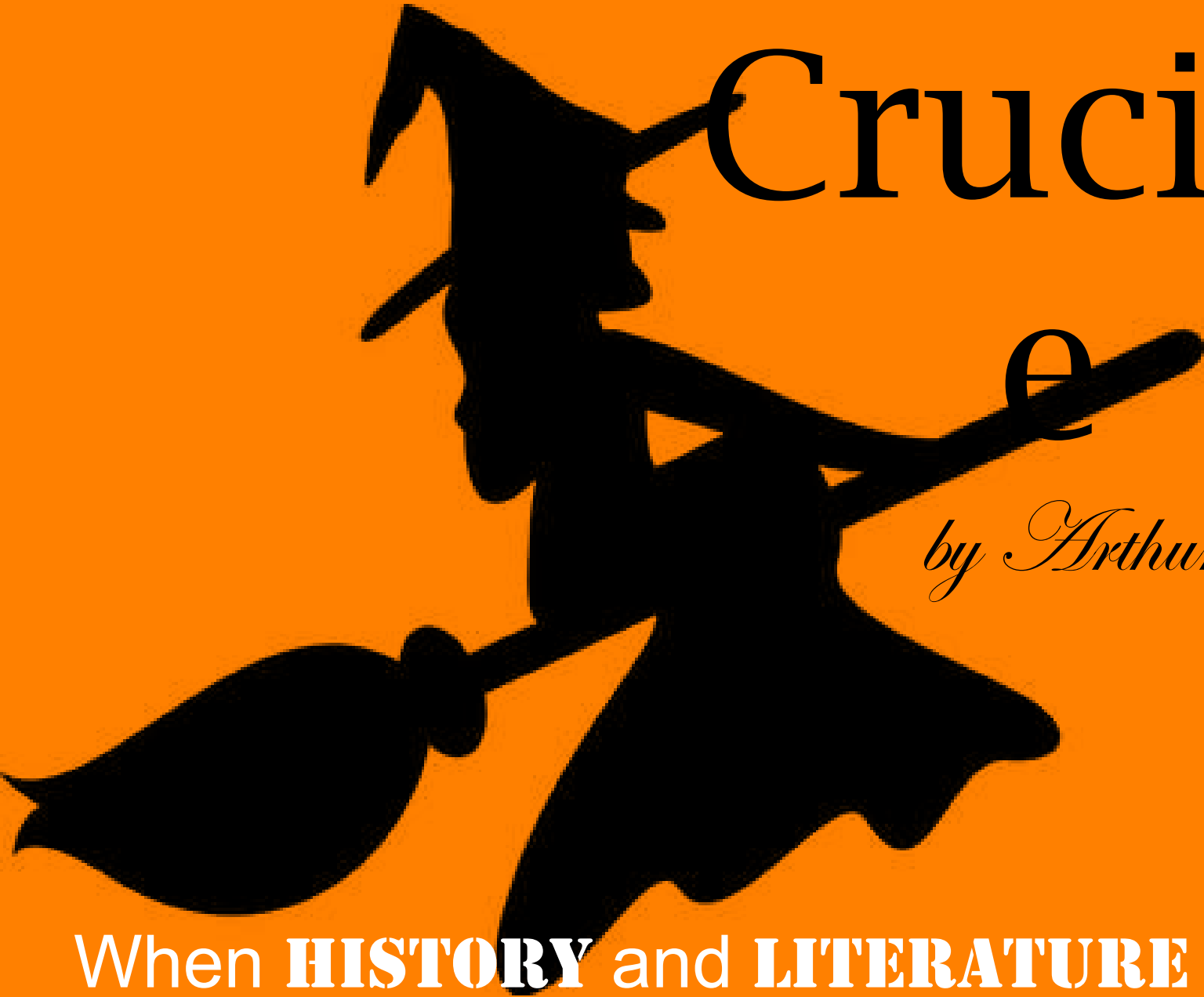


The Crucible

by Arthur Miller

When **HISTORY** and **LITERATURE** Collide



The Crucible is . . .

Puritanism

WITCHHUNT
McCarthy

Arthur Miller

Puritanism



- Religion that originated in England in the 1600s
- Puritans believed in predestination.
- They split from the Church of England in 1633. Many emigrated to the American colonies.
- They formed a “city on a hill” with religion for government.
- Since they believed strongly in the Bible, they were also hyper-aware of the Devil and witchcraft.

WITCHCRAFT IN SALEM



- All Puritans strongly believed in witches and witchcraft.
- Puritans believed that witches made a deal with the devil to receive powers.
- In Salem, witchcraft was a very serious sin AND crime.



WITCHCRAFT IN SALEM



- The witchcraft hysteria began in Salem in early 1692.
- Reverend Samuel Parris's daughter and Abigail Williams started having fits of convulsion, screaming, and hallucination. Other girls followed.
- A doctor examined the girls and concluded that the only explanation for these bizarre behaviors was witchcraft.

