

Script 1

Text: **The Crucible**

Question: Choose from a play a scene in which an important truth is revealed.

Briefly explain what the important truth is and assess the significance of its revelation to your understanding of theme or character.

1. Read section “A” of the essay.

On your own or with a partner, jot down first impressions:

Promising features:
Any worrying features:

2. Now read the remainder of the essay.

Your notes:

Your Category/Mark

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Established Category/Mark

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Presenter’s comments:

3

what the important truth is

significance revelation is to understanding character

Proctor had an affair

individual conscience
love for Elizabeth

with Abigail - it is important

inner crisis - find good within himself 'I am no good man'

as could have ended chaos but delayed - too much time for manipulative girls + corrupt court

'goodness will not die for me'

A
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Arthur Miller, in his play The Crucible reveals

the important truth that John Proctor had an affair

with the manipulative Abigail Williams during Act III

in the dramatic courtroom scene. This truth is a

vital contribution to the play as it provides the

evidence that the ~~witch~~ witchhunts with which the

whole play is about are in fact a result of Abigail's

plan to remove Elizabeth Proctor from John's life

and take her place. It is as John says a 'whore's

vengeance' despite the fact he fails to prove it. The

revelation of this truth is significant to our

understanding of the character of John Proctor -

his individual crisis and conscience and his

love for Elizabeth.

Miller develops the idea that the revelation of

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the truth of John Proctor's affair could end all of

A
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the accusations of witchcraft in Salem and bring the town back to order thus making it important. However, John delays revealing this truth for fear of loosing his good reputation in the town. Reputation is a key theme in the play and influences many characters however John's original prioritising of his reputation over revealing the truth has the most significant consequences. By the time John decides to reveal the truth Abigail and the girls have had time to manipulate the court so it is now corrupt and therefore when the truth is revealed it appears to be false.

Despite Proctor's failure to convince the court he is telling the truth his choice to do so reveals many aspects of his character. Firstly he sacrifices his reputation in order to save his wife and friends. Reputation is one of the most important themes within the play and Miller develops this in order for the audience to understand Proctor's willingness to sacrifice this in the climatic court scene when he admits he had 'known her' (Abigail). The importance of reputation

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can be seen in the character of Parris when he ~~first~~ discovers the girls dancing in the woods. Rather than concern himself with dealing with the serious act, as it was in this period of time, Parris is more worried about how this may affect his reputation in the town. He asks Abigail 'You're name, it is entirely white in the village, isn't it?' as he knows if it is not he would loose his ~~reput~~ position in the community. Proctor values his reputation in the same way and therefore when he chooses to reveal the truth and destroy his name he gives up one of the most important things in his life. He as he said himself 'made a bell of my honour'.

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Proctor's revelation of the truth is also very significant as he was previously on a quest to find some goodness left within him after the act of lechery. He claims 'I am no good man' and is constantly trying to do the right thing and make the correct decisions to show he is not all bad to both himself and his wife Elizabeth. Proctor therefore faces

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inner crisis when his wife is accused of witchcraft and arrested. He faces the decision of sacrificing his name and saving Elizabeth or keeping his name and dealing with the guilt for not trying to save her. However, Proctor's individual conscience takes over as he realizes his wife is being punished because of his acts and claims 'goodness shall not die for me'. As a result Proctor's choice to reveal the truth of his affair and save his wife shows his commitment and care for her. In a way Proctor is also sacrificing his life for her as if he is found out to be lying he may also be arrested and hanged thus emphasising even further his love for Elizabeth.

This love ~~Proctor~~ shows in his decision to tell the truth in court and challenge the authority of it's previous judgements is particularly significant considering his relationship with Elizabeth was almost completely destroyed. Proctor had trouble dealing with his guilt with the affair and Elizabeth could not forgive him.

This frustrated Proctor as he felt consistently judged by her as he claims 'it is as though I come into a court when I come into this house'. Therefore Proctor's choice to sacrifice his important reputation to save his wife with whom his relationship was not steady was very risky but shows his bravery and determination to resolve the matter, and as he claims 'I mean to please you Elizabeth'.

To conclude, through the revelation of the important truth of John Proctor's affair with Abigail Williams Miller develops a clearer understanding of Proctor's character. The sacrifice of his reputation and possibly also his life makes clear his affections for his wife and disproves the fact that Abigail 'has an arrow in you yet John' as Elizabeth claimed to him she did. As a result John's actions not only reveal to the ~~read~~ audience his compassion but also to Elizabeth. His revelation of the affair also suggests that Proctor has dealt with his inner crisis and come to terms with his guilt thus

Enter
number
of
question

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Finding some goodness within himself. Therefore
the revelation of the truth contributes greatly
to the audience's appreciation and understanding
of the character of John Proctor.