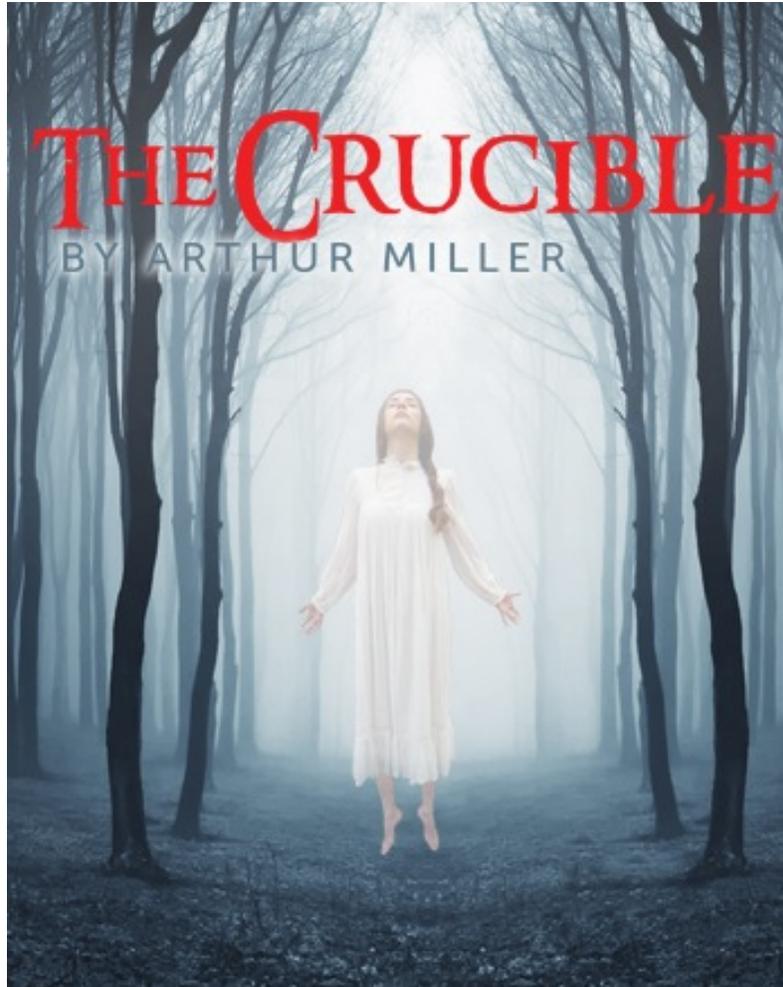


**Pacific Conservatory Theatre
Student Matinee Program**



Presents

Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*

Generously sponsored by
Judge & Mrs. Jed Q. Beebe
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Franca Bongi-Lockard
Ron & Mary Nanning

A Study Guide for Educators

Welcome to the Pacific Conservatory Theatre

A NOTE TO THE TEACHER

Thank you for bringing your students to PCPA at Allan Hancock College. Here are some helpful hints for your visit to the Marian Theatre. The top priority of our staff is to provide an enjoyable day of live theatre for you and your students. We offer you this study guide as a tool to prepare your students prior to the performance.

SUGGESTIONS FOR STUDENT ETIQUETTE

Note-able behavior is a vital part of theater for youth. Going to the theater is not a casual event. It is a special occasion. If students are prepared properly, it will be a memorable, educational experience they will remember for years.

1. Have students enter the theater in a single file. Chaperones should be one adult for every ten students. Our ushers will assist you with locating your seats. Please wait until the usher has seated your party before any rearranging of seats to avoid injury and confusion. While seated, teachers should space themselves so they are visible, between every groups of ten students. Teachers and adults must remain with their group during the entire performance.
2. Once seated in the theater, students may go to the bathroom in small groups and with the teacher's permission. Please chaperone younger students. Once the show is over, please remain seated until the House Manager dismisses your school.
3. Please remind your students that we do not permit:
 - food, gum, drinks, smoking, hats, backpacks or large purses
 - disruptive talking.
 - disorderly and inappropriate behavior (stepping on/over seats, throwing objects, etc.)
 - cameras, iPods, cell phones, beepers, tape recorders, hand held video games. (Adults are asked to put any beepers or cell phones on silent or vibrate.) In cases of disorderly behavior, groups may be asked to leave the theater without ticket refunds.
4. Teachers should take time to remind students before attending the show of the following about a live performance: Sometimes we forget when we come into a theatre that we are one of the most important parts of the production. Without an audience there would be no performance. Your contribution of laughter, quiet attention and applause is part of the play.

