

Rebecca nurse

Business



Individuals with integrity have always been scarce in society. In today's world and as shown in *The Crucible*, honesty is unappreciated and the truthful are punished. While this brings fear to all of Salem, one character stands by her beliefs until the death.

She refuses to stoop down to the level of liars, backstabbers, and thieves in a time of uncertainty and corruption. Rebecca Nurse is an honest woman motivated by her faith in Christ. *The Crucible* is a tale of desperation, lies, and hopelessness. The supposed Christian town of Salem, where nominal, shallow citizens were more concerned with their own personal gain than with loving their neighbor, was in chaos due to the witch trials where many innocent citizens were accused. Many of the individuals tried in court were fearful of the highly probable chance of being hung, and therefore confessed to a lie and accused others.

Only Rebecca Nurse remained faithful to her beliefs before and during the witch trials. When Salem turned its back on honesty, goodness, and trust, Rebecca did not follow the masses in their lies and attention seeking; she stayed true to herself and her beliefs. Rebecca was an esteemed member of the community; “ the general opinion of her character was so high that to explain how anyone dared cry her out for a witch – and more, how adults could bring themselves to lay hands on her...” (26) simply shows the greed and selfishness of the people of Salem. The Putnam's and Nurse's dispute over who should be in the ministry in Salem eventually drove the Nurses out of town to form Topsfield, “ a new and independent entity whose existence was resented by old Salemites” (26) thus increasing the loathing the Putnams had for the Nurses. The witch trials were a perfect time for the

Putnams to protect their name while expressing their hatred for the Nurses. In a brutal act of vengeance, Edward and Jonathan Putnam “ signed the first complaint against Rebecca; and Thomas Putnam’s little daughter was the one who fell into a fit at the hearing and pointed to Rebecca as her attacker” (26) thus sealing the fate of this highly respected, innocent woman.

While other characters lied to save their skins after being accused, Rebecca Nurse was honest and brave because of her faith in Christ. After Governor Danforth asked Rebecca if she would confess herself to witchcraft, she replied, “ Why it is a lie, it is a lie; how may I damn myself? I cannot, I cannot.” (140) Her honesty sends her to certain death, but also to the kingdom of Heaven. Rebecca sees that life on Earth is temporary, while life after death is never ending. When she says, “ Let you fear nothing! Another judgment waits us all!” (144) it is clear that she is confident, that she is making the right decision by telling the truth. Rebecca, a role model in the town of Salem, provides an example of strong beliefs for all who see her.

When John Proctor confesses to witchcraft, he is ashamed because Rebecca is watching him lie and feels convicted by her presence. “ Danforth: Courage, man, courage - let her witness your good example that she may come to God herself. Now hear it, Goody Nurse! Say on, Mr. Proctor. Did you bind yourself to the Devil’s service? Rebecca, astonished: Why, John! Proctor, through his teeth, his face turned from Rebecca: I did.

” (139) In this scene, Rebecca acts as Proctor’s conscience. Her presence reminds him of the justification he has made for lying which encourages him to make a decision that is ultimately the right one. Rebecca could be

interpreted as a metaphor for Christ. Her response to the unjust accusation of witchcraft was similar to Christ's reaction to his accusers – humbly and without defense. Rebecca's death can be compared to a lamb lead to a slaughter, which is a direct reference to Christ, because she died so willingly in the face of great injustice.

Rebecca Nurse is a perfect example of how the righteous are punished by a heartless, wicked society because she died specifically for her beliefs and what she felt was right. Her role in *The Crucible* is vital for she provides a standard of goodness which would otherwise be nonexistent. Societies everywhere contain their illogical, irrational Governor Danfoths, selfish and self righteous Putnams, and respectable, wise Rebecca Nurses. *The Crucible* is a timeless tale of good versus evil and stands to convict societies worldwide.