

Tension in the "trial scene" of "the crucible"

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



The Crucible was written by Arthur Miller who was born on 17th October 1915 in New York City. The Crucible is based on a small group of teen girls in 1692 Salem, Massachusetts caught in an innocent conjuring of love potions to catch young men who are forced to tell lies that Satan had invaded them and forced them to participate in the rites and are then forced to name those involved. Thrown into the mix are greedy preachers and other major landowners trying to steal others' land and one young woman Abigail infatuated with a married man John Proctor and was determined to get rid of his innocent wife Elizabeth.

Arthur Miller wrote the events and the consequent trials where those who demanded their innocence were executed, those who would not name names were incarcerated and tortured, and those who admitted their guilt were immediately freed. In Act 3 of The Crucible the Trial scene is set in the Salem meeting house, this scene is so important because it is the most intense scene in the play because everything is revealed, and timing proves to be one of the most important factors.

Proctor realizes that it is critical for Mary Warren to testify against Abigail before she loses her courage to do so. In addition, time is critical at this point in the play because individuals are being convicted continuously.

The Crucible is also based on McCarthyism this term describes the intense anti-communist suspicion in the United States in a period that lasted roughly from the late 1940s to the late 1950s. This period is also referred to as the Second Red Scare, and coincided with increased fears about communist influence on American institutions and spying by Soviet agents. Miller was

also involved in the McCarthy Trials, he broke with Elia Kazan over his decision to give names of former members of the American Communist Party to the House of un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). Miller was himself blacklisted by Hollywood when he refused to testify in front of the HUAC. However, this did not stop his plays being performed on stage. Miller used the Salem witch hunts as a outlet for his protest, he was trying to prove a political point about the McCarthy trials. Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* because he intended to give the necessary historical background, to grasp the concept of McCarthyism.

There are several characters in the trial scene, one is Proctor who is described as a 'tragic hero'. He plays a very important part in this scene as he is trying to prove that Abigail is lying to free his wife. Elizabeth is the wife of proctor, and when proctor confesses about his adultery she is summoned to court to be asked if it is true. Danforth is Deputy Governor and thinks he is superior to everyone else, Danforth rules the courtroom like a dictator. He believes Abigail and the other girls are incapable of lying.

Abigail and the girls also play a very important part in the play, as Abigail is trying to defend her own back, so she decides to pretend to see spirits and encourages the other girls to join in with her. Parris is the reverend and Abigail is his niece, he does not want to ruin his reputation so he decides to strengthen his authority through the witch trials. Hale is also a reverend, his character changed from believing in witches and saving their souls from the devil to saving their lives from a lie.

The most obvious relationship is that of Abigail Williams with John Proctor. They had a fling, and Elizabeth had her fired from her job to protect her

marriage. Abigail points the finger at Elizabeth for witchcraft because she wants to take Elizabeth's place as the new "Mrs. Proctor". Although John admits his adultery to protect his wife She thinks to dance on my wife's grave! said John Proctor. Which builds tension between Abigail and Proctor.

Another heated relationship is John Proctor and Reverend Parris. Proctor dislikes Parris I I have no love for Mr Parris. It is no secret. John sees the Reverend as a greedy, ungodly man, I have trouble enough without I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. Parris tries to get Proctor in trouble by telling the Governor that Proctor does not come to church, Such Christian that will not come to church but once in a month!. It is clear that John and Parris's relationship is based on hatred.

The most important relationship is that of John and Elizabeth Proctor. John is shamed by his affair. He is angry at his wife because he believes that she has been cold towards him, but he is also ashamed of his behavior. He loves Elizabeth, this is why he confesses about the affair with Abigail Williams i have known her, sir. I have known her. The reason this is so important is because it leads John to get involved in the trials.

Miller uses many dramatic devices to build up tension in the trial scene. Arthur used lots of stage directions to explain how the character was feeling and their emotions at the time, which would build up tension on the audience when the characters are angry or shouting for example (trembling, his life collapsing about him) : I have known her, sir. I have known her..

The setting would also bring a lot of tension into the scene, as the setting is in a court, it would be very stucked and formal it will also be religious, and if

anyone said anything they shouldn't it would build up a lot of tension for example (his mind wild, breathless): I say I say God is dead! this causes a lot of tension.

Another dramatic device would be plot development, The initial incident is the actual accusing the women of witchcraft by the several girls that were in the forest. This gets the plot rolling, and everything rolls downhill from their. The climax is accusing Proctor of witchcraft. The tension continues until the trial and the speeches made before the execution.

Miller has few cases of verbal irony. He uses it in the trial scene when Elizabeth tells the court that Proctor did not sleep with Abigail but she knows that he did. All parts with the girls lying about witches and ghosts are cases of dramatic irony, while the audience knows that the girls are lying, most of the characters do not. For example, in court, Abigail and the other girls pretend to be attacked by spirits Abigail(to the ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the 'bird' as though trying to talk it out of attacking her): But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin , Mary. and the people in court fear them to be in danger. However, the audience knows that they are faking it.

The Crucible was a great play, and I enjoyed reading it. I thought Miller was very successful with this play. There was lots of built up dramatic tension in this scene which got the audience into the play and would of got the readers attention. There was many dramatic moments for example when Elizabeth told a lie in court and also when Abigail was pretending to be attacked. In my point of view I thought this was the best scene out of the whole play and got me very interested in the McCarthy trials.

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