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Reflections:

A Student Response Journal for...

The Crucible

by Arthur Miller

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The Crucible

To The Teacher

In order to allow the teacher maximum flexibility in his or her approach, we have grouped the prompts by sections. The teacher may, therefore, assign specific prompts or allow the students to select one or more prompts from each section

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Response Journal

To The Student

Although we may read a novel, play, or work of non-fiction for enjoyment, each time we read one, we are building and practicing important basic reading skills. In our ever-more complex society, in which reading has become more and more crucial for success, this, in itself, is an important reason to spend time reading for enjoyment.

Some readers, however, are able to go beyond basic reading techniques and are able to practice higher thinking skills by reflecting on what they have read and how what they read affects them. It is this act of reflection—that is, stopping to think about what you are reading—that this journal is attempting to encourage.

To aid you, we have included writing prompts for each section; however, if you find something that you wish to respond to in the book more compelling than our prompts, you should write about that. We hope you enjoy reading this book and that the act of responding to what you have read increases this enjoyment.

After you read the indicated sections, choose the questions to which you will respond. Keep in mind that there are no right or wrong answers to these prompts, and there is no one direction in which you must go.

Class Record Sheet

[illegible]

Name_____ Section_____ Date_____

[illegible]

The Crucible

Act I

1. The play begins with Reverend Parris praying. In the Act One “Overture,” Miller writes that Parris “cut a villainous path, and there is very little good to be said for him.” Write a “Help Wanted” ad that expresses the qualities you think are valuable in a spiritual leader. Compare and contrast those qualities with Parris’ description.
2. When Miller describes the two-man patrol, he comments that the people of Salem have a tendency to mind other people’s business. Even now, over three hundred years later, we find ways throughout our country to do the same. One of these ways is with well-concealed cameras that film people in public places. The persons being filmed are generally unaware that they are being watched and filmed. Think about whether you feel this is a good idea or not. Complete the following dialogue you might have with the Mayor of your town about cameras in operation where you live:

You: It’s good of you to see me, Mayor. I’m concerned about the hidden cameras in our town. I feel that...

3. Arthur Miller writes of the differences between the settlers of Jamestown in Virginia and the Puritan settlers of Massachusetts. He states that the main difference in the ability to survive the harsh conditions in 1600’s America was that the Jamestown settlers were individualists looking for financial profit, and the Puritans acted as a community and with a spiritual motivation. Think about your own life. Are you an individualist, or are you a person who is more comfortable as part of a group? Imagine that this question is part of a test requiring you to write an essay about that subject. Write an answer to that essay question in no less than ten complete sentences, giving details of why you feel that way. Begin your answer as follows:

Regarding my preference to be an individualist or a member of a group, I’d have to say...

Response Journal

4. Betty is so sick that she is “inert” and “does not stir on the bed.” Think back to a time when you were sick enough to have to stay in bed. Make a list of ten things you wish someone had done for you during your stay in bed. The items on your list should be in complete sentences and should explain why you would wish for that item. Below is an example:

Example: I wish someone would have bought me a bent straw so that when I drank from the glass I wouldn't get all wet.

5. Abigail threatens Mercy, Betty, and Mary not to “breathe a word, or the edge of a word.” There are many other examples of archaic speech in this play. Make a list of ten sentences in the play you think are definitely archaic. The first one is done for you as an example:
“Aye, sir. He bid me tell you.”
6. Abigail is desperately in love with John Proctor. Write a love letter from Abigail to John using some of the archaic language you listed in question 5 above. Your love letter should be not less than eight complete sentences.
7. John Proctor, because he knows that adultery is wrong, feels guilty about his relationship with Abigail. Write a letter he might have written to her, which tells of his guilty feelings, why he feels the way he does, and what he wants Abigail to do.
8. Tituba's discussion with Hale and Parris is entirely a lie. Write a short story where everything that you write is a lie. You can write about school, home, your friends, your classes, or anything you wish, but it all must be lies.

The Crucible

9. We know that the greatest fear among the characters in *The Crucible* is to be accused of witchcraft. In this first act, Reverend Hale feels that Betty may be “truly in the Devil’s grip.” Abigail and Tituba are also under suspicion. From pages 42 through 48, Betty, Abigail and Tituba try to defend themselves against the accusations that they are tools of the Devil. Complete the following conversation you might have with a classmate who is also reading *The Crucible* about whether it was right for Betty, Abigail, and Tituba to lie to save themselves:

Classmate: There is no reason for them to lie. They just should have kept repeating the truth of what they were doing in the forest until they were believed.

