

The Crucible - Reader's Theater Script

Act 1 – Final Scene – Hale Visits and Tituba is Accused

Characters: Reverend Hale, Reverend Parris, Rebecca Nurse, Ann Putnam, Thomas Putnam, Giles Corey, Tituba, Abigail, Betty, Mary

Setting: Rev. Parris's home and Betty's room. Betty is unresponsive in the bed.

HALE: Pray you, someone take these! (*handing Parris a stack of heavy books*)

PARRIS: Mister Hale! Oh, it's good to see you again! My, they're heavy!

HALE: (*lofty and haughty*) They must be, they are weighted with authority.

PARRIS: Well, you do come prepared!

HALE: We shall need hard study, if it comes to tracking down the Old Boy. You cannot be Rebecca Nurse?

REBECCA: I am, sir. (*hesitantly*) Do you know me?

HALE: It's strange how I knew you, but I suppose you look as such a good soul should. We have all heard of your great charities in Beverly.

PARRIS: Do you know this gentleman?—Mister Thomas Putnam. And his good wife, Ann.

HALE: Putnam! I had not expected such distinguished company, sir.

PUTNAM: It does not seem to help us today, Mister Hale. We look to you to come to our house and save our child.

HALE: Your child ails, too?!

ANN: (*panicked and hoping to catch Hale's attention*) Her soul, her soul seems flown away. She sleeps and yet she walks....

PUTNAM: She cannot eat.

HALE: (*surprised*) Cannot eat! Do you men also have afflicted children?

PARRIS: No, no, these are farmers. John Proctor...

COREY: He don't believe in witches.

PROCTOR: (*aggravated*) I never spoke on witches one way or the other. Will you come, Giles?

COREY: No-no, John, I think not. I have some few queer questions of my own to ask this fellow.

PROCTOR: I've heard you be a sensible man, Mister Hale—I hope you'll leave some of it in Salem.

PARRIS: Will you look at my daughter, sir? She has tried to leap out the window; we discovered her this morning on the highroad, waving her arm as though she'd fly.

HALE: Tries to fly?

PUTNAM: She cannot bear to hear the lord's name, mister Hale; that's a sure sign of witchcraft afloat.

HALE: (*holding up his hands as if to stop them*) No-no...Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone and we must look only for his proper signs and judge nothing beforehand, and I must tell you all, that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no trace of hell in this.

PARRIS: It is agreed, sir—it is agreed—we will abide by your judgment.

HALE: Good then. Now, sir, what were your first warnings of this strangeness?

PARRIS: Why, sir... I discovered her... and my niece Abigail and ten or twelve other girls, dancing in the forest last night.

HALE: (*shocked, accusing*) You permit dancing?!

PARRIS: (*embarrassed*) No—no, it were secret...

ANN: Mr. Parris' slave has knowledge of conjurin', sir.

PARRIS: We cannot be sure of that, Goody Ann...

ANN: I know it, sir. I sent my child... she should learn from Tituba who murdered her sisters.

REBECCA: Goody Ann! You sent a child to conjure up the dead...?

ANN: (*Hysterically.*) Let God blame me, not you, not you, Rebecca! I'll not have you judging me anymore! (*resentful*) Mr. Hale, is it a natural work to lose seven children before they live a day?

HALE: (*Leafing through the book.*) Seven dead in childbirth?

ANN: Aye.

HALE: Have no fear now—we shall find this devil out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face! (*Corey crosses near bed, looking at Betty.*)

REBECCA: Will it hurt the child, sir?

HALE: I cannot tell. If she is truly in the Devil's grip we may have to rip and tear to get her free.

REBECCA: I think I'll go then. I am too old for this.

PARRIS: Why, Rebecca, we may open up the boil of all our troubles today!

REBECCA: Let us hope for that. (*Up toward door.*) I go to God for you, sir.

PARRIS: I hope you do not mean we go to Satan here! (*with voiced raised*)

REBECCA: I wish I knew. (*She goes out.*)

PUTNAM: Come, Mister Hale, let's get on. Sit you here. (*Hale sits on stool.*)

COREY: Mister Hale... I have always wanted to ask a learned man—What signifies the readin' of strange books?

