

Quotations in *The Crucible*

Quotations

- Memorise **key quotes** for:
 - Characters: Words that reveal personality or motivations.
 - Themes: Phrases that encapsulate major ideas.
 - Imagery or Symbols: Words or phrases that enhance understanding of the text's style.

Tip: Be prepared to explain the relevance and significance of each quote

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is a powerful exploration of hysteria, morality, and human weakness. Key quotations help reveal the characters' personalities and motivations, encapsulate the central themes, and enhance the play's style through vivid imagery and symbols.

Characters: Words that Reveal Personality or Motivations

John Proctor

- *"Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life!"* (Act IV)
 - **Relevance:** Proctor's refusal to sign a false confession highlights his commitment to personal integrity, even at the cost of his life.
 - **Significance:** This moment reveals his moral courage and completes his journey of redemption.
- *"We are only what we always were, but naked now."* (Act II)
 - **Relevance:** Proctor reflects on how the trials have stripped away Salem's façade of piety, exposing the true nature of its people.
 - **Significance:** This line reveals Proctor's growing disillusionment with the hypocrisy in his community.

Abigail Williams

- *"Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you."* (Act I)
 - **Relevance:** Abigail's threat to the other girls reveals her manipulative and ruthless personality.
 - **Significance:** This line establishes Abigail as the primary instigator of the hysteria.
- *"She is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me!"* (Act I)
 - **Relevance:** Abigail's complaint about Elizabeth Proctor shows her vindictiveness and obsession with John Proctor.
 - **Significance:** This line highlights Abigail's self-serving motivations.

Elizabeth Proctor

- *“The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you.”* (Act II)
 - **Relevance:** Elizabeth points out that Proctor’s guilt over his affair is his own burden to bear.
 - **Significance:** This quote reflects Elizabeth’s insight into her husband’s internal conflict.
- *“He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him.”* (Act IV)
 - **Relevance:** Elizabeth’s acceptance of Proctor’s choice to die with integrity reveals her deep respect for his decision.
 - **Significance:** This moment encapsulates the theme of redemption and the importance of personal honour.

Reverend Parris

- *“We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.”* (Act I)
 - **Relevance:** Parris’s fear of losing his reputation reveals his self-serving nature.
 - **Significance:** This line demonstrates his prioritisation of personal status over justice or truth.

Themes: Phrases that Encapsulate Major Ideas

Hysteria

- *“We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment.”* (Danforth, Act III)
 - **Relevance:** Danforth’s assertion highlights the trials’ supposed purpose of uncovering hidden sins.
 - **Significance:** Ironically, this line exposes how hysteria and fear fuel false accusations rather than truth.
- *“The Devil is alive in Salem, and we dare not quail to follow wherever the accusing finger points!”* (Hale, Act II)
 - **Relevance:** Hale’s statement illustrates how fear drives irrational actions during the trials.
 - **Significance:** It encapsulates the destructive power of hysteria.

Integrity and Reputation

- *“A man will not cast away his good name. You surely know that.”* (Proctor, Act III)
 - **Relevance:** Proctor defends his decision to reveal his affair with Abigail, showing his prioritisation of truth over reputation.
 - **Significance:** This line underscores the tension between public image and personal integrity.
- *“I have given you my soul; leave me my name!”* (Proctor, Act IV)
 - **Relevance:** Proctor’s plea reflects the importance of identity and honour in the play.
 - **Significance:** This quote highlights the central theme of redemption.

Imagery or Symbols: Words or Phrases that Enhance Understanding of the Text's Style

Fire

- *"We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment."* (Danforth, Act III)
 - **Relevance:** Fire is used metaphorically to represent purification and the exposure of truth.
 - **Significance:** Ironically, the trials create chaos and lies, subverting the imagery of fire as cleansing.

The Poppet

- *"Why, this go hard with her, Proctor, this—I had my doubts, Proctor, I had my doubts."* (Cheever, Act II)
 - **Relevance:** The poppet, found with a needle in it, is used as false evidence to incriminate Elizabeth Proctor.
 - **Significance:** The poppet symbolises the absurdity of the trials and the reliance on superstition over reason.

The Noose

- *"I cannot mount the gibbet like a saint. It is a fraud. I am not that man."* (Proctor, Act IV)
 - **Relevance:** Proctor initially views the noose as a symbol of shame but later embraces it as a path to redemption.
 - **Significance:** The noose represents both the cost of integrity and the ultimate sacrifice required to uphold it.

Conclusion

Quotations in *The Crucible* illuminate the motivations of its characters, the themes driving the narrative, and the rich imagery that underscores the play's emotional and moral impact. By memorising and analysing these lines, readers can deepen their understanding of Miller's critique of hysteria, morality, and human weakness.