You: You cannot be serious!

10. Many rumors are flying around Salem by the end of Act I. Write a two-paragraph newspaper article reporting on these rumors. Make sure you include the **why, where, when, who, and how** so that readers will understand all that is happening.
11. Act I has introduced you to several main characters: Abigail, Reverend Parris, John Proctor, and Reverend Hale. Each is a good candidate for a character study. Imagine that you are the casting director for a film version of *The Crucible*. Write a detailed description of what these characters in the film would be like and what actor you might want to portray each in the movie. You should include:
- appearance
 - type of voice
 - temperament
 - age
 - faults
 - strong points

Act II

12. Elizabeth and John Proctor's conversation over dinner seems to show that he is trying hard to please her, but he becomes angry when Elizabeth wants him to go to the Court in Salem and tell the truth about Abigail's lying accusations. Imagine you are Elizabeth's best friend. Recount the conversation that Elizabeth might have had with you in which she unburdened herself about her worries and her marriage to John. Begin the conversation as follows:

Elizabeth: Thank Providence that I have you for a friend whom I trust utterly. I just have to tell ...

13. Proctor says, "Lilac is the smell of nightfall, I think." Our sense of smell has a powerful effect on our memories. Make a list of eight different smells you associate with different places, season, events, etc., in your past. Two examples are supplied for you:

chalk dust – the first day of school

salty air – summer at the beach

14. John gets into trouble with his wife when she catches him lying about being alone with Abigail. Write a paragraph of no less than eight sentences about a time when you or someone you know was caught in a lie and how you felt when it happened. It is not necessary to use any real names in your paragraph.
15. John is angry that Mary disobeyed Elizabeth and went to town. Who makes decisions about when you can go out, how late you can stay out, where you go, and who you can go with? What factors determine whether you're allowed to go?

The Crucible

16. Obeying the rules in one's home is a problem even in the present day, so most young people may sympathize with Mary's situation. It should be kept in mind that there are real dangers for young people today, and that people watching over teenagers are primarily trying to keep them safe. Imagine you are the parent of a teenager. Complete the following conversation you might have with your child in which you ask him or her to behave in a certain manner and why you feel that way.

Parent: For starters, I love you. And because I love you, there are some things I'm going to ask you to do...

17. Mary, who works for John and Elizabeth, complains, "I'll not be ordered to bed no more, Mr. Proctor! I am eighteen and a woman." What kinds of rules should Mary—as their employee—have to follow? Make a list of "House Rules" for Mary.
18. Mary is "dissatisfied, uncertain of herself," perhaps because she has so few rights. What rights should teenagers have? Write an editorial that would be published in your school paper discussing your feelings about the current age requirement for driving, voting, and drinking alcohol.
19. Elizabeth says, "I am no Goody Good that sleeps in ditches, nor Osburn, drunk and half-witted." Elizabeth feels that these two women are easier to accuse of witchcraft because of their low social and economic status. Do all people truly have equal rights in a court of law? What seems to give some citizens the edge over the others in court? Even today, many feel that not all people receive equal treatment in courts of law. Complete the following with six sentences each, which give your true thoughts about the subject of equality or inequality under the law:

I think the people in our country who are the most likely to receive unfair treatment under the law are...

I think the people in our country who are most likely not to suffer harshly in our courts are...

Response Journal

20. Reverend Hale visits the Proctors unexpectedly at night, which gives his visit a rather ominous tone. To add to the pressure on the Proctors, they know that Reverend Hale is not making a simple religious visit, but rather one where he is assessing them with regard to the witchcraft accusations swirling around the entire area. Imagine a situation that would be something like that in the present day: A crime at your school is suspected, and one night, the Principal, accompanied by an unknown person, visits your home unexpectedly, but speaks only to your parents. You know you are innocent of any wrongdoing. Write an entry in a journal you might keep which tells of your feelings after the night visitors have left.
21. In the 1600's, when the actual Salem witchcraft trials took place, the piety of people was judged by external religious acts they either did or did not do. John Proctor is made to submit an account of his religious activities to Reverend Hale. List John's activities that show his religious devotion and those that do not. Write your answer in the following format:

