

Act Three Questions – *The Crucible*

1. As the act opens, who is being interrogated, and on what charge?
2. What is Mary Warren now prepared to tell the court?
3. What three facts about John Proctor does Ezekiel Cheever feel compelled to reveal to Deputy Governor Danforth?
4. What compromise, or deal, does Deputy Governor Danforth offer to John Proctor? What is Proctor's response?
5. How do Judge Hathorne and Reverend Parris persuade Deputy Governor Danforth to respond to the deposition that lists 91 supporters of Rebecca Nurse, Elizabeth Proctor and Martha Corey?
6. What does Giles Corey allege in his deposition about the behavior of Thomas Putnam? According to Corey, what are the Putnam's motives? What legal maneuver does Deputy Governor Danforth use to declare Corey in contempt of court?
7. At what point does Reverend John Hale begin to show that he is less satisfied with the court's procedures?
8. How does Abigail Williams threaten Deputy Governor Danforth? Why does she hold so much power over this court?
9. What confession does John Proctor make in open court? How does Deputy Governor Danforth test the truth of this confession? What is the ironic result? Why does the court believe Abigail more than Proctor?
10. What two devices do Abigail Williams and the other girls use to drive Mary Warren over the brink of hysteria?
11. What happens to John Proctor at the end of the act? How does Reverend John Hale show his disapproval?
12. What device does author Arthur Miller use for the dialogue at the beginning of this act? What might this device suggest about the tone of the legal proceedings that follow?
13. It is not until this act that Arthur Miller introduces one of the most important characters in the play, Deputy Governor Danforth. What are some of the elements of his complex personality in this act? How does the portrait of Danforth contrast, for example, with the characterizations in this act of Reverend Samuel Parris and Judge Hathorne?
14. This act is the most legalistic act in the play, filled with claims and counterclaims. Many of the arguments and decisions in the Salem court depend on faulty logic and result in a perversion of justice. Author and Playwright Arthur Miller wants the audience to see parallels between many of these actions and the events of the Senator Joseph McCarthy witch-hunts of the 1950's. For example, Deputy Governor Danforth's order to arrest "for examination" those who signed the deposition in favor of Rebecca Nurse, Martha Corey and Elizabeth Proctor might be regarded as parallel to the notorious guilt-by-association smears of the McCarthy period.
 - a. When Danforth rejects Reverend John Hale's request that legal counsel present Mary Warren's deposition how is the governor's logic faulty? (Hint: "The pure in heart need no lawyers.")
 - b. What do you think about the propriety of Danforth's insistence that Giles Corey name the anonymous informant who accused Thomas Putnam?
 - c. How might Reverend John Hale be said to identify the major underlying problem with the court's justice when he says, "There is a prodigious fear of this court in the county"?
15. This act contains much irony. Explain how the following are ironic and what type(s) of irony are present:
 - a. John Proctor's confession
 - b. John Proctor's passionate outburst at the end of the act, together with the court's interpretation of his remarks
 - c. Arthur Miller's comment in the stage directions that Abigail, "out of her infinite charity, reaches out and draws the sobbing Mary to her."
16. Although this act centers on the subjects of hypocrisy and hysteria in the court proceedings, we are also presented with several examples of courage and the assertion of integrity. How are the following characters linked with the subject of courage in this act: Mary Warren, John Proctor, Giles Corey, and Reverend John Hale?