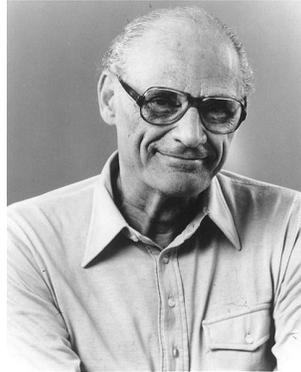


THE CRUCIBLE

by Arthur Miller



THE AUTHOR

Arthur Miller (1915-2005) was born and raised in New York City. He worked his way through college at the University of Michigan, and by the time he graduated in 1938, he had already received a number of awards for plays he wrote in his undergraduate years. After a number of early professional attempts that failed, he produced his first theatrical success with *All My Sons* in 1947. The play generally considered his masterpiece, *The Death of a Salesman*, won him the Pulitzer Prize in 1949 and catapulted him into the company of America's greatest living playwrights. Other successes included *The Crucible* (1953), a drama about the Salem witch trials in which he reflected on the McCarthy era, *A View from the Bridge* (1955), *After the Fall* (1964), *The Price* (1968), *The American Clock* (1980), and *Broken Glass* (1995). He also wrote the script for the movie *The Misfits* (1961 - the script was written as a starring vehicle for his wife, Marilyn Monroe, but the two divorced shortly after the movie was produced) and the Emmy Award-winning television special *Playing for Time* (1980).

The Crucible was written during the height of the McCarthy era, during which the House Un-American Activities Committee sought to root out communism from American politics and the media. Hollywood, always politically liberal, was a major target of McCarthy and his minions, and Miller was one of those called to testify before the committee (1956). As portrayed in the play, those who testified were pressured to give the names of any they knew who may have been tainted with the brush of communist ideology. Miller, like John Proctor, refused to name names, and his career and reputation suffered as a result. The misguided Puritanism of the play thus becomes a symbol for the misguided patriotism of the McCarthy era.

MAJOR CHARACTERS

- John Proctor - The protagonist of the play, Proctor is an honest farmer who hates hypocrisy, but is concealing a sin of his own - a brief affair with Abigail Williams while she served as his household servant. Because of his guilty conscience, he is reluctant to expose Abigail, but finally does so when it is too late. He dies on the scaffold because he refuses to clear his name by sullyng the names of others.

- Elizabeth Proctor - John Proctor's wife, she threw Abigail out of her house when she found out about her affair with her husband. Abigail accuses her of witchcraft in the hope that her death will allow Abigail to marry Proctor. Elizabeth is condemned, but the sentence is postponed when she is found to be pregnant. By the time she delivers the child, the hysteria has died down, and her life is spared.
- Mary Warren - A servant in the Proctor household, she is easily manipulated by Abigail and takes pleasure in defying the authority of her employer when Proctor insists that she tell the truth on the witness stand.
- Abigail Williams - Rev. Parris' niece and a former servant in the Proctor household, she had had a brief affair with John Proctor, but was thrown out of the house when Elizabeth discovered what was going on. [NOTE: This is perhaps the play's most significant deviation from history, since Abigail Williams was eleven years old at the time, and John Proctor was sixty.] Her desire to get revenge on Elizabeth and take her place as John Proctor's wife leads her to ask Tituba to put a curse on Elizabeth, and later accuse Elizabeth of witchcraft. She obviously revels in the power conferred upon her by the circumstances surrounding the trials.
- Reverend Samuel Parris - Minister of the church in Salem Village, his daughter is the first one stricken. He summons Hale to Salem, and quickly fans the fires of witchcraft hysteria for his own personal gain.
- Betty Parris - The minister's daughter, she is the first one afflicted after she and some other girls are caught by her father dancing in the forest with Tituba.
- Tituba - A black slave from Barbados in the household of Reverend Parris, she uses her knowledge of voodoo at the request of Abigail Williams and Anne Putnam. This sparks the entire round of witchcraft hysteria.
- Reverend John Hale - A scholar of the works of Satan, he is summoned to Salem to deal with reported cases of demon possession. He at first demands an investigation, but later becomes appalled at what is clearly a miscarriage of justice and a blatant hoax. He comes to regret his role in initiating the scare, but is unable to do anything to stem the tide of passion it produces.
- Giles Corey - An elderly but feisty New England farmer, he is not much of a church-goer, but attends occasionally to please his third wife, Martha. Inadvertent remarks about her reading habits lead to her arrest on charges of witchcraft, and his attempts to clear her lead to accusations against himself. He dies under torture rather than pleading guilty or not guilty to the charges.
- Martha Corey - Giles' third wife, a godly woman who hangs because she refuses to confess to crimes she did not commit.
- Thomas Putnam - A wealthy Salem farmer who has engaged in a long-standing land dispute with Francis Nurse.

