

The Crucible
Audition
Ann and Thomas Putnam

PUTNAM. (*Looking down at Betty.*) Why, *her* eyes is closed! Look you, Ann.

ANN. Why, that's strange. Ours is open.

PARRIS. Your little Ruth is sick?

ANN. *I'd* not call it *sick*; the Devil's touch is heavier than *sick*; it's *death*, y'know, it's death drivin' into them forked and hooped

PARRIS. Oh, pray not! Why, *how* does your child ail?

ANN. She ails as she must-she never waked this morning but her eyes open and she walks, and hears naught, sees naught, and cannot eat. Her soul is taken, surely.

PUTNAM. They say you've sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly?

PARRIS. A *precaution* only. He has much experience in all demonic arts, and I . . .

ANN. He has *indeed*, and found a *witch* in Beverly last year, and let you remember that.

PARRIS. Now, Goody Ann, they only thought that were a witch, and I am certain there be no element of witchcraft here.

PUTNAM. No witchcraft! Now look you, Mister Parris. . .

PARRIS. Thomas, Thomas, I pray you, *leap* not to *witchcraft*. I know that you, you least of all, Thomas, would ever wish so disastrous a charge laid upon me. We cannot leap to witchcraft. They will howl me out of Salem for such corruption in my house.

PUTNAM. Now, look you, Mister Parris; I have taken your part in all contention here, and I would continue; but I cannot if you hold back in this. There are hurtful, vengeful spirits layin' hands on these children.

PARRIS. But, Thomas, you cannot. . .

PUTNAM. Ann! Tell Mister Parris what you have done.

ANN. Reverend Parris, I have laid seven babies unbaptized in the earth. Believe me, sir, you never saw more hearty babies born. And yet, each would wither in my arms the very night of their birth. I have spoke nothin', but my heart has clamored intimations. And now, this year, my Ruth, my only-I see her turning strange. A secret child she has become this year, and shrivels like a sucking mouth were pullin' on her life, too. And so I thought to send her to your Tituba

PARRIS. To Tituba! What may Tituba . . . ?

ANN. Tituba knows how to speak to the *dead*, Mister Parris.

PARRIS. Goody Ann, it is a formidable sin to conjure up the dead.

ANN. I take it on my soul, (*Rising.*) but who else may surely tell us what person murdered my babies.

PARRIS. Woman!

ANN. They were murdered, Mister Parris! And mark this *proof!* -mark it! Last night my Ruth were ever so close to their little spirits, I know it, sir. For how else is she struck dumb now except some power of darkness would stop her mouth! It is a marvellous sign, Mister Parris!

PUTNAM. Don't you understand it, sir? There is a murdering witch among us bound to keep herself in the dark. Let your enemies make of it what they will, you cannot blink it more.