

THE GOOD JOHN PROCTOR

BY
TALENE
MONAHAN



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The Good John Proctor and Becky Nurse of Salem are sponsored in part by **Jim DeRentis, The Providence Real Estate Guy, with Residential Properties**

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Created by JB Benzinger, Am Wyckoff, and the Education Department

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Theater Audience Etiquette & Discussion

Please read carefully and go over with your classes before the show

TEACHERS

Speaking to your students about theater etiquette is ESSENTIAL. Students should be aware that this is a live performance and that they should not talk during the show. If you do nothing else to prepare your students to see the play, please take some time to talk to them about theater etiquette to help the students better appreciate their experience. It will enhance their enjoyment of the show and allow other audience members to enjoy the experience. The questions below can help guide the discussions. Thank you for your help and enjoy the show!

ETIQUETTE

What is the role of the audience in a live performance? How is it different from seeing a film? Why is it important not to chew gum or eat popcorn at a live theater performance? Why shouldn't you talk? What can happen in live theater that cannot happen in cinema?

Reiterate that students may not talk during the performance. Please make sure all cell phones and alarms are turned off. Recording devices and cameras are strictly prohibited. If there is a disturbance, they will be asked to leave, and the class may not be invited back to the theater. Students may not leave the building during intermission.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS BEFORE SEEING THE SHOW AT TRINITY REP

What are the differences between live theater and cinema? (Two-dimensional vs. three-dimensional; larger than life on the screen vs. life-size; recorded vs. live, etc.) Discuss the nature of film as mass-produced, versus the one-time only nature of live performances. Talk about original art works vs. posters. Which do they feel is more valuable? Why? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a play? What is the responsibility of an audience when watching a Shakespeare play?

Observation #1

When you get into the theater, look around. What do you see? Observe the lighting instruments around the room and on the ceiling. Look at the set. Does it look realistic or abstract? Try to guess how the set will be used during the show

Observation #2

Discuss the elements that go into producing a live performance: The lights, set, props, costumes, and stage direction. All the people involved in the "behind-the-scenes" elements of the theater are working backstage as the play unfolds before the students' eyes. Tell them to be aware of this as they watch the show. Observe the lighting cues. How do special effects work? How do the actors change costumes so fast?

Pay attention to when you're excited about something on-stage. What excited you? Pay attention to when you're bored. Why were you bored? What would you have done differently to make the play more interesting? Actors in a live performance are very attuned to the audience and are interested in the students' reactions to the play. Ask the students to write letters to the actors about the characters they played and to ask questions of the actors. Send these letters to: Trinity Repertory Company, c/o Education, 201 Washington St., Providence, RI 02903 or email to: education@trinityrep.com.

USING THIS STUDY GUIDE IN YOUR CLASSROOM

A Letter from the Education Department

Welcome to Trinity Rep and the 57th season of Project Discovery! The education staff at Trinity Rep had a lot of fun preparing this study guide and hope that the activities included will help you incorporate the play into your academic study. It is also structured to help you to introduce performance into your classroom through the following elements:

- Community Building in Your Classroom
- Inspiration and Background on the Artist
- Entering and Comprehending Text
- Creating Text for Performance
- Performing in Your Class
- Reflecting on Your Performance

Trinity Rep's Project Discovery student matinees help high school students in the following common core areas (for more information on the National Core Arts Standards, visit <http://nationalartsstandards.org/>):

- Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions (one-on-one, in groups, and teacher-led) with diverse partners on grades 9-10 topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively (CCS. ELA-LITERACY.SL.9-10.1)
- Analyze how complex characters (e.g., those with multiple or conflicting motivations) develop over the course of a text, interact with other characters, and advance the plot or develop the theme (CCSS. RL.910.3)
- Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in the text, including figurative and connotative meanings; analyze the cumulative impact of specific word choices on meaning and tone (CCSS. RL.9-10.44)
- Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas, and personal beliefs impact a drama/ theatre work (TH: Cn10.1.1.)
- Analyze and compare artistic choices developed from personal experiences in multiple drama/ theatre works (TH: Re8.1.1.)
- Respond to what is seen, felt, and heard in a drama/ theatre work to develop criteria for artistic choices (TH: Re7.1.1.)
- Evaluate and analyze problems and situations in a drama/ theatre work from an audience perspective (TH: Re9.1.1.)

Enjoy the show!

THE GOOD JOHN PROCTOR

By **Talene Monahan** Directed by **Kimberly Senior**
Assistant Directed by **Jessie March+** Stage Managed by **Kelsey Emry***
Assistant Stage Managed by **Olivia Tellier***

2023–24 Season at the **Lederer Theater Center** under the direction of
Curt Columbus **Kate Liberman**
Artistic Director Executive Director

THE ARTISTIC TEAM

Set Design by **Michael McGarty**
Costume Design by **Shahrazad Mazaheri**
Lighting Design by **Dawn Chiang**

Sound Design by **Joanna Lynne Staub**
Choreography and Intimacy Design
by **Shura Baryshnikov**
Fight Choreography by **Mark Rose**

THE CAST

Abigail Williams **Deanna Myers***
Betty Parris **Rebecca-Anne Whittaker***
Mercy Lewis **Lori Vega***
Mary Warren **Rachael Warren*‡**

UNDERSTUDIES:

Understudies never substitute for a listed player unless a specific announcement is made at the time of performance.

Betty Parris/Mary Warren **Mary Mullane**
Abigail Williams/Mercy Lewis **Alexa Cadete**

ADDITIONAL DUTIES:

Dance Captain **Deanna Myers**
Fight Captain **Rachael Warren**

THE GOOD JOHN PROCTOR received its World Premiere Production in February 2023 at THE CONNELLY THEATER in New York, New York produced by Bedlam Theatre Company: Eric Tucker (Artistic Director), Thomas Kapusta (Managing Director).

Supporting Sponsor
JAMES DERENTIS, THE PROVIDENCE REAL ESTATE GUY

Trinity Rep's 60th Season is sponsored by **RISCA**
Rhode Island State Council On The Arts

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This production is made possible in part by a grant from the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, through an appropriation by the Rhode Island General Assembly, a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and private funders.

* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.

‡ Trinity Rep Resident Company member
+ Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Program student



THE ARTISTIC TEAM

TALENE MONAHON
Playwright, The Good John Proctor
Off-Broadway: *The Good John Proctor* (Bedlam Theater), *Jane Anger* (New Ohio; 2022 Off-Broadway Alliance Best New Play Nominee), *How to Load a Musket* (Less than Rent; TheaterMania's "The 10 Best Theater Productions of 2020"), and *Frankie & Will* (MCC). **Regional:** *Jane Anger* (Shakespeare Theater of D.C.), *All in Good Fun* (Peterborough Players). **Education:** BA Senior Fellow, Dartmouth College. Talene Monahan is a Brooklyn-based playwright and actor of Armenian and Irish descent, originally from Belmont, Massachusetts. She was featured in the New York Times 2023 list of "Rising Theater Stars."

SARAH RUHL
Playwright, Becky Nurse of Salem
Sarah Ruhl's plays include *In the Next Room: or the vibrator play*, *The Clean House*, *Passion Play*, *Dead Man's Cell Phone*, *Melancholy Play*, *For Peter Pan on her 70th Birthday*, *The Oldest Boy*, *Stage Kiss*, *Dear Elizabeth*, *Eurydice*, *How to Transcend a Happy Marriage*, *Orlando*, *Late: a cowboy song*, and a translation of *Three Sisters*. She has been a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist and a Tony Award nominee. Her plays have been produced on and off Broadway, around the country, and internationally, where they have been translated into over fifteen languages. Originally from Chicago, Ms. Ruhl received her MFA from Brown University, where she studied with Paula Vogel. She has received the Steinberg Award, the Samuel French Award, the Susan Smith Blackburn Award, the Whiting Award, the Lily Award, a PEN Award for mid-career playwrights, and the MacArthur Award. You can read more about her work on www.SarahRuhlplaywright.com. Her new book *100 Essays I Don't Have Time to Write* was a *New York Times* notable book of the year, and she most recently published *Letters from Max* with Max Ritvo. She teaches at the Yale School of Drama, and she lives in Brooklyn with her family.

