

The crucible- abigail act 1 characterization assignment

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Michael Heifetz 10/29/11 Act 1 Characterization Throughout act one of The Crucible, Arthur Miller uses many forms of characterization to present Abigail as a sly, lying girl, who tries to wheedle her way into getting the outcome that she wants by any means necessary. One way he does this is through Abigail's words throughout act one. When Parris is asking Abigail about why she was fired from Elizabeth Proctor's service Abigail said, "[she] hates me, uncle, she must... [she is] a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman!" (Miller 12).

The way that Abigail had blamed getting fired on Elizabeth Proctor being a terrible person shows that she will lie to not be punished and soil Elizabeth Proctor's name. Miller's choice to have Abigail say all of those things instead of just telling the audience that Abigail lies a lot is a lot more effective in making an impression on the audience's mind because it forces the audience to form the opinion themselves. Another way that Miller shows Abigail's evil intents is through her actions. Betty wakes up for only a moment to tell everyone that Abigail "drank a charm to kill [Elizabeth] Proctor" (Miller 19).

Abigail's actions, told to us by the seemingly bewitched Betty, to what extent she will go to get what she wants. Although Miller could have just stated that Abigail had been out drinking blood and charms to kill Goody Proctor, he had Betty wake up and start screaming out what had happened. This brings a lot more tension into the storyline and cast a greater impression on the reader. The final way that Miller shows the reader Abigail's ill intentions is through what other characters say to and about her. When Abigail is with John Proctor he says to her, "Ah you are wicked yet... You'll be clapped in the stocks before you're twenty" (Miller 22).

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Proctor saying that Abigail would be put in the stocks is just one more way that Miller shows the readers how bad Abigail is. Stocks were generally used to publicly humiliate criminals back in the time that The Crucible took place. However, most people today know exactly what stocks look like and how they were used, so Miller's choice to have Proctor mention the stocks gives a very clear image to the audience. Miller's choice of words and how they were delivered throughout act one showed a great deal about Abigail's malicious intents through the story.