



# THE CRUCIBLE

BY ARTHUR MILLER

WY **PLAY**  
**HOUSE**

TEACHER RESOURCE PACK

# THE CRUCIBLE

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# THE CRUCIBLE

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## CAST

Steven Beard  
Jim Bywater  
Tim Chipping  
Lynette Clarke  
Dominic Gately  
David Killick  
Verity Kirk  
David Leopold  
Martin Marquez  
Joseph Mydell  
Kate Phillips  
Corinna Powlesland  
Daniel Poyser  
Marlene Sidaway  
Susie Trayling  
Alan Williams

Giles Corey  
Judge Hathorne  
Thomas Putman  
Tituba  
Ezekiel Cheever  
Francis Nurse  
Mary Warren  
John Willard  
John Proctor  
Gov. Giles Danforth  
Abigail Williams  
Ann Putnam/Sarah Good  
John Hale  
Rebecca Nurse  
Elizabeth Proctor  
Reverend Samuel Parris

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## CREATIVES

James Brining  
Colin Richmond  
Colin Grenfell  
David Shrubsole  
Anna Morrissey  
Ian Trollope  
Tim Charrington  
Lottie Hines  
Gemma Woffinden  
Tyrrell Jones  
Jane Thompson  
Michelle Booth  
Richard Lodge  
Samantha Krylonsky  
Loren Rayner

Director  
Designer  
Lighting Designer  
Composer and Sound Designer  
Movement Director  
Associate Sound Designer  
Dialect Coach  
Casting Director  
Associate Director – Young Company  
Assistant Director  
Company Stage Manager  
Stage Manager  
Deputy Stage Manager  
Assistant Stage Managers

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## YOUNG COMPANY

Ariella Rivlin  
Beth Knight  
Carrie Walker  
Catherine Hawthorn  
Charlotte Veal  
Elena Trowsdale  
Emily Anderson Wallace  
Holly Pennington  
Imogen Chillington  
Inbal Port  
Jamie Silver

Laura Marsden  
Lizzie Turner  
Lydia Crossland  
Mabel Goulden  
Natasha Brotherdale-Smith  
Nicoletta Baranelli  
Olivia Dobney  
Thea Mudhar  
Uma Ramachandran  
Zoe Hamilton

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#wyprucible



# SYNOPSIS

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## ACT ONE

The house of Reverend Parris. Parris prays as his daughter, Betty, lies catatonic on her bed. Tituba, his slave, enters and is told to leave immediately by an enraged Parris. Parris' niece and Betty's cousin, Abigail Williams enters, who lives with her uncle after being discharged from the service of John Proctor for unknown reasons. It is revealed that the previous night Abigail, Betty and a number of the girls from the village had engaged in a ritual in the forest led by Tituba. Accusations of witchcraft are now rife within the village and it is believed that Betty has been struck down by "unnatural causes".

Ann and Thomas Putnam come to visit, having heard of Betty's condition and reveal that their daughter Ruth – another of the local girls who engaged in Tituba's ritual – has been struck down by the same unexplained affliction. The Putnams sent Ruth to Tituba to contact her dead siblings, believing their other children to have been murdered by an unknown evil witch residing in the village.

When the Putnams and Parris leave the room, other girls who engaged in the ritual come to visit Abigail, who threatens them when they express their desire to tell the truth about the ritual. John Proctor then enters and sends away many of the girls, leaving him alone with Abigail and the catatonic Betty. Through the conversation between Proctor and Abigail, we learn that the two of them had an affair while she was in his service, and that she still attempts to seduce him.

As more of the townspeople come to see Betty for themselves, tensions rise over land ownership and old feuds are quickly reignited. Reverend Hale, a witchcraft expert of nearby town Beverly, arrives to investigate the claims of witchcraft and Abigail, in a panic at being questioned, names Tituba a conjurer of the Devil. Knowing her word will never stand up against Abigail's insistence and in an attempt to curb her punishment, Tituba confesses and names other townspeople witches along with her, sparking a chain of further accusations from Abigail and Betty.



Tim Chipping and Corinna Powlesland

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## ACT TWO

The house of John Proctor. Proctor and his wife Elizabeth are alone together. Proctor's affair with Abigail has had a profound effect on their relationship – he is tentative with his wife, trying to keep her happy, while Elizabeth is mistrusting and ultimately confrontational when she learns Proctor was alone with Abigail at Parris' house.

Marry Warren, the Proctors' servant, comes home from a day at court, giving Elizabeth a poppet that she made in court as a "gift". Angry that she has defied his orders to not leave the house and her continued efforts to undermine him, Proctor goes to whip her. She avoids it by recounting what happened in the courtroom and saying that she had saved Elizabeth's life after she was mentioned in the court. Showing how much power she has as a witness, Mary says she will no longer be ordered around.

