

Contracting with the Devil

March 1, 1692. Sarah Good, Sarah Osborne and Tituba (Reverend Parris's slave) are brought to trial at the Salem meetinghouse.

The marshal¹ indicated that the prisoners were to stand on a table a little to one side of the pulpit. Good scrambled up² by herself, Osburne had to be lifted up, and Tituba climbed up unaided. [...]

Judge Hathorne said, "We will open with prayer, Mr. Parris."

5 Tituba tried to follow the master's prayer. [...] He said that many persons in several families of this little village had been vexed and tortured in body and soul by witchcraft and diabolical operations. When Tituba heard the word "witchcraft," she began to listen closely and carefully. "The Devil hath³ been raised amongst us," he said, and his voice increased in volume, "and the Devil's rage is vehement and terrible. We are here witnesses to the sin of witchcraft which is the
10 work of the Devil. We all know that the unrepentant witches who refuse to confess their guilt, refuse to admit their sin, must die. We also know that those taken in the sin⁴ of witchcraft who confess their sin and repent, and thoroughly amend their ways and their doings, will be pardoned and live. We ask Thy blessing on this hearing. May the Lord be praised. Amen."
[...]

¹ Officer of law

² Climbed using her hands and feet

³ Has

⁴ Le péché

15 Marshal Herrick [...] indicated that Goody Good was to take her place alone, standing on the minister's⁵ chair.

[...] When she stood up on the chair and the girls saw her, they stiffened⁶ and started to shriek⁷.

Tituba felt Osburne tremble at the sound. When Judge Hathorne began to question Goody Good, the girls were silent.

20 Question: "Sarah Good, what evil spirit have you familiarity with?"

Answer: "None."

Question: "Have you made no contract with the Devil?"

Answer: "No."

Question: "Why do you hurt these children?"

25 Answer: "I do not hurt them. I scorn⁸ it." [...]

At one point, Judge Hathorne stopped questioning her to ask the girls if this was one of the persons who had tormented them. By way of reply, they fell to the floor, screaming and crying out that she was choking them and pinching them. Tituba, who had hardly dared glance in their direction, now saw that they were all there: Abigail Williams, Anne Putnam, Mercy Lewis, Mary

30 Warren, Elizabeth Booth, Sarah Churchill, Mary Walcott, Susana Cheldon, and Elizabeth

Hubbard with her knitting. Betsey Parris was not among them.

Tituba of Salem Village, Ann Petry, 1991

⁵ Pasteur

⁶ Became tense

⁷ Scream

⁸ Despise, reject