WITCHCRAFT IN SALEM

The first women
accused were:

- **Tituba:** Reverend Parris's slave
- **Sarah Good:** A homeless woman
- **Sarah Osborn:** A sickly woman whose illness caused her to miss church often.



WITCHCRAFT IN SALEM

During the next eight months of terror, more than 150 people were imprisoned for witchcraft.

By the time court was dismissed, 27 people had been convicted, 19 hanged and 1 pressed to death.



WITCHCRAFT IN SALEM

Discuss:

When have you heard the term “going on a witch hunt?”

What does it mean?

What are some symbolic witch hunts going on in our culture today?



McCarthyism

- A period of intense suspicion in the United States during the early 1950s.
- It began when Senator Joseph McCarthy, a U.S. senator from Wisconsin, claimed that communists had infiltrated the Department of State. This was also part of the time period known as “The Red Scare.”
- A special House Committee on Un-American Activities was formed to investigate allegations of communism.
- People from all walks of life became the subjects of aggressive “witch hunts” often based on inconclusive, questionable evidence.



McCarthyism

- Persons accused of being communists were often denied employment in both the public and private sector.
- In the film industry alone, over 300 actors, writers, and directors were denied work in the U.S.
- American writer, Arthur Miller, was one of those alleged to have been “blacklisted.”

McCarthyism

- McCarthy's influence finally faltered in 1954 when Edward R. Murrow aired an investigative news report which revealed McCarthy as unscrupulous in his speeches and abusive in his interrogation of witnesses.
- The public was finally made aware of how McCarthy was ruining the reputations of many individuals through false accusations of communism.

McCarthyism

- Discuss:
 - What was wrong about what McCarthy and his followers did?
 - How have we changed our legal system since then?
 - How has our legal system changed since the Salem witch trials?

Arthur Miller

- 1915-2005
- American Playwright and Writer



Arthur Miller

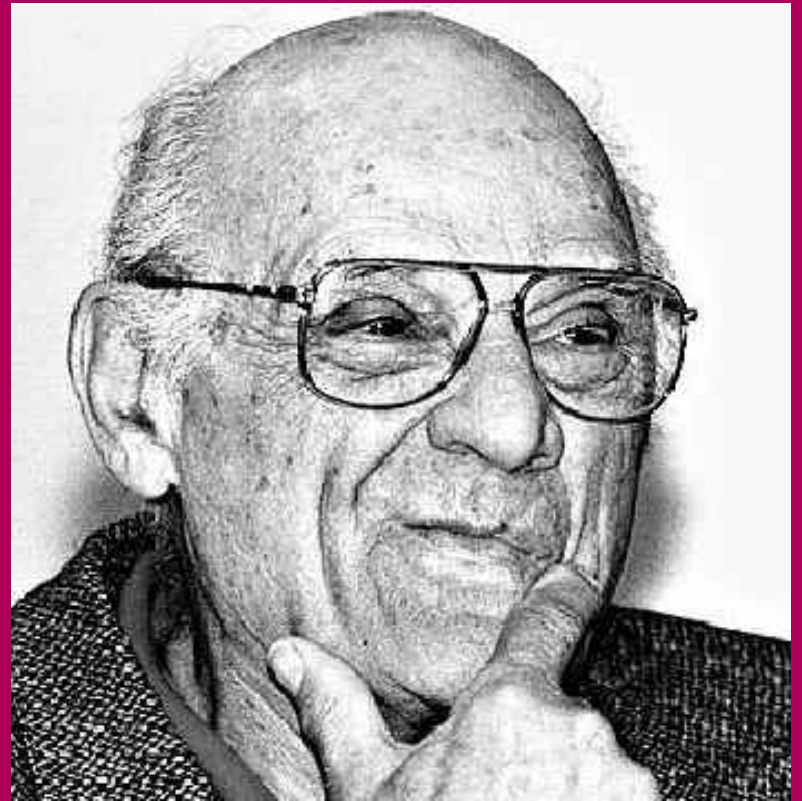
- In 1953 he wrote *The Crucible*, which uses the Salem witchcraft trials of 1692 as a symbol, to attack the anti-communist “witch hunts” of the 1950s.
- He believed the hysteria surrounding the witchcraft trials in Puritan New England paralleled the climate of McCarthyism – Senator Joseph McCarthy’s obsessive quest to uncover communist party infiltration of American institutions.





