

CHAPTER
3
Section 3

PRIMARY SOURCE *from* **The Salem Witch Trials**

The following is a portion of the Salem trial transcript in which Judge John Hathorne interrogates two of the accused—Sarah Osbourne and Tituba, a slave from Barbados. As you read, notice the difference in the way the two women respond.

HATHORNE: What evil spirit have you familiarity with?

OSBURNE: None.

H: Have you made no contract with the devil?

O: No, I never saw the devil in my life.

H: Why do you hurt these children?

O: I do not hurt them.

H: Who do you employ then to hurt them?

O: I employ nobody.

H: What familiarity have you with Sarah Good?

O: None. I have not seen her these two years.

H: Where did you see her then?

O: One day a-going to town.

H: What communications had you with her?

O: I had none, only, how do you do or so. I did not know her by name.

H: What did you call her then?

[At this point Sarah Osbourne had to admit that she had called her Sarah.]

H: Sarah Good saith that it was you that hurt the children.

O: I do not know if the devil goes about in my likeness to do any hurt.

Mr. Hathorne desired all the children to stand up and look upon her and see if they did know her, which they all did, and every one of them said that this was one of the women that did afflict them and that they had constantly seen her in the very habit that she was now in. . . .

H: Hath the devil ever deceived you and been false to you?

O: I do not know the devil. I never did see him. . . .

[Sarah Osbourne was dismissed, and Tituba was called to the stand.]

HATHORNE: Did you never see the devil?

TITUBA: The devil came to me and bid me serve him. . . .

H: What service?

T: Hurt the children, and last night there was an appearance that said to kill the children and if I would not go on hurting the children they would do worse to me.

H: What is this appearance you see?

T: Sometimes he is like a hog and sometimes like a

great dog.

H: What did it say to you?

T: The black dog said, "Serve me," but I said, "I am afraid." He said if I did not he would do worse to me.

H: What did you say to it?

T: I will serve you no longer. Then he said he would hurt me, and then he looked like a man.

This man had a yellow bird that he kept with him, and he told me he had more pretty things that he would give me if I would serve him. . . .

H: Did you not pinch Elizabeth Hubbard this morning?

T: The man brought her to me and made me pinch her.

H: Why did you go to Thomas Putnam's last night and hurt his child?

T: They pull and haul me and make me go. . . .

H: How did you go?

T: We ride upon sticks and are there presently.

H: Why did you not tell your master?

T: I was afraid. They said they would cut off my head if I told. . . .

H: Did not you hurt Mr. Corwin's child?

T: Goody [Mrs.] Good and Goody Osbourne told me that they did hurt Mr. Corwin's child and would have had me hurt him too, but I did not. . . .

H: Do you see who it is that torments these children now?

T: Yes, it is Goody Good. She hurts them now in her own shape.

from W. E. Woodward, ed., Records of Salem Witchcraft, I (Roxbury, Massachusetts: 1864).

Analysis Questions

- 1) Specifically, of what are Sarah Osbourne and Tituba accused?
- 2) After reading about the Salem Witch Trials (p. 82) why did this trial take place?
- 3) Of the accused, Osbourne or Tituba, whose story is more believable? Why?
- 4) One of the many ironies of the Salem Witch Trials is Tituba was spared while Sarah Osbourne was found guilty and
 - a) What are some possible reason why the two women responded so differently? b) From the judge and jury's point of view, why did they find Osbourne guilty and Tituba not?