

Crucible literary essay



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Literary Essay: The Crucible by Arthur Miller In The Crucible by Arthur Miller, Reverend Parris is a character in the play that is very static. His character does not evolve in many ways during the course of the play. By the end of the play, Reverend Parris is still selfish, stubborn, and greedy. However, one of his most prominent flaws at the beginning of the play is his selfishness. At the very beginning of the play, it is quite obvious that Parris is a selfish person. He only cares about himself, his reputation and materialistic things. (...) in the midst of such disruption, my own household is discovered to be the very center of some obscene practice. Abominations are done in the forest—" (pg. 11). This quote shows that he knows that the girls were dancing in the forest, but the thing he cares most about is that Abigail and Betty were part of it. These two girls were supposed to be taken care of by him; it is his duty to make them stay out of trouble. The thing he is worried for now is people now knowing they were part of this, and it will ultimately blacken his name for letting them do such a thing. (...) for now my ministry's at stake, my ministry and perhaps your cousin's life. " (pg. 11) This quote shows what he thinks about first, himself. He thinks about his ministry first and then after thinks about Betty and her life. His selfishness throughout the play does not change of course. An example of this is that in Act Three, he purposely lies/is very hesitant to telling the court that he saw the girls dancing in the forest. Proctor: " Mary. Now tell the Governor how you danced in the woods. Parris: " Excellency, since I come to Salem this man is blackening my name (...)" This quote shows that he tries to make Proctor look bad in court so that he gets what he wants. " They've come to overthrow the court, sir! "(pg. 88), " Such a Christian that will not come to church but once in a month! "(pg. 90). With these quotes, you can see that

Parris is trying to stop Proctor and make him look bad. He is doing this because he knows Proctor has something against him and he thinks that because of that, he thinks Proctor has been trying to make him look bad to the town.

At the very end of the play, Parris asks Danforth to postpone the hangings. One would think that this is an act of kindness, but of course he is only doing it for himself. He does this because he has found a dagger in his front door, and this makes him afraid that if people like John Proctor or Rebecca Nurse die, the town will revolt. Everything he does is for himself, and this proves that he does not change. As we move on, we see that Parris is not only selfish, but a stubborn man as well. Parris is a stubborn man throughout the play.

An example of his stubbornness is that he does not agree with the opinions of people, even if they are right. Even with all the proof that Proctor and his friends are giving the court; Parris is still too stubborn to believe it. Parris: " These people should be summoned for questioning. " Francis: " Mr. Danforth, I gave them all my word no harm would come to them for signings this. " Parris: " This is a clear attack upon the court! " (pg. 94, when Proctor and friends give Danforth the paper with the ninety-one farmers stating that their wives and others are innocent. This shows that Parris is stubborn when it comes to opinions that are the opposite of his. He automatically thinks and says that it was an attack upon the court, just because they have a different opinion from his. He will only give in to his stubbornness, for his selfishness. An example is in act four, when Parris tells Danforth to not hang Proctor, Nurse, and Corey. He only does so for selfish reasons, which still makes him

a stubborn man because he is doing to for himself. It is also noticeable that Parris is not only selfish, but he is greedy as well.

Parris shows signs of being greedy; he wants what he can get and more. "Where is my wood? My contract provides I be supplied with all my firewood. I am waiting since November for a stick, and even in November I had to show my frostbitten hands like some London beggar!" - "I regard six pound [a year for wood as part of my salary. I am paid little enough without I spend six pound on firewood]" (both on pg. 29) these quotes show that having things/possessions are important to him and he wants them right away, and he even wants more money on his pay to get these extras.

Another example of his greediness is that he wants to break tradition to obtain the deed to the house he is given because he is a minister. Proctor: "Mr. Parris, you are the first minister ever did demand the deed to this house" Parris: "Man! Don't a minister deserve a house to live in? Proctor: "to live in, yes. But to ask the ownership is like you shall own the meeting house itself (...)" (pg. 30). This shows that Parris wants what he wants, and he will try and get it. He wants to break tradition to own a house he is not supposed to own, and he sees his title of 'minister' as a way of pity to get it. Lastly, Parris wants golden candlesticks in the church instead of the regular ones. Proctor to Hale: "(...) for twenty week He preach nothin' but golden candlesticks until he had them. I labor the earth from dawn of day to blink of night, and I tell you true, when I look to heaven and see my money glaring at his elbows - it hurt my prayer, sir, it hurt my prayer. I think, sometimes, the man dreams cathedrals, not clapboard meetin' houses." (pg. 5) This quote shows that Parris only cares about his image. He wants to look good and

having gold candlesticks give people the impression of rich. The original ones are not good enough; he wants them even if the parish cannot afford them. This shows that Reverend Parris is greedy. Throughout the play *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, it is noticeable that Reverend Parris is a character who does not change very much. Parris is a selfish, stubborn, and greedy person from the beginning, until the end. By: Veronica Piccioni