POSITIVE THINGS

NEGATIVE THINGS

22. All of the people taken to court in Salem have been accused of a crime though there is no evidence they were even involved. Write the opening statement that a lawyer would use to convince the jury of the guilt or innocence of the accused.
23. Hale says nothing when Herrick and Cheever take Elizabeth away. Copy the lines on this page, inserting, as you go along, dialogue that Reverend Hale might say to try to keep Herrick and Cheever from taking Elizabeth away.
24. As Elizabeth is led away, Hale, "in a fever of guilt and uncertainty, turns from the door to avoid the sight." Imagine that someone you knew to be innocent of a crime that took place in your school were taken away by the police. You do not raise your voice in this person's defense. Write a journal entry for that night; explain what your feelings were about not having defended that person, or spoken up about his or her innocence.

The Crucible

25. We know that Elizabeth Proctor is completely innocent. Of all the characters in this scene, who is most at fault for the accusations against her and her arrest? Complete an accusation you might make against *one person* for causing Elizabeth this harm.

You: What is wrong with you! Elizabeth Proctor is...

26. Mary Warren has had an emotionally draining day. In our times, we know many ways to unwind and relax after a particularly bad day. Some of the beneficial ways might be to go for a long run, to soak in a hot bath, to work out with weights, or to watch a video or DVD. Write an eight-sentence description of the ways you have found to deal with a difficult day. As an alternative exercise, write a diary entry Mary Warren might write before she goes to sleep.
27. Abigail frequently shows signs of madness. Assuming that she could benefit from counseling, write a transcript of a conversation between Abigail and a psychologist. You could begin the transcript with

Therapist: Why don't you start from the beginning, Abigail, and tell me about it.

Abigail: Why are they blaming me? All I did was...

28. The characters in *The Crucible* are very richly drawn. Although they are all quite believable, most do fall fairly short of being likeable. Choose the character from Act I or Act II that you would be least unhappy about having as a member of your family. Write a brief (six sentences) paragraph about why you chose that person.

Response Journal

29. Proctor says to Abigail, “I will prove you for the fraud you are!” Abigail, however, doesn’t think she is a fraud. Have you ever known someone who wouldn’t believe the truth about a person or event? For example, some people believe that man never walked on the moon, despite proof; some people believe in UFO’s even without any real proof. Write about a time when someone wouldn’t listen to reason about an issue, event, or person. Describe what the incident was, how you felt at the time, and what steps you took to try to convince the other person.

Act III

30. Giles says Martha is “so taken with books” and that she has been arrested simply for reading them. Even today, some books can be controversial, and attempts are frequently made to ban some in our schools and libraries. Write an essay about whether you feel that any book should be banned or removed from a place of learning. Be sure to state very clearly your reasons for feeling one way or the other.
31. What kinds of books are more dangerous than others? What makes a book dangerous in your opinion?
32. Francis Nurse is upset because his wife has been condemned as a witch. Write a few slogans that could be used either in a protest to free the innocent men and women condemned of witchcraft or to help convict them. Example: BURN THE ACCUSED!
33. As you can see from the description of how the Salem trial is proceeding, a judge, but no jury, will decide the fate of the girls accused of witchcraft. Think about the way in which most criminal trials are conducted in the present time. Imagine that you were accused of a serious crime. Write a paragraph of at least eight sentences about which kind of trial you would rather have: one where your guilt or innocence would be decided by a judge alone, or one where a jury would make that decision. Be sure to give clear reasons for your choice.

The Crucible

34. Mary Warren is afraid to tell the truth about her friends. Most people feel a natural reluctance to inform on others accused of wrongdoing. Suppose someone you know worked for the Proctors, as Mary Warren does. This person is called to testify about Elizabeth's guilt or innocence. Complete the following conversation you might have about what to say:

Person: I'm so confused and afraid. Goody Proctor has been so good to me. I don't know what to do.

You: This is such a terrible thing for you. That Court should never be allowed to make you testify. But think about this...

