
Depiction of the Salem Witch Trials of 1692 in "The Crucible" by Arthur Miller

"The Crucible", written by Arthur Miller explores the madness of the Salem witch trials of 1692. The story revolves around the characters John Proctor, Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Williams, Reverend Parris, the 10 girls and others. The judges play an important role for which they possess supreme power, of the church along with government. Judge Hathorne and other judges seem to believe the girls and their accusations. In 1953, Senator Joseph McCarthy leads the House Un-American Activities Committee, a modern day witch hunt. Innocent people are hung, and lives are forever changed by the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts.

John Proctor is a father, husband and a respected, land owning member of the community. Abigail Williams' affair with John Proctor is the secret grudge that neighbors hold against each other. For him, it was just lust, while Abigail believed it was true love. Abigail tells John that he loves her and once Elizabeth is out of the way, they'll be free to love one another. Elizabeth is John's wife and mother of two, with one on the way. Elizabeth earlier dismisses their servant, Abigail, which causes her to seek revenge on Elizabeth in order to claim John Proctor as hers.

The judges are called in to investigate the supposed witchery haunting the area. The Salem area was filled with puritans, and the young girls of the time had little or no freedom. To rebel against the constricting lifestyle, they danced in the woods and pretended that others were bewitching them. Of those girls was Abigail Williams, who started accusing others of practicing witchcraft. The judges believe Abigail and the girls, without the judges, the girls would have been powerless.

The hunt for communists began. In 1953 the town of Salem, Massachusetts was home to the modern day witch hunt. Joseph McCarthy leads a newly formed committee called the "House Un-American Activities Committee." The madness erupted when McCarthy claimed to have a document with 205 known communists in the State Department. Many were blacklisted for refusing to confess and tell on their friends.

As you can see, Arthur Miller did a wonderful job incorporating the true events of 1692 and 1953 into "The Crucible." Among his plays, Miller was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for "Death of a Salesman." Obviously, witches do not exist, so the judges were responsible for those 19 lives that were lost during that time. The communists of 1953 did no harm to the local community and yet they were hunted down. In "The Crucible", greed took over Salem and made local townspeople turn on each other in order to save their lives or property.

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