- Ann Putnam - Thomas Putnam's wife, she has borne eight children, only one of whom survived. She is convinced they were murdered by witchcraft, and sends her only surviving child, Ruth, to Tituba to conjure the spirits of the dead children to see who murdered them. Ruth, like Betty Parris, falls into a strange stupor after the incident in the forest.
- Mercy Lewis - Servant girl to the Putnams, she becomes one of the accusers in the trial.
- Francis Nurse - A wealthy farmer who has engaged in a number of disputes with his neighbors.
- Rebecca Nurse - A godly woman who is accused by her husband's enemies, she dies on the gallows when she refuses to confess to crimes she did not commit.
- Sarah Good - A drunken and deranged woman who is one of the first to be accused of witchcraft.
- Governor Danforth - Deputy Governor of Massachusetts, he presides over the witch trials, and seems more concerned with his image than with justice.
- Judge Hathorne - A judge who is called in to sit in judgment on the witch trials, he was an ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne. The great writer's shame over his forefather's role in the trials was one of the major motivating factors behind the writing of *The Scarlet Letter*.
- Ezekiel Cheever - the clerk of the court during the witch trials, he delivers the warrants for the arrests of those accused of witchcraft.

NOTABLE QUOTATIONS

“Now look you, sir. Let you strike out against the Devil, and the village will bless you for it!” (Putnam to Parris, Act I)

“I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet!” (Abigail, Act I)

“There is prodigious danger in the seeking of loose spirits. I fear it, I fear it.” (Rebecca Nurse, Act I)

“There is either obedience or the church will burn like Hell is burning!” (Parris, Act I)

“I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this ‘authority.’” (Proctor, Act I)

“No, No. Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no bruise of hell upon her.” (Hale, Act I)

“Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined, and calculated. In these books the Devil stands stripped of all his brute disguises. Here are all your familiar spirits - your incubi and succubi; your wizards of the night and of the day. Have no fear now - we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face!” (Hale, Act I)

“I want to open myself! I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil! I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!” (Tituba, Act I)

“The Deputy Governor’s promised hangin’ if they’ll not confess, John. The town’s gone wild, I think. She speak of Abigail, and I thought she were a saint, to hear her. Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel. And folks are brought before them, and if they scream and howl and fall to the floor - the person’s clapped in jail for bewitchin’ them.” (Elizabeth, Act II)

“I do not judge you. The magistrate sits in your heart that judges you. I never thought you but a good man, John - only somewhat bewildered.” (Elizabeth, Act II)

“I never knew it before. I never knew anything before. When she come into the court I say to myself, I must not accuse this woman, for she sleep in ditches, and so very old and poor. But then - then she sit there, denying and denying, and I feel a misty coldness climbin’ up my back, and the skin on my skull begin to creep, and I feel a clamp around my neck and I cannot breathe air; and then - I hear a voice, a screamin’ voice, and it were my voice - and all at once I remembered everything she done to me!” (Mary Warren, Act II)