When we watch movies or television we are watching images on a screen, and what we say or do cannot affect them. In the theatre the actors are real people who

are present and creating an experience with us at that very moment. They see and hear us and are sensitive to our response. They know how we feel about the play by how we watch and listen. An invisible bond is formed between actors and a good audience, and it enables the actors to do their best for you. A good audience helps make a good performance.

PCPA welcomes you as a partner in the live theatre experience from the moment you take your seats. We hope that your visit will be a highlight of your school year.

HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

The Study Guide is a companion piece designed to explore many ideas depicted in the stage production of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. Although the guide's intent is to enhance the student's theatrical experience, it can also be used as an introduction to the elements of a play, and the production elements involved in the play's presentation. The guide has been organized into three major sections:

Elements of the story
Elements of production
Activities

Teachers and group leaders will want to select portions of the guide for their specific usage. Discussion questions are meant to provoke a line of thought about a particular topic. The answers to the discussion questions in many instances will initiate the process of exploration and discovery of varied interpretations by everyone involved. This can be as rewarding as the wonderful experience of seeing Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* on-stage.

Production Team and Cast
Arthur Miller's
The Crucible

Director
Scenic Designer
Costume Designer
Lighting Designer
Sound Designer
Fight Director
Voice/Dialect Coach
Movement
Production Stage Manager

Roger DeLaurier
Jason Bolen
Eddy L. Bowers
Tim Thistleton
Andrew Mark Wilhelm
Peter S. Hadres*
Kitty Balay
Katie Fuchs-Wakowski
Ellen Beltramo*

Cast of Characters

Betty Parris
Reverend Samuel Parris
Tituba
Abigail Williams
Susanna Wallcott
Mrs. Ann Putnam
Thomas Putnam
Mercy Lewis
Mary Warren
John Proctor
Rebecca Nurse
Giles Corey
Reverend John Hale
Elizabeth Proctor
Francis Nurse
Ezekiel Cheever
John Willard
Judge Hawthorne
Deputy-Governor Danforth
Sarah Good
Hopkins
Elizabeth Booth
Mary Hubbard
Susannah Earls
Bridget Abbot
Sarah Bibber
Deliverance Dane
Constables

Madison Davis
Don Stewart*
Meami Maszewski
Skye Privat
Stephanie Roman
Karin Hendricks
Erik Stein*
Caity Petterson
Bailey Durnin
Andrew Philpot*
Rosh Wright
Peter S. Hadres*
George Walker
Polly Firestone Walker
Brad Carroll
Leo Cortez
Griffith Munn
Michael Wu
Mark Booher
Katie Fuchs-Wakowski
Evan Held
Mollee Barse
Catherine Pieske
Michaela Ferroggiaro
Natalia Womack
Gisela Feied
Eden Bailey
Parker Harris
Brandon Mooney

*Member, Actors' Equity Association

Elements of the Story

Synopsis of the Production

In the aftermath of being caught dancing in the woods by the village Reverend, two young girls fall into a sleeping trance. Village members become concerned with the health of the children while the other girls who had been dancing in the woods become concerned with the truth coming out about what they did.

The Crucible is set in 1692 during the Salem Witch Trials. Massachusetts is in physical, emotional, and economic disarray from the 2nd Indian War, an outbreak of Small Pox, and the pressure on individuals to live an upright, restricted, Puritan lifestyle.