HALE: What books? (*Ann rises.*)

COREY: I cannot tell; she hides them. Martha, my wife. I have waked at night many times and found her in a corner, readin' of a book. Now what do you make of that?

HALE: (*trying to avoid the conversation*) Why, that's not necessarily...

COREY: It discomferts me! Last night—mark this—I tried and tried and could not say my prayers. And then she close her book and walks out of the house, and suddenly—mark this—I could pray again!

HALE: Ah!—the stoppage of prayer—that is strange. (*Sits on bed, beside Betty.*) I'd like to speak further on that with you.

COREY: I'm not sayin' she's touched the Devil, now, but I'd admire to know what books she reads and why she hides them—she'll not answer me, y'see.

HALE: Aye, we'll discuss it. (*again trying to avoid Corey's distraction*) Now mark me, if the Devil is in her you will witness some frightful wonders in this room, so please to keep your wits about you. Mister Putnam, stand close in case she flies. (*Turns to Betty, helps her sit up.*) Now, Betty dear, will you sit up? (*Sits her up.*) H'mmmm. Can you hear me? I am John Hale, minister of Beverly. I have come to help you, dear. Do you remember my two little girls in Beverly? Does someone afflict you, child? It need not be a woman, mind you, or a man. Perhaps some bird, invisible to others, comes to you, perhaps a pig, or any beast at all. Is there some figure bids you fly? (*Pauses. Passes his hand over her face.*) In nomine Domini Sabaoth, sui filii que ite d Infernos. (*Betty is laid back on pillow. Looks to Abigail.*) Abigail, (*Looks back to Betty.*) what sort of dancing were you doing with her in the forest?

ABIGAIL: Why—common dancing is all. (*uncertainly*)

PARRIS: I think I ought to say that I—I saw a kettle in the grass where they were dancing.

ABIGAIL: That were only soup.

HALE: Soup? What sort of soup were in this kettle, Abigail?

ABIGAIL: Why, it were beans—and lintels, I think, and—

HALE: Mister Parris, you did not notice, did you—any living thing in the kettle? A mouse, perhaps, a spider, a frog---?

ABIGAIL: (*Hysterically, seeing Parris' look.*) That frog jumped in, we never put it in!

HALE: (*grasping Abigail*) Abigail, it may be your cousin is dying—Did you call the Devil last night?

ABIGAIL: I never called him! Tituba called him!

PARRIS: She called the Devil!

HALE: I should like to speak with Tituba.

PARRIS: Goody Ann, will you bring her up? (*Ann goes to get Tituba*)

HALE: How did she call him?

ABIGAIL: I know not—she spoke Barbados.

HALE: Did you feel any strangeness when she called him? A sudden cold wind, perhaps? A trembling below the ground?

ABIGAIL: I didn't see no Devil!—(*To Betty, frantically shaking her*) Betty, wake up, Betty! Betty!

HALE: You cannot evade me, Abigail.—Did your cousin drink any of the brew in that kettle?

ABIGAIL: She never drank it! (*screaming*)

HALE: Did you drink it? (*pressing and moving closer to her*)

ABIGAIL: No, sir!

HALE: Did Tituba ask you to drink it?

ABIGAIL: She tried but I refused.

HALE: Why are you concealing? Have you sold yourself to Lucifer?

ABIGAIL: I never sold myself! I'm a good girl—I—(*Ann enters with Tituba.*) I did drink of the kettle!—She made me do it! She made Betty do it!

TITUBA: (*shocked and angry*) Abby!

ABIGAIL: She makes me drink blood!

PARRIS: Blood!!

ANN: My baby's blood?

TITUBA: No—no, chicken blood, I give she chicken blood! (*panicked, fearful, cowering*)

HALE: Woman, have you enlisted these children for the devil?

TITUBA: No-no, sir, I don't truck with the devil.

HALE: Why can she not wake? Are you silencing this child?

TITUBA: I love me Betty! (*hugging herself nervously*)

HALE: You have sent your spirit out upon this child, have you not? Are you gathering souls for the Devil?

ABIGAIL: She send her spirit on me in church, she make me laugh at prayer!

PARRIS: She have often laughed at prayer!

ABIGAIL: She comes to me every night to go and drink blood!

TITUBA: You beg me to conjure, Abby! She beg me make charm-

ABIGAIL: I'll tell you something. She comes to me while I sleep; she's always making me dream corruptions!

