

Name _____



Women's Power

In 1692, in the Puritan town of Salem, Massachusetts, women were expected to be quiet, obedient, and respectful. Men held the power, making important decisions for their families and the community. However, in *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller shows how the Salem witch trials challenged these gender roles in surprising ways.

At the start of the play, women in Salem were mostly powerless. Abigail Williams, a young woman, worked as a servant before being dismissed by Elizabeth Proctor. She had little control over her own life, but when she started accusing people of witchcraft, she gained enormous power. Suddenly, her words decided who would live and who would die. The judges believed her without question, and she used this to manipulate others. This shows how, in times of fear, even people with little power can rise to control those above them.

Elizabeth Proctor, John Proctor's wife, represents a different kind of strength. She is calm, honest, and devoted to her husband. However, because of society's rules, she has to suffer quietly when she is accused of witchcraft. She refuses to lie, even when it could save her life. Elizabeth's quiet courage challenges the idea that women are weak.

Mary Warren, another young woman, shows how difficult it was for women to stand up against authority. She knows that Abigail and the other girls are lying, but when she tries to tell the truth, she is threatened. She changes her mind out of fear, showing how powerless some women felt in a society where men controlled the courts and decisions.

Through these female characters, *The Crucible* challenges traditional gender roles. Abigail gains power by using fear, Elizabeth shows quiet strength, and Mary Warren struggles to tell the truth. Miller's play reminds us that history often treats women unfairly, but it also shows that they have always found ways to fight back.