

1 Background Information

1.1 American Drama

- Eugene O’neill was the first “important” figure in American Drama.
- Introduced realistic drama with the removal of the viewer by the fourth wall.
- Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams represent Realism and Realism combined with an attempt at something more imaginative.
- Miller wrote Death of a Salesman, All My Sons, and The Crucible.

1.2 The Crucible

- Produced in 1953, about puritans and the salem witch trials. This was in parallel to McCarthy’s Red Hunt. God, I hate McCarthy.
- There was a belief in Salem in witches, seen as the Devil’s helpers, and confession led to freedom from the devil’s bonds. Confusion in identifying witches came from shape-shifting and possession.

2 Act One

- Reverend Samuel Parris is a main character, play opens in his room. He kneels by his daughter’s bed, she is lying inert.
- Act opens with a digression, and a discussion of puritans. One point he makes about these people tend to mind others’ business, and that this feeds the witch trials.
- The puritans believe that they light the world. This has helped and hurt America in the time since.
- Miller says that the Salem Witch Trial developed from a paradox in whose grip we still live. The issue is one of the theocracy, but the balance turning toward individual freedom.
- We return to a mid-forties Parris, who is a bad man.
- Tituba is a slave, brought from Barbados by Parris from when he was a businessman there. Believed to be able to conjure spirits.
- Abigail is strikingly beautiful, an orphan living with Parris who is her uncle. She is very dramatic. She tends to seem like she’s lying here, because of the way she’s acting.
- Someone was running naked in the forest. Abigail may have drank blood. They danced.
- Betty is lying unresponsive in bed, tries to fly when she wakes up. She actually passed out, probably.
- Mercy is a merciless. She’s the Putnam’s servant, is sly.
- Mary is subservient, naive, and lonely. She’s a bit of a foil to Mercy.
- Mrs. Putnam tends to be full of canards.
- Abigail says she was discharged from Goody Proctor’s service because she hates Abigail and has it out for her. People want slaves, not servants, so she hasn’t gotten a job lately.
- It is assumed that the actual reason is that Abigail has had an affair with Goody Proctor’s husband John Proctor.

- Ann Putnam has had many babies die. She seems to be the gossip of the town, and simply makes matters worse.
- Thomas Putnam is a well-to-do, hard-handed land-owner and is 50. A commentary follows; he is a man with many grievances, at least one of which appears to be justified. His brother-in-law got turned down for a position he should have gotten. Putnam is the eldest son of the richest man in the village. His vindictive nature was demonstrated long before the witchcraft happened at all.
- Putnam feels his own name and the honor of his family have been besmirched by the village. He feels he was unfairly treated in his father's will. He accuses a lot of people.
- Putnam dislikes Parris, and Parris is not entirely aware of this.
- Putnam gives Parris advice to strike out against the devil, and this may just be a ploy to mess Parris up.
- Betty awakes, and tries to fly out the window. Abigail drank blood, and Betty makes note of this.
- The girls danced, Tituba tried to conjure the spirits of some dead sisters or something. Abigail threatens the hell out of the other girls in case they do tell.
- "In Proctor's presence, a fool felt his foolishness instantly."
- Proctor is respected, and feared, but he feels like a fraud.
- Proctor has a specific attitude toward Abigail, and she's pretty into him. He still thinks about her, but states he will never touch her again.
- Rebecca Nurse and Giles Corey enter.
- Nurse is really calm, chill. Her husband is well-respected, and she is as well. She's been through a lot, and is viewed as wise. She's very gentle, by nature.
- Putnams and Nurses have a land dispute.
- Putnam accuses Rebecca's spirit of tempting her to iniquity, and this is more true than Putnam knows.
- Nurse has 11 children, 26 grandchildren, and have seen all of them go through their foolishness. She has a lot of experience with children and says you have to let them be kids.
- Parris has sent for Reverend Hale, who apparently has some expertise in the field of witches and devils. Rebecca says he should just be sent back as soon as he gets here, saying that the Reverend will just foster further disagreement. Mrs. Putnam seems to resent and envy Rebecca Nurse who has had so many living children and grandchildren.
- There are arguments about land, deeds, Parris's preaching, firewood, factions in the church. This is a town full of conflict and contention. Reverend Hale enters.
- The ideals of the world haven't changed since the days of strong religion even though there is a superficial change.
- Hale says not to look to superstition, and yet this is a witch trial play.
- Putnams tend to be witchcraft believers, Abigail, the other girls, etc. Parris doesn't want witchcraft, and Proctor, Nurse, and maybe a couple others just don't believe it.
- Giles is wacky, comical, gets blamed for a lot, isn't very good at praying. Was a crank, and a nuisance, but is deeply innocent and brave.

