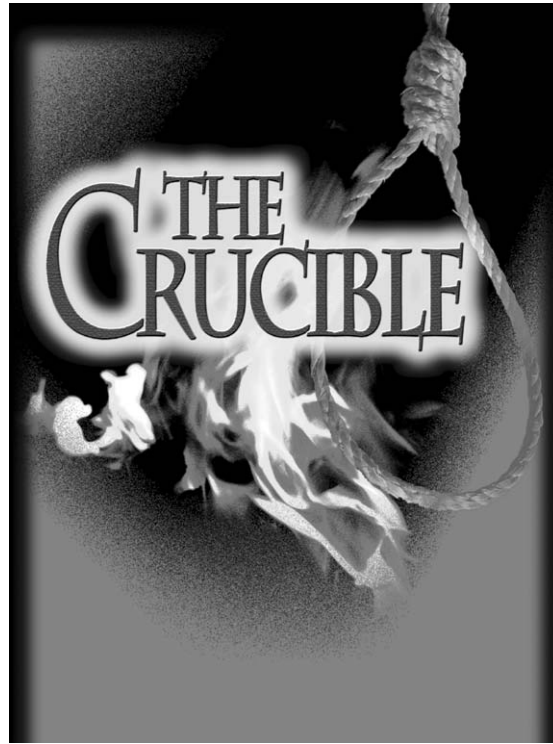


STUDY GUIDE

2004–2005 SEASON

THE REPERTORY THEATRE OF ST. LOUIS



BY ARTHUR MILLER
DIRECTED BY STEVEN WOOLF

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Who's Who?



Reverend Samuel Parris is the church pastor: a position of great authority within the Salem community. He is not satisfied with his financial arrangement with the villagers, nor does he feel he is shown the respect due to a man "ordained by God." The community dismissed the two pastors before him, and Parris is fearful of losing his position.

Betty Parris is the daughter of Reverend Parris. After Parris discovers her and several other Salem girls dancing in the woods, Betty begins to suffer from an unknown malady.

Tituba is a slave in the Parris household. She is from Barbados, a small island southeast of Cuba. Tituba sometimes practices the magical ceremonies that were performed in her homeland.

Abigail Williams is the 17-year-old niece of Reverend Parris. She was once a servant to the Proctors, but she was dismissed by Elizabeth Proctor after she had an affair with Elizabeth's husband. Many of the witchcraft allegations in Salem originate with Abigail.

Susanna Wallcott is one of the accusers at the trials. She is in her late teens and is friends with Abigail.

Ann Putnam is the wife of Thomas Putnam. Ann lost seven of her children shortly after their birth, and she believes the cause of death was supernatural.

Thomas Putnam is a wealthy landowner. Some suspect that Putnam accuses others of witchcraft purely as a way to gain more land and power in Salem.

Mercy Lewis is a cunning young girl who lives with the Putnams. Like Abigail, she is one of the primary accusers at the trials.

Mary Warren is the young servant of the Proctors. Shortly after Abigail was dismissed, Mary was hired in order to care for the house and children while Elizabeth was ill. Mary is not as strong willed as Abigail or Mercy.

John Proctor is a farmer in Salem. Although he deeply loves his wife, Elizabeth, he had an affair with Abigail, which he regrets. John believes Reverend Parris is more concerned with wealth than with the souls of the Salemites, and therefore he no longer attends church regularly.

Rebecca Nurse is a well-respected, elderly member of the Salem community. She is known for her kindness as well as her charity, and is considered by many to be "the very brick and mortar of the Church." Her husband is Francis Nurse.

Giles Corey is married to **Martha Corey**. Although old he is very hearty, and for a farmer, Corey is quite well versed with the legal system. He inadvertently causes the court to suspect his wife of witchcraft.

Reverend John Hale, from the nearby community of Beverly, is a graduate of Harvard College and is an expert on witchcraft. Reverend Parris sends for Hale when Betty falls sick. Initially Hale supports the trials, but his opinion changes most dramatically as women such as Rebecca Nurse are accused.

Elizabeth Proctor is the wife of John Proctor. She is an honest woman, and she continues to love and respect her husband even after he has an affair. She does, however, have difficulty putting the affair behind her.

Francis Nurse is a respected member of the community. Like Proctor, he is against the witchcraft investigation.

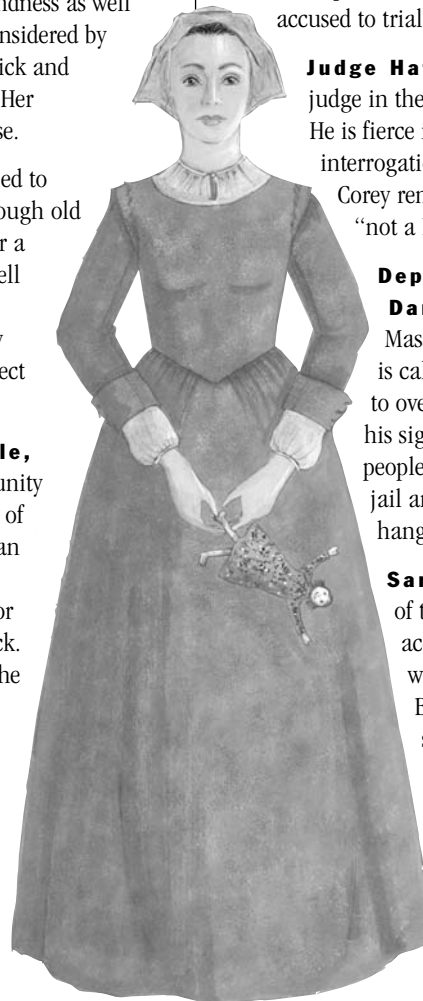
Ezekiel Cheever is a tailor who becomes the clerk of the court during the trials. It is his job to deliver arrest warrants to the accused.

