

THE CRUCIBLE

study guide

by

AMANDA ALLEY,
DRAMATURG

KRISTIN PERKINS,
ASSISTANT DRAMATURG

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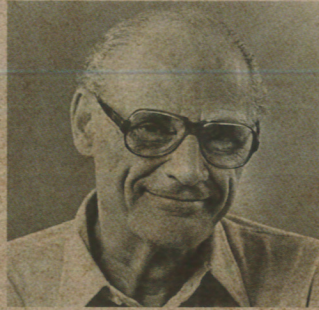
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A Note From the Dramaturg

ARTHUR MILLER

Playwright Arthur Miller was born to European Jewish immigrant Isadore Miller and native New Yorker Augusta Barnett Miller, in Manhattan on October 17, 1915. Miller grew up during some of the most trying times our nation has seen, experiencing both the Great Depression and World War II firsthand. His experiences, and the political opinions they informed, colored his art through over 60 years of artistry and theatre making.



THE COMMUNIST WITCH HUNT

- ✦ The House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) was a congressional committee formed in 1938 to investigate subversive activities committed by government employees and private citizens.
- ✦ The HUAC accused many people (especially artists) of having communist sympathies during the Red Scare following WWII.
- ✦ The proceedings of the HUAC often included invasiveness and intimidation: the accused faced jail time or blacklisting if they refused to cooperate.
- ✦ Arthur Miller wrote *The Crucible* in 1953 during the HUAC's height of activity.
- ✦ Three years later, Miller was called before HUAC himself. In his testimony, he denied having any communist sympathies. However, when asked to name to name other communists, Miller flatly refused and was held in contempt of the court.



A CITY SET ON A HILL

The Puritans sailed to the New World to establish a "city set on a hill," a beacon that would show the world what righteous living looked like. This meant that those who lived in Salem were held to extremely high standards. Below are some Puritan rules and beliefs. As you watch the show, notice the interaction between certain characters and how their decisions were influenced by these beliefs.

Only men could hold office in the church.

Due to the fall of Eve, women were thought to be more prone to the devil's temptations.

Church attendance was mandatory.

Strict adherence to the commandments was expected. For this reason, laughing and dancing were seen as lewd, as were public displays of affection. They had to wear a mask of solemnity.



*"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live."
- Exodus 22:18*

The devil was always trying to infiltrate the communities of God's righteous, so they always had to be on the lookout.

IN REAL LIFE

Miller used a great deal of literary license when he wrote *The Crucible*. Though some of the play is historically accurate, there are several differences between the actual events of the 1692 Salem witch trials and those in this play, most of which can be found in the relationships between the characters. Hopefully these accurate biographical summaries of those who inspired Miller's characters will clear up those discrepancies.



JOHN PROCTOR

INNOCENT?



ELIZABETH
BASSETT
PROCTOR

John Proctor was a farmer and tavern owner who lived just outside of Salem village. At about 60 years old, he was the first male to be accused of witchcraft in Salem. He advocated for the innocence of those accused throughout the trials, specifically his wife and children who were also accused.

Elizabeth was John's third wife, and was 40 years old in 1692. She was accused of witchcraft and sentenced to hang, but that hanging was postponed by a pregnancy. The delay saved her from the noose and she later remarried.

During the Salem witch trials, Abigail lodged 41 legal complaints, gave formal testimony in 7 cases, and was involved in as many as 17 formal court cases. She was 11 or 12 at the time, so it is unlikely that she and John Proctor had ever met before the trials. There isn't any documentation on what happened to her after she left the proceedings.

ABIGAIL WILLIAMS



REVEREND
SAMUEL PARRIS

After several failed business ventures as a merchant, Samuel Parris entered the ministry in Salem, Massachusetts, where he was met with opposition. During the trials, he submitted legal claims and served as a witness for several of the afflicted girls. After the trials, those who mistrusted him outnumbered his supporters, and Parris was forced out of Salem in 1696.

