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English Novels ***The Crucible*** Unit Packet

Text: *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller

**Unit Overview:**

o        Vocabulary study: Look up definitions for twenty words (due when packet is due). Small glossary of other words given. Background notes: students are expected to take notes in the space given

o        Character study: for the main characters, tell as much as you can about each.

o        Study questions: answer as we read; these are due when the entire packet is due.

o        Dramatic reading: It is expected that each student participate in the reading of this play. There are twenty-two roles, but we will share large roles so everyone has a part.

o        Test: Part of Unit 1 Test

**Unit Packet:** 50 points

**Background notes**

**Author:**

**Drama:**

**Dramatic structure:**

1.

2.

3.

**A crucible is:**

**Puritans believed:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

**Why was the idea of possession accepted?**

**Themes:**

1.

2.

3.

4.

**McCarthy Hearings:**

During the McCarthy hearings (1950’s) many innocent people were accused of being traitors (communists, mainly) to our country and, while they were not physically harmed, their professional and personal lives were ruined by this adverse publicity, which was often untrue. During this period also (as in Salem) many supposed “good people” participated in the accusations against others because they were afraid that if they refused to do so their own lives would be ruined. Miller is thus drawing a parallel between two periods of hysteria in our country, though far apart in time, that are dangerously close in ideology. (Guidon study materials)

**Vocabulary study:** Glossary: these words are defined for you.

1.      theocracy: governed by religion

2.      providence: God’s will; God’s intervention in human affairs

3.      Puritanical: strict in morality and religion; this term has come about since the reign of the Puritans

4.      inculcation: impress with insistent urging; convince

5.      propitiation: win good will

6.      ameliorate: improve

7.      theology: the study of a religious doctrine; what a particular sect believes

8.      vestry: the room in the church where robes are kept

9.      apparition: ghost

10.  trafficked: have dealings with

11.  blink: tolerate

**Vocabulary study:** You need to define the following twenty words.

1.      dissembling

2.      conjure

3.      vindictive

4.      propriety

5.      diametrically

6.      defamation

7.      malign

8.      fiend

9.      iniquity

10.  malevolence

11.  contempt

12.  prosecutor

13.  deposition

14.  plaintiff

15.  guile

16.  reprieve

17.  indictment

18.  conspiracy

19.  purged

20.  penitence

**Character study:** For each of the following characters, write who she/he is, what relationship to other characters, any important character or personality traits and any other important information.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | Who is he/she? | Relationship to whom? | Problem? Acts of courage/cowardice? |
| Reverend Samuel Parris  |          |   |   |
| Betty Parris   |        |   |   |
| Abigail Williams  |          |   |   |
| Tituba  |        |   |   |
| Mrs. Ann Putnam  |         |   |   |
| Thomas Putnam  |          |   |   |
| John Proctor  |          |   |   |
| Elizabeth Proctor  |      |   |   |
| Rebecca Nurse  |   |   |   |
| Reverend John Hale  |   |   |   |

Think of what you mean when you use the words “honor,” “truth,” “justice,” or “courage.” Choose one character that exemplifies your idea of one of these ideals and explain how he/she lives up to your standards (or do the reverse: fails to live up to your standards).

**Study Questions:** Answer each fully (sometimes in sentences, sometimes the answer is just a word or two). Keep these questions out and fill in your answers as we read and not when we finish. Answers to some of the questions might be found in the exposition sections.

**Act I**

1. What was Samuel Parris’s attitude toward children?

2. Why do you think Rev. Parris has many enemies?

3. After Parris begins to believe his daughter to be afflicted by witchcraft, what is Thomas Putnam’s advice to him?

4. What truths come out when the adults leave the girls alone?

5. What’s going on between Abigail and John Proctor?

6. Why does Betty start screaming?

7. Why are some people, including John Proctor, inclined to stay away from Sabbath meeting?

8. Why does Hale believe the Devil would strike Rev. Parris’s house?

9. Though Rev. Hale is trying to get Tituba to name her accomplices, who is the first person to actually mention names?

10. Why isn’t it difficult for Ann Putnam to believe that Goody Osburn is a witch?

**Act II**

11. What do you know about the relationship between John and Elizabeth Proctor from the stage action and opening dialogue of Act II?

12. Describe the power Abigail has in the court room.

13. What’s going on between the Proctors on pages 52-53 (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_)?

14. Though Mary Warren cannot say who accused Elizabeth Proctor, who do you believe accused her and why?

15. Ironically, which commandment can John not remember?

16. John Proctor seems to be the only voice of reason in the confusing end of Act II. What are some examples to support this idea?

17. Why is Mary Warren afraid of telling the truth about Abigail, for herself and for John?

**Act III**

18. Over and over, Danforth says that the good have nothing to fear. What evidence can you give to show that the opposite is true?

19. On pages 95-96 (\_\_\_\_\_\_\_) Danforth gives the premise for judging a witch. Summarize his guidelines.

20. Mary Warren's testimony is destroyed in the end because she cannot do something. What? How does she explain the problem?

21. Finally, Proctor admits that he and Abigail have been lovers. This truth could be the end of Abigail’s control. Why isn’t it?

22. What is the importance of John Proctor’s last speech (in Act III)?

**Act IV**

23. What is Hale’s mission in Act IV?

24. Parris tells Danforth, “You cannot hang this sort” (123). What does he mean?

25. Why won’t Danforth pardon the prisoners?

26. Do you think Elizabeth Proctor would confess if she were in her husband’s place? Explain.

27. In the end, what is it that is of utmost importance to John Proctor?