KIMBERLY SENIOR *she/her*
Director, The Good John Proctor
Trinity Rep: Debut. **Brown/Trinity Rep:** *We Go Round and Round*. **Broadway:** *Disgraced*. **Off-Broadway:** *Bella Bella*, *The Niceties*, Manhattan Theatre Club; *The Who & The What*, *Disgraced*, LCT3; *Discord*, Primary Stages; *Engagements*, Second Stage; *Stories of a Lifetime*, *Certain Women of an Age*, *Sakina's Restaurant*, Audible Theater. **Regional:** *Support Group for Men*, *Disgraced*, *Rapture*, *Blister*, *Burn*, Goodman Theatre; *Our Daughters*, *Like Pillars*, *Sweat*, *The Niceties*, Huntington Theatre Company; *Byhalia*, *MS*, The Kennedy Center; *The Niceties*, *Sex with Strangers*, Geffen Playhouse; *Disgraced*, Mark Taper Forum, Berkeley Repertory Theatre, Seattle Repertory Theatre; *The Who & The What*, La Jolla Playhouse; *Buried Child*, *The Scene*, *Marjorie Prime*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Letters*, Writers Theatre; *Want*, *The North Plan* Steppenwolf; among others. **Film/TV:** *Chris Geth-*

ard: Career Suicide (HBO). **Audio:** *The Wastelands* (Marvel/Apple/Sirius), *Crowded Hours* (Believe Entertainment/Audible), *Ghostwriter* (C13/Best Case). **Other:** Kimberly is a member of SDC and proud mother of Noah (17) and Delaney (15). KimberlySenior.net

JESSIE MARCH+ *she/her*
Assistant Director, The Good John Proctor
Trinity Rep: Debut. **Other Theaters:** As an actor: *The Humans*, *Silhouette of a Silhouette*, *Spring Awakening*, *Not I*, *10,000 Things*, Wilbury Theatre Group; *The Squirrels*, *Everybody*, Burbage Theatre Company; *As You Like It*, Saratoga Shakespeare Company. **Other:** Jessie is so excited to begin her journey with the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Acting cohort this year. She holds a Bachelor of Science from Skidmore College and simply loves to learn! So much gratitude to this cast, crew, and team.

CURT COLUMBUS *he/him/her*
Director, Becky Nurse of Salem
Curt has been Trinity Rep's artistic director since 2006. **Directing:** *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Macbeth*, *Ragtime*, *Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage*, *Middletown*, *Vanya and Sonia and Masha and Spike*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *His Girl Friday*, *Camelot*, *Cabaret*, *Blithe Spirit*, *A Christmas Carol*, *Cherry Orchard*, and the world premieres of *The Completely Fictional—Utterly True—Final Strange Tale of Edgar Allen Poe* and *Social Creatures*. **Playwriting and Translations:** *Paris by Night*, *The Dreams of Antigone*, *Sparrow Grass*, *Cherry Orchard*, *Ivanov*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Like Sheep to Water* (*Fuente Ovejuna*). **Other:** Curt lives in Providence, Rhode Island with his husband, Nate Watson.

SHURA BARYSHNIKOV* *she/her*
Choreography and Intimacy Designer
Trinity Rep: *The Inferior Sex*, *Fuente Ovejuna*, *A Christmas Carol* (2012, 2013, 2015, 2022), *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Middletown*, *Veronica Meadows*, *Social Creatures*, *The Completely Fictional – Utterly True – Final Strange Tale of Edgar Allan Poe* **Brown/Trinity Rep:** *In the Next Room*, *Stone Cold Dead Serious*, *Rhinoceros*, *Tango* **Other Theaters:** *Norma*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, Boston Lyric Opera; *Dark Room*, Bridge Repertory Theatre; *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Cabaret*, Wilbury Theatre Group; *The Forgetting Curve*, Bridge Repertory Theatre & Theatrum Mundi Productions. **Film/Television:** Choreographer/Director, *Svadda*, Boston Lyric Opera. **Other:** Shura works broadly across dance, theater, and opera, with recent choreographic commissions and directing projects for FirstWorks, Khambatta Dance Company, Urbanity Dance, and Emmanuel Music. She serves as Head of Physical Theater/Assistant Professor of the Practice for the Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Programs and is a member of Actors' Equity Association and the American Guild of Musical Artists. More at www.shurabaryshnikov.com

MARK ROSE *he/him*
Fight Choreographer
Trinity Rep: *Sweeney Todd*, *A Tale of Two Cities*, *Sueño*, *A Christmas Carol* (2022). **Other Credits:** *Cabaret*, *Camelot*, *Into The Breeches*, *Lifespan of a Fact*, *Rhinoceros*, *The Motherf**ker with the Hat*,

Romeo & Juliet, Asolo Rep; *The Big Test Stunt Show*, Legoland New York; *Frontier Follies Stunt Show* (2018-19), Idlewild & SoakZone Theme Park; *The Kings Tournament* (2017-present), *Misfits of Fortune Pirate Show* (2021-present), Sparta NJ Renaissance Faire. **Other:** Mark is an actor and stuntman whose work has recently been seen at Cleveland Playhouse and Asolo Rep, as well as on TV in shows like *Gotham*, *The Blacklist*, *Quantico*, *South Beach Tow*, and more. You can see more at www.mark-rose.com or on Instagram: @mark.rose.stunts

MICHAEL MCGARTY *he/him*
Set Designer
2023 is the beginning of Mr. McGarty's 40th season in association with Trinity Rep. In that time, he has designed upwards of 50 productions. He has designed extensively at regional theaters throughout the U.S., including The Public Theater, Seattle Rep, The Old Globe, and the Dallas Theater Center. He has designed on Broadway and the West End of London, as well as opera in Europe and America. McGarty is an adjunct professor of design at the Rhode Island School of Design.

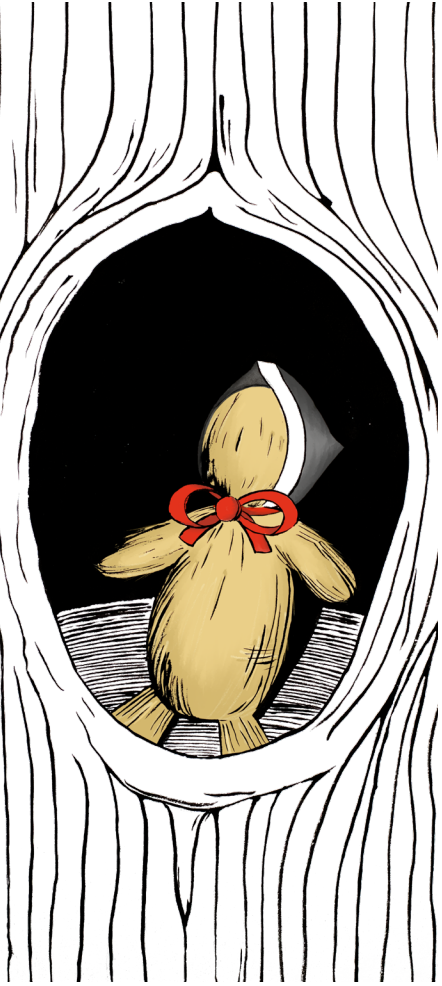
SHAHZRAD MAZAHERI *she/her*
Costume Designer
Trinity Rep: *Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street*, *Sueño*. **Regional:** *English*, Berkeley Repertory Theatre; *Carmela*, *Full of Wishes*, Children's Theatre Company; *LIZZIE: The Rock Musical*. Theatre Three; *La Gringa*, American Stage Theatre Company; *He's Born*, *He's Borne*, Undermain Theatre; *Baba*, Amphibian Stage. **Education:** MFA, Southern Methodist University. www.shahrzadmazaheri.com

DAWN CHIANG *she/her*
Lighting Designer
Trinity Rep: *Sweeney Todd*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *black odyssey*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *A Christmas Carol* (2017), *The Mountaintop*. **Broadway:** *Zoot Suit*, co-design for *Tango Pasion*; associate design: *Show Boat*, *La Cage aux Folles*. **Opera:** Resident lighting designer, New York City Opera. **Off-Broadway:** *Little Girl Blue*, *Robin and Me*; Manhattan Theatre Club, Roundabout Theatre, the first two seasons of the *Encores!* (City Center/New York). **Regional:** Oregon Shakespeare Festival, Mark Taper Forum, Denver Center Theatre Company, South Coast Repertory, Guthrie Theater, Syracuse Stage, Arena Stage. **Awards:** Two Drama-Logue awards, two Lighting Designer of the Year awards (Syracuse Area Live Theatre). **Nominations:** American Theatre Wing/Maharam Design Award, Los Angeles Drama Critics' Award and San Francisco Bay Area Drama Critics' Award. **Other:** Mentor for Theater Development Fund's "Wendy Wasserstein Project" theater outreach program for New York City high school students. www.linkedin.com/in/dawnchiang

JOANNA LYNNE STAUB *she/her*
Sound Designer
Trinity Rep: Debut. **Off-Broadway:** *Mother of the Maid*, The Public Theater; *Tooth & Claw*, Ensemble Studio Theatre; *Smart Blonde*, 59E59; *Weightless*, WP Theatre. **Regional:** *Sammy & Me*, Alliance Theatre and Bay Street Theatre; *Dames at Sea*,

Tommy and Me, Bucks Co. Playhouse; *Into the Woods*, Dallas Theater Center; *Mamma Mia!*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Annie*, *Austen's Pride*, 5th Avenue Theatre; *Constellations*, Geva Theatre; *How to Catch Creation*, *Bernhardt/Hamlet*, *Life After*, Goodman Theatre; *Wild Goose Dreams*, La Jolla Playhouse; *Pirates of Penzance*, *My Fair Lady*, *Beauty & the Beast*, Oregon Shakespeare Festival; *Shout Sister Shout*, Seattle Rep; *Fun Home*, Theatreworks Hartford. **TV:** *The Sound of Music*, *Peter Pan*, *The Wiz*, NBC; Morning Summer Concert Series, NBC & ABC; *The Puppy Bowl*, Animal Planet; US Open Tennis, ESPN. **Education:** BS, Ithaca College; MFA, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign **Other:** Dozens of Broadway Associate Design & Engineering Credits. www.jlssound.com.