TITUBA: Abby!

ABIGAIL: I always hear her laughing in my sleep. I hear her singing her Barbados songs and tempting me with-

TITUBA: Mister Reverend, I never-

HALE: When did you compact with the Devil?

TITUBA: I don't compact with no devil!

PARRIS: You will confess yourself or I will take you out and whip you to your death, Tituba!

PUTNAM: This woman must be hanged! She must be taken and hanged!

TITUBA: No-no, don't hang Tituba. I tell him I don't desire to work for him, sir.

HALE: Who, the Devil? Now, Tituba, I know that when we bind ourselves to Hell it is very hard to break with it entirely. Now, we are going to help you tear yourself free.—You would be a good Christian woman, would you not, Tituba?

TITUBA: Ay, sir, a good Christian woman.

HALE: And you love these little children?

TITUBA: Oh, yes, sir, I don't desire to hurt little children.

HALE: And you love God, Tituba?

TITUBA: I love God with all my bein'.

HALE: Now in God's holy name...

TITUBA: Bless Him...bless Him... (*now down her knees rocking back and forth*)

HALE: And to His Glory...

TITUBA: Eternal Glory...Bless Him...Bless God...

HALE: Open yourself, Tituba-open yourself and let God's holy light shine on you.

TITUBA: Oh, bless the Lord. (*from her knees, raising her arms as if praising the Lord*)

HALE: When the devil comes to you does he ever come with another person? Perhaps another person in the village? Someone you know. Who came to you with the devil? Two? Three? Four?-how many?

TITUBA: There was four. There was four.

PARRIS: Who? Who? Their names, their names!

TITUBA: Oh, how many times he bid me kill you, mister Parris! (*hysterically*)

PARRIS: Kill me!

TITUBA: He say Mister Parris must be kill! Mister Parris no goodly man, Mister Parris mean man and no gentle man,

and he bid me rise out of my bed and cut your throat! I tell him, no! I don't hate that man! I don't want kill that man! But he say , You work for me, Tituba, and I make you free! I give you pretty dress to wear, and put you way highup in the air and you gone fly back to Barbados! And I say, You lie, Devil, you lie! (*growling at the devil*) And then he come one stormy night to me, and he say, Look! I have white people belong to me. And I look...And there was Goody Good.

PARRIS: Sarah Good!

TITUBA: Aye, sir, and Goody Osburn...

ANN: I knew it! Goody Osburn were midwife to me three times. I begged you, Thomas, did I not? I begged him not to call Osburn because I feared her, my babies always shriveled in her hands...

HALE: Take courage, you must give us all their names. How can you bear to see these children suffering? Look at them, Tituba-look at their God-given innocence; their souls are so tender; we must protect them, Tituba; the devil is out and preying on them like a beast upon the flesh of the pure lamb...God will bless you for your help...

ABIGAIL: (*Hands clasped, eyes closed.*) I want to open myself! I want the light of God, I want the sweet love of Jesus! I danced for the Devil; I saw him; I wrote in his book; I go back to Jesus; I kiss His hand—I saw Sarah Good (*Betty's hands appear above headboard raised toward the heaven.*) with the Devil! I saw Good Osburn with the devil! I saw Bridget Bishop with the Devil! (*As she is speaking Betty picks it up as a chant.*)

BETTY: (*As all turn to her.*) I saw George Jacobs with the Devil! I saw Goody Howe with the Devil!

PARRIS: She speaks. She speaks! (*praying a prayer of thanksgiving while the girls confess names until the curtain falls*)

HALE: Glory to God!—it is broken, they are free!

BETTY: (*Calling it out hysterically and with great relief.*) I saw Martha Bellows with the Devil!

ABIGAIL: (*happily naming names.*) I saw Goody Sibber with the Devil!

PUTNAM: The marshal, I'll call the marshal!

HALE: Let the marshal bring irons. (*On the girls' ecstatic cries, CURTAIN FALLS.*)

*In nomine Domini Sabaoth, sui filiique ite d Infernos – “In the name of the lord of hosts and his son get thee to hell.”

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*The person playing Mary Warren here is my principal! He popped in to evaluate me the day we were acting, and being a former English teacher, he couldn't resist!

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