TITUBA INDIAN



??

In court documents Tituba is named as "Indian Woman, Servant", but there is no description beyond that. We do know that she and her husband, John, were Reverend Parris' slaves after he left a failed plantation in Barbados. Tituba was the first to confess to witchcraft. Without her confession there was no witness to the devil's dealings in Salem, and no way to identify whom his followers were.

So why did the seemingly rational members of Salem begin a witch hunt?

- ✦ Attention or Power—Women and children were often dismissed in Puritan society, but the witch hunts gave women and young girls a platform to influence their community and be heard.
- ✦ Poison—A fungus called ergot could have poisoned the accusers. This would explain why the girls acted so strange during this relatively short period.
- ✦ Guilt—High Puritan standards pressed heavily on the people of Salem. The trials provided an opportunity to shift accountability for grievous sin on someone else—including the devil himself. Pushing the guilt of past transgressions onto the accused was a way (conscious or subconscious) of gaining psychological and social relief.
- ✦ Material Benefit—The accusations disproportionately benefited members of Salem Village, a socially distinct agricultural community, and seemed to target members of Salem Town, the urban port of Salem.

There were probably many interlocking causes for the hysteria, including a combination of those listed here. Arthur Miller has identified several of these throughout the script. See which ones you can recognize!

RECYCLING WORDS

The set for this production of *The Crucible* is very simple except for the ornate poem centered on the back wall. Throughout the play you will see characters interact with this poem in a special way, highlighting certain words to create what is called a redacted poem. Known alternatively as “blackout poetry,” redacted poetry repurposes existing text by highlighting specific words. The excess words are crossed out, blacked out, or erased to create a new poem. Watch closely to see what message the cast of *The Crucible* is trying to convey through their new version of the poem.

Below is the second verse from Psalm 2, a song you’ll hear in the show. See what kind of message you can pull from the stanzas by crossing out most of the words.

*And now yee Kings be wise,
Be learn’d yee judges ofth’earth heare.
Serve yee the lord with reverence,
Rejoyce in him with feare.*

*Kisse yee the Sonne, lest he be wroth,
And yee fall in the way.
When his wrath quickly burnes,
Oh blest are all that on him stay.*

—Emily Higinbotham

HOW WE USE MASKS

GREEK MASKS

Greek masks were originally used in religious ceremonies to worship Dionysus, the god of harvest and fertility. In the plays that were written in his honor, masks were used to convey emotion to large amphitheatre audiences. There were only two or three main actors who had speaking roles in a traditional Greek play, so one actor had to portray multiple people and personalities in one show. The masks not only improved visibility, but also defined each character and their traits.



BRECHTIAN THEATRE

Bertolt Brecht, a German playwright, developed a theatre practice known as the *Verfremdungseffekt* (or simply the “V-effect”), which means “to make strange.” The theory was meant to distance the audience enough that they were required to think about what they were seeing rather than being passive observers. He used masks to show that the actor was wearing a character, so that the audience would consider the characters on an intellectual level rather than a wholly emotional level.

HERE AT BYU

David Morgan, the director of this production of *The Crucible*, often uses masks to create visual metaphors. His goal is to help the audience understand the layers and masks that people—specifically the Puritan characters in this show—use to hide their true selves. The person you see isn’t presenting who they really are. The truth is beneath the mask. As you watch, try to determine what some of those metaphorical masks might be made out of, and think about any masks you may keep in your arsenal.



A NOTE FROM THE DRAMATURG

The Crucible depicts a heavy subject. It dramatizes one of the darkest moments in American history while alluding to another. Knowing this, I wondered why a religious institution such as Brigham Young University would pick this piece for one of their productions. A play about witches, demons, adultery, deceit, and injustice seems like an odd fit for the aims of BYU. The answer to this question evaded me until I looked into the meaning of the play's title.