ADDITIONAL STAFF
Assistant to the Scenic Designer
Tiago Rodrigues
Associate Sound Designer **Alex Brock**
Dialect Coach, Becky Nurse of Salem.....
Rebecca Gibel



* Member of Actors' Equity Association, the union of professional actors and stage managers.
† Trinity Rep Resident Company member
‡ Brown/Trinity Rep MFA Program student

THE CAST, THE GOOD JOHN PROCTOR

DEANNA MYERS* *they/she*
Abigail Williams
Deanna Myers is thrilled to join Trinity Rep for their first production. **Select credits:** *The Great Leap*, Steppenwolf Theatre; *Miss Bennett: Christmas at Pemberley*, Milwaukee Repertory Theatre; *You on the Moors Now*, The Hypocrites; *Tiger Style!*, *The Scene*, *Smart People*, Writers Theatre; *The Gulf*, About Face Theatre. **TV:** *Chicago Med*, *Chicago Fire*, *Empire*, *Hot Date*. **Other:** Deanna is a London-based, Off-West End Award-nominated the-atermaker, educator, and activist. Deepest gratitude to KVS. A mi esposa Nayda, mi corazón siempre. Muchos besitos. For BP, whom we hope is heartened by this production. And, as always for Carol Jane, who never knew she was a feminist but was, nonetheless.

LORI VEGA* *she/her*
Mercy Lewis
Trinity Rep: Debut. **New York:** *Downstate*, Playwrights Horizons; *The Scream Inside*, Working Theater; *One Night, P*SSY C*CK KNOW NOTHING*, *Pay No Attention to the Girl*, Target Margin Theater; *The Bacchae*, Classical Theater of Harlem. **Regional:** *Babel & Ushuaia Blue*, Contemporary American Theatre Festival; *Nonsense and Beauty*, Rep Theatre St. Louis; *Read to Me*, Portland Stage Co.; *Halftime with Don*, New Jersey Rep; *As You Like It*, Idaho Shakespeare; *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *As You Like It*, Lake Tahoe Shakespeare). **TV:** *Pretty Little Liars*, *And Just Like That*, *FBI*, *BULL*, *El Deafo*. www.lorivega.net

RACHAEL WARREN*‡ *she/her*
Mary Warren
Trinity Rep: Resident company member since 2002. Select credits: Mrs. Lovett, *Sweeney Todd*; Suze, *Fairview*; Voice of the Plant, *Little Shop of Horrors*; Darcy/Wickham, *Pride and Prejudice*; Mother, *Ragtime*; Grace Richards, *Into the Breeches!*; Puck, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; Warrior One, *Beowulf: A Thousand Years of Baggage*; Tilly, *Melancholy Play: A Chamber Musical*; Nancy, *Oliver!*; Sally, *Cabaret*; Eliza, *My Fair Lady*; Betsy/Lindsey, *Clybourne Park*; *Songs of Innocence*, *Songs of Experience*; Ophelia, *Hamlet*; Wendy, *Peter Pan*; Rebecca, *The Long Christmas Ride Home*; Sabina, *The Skin of Our Teeth*; Lady Percy/Katherine, *the Henriad*; Mary, *Dublin Carol*. **National Tours:** *Tommy*, *Chess*, *Company*. **Other Theaters:** Commonwealth

Shakespeare Company, Wilbury Theatre Group, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, A.R.T, Actors Theatre of Louisville, Cleveland Play House, Williamstown, Hartford Stage, Goodspeed Opera, The Wallis Annenberg Center, Virginia Stage. **Other:** Rachael is a graduate of the A.R.T. Institute at Harvard and Illinois-Wesleyan University. She is on the faculty of the Brown/Trinity MFA Program. www.rachaelwarrenstudio.com

REBECCA-ANNE WHITTAKER* *she/her*
Betty Parris
Trinity Rep: Johanna, *Sweeney Todd*; Ghost of Christmas Past/Lucy (u/s), *A Christmas Carol* (2019). **Brown/Trinity Rep:** Lucy/God/Be, *the book of Lucy*; Marianne, *Constellations*; Marina, *Pericles*; Catherine, *A View from the Bridge*; Agave, *Bakkhai*. **Other Theaters:** Hero, *Much Ado About Nothing*, Commonwealth Shakespeare Company; Ensemble, *LORDES*, Ice Factory at New Ohio Theatre. **Other:** Rebecca-Anne is a first-generation Caribbean-American actor, singer, and writer. She holds an MFA in acting from Brown/Trinity Rep and a BA in drama from Vassar College. She is a Miranda Family Fellow. For Mom, Dad, Christina, and her awe-inspiring Aunties. www.rebecca-annewhit-taker.com IG: @rebeccaanne.w

KELSEY EMRY* *she/her*
Stage Manager
Trinity Rep: Assistant stage manager, *Tiny Beautiful Things*, *Marisol*; production assistant, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Macbeth*, *Into The Breeches!*, *A Christmas Carol* (2017, 2018), *Native Gardens*, *Death of Salesman*, *Like Sheep To Water*, or *Fuente Ovejuna*. **Teatro en El Verano:** *Romeo & Juliet*. **Off-Broadway:** *Storyville*, York Theatre Company; *Violette*, *Violette*, Bushwick Starr. **Regional:** Production stage manager, *Bad Jews*, *Ironbound*, assistant stage manager, *A Lie Agreed Upon*, The Gamm Theatre; Ocean State Theatre Company. **Education:** BA, Roger Williams University. **Other:** Kelsey is a local stage manager/director and is thrilled to be back at Trinity Rep!

OLIVIA TELLIER* *she/they*
Assistant Stage Manager
Trinity Rep: Assistant stage manager, *Sweeney Todd*; production assistant, *The Inferior Sex*, *A Christmas Carol* (2022), *The Inheritance*, *Fairview*, *Sueño*, *Tiny Beautiful Things*; child coordinator, *A Christmas Carol* (2021). **Other Theaters:** Assistant stage manager, *The Sound of Music*, *Clue: The Musical*, *Evita*, *Forever Plaid*, Jean's Playhouse; stage manager, *Occupy the Stage 2020*, The National Women's Theatre Festival; production assistant, *Native Gardens*, *It's a Wonderful Life...*, *The Clean House*, Portland Stage Company; stage manager, *#ENOUGH: Plays to End Gun Violence*, Providence Fringe Festival, Wilbury Theatre Group; stage manager, *The Freedom of Air*, *Down the Mountain and Across the Stream*, Barn Summer Playhouse. **Other:** Olivia graduated from Roger Williams University with a BA in theatre and a minor in arts management. She is a proud member of AEA and Stage Managers' Association.

Unit One:

Background Information



ABOUT THE PLAYWRIGHT: TALENE MONAHON

Talene Monahon grew up acting in Belmont, Massachusetts, and continued to pursue acting in regional and local theatres during her undergraduate education at Dartmouth College. She is now an actor and playwright based in Brooklyn, New York.

Monahon typically works in revising or reimagining history in a way that gives a new voice to previously marginalized people. It's a desire that stems, partly, from her Armenian heritage, she says. Monahon's previous plays have also questioned prevailing historical narratives: *Jane Anger* is based on a "radical, wild, scorching proto-feminist pamphlet that is discussing sexism and denouncing sexual assault." The play gives the character of Jane Anger a voice, and explores sexism in Jacobean England and today. Her play *How to Load a Musket*, "offers a unique look at this all-consuming hobby and the people who practice it as they find themselves caught in the crosshairs of a national battle over how history is told." Along these lines, Monahon calls *The Good John Proctor* a 'prequel' to Arthur Miller's classic *The Crucible*, which centers around the inner lives of the children who later become the focus of the Salem witch trials.