The play opens on Reverend Parris fretting over the well-being of his afflicted daughter, Betty, and how her sudden illness will affect his reputation in the village. Reverend Parris' refugee niece, Abigail Williams, tries to console him about his fears and what he saw in the woods (the girls dancing around a cauldron). Abigail is one of the older girls in the village. After being suddenly let go as the servant from the Proctor household, she developed a reputation amongst the villagers. Although she is a bully, the other girls that surround her admire her shocking behavior and fearless attitude. Abigail has had a secret affair with John Proctor. When Proctor enters the room to check on Betty, Abigail is noticeably flustered by his appearance.

Villagers such as Thomas and Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, and Rebecca Nurse also come to check on Betty. Reverend Parris has called the reputable Reverend Hale from Beverly to come and evaluate her. Reverend Hale specializes in determining whether witches and evil spirits are at work in a community. Upon questioning by Rev. Hale, the house servant Tituba breaks and admits to being in league with the Devil. Tituba, Abigail, and the newly awakened Betty begin naming the names of other women in the village who they claim they have also seen "with the devil".

Over the next couple of weeks, countless members of the village are named by the girls, with Abigail as their leader, of being witches—including John Proctor's wife, Elizabeth. Mary Warren, the current servant in the Proctor household has become swept up in the hysteria of the girls and the power that comes with being a member of the court and testifying against the accused witches. Mary, another refugee, is a shy 18 year old who is easily influenced and curious about things outside the norm of her daily life. The trials allow her to have a voice and to be respected by members of the community. Although she is an active member in the trials, when Abigail accused Elizabeth of being a witch, Mary stood

up for Elizabeth. However, Elizabeth is still collected by officials of the court and taken to jail.

John Proctor makes it his mission to free his wife—both because he knows she is innocent and to atone for his sin of cheating on Elizabeth with Abigail. John goes to Abigail in the woods one night to try and convince her that she needs to tell the truth and stop the facade of the trials. Abigail who admitted to John that it was all a facade in the first scene, now tries to persuade John that the trials need to happen because the village is full of hypocrites. Abigail is unmoved by John's sentiment and Elizabeth's trial proceeds.

At Elizabeth's trial, John Proctor pleads to Judge Hawthorne and Deputy-Governor Danforth to free his wife. He admits to his affair with Abigail and pleads with the court to free his wife because she is falsely accused. After John claims that Elizabeth cannot tell a lie, Elizabeth is brought in and questioned about John and Abigail's affair. Elizabeth, seeking to protect the honor of her husband, lies and condemns herself. John Proctor is also condemned and sent to jail. This is the turning point in the trials. Reverend Hale who believes John to be an honest and true man sees the trials for what they are and tries to end them.

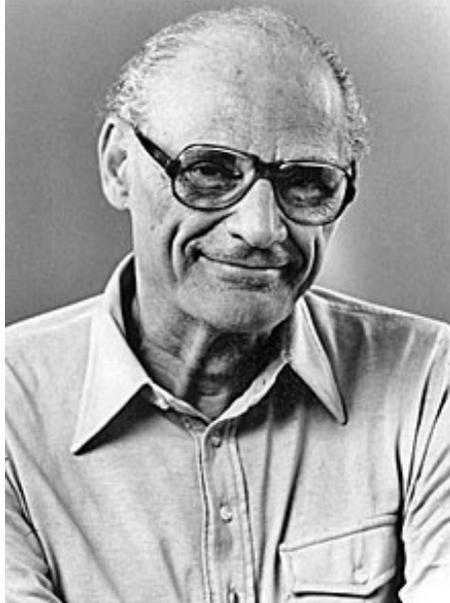
Andrew Philpot* as John Proctor, George Walker as Reverend John Hale,
Polly Firestone Walker as Elizabeth Proctor, Skye Privat as Abigail Williams

The final scene is set in the Salem jail. The accused Tituba and Sarah Good drink with the guard, Willard, and joke about the devil taking them away. Elizabeth and John are brought to one another so that Elizabeth might try and persuade John to lie and say he was working with the devil—which would allow him to be set free and forgiven of his sin. John, who has had enough of lying,



struggles with the decision to sign his name to a document that claims he is a

witch—another lie. As a last act of saving his dignity and dying an honest man, John chooses to hang. Elizabeth supports his decision to follow his integrity, ending the play with the line “He has his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him!”



