

# The crucible character analysis



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In the play 'The Crucible' by Arthur Miller, the author uses characters from the 17th century witch-hunts to show the corruption behind McCarthyism. The play was published in 1953, a time when McCarthyism was actively affecting and contributing to society. The book is filled with false accusations during 1692, in order to relate to the time period it was released. In the play, the character Abigail Williams is in love with John Proctor, a married man, who she had an affair with. Abigail tries to win John over by using witchcraft.

When she is caught by her uncle, Reverend Parris she is afraid of being punished, so she blames their slave, Tituba. This accusation sparks a time of fear and accusation of witches in Salem. When the witch-hunt begins, Abigail realizes that she can use her lies to gain power in Salem. She thinks she can use this power to get rid of John Proctor's wife, Elizabeth, and that when Elizabeth is gone John will love her. Abigail is driven by fear and envy, and her corrupt decisions lead to the downfall of Salem society.

Abigail Williams is a seventeen-year-old orphan, who lives with her uncle, Rev. Parris. Abigail was fired from her job as a servant by Goody Proctor because she had an affair with John Proctor. She believes that her affair with John Proctor is true love and that the only thing standing between them is his wife. Abigail states in Act 1, "I have something better than hope, I think!" (Miller 22) because she believes that John has made a promise to her by breaking of chastity for her, that he loves her.

Her envy of Elizabeth leads to her making very bad decisions. These decisions cause Abigail to be afraid of being convicted of witchcraft, so she accuses others, making them scapegoats for her wrong-doings. When Abigail and the other girls go dancing in the woods Abigail tries to drink a charm to

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kill John Proctor's wife. When they are caught dancing she forces all the girls to lie about what happened. She puts the blame on Tituba. They continue to make accusations against people in Salem.

" I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! "... " I saw Alice Barrow with the Devil! "... " I saw Goody Hawkins with the Devil! "... (48) People are hanging because of the girls' false claims. Abigail then tries to get Elizabeth hanged for witchcraft but Elizabeth is allowed to live because she is pregnant. By the end of the play, Abigail tries to flee with John but his refusal to leave with her finally makes her realize that he will never love her. After this, she only has fear left as a motivator.

She flees with Mercy Lewis on a boat with all of Rev. Parris' money. John is hanged because he refuses to give up his name. " The legend has it that Abigail turned up later as a prostitute. "(146) Although most of her actions caused pain for others, it did eventually lead to her own downfall. " Elizabeth Proctor married again, four years after Proctor's death. "(126) It is ironic that the person Abigail set out to hurt the most was one of the few people who went on to live a better life.

Since Abigail is motivated by envy and fear, her decision to fuel the witch-hunt creates tragedy by the end of the play. Everything she does causes John's death as well as the hanging of countless others, the innocent people of Salem. This play really captures the effects of false accusations and theocracy when given power. The witch-hunts, like McCarthyism caused suffering for many without any proof or reason. Abigail proves an example of the consequences when power is given to things that cannot be proven, unsupported theories.