Her plays include:

How To Load A Musket, *The Good John Proctor*, *Frankie And Will*, *Jane Anger*, *All In Good Fun*



The Salem Witch Trials

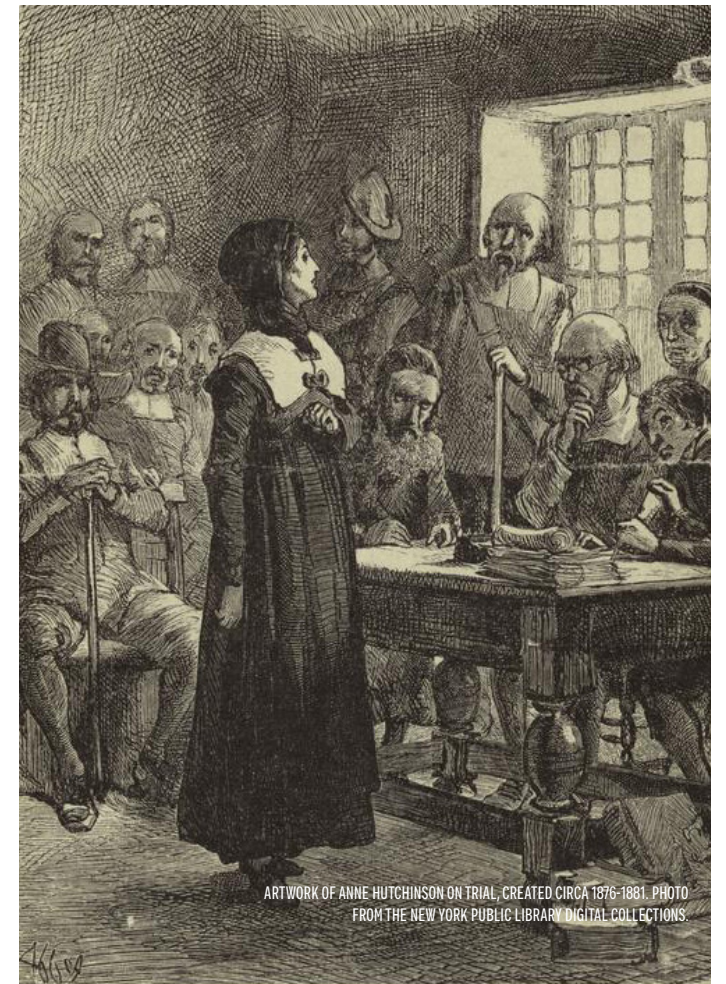
The Salem Witch Trials, which unfolded in the late 17th century in the Massachusetts Bay Colony, stand as one of the most infamous and harrowing episodes in American history. This tragic event was marked by mass delirium, paranoia, and misogyny. The Salem witch trials took place between 1692 and 1693 in the town of Salem, a small Puritan community characterized by its strict religious beliefs and social hierarchy. The Puritans, who had migrated to the New World seeking religious freedom, lived in a tight-knit society where communal norms were strictly enforced. Any deviation from these norms was met with suspicion and fear due to their religious beliefs, and outsiders were treated with suspicion and hostility. Additionally, Salem was facing the aftereffects of a British War with France, a smallpox epidemic, and tensions with the affluent community of Salem Town. These circumstances caused social tension and instability in Salem, which contributed to paranoia in the town and the need for a scapegoat.

The crisis began with a series of mysterious afflictions that affected a group of young girls in Salem. They exhibited behaviors such as fits, seizures, and uncontrollable screaming. Failing to find a logical explanation, the community turned to the supernatural. In their search for a scapegoat, the girls accused several local women of witchcraft, igniting a wildfire of fear and paranoia. The accusations spread rapidly, with neighbors pointing fingers at each other. As more people were accused of witchcraft, the authorities established a court to handle the trials. The court operated under a deeply flawed legal process, where testimonies of dreams and visions were used to incriminate the accused. This evidence was highly unreliable and subjective, leading to wrongful convictions.

The Salem witch trials exposed the fragility of societal norms and the potential for mass paranoia to destroy a community. Families were torn apart as individuals turned against one another, driven by fear and mistrust. The trials highlighted the dangers of religious extremism when it disregards justice and reason. The trials also underscored the power dynamics within the community. Many of those accused were women, particularly those who did not conform to traditional gender roles or who challenged the established authority. Accusations

were often rooted in personal rivalries or longstanding feuds, as well as prejudices against individuals who were deemed "different" or "other." Additionally, many of the accused were vulnerable members of the community and were houseless, poor, or enslaved.

The Salem witch trials eventually came to an end, but not before numerous innocent lives were ruined. Several accused individuals were executed, and many more faced imprisonment, public humiliation, and the loss of property. After the trials, we can see a legacy of skepticism toward unchecked authority and the importance of defending civil liberties.



ARTWORK OF ANNE HUTCHINSON ON TRIAL, CREATED CIRCA 1876-1881. PHOTO FROM THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY DIGITAL COLLECTIONS

Witch Hunts

Then and Now

While the explicit witch trials of colonial days may have subsided, elements of modern society continue to perpetuate witch hunts in different forms. The article "Witch Trials in the 21st Century" by National Geographic Education sheds light on instances where people are accused of witchcraft and subjected to violence, often in regions with limited education and exposure. These cases stem from factors like economic disparities, gender inequality, and ignorance, perpetuating age-old biases that associate vulnerable individuals with supernatural harm.

Similarities Across Eras

- **Scapegoating and Fear:** Both historical and contemporary witch hunts are driven by fear and a need for scapegoats. Whether it's the fear of the unknown or societal anxieties, individuals are often targeted as convenient outlets for this fear. The Salem Witch Museum has a tool where you can view submissions of fears, triggering events, and the resulting scapegoats throughout history or today: <https://salemwitchmuseum.com/witch-hunt/>
- **Gender Dynamics:** Historically, women were disproportionately targeted due to prevailing gender norms. Today, women in some regions still face accusations and violence on charges of witchcraft,

reflecting the persistence of gender-based discrimination. Misogyny played a multifaceted role in the witch trials. The trials provided an outlet for the perpetuation of male dominance, as women who defied societal norms or posed a challenge to patriarchal authority were branded as witches. Their persecution served as a stark warning to other women to conform to the accepted roles and behaviors of the time. The trials also served as a means of controlling and silencing women, limiting their opportunities for agency and expression. The legacy of misogyny, as exemplified by the witch trials, persists in modern society. Although progress has been made in advancing gender equality, gender-based discrimination continues to be prevalent in various aspects of life, from workplace opportunities to representation in leadership roles. The witch trials serve as a stark reminder of the dire consequences of unchecked bias and the importance of dismantling systemic inequalities

- **Social and Economic Factors:** In both eras, witch hunts are fueled by social and economic disparities. Accusations can be triggered by jealousy, personal vendettas, or a means to control resources and who has access to them



Arthur Miller

Arthur Miller, an iconic American playwright, became known for his distinctive voice in American theater and his ability to dissect complex social and political issues. Miller was born to Jewish immigrant parents of Polish descent. His family experienced the challenges of the Great Depression, which significantly influenced Miller's later writings that often explored the struggles of the working class. He attended the University of Michigan, where he honed his skills as a writer. In 1947, Miller's first major play, *All My Sons*, was produced on Broadway. However, it was his play *Death of a Salesman* (a piece about the American Dream and its disillusionment) earned him the Pulitzer Prize and cemented his reputation as a playwright.

Miller's *The Crucible*, which premiered in 1953, was inspired by the Salem witch trials of the 17th century but served as an examination of McCarthyism, a period of intense anti-communist fear in the United States during the Cold War. Through the play's characters and events, Miller draws a parallel between the Salem witch trials and the political witch hunts of his own time, where individuals were accused of disloyalty and being communists without direct or conclusive evidence. This period of time led to similar mass hysteria and the accused losing their jobs and the crumbling of their livelihoods. *The Crucible* serves as a commentary on the dangers of unchecked authority.



Arthur Miller Plays:

The Golden Years • The Man Who Had All The Luck • All My Sons • Death Of A Salesman • An Enemy Of The People • The Golden Years • The Crucible • A View From The Bridge • After The Fall • A Memory Of Two Mondays • Incident At Vichy • The Price • The Creation Of The World And Other Buissness • The Archbishop's Ceiling • The American Clock • Playing For Time • The Ride Down Mt. Morgan • Broken Glass • Mr. Peters' Connections • Resurrection Blues • Finishing The Picture

Unit Two: About The Production

RESOURCES

Content and Health Advisories

- Please feel free to use ear plugs, ear defenders, and cover your ears and eyes.
- Actors will appear in the aisles of the theatre; to avoid collision, please only use aisles as an egress.
- There are intense discussions of sexual abuse and violence including grooming and rape, with specific mention of the devil.
- There is discussion of self-harm/suicide ideation.
- There are depictions and discussions of miscarriage.
- There is simulated violence with fake blood, followed by simulated realistic vomiting.
- During scene transitions the music is suddenly very loud, and the lights will often change quickly.
- There are frequent moments of overlapping noise that can become overwhelming.
- The storage under the stairs closes with a slam.
- The first three rows may get splashed with water.
- There is a scene that utilizes flickering lanterns in complete darkness that may trigger photosensitive people.