“Because it speaks of deceit, and I am honest! But I’ll plead no more! I see now your spirit twists around the single error of my life, and I will never tear it free!” (Proctor, Act II)

“Theology, sir, is a fortress; no crack in a fortress may be accounted small.” (Hale, Act II)

“And why not, if they must hang for denyin’ it? There are them that will swear to anything before they’ll hang; have you never thought of that?” (Proctor, Act II)

“I cannot think the Devil may own a woman’s soul, Mr. Hale, when she keeps an upright way, as I have. I am a good woman, I know it; and if you believe I may do only good work in the world, and yet be secretly bound to Satan, then I must tell you, sir, I do not believe it.” (Elizabeth, Act II)

“If *she* is innocent! Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Were they born this morning as clean as God’s fingers? I’ll tell you what’s walking Salem - vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the crazy children are jangling the keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! This warrant’s vengeance! I’ll not give my wife to vengeance!” (Proctor, Act II)

“Proctor, I cannot think God be provoked so grandly by such a petty cause. The jails are packed - our greatest judges sit in Salem now - and hangin’s promised. Man, we must look to cause proportionate. Were there murder done, perhaps, and never brought to light? Abomination? Some secret blasphemy that stinks to Heaven? Think on cause, man, and let you help me to discover it. For there’s your way, when such confusion strikes upon the world. Let you counsel among yourselves; think on your village and what may have drawn from heaven such thundering wrath upon you all. I shall pray God open up our eyes.” (Hale, Act II)

“The pure in heart need no lawyers. Proceed as you will.” (Danforth, Act III)

“Is every defense an attack upon the court?” (Hale, Act III)

“But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between. This is a sharp time, now, a precise time - we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God’s grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not the light will surely praise it.” (Danforth, Act III)

“A fire, a fire is burning! I hear the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud - God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!” (Proctor, Act III)

“Why, it is all simple. I come to do the Devil’s work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie themselves. There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head!” (Hale, Act IV)

“Beware, Goody Proctor - cleave to no faith when faith brings blood. It is mistaken law that leads you to sacrifice. Life, woman, life is God’s most precious gift; no principle, however glorious, may justify the taking of it.” (Hale, Act IV)

“Your soul alone is the issue here, Mister, and you will prove its whiteness or you cannot live in a Christian country.” (Danforth, Act IV)

“Because it is my name! Because I cannot have another in my life! Because U lie and sign myself to lies! Because I am not worth the dust on the feet of them that hang! How may I live without my name? I have given you my soul; leave me my name!” (Proctor, Act IV)

“He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him.” (Elizabeth, Act IV)

NOTES

Act I - This act takes place in the Parris home. Betty, the minister’s daughter, is ill, having lapsed into a trance from which she cannot be awakened. Rumors of witchcraft have begun to spread through the village. Rev. Parris has sent for John Hale, an expert in witchcraft, to prove that Betty’s sickness has no supernatural cause, though the doctor can find nothing wrong with the girl. The

sickness had begun when Parris had caught some of the girls dancing in the forest. Parris is concerned that the incident could threaten his ministry, which is on shaky ground anyway. Thomas and Ann Putnam then arrive to announce that their daughter, Ruth, is similarly afflicted. Ann confesses that she had sent Ruth to the Parris' slave Tituba to get her to conjure up the spirits of her seven children who had died in infancy, with the intention of discovering who had murdered them by supernatural means. She now believes Ruth to be bewitched. After the adults leave, several of the girls discuss what happened in the woods, and Betty, who wakes up, reveals that Abigail Williams had drunk a potion intended to kill Elizabeth Proctor. Abigail then threatens to kill the other girls if they breath a word about her efforts to kill Goody Proctor by witchcraft.