Panicked by what Mary has said, Elizabeth quickly catches on to the fact that Abigail was the one to mention her and begs Proctor to go to Abigail and reason with her. Reverend Hale interrupts them, investigating people of the town and carrying the suspicions of Elizabeth mentioned in court. While he questions them, Giles Corey and Francis Nurse enter and say their wives have been arrested, joined by Ezekiel Cheever and Marshall Herrick who have come to arrest Elizabeth, formally accused by Abigail. They question her on the presence of poppets in the house, and when the poppet from Mary is discovered, they arrest her.

# SYNOPSIS

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## ACT THREE

The Meeting House. As Martha Corey is tried, her husband Giles Corey objects, saying that he has evidence in her defence. Corey and Francis Nurse bring Proctor and Mary in front of Judges Danforth and Hathorne, so that Mary can give evidence against the other girls. However, Danforth believes that it is Proctor's intent to undermine the court and interrogates him, revealing that Elizabeth is pregnant and would be spared to live out her pregnancy if Proctor proceeds no further with his objections. Proctor says he cannot agree to the terms and along with Corey and Francis, gives testimony – a signed petition in support of Elizabeth, Martha and Rebecca from 91 townspeople.

Danforth dismisses the petition, and gives the order to hold all 91 signatories for questioning. When Corey says to Danforth that Thomas Putnam orchestrated his daughter's accusations, Danforth holds him in contempt of court for refusing to say how he learned the information. Reverend Hale begins to see through the corruption of the court and begs Danforth to consider Mary's new deposition. Realising that one way or another he is being lied to and his authority undermined, Danforth calls for the other girls.

Under pressure from Danforth, Parris and Hathorne, Abigail once again claims she is being attacked by spirits forcing Proctor to admit the truth about their affair. Wishing for confirmation, Danforth sends for Elizabeth who Proctor assures him cannot lie. She does lie to save Proctor however, and in response the girls begin to scream that they are being attacked again. Scared, Mary joins them once more, saying Proctor is the Devil's man. The scene closes with Proctor and Corey being arrested and Hale quitting the court.

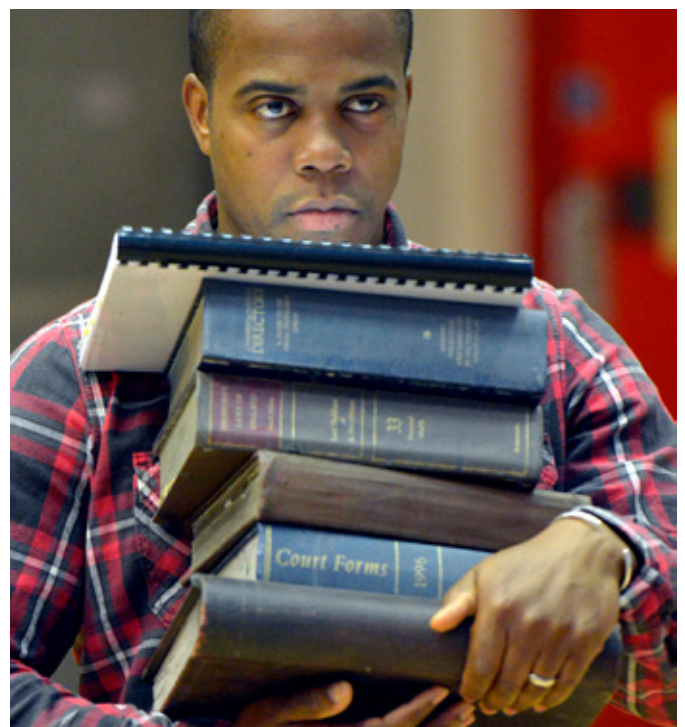
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## ACT FOUR

The Salem Jail. On the day of Proctor's and Rebecca's execution, Hale begs Rebecca, Martha Corey and others to confess to the crimes they are accused of in order to save their lives. Parris admits to Danforth and Hathorne that Abigail and Mercy Lewis – another of the accusers – have robbed him and left the country, and that since the excommunication of Proctor, attempts have been made on his life. Despite this news and the new lack of faith in the courts, Danforth refuses to postpone the executions.

In an attempt to get a confession out of Proctor and subsequently quiet the dissension within the town, they send for Elizabeth and ask her to speak with him. Once together, they speak of Corey's execution and how he stood by his innocence. Proctor asks Elizabeth for forgiveness, but she says he only has to forgive himself. He confesses to Danforth and Hathorne in an attempt to save his life, but after being urged to implicate others, he cannot bring himself to sign the written confession and rips it up in front of them.

As he is led away to be hanged, Parris and Hale plead with Elizabeth that she change his mind. In her devastation, she accepts that he refuses to lie and accepts him as a good man.



