The Crucible
Act II study guide

What is the setting of Act II? And how many days have passed since the end of Act I?

- The Proctors’ home
- Eight days

From the beginning of Act II, what can you tell about the relationship between John and Elizabeth Proctor?

- It is strained and awkward. They are having a difficult time making conversation because John’s affair with Abigail is still hanging over their marriage

How has Mary Warren changed since being appointed to the court?

- Although described by John as being a mouse, her appointment to the court has given her power and importance, to the point where she refuses to do what she is told to do

According to Mary Warren, what happens to people when they confess to witchcraft?

- They will be saved from hanging

What does Elizabeth want John to do, which John wants to “think on”?

- To go to Salem to tell the court that Abigail is a fraud
What does John say keeps him from telling the court what he knows? What other reasons may John have for not wanting to tell the court about Abigail?

- He had no witnesses to Abigail’s statement that the children’s sickness had nothing to do with witchcraft
- He is afraid he may have to admit to his affair with Abigail
- Also, he still has feelings for Abigail

Why is Elizabeth upset over John’s hesitating to go to Salem to tell what he knows about Abigail?

- She fears that he still has feelings for her

Why is Elizabeth suspicious of her husband?

- Because he lied about seeing Abigail alone

What does Mary Warren make for Elizabeth while in court? What significant role does this ultimately play in Act II?

- A poppet
- It is used as evidence against Elizabeth, who is accused of being a witch

How does Mary save herself from a whipping from John?

- She tells Proctor she saved Elizabeth’s life in court

What does Elizabeth think Abigail stands to gain by accusing her of witchcraft?

- That, with her death, Abigail can marry John Proctor
Who comes to the door as John and Elizabeth are arguing? What does he want?

- Reverend Hale
- He wants to question the couple about Elizabeth's name being mentioned in court

What reasons does Proctor give for not attending church regularly?

- At first he says he hasn't been attending regularly because his wife has been sick
- However, he admits he hasn't been attending because he dislikes Rev. Parris and doesn't see the light of God in him

When Rev. Hale visits, what things seem to go against the Proctors?

- Hale notes that they have not attended church regularly
- One of their boys is not baptized
- John stumbles over the 10 Commandments
- They question the existence of witches

What commandment does John forget and why is this ironic? Why do you believe John has forgotten this particular commandment?

- Thou shalt not commit adultery
- It is the one for which he is guilty
- He feels guilty over the affair with Abigail

Why does Hale argue that Proctor's forgetting a commandment is a serious matter?

- Hale compares theology to a fortress and says that Proctor's forgetting even one commandment is serious because even one small crack can bring down a fortress

What reason does John give Rev. Hale as to why one of his children was not baptized?

- He says he sees no light of God in Rev. Parris, so he refuses to allow him to baptize his child
What important information does John reveal to Rev. Hale?

- That Abigail told him that the girls’ dancing in the woods had nothing to do with witchcraft

What proof has been offered of Martha Corey’s witchcraft?

- Walcott says he cannot keep a pig alive because Martha bewitches them with her books

Why does the needle convince Cheever that Elizabeth is a witch?

- Abigail accused Elizabeth’s Proctor’s familiar spirit of pushing a needle in her stomach, and Cheever believes that Elizabeth pushed the needle in the doll, therefore harming Abigail

With what crime has Rebecca Nurse been charged? Why is this “final proof” that the town has gone mad?

- The marvelous and supernatural murder of Goody Putnam’s babies
- Because, if such a pious and respected woman as Rebecca Nurse can be accused of witchcraft, then no one is safe from being accused of witchcraft

What connection is there between the poppet given Elizabeth by Mary and Elizabeth’s arrest?

- Cheever finds a needle stuck in the doll’s stomach, and Abigail had a needle stuck in her abdomen.

To what biblical event does Proctor refer when he alludes to Pontius Pilate when describing Hale? What does this suggest about Hale?

- Pontius Pilate, when given the opportunity to decide Jesus’ fate, washed his hands of the decision and allowed the people to choose whether or not to crucify him
- That Hale is a coward for not doing anything to try and stop the arrest of so many people on charges of witchcraft
### What could happen to John Proctor if he admits to an affair with Abigail?
- He could be charged with lechery (adultery), which was a serious offense for Puritans.

### Elizabeth’s willingness to go with Cheever shows that she is what?
- That she is strong in her faith.

### What does Proctor question as Elizabeth is being arrested?
- Just how innocent the accusers are.

### Why does Mary Warren refuse to testify in court following Elizabeth’s arrest?
- She’s afraid that Abigail will retaliate and try to hurt her.
- She also warns John Proctor that Abigail may accuse him of lechery.