This play includes strong adult language, references to sexual content and assault, description of miscarriage, and themes of historical violence against women. Scenes include intense discussion of rape, sexual assault, and self-harm ideation. Throughout the play, all the children reference being punished with lashing and being hit. Mercy uses alcohol to cope with the trauma she's experienced living and working at George Burroughs' house, a problem that can affect survivors of child sexual abuse. Many of Mercy's descriptions of visits from the devil and witches are descriptions of sexual assault against women and children.

Abigail deals with trauma throughout the play: she is groomed by John Proctor and, although it isn't shown onstage, it's clear he assaults her, and she later is pregnant and has a miscarriage. Abigail goes through many survivor trauma responses during the play. Below are a variety of resources for education, prevention, and services around child sexual assault and domestic violence.

Day One Rhode Island "is leading efforts to address sexual assault as a community concern. We are committed to supporting survivors and increasing prevention." They have a Children's Advocacy Center, and the CAC model "results in less trauma and re-victimization for the child, efficient teamwork, and successful collaborations. [It] provides an array of wrap-around services, including case management, crisis intervention, clinical interventions, and criminal justice advocacy, the latter contributing to increased prosecution rates."

The CAC "provides follow up services for the child and non-offending caregivers up to a year." <https://dayoneri.org/support-services/childrens-advocacy-center>

The CAC also provides mentoring, treatment services, community education, and trainings for the public, service providers, and law enforcement professionals about Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children: <https://dayoneri.org/support-services/csec-commercial-sexual-exploitation-of-children>

These are resources for prevention including risk factors, workshops, and the social ecological model, as well as national prevention resources: <https://dayoneri.org/education-resources/prevention-education>

Day One provides a number of community trainings and events: <https://dayoneri.org/education-resources/training-events-calendar>

Day One provides facts and statistics, general information, and links to resources for parents and caregivers at this link: <https://dayoneri.org/education-resources/resources-materials>

Darkness to Light's mission is: "Through a combination of research, education, and community advocacy, we use a social behavior change approach to pioneer new training initiatives that bring child sexual abuse prevention to the attention of the broader cultural conversation. Our work empowers adults and organizations to bring best-practices in child safety to their own communities." The organization offers facts and statistics about Child Sexual Abuse: <https://www.d2l.org/child-sexual-abuse/statistics/>

This includes information including impacts on survivors and red flag behaviors: <https://www.d2l.org/child-sexual-abuse/>

Darkness to Light has a variety of educational materials and trainings: <https://www.d2l.org/education/>

RI Coalition Against Domestic Violence has information on prevention along with a publication available for download, and a helpline: <https://ricadv.org/prevention/>

Sisters Overcoming Abusive Relationships is a task force made up of survivors of domestic violence working to "promote, advocate for, and work towards the elimination of domestic violence and to embody and give visibility to the voices of abused women." <https://ricadv.org/soar/>

The Sojourner House is a "provider of comprehensive services available to victims of abuse 24 hours a day, 7 days a week." <https://sojournerri.org/who-we-are/>

They provide events and trainings for the community: <https://sojournerri.org/event-calendar/>

This link includes all of their services, such as support groups, housing programs, hotlines, and the emergency shelter: <https://sojournerri.org/services/>

They have Youth and Teen Programs available: <https://sojournerri.org/youth-teen-programs/>

They offer trainings on a variety of topics including The Dynamics of Sexual Assault, Engaging in Healthy Relationships, Empowering Victims, and Teen Dating Violence: <https://sojournerri.org/education-training/>

Every Voice Coalition “trains and mobilizes the next generation of student leaders to pass survivor-centered state laws addressing campus sexual violence.” You can find their information on legislation, current action groups in different states, and education available at their website: <https://www.everyvoicecoalition.org/about>

RAINN (Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network) is the nation's largest anti-sexual violence organization. RAINN created and operates the National Sexual Assault Hotline (800.656.HOPE, online. rainn.org y rainn.org/es) in partnership with more than 1,000 local sexual assault service providers across the country and operates the DoD Safe Helpline for the Department of Defense. RAINN also carries out programs to prevent sexual violence, help survivors, and ensure that perpetrators are brought to justice.”

Here are RAINN's safety and prevention resources for parents, students, and tips on staying safe and protecting others: <https://www.rainn.org/safety-prevention>

This includes safety support for parents: <https://www.rainn.org/safety-parents>

A document entitled Grooming: Know the Warning Sign: <https://www.rainn.org/news/grooming-know-warning-signs>

RAINN offers consulting services and trainings: <https://www.rainn.org/consulting-services#training>



A CONVERSATION WITH THE DIRECTOR AND CURT COLUMBUS

A conversation between Curt Columbus and Kimberly Senior, director of The Good John Proctor.



CC (Curt Columbus): At the center of these two plays is a response to the Salem witch trials, and *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. *The Crucible* is considered one of the most canonical plays in the American Theater, and it's taught in English classes across the country. But it is extremely problematic, and I don't think that we talk about that enough. Both plays help to make vivid the sexism inherent in *The Crucible*.

Kimberly Senior: In the world of [playwright] Talene [Monahan]'s play, *The Crucible* doesn't exist yet. The events take place before the witch trials, before the events of *The Crucible*. Because it's before the Salem witch trials, this play asks; "why do we have rules in place to control the population you feel threatened by?" *The Good John Proctor* questions why Arthur Miller gets to talk about women's sexuality, imagination, play, and fear. We see what would happen if we let the girls speak too.

There's so much in this play about consequences that comes up for me. I was talking with Rachael [Warren] the other day about Betty Parris, who is the youngest character and the least aware of consequences. I said it reminded me of a book called *The Scientist in the Crib*, that I recommend to every new parent, about kids experimenting with cause and effect to learn what's "good" and "bad." Betty is like this little scientist. She'll think "If I curse, I get 20 lashes. If I tell you, my older, wiser cousin who I worship, about the dream I had, what's going to happen?" The opening moment of the play is literally a young person questioning. And that's very relevant today.



THE PLOT SYNOPSIS



The Good John Proctor opens with Betty and Abigail, cousins and best friends, talking at night when they're supposed to be asleep. Betty describes a dream in which she flew, and Abigail promises to keep it a secret because flying is wicked and a sign of witchcraft. The next day, Abby and Betty play King and Peasant while churning butter, and it becomes clear they're worried about being caught playing by the adults who surveil them. Back in bed at night, Betty is in pain because she received lashes for cursing.

Betty and Abigail are playing King and Peasant when Mercy enters. She tells them about the Goodwin sisters, who she claims were possessed by a witch but had many physical scars and marks, probably indicative of domestic violence and child sexual abuse. The "witch" was caught and hanged.

Abby gets her first job working for the Proctor family. Abby is excited to have a job and work and "grow very strong."

Mercy talks about how liars and people who "kiss Satan" are everywhere in the town and says that playing with poppets is a sin. She describes the sexual abuse that the devil does to people in their sleep. It's clear she's drunk. Abigail reveals that Mrs. Proctor is sick and has chronic fatigue, and says she wants to work in the field and that John Proctor said he would teach her.

Betty plays with her poppet, who tells her its name is Bangwell Put. While playing, she meets Mary Warren, an older girl from Maine whose mother has recently died. Mary and Betty are curious about The Woods and look at a beautiful bird in the trees. They speculate about what is on the other side of The Woods, if it's a kingdom or their same village in an alternate dimension. Mary gets excited and falls to the ground, shaking. She wakes up and explains this happens frequently.

At the house, Betty and Abigail discuss her job. Abigail reveals that John Proctor gave her a colorful ribbon, and that she sat on his lap so that he could put it in her hair. Betty asks

Abigail if John is her best friend, and Abby says he's more like her father. Betty and Abby wake up because there's blood in their bed, from Abigail. They're afraid, and Abby is worried it's something bad or sinful. Betty discusses the only other time she's seen blood in that place: her mother had a miscarriage and Betty saw a face in the blood, which her mother pushed into the fire. Abby is worried and her and Betty hide the bloodstained sheet. The next day, Mercy says that the blood is normal and will come monthly, and that if one day it doesn't come "that's bad" and Betty will probably die.

