

Notes

Sometimes when we read about history we are horrified about the things humans have done to each other. There is a tendency to feel that our society today is more cultured and evolved, superior even, to the people we read about in history books; however, it has been said that those who do not remember the past are condemned to repeat it. Considering the alarming rates of bullying in schools and teen suicide, maybe we aren't as evolved as we sometimes think we are. The spelling of the title is correct – which of the witch hunts is the real tragedy? The one we should have learned from or the one we don't realize is happening? This multiple character play may be performed by two females and be entered in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting or may be performed by a single female and be entered in Dramatic Interpretation. If used in Duo Interpretation or Duet Acting, one actress will portray Elizabeth throughout the entire performance; the other female will portray all of the other girls in the script. Technical blocking and spot on timing will only add to the overall effect of this presentation.

Cast of Characters:

Elizabeth: Prominent member of her class. Mirrors Elizabeth Hubbard who was one of the first girls to accuse women in her community of witchcraft.

Abigale: Elizabeth's best friend. Mirrors Abigail Hubbard, also one of the first girls who claims to be afflicted by witchcraft.

Martha: A fellow classmate of the girls. Mirrors Martha Corey who was accused of being a witch when she came to the defense of the women accused of witchcraft. She was convicted and later killed.

Ann: Friend of Elizabeth and Abigale. Mirrors Ann Putnam, also one of the first girls to come forward saying they were afflicted by witchcraft.

Sarah: A less popular girl in the school who is friends with Martha and Mary. Mirrors both Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne, both were accused of being witches. They were easy targets, because they were considered undesirable by the community.

Setting: In the classroom and halls of a high school.

(Recite Emily Dickinson poem)

Witchcraft was hung, in History,

But History and I

Find all the Witchcraft that we need

Around us, every Day —

--Emily Dickinson, #1583

(In the classroom giving an oral report)

Elizabeth: *(Slightly bored reading from papers; are other students preoccupied)*

My name is Elizabeth, and the history topic Mr. Brattle assigned me to research is the Salem Witch Trials. It started when Reverend Samuel Parris' daughter and his niece started behaving strangely. They would scream, writhe in pain, and crawl around on the floor. Doctor William Griggs was called to examine the girls, but he couldn't find anything wrong with them. He said that the fits were caused by the spirit of the devil. Reverend Parris demanded to know who would cause this to happen to the girls. The girls told him that some women in the town were witches and that the witches' spirits were afflicting them and causing them physical and emotional pain.

(Abigail and Elizabeth talking at school)

Abigail: Hey Elizabeth. I'm so glad I found you. I've been looking everywhere for you.

Elizabeth: Hi Abigail, what's up?

Abigail: You will never guess what I just saw in the lunchroom.

Elizabeth: (*Excited to be hearing gossip*) What?

Abigail: I totally thought you should know that I just saw Sarah eating lunch with Chris, and they looked pretty cozy.

Elizabeth: (*Surprised*) Are you serious?

Abigail: Yeah, she was hanging all over him. It was totally disgusting because she is supposed to be our friend, and she knew you liked Chris.

Elizabeth: (*Sounding hurt*) I can't believe this. I told Sarah last week that I've been crushing on Chris all year, and he just started texting me. She knew that I was hoping he would ask me out.

Abigail: It's so terrible the things people will do to try to get attention.

Elizabeth: (*Angry and vindictive*) Whatever. Sarah can't seriously think that Chris would consider dating someone like her? She's so cheap and desperate she was probably throwing herself at him trying to get a date for prom.

Abigail: (*Laughing*) There isn't any other way he would spend time with her.

Elizabeth: Someone should warn him to be careful though. She's been around so much he would probably catch something. Who knows what she's picked up already.

(Back in the classroom continuing the oral report)

Elizabeth: The women accused denied having anything to do with witchcraft, but they were social outcasts so it was easy for most people to believe they were witches. A few women came to their defense, but as soon as they said something they were accused of being witches too. The judges thought that the only reason why someone would defend a witch was because they were a witch, too.

(In the school hall way)

Martha: Elizabeth, I've heard the horrible things you have been saying about Sarah. Why would you do that? Seriously, you're completely destroying her reputation. It's so low class of you.

Elizabeth: Low class, Martha? What's low class is that Sarah throws herself at every guy in our school.

Martha: What are you talking about? That's not true, and you know it.

Elizabeth: That's not what I heard.

Martha: Don't you mean that's not what you said?