

Review of the "the crucible" by arthur miller

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



Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* takes place in Salem, Massachusetts during 1692 written in a third person omniscient point of view.

Miller's book follows the infamous Salem witch trials, it can be connected to the title of the book because crucible is synonymous with the word trial.

Abigail Williams, one of the main characters, goes about the story avoiding confrontation and consequences at any cost. Consistently blaming others for things they did not commit so she may benefit from it. Abigail's story is closely tied in with that of John Procter, a man who had an affair with Abigail during her time under his employment, is another main focus of the story.

Abigail wanted to tear John and his wife apart so that she may have John for herself, so she accused Ms. Procter of witch craft. John does not wish that, even going so far as to admitting to adultery in a time where that was a very strong sin. This selfless act may have been taken out of guilt however, it proved useless when convincing the court of his wife's innocence. Another key character is Reverend Hale, a naive witch-hunter who is described by Miller in Act 1 as " a tight-skinned, eager-eyed intellectual". Who at first is leading voice in whether or not Salem has witches till Abigail and her band of women shroud his judgment with their own accusations. He later on comes to realize that there may not have ever been a witch, and that in fact John Procter has created no compact with the devil. The largest external conflict in the story is most definitely the trials themselves, as they turn neighbor against neighbor, " The witch-hunt was not, however, a mere repression. It was also, and as importantly, a long overdue opportunity for everyone so inclined to express publicly his guilt and sins, under the cover of accusations against the victims". This shows how the people used the whole event as a

disguise for their suppressed desires or actions. Mary Warren also extends into a large conflict of the story, as she is one of the girls who claims to have seen these spirits. However she wishes to tell the truth, " Abby, we've got to tell. Witchery's a hangin' error, a hangin' like they done in

Boston two years ago! We must tell the truth Abby!". John Procter has his own conflict arc, as stated earlier, his relations with Abigail. Miller describes him as "... a sinner not only against the moral fashion of the time, but against his own vision of decent conduct". When John goes on to say " There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep, my wife cannot lie". This is rather ironic for his character because Ms. Procter comes in to testify that he did not have relations with Abigail which in fact was a lie. Irony makes a recurring visit in this play, Abigail says "...I cannot stop my mouth; it is God's work I do". Which is ironic because she forces the other girls to lie under the name of Gods work. The accusation of witchcraft symbolizes how men do not like to take responsibility for their own faults. Giles, a villager, accuses his wife by claiming "... I tried and tried and could not say my prayers. And then she close her book and walks out of the house and suddenly... I could pray again!". Miller goes on to reveal "... he forgot to say that he'd recently learned any prayers and it didn't take much to make him stumble over them.". This story displays how men use witchcraft as a scapegoat instead of admitting their own fault.

The climactic moment that relates to a major external conflict is when John Procter is found guilty and sentenced to hang. A theme that can be pulled and learned from is that of blame, and to learn that one must burden their

own actions and not drag someone else for something they did not do. An important quote, " I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house!". This is when John and his wife argue about the situation with Abigail, this foreshadows a key scene in the future. Where John does in fact go to court and speak on that subject. Mrs. Putnam has another good quote " There are wheels within wheels in this village, and fires within fires!", which reflects that you cannot believe what is on the surface, that there is much more than meets the eye. Finally Reverend Hale says something rather important, " No man may longer doubt the powers of the dark are gathered in monstrous attack up on this village. There is too much evidence now to deny it". The village is certainly under attack, but not necessarily in the way Hale thinks it is. The real " powers of the dark" affecting Salem are suspicion and fear, not anything demonic. I had mixed emotions about this story, frankly it pissed me off more than anything. How easily the court believed these girls and those moments when other characters would offer the truth as a viable explanation but it would get swept under the carpet. It reflects modern times as well, because there are some scenarios where a crime that has no evidence can be easily swayed by the voice of one side. Showing that even though it's been 326 years, we as people never seem to take responsibility for our own actions. Rather using others as scapegoats or creating stories to bury someone else. As a whole it's a classic work of literature that I could pull something from and can still be applied to this day, thus making it a classic.