Daniel Poyser

# CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT: JOHN PROCTOR

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## DESCRIPTION

Proctor is a farmer in his mid-thirties. Before the events of the play, Proctor had an affair with Abigail Williams. The affair results in Abigail accusing his wife of witchcraft, followed by himself being implicated. However, it is through his honesty and his differing beliefs from those in power that results in his execution at the end of the play.

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## ACTIVITY: THE CHARACTER'S JOURNEY

Using your knowledge of the play, write a paragraph about John Proctor's journey through the play. Make sure that you discuss not only the events, but the effect they have on the character.



Martin Marquez

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## THE REAL LIFE JOHN PROCTOR

The Proctor we know from the play is a highly fictionalised version of the real John Proctor living in Salem in 1692. At the time of the witch trials Proctor would have been 60 years old – much older than the way he is portrayed in Miller's play – and had been married 3 times. While it is true that Abigail Williams was Proctor's main accuser at the time, it is seen as unlikely that the two of them had an affair as the real Abigail was 11 at the time of the trials.

Also as in the events of the play, Proctor's wife Elizabeth was accused of witchcraft first and put on trial. When Proctor insisted that the accusations were false and suggested that his accusers be the real perpetrators of witchcraft, they turned their accusations upon him as well. His attempts to maintain both his and Elizabeth's innocence were in vain and despite getting many of his neighbours to sign a petition as testament to their character, he was found guilty and executed by hanging on 19th August 1692.

# CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT: ELIZABETH PROCTOR

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## DESCRIPTION

Elizabeth is John Proctor's wife. From her first appearance she is still hurt by Proctor's affair with Abigail, but is trying to continue with life as normal. Elizabeth is described by her husband as someone who could never tell a lie, but this becomes the downfall of both herself and Proctor when she lies to the Judges to protect Proctor's reputation after he admits to his affair with Abigail.

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## THE REAL LIFE ELIZABETH PROCTOR

The real John Proctor of the Salem witch trials married 3 times over the course of his lifetime – 2 of those wives being named Elizabeth. However, we can assume that the character of Elizabeth Proctor in *The Crucible* is based chiefly on Proctor's third wife, Elizabeth Proctor, nee Bassett.

Elizabeth married John in 1674, two years after the death of his second wife, Elizabeth Proctor nee Thorndike. Elizabeth's past had already been plagued with accusations of witchcraft when her grandmother,

Ann, a Quaker and midwife, was brought up on charges of witchcraft in 1669. Though the charges against her were never proven and no action was taken, the scandal followed Elizabeth and may have contributed to the hysteria which resulted in the accusations against her in 1692.

Elizabeth was first accused by Mary Warren, and later by Mercy Lewis and Abigail Williams. While the accusations against her were at first ignored, the persistence of the girls led to her arrest. She and Proctor were found guilty of the charges against them, leading to his execution. However, because Elizabeth was pregnant, her execution was postponed until after the baby was born. She gave birth to a son in January 1693, whom she named John after his father, but was never executed, instead remaining in prison with the baby until May 1693.

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## ACTIVITY: CHARACTER ANALYSIS

In the space below create a spider-graph using 5 adjectives to describe Elizabeth Proctor. Give reasons for your choices using examples from the play.

Elizabeth  
Proctor



# CHARACTER SPOTLIGHT: REBECCA NURSE

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## DESCRIPTION

Rebecca Nurse is described as a white-haired, 72 year old woman who walks with a cane. Her moral upstanding and kind nature was admired and respected amongst the townspeople. She is able to soothe Betty Parris by her mere presence and speaks with a level head, guided by her strong religious beliefs. The prominence of her character within the play allows Miller to highlight just how bad the accusations became.

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## ACTIVITY: FACTS & LIES

Using your knowledge of the play, write three facts and three lies about the character of Rebecca Nurse in the boxes provided.

Facts

Lies



Marlene Sidaway

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## THE REAL LIFE REBECCA NURSE

Rebecca Nurse was one of the oldest accused during the witch trials. She was a well-respected member of the community and was defended by many of her fellow townspeople when the accusations were first made against her in March 1692. As depicted in the play, it is believed that the accusations were orchestrated by the Putnam family and made due to a dispute between the Nurse family and the Putnams over land ownership.

Nurse stood trial for acts of witchcraft in June 1692 and was initially found not guilty by the jury. This resulted in an outcry from her accusers and the children who said that they had been attacked by Nurse's spectre. The court asked the jury to reconsider their verdict, directing their attention to a statement Nurse had made in which she referred to a fellow prisoner who had already been convicted as "one of us". Jumping to the conclusion that by "us", Nurse meant "witches", the jury convicted her and she was executed by hanging in July 1692.



# CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

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## REVEREND PARRIS

Minister of the town of Salem, Parris has a lot to lose from the implication that his daughter and niece were engaging in witchcraft. He is a key figure in the progression of the trials, encouraging Betty and Abigail to discuss what happened in the woods and to name other townspeople as witches.