Abby describes to Betty how she helped John Proctor deliver a horse's baby. She reveals that he brought her a bucket of water to wash off the horse's blood in the barn. They go to sleep, and Betty notices Abby masturbating.

The next day, Betty and Mary reenact a birth with Bangwell Put playing the newborn baby. Mary says Bangwell Put has an invisible spirit twin. She explains that her mother was a midwife, and when Betty asks how her mother died, she reveals that she was choked. Betty asks if it was by Satan, and Mary says, "Sort of." Mary reveals that she has also been hired at the Proctors' house.

Mary is at the Proctors' house when Abigail comes inside distressed, bruised, and covered in dirt and feathers. Abigail, clearly lying, tells Mary that she was in the chicken coop gathering eggs, but that she left them there. Mary offers to go get them for her, and Mary's spinning wheel mysteriously falls.

Abigail, still distressed, wakes Betty up at night to ask if she's dreaming. Betty explains she had a dream about witches. When discussing if the witches were sinning, Abigail says, "Everyone sins/ Every person we know has sinned so hard/ Like I've sinned, you know."

Abigail and Mary are in the Proctors' house, and Abigail is angry and distressed and reveals that Mrs. Proctor has let her go and said that John Proctor is "not a good man/ She said she was sorry he was not a better man." Abby insists that she understands love, because she's been loved before by her father, and that she loves John Proctor. She also says, "He left something here/ Inside of me." She says she doesn't remember her life before. This scene contains Abby discussing a sexual assault.

Betty and Abby are playing King and Peasant when Mercy comes in and reveals she left her employer's house because "he's not a good man." Mercy points out that Abby has a bruise all the way around her neck, and Abby calls Mercy a drunk. Mercy says, "being choked is a sure sign of lying with the Devil" and Abby begins to fight Mercy. She chokes Mercy and simulates sex, possibly reliving her assault.

Betty and Abby set off to meet Mary in the forbidden Woods. Abby reveals that she has Mercy's "sure sign" of death, which we know means she has missed her period. They head into the Woods, discover a river, and jump in together. They find a poppet that followed them into the Woods, seemingly of its own accord. Abby exclaims "I'm a WITCH!" and Mary says she is too, like her mother was – they decide to do magic, and Abby says she wishes she could break the new parts of her body. Mary comes up with a plan: they will sacrifice the poppet to complete Abby's wish. As Betty tears apart the poppet, Abby has a miscarriage. Mary begins to have a seizure, and Betty falls to the ground as well. The girls are found by Betty's father in the woods.

Mary is alone on stage and delivers a monologue about how she has lived in many forms after her death. At one point, she turned into a mosquito and witnessed the pardoning of the witches as in the court room. She has also performed her role in the witch trials for many different audiences. She says, "I am always called Mary Warren, but I now have many faces

and many bodies, /And so I live in all of them at once."

15 years later, Betty and Mercy sit outside watching their children play. Mercy reveals that Abby and Mary have since died; Mary from a seizure, but she doesn't know how Abby died. Betty recommends that Mercy ask for forgiveness from the town. Mercy explains that she doesn't feel she needs to be forgiven. She says, "You didn't suffer what we suffered./ You never felt the Devil's claws on you./ You were never choked in your sleep... No child should have to suffer what I suffered every night in that house in the darkness./ So I cried tears of joy the day they hanged him at the gallows."

Betty says that Abby's cause of death is a secret. Behind her, we see Abby in a forest of birch trees, wandering through the woods.

Betty Parris, age 9.5



Abigail Williams, age 11



Mercy Lewis, age 14



Mary Warren, age 18



RESPONDING TO

The Crucible

Sarah Ruhl, the playwright of *Becky Nurse of Salem*, writes about Abigail as a historical figure vs. her ahistorical representation in *The Crucible*. She writes,

"The real Abigail Williams was 11 years old. In the play, Miller made her 17. The real John Proctor was a 60-year-old tavern keeper. Miller made him an upright farmer, age 35. The real Abigail Williams never turned to prostitution; Miller writes, in *Echoes Down the Corridor*, that legend has it that Abigail grew up to be a whore in Boston. There is no evidence for that line of thinking, nor is there any evidence that she and John Proctor knew each other before the witch trials... I suppose what strikes me as fundamentally dishonest about *The Crucible* is the mixture of fact and fiction; the copious historical notes, unusually embedded in the stage directions, lead us to believe that we are watching actual history unfold. But we are watching what we always watch onstage—a psychic drama from the mind of a complicated individual relating his psyche to humankind's larger, collective unconscious. That *The Crucible* is performed at almost every high school, and is in fact the way American girls and boys understand the history of Salem, added to my frustration. I thought, All those bonnets, all those Goody Sarahs, and, really, Arthur Miller just wanted to have sex with Marilyn Monroe! I

thought, all those women died, but John Proctor was the hero of the story. I thought, to this day, no one knows why the girls engaged in mass hysteria, but it probably was not the lust of one duplicitous eleven-year-old for a middle-aged barkeep. For all of these logical reasons, I thought that I would end up writing my own historical drama about the Salem witch trials, but every time I tried to dip my toe into the 17th century my pen came back and told me to stay in my own era. Perhaps because I felt dwarfed by the long shadow cast by Arthur Miller's mastery. Or perhaps I wanted to stay in the present moment because I have been undone and fascinated by the language of the witch hunt used by Donald Trump from his campaign, in which he whipped crowds into a frenzy, yelling, 'Lock her up!,' with those crowds often replying, 'Hang the bitch!,' to his term in office, during which he has used the expression 'witch hunt' hundreds of times, describing himself as the victim. Not since the burning of witches in Europe has the iconography of witchery been used with such base hypocrisy and to such effect [...] Let playwrights have their secrets, their private lusts, their compulsions— but do let us free Abigail Williams from her manufactured lust for John Proctor. When John Proctor says, 'It is a whore!' and the 'it' is a child called Abigail, let us consider that the real historical child was neither an 'it' nor a whore."

The Good John Proctor is an imagining of eleven-year-old Abigail, nine-year-old Betty, fourteen-year-old Mercy, and eighteen-year-old Mary's stories. At the end of the play, Mercy describes the evil in Salem, the evidence of the devil, not as witchcraft or dark magic but as the cruelty of men towards children. The play asks what innocence truly means in a society in which children, girls, and women are policed and harmed.



OTHER NOTABLE THEMES

Punishment and surveillance

Betty and Abigail are often interrupted by noises that frighten them, making them worried that someone could see them playing or overhear them talking. They are constantly being surveilled and punished by adults, and their speech is censored. There are certain topics they aren't allowed to talk about, toys they aren't allowed to play with, and words they aren't allowed to use because they are "sinful." The girls begin to police themselves, warning each other not to be too loud or spill a secret because it might expose them to criticism and punishment. This relates to the culture of Puritan Salem: women and girls especially were punished and taught to feel shame about playing, their imagination, their experiences, and even their periods. The noises that interrupt the children's conversations and scare them represent this constant feeling of being watched and being punished.

Gender

The script specifies that "The character of Abigail is non-binary and should be played by a nonbinary performer." Abigail's gender comes up throughout the play. Mercy questions why Abigail would want to do "boy work" when she says she wants to learn to work outside, and calls her crazy. Later, while playing King and Peasant, Betty says, "Why you always want to be King/

It doesn't make sense/ You're not a man, even." Abigail shows discomfort with her interest in "boy work" being questioned and criticized. How might Abigail's gender identity impact the way she experiences the gender roles enforced upon her and girls in Salem?

Boundaries and The Woods

The children often play on the outskirts of the town near the start of The Woods. They are curious about The Woods but can't explore them because they've been told that they are a place for sin. In drama and other literature, woods and forests are often spaces outside the boundaries of conventional society: in many cases, forces seen as a threat to the status quo originate or dwell in the woods. This can be seen as far back as Ancient Greece in *The Bacchae* by Euripides, where the bacchantes are a threat to the stability of the city's order and make their home in the woods. In Sondheim's musical *Into the Woods*, the woods are a space of magic, possibility, strangeness, and even bring characters' morals into question.

Mary's strangeness (in the other children's eyes) comes in part from her willingness to explore The Woods. When she leads Betty and Abigail into the woods at the end of the play, their exploration emboldens the children to embrace the sin they feel they have committed: Abby proclaims that she is

evil and that she's even a "WITCH! A witchy witch!" In the mysterious space of the woods, Mary takes her first try at performing moon magic. This is also where Abby has her miscarriage. They are later found in the woods by Reverend Parris. *The Crucible* begins where *The Good John Proctor* ends: the children are found in The Woods and are accused of sinning. The children have transgressed a social boundary. Salem's societal norms were in general strict and communally enforced. How do each of the characters push back against the norms they are expected to participate in?