John Willard is the Marshal in Salem. He oversees the Salem jail and is responsible for bringing the accused to trial.

Judge Hathorne is a judge in the witchcraft trials. He is fierce in conducting interrogations, but as Giles Corey reminds him, he is "not a Boston judge yet."

Deputy Governor Danforth of the Massachusetts province is called in from Boston to oversee the trials. By his signature, over 400 people have been sent to jail and 72 condemned to hang for witchcraft.

Sarah Good is one of the first that is accused of practicing witchcraft in Salem. Being poor and somewhat of an outcast, she "names names" in an attempt to save herself.





Words to the Wise



crucible—A crucible is a vessel of metal or refractory material, employed for heating substances to a high temperature. A crucible can also refer to a severe searching test.

refractory—A material that is refractory has the ability to retain its physical shape and chemical identity when subjected to high temperatures.

Goody—This is a shortened form of goodwife. It is synonymous with “Mrs.”

heathen—A heathen is a person who adheres to the religion of a people or nation that does not acknowledge the God of Judaism, Christianity, or Islam.

aye—This is another word for yes.

trafficked—To traffic with someone (or something) means to have dealings or do business with them.

spirits—Spirits refer to emanations of the supernatural: demons, witches, ghosts or the devil. When Parris asks the girls if they have “trafficked with spirits,” he is asking whether they have had dealings with the forces of the devil.

conjure—To conjure means to bring a spirit forth by supernatural means.

abomination—An abomination is something that causes horror or disgust. When Parris uses the word, he uses it in the sense of “an abomination before God,” or a sin.

sport—When the girls speak of sport, they refer to creating fun for themselves.

blink—To blink means to ignore a fact or to look away from it.

white name, black name—A person with a white name has done nothing to dishonor himself and therefore has a good reputation. A person with a black name has done something to bring shame upon himself or upon his community.

Devil’s Touch—When Ann says her babies have “felt the Devil’s Touch,” she means their deaths were caused by the supernatural influences of witches and the devil.

unbaptized baby—Nearly all children were baptized in Puritan society at an early age. Therefore when Ann says, “I have laid seven babies unbaptized in the earth,” she means that her children died shortly after childbirth.

“reddish work”—When Abigail speaks of “reddish work done at night,” she refers to bloody, evil deeds.

pound—A pound is a form of British currency. It was used in the New England colonies before the dollar.

covenanted—To be covenanted means to be bound as by contract. When Rebecca refers to covenanted Christians, she means they are dedicated to God.

prodigious—Prodigious is another word for profound or important.

Sabbath—The Puritans observed Sunday, the Sabbath, as a day of rest and worship in honor of God.

poppet—A poppet is a small handmade puppet.

lechery—Lechery refers to the sin of adultery.

harlot—Harlot is another word for prostitute.

“The Old Boy”—Tituba’s homeland of Barbados did not see the devil as necessarily evil. Tituba refers to the devil as “The Old Boy,” which reflects that sentiment.

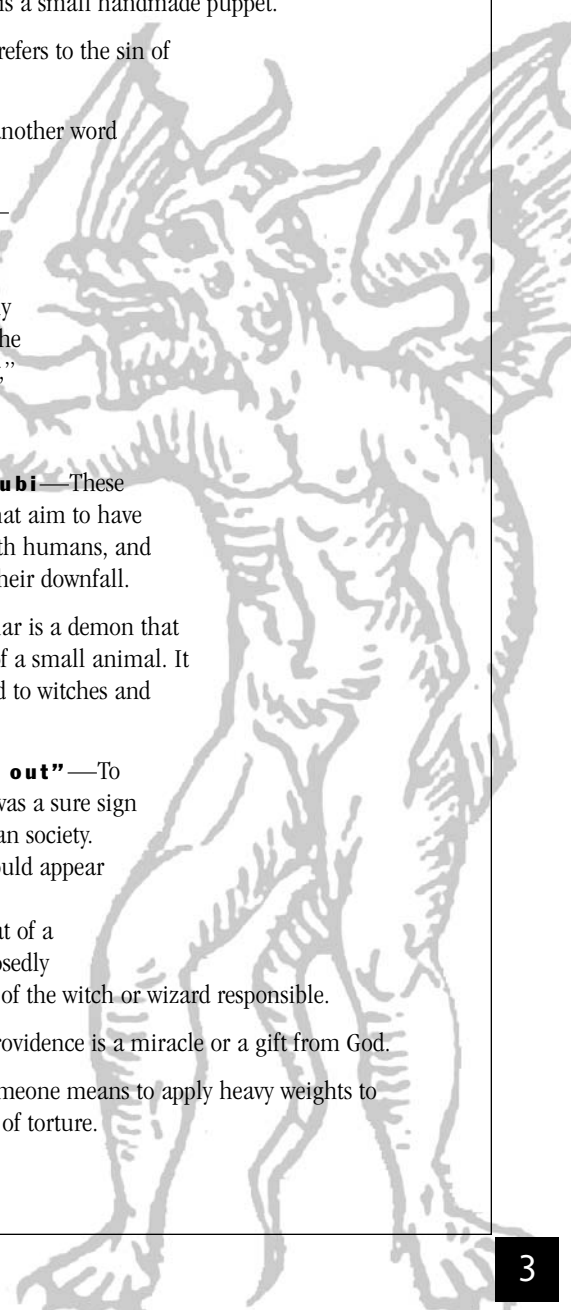
incubi and succubi—These are demonic spirits that aim to have sexual intercourse with humans, and thereby bring about their downfall.

familiar—A familiar is a demon that appears in the form of a small animal. It is supposedly provided to witches and wizards by the devil.

