

Analysis of john proctor's character development in the crucible

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



Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* is based in Salem, which is engulfed in the hysteria caused by the accusation of children that many believe have partaken in witchcraft. Throughout *The Crucible*, John Proctor faces a lot of internal conflicts regarding his reputation. As the drama unfolds due to the intense conflict, his character transforms and develops. John Proctor is a man with strong morals, which is why he has major internal conflicts throughout the play. John Proctor's use in the play is to showcase how the effects of the trial take a toll on the characters in Salem. *The Crucible* portrays John Proctor as a paragon for the people of Salem and the change can be attributed to the Salem Witch Trials, his affair, and his desire to keep his name for himself. When John Proctor first enters the play, he is seen as a well-respected, leading figure of the community. The people of Salem respect John as shown when Giles Corey and Francis Nurse look to him for help when their wives are arrested. In one way or another, he can be seen as a tormented individual because he seems to put on this facade to the people in town but then has to go home to suffer through his thoughts. As his portrayal progresses, the readers quickly see that he is suffering through a huge internal battle. It is shown that "he is a sinner, a sinner not only against the moral fashion of the time but against his own vision of decent conduct". It is clear that he is fighting internal demons because he sees himself as fraudulent. Although it is not clear, the reader can infer that something had occurred between both Abigail and John, which is why he has this internal conflict.

As the play comes to an end, John has undergone a change. When he is facing a hanging, he decides to save his wife. Throughout the play, both

Elizabeth and John often underestimate their love for each other. During the play, he is at a constant battle with himself about his infidelity and the accusation of witchcraft only further drags him down. He and Elizabeth coming to terms with his affair and finally speaking on it, truthfully, is a turning point for both characters and aids in his change. This affair aids in his change because it breaks him. As stated before, John is seen as a dominant and leading figure in Salem and having sinned so immensely as John would not go over well with the community.

His best and most valuable possession is his name and throughout the play, he is driven to give that up for his wife Elizabeth Proctor. Although the affair may give the readers a reason to look down on John, his decision to tell the court about his affair ironically demonstrates his goodness. At the end of the play, Proctor refuses to slander himself by allowing the court to nail his false confession to the church door. This action further depicts Proctor's integrity. "The play's climax comes as Proctor, who has long struggled with the guilt over his infidelity and with his powerlessness to assert his innocence in the face of an implacable and tyrannous authority, realizes that he cannot destroy his true identity by signing a false confession: "Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life!" The play's final image of an innocent Proctor going to his unjust hanging was to be uncannily echoed three years after the play was written when Miller was called before the House Committee on Un-American Activities and convicted of contempt of Congress". He refuses to lose the goodness of his name which is why he rejects his name being put

John Proctor changes for the better during *The Crucible*. The events in the play shape him into the new character we see in the end. His change adds a sense of realness because he doesn't buckle under the pressure of authority and stands up for what is right. His change shows the development and improvement characters can make within a play. The Salem Witch Trials, his affair, and his desire to keep his name attributes to his huge change and immense character development.