



Arthur MILLER
(1915–2005)

believed that the theatre had a social function. His plays are about the relationship between public and private lives and explore such themes as social duty and conscience. (*Death of a Salesman*, 1949, *The Crucible*, 1953)

*The Crucible*¹ was written in 1953, during McCarthyism, when many Americans, including Arthur Miller, were accused of pro-Communist beliefs and asked to denounce some of their friends. The *Crucible* is set in 17th-century Salem, during a period of witch-hunts.

Led by Abigail (Reverend Parris's niece), several girls including Tituba, Reverend Parris's black servant from Barbados², and Betty (Parris's daughter) have been dancing in the forest. In fact Abigail wanted Tituba to prepare a potion to kill Proctor's wife (Abigail wants to seduce her husband). Parris catches the girls and Betty faints and remains unconscious. There is of course rumour of witchcraft. Abigail accuses Tituba of being a witch and Reverend Hale, a specialist of occult phenomena is sent for. Tituba is terrified of being hanged but understands that she might be saved if she accuses others, even though they are innocent.

HALE: When the Devil comes to you does he ever come – with another person?

(She stares up into his face.)

5 Perhaps another person in the village? Someone you know.

PARRIS: Who came with him?

PUTNAM: Sarah Good? Did you ever see Sarah Good with him?

10 Or Osburn?

PARRIS: Was it man or woman came with him?

TITUBA: Man or woman. Was – was woman.

15 PARRIS: What woman? A woman, you said. What woman?

TITUBA: It was black dark, and I –

PARRIS: You could see him, why could you not see her?

20 TITUBA: Well, they was always talking; they was always runnin' round and carryin' on –

PARRIS: You mean out of Salem? Salem witches?

25 TITUBA: I believe so, yes, sir.

(Now Hale takes her hand. She is surprised.)

HALE: Tituba. You must have no fear to tell us who they are, do you

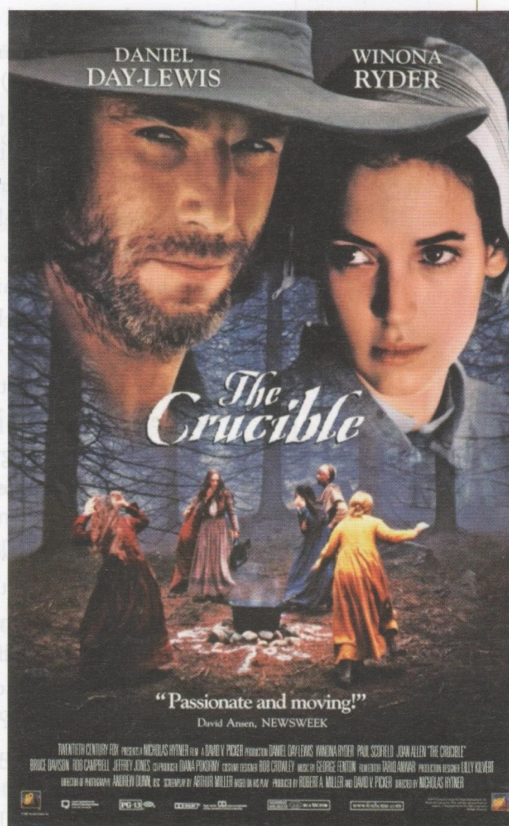
understand? We will protect you. The Devil can never overcome a minister³. You know that, do you not?

30 TITUBA (kisses Hale's hand): Aye, sir, oh, I do.

HALE: You have confessed yourself to witchcraft, and that speaks a wish to come to Heaven's side. And we will bless⁴ you, Tituba.

TITUBA (deeply relieved): Oh, God bless you, Mr Hale!

HALE: (with rising exaltation): You are God's instrument put in our hands to discover the Devil's agents among us. You are selected, Tituba, you are chosen
35 to help us cleanse⁵ our village. So speak utterly, Tituba, turn your back on



him and face God – face God, Tituba, and God will protect you.

TITUBA (*joining with him*): Oh, God, protect Tituba!

HALE (*kindly*): Who came to you with the Devil? Two? Three? Four? How many?

(*Tituba pants, and begins rocking back and forth again, staring ahead.*)

TITUBA: There was four. There was four.

PARRIS (*pressing in on her*): Who? Who? Their names, their names!

TITUBA (*suddenly bursting out*⁶): Oh, how many times he bid⁷ me kill you, Mr Parris!

PARRIS: Kill me!

TITUBA (*in a fury*): He say Mr Parris must be kill! Mr Parris no goodly man, Mr Parris mean man and

no gentle man, and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! (*They gasp.*) But I tell him 'No! I don't hate that man. I don't want kill that man.'

he say, 'You work for me, Tituba, and I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear, and put you way high up in the air, and you gone fly back to Barbados!' And I say, 'You lie, Devil, you lie!' And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, 'Look! I have white people belong to me.' And I look – and there was Goody⁸ Good.

PARRIS: Sarah Good!

TITUBA (*rocking and weeping*): Aye, sir, and Goody Osburn.

MRS PUTNAM: I knew it! Goody Osburn were midwife⁹ to me three times.

I begged you, Thomas, did I not? I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared her. My babies always shrivelled¹⁰ in her hands!

HALE: Take courage, you must give us all their names. How can you bear to see this child suffering? Look at her, Tituba. (*He is indicating Betty on the bed.*) Look at her God-given innocence; her soul is so tender; we must protect her, Tituba; the Devil is out and preying¹¹ on her like a beast upon the flesh of the pure lamb. God will bless you for your help.

(*Abigail rises, staring as though inspired, and cries out.*)

ABIGAIL: I want to open myself!

(*They turn to her, startled. She is enraptured*¹², as though in a pearly light.)

I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand. I saw Sarah Good with the Devil: I saw Goody Osburn with the Devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil!

(*As she is speaking, Betty is rising from the bed, a fever in her eyes, and picks up the chant.*)

BETTY (*staring too*): I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!



From *The Crucible*, 1996
directed by Nicholas Hytner

PARRIS: She speaks ! (He rushes to embrace Betty.) She speaks!

HALE: Glory to God! It is broken, they are free!

BETTY (calling out hysterically and with great relief): I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

90 ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil! (It is rising to a great glee¹³.)

PUTNAM: The marshal¹⁴, I'll call the marshal!

(Parris is shouting a prayer of thanksgiving.)

BETTY: I saw Alice Barrow with the Devil!

(The curtain begins to fall.)

95 HALE (as Putnam goes out): Let the marshal bring irons!

ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Hawkins with the Devil!

BETTY: I saw Goody Bibber with the Devil!

ABIGAIL: I saw Goody Booth with the Devil!

(On their ecstatic cries)

THE CURTAIN FALLS

1. a crucible: un creuset 2. Barbados: la Barbade 3. a minister: un pasteur 4. to bless: bénir
5. to cleanse: purifier 6. to burst out: éclater 7. to bid: ordonner 8. Goody [short for goodwife] was the name given to women 9. a midwife: une sage-femme 10. to shrivel: se flétrir
11. to prey on so: s'attaquer à quelqu'un 12. enraptured: sous un enchantement 13. glee: la jubilation
14. a marshal: un homme de loi

Zooming in

- The structure of the scene.
 - What are the two main parts of the scene?
 - What are the different steps of Tituba's confession?
- Study the development of hysteria, which affects both the ministers and the girls, in:
 - stage directions,
 - repetitions.
- What means do the accusers use to get an answer, whether it be true or untrue?
- What is the relevance of this scene for the time it was written?
- Show that this scene is a perversion of true Christianity.