“sent her spirit out”—To send out one’s spirit was a sure sign of witchcraft in Puritan society. Although the spirit could appear in a form other than human—such as that of a bird—it would supposedly still bear the likeness of the witch or wizard responsible.

providence—A providence is a miracle or a gift from God.

press—To press someone means to apply heavy weights to their lungs as a form of torture.





What's the Story?



Act I, Scene I

A bedroom in Reverend Samuel Parris's house, Salem, Massachusetts, in the spring of the year, 1692.

Reverend Parris's daughter, Betty, is mysteriously ill. The doctor can't find a cause; Parris begins to fear witchcraft, and sends for an expert, Reverend Hale of Beverly. He then confronts his niece, Abigail, for dancing in the forest with Betty and several other girls. Parris's fears seem confirmed when he learns that another girl, Ruth Putnam, is also ill. Abigail swears all the girls to secrecy about their nighttime activities and they leave. John Proctor enters. Abigail had once worked for him as a maid, but his wife, Elizabeth, fired her when she realized that the two were having an affair. Abigail tries to win John back by confiding that the "illness" has nothing to do with witchcraft—Parris had discovered them dancing in the woods and had frightened Betty. When she insists that John must still love her, he rejects her. Other neighbors begin to arrive, and there is much dissension. A longtime disagreement between Proctor and Parris flares up regarding Parris's financial demands as the church minister. As the villagers argue, Reverend Hale arrives and questions them. When he hears of the dancing, he questions Abigail and she defends herself by blaming their slave, Tituba, who is frightened into confessing to witchcraft. Tituba begins to name other women who she "saw with the devil." Abigail and Betty join her in accusing others of witchcraft.

Act I, Scene II

The common room of Proctor's house, eight days later.

Elizabeth Proctor tells her husband that their servant, Mary Warren, has gone to town as an "official of the court," and that 14 people have been jailed as witches based on the testimony of Abigail and the other girls. She insists that he must tell the court what Abigail told him. Mary returns, gives Elizabeth a small poppet she had made during court, and tells them that now 39 people have been arrested and one convicted. She reveals that Elizabeth's name was also "somewhat mentioned." The Proctors realize that Abigail's desperate plot is to see Elizabeth hanged, then to take her place. Reverend Hale arrives to question them about church attendance and Bible knowledge, and Proctor tells Hale what he knows about the girls' "sport." Hale's confidence in the girls' testimony begins to weaken, especially when Francis Nurse and Giles Corey arrive at Proctor's house to report their wives' arrest. Clerk of Court Cheever appears to search the house for poppets and finds a needle in the belly of the one Mary made—signifying witchcraft, since Abigail had said she was stabbed in the same place on her own body. Despite their explanation that it was Mary's poppet and had only been in the

house for a few hours, Cheever arrests Elizabeth. Proctor threatens Mary, telling her that she must go to court to denounce Abigail.

Act II, Scene I

The vestry of the Salem Meeting House, two weeks later.

Giles Corey tries to give evidence on behalf of his wife. Hale speaks in his defense, but they are interrupted by the arrival of Proctor with Mary Warren. Prompted by Proctor, Mary tells the court that the girls have been pretending to see spirits. When the men present the court with a document attesting to their wives' good character, signed by 91 townsfolk, Judge Danforth takes it as an "attack on the court," and orders that all signers be arrested for questioning. Danforth summons the other girls to answer Mary's accusation, which they deny. Proctor tells the officials what he knows, and Danforth begins to see Abigail "as though with new eyes." Hathorne questions Mary and charges her to faint, as she had done previously in the courtroom, but she cannot. The other girls go into hysterics and Proctor accuses Abigail of adultery. Danforth questions Elizabeth about Proctor's relationship with the girl and she denies knowledge of any wrongdoing in an attempt to save her husband's reputation. Abigail and the others suddenly "see" Mary's spirit, in the shape of a bird, attacking them, and they frighten her into returning to their side. Mary accuses Proctor of being the "Devil's man" and afflicting her through witchcraft. Hale is horrified as he recognizes the pretense of the girls. He denounces the court and leaves. Danforth charges Proctor and Corey with witchcraft and they are taken to jail.

Act II, Scene II

A cell in Salem jail, three months later.

Danforth and Hathorne meet with Parris, who tells them that Hale has returned to seek confessions and that Abigail has run away. Parris fears that the people of Salem will rebel against the court if people such as Proctor and Rebecca are hanged. He asks for a postponement of the morning's hangings, but the judges refuse. Hale announces that none of the women will confess, so they summon Elizabeth to plead with Proctor to do so. She tells her husband about the latest hangings and Corey's death by pressing. They forgive each other for their marital troubles and Proctor announces, "I will have my life." The judges write out his confession, but at the last minute Proctor refuses to sign and tears up the document. He exclaims, "I have given you my soul, leave me my name!" With Rebecca Nurse and others, he is taken to Gallows Hill. Hale continues to try to persuade Elizabeth to get Proctor to sign in order to save his life, but she refuses. She states, "He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him."



Arthur Miller and Elia Kazan

McCarthyism and *The Crucible*

In 1947, the House Un-American Activities Committee, or HUAC, began holding hearings on the Communist Infiltration of the Motion-Picture Industry. The hearings provided a sensation in the United States that captivated the public. Simultaneously, the hearings divided the nation. Communist meetings had been common in the U.S. several years prior—before the Cold War became a source of tremendous fear. Famous names came under the scrutiny of the committee, from Gary Cooper to John Lawson. Playwrights, actors, writers, directors—they were all investigated, and many were called to testify. In 1950 the furor reached a new height, as Senator Joseph McCarthy accused the entire U.S. State Department of being “full of Communists.” During this period Arthur Miller saw the net of accusation draw closer and closer, first with acquaintances being interrogated, then coworkers, and finally, his dear friend and favored director, Elia Kazan.