Arthur Miller

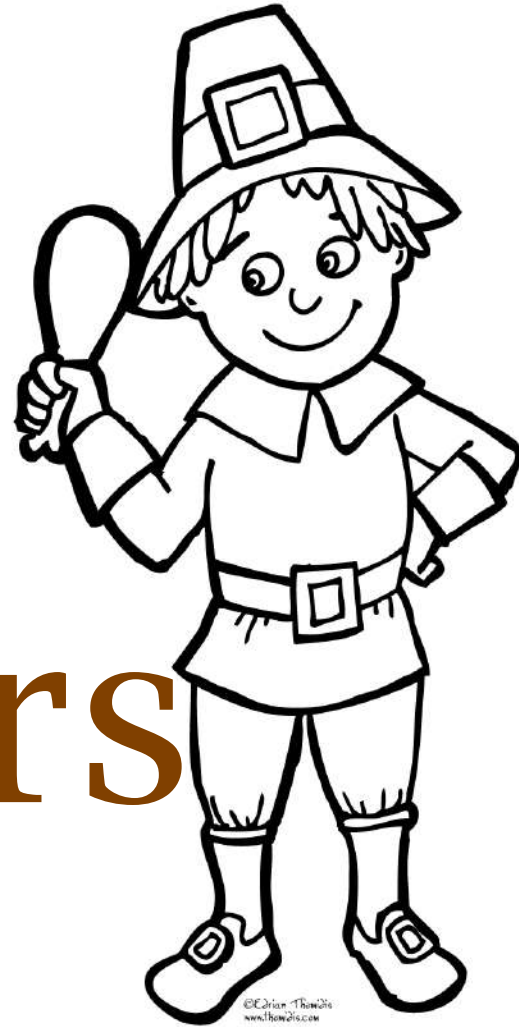
- After the publication of the *The Crucible*, Miller himself was investigated for possible associations with the communist party.
- He refused to give information regarding his colleagues and was found guilty of contempt of Congress. His sentence was later overturned.



The Crucible.

Cast of

Characters





Abigail Williams

- Orphaned niece of Reverend Parris
- Lived with the Proctors while working there as a servant. She was once the mistress of John Proctor but was fired when his wife discovered the affair.
- Now living with her uncle, Reverend Parris, and his daughter Betty.
- She is extremely jealous of Elizabeth Proctor and uses her power in the town to rid herself of Elizabeth as well as any others who have insulted her in the past.
- She can't let go of her obsession with John Proctor, thinking he still loves her.
- She is the leader of the girls, and they do what she tells them to, even when they don't agree.





John Proctor

- Farmer, lives outside of the village
- Married to Elizabeth, with two young children
- He had an affair with his servant Abigail when she was employed in his household
- Knowing the affair was a sin, he tries to break things off with Abigail.
- He knows that the girls are pretending but cannot tell what he knows without revealing having been alone with Abigail.
- He carries a huge guilt for the affair, but doesn't seem to know how to make it up to his wife.





Elizabeth Proctor

- Wife of John Proctor
- She suspected the affair going on between Abby and John and fired Abby from her servant's position.
- She hired Abby's friend Mary to replace her.
- She is Abigail's main target for the accusations.
- She is still very upset about the affair, but she feels it is also her fault because she is often sick and unkind to John.





Tituba

- Servant to the Parris household
- She is a native of Barbados and practices a form of voodoo magic.
- She is enlisted by Ruth Putnam and Abigail to cast spells and create love charms.
- When Abigail turns on her to save herself from punishment, Tituba finds a different way to escape punishment: confession.





Reverend Parris

- Pastor of the church in Salem
- He is the father of Betty and the uncle of Abigail Williams. His wife died several years ago.
- He believes that his job as minister is in danger and that the townspeople do not respect his position as a man of God.



Deputy Governor Danforth

- Brought in when the accusations start to get serious.
- He believes young girls are naturally honest, and so tends to believe them more than others.
- He is “sensitive” to the presence of the devil and reacts explosively to whatever evidence is presented.



The Girls

- **Betty Parris**- Daughter of the Reverend, cousin to Abigail Williams. She is a weak girl who goes along with her cousin as soon as she is threatened.
- **Susanna Walcott**-One of the girls. She is initially sent between Parris and Dr. Griggs to determine the cause of Betty's ailment. She is easily guided by Abigail.
- **Mercy Lewis**- Servant to the Putnam household. She is a merciless girl who seems to delight in the girls' activities.
- **Mary Warren**-Servant to the Proctor household. Abigail uses her to effectively accuse Elizabeth.



Drama Basics

Drama is a form of literature that is written to be performed before an audience. The two main types of drama are tragedy and comedy. A **tragedy** unveils the downfall of a main character in a serious tone; a **comedy** is light and often humorous.

Like fiction, drama includes the following elements: plot, setting, characters, and theme. The **plot** is the chain of related events that make up the story. In a drama, the plot is developed in a series of **acts** that are made up of **scenes**, with each scene establishing a different time and place, or **setting**.

The plot is brought to life through the words and actions of the **characters**, the individuals who participate in the action. The conversation between characters is called **dialogue**. The central character of a play is the **protagonist**; he or she is deeply involved in the conflict and may change because of it. A major character who opposes the protagonist is the **antagonist**. Some plays also have a **foil**, a minor character who contrasts in personality with the protagonist. The plot presents a **conflict**, or a struggle between opposing forces. Through the plot, a playwright develops a **theme**, the central message that the writer wants to share with an audience.

DRAMATIC PLOT STRUCTURE

Title of Selection: The Crucible

Author: Arthur Miller

