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## The Crucible: Revealing The Theme Of Witch Hunt

In Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*, there are numerous events where innocent people are harmed. Some individuals were hurt and even killed, and others were emotionally damaged. Many people were murdered after several accusations, lies, and acts of jealousy during the witch trials in Salem, Massachusetts in the late 1600's. Abigail Williams, a very attractive, unmarried, eighteen year old orphan, and the main antagonist of the play, can be easily blamed for the hysteria of the play. She is intelligent and cunning, but very revengeful.

The main reason Abigail is at fault for the deaths of those during the witch hunts, is because of all her jealousy. Abigail is an evil and malicious person who wants everything to go her way, regardless of who she harms. Throughout the play, her accusations and lies caused several individuals pain and suffering, which she never really cared about unless it involved John Proctor. Abigail is lustful towards Proctor, which ultimately creates the wildness of the play. Abigail claimed that she loved him, and he loved her back. John tried telling Abigail that their affair is over, but she desperately tried to rekindle their romance and keep it alive. Proctor states, "Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind." (Miller 23). Because of this jealousy, there is much tension between Abigail and Elizabeth Proctor, John's wife. Abigail attempted to kill Elizabeth with a curse because she thought that if Elizabeth is dead, John would marry her. Then, later in the play Abigail accused Elizabeth of witchcraft. Abigail had no problem with sinning and accusing innocent people of witchcraft in order to get Proctor.

However, even though Abigail said she loved John, she might have simply cherished the care and affection he gave her. John cared for her like no one else had. In a way, John seemed somewhat like a father figure towards Abigail. When she was just a child, Abigail witnessed the murder of her parents, "I saw Indians smash my dear parents heads on the pillow next to mine" (Miller 20). With that being said, Abigail grew up without any love or nurturing from a mother or father. Abigail experienced severe trauma after her parents were murdered. This kind of experience can cause someone to act different than normal and cause them to be vengeful towards others. If Abigail had never experienced the murder of her parents, she may have never felt compelled to have the love of an older man.

In addition, Abigail was found breaking rules by dancing in the forest with many girls and drinking a potion, "You drank blood Abby! You didn't tell them that!". (Miller 19). After the girls were caught, Abigail was afraid of losing her life because she knew that if no one else was blamed, she would be accused and killed. There are already rumors going around town of Abigail's affair with Proctor, now on top of that, people are talking about witchcraft. At the start, Abigail only tries to conceal the truth, because if it gets out, Abigail could be severely punished or even hanged for it. When she was first accused, she tries to get all the girls under control and threatened them multiple times, "Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnam's dead sisters. And that is all. And mark this. Let either of you breathe a word, or the edge of a word, about the other things, and I will come to you in the black of some terrible night and I will bring a pointy reckoning that will shudder you." (Miller 20). This is when the hysteria starts and begins to build up. By doing this, Abigail gets the respect and appreciation of the people. This gives her unlimited power over the town which she can use to accuse anyone

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in the town and get away with it. With this power she is able to manipulate the court, by gaining their trust and sympathy. Furthermore, if one of the girls goes against her, such as Mary Warren, she simply accuses them of witchcraft. She uses this power to become the leader as well as the bully just to win Proctor back.

Desire is a basic human quality. You can not control it. Since the start of the play, Abigail Williams was determined to win over Proctor. To do this, Abigail harms and manipulates everybody around her whom gets in her way of reaching her goal, ultimately getting Proctor, which in the end she fails to accomplish. Abigail is the real witch. She causes all the problems, starts and builds up the madness throughout the play, causes arguments between people, and brings about the destruction of the town.