About the Play & Author

(Arthur Miller: Image from Wikipedia)

Opening at the Martin Beck Theatre on Broadway in 1953, *The Crucible* was not immediately a smash hit. Although it got good reviews, some critics either compared it too heavily to the political instability of the McCarthy Hearings, or to Miller's masterpiece *The Death of a Salesman*. Forging through a rocky beginning, *The Crucible* has had 65 years of consistent revivals, the most recent being an alternative contemporary 2016 revival, and has become a staple in both American literature and high school curriculum.

Arthur Miller was born in 1915 in New York and died in 2005 in Connecticut. During the Great Depression, Miller's family was put into despair as his father, a manufacturer, was financially ruined. Miller worked in a warehouse after he graduated from high school and then went on to college at the University of Michigan. By age 30, Miller published his first widely successful novel *Focus* which was about anti-semitism. In 1947, Miller won a Tony Award for his play *All My Sons*. In 1949 he won a Tony Award and the Pulitzer Prize for *Death of a Salesman*--arguably his most famous and well-acclaimed work. In 1953, Miller won the Tony Award for best play for *The Crucible*.

The Crucible was criticized by many people for being a play that fell short of their expectations after the great *Death of a Salesman*. Miller states in a *New York*

Times article from 1958 that he never intended *The Crucible* to be another *Death of Salesman*. He stated that he wanted to write something completely different for the audience to connect to and understand human nature. Miller also believed that *The Crucible* was less successful in the beginning because audience members and critics drew too many comparisons to McCarthyism. While Miller certainly drew inspiration from the McCarthy trials--as he himself was accused and refused to give names to the House Un-American Activities Committee-- he never intended for *The Crucible* to be a pure allegory for the McCarthy Trials.

Miller conducted extensive research for *The Crucible*. Miller began researching/writing the play in the spring of 1952. He went to the Salem courthouse and read through the town records. He states that all characters in his play played similar roles in real life. Miller toured what was Salem Village, spending time visiting the home of Rebecca Nurse, walking the street where Reverend Parris' house was meant to be, etc. He was appalled and bewildered that other people that visited the Salem museum or who walked through the streets were not as deeply affected by the history as he was. This is why Miller really wanted to write a historical play that spoke to the travesties of human nature.

Miller based some of this conflict of human nature on his own life. John Proctor's struggle over still desiring Abigail even though he is married to Elizabeth can be compared to Miller's own struggle with his affair with Marilyn Monroe while he was still married. Miller eventually left his wife and married Marilyn.

In 1991 Miller gave a speech in Salem, MA at the 300th anniversary event for the Salem Witch Trials. He talked about why he wrote the play and what people could learn from it.

Elements of Production

Themes in *The Crucible*

Honesty and Hypocrisy

This play revolves around a community that is extremely conservative and religious. Puritans were Calvinists who believed in predestination with a person's outward fortune being a reflection of whether or not they were one of God's chosen people. There was no real way to atone for sins in this community—like how Catholics can go to confession. Therefore, Puritans tried to live their lives as perfectly as possible, which created a great deal of stress and anxiety in the village. Abigail and John Proctor both believe that people in the village are hypocrites. What does it mean to be a hypocrite, though, when as a Puritan everything is restricted? John views himself as a hypocrite for trying to live an upright life but secretly having an affair with Abigail. Some of the girls, like Mary Warren, believe they are doing honest work by participating in the trials, while others know it is all just a game led by Abigail. Many of the accused admit to working with the devil. Do they say this to save themselves from being hanged? Or do they say this because they actually believe that the devil slipped in somehow and influenced them to be a witch? Puritans believed that idleness, especially in women, was an opportunity for the devil to get inside a person—which is partially why idleness was made illegal in Puritan communities.