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## TITUBA

Parris' slave. She is said to be able to contact the dead and engages in a ritual with many of the town's girls, sparking hysteria within the town. She is forced into admitting to witchcraft.

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## ABIGAIL WILLIAMS

Parris' niece and previously the Proctors' servant. She had an affair with John Proctor while working for him and was relieved of her duties when it was discovered by Elizabeth. She actively engaged in the ritual with Tituba in an attempt to destroy the Proctors' marriage and fuels the witchcraft hysteria by naming Tituba, Elizabeth, and many other townsfolk as consorts of the Devil.

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## MARY WARREN

The Proctors' current servant, Mary is one of the girls present at Tituba's ritual and one of the Proctors' main accusers. She frames Elizabeth by placing a poppet she had made upon the Proctors' mantelpiece and claiming it was used by Elizabeth for spell casting.

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## DEPUTY-GOVERNOR DANFORTH

Deputy-Governor of Massachusetts, Danforth presides over the court. He is a fiercely devout Christian and an imposing presence who seems more interested in wielding his power through successful prosecution than getting to the truth of the situation.

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## ACTIVITY: CHARACTER SUMMARIES

For each of the characters listed below, give a short description of their role within the events of the play.

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### BETTY PARRIS

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### JUDGE HATHORNE

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### GILES COREY

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### REVEREND JOHN HALE

# CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY

FRANCIS NURSE



ANN PUTNAM



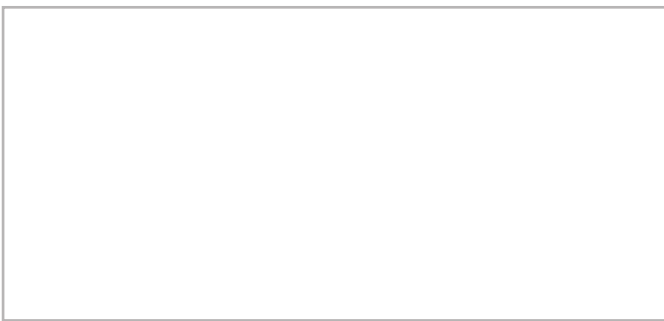
EZEKIEL CHEEVER



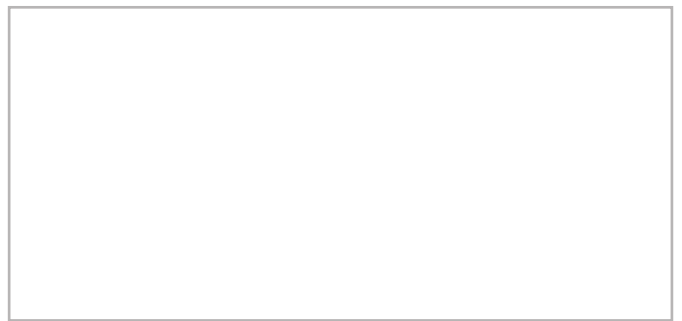
THOMAS PUTNAM



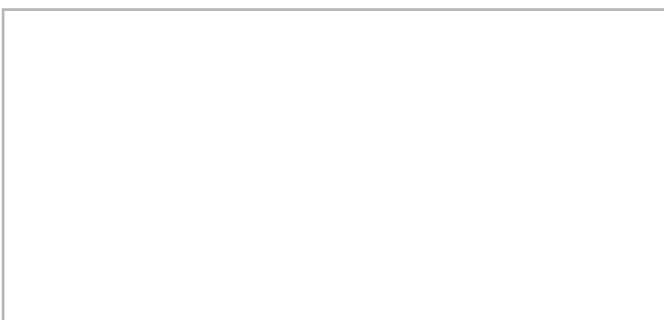
MARSHAL HERRICK



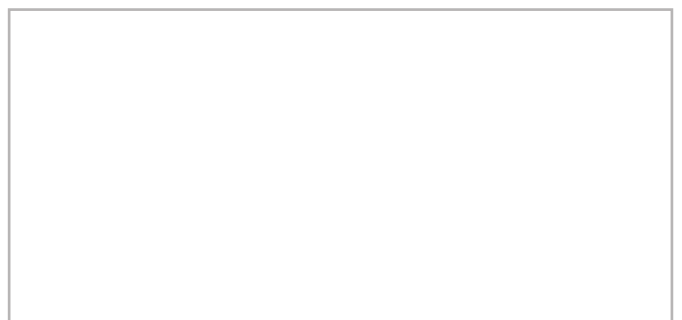
MERCY LEWIS



SUSANNA WALCOTT



SARAH GOOD



# INTO THE CRUCIBLE

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR JAMES BRINING TALKS TO STUART LEEKS ABOUT THE ENDURING POWER OF ARTHUR MILLER'S CLASSIC

In 1950, Arthur Miller made an adaptation of Henrik Ibsen's play *An Enemy of the People*. In America in the 1950s there were those who considered Miller himself to be an enemy of the people. He was called before the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1955, where it was alleged that, some years before, he had protested against the outlawing of the Communist Party and opposed the Smith Act, which made it an offence to advocate overthrowing the US government by force. Miller was indicted because he refused to name people he'd met at communist writers' meetings many years before. He appealed against the judgement, and his conviction was quashed by the Supreme Court in 1958.