As the interrogations by the committee grew more widespread, it became more and more apparent to the public that innocent people were being persecuted. It was during this time that Arthur Miller began researching *The Crucible*. In his biography of Miller, Martin Gottfried writes:

*“The terrorizing search for Communists—McCarthyism, as it was being called—was frequently characterized as a witch hunt, a reference to the historic events in 1692 Massachusetts. . . Miller was fascinated by [the] parallel between HUAC and Salem. In 20th-century America as in 17th-century Salem, once the heretic was accused no defense of innocence was available. Acquittal was possible only through confession and disavowal. This intrigued Miller, the notion of confessed sin—even sin falsely confessed—being the equivalent of virtue. That contemporary terror, said Miller, would underlie every word in *The Crucible*.”*

Miller knew the play would put him at risk of being blacklisted, as the parallels between the Salem witch trials and McCarthyism were strong. Nevertheless, *The Crucible* premiered on Broadway on January 22, 1953. It was not a great success, suffering from mixed reviews and attendance, and it closed after just six months.

The witch hunt of McCarthyism certainly played a direct role in the difficulties of the play: critics and audience members could easily be branded as “communist sympathizers” by espousing the play too loudly. But McCarthyism also played an indirect—although perhaps even more damaging—role in undermining *The Crucible*’s first run: Elia Kazan was not the director.

Kazan had directed such hits as *On the Waterfront*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and Miller’s *Death of a Salesman*. He was accounted a phenomenal talent. But on April 10, 1953—the second time he was called before HUAC—he agreed to “name names.” His capitulation would immediately make him the object of scorn among his peers. Miller and others had a very difficult time accepting his decision. And Hollywood has never forgotten, as evinced by the lack of applause at the 1999 Academy Awards ceremony when he was awarded an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement.

Director Jed Harris was asked to direct *The Crucible* instead of Kazan. Although Harris had been the rising star of Broadway in the 1920’s, he had not directed a successful show for years. Kermit Bloomgarden, the producer for the play, stated, “Everything I heard about this man is true. . . he is a moral and physical coward.” Not good qualities for the man who would direct *The Crucible*.

McCarthyism had won a battle against *The Crucible*: the very weaknesses in humanity and human society that the play exposes led to its unsuccessful premiere. But that was only the beginning. *The Crucible* has gone on to be produced countless times throughout the world. It has been censored and it has been banned, but it always returns, just as powerful as before. It will continue to be a timeless reminder of the consequences of surrendering one’s conscious to another.

For a brief biography of Arthur Miller, see page 24 of your program.



The Girl Who Cried “WITCH”

Ann Putnam Jr., born in 1680, was the eldest child of Thomas and Ann Putnam Sr. Ann was an intelligent child, but she was also instilled with a strong belief in witchcraft at a very early age. Her mother was a firm believer in the power of Satan and the occult, and like many Puritans, she ensured her daughter shared those beliefs and fears. Although Ann does not appear in *The Crucible*, she was a central figure in the Salem witch crisis.

Abigail Williams and Betty Parris, both of the Parris household, were the first young girls “afflicted” in Salem. According to the description by John Hale, a minister of the nearby village of Beverly, the girls were “bitten and pinched by invisible agents. . . sometimes taken dumb, their mouths stopped, their throats choked, their limbs racked and tormented.” This condition spread quickly however, with Ann and other girls showing signs of “affliction” by mid February. Ann was 12 years old at the time.

The girls’ first accusations of witchcraft were against Tituba, Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne. Each of these women was somewhat an outcast in Puritan society, respectively being a slave, a beggar and a suspected harlot. They were easy targets of the allegations. The next accusation however—which was made by Ann—brought the fear and hysteria in Salem to new heights. In March she accused Martha Corey—a respected, churchgoing woman—of bewitching her. The other girls followed by filing formal witchcraft indictments against Corey. In the coming months Ann’s accusations continued to escalate, perhaps the most shocking being against the former Salem pastor, George Burroughs, and the pious Rebecca Nurse. Both were hanged.

Ann Putnam Sr., who eventually began to suffer from “fits” in the Salem court like her daughter, likely contributed to her daughter’s behavior—both by the example she set and by instilling young Ann with a fear of witchcraft. Many historians, however, also believe land disputes played a role in the Salem crisis. The Putnam family is central to this theory, as they had been involved in heated landownership battles with the Towne family for over 50 years. Towne was Rebecca Nurse’s maiden name.

Ann was not only part of the crisis in Salem, but in the town of Andover as well. By July of 1692, the young girls of Salem had become famous throughout the province for their “holy work.” Joseph Ballard of Andover, whose wife had mysteriously fallen ill, sent to Salem for an accuser, or a “witch finder.” Ann, along with her friend Mary Walcott, was sent to help. Because neither of the girls knew the people of Andover, Marshal Bradstreet decided to have the people of the town walk past the two girls as they were in the midst of their “possession.” If either witch finder ceased her fit, the person walking past her was considered guilty. By the end of the day, the girls had identified over half a dozen witches, and more than 40 arrest warrants had been served.

In the final months of 1692, the Court of Oyer and Terminer was disbanded: the witch hunts were finally coming to an end. But not before Ann Putnam Jr. had accused over 62 people of witchcraft and 20 lay dead, due in part to her testimony against them.