35. Under what circumstances do you think it is permissible or even necessary to inform on your friends? Make a list of situations under which you might go against friendship and tell the authorities that a friend of yours is guilty of something. If you feel that nothing would make you do this, explain why in a paragraph.
36. Danforth says, "The pure in heart need no lawyer." That is a lofty ideal that, in reality, has been proven false at times. People have frequently been condemned unjustly many times in history. Below are the names of five people who were convicted, imprisoned, or executed for supposed actions against the ruling society. Choose one of those names to research. Then write a one-page report on that person's supposed crimes and the punishment.

- Galileo
- Joan of Arc
- Nelson Mandela
- Jesus Christ
- Socrates

Response Journal

37. Giles faces contempt charges for refusing to give the name of his informant. What would you have done in this situation? Write your answer in no less than six complete sentences, giving reasons for your choice of action.
38. Parris says that Proctor has been trying to ruin his name since he came to Salem. Shakespeare wrote, “Good name in man and woman,... Is the immediate jewel of their souls.” Think about how much your good name, your reputation, means to you. Complete the following conversation you might have with a friend who has told you that he or she does not care a bit what people think of him or her:
- You:** You don’t want to care about what people think? In my opinion, that’s...
39. Proctor claims that Abigail is no child. The subject of when and under what circumstances a young person should be considered a “child” or an “adult” is a difficult one. Suppose a person in his or her forties is brought to trial for a crime committed at age fifteen. A defense lawyer would want the trial to be held in juvenile which would mean different trial rules. Write an editorial for your school newspaper in which you state your opinion about this subject and why you feel the way you do.
40. When Mary Warren realizes that she is in serious trouble, she changes her story and blames Proctor as “the Devil’s man.” Have you ever been blamed for something that you didn’t do? How did you react? Write an email to the person who accused you explaining your side of the story.

The Crucible

Act IV

41. A jail in Salem, Massachusetts in the 1600's was dark, wet, cold, and usually rat-infested. Since those times, the conditions inside a prison have steadily improved. Opinion is divided as to whether our present-day prisons should be as comfortable as they are (television sets, overnight visits of spouses, special meals, etc.). Given the fact that prisons are a realistic necessity, make a list of what you feel an ideal prison should be like. Your list should include the things the prison should not have as well as the things it should have. Follow the format below:

PRISON SHOULD HAVE

PRISON SHOULD NOT HAVE

42. Danforth warns Herrick, "Beware hard drink." Considering that nearly half of the prison population of this country is there because of either alcohol or drugs, Danforth was right in his warning. Write a public service announcement for television that would warn people of the risks they run when they drink alcohol.
43. Hale returns with the intention of convincing others to confess to witchcraft, despite knowing that they are innocent. You have probably seen this plea made by lawyers on television crime programs many times. If you were accused of a serious crime that you did not commit and were offered a lighter sentence if you confessed, would you confess? In a short paragraph, explain why you would or would not confess to a crime you did not commit.
44. Abigail has stolen thirty-one pounds from Parris. Make a "Wanted Poster" for Abigail. Include a description of her, why she's wanted, where she might be headed, and any other appropriate information.
45. John Proctor, Rebecca Nurse, and Martha Corey are scheduled to hang. Choose one of these characters and write his or her will. You can include personality traits as well as material things. For example, Rebecca might will her kindness and compassion to the children of Salem.

Response Journal

46. Hales says, “Goody Proctor, your husband is marked to hang this morning.” If you knew you were going to die in 24 hours, how would you live your last moments and days? What would you regret and be most proud of in your life?
47. Reverend Hale tells Elizabeth, “Beware Goody Proctor—cleave to no faith when faith brings blood.” The terrorists who killed nearly 3,000 people on September 11, 2001, were partially motivated by what they felt are religious beliefs. Many religions, past and present, have been guilty of bloodshed. Write a letter the Editor of an imaginary newspaper explaining your views on this subject. Begin your letter as follows:

To the Editor:

Those who kill others using religious beliefs as an excuse...

48. The description of the death of Giles is chilling. He has declined to plead either innocent or guilty to the charges against him. For this he was “pressed” to death by stones piled on his chest, while he called bravely, “More weight.” Write four additional headlines for a newspaper editorial that supports the witch trials and four headlines that oppose this type of “justice.” We have done one for you as an example.