A crucible is a metal or ceramic container that is used to melt metal because it can withstand extremely high temperatures. Alternatively, a crucible is a time of extreme difficulty or trial that results in the creation of something new. This definition brought all of the puzzle pieces together for me. The value in producing, watching, and studying *The Crucible* is not necessarily in the content of the show, but in what it can teach us.

Arthur Miller meant for *The Crucible* to be a teaching instrument. In his own way, he "redacted" the events of 1692 to criticize the way the American government dealt with Communism after World War II. He wanted audiences to recognize the wrongdoings of the Salem court and relate them to the House Un-American Activities Committee's actions, therefore recognizing the error of the Communist witch hunt.



With this production of *The Crucible*, David Morgan has taken Miller's work and redacted it for his own purposes. He recognized the masking of Miller's views and the figurative masks the characters hid behind. By making those masks literal, he points out the error of those who wear masks and the virtue of those who do not.

So as you watch BYU's *The Crucible*, pay attention to what this production has to teach you. You might find it difficult like I did, but there is a wealth of knowledge and growth waiting for you. Because, as Reverend Parris states in the third act of the play, "We are here . . . precisely to discover what we have not seen."

—Amanda Alley, dramaturg

MEET THE CAST CONT.

Andrew Groome
Ezekiel Cheever

From Okotoks, Alberta, Canada, Andrew is a sophomore studying acting and is enjoying the opportunity to study here at BYU with his lovely wife, Arielle. Recent credits include Edward Bloom in *Big Fish: The Musical* and Owen Musser in *The Foreigner* at The Carriage House Theatre, and the Bookseller in BYU's production of Disney's *Beauty and the Beast*.

Tyler Hatch
John Proctor

From Roosevelt Utah, Tyler Hatch is a senior in the music dance theatre program. Recent credits include Giuseppe in *The Light in the Piazza*, Raleigh in *The Last Train to Nibroc*, and Guy in *Single Wide*, all at BYU. He has the honor of being married to the wonderful director and writer, Taylor Hatch.

Spencer Hunsicker
Reverend Samuel Parris

From Tampa, Florida, Spencer is a junior studying acting. Recent credits include Algernon in *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Truffaldino in *The Servant of Two Masters*, both at BYU.

Dayne Joyner
Francis Nurse

From Athens, Georgia, Dayne is a sophomore in the music dance theatre program. Recent credits include Charlie in *The Foreigner* and Amos Calloway in *Big Fish* at Carriage House Theatre in Canada, and most recently the Bank Chairman in BYU's production of *Mary Poppins*. In 2015 Dayne served as a Young Performing Missionary in Nauvoo, Illinois, and is happy to be serving in Nauvoo again this summer. He loves the power theatre has to change lives.

Ann Lopez
Mrs. Ann Putnam

From Herriman, Utah, Ann is a senior studying acting. She loves llamas.

Abbie Martschenko
Abigail Williams

From Cary, North Carolina, Abbie is a senior in the BFA acting program and has a minor in editing. Recent credits include Matilde in *The Clean House* at BYU and numerous short films around Provo. She looks forward to moving somewhere warm after graduation.

Heather McDonald
Mary Warren

From Sacramento, California, Heather McDonald is a senior in the music dance theater program. Recent credits include Grace O'Malley in *The Pirate Queen* at the Hale Center Theater, Ado Annie in *Oklahoma!*, and Smeraldina in *Servant of Two Masters* at BYU. She would like to thank her family and friends (as well as her special someone) for all of the support and patience of her craziness throughout this year and, let's be honest, her whole life!

MEET THE CAST CONT.

Nathan Meyers
John Willard

From Longview, Washington, Nathan is a junior studying acting with a minor in editing. Recent credits include Juror #8 in *Twelve Angry Men* in a BYU Mask Club and Mordred in *Camelot* with Rising Star Productions Community Theater.

