and the
balance has yet to be struck between order and freedom. (p. 7)

Where else can we see such a statement played out in the history of this country?

9. What trait does Miller say we inherited from the Puritans? (p. 20)

10. What issue do the people of Salem seem most at odds over in Act I?

11. What personal catastrophe has Goody Putnam experienced?

12. What is “the concept of unity” as Miller explains it on p. 33?

According to him, what few people are able to grasp this concept?

What was the cosmology of pre-Christians?

Why did the creation of a “Devil” become necessary or desirable? For what may a “Devil” be used as a weapon?

13. Miller states on p. 34 that “in America any man who is not reactionary in his views is open to the charge of alliance with the Red hell.” What does “reactionary” mean?

What is the “Red hell”?

Put Miller’s statement into your own words.

14. According to Giles Corey, what odd thing has his wife been doing?

Considering the Puritan mindset, why will this thing be problematic?

15. Explain the situation with Abigail, John Proctor, and Elizabeth Proctor.

16. Explain what happened during the “McCarthy Era.”

17. On p. 79, what does Hale suggest to Proctor as the cause of all the troubles?

Although Proctor replies, “I never heard no murder done in Salem,” which commandment has been broken?

How is this crime—not in a supernatural way, but in a very human way—responsible for all that has happened?

18. What does Reverend Hale come to realize by the end of Act III?

In Act IV, what is his motivation for trying to get people whom he *knows* are innocent to confess to witchcraft anyway? Is it for their own good or for his? Explain.

19. Explain why John Proctor changes his mind and does not confess.