*The Crucible* by Arthur Miller Act 4



**Setting:** A cell in Salem that fall

* **Sarah Good** and **Tituba** are so caught up in the hysteria that they believe their own confessions and think the Devil has come for them to bring them to Barbados, but it’s only Herrick, the marshall.
* **Herrick** reports that Hale has been back to pray with the prisoners 🡪 this greatly displeases Danforth
* **Danforth** and **Hathorne** at jail – discover that **Hale and Parris** have been visiting with the prisoners together including **John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse**
* **Hale** has been trying to convince the accused to confess in order to be saved – this pleases Danforth (***even if he realizes the error of his ways, Danforth can’t admit it without looking foolish***)

**Missing Abigail, Nearby Riots, None Like Them Hanged Before:**

Parris tells Danforth that **Abigail stole 31 pounds** from him and **ran off with Mercy Lewis** – Parris figures they ***“fear to keep in Salem any more” – \*\*\**it’s the first evidence that Abigail is not as virtuous as she seemed and puts her testimony into question**

**Rebellion in Andover** regarding witch trials sparks **fears of similar rebellion in Salem** now that upstanding citizens like Rebecca and Proctor are scheduled to hang –

Parris: ***“these people have great weight yet in the town”*** (133) – their hangings will incite a riot – Parris, ***“It were another sort that hanged till now”*** (133).

Parris asks Danforth to postpone hangings

* **Parris** – if ONE confesses it casts doubt on the others, but if NONE confess, people will believe they’re innocent:

***“for if he [Hale] bring even one of these to God, that confession surely damns the others in the public eye, and none may doubt more that they are all linked to Hell. This way, unconfessed and claiming innocence, doubts are multiplied, many honest people will weep for them, and our good purpose is lost in their tears” (****134)*.

* **Danforth refuses** to postpone – Parris admits that he found a dagger on his door **“You cannot hang this sort. There is danger for me. I dare not step outside at night!”** – **Parris advocates for the prisoners b/c he fears for himself.**
* **Hale enters** – exhausted, sorrowful, and direct – **tells Danforth he MUST pardon them**
* Danforth feels like he has to stick to his decree: ***“I cannot pardon these when twelve are already hanged for the same crime. It is not just…the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die this morning. Postponement now speaks a floundering on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now”*** (136).

**Hale** regarding the state of the town:

***“there are orphans wandering from house to house; abandoned cattle bellow on the highroads, the stink of rotting crops hangs everywhere, and no man knows when the harlots’ cry will end his life – and you wonder yet if rebellion’s spoke? Better you should marvel how they do not burn your province!”*** (137) 🡪 Rebellion?! Danforth’s lucky they’re not coming after him and burning down his town!

* **Hale** has come to ***“do the Devil’s work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie themselves”*** (137) – he’s trying to convince them to make false confessions.
* They bring **in Elizabeth to convince Proctor to confess** – she’s 6 months prior to delivering.
* **Hale feels responsible** for the deaths:
  + ***“I came into this village like a bridegroom to his beloved, bearing gifts of high religion; the very crowns of holy law I brought, and what I touched with my bright confidence, it died; and where I turned the eye of my great faith, blood flowed p. Beware, Goody Proctor – cleave to no faith when faith brings blood. It is mistaken law that leads you to sacrifice”*** – his religion and actions brought blood and death, but it’s intended to bring light and life (138).

**Hale to Elizabeth** *“Let him give his lie. Quail not before God’s judgment in this, for it may well be God damns a liar less than he that throws his life away for pride”* (139).

**Danforth to Elizabeth** – he’s shocked that she’s not upset that Proctor will die at sunrise, ***“your dry eyes now would be sufficient evidence that you delivered up your soul to Hell! A very ape would weep at such calamity! Have the devil dried up any tear of pity on you?”*** (139)

They bring in Proctor “(…*his eye caught by the sight of Elizabeth. The emotion flowing between them prevents anyone from speaking for an instant*”) (140).