In 1699 Ann’s parents died of an infectious disease within two weeks of each other. Ann, then 19 years old, proceeded to raise her nine orphaned brothers and sisters. She never married, and she died in 1716 at the age of 37.

Ann Putnam Jr. v. Rebecca Nurse


The Deposition of Ann Putnam junr who testifieth and saith that on the 13th March 1691/92 I saw the Apperishtion of Goody Nurse: and she did immediatly afflict me but I did not know what her name was then: tho I knew where she used to sit in our Meeting house: but since that she hath grievously afflicted me by biting pinching and pricking me: urging me to writ in her book and also on the 24th of March being the day of her examination I was grievously tortured by her dureing the time of her examination and also severall times since and also dureing the time of her examination I saw the Apperishtion of Rebecca Nurse goe and hurt the bodys of Mercy Lewis, Mary Walcott, Elizabeth Hubbard and Abigail Williams.

Ann Putnam junr: did own the oath which she hath taken this her evidence to be the truth. before us the: Juriers for Inquest this 3 day of June: 1692.



The Apology of Ann Putnam Jr.



 On August 25, 1706, Ann Putnam Jr. stood before the Salem Village church congregation while the Reverend Joseph Green (who replaced the banished Samuel Parris) read the following confession and apology from the church book:

I desire to be humbled before God for that sad and humbling providence that befell my father's family in the year about '92; that I, then being in my childhood, should, by such a providence of God, be made an instrument for the accusing of several persons of a grievous crime, whereby their lives were taken away from them, whom now I have just grounds and good reason to believe they were innocent persons; and that it was a great delusion of Satan that deceived me in that sad time, whereby I justly fear I have been instrumental, with others, though ignorantly and unwittingly, to bring myself and this land the guilt of innocent blood; though what was said or done by me against any person, I can truly and uprightly say, before God and man, I did it not out of any anger, malice, or ill will to any person, for I had no such thing against one of them; but what I did was ignorantly, being deluded by Satan. And particularly, as I was a chief instrument of accusing Goodwife Nurse and her two sisters, I desire to lie in the dust, and to be humbled for it, in that I was a cause, with others, of so sad a calamity to them and their families; for which I desire to lie in the dust, and earnestly beg forgiveness of God, and from all those unto whom I have given just cause of sorrow and offense, whose relations were taken away or accused.

Signed, Ann Putnam Jr.

The trouble in Salem began during the cold Massachusetts winter of January, 1692. Eight young girls began to take ill, beginning with 9-year-old Elizabeth Parris, the daughter of Reverend Samuel Parris, as well as his niece, 11-year-old Abigail Williams. It was a strange sickness: the girls suffered from delirium, violent convulsions, incomprehensible speech, trance-like states and odd skin sensations. The worried villagers searched desperately for an explanation. Their conclusion: the girls were under a spell, bewitched—and, worse yet, by members of their own pious community.

When the trials ended, the townsfolk and the accusers were at a loss to explain their own actions. In the centuries since, scholars and historians have struggled as well to explain the madness that overtook Salem. Was it sexual repression, dietary deficiency, mass hysteria, a simple fungus, or a response to the recent Indian attacks? Consider some of the recent theories and draw your own conclusions!

A Town Divided

There was a division within Salem Village. Those who lived close to Salem Town became merchants, such as blacksmiths, carpenters and innkeepers. They supported the economic changes taking place and were financially tied to Salem Town's thriving harbors. But many of the farmers who lived far from this prosperity believed the worldliness and affluence of Salem Town threatened their Puritan values. One of the main families to denounce the economic changes was the Putnams—a strong and influential force behind the witchcraft accusations. The Putnams hoped to solidify a separation from Salem Town by establishing their own church. In 1689, a congregation (mostly Putnams) was formed under Reverend Parris that held services in the Salem Village meetinghouse. Contracts for ministers during this period often provided them with a modest salary and use of a house: Parris got the deed to the parsonage as well. The Salem Town supporters showed their opposition by refusing to worship with him and withholding their taxes, which helped pay the minister's salary and provided his firewood. Parris's stern Puritan rhetoric further separated the two factions.



What Really Happened in Salem?

In October of 1691 a new Salem Village Committee was elected that was comprised mostly of Parris's opponents. This new committee refused to assess local taxes that would pay Parris' salary; therefore, Parris and his family had to rely solely on voluntary contributions for sustenance. The Putnams were now worried about losing Parris and the long-sought independence from Salem Town.

The jealousies and hostilities between these two factions played a major role in the witch trials. Most of the villagers accused of witchcraft lived near Salem Town, and most accusers lived in the distant farms of Salem Village. It is not surprising that Parris was a vigorous supporter of the trials, and his impassioned sermons helped fan the flames of the hysteria.

The Innocence of Youth

In 1692, children were expected to behave under the same strict code as the adults. Any show of emotion was discouraged and disobedience was severely punished. Puritans believed that playing games and playing with toys were sinful distractions. Although boys had a few outlets for their imagination, girls were expected to tend to the house. Many children learned to read, but most households owned only the Bible and other religious works—including a few that described evil spirits and witchcraft in great detail.

Such was the world of Abigail Williams and Betty Parris during the long, dark winter of 1692. There was little to feed their imagination that did not warn of sin and eternal punishment. Books about fortunetelling were popular throughout New England during that winter, and many young girls would form small circles to practice divinations and fortunetelling. Betty, Abigail and two other friends formed such a circle, often including Tituba. Other girls would come to listen to Tituba's tales, and they would predict their fortunes by dropping an egg white into a glass of water and interpreting the picture it formed. These activities were strictly forbidden, which must have filled them with fear and guilt. This may have been one reason for their hysterical behavior, or perhaps Betty and Abigail were frightened by their fortunes and expressed their stress in unusual ways. At a time when young girls were forbidden to act out or express themselves, it is easy to see why they were so enraptured by the attention they received when they became "bewitched."