Performance

Mary Warren's monologue after the children are discovered in The Woods discusses how she has lived many different lives through performances of *The Crucible*. She references the audience, calling them "watchers" and "shadow people." Mary points out how she has difficulty recognizing all of herself in these different iterations of her, partly because she can't remember herself and her old life, and partly because each version is different. Mary's monologue reminds us that these characters were real people, and we know very little about the real people behind the stories we tell about them. Abigail, Betty, Mary, and Mercy have all been shaped in our minds by *The Crucible* and will be reshaped again by *The Good John Proctor*. Mary's monologue is an example of the way

that Monahan's work questions the way we accept *The Crucible* as historical, and the way it is privileged in our classrooms.

Innocence

Betty and Abigail are confronted with Mercy's knowledge of sin, her drinking, and her experience of trauma, and at first find her intimidating and persuasive. As Abby joins Mercy as a servant, leaves the home, and begins to interact with adults, she is forced to reckon with adult experiences as a child. Innocence also becomes a theme at the end of the play, when Betty asserts that those hung in the witch trials were innocent souls. Mercy rejects this, pointing out that while some of the women were innocent, the men hanged had harmed them and other children. The play calls into question the concept of innocence when applied to the witch trials – while witchcraft did not exist and the justice system was biased and cruel, Mercy articulates that she and Abby felt they were speaking truth in way they had never been able to before. *The Good John Proctor* suggests that the labels of innocent and guilty are too simple to encapsulate the complexities of the event.



Unit Three: Entering The Text

EXERCISE 1: MAKING YOUR OWN RESPONSE TO A WORK OF ART

The Good John Proctor is in many ways a response to the misogyny of Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*.

- Think about a book, play, movie, song, or other work of art that you have questions about. What's the biggest thing you would change about it? Does anything about it make you angry, inspired, confused, or curious?
- Brainstorm a response to the piece of art – write a chapter of a book, a verse of a song, a poem, draw a picture, create a playlist, create a movement piece, anything you want! Students can volunteer to share their creations with the class.
- If you made the play before you could read the last chapter, how would YOU change the ending? Why would you make that change?



EXERCISE 2: WHO TELLS YOUR STORY?

In the last scene of the play, Betty and Mercy discuss how Abigail, Mercy, and Mary have been treated after the trials. Mercy and Betty argue over the reasons behind the accusations and Mercy and Abigail's intentions. The play itself is also interested in questioning and reframing the story of the Salem witch trials as written by Arthur Miller's *The Crucible*. This exercise will help students explore how an author's point of view can change a story's impact.

Have the class split into pairs and label one from each pair A and B. Have A interview B about something that happened in their life. Then A will retell that story to the class, acting as an academic, a sales rep and a gossip columnist. Have B do the same for A performing as a spy, a flight attendant and a news reporter.

Discussion Questions: What aspects from the story do each of these people pull out? How does the story change depending on who is telling it? How does your understanding of the original storyteller change depending on who is retelling it? Which version of the story are you most drawn to? How does this relate to *The Good John Proctor* and *The Crucible*? Are there different themes that you gather from a performance versus reading the story in class? How does this affect our understanding of history and historical figures? How does this affect our understanding of stories and how they are compiled or created?



EXERCISE 3: 101 WAYS TO READ A MONOLOGUE

A monologue, or soliloquy, is a long speech made by one person. Sometimes it can be a challenge for a young actor to take on a piece of text and perform it on his or her own, so this activity is a way to get your students to forget their inhibitions and have fun with it.

- Pick one or more of the monologues below, and hand them out to your students. You can assign or let them choose which monologue they want to do and give them a few minutes to read it over a few times and familiarize themselves with it
- In partners, let them read it out loud to one another a few times in whichever way they want to.
- After this, using your own suggestions and those of your students, throw out different ways to read the monologue. Feel free to be as wacky as you want -- this is supposed to be fun. You can filter the suggestions and pick one that you think would work and let them do it that way. Some examples of different ways to read it include (but are definitely not limited to): an aerobics instructor, an army general, someone who desperately has to go to the bathroom, a squirrel, the laziest person in the world, singing it, whispering it, telling it like it's a scary story, like an interpretive dancer, like they are in a musical, like a President, or a King...you can even use celebrity names and have them imitate them using the monologue
- This can be done with all the students working in partners or on their own at the same time. If this is a particularly brave group, you can challenge them to take your suggestions and perform individually in front of the class
- After every willing student has performed, take some time to talk about what they got from it. Did it help them understand the monologue better? If so, how? Did they find that any of the interpretations, as silly as they may have been, worked and made some sense? Which ones, and why? How does this help them as actors?

EXERCISE 4: LETTERS IN CHARACTER?

The first part of the following activity gives students the opportunity to interact with the characters and plot points of the story. The second half of this activity allows students to get inside the character's head and understand the story from their perspective.

→ Have your students choose a character from the play and, using any of the following prompts, write a letter to that character: What advice would you give the character at this point in the story? What is something important that you want this character to know right now? Tell this character about an event in the story that hasn't happened yet.

→ Once everyone has finished, collect the letters and redistribute them to other students in the class.

→ Now, each student must imagine that they are the character that the letter is addressed to and respond to it from his or her perspective and their character's motivations for their actions in the play. Have your students write their responses in the form of a monologue and perform them for the class.



MONOLOGUES:

BETTY

Nighttime. Bed.

Hey Abby?
Do you think Betty--I mean my older
Sister Betty
And older Sister Susannah
The Ones who came before, who died
before I was born
And your father
And your mother
And my father's parents, the Saints Jane
and Samuel
Who came over from England
Do you think they--Oh! And also Kitty!
Who died when I six but was so sweet
The one I told you about?
With the black fur
Before you came to live here (beat)
Do you think they are all awaiting us
In the kingdom of Heaven?
Do you think they all know each other
there?
When I think of Heaven I think of literal-
ly the sky
Like when you see those pink clouds on
certain days?
But do you think
There are woods in Heaven? Or things
that are like The Woods? Abby?

*The sound of muffled crying
from a room below.*

BETTY Oh
She's up
Do you hear her, Abby? She's up (beat)
Abby, are you awake?

Silence

MARY

I am trying to remember myself.
When I died, I first emerged as a dew droplet on a leaf.
Yes!
What happened was: I shook until I fell upon a rock and then I died
As quickly as a finger snap.
When I awoke, it was as the dew droplet
I remembered nothing then, and was only moist.
Next, I lived for one glorious night as wood smoke.
I writhed and danced wildly in the air.
It was during this night, as the wood smoke, that I had my first
memory!
I remembered suddenly the courtroom
And how we writhed before the judges, all of us.
I searched the smoke for the other girls who shouted names in the
trials with me
Mercy and Abby and Ann Junior
But they were not there
Or at least, I could not find them--
And anyways, soon thereafter, I was extinguished by the wind.
After that, I was a sapling twig, after that, a piece of algae on the
shore.
Then, for some time during the summer, I was a mosquito.
I discovered that I had a talent for this! For mosquito-ing!
I flew into houses at night and suckled blood.
Many many times, I evaded being crushed.
And when I died, it was a happy death
Of natural causes: in my sleep, on the back of a cow.
It was during this era, as the mosquito,
That I perched on the high raft of the courtroom ceiling
And peered down at the signing of a paper, a petition
Which pardoned people who had been hanged as witches some years
before.
I saw the names of the dead, written in quill:
Rebecca Nurse
Sarah Good
Sarah Osbourne
Giles Corey
George Borroughs
John Proctor.
These were some names I saw as I buzzed softly high above, rubbing
the small wires of my mosquito hands together.



SCENE 1:
Mary and Betty

MARY

Hi Hello

Mary Warren has appeared out of nowhere. She maybe has a leaf stuck in her hair. Betty hides the poppet behind her back

BETTY

Ahh!!

MARY

Greeting greetings? Hello? Good morning?

BETTY

Who are you?

MARY

I'm Mary Warren, From Wells, Maine

BETTY

I'm Elizabeth Parris.

MARY

Who's your friend?

BETTY

My friend?

MARY

The one behind your back?

BETTY

That's
She doesn't have a name
And she's not even mine, actually

MARY

(genuinely sorrowful) How sad to not have a name

BETTY

I've never seen you before
I don't understand who you are

MARY

I just moved to Salem
From the fringes of Wells, Maine
As I said

BETTY

How old are you?

MARY

Oh Oh
I'm pretty sure I'm recently eighteen.

BETTY

EIGHTEEN?

MARY

Yes. I am an ancient child

BETTY

Are you married?

MARY

(peering at the sky) Nooooooooo

BETTY

Sorry
I just thought
Cause you're so old.

MARY

I take no offense

BETTY

Why did you come here?

