

Abigail williams: the harlot and a whore in the play the crucible essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Abigail Williams from the play, *The Crucible*, is a vicious antagonist. She would stop at nothing to attain her demented goals. In another writer's hands, Abby could have been portrayed in a sympathetic light. After all, she is under age and has been sleeping with a supposedly honorable man thirteen years her senior. Arthur Miller, however, finds little humanity within her. Throughout the play, Proctor labels her a "harlot" and a "whore." And perhaps Miller isn't far off. According to the playwright's research, the real Abigail Williams turned to prostitution several years after the Salem Witch Trials. Her deviousness almost makes her unrealistic. She convinces young women to dance in the dark forest (a sinful act by puritan standards). She practices voodoo in an attempt to win back her lover, John Proctor. She feigns demonic possession, luring the rest of the girls to behave the same way. She plants evidence of witchcraft in Elizabeth Proctor's home, hoping to send her to the gallows. She manipulates the judges and denies having a relationship with Proctor. Perhaps the most sinister act takes place after a dozen citizens have been hanged. Abigail steals Rev.

Parris' life savings and runs away, never to be heard from again. In short, Miss Williams is a wretched, diabolic person! Abigail is the exact opposite of Elizabeth. Abigail represents the repressed desires — sexual and material — that all of the Puritans possess. The difference is that Abigail does not suppress her desires. She finds herself attracted to Proctor while working in the Proctor home. Abigail is independent, believing that nothing is impossible or beyond her grasp. These admirable qualities often lead to creativity and a thirst for life; however, Abigail lacks a conscience to keep herself in check. As a result, she sees no folly in her affair with Proctor. In fact, Abigail resents

Elizabeth because she prevents Abigail from being with Proctor. Declaring witchcraft provides her with instant status and recognition within Salem, which translates into power. Abigail uses her authority to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation. She threatens the other girls with violence if they refuse to go along with her plans, and she does not hesitate to accuse them of witchcraft if their loyalty proves untrue. Such is the case with Mary Warren.