It was in a climate of fear in America of the 'Red threat' posed by Soviet Russia as the Cold War grew colder in the early 1950s that Miller wrote *The Crucible*. Ostensibly the play is based on actual events in Salem, Massachusetts in 1692-93, in which 20 people – some

men, but mostly women – and even two dogs were tried and hanged for alleged witchcraft. At heart, however, Miller makes the Salem witch trials a metaphor for Senator Joseph McCarthy's persecution of those in America suspected of harbouring Communist sympathies at the time he was writing the play. But in the 60 years since Miller wrote it, *The Crucible* has resonated anew with contemporary events in each and every passing year.

James Brining is refreshingly blunt on the subject of what does and doesn't draw him to the play: "I'm not terribly interested in the McCarthy trials," he told me, "which is not to suggest that they weren't pivotal to Miller writing *The Crucible*. But the play has as much bite and resonance now as it did in 1953. The notion that 'you're either with us or you're against us' is something we've heard frequently over the past few years. And I'm not being judgemental about that. What the play examines is the difficulty of balancing the demands of the greater good with the needs of the individual, and the compromises of personal liberty involved in that. It seems to me that this is the terrible weight of responsibility that those in government have to bear. In Act III, Judge



James Brining

# INTO THE CRUCIBLE

Danforth says: '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 ...' Those words seem extraordinarily pertinent to the time we are living in, when moral ambiguity is all around us, and the concept of evil is difficult and complicated".

For James, *The Crucible* is a quintessentially American play. It is set some 70 years after the Pilgrim Fathers arrived in New England from Europe on the *Mayflower*, seeking the freedom to practice their own brand of radical Puritanism. "America is a country that was founded in religious fundamentalism" says James. "Salem in 1692 is a theocracy still – state and religion are one. But it's also an early capitalist community, with people fighting over land with the indigenous peoples, and fighting over land with each other. So it's a society that is straining between the needs of a community that is under threat – on the edge of a new continent, between the ocean and the forest – and the interests of the individuals within it".

Of course, in Salem in 1692 there were no witches, whereas there certainly were Communists in America in the early fifties. As the Cold War escalated, the threat posed by Communism was justifiably feared by many perfectly reasonable Americans, just as there is widespread fear in the West today surrounding, for example, the spread of extreme Islam. The great danger is that such fears are then exploited by those whose aim it is to condemn all those of whatever faith or political persuasion to which they happen to be opposed – or, as happens in *The Crucible*, used to fuel personal vendettas.

James points out that although there is no sense in the play in which the girls are actually subject to diabolical possession, this was a society in which the belief in witchcraft was very real. "The production has to create a world in which there is a profound belief in the possibility of the existence of witches," he says, "otherwise the play doesn't make sense. So we haven't modernised it, we haven't updated it. But I do think that we can create an aesthetic environment in which it feels closer to us now. Even if the belief system and values of these people is distant from us, their psychology isn't. The psychology is actually extraordinarily modern, particularly that of the women, who have enormous emotional intelligence. I want them all to feel as close to you as your next door neighbour."

The relationship between the men and the women in the community of the play is something that interests James greatly, and he aims to make that apparent in his staging. A large cast of sixteen is supplemented by girls from the Playhouse's Youth Theatre. "In a world in which the power tends to be held by men, it's no coincidence that it's mostly women who are put to death for being witches. There's a tension in the play between the older men who have power and these young women who are disempowered, and that disconnect is something we're trying to make very vivid in the production".

Miller plays out the public themes of the play – sin, guilt, conscience, denial – in the family drama that is at its heart – the triangle formed of Elizabeth Proctor, her farmer husband John and Abigail Williams, their former housemaid. The playwright's own feelings of guilt and betrayal in his personal life at this time almost certainly fed into *The Crucible*. He had married his first wife, Mary, in 1940, but ten years later the marriage was in serious trouble. In 1951, Miller began a relationship with Marilyn Monroe, for whom he was eventually to leave Mary. Miller admitted in an article about the writing of *The Crucible* in the *New Yorker* forty years later: "I had not approached the witchcraft out of nowhere or from purely social and political considerations. My own marriage of twelve years was teetering and I knew more than I wished to know about where the blame lay". As James says, "On a very human level it's a play about a family in crisis, and a play about what it's like when infidelity enters into a marriage, and how a relationship can survive that."