John Proctor then enters the room, orders Mary Warren, his servant, to return home. Abigail then speaks of her desire to resume their affair, but Proctor insists it is over. When Betty cries out at hearing a psalm being sung, many come up from the room below, including Rebecca Nurse, a kindly old woman who warns against introducing ideas of witchcraft into the business. Parris then begins to complain about his treatment in the parish, including what he considers an inadequate salary. Proctor then complains of hearing nothing but hellfire and brimstone from the pulpit. After a brief argument over land boundaries, Proctor and Giles Corey prepare to leave.

At this point, John Hale, a minister from Beverly who is an expert on witchcraft, arrives. He interrogates Parris and Putnam about what has happened. Giles Corey admits that his wife reads strange books, and Hale promises to speak with him about the matter later. When Abigail is questioned, she accuses Tituba of conjuring the Devil in order to protect herself. Hale demands that Tituba awaken Betty, but Tituba denies having any power over the girl. When threatened with hanging, Tituba confesses, then begins to implicate others, beginning with the most disreputable women in the village. The girls then join the chorus, calling out name after name.

Act II - This act takes place in the home of the Proctors. Proctor has just returned home from a day working on the farm. His conversation with his wife is forced and tense - it is obvious that the two continue to be separated by his earlier affair with Abigail. Elizabeth reports that Mary Warren has gone to Salem for the trial, and that fourteen have now been imprisoned, threatened with hanging if they refuse to confess to witchcraft. Abigail is clearly the prime mover in the hysteria now. Elizabeth urges Proctor to go into the village and reveal Abigail's true motivation, thus uncovering the hoax. When Proctor hesitates, Elizabeth wonders whether he still has feelings for Abigail.

Mary Warren then returns from court, acting strangely. She says that thirty-nine people have now been arrested, and that Goody Osburn has been sentenced to hang. She then speaks of her experiences of being attacked by the Devil in the courtroom. After talking about the interrogation of Goody Good, Proctor threatens to whip her if she goes to court again. He insists that she must, and in her panic reveals that Elizabeth's name was mentioned. After Mary goes to bed, Elizabeth expresses her fear that Abigail wants her dead, and encourages Proctor to go to Abigail and make it clear that their relationship is over, and that she has no hope of ever seeing it resumed.

John Hale then arrives, in the process of traveling from house to house on his own to interview those who have been mentioned in court, including the godly Rebecca Nurse. He begins to ask the Proctors about their religious habits, which are clearly sporadic at best. Proctor then complains about Parris' carping desire for golden candlesticks for the church. When asked to repeat the commandments, he stumbles through them out of sequence, leaving out the command against adultery. Before Hale leaves, Proctor reveals to him that Abigail had told him in private that the girls' sickness had nothing to do with witchcraft. When asked if he believes in witches, Proctor

professes ignorance, but Elizabeth confesses that she cannot believe in witches if someone may be a witch without knowing it while living an upright life all the time. Giles Corey then arrives to announce that his wife, along with Rebecca Nurse, had been taken off to jail. Ezekiel Cheever then arrives with a warrant for Elizabeth's arrest, saying that she has been charged with witchcraft by Abigail. Abigail had claimed that Elizabeth's spirit had stuck a needle into her stomach; when Cheever finds a rag doll with a needle in it, he is convinced of Elizabeth's guilt. When Proctor calls Mary Warren downstairs, she admits that she made the doll in court, and left the needle in it herself. After Elizabeth is taken away, Proctor insists that Mary Warren tell the truth about the doll in court the following day, but she is afraid to testify against Abigail, and in her terror tells Proctor that she knows about his affair, but he demands that she testify anyway.

