

Student Essay on The Meaning of the Crucible Title

The Meaning of the Crucible Title by Arthur Miller

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Essay

Two definitions of the word "crucible" can apply to the title of the play *The Crucible*, "a container for melting or purifying metals" and "a severe test." The village of Salem was a strict puritan community, a container. The contents of this container are the God-fearing people of Salem along with their feelings and emotions. Fueled by the lies and blasphemy in the town, they're finally brought to a "melting point" where they buy into the deceit and start to charge witchcraft. The accusations of witchcraft can also be seen as a melting pot. At first, slaves and vagrants were the victims of the claims. Eventually, witchcraft became an indiscriminate foe when well-known citizens were charged such as Rebecca Nurse, George Jacobs, and Elizabeth and John Procter. The crimes were charged in attempt to purify the community of the influence of Satan. The entire community of Salem was put through a "severe test" throughout the trials. The test was of faith in God and the court, and their faith in the court was wavering by the end of the play. John Proctor was put through a severe test of faith in himself, and came through in the end by finding the good in himself and refusing to cast away his name in signing a confession.