

The crucible by arthur miller and the flaws of john proctor

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Proctor 101: How to Not Survive “ The Crucible”

In the play, “ The Crucible” by Arthur Miller, the characters in the play eventually show their personal flaws. The entire play was designed to force out everyone’s loyalty to each other and their flaws when they are put under extreme circumstances. Each character slowly began unraveling and turning on each other. But perhaps, the character John Proctor, had the most tragic flaw of them all. While everyone was turning on each other, he was busy turning on himself.

John Proctor himself is a good man. He is the husband to Elizabeth Proctor and father to two boys. He is a hardworking farmer who dedicates his time to working on his farm at all times. His wife said that “[He] is a good and righteous man. He’s never drunk, as some are, nor wasting his time at the shovelboard, but always at his work” (Miller, 521). On top of that, he is faithful. He lives each day under the command of God and what he deems right. He attends church whenever he gets the opportunity. The only times he does not attend is when his wife’s health prevents him from going. However, the extent of his faith becomes questionable when he fails to name all ten commandments and when the one he forgot, was the one he was guilty of.

John Proctor’s lust for his servant Abigail Williams led him to commit adultery. During the time his wife was severely ill and with a little help from Abigail’s deceitfulness, he let his desires get the best of him and he had an affair with her. His wife knows of this incident and this has led to her giving

John the cold shoulder. He has constantly tried to forget about his sin but despite how hard he tries, he cannot forgive himself for what he has done.

There is also a second flaw that leads John Proctor to his death; his pride. At the end of the play, he admits to adultery. Judge Danforth calls for a confession to be written so that it can be hung on the church doors for everyone in the village to see. After confessing, he was asked to sign his name as proof he confessed. His response was that “[They] have all witnessed it; what more is needed” (Miller, 538). He does wish to place his name upon a document that will drop his reputation. The two things he values most in his life is his family and an untainted name. He was finally able to muster up the strength to sign his name, but shortly after, he picked up the confession and ripped it up. He said “ I confess to God, and God has seen my name on this! It is enough” (Miller, 538). Because he refused to submit his name to the church, he was sentence to hang. He let his pride get the best of him and that was the cause of his tragic death at the end of the play.

Throughout the play, John Proctor went through a hell of a time. He went from living everyday simple and full of work to dealing with accusation of witchcraft and seeing people he knew being hanged. This can drive a man mad. Perhaps, this is why Arthur Miller titled his play “ The Crucible”. The definition of a crucible is a situation of severe trial; to put someone to the test and see if he or she survives. John Proctor’s faith and nobility were heavily tested and, sadly, he lost.

Because of his flaws, John Proctor set his own course to death. If you do good, good shall be come back. John did something terrible so he got the best of it. He then had the opportunity to save himself but he chose not to. To be honest, if John did not go mad, he probably could have live.