

Thesis: Elizabeth Proctor is the strongest character in *The Crucible* because she shows incredible loyalty to her friends and family, she loves her husband enough to give him his “goodness,” and she has the courage to stand up for herself even though it may have ultimately destroyed her life forever.

Period 7

The final reason Elizabeth is the strongest character is because she has courage to stand up for herself throughout the play. After Abigail mentions Elizabeth's name in court, Reverend Hale visits the Proctors to question the Christian character of the family. When Hale asks Elizabeth if she believes in witches, Elizabeth responds, “If you believe I be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it” (II; 1075). Even though Elizabeth could condemn herself for saying this, she decides being honest and sticking up for herself is more important. It takes a strong character to put oneself at risk like Elizabeth does. Elizabeth shows courage once again in this act by making a critical statement about Abigail. Once Elizabeth finds out that Abby accuses her spirit of stabbing her with a needle, Elizabeth speaks out about the most dangerous girl in town: “The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!” (II; 1078). It takes great courage for Elizabeth to speak out against Abigail who is putting many people of the town in jail. Once again, Elizabeth sticks up for herself and will not let others believe that she is a witch. She wants what is right; therefore, this makes Elizabeth the strongest character in the play. Not many others would condemn themselves by telling the truth.

#### Period 4

The final reason Elizabeth is the strongest character is because she has the courage to stick up for herself throughout the play. When Abigail mentions Goody Proctor's name in court, Hale comes to their house to investigate the family's Christian character. Hale directly asks Goody Proctor if she is, indeed, a witch, and she replies, "If you believe I be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it" (II; 1075). Even though Elizabeth knows she could get into a great deal of trouble for making such a risky comment, she chooses to stick up for herself in this situation. She does not want people in the town to think she is a witch since she has been such an upstanding citizen for so long. In the same Act, Elizabeth shows courage once again when Cheever comes to the house and relates the story that Abigail accused Goody Proctor of stabbing her doll with a needle, ultimately stabbing Abigail. At this point, Elizabeth realizes just how much danger she is in, and she cannot stand it anymore: "The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!" (II; 1078). It takes great strength and courage for a woman at this time to outright accuse another of having to die. Abigail is a threat in the community, and Elizabeth is now openly going against her. Elizabeth shows great courage sticking up for herself, making her the strongest character in the play.

## Period 2

The final reason Elizabeth Proctor is the strongest character is because she has the courage to stand up for herself even though it may ruin her life. After Abigail accuses Elizabeth of being a witch, Reverend Hale comes to the Proctor house to question their Christian character. When Hale asks Elizabeth if she believes in witches, Elizabeth responds, "If you believe I be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it" (II; 1075). Elizabeth could certainly get in trouble for making such a risky statement, but she chooses to stand up for herself and not let Reverend Hale believe she is a witch. It takes a courageous woman to go against the girls of the town and put herself in danger. Elizabeth stands up for herself again in the same act right after she finds out that Abigail accuses her of stabbing the doll with a needle. When Cheever tells her this information, Elizabeth reaches her breaking point: "The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!" (II; 1078). It takes great courage to make this comment about the young girl who is accusing many townspeople of being witches. However, Elizabeth wants her feelings to be known and will not let others accuse her of witchcraft. Once again, Elizabeth stays true to herself, even though she may have to pay heavy consequences. Elizabeth's courage helps define her as the strongest character in the play.

The first reason to prove that Elizabeth is the strongest character is the fact that she stays loyal to her friends and family by using honesty and deceit. Elizabeth stands up for what she believes in, and she is disgusted when she finds out her friend, Rebecca Nurse, is charged with witchcraft. Elizabeth declares, "You will never believe, I hope, that Rebecca trafficked with the devil" (II; 1072). Elizabeth understands that anyone who sticks up for an accused person could also be accused of witchcraft, but she insists on defending her righteous friend. She tells Hale that these accusations are ridiculous if Rebecca Nurse is going to be sent to jail. Clearly, it takes a strong person to stick up for a friend when there is an alarming risk of being accused for doing so. Elizabeth does not care, though, and her loyalty only continues to be tested. When she is called into court during the questioning of John's fidelity, she has the chance to clear the dirty family secret that has been ruining her life. She does not know, however, that John already admitted to his sin, and she tells Danforth that her husband did not have an affair. Her husband immediately recognizes her loyalty, and he screams out to the court, "She only thought to save my name!" (III; 1099). Even though she lies to the court, Elizabeth shows that saving her husband's name is more important to her than her own life. She could have been charged because of her deceit, yet she still put her husband before herself. A weak character would have never taken that chance. Elizabeth's loyalty to help her loved ones ultimately makes her the strongest character in the play.

A final reason that shows Elizabeth is a strong character is because she illustrates courage by sticking up for herself. This is proven when E is questioned at her house. She is upset that others may even believe she is a witch, but she keeps her answer as honest as she always is: "If you believe I be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it" (1075). Even though E knows she could get in trouble for this comment, she is still courageous enough to say it to Rev. Hale. This comment ends up getting her condemned, but being honest was important to Elizabeth. Another example of E's courageousness is seen when E is questioned for having a poppet in her house. E knows Abigail is behind the accusation, and her frustration is seen when she responds, "The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!" (1078). It takes great courage to say something about the girl who has been accusing others in the community. Once again, E stays true to herself even though she may have to pay the consequences. Clearly, E is a strong character because of her courage.