SUPPORT

No More Witches in Salem

OPPOSE

The Bravery of a Wronged Man

The Crucible

49. After tearing up and crumpling his confession, Proctor says, “I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor.” We should all consider the good things about ourselves more often. Here is your chance. List at least five good things about yourself and at least five good things that you have done in the past. Follow the format below:

SOME GOOD THINGS ABOUT ME

SOME GOOD THINGS I’VE DONE

50. Though the play ends tragically, “the new sun is pouring in upon [Elizabeth’s] face.” Do you believe that every tragedy can have positive results? Why or why not? Defend your opinion in a short paragraph.
51. As John Proctor, write a letter to your unborn child, explaining your decision to hang for a crime you did not commit.
52. A crucible is a vessel used for melting substances using high heat. It is also defined as a “severe test.” The United States has been called “God’s crucible” and a “melting pot.” How are these definitions and uses of “crucible” true in *The Crucible*?

WRAP UP

53. The ending of this play could be considered tragic. Can you think of a better ending, or do you think this is a good ending because it is appropriate?
54. What do you think of the title of the story? Did you understand its significance? Can you come up with a better title?
55. Write a letter to a friend telling why you did or did not like *The Crucible*.
56. If you were to tell a friend what you think the message of this novel is, what would it be?
57. Write a list of three things you liked best, and three things you liked least about *The Crucible*?

Test

I. Multiple Choice

1. Proctor does not like Reverend Parris because he thinks that Parris
 - A. is a lecher.
 - B. is too superstitious.
 - C. is too concerned with money and expensive items for the church.
 - D. spends too much time talking hell-fire and damnation.
 - E. Both C and D.

2. At the opening of the play, Tituba confesses to witchcraft because
 - A. she is frightened for her life.
 - B. she plans to get even with Reverend Parris.
 - C. she does not understand what it is that Reverend Hale has asked her.
 - D. she is trying to save the girls.
 - E. Both B and D.

3. Elizabeth Proctor is not hanged because
 - A. the judges wish to use her to get her husband to confess.
 - B. she confesses that she was a witch.
 - C. the judges doubt Abigail's story.
 - D. she is pregnant.
 - E. John saves her.

4. After confessing to witchcraft, John Proctor
 - A. refuses to give the names of others he saw with witches.
 - B. laughs uncontrollably as he hands them his signed confession.
 - C. accuses Giles Corey of also being a witch.
 - D. implicates Reverend Parris in a conspiracy to overturn the court.
 - E. begs forgiveness for having seduced Abigail.

Response Journal

5. John Proctor tries to rationalize his confession by saying
 - A. he is innocent but wants to live.
 - B. he has a family to support.
 - C. that many people are confessing to save their lives, so he will also.
 - D. that two wrongs do not make a right in this instance.
 - E. he is a sinner, and his death as a heroic figure would be a fraud.

 6. Who is described as “strikingly beautiful...with an endless capacity for dissembling”?
 - A. Elizabeth
 - B. Abigail
 - C. Mary
 - D. Betty
 - E. Tituba

 7. By the end of the play, Giles Corey
 - A. is hanged.
 - B. is pressed to death.
 - C. confesses to witchcraft.
 - D. changes from a supporter to an opponent of the trials.
 - E. Both C and D.

 8. It is a characteristic of Abigail, when attacked,
 - A. to whine and complain.
 - B. to blame others for the problem.
 - C. to attack her attackers or someone else.
 - D. to cry and to plead innocence.
 - E. Both A and D.

 9. Putnam is accused of
 - A. trying to over throw the court.
 - B. having his daughter denounce people so he can get their land.
 - C. causing the death of nine infants.
 - D. desiring to get Reverend Parris removed from his post.
 - E. giving false testimony to the court.
-

The Crucible

10. Reverend Hale's authority is said
- A. to rest on all the books he has studied.
 - B. to come as a divine right from the King.
 - C. to be a result of common sense and a sharp intellect.
 - D. to be contested by Reverend Parris.
 - E. Both A and C.
11. Abby denounces Elizabeth because
- A. she truly believes that Elizabeth is evil.
 - B. Elizabeth has accused her of thievery.
 - C. Elizabeth has been talking about her behind her back
 - D. Abby wants to get rid of Elizabeth so she can have John.
 - E. Elizabeth has become a threat to her own safety.
12. In looking for a relevance between this play and the year 1952, the trials in the play may be compared to
- A. the communist menace.
 - B. the House Un-American Activities Committee hearings.
 - C. the Spanish Inquisition.
 - D. The Scopes Monkey Trial.
 - E. Both B and D.
13. A needle got in the poppet's belly because
- A. Abigail put it there to get Elizabeth into trouble.
 - B. Elizabeth put it there to cause pain in Abigail.
 - C. Elizabeth put it there quite innocently.
 - D. Mary Warren left it there for safekeeping after she had finished making the poppet.
 - E. Giles Corey had put it there as a joke on his wife, and it backfired.
14. By Act IV, Reverend Parris is worried because
- A. he fears that the rebellion in Andover may spread.
 - B. he suspects that his daughter is lying.
 - C. Abigail has disappeared and may have been the victim of foul play.
 - D. he is convinced that he has lost his position.
 - E. John Proctor has threatened to get him.

