

Relationship between john proctor and elizabeth proctor in crucible



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Arthur Miller uses stage directions to establish the relationship between John and Elizabeth in Act 2. The narrative at the beginning of the scene John is directed to season the stew that Elizabeth has made for their evening meal because he wasn't quite pleased with what she had made. This can be interpreted as a symbol which says that he is dissatisfied with Elizabeth because she is not good enough wife for him. This suggests that it is possible that he has not been pleased with Elizabeth for a long time.

When they advance to eat John compliments Elizabeth on how well it was seasoned, this is ironic due to the fact that we know that John seasoned the stew, though she did not know in the stage direction it says she "blushed with pleasure" this suggests that she delighted that she has satisfied him. After that she says "I took great care" which gives the audience the imprint that even though John is displeased with what Elizabeth has given him, she had tried her best to please him. This could be because John feels guilty about his affair with Abigail.

But it also gives the impression to the audience that there is a lack of communication between them because, John feels he has to hide the fact that he added seasoning, just to make Elizabeth happy. The stew almost represents how the couple's differences in character are reflected in their differences in taste. Miller is using dramatic irony here to show that with something so trivial there is still dishonesty between them; this is what has led to a breakdown of trust. It could also show that Proctor wants to make things better in his life: especially with Elizabeth.

Through this, the audience can see that Proctor really wants to make Elizabeth happy and doesn't want to put a foot wrong as he is saying as little

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as possible. Nevertheless there is a sturdy display of dissatisfaction In both Proctor and Elizabeth. Arthur Miller shows this whilst Proctor goes up to kiss Elizabeth, but instead of Elizabeth kissing him back she stands there and recieves it this displays a real divide between them as something as harmless as a kiss would not seem so awkward and unnatural in a healthy marriage.

But, the key thing here is that the awkwardness is not given voice, which makes it all the more noticeable. It is almost as though saying it out loud would. Proctor had said in act one that he had left Abigail behind, but instead in act 2 you can see the tension between them and a distance between them. Their relationship seems extremely fragile, unable to overcome the damage that Abigail has done to it. Even when Cheevers and Marshall had come to arrest Elizabeth, she is unable to respond to John's concern and increases attention.