

## Extract 2: *The Crucible*, Arthur Miller

This excerpt from the very beginning of the play. Reverend Samuel Parris has just discovered his niece Abigail, his daughter Betty and their friends dancing in the forest.

**ABIGAIL:** Uncle? Susanna Wallcott's here from Dr. Griggs.

**PARRIS:** Oh? The Doctor. (*Rising.*) Let her come, let her come.

**ABIGAIL:** Come in Susanna. (*Susanna Walcott, a little younger than Abigail, enters.*)

**PARRIS:** What does the doctor say, child?

**SUSANNA:** Dr. Griggs he bid me come and tell you, Reverend sir, that he cannot discover no medicine for it in his books.

**PARRIS:** Then he must search on.

**SUSANNA:** Aye, sir, he have been searchin' his books since he left you, sir, but he bid me tell you, that you might look to unnatural things for the cause of it.

**PARRIS:** No - no. There be no unnatural causes here. Tell him I have sent for Reverend Hale of Beverly, and Mister Hale will surely confirm that. Let him look to medicine, and put out all thought of unnatural causes here. There be none.

**SUSANNA:** Aye, sir. He bid me tell you.

**PARRIS:** Go directly home and speak nothin' of unnatural causes.

**SUSANNA:** Aye, sir, I pray for her. (*Goes out.*)

**ABIGAIL:** Uncle, the rumour of witchcraft is all about; I think you'd best go down and deny it yourself. The parlour's packed with people, sir - I'll sit with her.

**PARRIS:** And what shall I say to them? That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?!

**ABIGAIL:** Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it. But they're speakin' of witchcraft; Betty's not witched.

**PARRIS:** Abigail, I cannot go before the congregation when I know you have not been open with me. What did you do with her in the forest?

**ABIGAIL:** We did dance, Uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there's the whole of it.

**PARRIS:** Child. Sit you down. Now look you, child - if you trafficked with spirits in the forest, I must know it, for surely my enemies will, and they'll ruin me with it... Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?

**ABIGAIL:** I know it, Uncle.

**PARRIS:** There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit. Do you understand that?

**ABIGAIL:** I think so, sir.

**PARRIS:** Now then - in the midst of such disruption, my own household is discovered to be the very centre of some obscene practice. Abominations are done in the forest...

**ABIGAIL:** It were only sport, Uncle!

**PARRIS:** I saw Tituba waving her arms over the fire when I came on you; why were she doing that? And I heard a screeching and gibberish comin' from her mouth...

**ABIGAIL:** She always sings her Barbados songs and we dance.

**PARRIS:** I cannot blink what I saw, Abigail - for my enemies will not blink it. And I thought I saw a... someone naked running through the trees!

**ABIGAIL:** No one was naked! You mistake yourself, Uncle!

**PARRIS:** I saw it! Now tell me true, Abigail. Now my ministry's at stake; my ministry and perhaps your cousin's life... whatever abomination you have done, give me all of it now, for I dare not be taken unaware when I go before them down there.

**ABIGAIL:** There is nothin' more. I swear it, Uncle.