MARY

I was living with my Mother
In Wells, Maine
Then she died tragically
So I left

BETTY

Oh yeah
Seems like
Most people I know these days
Are dead
Or have jobs

MARY

Yes I agree with that
We live in a perilous age
Powerless, most of us
It seems I am now in need of a job
A place to work and toil
I wish I had more skills!
I wish I knew
How to make a kettle dance or
How to send dung! Flying through the air!
Do you know of these things?

BETTY

Well, my cousin Abby got really mad this one time
And she threw dung at me
Which did make the dung fly through the air pretty fast?

MARY

Excellent, excellent *(leaning in, excited)*
Now we have spoken for long enough that I feel pressed to ask
How was it? In there?

BETTY

How was? Where?

MARY

In there?
Were you not just within?
Within The Woods right there?

BETTY

(defensive) NO! What??
I haven't been anywhere
Except for right here

MARY

I'm sorry
I was confused, I mistook
I thought you were One who played in The Woods

BETTY

I am NOT One
My dad is the REVEREND

I have only been here
I am playing by MYSELF
Betty demonstrates playing by herself

MARY

(admiring) Ooooh! Very good! Good playing!!!

SCENE 2: Betty
and Abigail

The stage is bare and very dark. Nighttime. WOOD NOISES in the darkness: scurrying, little animal screeches, branches rustling, an owl hoot, etc. The noises go on for a little while. Then quiet. Betty and Abigail in bed. Whispers

BETTY

Abby? Abby?

ABIGAIL

No

BETTY

Abby hey hi, are you up?

ABIGAIL

No I'm asleep

BETTY

You are?

ABIGAIL

Snore. Snore.

BETTY

What?

ABIGAIL

What? Is the fire out?
Ugh it's dead cold
Betty what?

BETTY

I wanted to tell you
I had a dream that I could fly
I was flying
Through the woods

At night
Like an owl
I wanted to tell you before I forgot

ABIGAIL

Like an owl?

BETTY

I kept on bumping into trees

ABIGAIL

So you weren't very good at flying?

BETTY

I got the hang of it
After a bit
I was good by the end

ABIGAIL

Which woods?
The Woods????

BETTY

Yes!
The Woods

ABIGAIL

Really?
You went in
There
You were inside
The Woods
???

BETTY

I think so um
It was dark, so
Hard to tell
But--
Something like a noise.

ABIGAIL

Shhh
Wait hold on
They sit up and listen

ABIGAIL

I thought I heard something,
Someone else up maybe

BETTY

No one else's up

ABIGAIL
ABIGAIL Okay
.....
Like Betty
Owls aren't the only ones
There are other ones who fly

BETTY
....I know

ABIGAIL
You should keep that a secret
That dream

BETTY
I'm not telling anyone so

ABIGAIL
ABIGAIL You just told me
Wow

BETTY
Nooo

ABIGAIL
Wowww
You're a pretty bad at secrets

BETTY
Come on hey!
You don't count
Cousins don't count? Right?

ABIGAIL
You're lucky I'm the best secret keeper
in this town
That's all I'm saying

BETTY
I wasn't on a pole
Or a stick or anything
Or a broom !
And I AM good at secrets!

ABIGAIL
You're screaming
Someone's gonna wake (beat)
How did you do it then

BETTY
(whispering) I just used my arms out
and in
Like I was a man swimming in the
ocean
That's how I did it
With my arms

ABIGAIL
(*whispering*) Did you feel like? Wicked?
In the dream?
Betty thinks about it.

BETTY
BETTY I felt amazing

SCENE 3: Betty
and Abigail:

BETTY
I had a dream -- about WITCHES.

ABIGAIL
WHAT WHAT

BETTY
I KNOW
A noise from downstairs. They look
around and hush up for a moment.

ABIGAIL
(*quieter but !!!!*) How many were there?
Did you see their old crone faces?
Were they eating babies' arms?

BETTY
There were three
Or maybe four

ABIGAIL
Wow so like a coven
Were they in The Woods?

BETTY
I think so
...
They weren't croney or old

They looked like us kind of

ABIGAIL
You're fooling

BETTY
Like us, but different
They were dancing and one of them
was running
It was strange like
They were smiling
Sort of

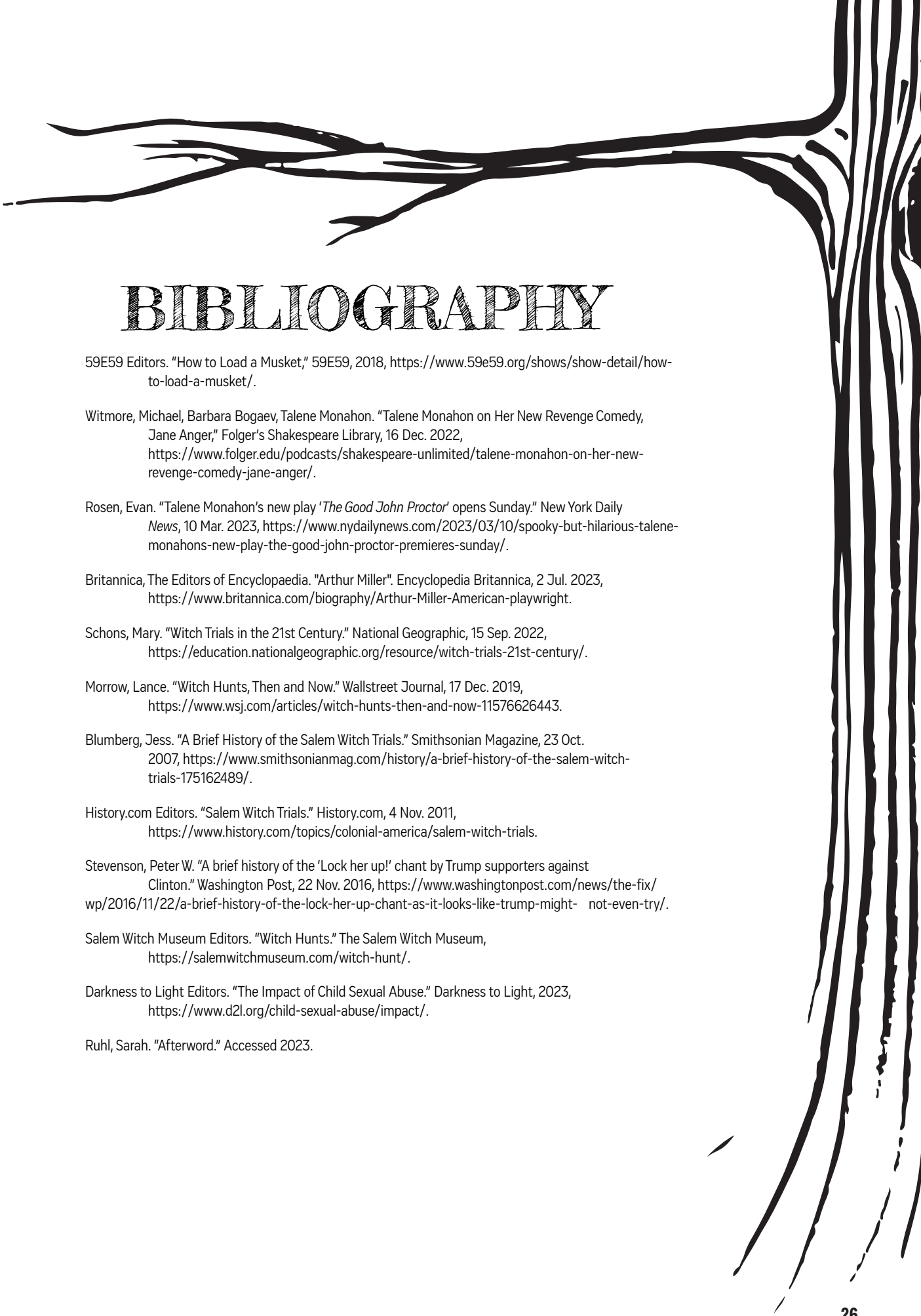
ABIGAIL
That doesn't make any sense

BETTY
It's what I dreamt!
They had smiling faces
Maybe they were doing something
wicked, though
I couldn't tell
(*she scrunches her face*) Ahh I'm trying to
remember
If Satan was there too? And all his devil
companions?
I'm not so sure...
They were definitely sinning like
At some point, they took flight (yawns)
So yeah
They were sinning
I guess that's what they were smiling
about

ABIGAIL
Everyone sins
Every person we know has sinned so
hard
Like I've sinned, you know

BETTY
BETTY (*starting to nod off*) Uhuh

ABIGAIL
ABIGAIL Are you sleeping again?
Tell me more about your dream
Tell me something else
.....
Betty?



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