James does not believe that there are out-and-out villains in the play. Abigail, for example, is young and already emotionally damaged when the affair with Proctor begins. "It's not that I am trying to exonerate her," James says, "but when you stage a play you have to examine what it is that is motivating each of the characters. Abigail has, she says – and I believe her – witnessed the death of her parents. She is traumatised, she is pathological, and Proctor is at least partially responsible for that. She speaks of having been through fire with him. She has almost created a new theology for herself, and it's quite modern – the sense of 'It's us against the world'. It's an individualism that, in a way, Proctor himself is driven by. Nowadays, it's something we as a society tend to prioritise; Abigail takes it to an extreme".



# INTO THE CRUCIBLE

Daniel Poyser and Steven Beard



And what of Proctor himself? Miller was heavily influenced by Greek classical drama, and in John Proctor he created a genuine tragic hero in the Greek sense, flaw and all. "In rehearsal we've been exploring the question of the extent to which Proctor is a 'good' man. He's certainly a deeply flawed man, who has sinned and knows the guilt of it. I don't think the audience is meant to find him a particularly attractive personality. His moment of self-realisation happens as late as possible in the arc of the play. But unlike a classic Greek play, this one I think denies us catharsis. It is unsparing in confronting us with the futility of the wilful ignorance of which human beings are capable."

For Judge Danforth, there can be no swerving from the path on which he is set. In his introduction to the play, Miller expressed the opinion that he hadn't been hard enough on the Judge: "I think now, almost four years after the writing of it, that I was wrong in mitigating the evil of this man and the judges he represents. Instead, I would perfect his evil to the utmost and make an open issue,

a thematic consideration of it, in the play". These words may well have been spurred by Miller's experience of facing the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1955, and James takes a more nuanced view of Danforth: "There is a lot at stake for him. He comes in and has to resolve the situation. He makes his decisions in good faith and if he were then to question those decisions the whole thing would collapse into chaos. It was the same with Tony Blair over the war in Iraq: once he'd committed himself to that course he couldn't afford to question it. Danforth is uncompromising – he knows he can't afford to be otherwise."

Summing up the enduring power of Miller's play, James says: "What *The Crucible* shows us is that human beings are inherently flawed, and a system of living that requires us to deny our flawed nature results in disaster. Our flaws make us who we are; we have to accept that fact and find ways of living together."

# DIRECTING ACTIVITY

EACH OF THE QUESTIONS BELOW CAN BE WORKED ON AS A PRACTICAL EXERCISE IN SMALL GROUPS OR WRITTEN ABOUT IN THE SPACES PROVIDED.

Re-read Act One of the play. How might you direct a sequence before the scripted action of the play to show what had happened the night before?

How might you direct the scene changes between each of the Acts to tell the story of how the play's action progresses outside of the scripted dialogue?

Look specifically at the end of Act One from the point of Tituba's re-entry. How might you effectively direct this part of the play to show the following:

- The characters are convinced by Abigail's lies
- To communicate to an audience that Tituba gives a false confession

Kate Phillips



# CREATING THE WORLD OF THE CRUCIBLE

SET AND COSTUME DESIGNER OF THE THE CRUCIBLE COLIN RICHMOND SHARES THE PROCESS OF BRINGING THIS 20TH CENTURY CLASSIC TO THE QUARRY STAGE. HIS ROLE AS DESIGNER INCLUDES EVERYTHING YOU SEE ON STAGE INCLUDING SET, COSTUME AND PROPS.

Working on a show starts by reading the script, getting a feel for the piece and then an initial meeting with the director to discuss their vision. From that you meet again looking at how the concept best fits the instincts you had when you initially read the text. Once a design is agreed a 1.25 scale model is made of what will eventually be seen on stage, allowing me to work through scene changes and make sure we are creating a space that best reflects the mood we want to portray throughout the performance. As rehearsal begins I work with every department to create what was a sketch on a page, or a very small model into something life-size, tangible and real.

Director James Brining and I were keen to not make just another production of *The Crucible*. We wanted to create a more playful space where the world nods to history but doesn't depict it verbatim. We looked at religious communities, American sects, cults, religious fanatics, Bible belt America and Amish communities. From this point we pieced together a world which creates a feel of the Salem in Arthur Miller's text. My inspiration came from these particular elements and also from looking at images of temporary churches, churches from around the world, spaces which have a real sense of community.

As a designer, you work with most departments within the theatre, as everything we do impacts elements of the production. The Wardrobe department, actors, set builders, scenic artists, props department, make-up, wigs, stage management, lighting and sometimes sound are all called upon. There's hardly one department that gets ignored by us! I love it for that very reason.