- Hale questions the girls, especially Tituba and Abigail.
- Girls try to push the blame off themselves, for the most part
- More small talk is made, and a sense of separation rises. Elizabeth doesn't want conflict but she must cause it anyway.

3 Act Two

- Early in the act Mary Warren and the Proctors are talking about other girls. Sarah Good and Sarah Osborne, in particular. Warren seems shaken up over the whole situation. She likes to be treated like she means something, to be the centre of attention.
- Sarah Good "Never knew any commandments" and this shows the witch hunt is toward anyone who isn't flawless in the eye of the Puritan.
- Mary is defiant, and then goes to sleep while Elizabeth fears. John says he'll find Ezekiel Cheever, Elizabeth feels they need more than Cheever.
- Elizabeth goes into a monologue about Abigail, who is actually pretty damn clever. Abigail wants to take the place of Elizabeth with Proctor.
- Elizabeth gets no commentary from Miller.
- Elizabeth has fortitude, faith, tries to make the best of the situation. Parris asks Abigail if her name is white in town, and she says Goody Proctor says things about her, but there is no actual support for this yet. Judge Hale shows up, and says that Elizabeth has been mentioned in the court.
- Hale begins to question them, and they get onto the subject of the Church, the candlesticks, and Parris. Proctor could be described as an "Independent Thinker" as he doesn't think going to Church makes sense since Parris isn't preaching what he agrees with; Proctor thinks one must hold firm with what they believe in.
- Nurse has been under suspicion, and Hale says it is a pretty crazy time.
- Hale believes that since Parris is ordained, the light of God must be in him. The commandments thing happens again.
- Hale tries to smile, and is prodding them.
- Elizabeth wants John to tell Hale about Abigail, and the conversation turns to her. Giles Corey and Francis Nurse appear after that. Both their wives have been taken as suspects.
- Hale says he knows Rebecca is a good person, and that the court is likely to let her go.
- "Until an hour before the Devil fell, God found him beautiful in Heaven."
- Giles explains how his wife is charged by a man named Walcott accused his wife (Martha Corey)
- Cheever and someone enter.
- Cheever believes you must do as you're told, which is quite the dangerous attitude to have.
- Cheever asks Elizabeth if she keeps poppets in her house, which is related to the poppet and Abigail. Elizabeth was framed in this way.
- Things get heated, Proctor rips up the order. Hale states that "Vengeance is walking in Salem" and speaks the truth about how the place is being run by vengeance and children.

- Allusion is made to Pontius Pilate, and that Hale did the same as Pilate and washed his hands of something he could have stopped.
- Hale looks away with guilt and uncertainty as Elizabeth is taken off. Corey calls to Hale, who then says he will testify in her favor.
- Proctor says Hale is a coward despite being ordained in God's tears.
- Hale says God wouldn't be provoked grandly by such a petty cause. Unwittingly references Proctor's affair.
- Mary Warren won't charge Abigail.
- Proctor is willing to sink the ship he's living on just to kill the captain.
- Abigail plans to "Save" Proctor.

4 Act Three

- Miller uses irony quite a bit. Bucher's laptop presents the Powerpoint he wanted to use here.
- Opens in the courtroom. Characters are not seen, they are merely heard at the opening.
- The lack of people visible at the start of the scene implies a hiddenness and adds a tension.
- Martha Corey is on trial, and her husband Giles shows up to interrupt the court. The charges have changed against her.
- Giles says against Putnam that he is rigging the trial to rob the land from the convicted.
- Hathorne is a bitter, remorseless Salem judge.
- Danforth didn't mean to accuse anyone of anything, but did anyway.
- Hale says Giles claims hard evidence in defense of his wife. Danforth interrupts him and says the evidence must be submitted by a proper affidavit.
- Herrick offends Danforth by saying they are deceiving him. Danforth responds with
- Notes here have been missed. Not cool.
- Proctor confesses, and Danforth asks questions. Abigail is a harlot or something.
- People are to turn their backs so they can't tell Abigail what to say. Elizabeth is forced to lie.
- At the end of the act, Abigail and the other girls start to act as though they're seeing spirits. Mary tries to get them to stop.
- By the end of the act, Giles Corey is arrested for contempt of court and Proctor is arrested for witchcraft.
- Hale has changed and wants to be done with the procedures and the situation.