* The emotion between them is overwhelming –

**GILE’S FATE:**

Elizabeth tells Proctor about **Giles’ death** “***He were not hanged. He would not answer aye or nay to his indictment; for if he denied the charge they’d hang him surely, and auction out his property. So he stand mute, and died Christian under the law. And so his sons will have his farm. It is the law, for he could not be condemned a wizard without he answer the indictment, aye or nay”*** (142) 🡪 they pressed him with heavy stones and he only said, “More weight” and died.

* **Proctor looks to** **Elizabeth** for guidance as to whether or not he should confess, but she said, ***“As you will, I would have it”*** – she wants him living, but the decision is his (142).

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**Proctor’s Complex Character:**

-Doesn’t want to go to the scaffold like a saint and martyr because he doesn’t see himself as a good man give his past infidelity/sins ***“I cannot mount the gibbet like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man. My honesty is broke, Elizabeth; I am no good man. Nothing’s spoiled by giving them this lie that were not rotten long before”*** (143) – John figures, he’s already sinned, why not lie too

**John & Elizabeth:**

Eliz says that his goodness is evident in the fact that he has not confessed till now, but he says he’s kept quiet out of spite, “It is hard to give a lie to dogs” (143) and asks for her forgiveness.

She replies, “***It is not for me to give, John, I am”*** and says she cannot forgive him until he forgives himself – **she acknowledges his goodness and takes some of the blame for what happened saying, *“I have read my heart this three month, John. I have sins of my own to count. It needs a cold wife to prompt lechery”*** (143) 🡪 she says she drove him to it.

* She says she never felt deserving of love, ***“I counted myself so plain, so poorly made, no honest love could come to me! Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. It were a cold house I kept!”*** (144)
* She weeps, tells him to make his own decision and let him be the only judge of himself. “I never knew such goodness in the world!” (144) 🡪 **their relationship is the best it’s been**

-He says he wants his life, ***“Let Rebecca go like a saint; for me it is fraud!”*** (145) – he said to confess is evil and says that Elizabeth would never give them such a lie***, “You would not; if tongs of fire were singeing you you would not! It is evil. Good, then – it is evil, and I do it!”*** (145).

**Proctor’s Confession:**

Danforth takes his confession as they write it down to be posted on the church door – they bring in **Rebecca and she’s astonished*, “Oh, John – God send his mercy on you!”*** (146)

-He will NOT say that he saw anyone else with the Devil – **he won’t implicate anyone else.**

**Danforth** angers, *“I am not empowered to trade your life for a lie. You have more certainly seen some person with the Devil. Mr. Proctor, a score of people have already testified they saw this woman with the Devil”* (147)…**Proctor won’t sell out others to save himself (a testament to his good character): “I speak my own sins; I cannot judge another. I have no tongue for it.”**

**PROCTOR’S INTERNAL CONFLICT: TO SIGN OR NOT TO SIGN**

**-Proctor hesitant to sign his name to his confession, but Danforth insists : “(His breast heaving with agonized breathing, Proctor now lays the paper down and signs his name.)” 🡪 His INTERNAL CONFLICT**

**-Proctor takes back the signed confession,**

***“God does not need my name nailed upon the church! God sees my name; God knows how black my sins are! It is enough!...You will not use me! I am no Sarah Good or Tituba, I am John Proctor! You will not use me! It is no part of salvation that you should use me! …I have three children – how may I teach them to walk like men in the world, and I sold my friends?...I blacken all of them when this is nailed to the church the very day they hang for silence!”* (149-150)**

**WHY??**

***“Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because I lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!” (150)***

* Tears up the confession
* Parris and Elizabeth weep – Proctor says to Eliz, “Give them no tear! Tears pleasure them! Show honor now, show a stony heart and sink them with it!” (kisses her with great passion) (151)

**Danforth** cries out for their hanging!

Parris and Hale beg Elizabeth to try and talk him into confessing publicly; Hale says says, ***“It is pride, it is vanity”*** (152)

\*\*\*Elizabeth: **“He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!”** (152)