Chelsea Mortensen
**Rebecca Nurse/
Martha Corey/
Sarah Good**

From Mesa, Arizona, Chelsea Mortensen is a senior in the directing emphasis for theatre arts studies. Her past roles include Nadya in *Travesties*, the Sheep in *Charlotte's Web*, and Clara in *Hayfever*, all at BYU. She also played Mrs. Brill in *Mary Poppins* at the Playmill Theatre.

Erika Ovuoba
Tituba

Erika is a student at Utah Valley University in her junior year of the BFA acting program. Some of her favorite roles include Princess Puffer in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and Marta in *Company*, both at Utah Valley University, and Nettie in *The Color Purple* at the Wagner Performing Arts Center. Erika was a finalist at KCACTF in 2015. Tituba was her very first role in a play, and she is extremely excited to play her again!

Clara Richardson
Violinist

From Alpine, Utah, Clara is a freshman in the pre-acting program. Recently she has performed in Abravanel Hall and Temple Square with the Timpanogos Chamber Orchestra. She has played violin for most of her life and absolutely loves it, but she has enjoyed acting in multiple productions as well. Currently, she is playing Lady Macbeth in BYU Young Company's Production of *Macbeth*.

Cooper Sutton
Reverend John Hale

From Terre Haute, Indiana, Cooper is a junior studying acting. Credits include Cosmo Brown and tap choreographer in *Singin' in the Rain* at the Playmill Theatre, a performer in the 2016/2017 BYU Young Ambassadors, BYU's *Beauty and the Beast*, *Merrily We Roll Along*, and *White Christmas*, and The American Tap Dance Foundation's production of *Tap City* on Broadway. He recently received Denver's Marlowe award for Best Actor. He is married to Emma Sutton.

Elliott Sweeney
Mr. Hopkins

From Easton, Pennsylvania, Elliott is a freshman studying acting with a minor in music. Recent credits include Ewart Dunlop in *The Music Man* at Easton High Theater, Jean-Michel in Rodger and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* also at Easton High Theater, and Nicholas in *The Boy Who Stole the Stars* at BYU. He also received a nomination for Outstanding Performance by a Featured Male Ensemble Member in the 2016 Freddy Awards.

Taycen Timothy
Judge Hathorne

From Houston, Texas, Taycen is studying acting. Recent credits include John Arable in *Charlotte's Web* at BYU.

Jared Wells
Thomas Putnam

From Pacifica, California, Jared Wells is a senior in the theatre art studies program. Recent roles include Benoit in *La Bohème*, Les Croupier in *Manon*, and Don Curzio in *The Marriage of Figaro* with the BYU Opera. Other highlights include playing the role of Bartolo in *The Barber of Seville* in BYU Opera Scenes, the Lemonade Seller in Soren Budge's production of *Macbeth*, and a chorus member in Jennette Black's production of *She Loves Me*.

Alana Bishop Wilcox
Susanna Wallcott

From American Fork, Utah, Alana is a sophomore studying acting. She recently played Millie in *7 Brides for 7 Brothers* at AFHS. She loves to perform and is excited to be in her first production at BYU! She and her husband, Skyler Wilcox, happily got married in August.



MEET THE PRODUCTION TEAM

Rachel Bowerbank Scenic Designer

From Lehi, Utah, Rachel is a senior studying theatre arts with an emphasis in scenic design. Recent credits include assistant scenic designer for the U.S. premiere of *Chariots of Fire*, production stage manager for *The Princess and the Pauper*, Scenic Designer for *Cyrano*, male dresser for the U.S. Premiere of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and deck crew for *The Marriage of Figaro*, all at BYU. Thanks to her family and friends for their continued support!

Kalea Burke Lighting Designer

From Fort Collins, Colorado, Kalea is a junior studying theatre arts with a minor in philosophy. Recent credits include assistant lighting designer on *Mary Poppins* and *The Taste of Sunrise* at BYU. Kalea is excited to be designing her first show and could not have done it without her assistant Celia Linford and her loving family and friends.