Response Journal

15. Abigail gets Mary Warren to rejoin her and the girls in the denunciation-
by
- A. threatening to tell the judge that Mary danced naked in the forest.
 - B. threatening her with physical harm.
 - C. frightening Mary after Abigail pretends that Mary is sending out evil spirits to harm her.
 - D. attacking John Proctor.
 - E. Both B and A.

II. Identify the speaker of the following quotes:

16. "God is dead!"
- A. John Proctor
 - B. Elizabeth Proctor
 - C. Abigail
 - D. Reverend Hale
 - E. Gov. Danforth
17. "I'll not be ordered to bed no more, Mr. Proctor. I am eighteen and a woman,..."
- A. Elizabeth
 - B. Abigail
 - C. Mary Warren
 - D. Tituba
 - E. Mercy Lewis
18. "No uncorrupted man may fear this court, Mr. Hale. None."
- A. John Proctor
 - B. Governor Danforth
 - C. Reverend Parris
 - D. Giles Corey
 - E. Thomas Putnam

The Crucible

19. "I will not give you no name. I mentioned my wife's name once and I'll burn in hell long enough for that. I stand mute."
- A. John Proctor
 - B. Thomas Putnam
 - C. Reverend Hale
 - D. Giles Corey
 - E. Reverend Parris
20. "Spare me. You forget nothing and forgive nothing. Learn charity woman."
- A. John Proctor
 - B. Thomas Putnam
 - C. Giles Corey
 - D. Reverend Parris
 - E. Gov. Danforth

Test
Student Answer Sheet

Name: _____

1. _____

11. _____

2. _____

12. _____

3. _____

13. _____

4. _____

14. _____

5. _____

15. _____

6. _____

16. _____

7. _____

17. _____

8. _____

18. _____

9. _____

19. _____

10. _____

20. _____

Response Journal

An Annotated Bibliography on Response Journals

Response Journals: Inviting Students to Think and Write Literature

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The Crucible

**Test
Answer Key**

- | | |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1. <u>E</u> | 11. <u>D</u> |
| 2. <u>A</u> | 12. <u>B</u> |
| 3. <u>D</u> | 13. <u>D</u> |
| 4. <u>A</u> | 14. <u>A</u> |
| 5. <u>E</u> | 15. <u>D</u> |
| 6. <u>B</u> | 16. <u>A</u> |
| 7. <u>B</u> | 17. <u>C</u> |
| 8. <u>C</u> | 18. <u>B</u> |
| 9. <u>B</u> | 19. <u>D</u> |
| 10. <u>A</u> | 20. <u>A</u> |

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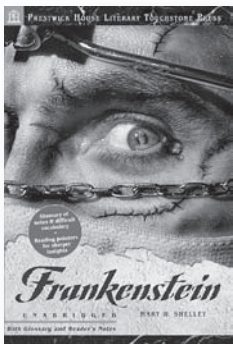
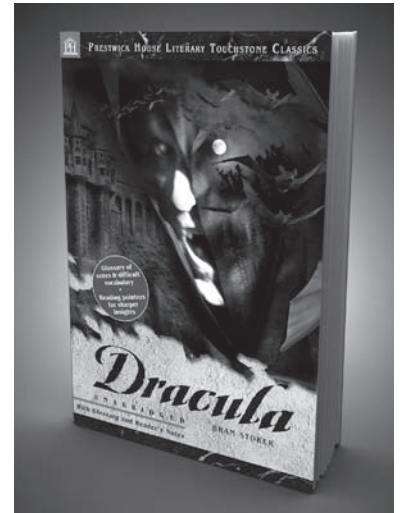
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