Fear and Trembling

A recent smallpox outbreak, the revocation of the Massachusetts Bay Colony charter by Charles II, and the constant fear of Indian attacks served to create anxiety among the early Puritans that God was punishing them. This fear of punishment established a fertile atmosphere in which witchcraft could easily be interpreted as the cause of God's wrath. Due to this belief and fear, they would want to make sure that every last witch be discovered and punished in order to end His anger. Arthur Miller's *The Crucible* expresses this fear perfectly at the end of the first Act, when Reverend Hale warns: "Think on cause 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."

War and Rumors of War

Wabanaki Indian and French surprise attacks were common in nearby Maine and New Hampshire, and the New Englander's referred to this time as the Second Indian War. Traumatized orphans and refugees from these areas were often placed as servants in Boston and Salem households after their families had been killed. It is a common phenomenon for those who have experienced such tragedy to feel overwhelming guilt, because while their families died, they themselves survived. Many of the young accusers in Salem, such as Mercy Lewis, were such orphans. Some historians have theorized that the tragedy these survivors experienced, along with their guilt, strengthened their belief in "unseen evils" and led to their accusations of witchcraft.

Slight of Hand

As the general population grew more fearful of surprise attacks by French and Indian forces, the natural target

for their blame would be those who currently ruled in the New England territory. Historians have noted that in years prior to the Salem trials, New England's leaders seldom agreed with accusations of witchcraft. They usually found the accused to be innocent. During the trials, however, their position changed. Perhaps this was due to their guilt over not being able to assemble enough munitions and men to prevent the attacks of the French and Indians: they found it easier to deal with a witch they could "lay their hands on," as opposed to an enemy who attacked and disappeared into the woods with uncanny speed. Or, perhaps the leaders felt their position was safer while the population was focused on witchcraft, and not on the tragedies of the war.

Unwitting Puritan Hippies

There is a similarity between the symptoms reported by Salem's accusers and the hallucinogenic effects of drugs like LSD. LSD is a derivative of ergot, a fungus that affects rye grain. Toxicologists now know that eating ergot-contaminated food causes *ergotism*—or ergot poisoning—which can lead to a convulsive disorder characterized by violent muscle spasms, vomiting, delusions, hallucinations, crawling sensations on the skin and other symptoms—all of which are present in the records of the Salem trials. Ergot thrives in warm, rainy springs and summers—the exact conditions of Salem in 1691. Nearly all of the accusers lived in the western section of Salem village, a region of swampy meadows that would have been prime breeding ground for the fungus. Rye was the staple grain of Salem, and the rye crop consumed that winter—when the first unusual symptoms began to be reported—could have been contaminated by ergot. The summer of 1692, however, was dry, which could explain the abrupt end of the "bewitchments."



READ MORE ABOUT IT

Arthur Miller: His Life and Work by Martin Gottfried. Da Capo Press; 2003. This is the definitive biography on the life and accomplishments of Arthur Miller.

Timebends: A Life by Arthur Miller. Grove Press, Inc.; 1987. This is the autobiography of Arthur Miller. It is not only informative, but most entertaining, as much of it is written in a narrative style.

Arthur Miller's Collected Plays by Arthur Miller. Penguin USA; 1981. This book contains all the playwright's best known plays and includes an introduction by Miller.

The Salem Witch Crisis (Praeger; 1992) and *A Quest For Security: The Life of Samuel Parris, 1653–1720* (Greenwood Press; 1990) by Larry Gagg. Written in a

narrative style, these books are an excellent source for learning more about the Salem witch trials and 17th-century New England.

Witchcraft in America by Peggy Saari and Elizabeth Shaw (editor). UXL; 2001. This book explains how witchcraft fears progressed in America before, during and after the Salem trials. It is an excellent resource for teachers, giving brief case studies and biographies as well as key terms and concepts.

The Devil Discovered: Salem Witchcraft 1692 by Enders A. Robinson. Waveland Press; 1991. This book provides interesting theories behind the crisis.

The Records of Salem Witchcraft. (Da Capo Press; 1971, reprint) and *The Salem Witchcraft Papers* (Da Capo Press; 1977). These books contain transcripts of the original documents of the Salem witch trials. You can also find the Salem witch trial documents online at <http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/texts/>

The Salem Trials Homepage is an excellent starting point for research on the Salem Trials. It is located at www.law.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/salem/SALEM.HTM. The site also includes a game of "Salem Witchcraft Jeopardy."

The official website of the Arthur Miller Society, at www.ibiblio.org/miller/, contains a chronology of the author's life, descriptions of his major works and a thorough list of upcoming events related to Miller.

Discovery School maintains a site that describes Salem at the time of the trials. The site also includes teacher tips, resources and lesson plans. www.school.discovery.com/schooladventures/salemwitchtrials/

There is an interactive webpage showing the events in Salem in March, 1692 at <http://fisher.lib.virginia.edu/libsites/salem/index.html>. This website is an ongoing project, and its goal is to visually show the social context of the witch trial episode by placing the nearly 300 people mentioned in the court records in their actual household locations in the Village.



These questions and activities are designed to help students anticipate the performance and then to build on their impressions and interpretations after attending the theatre. The activities and questions are divided into “**Before the Performance**” and “**After the Performance**” categories. While most of the exercises provide specific instructions, please feel free to adapt these activities to accommodate your own teaching strategies and curricular needs. To assist you in incorporating these materials into your existing curriculum, we have provided the numbers of some of the corresponding Missouri Knowledge Standards and Illinois Learning Standards. In addition, the majority of the content integrates or allows demonstration of the following Missouri Performance Goals: 1.5, 1.9, 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5 and 4.1.

