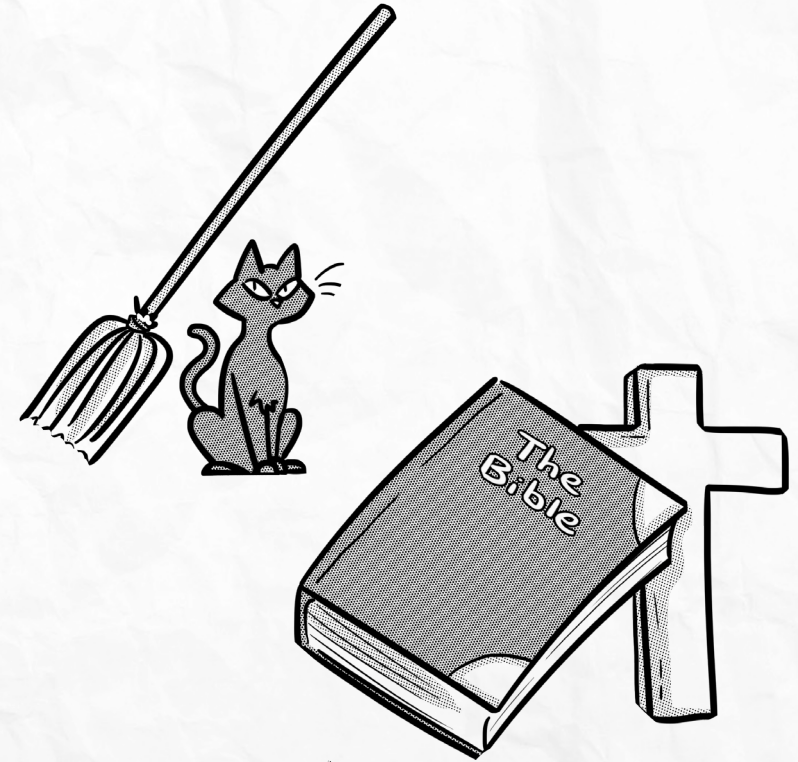


The Crucible

Arthur Miller



KnowIT

Location

- The location of a play is the **place** in which it is set.
- In which Massachusetts town was the play set?
- Can you find Massachusetts on a modern map of the USA?
- Why are the characters unlikely to have 'American' accents?
- In which different places are the four acts of the play set?
- What props/items of furniture would you include in a set for Act 2 of the play?
- Who were the Pilgrim Fathers?
- When and where did they land in America?
- What was the name of the ship in which they sailed?

Period

- The period of a play is the **time** in which it is set.
- In which year is the play set?
- How long before this did settlers first arrive in North America?
- What is a Puritan?
- How would the clothes (costume) have differed from what we wear today?
- In which year was the play written?
- Who was Senator Joseph McCarthy?
- What was happening in 1950s America which influenced Miller to write the play?

Witchcraft

- Draw what you imagine a **witch** to look like.
- List the items/objects/creatures you associate with witches e.g. black cats, broomsticks ...
- What sort of people were first accused of witchcraft in the play?
- How were so called witches tried or tested? What were believed to be signs of guilt/innocence?
- Why does Abigail want Elizabeth to be tried?
- Do you believe that witches exist now?
- Are they necessarily bad or evil?

Religion

- The early settlers brought with them the deeply religious lifestyle of Oliver Cromwell's puritan society. People were expected to attend church regularly, not to work on Sundays etc. Complete the following quotes and write down who says each line.
- 'Open yourself Tituba – open yourself and let God's _____ shine on you.'
- 'There be no mark of blame upon my life, Mr Hale. I am a _____ Christian woman.'
- 'To God every soul is precious and his _____ is terrible on them that take life without cause.'
- 'Now remember what the angel _____ said to the boy _____. Remember it.'
- 'I want to open myself! I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of _____!'
- 'There is either _____ or the church will burn like Hell is burning!'

Hysteria

- What is 'hysteria'?
- At what points do we see hysteria in the play?
- In what other situations might people become 'hysterical'?
- How could the girls in the court use their acting skills to show they have become hysterical? What might they do?
- How might they react towards each other and particularly towards Abigail?
- Why is Mary Warren unable to 'faint' of her own free will when she has done it so many times before?

Status

- This describes how important or powerful a character is.
- What makes a character important or powerful?
- How can you use your **voice, face and body language** to show your status on stage?
- Which of these two characters has particularly **high** and which has particularly **low** status in the play?
Deputy Governor Danforth, Sarah Good
- How might you use your acting skills to show the status of one of these characters on stage? How might you **respond** to other characters to indicate your status?

Characters

- Which characters from the play are described here?
- A strikingly beautiful girl of seventeen. An orphan, the niece of Reverend Parris.
- A twisted soul of forty-five who has lost many children in childbirth.
- A farmer in his mid-thirties, powerful of body, even-tempered and not easily led. Married to Elizabeth.
- An eighty-three-year old man, knotted with muscle and still powerful. Married to Rebecca.
- A negro slave from Barbados in her forties.
- A grave man in his sixties. The deputy governor of the province.

Acting Skills

- Using what you know about the characters, work with a partner on one of the extracts below.
- Consider how you would use your voice, face and body language to put the character across convincingly.
- Which words/phrases would you emphasise?
- Where would you speed up or pause?
- What movement/gestures might you use?
- What facial expression might you adopt and how/when might it change?

Abigail: 'Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you. And you know I can do it; I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down! (She goes to Betty and roughly sits her up.) Now, you – sit up and stop this!

Act One

Proctor: 'A man may think God sleeps, but God sees everything, I know it now. I beg you sir, I beg you – see her what she is. My wife, my dear good wife, took this girl soon after, sir, and put her out on the highroad. And being what she is, a lump of vanity, sir – (He is being overcome) Excellency, forgive me, forgive me. (Angrily, against himself, he turns away from the Governor for a moment. Then, as though to cry out is his only means of speech left:) She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave! And well she might, for I thought of her softly. God help me, I lusted, and there is promise in such sweat. But it is a whore's vengeance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands. I know you must see it now.'

Act Three

- What emotions is each of the character's feeling?
- What are their intentions?
- What impact do they hope to have on their audience?