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Dramatic Licenses The Crucible

• “Miller admits in the introduction to the play that he boosted Abigail Williams' age to 17 even though the real girl was only 11, but he never mentions that John Proctor was 60 and Elizabeth, 41, was his third wife” (Burns).

• “Arthur Miller has simplified the legal transactions involved in the trials and assigned to some individuals judicial powers they did not have” (Morgan).

• “Arthur Miller has probably done more than anyone else to remind us we are not so much better. The Crucible, as we all know, was written in the midst of the McCarthy era, and it was intended, I think, to suggest that we were behaving, or allowing our authorized representatives to behave, as badly as the authorities at Salem” (Morgan).

• “Arthur Miller says he tried to convey in it "the essential nature of one of the strangest and most awful chapters in human history." He has succeeded—almost. The Salem episode was both strange and awful. If the author had known more about the history of New England, however, it is possible that he might have found what happened at Salem less strange and more awful” (Morgan).

• “Tituba, is persistently portrayed as having been of Black African descent or of mixed racial heritage, despite always being referred to in the primary sources as "an Indian woman". This presentation of Tituba, known to have been a slave from Barbadoes, began
in the Civil War era, when most slaves from Barbadoes were, in fact, of Black African heritage. Had the real Tituba nearly two centuries earlier actually been African or Black or mulatto, she would have been so described” (Burns).

- “The hysteria did not die out "as more and more people refused to save themselves by giving false confessions," as the epilogue... states. The opposite was true: more and more people were giving false confessions and four women actually pled guilty to the charges. Some historians claim that this was because it became apparent that confession would save one from the noose, but there is evidence that the Court was planning to execute the confessors as well” (Burns).

- “The Putnams' daughter was not named Ruth, but Ann, like her mother, probably changed by Miller so the audience wouldn't confuse the mother and the daughter. In reality, the mother was referred to as "Ann Putnam Senior" and the daughter as "Ann Putnam Junior” (Burns).

- “Abigail tells Betty, "Your Mama's dead and buried!", (Screenplay, Scene 21; play, Act 1, Scene 1). Betty Parris' mother was not dead and was very much alive in 1692. Elizabeth (Eldridge) Parris died four years after the witchcraft trials, on July 14, 1696, at the age of 48” (Burns).

- “Miller has offered his audience an escape they do not deserve. He has allowed them a chance to think that John Proctor asserted the dignity of man against a benighted and outworn creed. Proctor did nothing of the kind. Proctor asserted the dignity of man against man” (Morgan).
• “After evidence or charges were presented, and depositions sworn to before the court, the grand jury would decide whether to indict the person, and if so, on what charges. If indicted, the person's case would be heard by a petit jury, basically to "trial", something like we know it only much faster, to decide guilt or innocence. Guilt in a case of witchcraft in 1692 came with an automatic sentence of death by hanging, as per English law” (Burns).
Works Cited