SOCIAL SCIENCES

Before the Performance

1 The witch trials of the 17th century were a tragic period in America’s history: over 150 people were arrested, 28 were convicted of witchcraft, and 19 were hanged. The ultimate cause of the hysteria is a mystery, but theories on the source abound: it was due to the union of church and state; it was the result of a greedy attempt to gain land; it was the side effect of strong belief in the supernatural; and many other theories. There is even a theory that the tragedy began because many of the town folk had been exposed to a hallucinogenic mold. The hysteria was likely the result of many factors.

Have the students read “What Really Happened in Salem” from page 8 of this Study Guide and hold a class discussion. Ask the class to think of other possible causes for the crisis and list them on the board. Have your students respond to the following questions: Which reasons for the crisis are the most credible? How did each contribute to the development of the witch crisis? Which issues do you feel were not a factor, and why? Have any of the causes been “solved” in our current society? How? Are any of the causes still present today? Do you believe they could lead to another similar tragedy? Why or why not? (MO: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CS3, CA6 IL: 1, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

2 Puritan is not an entirely precise term. Saying “he is a Puritan” in the 17th century would be little more descriptive than saying “he is Protestant” or “he is Jewish” today. It only reveals a small amount about the individual’s way of life. Pick two Puritan societies (the Puritans of Salem, the



Puritans of Massachusetts Bay Company and the Puritans of England are excellent groups for comparison) and make a list of the differences between the two groups. (MO: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CS3, CA4 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

3 Chose one Puritan society and write a short essay that describes an aspect of Puritan life. Possible topics to explore include: the role of women; the way women were perceived by men; what life was like for a child growing up, the role of the church in Puritan life, or Puritan beliefs and values.

(MO: SS2, SS3, SS4, SS5, SS6, CA1, CS3, CA4 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18)

4 How does the relationship of church and state in Puritan New England of the 17th century differ from the relationship of church and state today? (MO: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS6, CA1 IL: 1, 4, 5, 14, 16, 18)

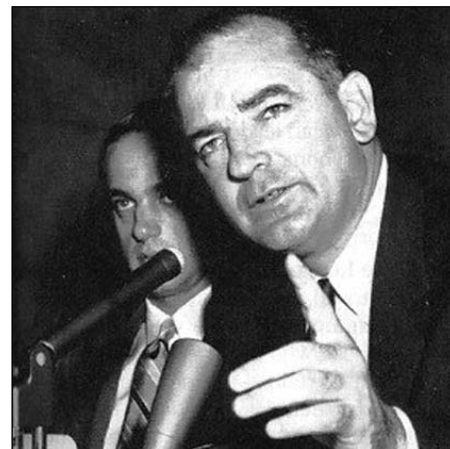
After the Performance

5 The transcripts of the actual court documents of the Salem witch trials can be found at your local library (*The Records of Salem Witchcraft* or *The Salem Witchcraft Papers*) or on the Internet (<http://etext.lib.virginia.edu/salem/witchcraft/texts/>). Look through the court examinations and create a list of the types of evidence that were used to convict people during the trials. Would such evidence be allowed today? Why not? (MO: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS6, CA1, CA2 IL: 1, 4, 5, 14, 16, 18)

6 The Salem trials were a literal witch hunt, but the phrase “witch hunt” has taken on a broader meaning today. It is now defined as, “An investigation carried out ostensibly to uncover subversive activities but actually used to harass and undermine those with differing views.” Look into current or recent world events and identify a witch hunt. How is this modern witch hunt similar to the hunt for real witches in Salem? How is it different? (MO: SS2, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18)

7 Examine the McMartin preschool case of the 1980’s. In what ways was it similar to the witch trials in *The Crucible*? How were the incidents different? In light of the McMartin preschool case, do you believe our society learned from the tragedy in Salem? Why or why not? (MO: SS2, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 16, 17, 18)

8 Many believe that *The Crucible* is an allegory for the “red scare” of communism in America. Research HUAC (the House Un-American Activities Committee) and McCarthyism of the 1950’s. Write an essay that compares the red scare to the events in *The Crucible*. (MO: SS1, SS2, SS3, SS5, SS6, CA1, CA2, CS3, CA4, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5 IL: 1, 3, 5, 14, 16, 18, 25, 27)



COMMUNICATION ARTS

Before the Performance

1 The New Englanders of the late 1600’s spoke and wrote differently than we do today. There were many dialects of speech in New England at the time—some of the people would have spoken with an Irish influence, some with a Scottish accent, and others in a British dialect. If these actual accents were used in *The Crucible*, the change in speech from character to character would distract the audience and distance them from the play. Therefore, Director Steven Woolf has the actors speak using the rhythm of the language that is inherent to Arthur Miller’s script. The actors do not use the actual 17th-century dialects that were used in New England at the time.

