

# The crucible



**ASSIGN  
BUSTER**

Many people throughout history have fallen to the seduction of power, a very tempting and alluring concept. George Washington, Napoleon, and Hitler are just a few of these particular people who have absorbed themselves in the appeal of power.

In *The Crucible*, by Arthur Miller, several characters display the same characteristics of these famous leaders. Throughout the entire play, Abigail becomes insanely obsessed with milking power from her past, adulterous affair with John Proctor so she can be seen as superior to the other villagers. Her uncle also finds the need to control an entire town which he accomplishes by becoming their Puritan minister. Another power-hungry member of Salem is Putnam, a man who exploits the witch trials to gain land from the accused families.

All three of these characters do whatever it takes throughout the play to get what they want: power. Their desire for this control brings them to drastic measures, including wrongfully blaming people in Salem for terrible events with conscience of their actions. For some people, the desire to overpower others causes them to do radical and extreme things with no regard for negative consequences.

In the twisted world that is Abigail??™s reality, she believes that she and Proctor are soul mates, and by being together she can finally be complete. During the first act, Abigail and Proctor find themselves alone together for a moment where they engage in a very enlightening conversation in which Abigail cries, ??? I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart. .

. (Act 1, Page 24).??? Through the eyes of Abigail, Proctor is a source of power that she will obtain with whatever it takes. According to her, Proctor is something of her savior who showed her something meaningful that she can never turn from. Abigail becomes so delusional in thinking that her relationship with Proctor could be a reality that she decides there is a necessity in killing Elizabeth.

She decides she can do this by framing Elizabeth to taking part in witchcraft and then charging her in court which prompts an investigation. Even though her charade gets completely out of hand, she cannot find it in her heart to stop convicting people of signing with the Devil until Elizabeth is dead. Once she achieves her goal, she will finally be at ease and respected, despite the terrible things she had to do to get there. Abigail??™s uncle, Reverend Parris, is not so different than his niece in some respects. Before ruling over the Puritan congregation of Salem, Parris had lived in Barbados as a wealthy and successful merchant. For him, though, this had not been enough; he had left his luxurious life in Barbados behind, and moved north to Massachusetts. Here he had become the Reverend of Salem and finally finds himself in a position of power.

In Barbados, though he had been successful, he did not truly have power over people. That deficiency is obliterated upon him becoming one of Salem??™s most powerful people, a church figure. Through this role in the society of Salem, Parris soon discovers he can obtain anything he wants. Some people are greatly irked by his abuse of power as he demands more money for wood, and orders golden candlesticks made. Proctor justifies this by saying, ??? But Parris came, and for twenty week he preach nothin??™

but golden candlesticks until he had them (Act 2, Page 65).??? According to Proctor, Parris did nothing for twenty weeks, but require golden candlesticks be placed upon his alter. When Parris finally arrives in his much desired position of power, he makes full of use of it by manipulating his lesser to acquire all his desires.

Throughout the play, it becomes evident that the Putnams are a very eminent family. This reputation is true in not only Salem, but other parts of the province as well. When Reverend Hale first enters the play, he lays eyes upon Mr. Putnam and declares that he did not expect such distinguished company (Act 1, Page 37). Despite the influence he already has over Salem, Putnam always seems to desire more. When his brother-in-law was unsuccessful in becoming a minister of Salem- a position Putnam could have derived power from- he meant to right matters however he could. Putnam was also the eldest son of Salem??™s richest man, but when his father died, he felt he was left a disproportionate amount; he brought the case to court, but faced a loss which resulted in a great hit on his ego (Act 1, Page 14).

In both previous situations, Putnam was unable to increase his wealth and power which had a great impact on him, Putnam??™s daughter is one of the girls to cry out against the town??™s ??? witches???. By no coincidence, some of the accused are those with lands bordering the Putnam??™s estate. Through an exploitation of the witch trials, Putnam gains more and more land thus increasing his realm throughout Salem.

In Arthur Miller??™s The Crucible, the witch trials are basically the result of Abigail??™s conquest of Salem. With her desire to power over Elizabeth,

Abigail cries out against many people of the town in this demented attempt to become powerful. Much like Abigail, Putnam takes advantage of the witch trials to get what he wants. As a man who desires to be the ??? king??? of Salem, Putnam and his daughter find the need to cry out against those who restrict his ??? kingdom???. Both of these characters have a strong yearning for being placed in position over others whether it be in terms of land and money or love. A third character in the play who displays the same traits is Parris, but he does not show them during the trials.

Unlike Abigail or Putnam, Parris does not long for money or love, but for raw power and the ability to make others complete his every demand. Not through exploitation of the witch trials but exploitation of Salem??™s Puritan congregation, Parris becomes a greatly revered man. Like many others, these three characters do immensely stupid and harmful things throughout the course of the novel to get the power they desire.