Although I worked on a concept for the piece, I also wanted to create a feeling of a world apart, but also a world which we all know. We aren't just holding a hand up to the audience, allowing them to spectate. We want the audience to be able to access the world of *The Crucible*, perhaps representing something of contemporary life. It's for this reason we have a mix of



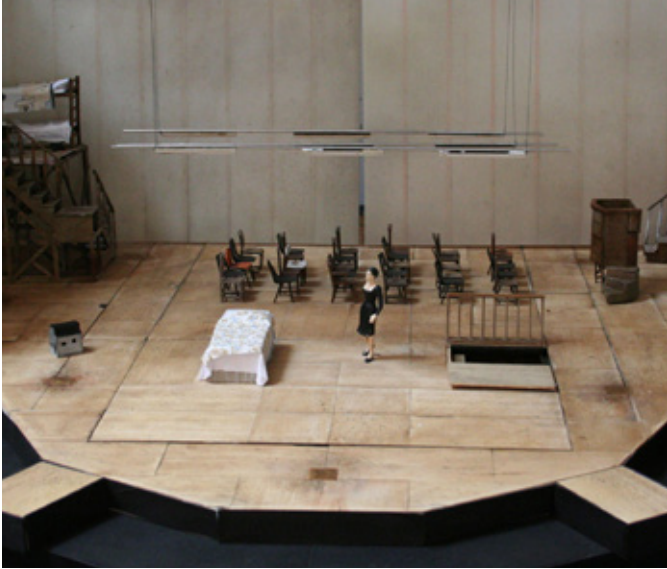
style within the costumes. There's a nod to a few different denominations of religion and a very bold reference to the period and the people who inhabited Salem at that time, including the representation of a farming community.

The look for the girls came from an image sourced of two young Amish girls in a crop field. There was something confusing about the image and unsettling, it was period in feel but with a contemporary edge, taken a couple of years ago. It fascinated us to think how we could mix this through the world on stage. There's still the strong stamp of puritan within everything, a no fuss, buttoned up society, but we've tried to play with it ever so slightly for our Leeds audience.

It's remarkable to think there are still these factions of our society, especially within America where communities are closed off from outside contact. It was this sort of community we were interested in, and from that starting point we were able to just run with it.



# DESIGN ACTIVITY



## MODEL BOX

Look at the description of the stage in Act Three. In the space below, draw your own design for the set for this part of the play, taking into account the period in which it is set but also using key themes of the play to influence your decisions. Label aspects of your design clearly, with reasons for your choices.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for drawing a stage set design. The box is positioned below the text and occupies most of the lower half of the page.



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

While some dramatic liberties were taken with the events of the Salem witch trials for the purpose of writing *The Crucible*, the characters of the play are real and the events accurate. The events which sparked the trials started in January of 1692, when Betty Parris and Abigail Williams – daughter and niece of Salem's Rev. Samuel Parris – began having unexplained fits. The girls claimed that they were feeling the pain of being stabbed with needles and pinched, their condition soon being diagnosed by the local doctor, William Griggs, as the result of witchcraft.

Exactly how this conclusion was drawn is unclear and can only be speculated over. It's possible that since there were rumours of witchcraft circulating the surrounding towns prior to 1692, someone in the town suggested the possibility of witchcraft ailing the girls and this was blown very quickly out of proportion. Many accounts also tell of Betty and Abigail – along with other girls in the town – practicing fortune telling. When Rev. Parris found them out, he cried "witch" in an attempt to avoid the scandal of having his own family members being accused of black arts.

The finger was first pointed at Tituba, a slave owned by Rev. Parris. While her native country is unknown, she was bought by Parris from a family in Barbados where it is believed that she learned various occult stories and practices from her previous mistress. Whether or not Parris knew this is open to speculation, but when at first she denied the accusations, she was beaten by Parris until she finally confessed, also implicating Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne. All three women were arrested, interrogated and ultimately sent to jail for their alleged crimes of witchcraft. None of the townspeople defended them as each was seen as an outcast, and their successful indictment paved the way for the mass hysteria that followed.

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## DISCUSSION

Why might Parris have accused Tituba? Why do you think she ultimately confessed?

If you were an actor or a director working on a production of *The Crucible*, what decisions would you make about the character of Tituba in relation to this?

Alan Williams



# HISTORICAL CONTEXT: THE SALEM WITCH TRIALS

Between the months of March and May 1692 accusations of witchcraft became rife. Upstanding members of the community – like Rebecca Nurse – found themselves being arrested; those who spoke out against the validity of the accusations had the finger pointed at them as a result. However, these accusations can be attributed to personal vendettas and family feuds – especially in the case of Ann Putnam, who soon joined Betty and Abigail in their affliction and was said to be used by her family to make accusations against members of the community with whom they had had long-standing problems.

In June of 1692, at the height of the hysteria, the governor of Massachusetts, Sir William Phips, set up a special court in Salem to deal with the accusations, appointing lieutenant governor William Stoughton as Chief Justice to preside over the trials. Stoughton was by all accounts an unyielding man. He allowed the use of 'spectral evidence' in court – the testimonies given by Abigail Williams and others that the spectres (ghosts) of those accused would attack – and it was on this evidence that many of those standing trial were convicted.

