

"More Weight"

With the words "more weight" Giles Corey, from *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller, becomes a true hero. Throughout the play, Corey changes from a foolish old man, into a hero who courageously dies for his family's well-being and honor. With just those two words, the character of Giles Corey is defined.

Before the trials begin, Giles Corey is just a silly old man, courageous but not very smart. Although 83 years old, he is ridiculed and blamed for things that go wrong.

When the suspicion of witches begins, Corey unthinkingly says something about his wife

reading books, and hiding them from him, which was somehow disrupting his prayers. "It

discomfits me! Last night--mark this--I tried and tried and could not say my prayers. And

then she close her book and walks out of the house, and suddenly--mark this--I could pray

again!" (p. 40) The explanation for this was very simple: Giles was not a churchgoing

man. But, not realizing what he had done, Giles Corey had just sentenced his wife to be hanged.

The hysteria over witches continues to grow, and Corey's wife is tried as a witch.

When he realizes what he has caused to happen, Giles is overcome by guilt and grief. He

begs for his wife to be released. Furthermore, when Giles offers evidence that Putnam

falsely accused a man as a witch in order to get his land, and the judge asks Corey to give

the name of the man who heard Putnam's conversation as evidence, Giles refuses to give

the name so to protect him, while he himself would have to hang, an act of honor and

courage: "I will not give you no name. I mentioned my wife's name once and I'll burn in

hell long enough for that. I stand mute." (p. 97)

Giles Corey finally becomes a true hero when he is tortured to death for remaining

silent. Instead of giving the court a name, exactly what they wanted from him, which

would free himself while causing another man to hang, Giles mutters only "more weight"

as he is crushed to death by heavy stones. By escaping hanging, Corey's land would still

be in the family, his family's honor would remain intact, and Giles Corey would be remembered later as the hero of the Salem Witch trials, the only man who was not hanged

as a witch but instead endured terrible pain so that others might not have to.

Giles Corey showed courage and respect for his wife, his fellow man, and his family. He turned from a comical hero into a true and honorable one, a man who stood up

against hysteria of the infamous Salem Witch Trials.

