

*inactive, and in effect, not present in the scene. However, entrances may be made directly from offstage if preferred. As PARRIS prays, TITUBA appears behind the light curtain. She is his Negro slave, in her fifties. She hesitates before entering, then steps into the acting area, approaches her master, glancing over his back at the child on the bed.*

TITUBA My Betty be hearty soon?

PARRIS Out of here!

TITUBA My Betty not goin' die . . .

PARRIS Out of my sight! Out of my . . . (TITUBA exits hurriedly. He kneels again. He is overcome with sobs.) Oh, my God! God help me! (Quaking with a bodyful of fear, and uttering undecipherable syllables of sobs.) Betty. Child. Dear child. Will you wake, will you open up your eyes! Betty, little one . . . (ABIGAIL WILLIAMS, 17, enters. A strikingly beautiful girl, an orphan, with an endless capacity for dissembling. Now she is all worry and apprehension and propriety.)

ABIGAIL Uncle? Susanna Wallcott's here from Doctor Griggs.

PARRIS Oh? The doctor. (Rising.) Let her come, let her come.

ABIGAIL Come in, Susanna. (SUSANNA WALLCOTT, a little younger than ABIGAIL, enters.)

PARRIS What does the doctor say, child?

SUSANNA Dr. Griggs he bid me come and tell you, Reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.

PARRIS Then he must search on.

SUSANNA Aye, sir, he have been searchin' his books since he left you, sir, but he bid me tell you,

that you might look to unnatural things for the cause of it.

PARRIS No – no. There be no unnatural causes here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mister Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine, and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be none.

SUSANNA Aye, sir. He bid me tell you.

ABIGAIL Speak nothin' of it in the village, Susanna.

PARRIS Go directly home and speak nothin' of unnatural causes.

SUSANNA Aye, sir. I pray for her. (Goes out.)

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

PARRIS And what shall I say to them? That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?!

ABIGAIL Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it. But they're speakin' of witchcraft; Betty's not witched.

PARRIS Abigail, I cannot go before the congregation when I know you have not opened with me. What did you do with her in the forest?

ABIGAIL 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.

PARRIS Child. Sit you down.

ABIGAIL I would never hurt Betty, I love her dearly, I . . .