In September, questions began to arise about the validity of spectral evidence. These questions came initially from Cotton and Increase Mather, a father and son who were both ministers and whose opposing opinions aroused the suspicion of Sir William Phips. While Cotton was an avid believer that evil spectres could only take on the form of those who had sworn their allegiance to the Devil, his son was of the opinion that these spectres could in fact take on the form of innocent people, referring to the Bible as backup to his claims. It was this which eventually convinced Phips to rule that spectral evidence no longer be permissible in court, resulting in a stay of execution for five convicted prisoners and the court later being dissolved.

Stoughton never agreed with the decision that spectral evidence should not be permissible and some sources say that he quit the court as a result. However, he later went on to become Chief Justice in the Supreme Court of Massachusetts and, taking with him his desire to eradicate witches, continued the trials. However, he was once again overruled by Phips in the use of spectral evidence and many of those he had sentenced to death were once again reprieved. Stoughton later returned to his home country of England, where he launched a campaign against Phips' rule.

In all, 43 Salem inhabitants stood trial on charges of witchcraft, with 19 being executed.

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## DISCUSSION

Why do you think that William Stoughton, such a prominent figure in the Salem Witch Trials, doesn't appear as a character in Miller's play?

Why might Miller have chosen to use Thomas Danforth and John Hathorne instead?

# MCCARTHYISM: THE CRUCIBLE AS AN ALLEGORY

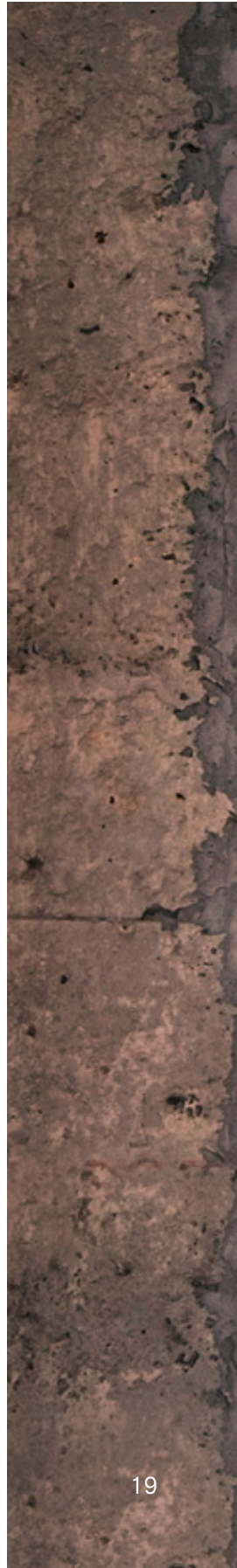
During World War II, there was a marked increase in the number of members of the Communist Party of the United States. Communist governments had already gained power in Eastern Europe and China and the United States were becoming increasingly concerned that there may be an attempt to overthrow the government and the capitalist society which had been established.

Fuel to the fire came in the form of Joseph McCarthy, at the time a junior Senator of the state of Wisconsin. On 9th February, 1950 at a Lincoln Day celebratory lunch, McCarthy made a speech in which he said he held in his hand a list of 205 names who were known members of the Communist Party of the United States. Furthermore, McCarthy claimed that these names were known to the Secretary of State and continued to be allowed to work for the State Department. The truth of this claim still remains a mystery, since on subsequent occasions the number varied.

The media attention which followed McCarthy's speech elevated his power levels within the Senate, a power which he used to head his own investigations into those he thought were communists or sympathisers. Despite the fact that McCarthy's original point was that Communists should not be allowed to work for the State Department, many of those interrogated never had.

While being a Communist wasn't illegal, McCarthy had people charged with the act of subversion. This was helped along by the contribution of the FBI's 'Responsibilities Program', in which files of those with potential Communist links were handed over to McCarthy for further investigation. Liberals and left-wing supporters were often targeted and many of those who were investigated were done so on baseless accusations for which there was no evidence. McCarthy used intimidation and threats during interrogation and while most were eventually released without charge, the damage done to their reputation was irreversible with many struggling socially and financially for the rest of their lives.

Miller has implied that he rejects the notion that *The Crucible* is an outright allegorical representation for the events surrounding McCarthyism, but does accept that it was influenced by it. The conclusion that the play was an allegory was drawn by those who saw the play when it was first produced and drew parallels with political proceedings at the time. Instead, Miller states that he had had the idea for *The Crucible* for a while before the rise of McCarthyism and that the play is about the "handing over of conscience". He was inspired by the relationships between John Proctor, his wife Elizabeth, and Abigail Williams, thus making these the central focus







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