

The Crucible by Arthur Miller

Act 1

*The play is set in Salem, Massachusetts, 1692; the government is a theocracy—rule by God through religious officials. Abigail is a young girl who lives with her Uncle and cousin in the village. In this scene she is with her unconscious cousin Betty and other girls. They have been caught dancing in the woods at night.*

ABIGAIL:

Uncle, the rumour of witchcraft is all about; I think you'd best go down and deny it yourself. The parlour's packed with people, sir. I'll sit with her.

Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it - and I'll be whipped if I must be. But they're speaking of witchcraft. Betty's not witched. We did dance, uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there's the whole of it. I would never hurt Betty. I love her dearly.

But we never conjured spirits! It were sport Uncle. A dress? No one was naked! You mistake yourself, uncle! There is nothin' more. I swear it Uncle. My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!

Uncle you've prayed since midnight. Why don't you go down and I'll sit with her.

Betty? Now stop this! Betty? Sit up now!

[Enter Mercy & Mary} Mercy. Mary. Listen, now: if they be questioning us, tell them we danced- I told him as much already. He knows Tituba conjured Ruth's sisters to come out of the grave. He saw you naked.

What ails you Betty? I talked to your papa and told him everything, he know now, he knows everything we - Betty, you never say that again! You will never - Shut it! Now shut it!

Now look you. All of you. We danced. And Tituba conjured Ruth Putnum'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. And you know I can do it: I saw Indians smash my dear parents' heads on the pillow next to mine, and I have seen some reddish work done at night, and I can make you wish you had never seen the sun go down!