Examine a speech, letter, sermon or legal document from the 1600’s—it needs to be a copy of an original document, not a translation. Read the document carefully and then translate it (or a few paragraphs of it) to our modern form of English. What spelling changes have occurred over time? What words are no longer used? How has the phrasing changed? What factors do you think caused this change in American English over time? (MO: CA1, CA3, CA4, CA7, FA1, FA3, FA4, FA5, SS2 IL: 1, 3, 5, 16, 25, 27)

After the Performance

2 *The Crucible*’s title is highly metaphorical to the events and characters of the play. In “Words to the Wise,” the terms “crucible” and “refractory” are defined. To which character(s), conflicts, or aspects of the plot could these words allude? Defend your answers. (CA1, CA2, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3 IL: 1, 4, 5, 25, 27)

3 Playwrights often take dramatic license when writing about a historical period. Arthur Miller has stated, “This play is not history in the sense in which the word is used by the academic historian. Dramatic purposes have sometimes required many characters to be fused into one; the number of girls involved in the ‘crying out’ has been reduced. However, I believe that the reader will discover here the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history. The fate of each character is exactly that of his historical model, and there is no one in the drama who did not play a similar—and in some cases exactly the same—role in history.” List the differences you can identify between *The Crucible* and the actual events and people of Salem. Why do you think Miller made each of these changes? (CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, CA7, FA1, FA2, FA3, FA5, SS2, SS3, SS6 IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 14, 16, 18, 25)

The Rep would like to thank Asolo Theatre Company for allowing us to use materials from their Study Guide in the creation of this publication.

FINE ARTS

Before the Performance

1 Aristotle outlined the elements of epic Greek tragedy and the characteristics of the tragic hero in *The Poetics*. These elements are still used in many tragedies today. According to Aristotle, the aim of the tragedy is to arouse **pity** and **fear**, and to cause a **catharsis** (a release of emotional tension that refreshes the spirit). The play must also contain **reversal** (the end result is opposite to what the central character intended) and **discovery** (the character learns something profound, usually about himself or his society). The **tragic hero** of the play must be an admirable person, but also one with a **fatal flaw** that leads to his or her downfall. Create a list of six plays or films you have seen that have some of the characteristics above. Next to each title, list the tragic hero and his flaw (if there is one), the way the work arouses pity and fear, and whether or not it caused you to feel a catharsis. (FA1, FA2, FA3, FA4, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, CA5, CA7 IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 25, 27)

2 Peer pressure could be a factor in the girls' behavior in *The Crucible* (as well as in the real Salem). Split up into groups and write a scene in which someone is influenced by peer pressure. Perform your scene for the class. (FA1, FA2, FA3, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA4, CA5, CA6 IL: 1, 3, 4, 5, 25, 26, 27)

3 Some plays and novels employ a literary device known as a characteronym: a character name which suggests the personality traits of the fictional character. This device is also used in literature. Sometimes the names are ironic, representing the opposite of the character's actual behavior. Although the names in *The Crucible* were taken directly from the Salem witch trials, a few character names could easily be characteronyms. View the character names in "Who's Who" and determine which ones could be characteronyms. What other play have you read that employs characteronyms? When watching *The Crucible*, be sure to note whether the characteronyms are indeed representations of the character's nature, or if they are ironic indications of an opposite nature. (FA1, FA2, FA4, FA5, CA1, CA2 IL: 1, 4, 5, 25, 27)

After the Performance

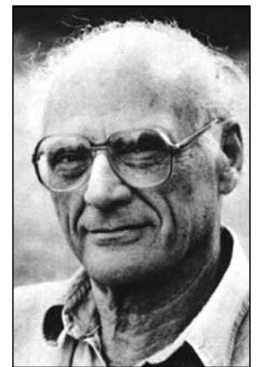
4 In the "Before the Performance" section prior, the elements of Aristotelian tragedy are discussed. Do you believe *The Crucible* is an Aristotelian tragedy? How is the play similar and how is it different? Is there a tragic hero in the play, and if so, who is it? What is his or her fatal flaw? For whom in *The Crucible* do you feel pity? Why? What in the play causes you to experience fear? Was your fear for the character, or was it because you are afraid something similar could happen to you? Why or why not? (FA1, FA2, FA3, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA6 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 27)

5 When speaking of *The Crucible*, Director Steven Woolf has stated: "*The Crucible* is about the collision of private and public life. It is at the moment that private becomes public that drama occurs." What private matters became public in the course of the play? How did the revelation affect the characters involved? How did this make you feel about the character? What did you feel toward the other characters (those who learned the secret)? Explain your answers. (FA1, FA2, FA3, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA6 IL: 1, 2, 4, 5, 25, 27)

6 Pick a recent event in which an aspect of someone's private life became public knowledge. Create a list of how their life changed as a result. Also include how society's perception of the person changed. Did the person's loss of privacy result in a change for the better or for the worse in that person's life? Compare what happened to this current figure to what happened to a character in the play. (FA1, FA3, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA3, CA4, SS2, SS6 IL: 1, 2, 3, 5, 16, 18, 25, 27)

7 Scenic Designer Narelle Sissons created the sets for the play to support the theme of having one's private life exposed. What changes to the set did you notice from scene to scene that created this effect? (FA1, FA2, FA3, CA1, CA2, CA6 IL: 1, 4, 5, 25, 27)

8 Arthur Miller has referred to himself as a "social" playwright. His plays explore human nature and society in an effort to illuminate why we make the decisions we do, and to reveal how our society can function better. When speaking of the value of theatre, Miller has written: "By whatever means it is accomplished, the prime business of a play is to arouse the passions of its audience so that by the route of passion may be opened up new relationships



between a man and men, and between men and Man. Drama is akin to the other inventions of man in that it ought to help us to know more, and not merely to spend our feelings." What in *The Crucible* most aroused your passions? What aspects of human nature does the play expose? What societal problems does it reveal? What did the play show you about the responsibility of Man to men (society)? (FA1, FA2, FA3, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA6, CA7, SS6 IL: 1, 4, 5, 16, 18, 25, 27)

9 At the end of the play, John Proctor decides to confess to a lie in order to save his life. When asked to sign his name, however, he changes his mind. Why does he make this decision? Why does Elizabeth refuse to beg him to sign? (FA1, FA2, FA3, FA5, CA1, CA2, CA6, CA7 IL: 1, 4, 5, 25, 27)