

KEY POINTS:

- The setting is Salem, Massachusetts – USA, 1692
- Salem is a small country (rural) community – everybody knows everybody else's business.
- The whole area is a deeply religious one. The dominant religion is Christianity, but a very strict form run by PURITANS.
- PURITANS believed in a hard and simple life; fun and festivals were considered ungodly and sinful.
- The church had a lot of power and could punish people for activities they considered sinful – people often lived in fear of the church, their reputations could be ruined easily.

KEY WORDS TO NOTE:

- **PURITAN** – (see above)
- **ABOMINATION** – deeply offensive (often in a religious sense)
- **GOODY** – used as a title (like Mrs) to describe the female head of a household.
- **GOSSIP** – rumours used to discredit a person.
- **REPUTATION** – the general opinion that others have of you.
- **INTEGRITY** – a person's morals (honesty, faithfulness...) which stay unchanged.

KEY EVENTS/CHARACTERS TO NOTE:

- REVEREND PARRIS is concerned. His young daughter BETTY lies in bed with a fever and unable to wake up.
- RUMOURS are spreading that she is possessed by WITCHCRAFT.
- PARRIS is a man in his mid forties. He is new to the job of reverend in Salem and knows that many people do not like him.
- PARRIS is worried that if rumour spreads about BETTY being involved in WITCHCRAFT, he will lose his job! He has sent for a neighbouring reverend to prove the rumours wrong.
- ABIGAIL WILLIAMS is PARRIS' niece. She is a "strikingly beautiful" and seventeen year old orphan.
- PARRIS caught ABIGAIL, BETTY his slave TITUBA and other young ladies from Salem in the forest dancing, possibly naked. He is very worried that others will think his children are involved in what looks like WITCHCRAFT.
- ABIGAIL denies practicing WITCHCRAFT, she admits to dancing and is willing to be punished for doing this.
- PARRIS mentions that her REPUTATION may not be that good. There are rumours that she had an affair with the husband of GOODY PROCTOR, a woman she once worked for.