Deanne DeWitt Costume Designer

Deanne received her undergraduate and masters degrees from BYU in fashion and costume design and has worked in the costume shop since 1991. Recent costume design credits at BYU include the School of Music's opera *Manon* and BYU Young Company's touring show *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Her multi-talented husband Paul is playing the part of Deputy Governor Danforth in *The Crucible*. After raising 8 children together they are reaping the rewards of 16 delightful grandchildren in Springville, Utah.

Rachel Bennett Makeup & Hair Designer

From Taber, Alberta, Canada, Rachel Bennett is a senior in the theatre arts studies program with an emphasis in makeup design. Recent design credits include assistant makeup designer for *Mary Poppins*, and head makeup artist for the UVU capstone film *Stone Cold*. She has loved this opportunity to be a part of the creative team on one of her favorite shows!

Taylor Robinson Properties Designer

From Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Taylor Robinson is a media arts major. Working in the prop shop for 2 years, Taylor has designed and assisted on BYU shows including *Water Sings Blue*, *Beauty and The Beast*, *A Taste of Sunrise*, and *Mary Poppins*.

Emily Higinbotham Sound Designer & Composer

From Orem, Utah, Emily recently graduated from BYU with a bachelor's degree in commercial music with a focus on media composition and audio... and anything else she could get her hands on. She grew up participating each year in *The Best Christmas Pageant Ever* at the Valley Center Playhouse in Lindon, Utah, both acting and running lights and sound. She is very excited to be doing her first sound design.

Amanda Alley Dramaturg

From Gilbert, Arizona, Amanda is studying theatre arts with an emphasis in playwriting and a minor in world dance. She has served as a Young Performing Missionary in Nauvoo, Illinois, and has spent the last three years as a member of the BYU International Folk Dance Ensemble. She was a playwright for the first year of the BYU Microburst Theatre Festival and had the privilege to accompany the production to KCACTF in 2014, where it received an award for its innovative structure. She is excited to explore the behind-the-scenes world of theatre as a dramaturg for BYU's production of *The Crucible*.

Julianne Francisco Production Stage Manager

From Riverside, California, Julianne is a master of information systems management student with a minor in theatre arts studies. Recent stage management credits include BYU's opera productions of *La Bohème* and *The Lost Children of Hamelin*.

Celia Linford Asst. Lighting Designer

From Denver, Colorado, Celia is a sophomore studying lighting design with an undeclared minor in media arts studies. Recent credits include BYU's Microburst theatre festival and student directed mask clubs, *Persephone* and *Hobbes*.

Kassidy Jones Asst. Stage Manager

From Enterprise, Utah, Kassidy is a junior studying theatre education.

Kristin Perkins Asst. Dramaturg

From Encinitas, California, Kristin is a senior studying theatre arts with a minor in women's studies; her emphases are critical studies and playwriting. She's written for, acted in, and directed shows at BYU and in the community. Kristin was recognized with BYU's Outstanding Critical Studies Award for 2016 and three Mayhew Awards for her playwriting. This is her first foray into dramaturgy.

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This production is entered in the Kennedy Center American College Theater Festival (KCACTF). The aims of this national theater education program are to identify and promote quality in college-level theater production. To this end, each production entered is eligible for a response by a regional KCACTF representative, and selected students and faculty are invited to participate in KCACTF programs involving scholarships, internships, grants, and awards for actors, directors, dramaturgs, playwrights, designers, stage managers, and critics at both the regional and national levels.

Productions entered on the Participating level are eligible for invitation to the KCACTF regional festival and may also be considered for national awards recognizing outstanding achievement in production, design, direction, and performance.

Last year more than 1,300 productions were entered in the KCACTF involving more than 200,000 students nationwide. By entering this production, our theater department is sharing in the KCACTF goals to recognize, reward, and celebrate the exemplary work produced in college and university theaters across the nation.

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