So who is being honest: the girls accusing others of being witches, those that admit to being witches, or those that refuse to submit and defend their piety?

Who is being a hypocrite: those using the power of the trials for personal wealth which conflicts with the Puritan value of humility, or John Proctor who made a mistake by having an affair but otherwise tries to live an upright life?

Power vs. Powerlessness

In Puritan society, women were viewed as a tool of the devil to tempt men. Women were not allowed to be a part of the town meetings or church meetings. Women were to be married and have children. Often times, the role of a woman was to have children until she died. The trials were an event that not only suddenly gave women (girls) a voice, but a seemingly endless amount of power to influence the community.

The judges at the witch trials were the wealthy and powerful 1% of the colonies. With no official judicial training, the judges intermarried into powerful

families, became government and military officials, and heavily invested in commerce. The destruction of the 2nd Indian War caused the judges to fear the status of their power. Not only did the judges lose their land and wealth in the war, but they were to blame for poor military and political decisions that affected the outcome of the war. The Salem Witch Trials were an opportunity for the judges to re-solidify their status by using the devil as a scapegoat. If the judges successfully “scrubbed the colony clean” then they might be put back in their rightful place, on top.

Mary Beth Norton puts the problem of power into words in her book *In the Devil's Snare*:

“The strange reversal that had placed women on top was then righted, and young women were relegated once again to what contemporaries saw as their proper roles: servers, not served; followers, not leaders; governed, not governors, the silent, not the speakers. Those momentarily powerful became once more the powerless” (304).

Classroom Activities:

Pre-Performance Questions:

1. What do you think constitutes a “witch hunt” in modern day society?
2. Do you think it is more important to adhere to social customs and norms or to stand up for what you believe is right—even if that means putting yourself in trouble?

Post-Performance Questions:

1. Do you think the girls were playing a game or do you think they really believed that the spirits of witches were attacking them?
2. Why do you think Reverend Parris felt so much anxiety about catching the girls dancing in the woods?
3. Do you think Elizabeth Proctor is to blame for John’s affair? Why?
4. Why do you think the other girls in the play look up to Abigail, even though she is an outspoken bully?
5. If you were accused of being a witch, would you confess to being one or stand firm in your belief that you are blameless?
6. How do you think losing the 2nd Indian War affected the outcome of the Salem Witch Trials?
7. Why do you think women were accused of being witches more than men?
8. How do you think being a young female refugee (from the 2nd Indian War) in the town (like Abigail Williams, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Warren) affected how others saw you. Remember, Puritans were skeptical of outsiders and anything that did not conform to their customs and community.

PERSPECTIVE WRITING— PERSONAL NARRATIVES

1. Describe what you believe to be a typical day in the life of a Puritan. Write about the day from moment to moment—including what you eat, what kind of

work you do, who you see, etc.

2. Revise the personal narrative into a first person monologue about how you feel about your typical day as a Puritan. This needs to be appropriate for sharing with the class.
3. After everyone (or those willing) have shared their monologues with the class, have the class vote on one monologue that they can all add to to make the monologue richer and more evocative.
4. Discuss the similarities and differences that arose during the process. Was there general agreement or marked differences? If they were different why? Were they subtle or obvious variations? Did the class agree on what was important to include and why? If not how would the elimination of some elements change the way the story would be understood when read?

PERSPECTIVE WRITING – EULOGY

1. An eulogy is a speech or writing that praises a person that has recently died. Eulogies should not be confused with elegies, which are poems written in tribute to the dead; nor with obituaries, which are more similar to biographies.
2. After seeing the play, write an eulogy for John Proctor from your perspective.
3. Write a second eulogy for John Proctor from the perspective of Elizabeth Proctor, Abigail Williams, Reverend Hale, or Deputy-Governor Danforth.
4. Read and compare the eulogies in class. Discuss what information was important from the student's perspective? What information was important when writing from another character's perspective? What information did they leave out? Were there subtle or blatant differences from the different characters?