

# The crucible comparison

[Literature](#), [Books](#)



Katelyn Mittler 10/4/12 4th hour Hegemony through Terror Lost, terrified, and not in control of their own thoughts, Mary Warren and Shawn Hornbeck strive for the life they once lived. In 1692, The Crucible character, Mary Warren comes under the control of foil character, Abigail Williams. In a similar, more recent story, Shawn Hornbeck's normal life of video games, hanging out with friends, and dirt biking, is ripped away from him with Michael Devlin forcefully kidnaps him with the intent of murder. Everyday coerced by their fear, constantly reminded death reigns imminent.

In Arthur Miller's The Crucible, character Mary Warren, threatened by Abigail Williams not to release they are pretending, lives a lie; just as missing child, Shawn Hornbeck, manipulated by Michael Devlin, cannot release his true identity. Falling into great peer pressure while facing threats from Abigail, Mary makes the courageous decision to tell the truth, but Abigail strengthens her grip and the truth crumbles. Mary knows the girls are lying but struggles with the imminent threats from Abby in her rebuke to Proctor, "She'll kill me for sayin' that! (Miller 80). Mary gets this idea from the death threat imposed on her by Abby "and mark this. Let either of you breathe a word or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you" (20). Abigail scares not just Mary, but all the girls with threats. After trying to tell the truth, Mary succumbs to the torment of Abby. "Abby, Abby, I'll never hurt you more" (119).

The "pointy reckoning" that Abigail threatens Mary with does its justice and Mary morphs back into a powerless silenced girl. Similarly, from Shawn's abduction on October 6th 2002 to his discovery on January 12th 2007, Devlin

forces Shawn into living a lie. Shawn spares himself from the wrath of Devlin as he remains powerless in a glass case of emotions. “ From day one he had the gun, he had the power. I was powerless and there was nothing I could physically do” (Kidnapped: Shawn Hornbeck). Devlin holds all of the power, leaving Shawn unable to even think clearly.

According to Shawn’s stepdad, Craig Akers, “ Devlin’s control over Shawn was complete and total” (Kidnapped: Craig Akers). Through Devlin’s “ complete and total control,” Shawn makes what his parents call “ A deal with the devil” to save his own life. “ Shawn told the defendant that he would do whatever he wanted him to if he didn’t kill him” (Kidnapped: Akers). “ Devlin agreed not to kill Shawn as long as he made what we called ‘ a deal with the devil’. He could never contact anyone, never try to run. And if he did he would be killed” (Kidnapped: Akers).

This “ deal with the devil” results in Shawn living a lie. “ Shawn became Shawn Devlin and for the next four and a half years the deal he made that day left him tied to his tormentor”(Kidnapped: Sheriff Gary Toelke). The haunting agreements made that day leaves Shawn trapped in a world of terror only known by few. Mary Warren and Shawn Hornbeck are under what psychologists call “ control by terror”. Living a lie, both are coerced into deciding between saving themselves by staying in this lie or to reveal the truth and face the forever imminent death threats.

Mary and Shawn fear if they release the truth, they will be killed. Through this fear, Shawn and Mary start to believe their fake stories. Mary believes the girls are doing God’s work, and Shawn starts accepting the harsh reality of being Shawn Devlin. Mary and Shawn predicaments are not predestined;

they are, as Devlin says when he first grabs Shawn, “ you were just in the wrong place at the wrong time”. Mary’s “ wrong place” starts with her dancing in the woods. Shawn’s begins with taking the shortcut road to a friend’s house.

Eventually, Mary gives up and gives in. she succumbs to Abby, becoming the person she never intended. On a brighter note, even though he accepts Shawn Devlin as his new identity, Shawn never gives up hope. Shawn knows his family is still seeking his safe return and makes some efforts to discreetly contact them. On the day the police find Shawn, a huge weight lifts off his shoulders. He says, “ It was a new feeling to say who I really was. ” Shawn starts slowly back into his old set of norms.

Mary and Shawn lose their personal identities to save themselves, each take a different route in trying to rediscover them. Through further investigation, it is evident that Mary Warren and Shawn Hornbeck encounter the same feelings of terror but are also uniquely different from each other. They fear for their lives as they struggle internally with revealing the truth or living with the guilt and constant terror behind the lies. Shawn and Mary both encounter numerous times when opportunities to tell the truth stands right in front of them; however, struck by fear they remain silent.

Though Mary’s story does not result in a sugar-coated ending, Shawn’s story of torment and terror leads to triumph and a truly heart-warming story. Shawn teaches everyone to never give up hope and that you will always find your way back home, Mary’s story teaches a valuable life lesson to stand up for what you believe in, even if you are standing alone. Though Shawn and

Mary encountered horrific events, they are truly two people (fictional or not) who show evident and inspirational life lessons.