

STORY GRAMMAR

STORY: *The Crucible*

AUTHOR: Arthur Miller

PLOT: A play based on the happenings of the Salem Witch Trials.

THEMES: Social Responsibility--standing up for what is right; authority; and integrity.

EPISODE

Setting: The whole play takes place in the small village of Salem, Massachusetts; the year is 1692.

Characters: Reverend Parris, Betty Parris (the Reverend's daughter), Tituba (the Reverend's slave from Barbados), Abigail (the Reverend's niece and at one point John Proctor's mistress), Thomas Putnam (wealthy and influential man in Salem), Mrs. Ann Putnam (his wife), John Proctor (the protagonist), Elizabeth Proctor (his wife), Mary Warren (Proctor's servant), Rebecca Nurse (elderly midwife), Francis Nurse (her husband), Mercy Lewis (friend of Abigail and one of the girls possessed), Giles Cory, Reverend John Hale (witchcraft specialist), Judge Hathorne, and Deputy Governor Danforth.

CHAIN OF EVENTS:

Reverend Parris catches his daughter, Betty, his niece, Abigail, and other girls sinfully dancing with Tituba in the forest. Betty and the Putnam's daughter are startled into a trance when caught red-handed. Rumors begin to spread about the dancing and the trances. (Initiating Event)

Secrets are revealed concerning Abigail: she had an affair with John Proctor and drank blood in order to kill Elizabeth Proctor. The city of Salem begins to unravel and much of the blame is pointed toward Reverend Parris. In order to save his reputation, Rev. Parris frantically and desperately diverts the attention from him to witchcraft. Thus he summons Reverend Hales, the witchcraft specialist; upon arriving, Rev. Hales basically forces a confession out of Tituba and Abigail. These two begin accusing others in order to 'be cleansed.' The trials begin. (Initiating Event)

The people in Salem begin to accuse one another out of fear, ignorance, jealousy, and vindictiveness. Many of the towns upright citizens are accused of witchcraft: Rebecca Nurse, Elizabeth Proctor, Martha Cory, and John Proctor. Those who confess to being a witch and accuse others of the same crime are pronounced clean and released. Those who do not confess are killed. (Outcome)

Proctor continually fights against authority in order to save the lives of his wife and friends. In this valiant effort, Proctor is truly cleansed and purified from his previous sin of adultery. He too is eventually arrested; he does not bow down to the lies, jealousy, and pride of Judge, Deputy Governor, Thomas Putnam, Abigail, and the other accusers. (Resolution)

John Proctor dies with his goodness restored; John Proctor dies with his name. (Reaction)