Act III - This act takes place in the courtroom. When the act begins, Martha Corey is on trial. Her husband cries out that she has been accused because Putnam is greedy for land. Francis Nurse, whose wife Rebecca had been condemned that morning, claims that the girls are frauds, and offers Mary Warren's testimony as evidence. Proctor insists that Mary never saw any spirits, but that the girls are pretending. The judges question Proctor closely to see if he is trying to subvert justice, but he denies any such intention. The judges inform him that his wife is pregnant, though there is no visible evidence to support her contention, and notes that this means she will be spared for another year until the baby is delivered. Proctor swears that she would never lie. When asked if he will now drop his charges, he refuses for the sake of the other people accused before the court. Proctor then presents a petition signed by 91 people affirming the good character of Rebecca, Martha, and Elizabeth. Danforth immediately orders their arrest for questioning. Giles then presents his deposition to the effect that Putnam is prompting his daughter to cry out against certain farmers because he covets their land. When he refuses to give the name of the person who told him he heard Putnam say so, however, he is arrested for contempt of court.

Mary Warren then gives her testimony. When Proctor presents her deposition, Hale pleads that a lawyer be permitted to present the case, but Danforth refuses. Mary affirms her deposition, but then the other girls are brought into the room. Abigail swears that Mary is lying as is particular of the case is rehearsed, and even goes so far as to threaten Danforth himself. Then suddenly she goes into her act again, claiming that Mary Warren's spirit is coming to do her harm, and the other girls immediately pick it up. In the ensuing chaos, Proctor accuses Abigail of being a harlot, then backs up his accusation by testifying about their affair. Abigail denies it, and Danforth then sends for Elizabeth, again making Proctor affirm that his wife would never lie. Elizabeth, under stern questioning, denies the affair, and Danforth sends her away, convinced of the righteousness of his judgment. Abigail then cries out again against Mary Warren's spirit while Danforth threatens her with the gallows if she continues to lie, so rattling the poor girl that she cries out against Proctor, who is then arrested and taken off to jail. Hale then denounces the proceedings and stomps off in a fury.

Act IV - The final act takes place in a cell in the jail several months later, where Tituba and Sarah Good are imprisoned. They are drunk, and speak happily of the Devil coming to take them away to Barbados. They are sent to another cell because this one is wanted for an interview. Danforth and Hathorne enter, and discuss the fact that Hale is now circulating among those who are to hang, seeking to comfort them and convince them to confess in order to spare their lives. He has spent the past months preaching against the witchcraft hysteria, and has stirred up much popular opposition

to the court. Parris enters and announces that Abigail has robbed him and disappeared, and begs for a postponement of the hangings. Danforth refuses. Hale then enters and tells them that the accused will not confess to crimes they have not committed, and begs Danforth to pardon them. He again refuses, and asks about Proctor's condition. When told that he refuses to speak to anyone, he orders that Elizabeth be summoned to try to convince him to confess. Hale tries to convince her to speak to her husband. She finally agrees, and the two of them are left alone in the cell. Proctor asks about their children and friends, and is told that Giles Corey has been crushed to death for refusing to plead guilty or not guilty to the charge against him, thus preserving his property for his children. Proctor intimates that he is willing to confess and spare his life because he is already a wretched sinner, and one more sin would make little difference, but he begs his wife's forgiveness; she then asks for his, implying that her coldness and suspicions drove him to lechery. She is then led off as the judges and ministers return. Proctor agrees to confess, bringing loud hosannas all around, but balks when Danforth insists it must be put in writing for the edification of the general population. He grudgingly complies, but suddenly stops when Rebecca Nurse is led into the room. Finally, he signs his confession, but refuses to allow them to post it publicly, tears the document to pieces, and is led off to the scaffold.

ESSAY QUESTIONS

Discuss the following in a five-paragraph essay:

1. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the playwright drew all of the characters and much of the plot from actual historical accounts of the Salem witch trials, yet he also deviated from the historical narrative in certain key particulars. In what ways are the deviations from history central to the message Miller is attempting to communicate? In what sense do they help to universalize the meaning of the play?
2. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was written during the McCarthy era in the early fifties. The misguided Puritanism of the play thus becomes a metaphor for the misguided patriotism of the McCarthyites. Is the metaphor an effective one? In what ways were the Puritans of Salem similar to the Red-baiters on the House Un-American Activities Committee? In what ways were they different?
3. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was written during the McCarthy era in the early fifties. The misguided Puritanism of the play thus becomes a metaphor for the misguided patriotism of the McCarthyites. Assess the attitude of the playwright toward the targets of his wrath. Was he opposed to *misguided* religious and political zealots, or did he oppose religion and patriotism in themselves?
4. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was written during the McCarthy era in the early fifties. Miller clearly saw similarities between the way witchcraft was perceived by the early Puritans and the way Americans in the fifties perceived communism. In what ways is the comparison between witchcraft and communism valid, and in what ways is it not? Were both of these evils real threats to the societies endangered by them, or perceived threats only, as Miller implies?

5. With regard to Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the playwright has commented that the play is intended to set forth the value of individualism over conformity. By making reference to specific incidents and quotations from the play, evaluate the ways in which Miller communicates his love for individualism.
6. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, John Proctor cries out, "I'll tell you what's walking Salem - vengeance is walking Salem." Was he right? Was the real central issue of the witchcraft hysteria as presented by Miller in the play the Devil, or was it people's desire for revenge against and power over their neighbors? Support your conclusion with specifics from the play.
7. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, discuss how the witch trials served to empower the powerless. In what ways did this make them similar to Miller's real subject, the McCarthy-led hearings of the House Un-American Activities Committee?
8. At the end of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, John Proctor refuses to perjure himself and goes to the gallows, an innocent man. What was his real reason for refusing to lie? Do you agree with his decision? Why or why not?
9. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, authority figures like Parris, Danforth, and Hathorne are placed in a position where they are forced to uphold the proceedings of the trials, no matter what their consciences may tell them. Only Hale is strong enough to break the bonds that keep the others from admitting that they were wrong. What factors in the trial almost forced people to take the side of the accusers rather than the accused?
10. Is Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* an anti-Christian play? Was it the playwright's intention to portray the Christian faith as evil, or did he have another target in mind? Support your conclusion with specifics from the play.
11. In what ways does Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* illustrate in extreme form the consequences of the Half-Way Covenant on the society of the Massachusetts Bay Colony? Even given the fact that Miller's dramatization is not historically accurate, how does it reflect a society in which Christianity was no longer a matter of a changed heart so much as one of social conformity?
12. One of the non-historical aspects of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* is its portrayal of the legal system of Massachusetts Bay Colony. The trials were conducted according to the principles of English law, and were not the acts of railroading bigotry portrayed in the play. In fact, one might argue that the legal system portrayed by Miller is much closer to that used in the Spanish Inquisition. What legal principles utilized in the courtroom scenes of the play correspond to the known practices of the Inquisition, and how are they similar? Be specific.
13. Discuss the title of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Why is the title appropriate to the story? Does it help to bring out the main theme of the work? Why or why not?

14. Discuss the character of either John Proctor or John Hale in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Do you consider the man about whom you have chosen to write a godly man as he is portrayed in the play? Why or why not? What about him do you consider the most admirable? the least admirable? [NOTE: In real life, both of them were godly men, with none of the doubts that Miller seems to consider so commendable.]
15. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the script makes it clear that many people chose to lie in order to save their lives. Central figures in the play such as John Proctor and Rebecca Nurse refused to do so. Evaluate their decision. Do you believe they did the right thing? Why or why not?
16. Critic Randy Nelson argued that Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* "causes us to wonder about adherence to law and to principle that may lead to order but not to justice." Is this a fair statement of one of the major themes of the play? Evaluate Miller's treatment of the relationship between principle and justice. Is it true that the two are sometimes at odds?
17. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, does the playwright believe in the existence of Satan, demons, and witches? Why or why not? Use specific information from the play to support your conclusion.
18. In reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, what difference does it make whether or not the reader believes in witches? How would someone who believes in the reality of evil supernatural forces interpret the events of Salem Village in 1692 differently than someone who does not share that belief?
19. Given the facts that the affair between John Proctor and Abigail Williams and the voodoo practiced by Tituba pictured in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* never actually occurred, how would you explain the events that occurred in Salem Village in 1692?
20. Often today, social service agencies that deal with victims of childhood sexual abuse insist that children who make such allegations ought always to be believed because of the horrific nature of the crimes committed against them. Did reading Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* change your thinking on this subject? Why or why not?
21. Compare and contrast the roles played by the young accusers in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* and Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*. Were their motivations similar? their actions? the consequences of those actions?
22. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, which character do you think undergoes the greatest transformation in the course of the drama? Support your conclusion with specific incidents and quotations from the play.
23. If, as Aristotle proposed, a tragedy is a story in which a noble man comes to an unhappy end because of a flaw in his character, would you classify Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* as a tragedy? Why or why not?

