

Waterfront and arthur miller's play

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Elia Kazan's film *On the Waterfront* and Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* tell similar stories. In the movie, *On the Waterfront*, a waterfront worker named Terry Malloy aids in the killing of one of his co-employees, Joey Doyle. In the beginning of the movie, we see that Terry's conscience is beginning to bother him. Edie, the sister of Joey, is found at the scene of the crime, pleading to the people around her, " I want to know who killed my brother! " As the movie progresses, we soon find that the mob has complete control over the workers at the union.

Having killed three people already, people who were going to testify against the mod-run labor unions, Terry knew that it was best for him to keep quiet. However, his love interest in Edie soon begins to change his idea about what it means to " rat" on people. With the help of the local priest, Terry finally confesses his crime to Edie and testifies against the mob in court.

The movie ends with Terry in bloody battle, winning the confidence of his coworkers, and setting his people free.

In *The Crucible*, John Proctor is a noble character that is in the middle of a moral dilemma that might change the fate of the people of the puritan town Salem, Massachusetts. As the hysteria of the witch-hunt progresses, Proctor has to confront his own inner guilt about his affair with the Abigail Williams, the leader of the trio that is accusing the town's people of witchery. After his wife is added to the list, Proctor begins to seriously consider risking his own reputation to discredit Abby. In the end, Judge Dimmesdale convinces the people that Proctor is a liar.

Proctor is faced with confessing in order to save his life, or to die with what little honor he had left. Proctor decides not to confess. Thus, there are some basic similarities between these stories: in each story, both are confronted to confess their sins for the better of the people and each man has to face certain consequences that come with their confession. However there is also a strong difference in the way in which the characters give birth to the guilt they have on their conscience. Both characters face the stress of confessing their sins for the better of the majority.

Terry Malloy has to confess to his love, Edie, that he had something to do with the death of her beloved brother. After already telling her that he had absolutely nothing to do with it, the fact that he, himself, had actually aided in killing him, shocked her. Also, by confessing, he was called the “rat” and lost respect amongst his friends. Of course, he later gains their respect when he faces the mob during the climax of the movie. By confessing, he not only delivered to Edie the murderers of her brother, but he also aroused the opportunity of to gain freedom for his coworkers.

In *The Crucible*, Proctor had to confess to his wife that he had indeed committed adultery, even though she already knew. In Puritan times, Adultery was highly offensive. Not only would this most likely ruin his marriage, but it would also ruin his reputation in the town. Furthermore, later in the play, Proctor has to deal with the choice of choosing to confess and live, or to sign a confession that would be posted for the town to see. Up until John Proctor, the people that were hanged were not respected. If

Proctor has confessed, many more respectable people might have been brought to trial as well.

The choice he made turned out to be better for the majority. Another similarity between the stories is the consequences the men might have had to face. In *The Crucible*, Terry is threatened to be killed, not only by the mob, but by his brother as well. Also, even if he survived through the confession, he would still have to deal with the issue of finding a job, as the mob controlled most of the work on the waterfront. Luckily for him, his bravery was followed. His coworkers would rebel with him in order to save his and their jobs.

Proctor on the other hand, in the last act of the story, had to choose between life and death. By confessing to crimes he did not commit, he would not be hanged. However, he could not see how his signing of the confession would in any way help the situation. Thus, he chose not to confess. He chose death. One of the differences in the stories is the way in which the characters gave birth to the guilt on their conscience. Terry involuntarily helped in the murder of Joey Doyle: I thought they was gonna talk to him... I thought they was gonna talk to him and get him to dummy up...

I figured the worst they was gonna do was lean on him a little bit... Wow! He wasn't a bad kid, that Joey. As one can see, his job was to merely lead the guy onto the rooftop so they could "lean on him a little bit". However, the mobsters had other plans. With the love interest in Edie and the pressure to do what was right by the reverend, Terry decided to do what he thought was

best. As with Proctor, his adulterous affair with Abbigail was intentional. He himself committed the crime that made it harder for him to discredit her.

Furthermore, by continually lying to his wife, he further damaged his relationship with her. The difference is slight, but very clear. Both stories have a greater meaning hidden in them. Both were made to show how the Mccarthy's Era affected people. In Arthur Miller's, *The Crucible*, hysteria, propaganda, and fear bled throughout the pages. At the same time, Kazan's *On the Waterfront* gave some of the reasons as to why it was difficult to do what was pure... to do what was right. As complex as both situations were at the time, they frightenly depicted what was happening in real life.