

# Character of abigail williams in the crucible

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



The Crucible is a play about vengeance and power. Abigail Williams manipulates an entire town to do her bidding, stemming from her want to save her reputation and to be able to finally have the man she lusts over. Abigail becomes one of the main antagonists of the play through her deceitful and selfish antics. Abigail's character traits, motivations and conflicts are key factors in driving the plot of The Crucible.

Abigail Williams can be described in a number of words. One is deceitful. The moment we meet Abigail, she is immediately described as one "with an endless capacity for dissembling". This deceit and manipulative behavior is the main cause of the hysteria of the Salem Witch Trials. Another characteristic is vengeful. Abigail loves John Proctor, but his wife Elizabeth threw her out and began starting rumors about her. To get back at her and to finally have John, Elizabeth accuses her of being a witch. Also, when Mary Warren tries to tell the truth towards the end of the play, Abigail feigns a spiritual attack and tries to deter Mary from speaking the truth. Finally, Abigail Williams is selfish. She shows no remorse for causing the death of 20 innocent people all because of her want for John and to save her reputation.

Abigail's motivations stem from her character traits. Obviously, one of her main reasons for causing the Witch Hunts is to accuse Elizabeth Proctor of witchcraft. Abigail believes that by doing so she will finally be able to be with her lover and "dance with me on my wife's grave." This motivation came from the moment Abigail and John Proctor first began their relationship where she was most likely lead to believe that they could be more than lovers. This motivation is shown when Abigail accuses Elizabeth of witchcraft, and is resolved with John refuses to be with Abigail and admits to his

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adultery. Another motivation of Abigail is to save her reputation. During our first moments of knowing her, she says “ There be no blush about my name.” and “ my name is good in the village.”, and then flies into a temper when asked about rumors spread by Goody Proctor. Also, when discovered in the woods, instead of admitting to her own interest in witchcraft, she wishes to save herself by claiming she was forced to do it. This motivation carries throughout the play, as it begins the witch accusations and continues them throughout the play for whomever claims the girls are frauds or tries to debunk them are immediately accused of witchery. This is finally resolved when Abigail flees town to start a new life elsewhere.

Abigail’s motivations directly correlate with her conflicts throughout the play. The primary internal conflict is that of her own insecurity. Abigail is so unsure of her own abilities to secure John as her own, that she has to accuse his wife of a witch in an effort to kill her in order to be with him. Also, because of her insecurity of having a poor reputation and having her name be tarnished, she begins accusing others of lies and witchery. This is slightly resolved when Abigail finally leaves Salem. Her insecurity of having a “ whore’s” reputation and being seen as a liar is too much and she flees. Her primary external conflict would be her love for John. She wants to be with him with all of her heart, but he rejects her and calls her a whore. She claims he “ put knowledge in my heart” and wishes that he not tear that from her. This is never truly resolved for Abigail still loves him even at the end of the play, but he rejected her and she chose to run from that heartache.

Abigail Williams' complex character and selfish acts are clearly demonstrated throughout the literary Salem Witch Trials. Through her character traits, conflicts and motivations, she orchestrates the hysteria of an entire town and deaths of many people. Abigail is the main antagonist of the play and is the puppet master behind the entire event.