24. In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, the two pastors, Parris and Hale, serve as foils for one another. Compare and contrast the two men, both in their essential characters and in the ways they change during the stories. How does each help to illuminate the character of the other?
25. Discuss the romantic triangle at the heart of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. In what ways do Elizabeth Proctor and Abigail Williams represent two sides of the personality of John Proctor? As the protagonist struggles to establish his own identity, how do his relationships with his wife and his former lover help to delineate that struggle? Support your argument with specifics from the play.
26. The version of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* we read in class was adapted by Arthur Miller, the author of *The Crucible*. It is not difficult to understand why Miller was attracted to this play. Compare and contrast the two stories, being sure to make reference to both their protagonists and their themes.
27. Compare and contrast the characters of Catherine Stockmann and Elizabeth Proctor in Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. In what ways are these wives passive victims of the events in which their husbands are engulfed? Are they right to try to persuade their husbands to submit? Why or why not? Support your arguments with specifics from the two plays.
28. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* was written in the context of the McCarthy Red Scare in the United States. His adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* actually came out three years earlier, in 1950. Is Ibsen's play as applicable to the circumstances surrounding McCarthyism as is *The Crucible*, or does it focus on more general issues? Support your conclusion with specifics from the play.
29. Both Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* were written during the era of the McCarthy Red Scare. In your opinion, which is the more effective critique of McCarthyism? Why do you think so?
30. Both Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* make critical changes in the historical events they portray in order to support their major themes. Are such alterations of history justifiable? Is such a practice commendable pursuit of artistic ends, or indefensible propaganda?
31. Both Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* use evangelical Christianity as a symbol for what the playwrights detest about American society. What is it about the themes addressed by the playwrights that make Christianity such a convenient target? What does the fact that Christianity is seen as the enemy tell you about how American society has changed in the years since these events occurred?

32. Both Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee's *Inherit the Wind* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* use evangelical Christianity as a symbol for what the playwrights detest about American society. Yet the Christianity of the Puritans was very different from that of southern fundamentalists in the early part of the twentieth century. How did the religions practiced by these two groups differ from one another? In what ways were they the same? Are the similarities or the differences more important to the themes on which the playwrights focus their attention?
33. Compare and contrast the portrayals of the Massachusetts Bay Puritans found in Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Why are both writers so antagonistic toward what was in reality a godly group of people despite their obvious faults? In what ways do the two portrayals differ, and what do these differences reveal about the purposes of the authors?
34. The Salem Witch Trials play a significant role in both Nathaniel Hawthorne's *The House of the Seven Gables* and Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Compare and contrast the treatment of the trials in the two works, giving special attention to the role played by greed for land and the way in which the Puritans are portrayed. Do the two authors share the same aims in their negative portrayal of Puritanism? Why or why not?
35. Compare and contrast the withdrawn confessions of the title character in George Bernard Shaw's *Saint Joan* and John Proctor in Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. In both cases, the one on trial deliberately chose death over what he or she considered a worse alternative. What did they fear more than death? What do these choices tell you about the beliefs and attitudes of the playwrights in each case? Support your conclusions with specifics from both plays.