

# Tituba's Daughters

## The Characters and Their Attributes

**TITUBA** is a complex character who has multiple skill-sets and the intellectual ability to evaluate and solve diverse problems as they arise. Like the other refugees from the Salem trials, she carries with her the guilt for having given false testimony at the Salem trials. She desires absolution from what she believes was the sin of saving herself at the expense of others. She is the wisest character in the story, having come to understand the relative nature of *good* and *evil* in the context of colonial New England. She interprets her indigenous Taino religion, as a metaphorical mythology, and holds Christianity in mild contempt, having witnessed its hypocrisy, present during the Salem trials. Her leadership capabilities are evident in Barbados, where she served both as the village representative to the Council of Elders, and as the *Shaman* of the village, teaching cultural traditions, history and mythology to the Arawak children. She is a master storyteller and is the primary narrator of the present story. Tituba envisions a quiet, happy life with her daughters and housemate, Samuel Parris. She will have achieved these ends within the course of the story.

**ABIGAIL WILLIAMS** has walked a long, bumpy road in her search for her redemption. She embodies the premise that all human beings possess an internal core of *good*, which, for some people, given hardships and difficult circumstances, cannot easily be accessed. The *good* within Abigail Williams is revealed in slow measures to the others and to herself as the story progresses. She has teetered on the edge of the abyss, but not fallen in. She ultimately realizes that to be forgiven, she must first find some way to forgive herself. She works to redefine herself as a good person. It is her obsession, an obstacle that may prevent her ever achieving any conventional happiness. Abigail makes positive strides in overcoming this obsession in this story but the question remains: will she ever be completely free of her past?

**EDWIN COREY** is an idealist and dreamer who would like to bring light into a dark world. He is an egalitarian, a proto-abolitionist, who hopes through his acts of kindness to compensate for the useless death of his brother, Giles and the other Salem victims. He appears a mild-mannered man, but fights a battle between his placid nature and an internal anger—an anger that flares up at critical moments.

**JOHN COREY** is Edwin's son. He is bored with Boston and helping his father run the school. He seeks a more adventurous life—a life where he can make his own decisions without having to defer to his father's *dictums*. He has little experience in matters of love and Abigail Williams, being older and more worldly, is a new element for John. He struggles to understand her strong and independent spirit, very different from the women he has known so far. His love for Abby is frustrated by her reluctance to let herself be loved. She is preoccupied with the other pressing matters, primarily, the defeat of Danforth. Together, Abigail and John will share a mutual affection, but different aspirations that lead them on different life paths.

**JUDGE DANFORTH** craves status and power. Judge Hawthorne easily manipulated him into sentencing the Salem suspects to the gallows. Danforth needs a *handler* in order to succeed; when left to his own devices, makes many wrong choices. A ruthless politician, without the prerequisite guile and wit, he is devoid of moral principles, a sociopath and incapable of remorse. His reckless self-confidence makes his downfall inevitable.

**JUDGE HATHORNE** is an archetype of political corruption. He is a sophisticated villain who conceals his nefarious side. He has a degree of complexity and nuance—even some vestige of conscience. He uses his status and power to manipulate the political scene, enhance his status, and to acquire real estate illegally. In Salem, he showed little emotion at the hangings, but took a secret delight in it. He has successfully escaped any culpability for the corrupt ventures undertaken with Danforth. He will distance himself from Danforth by the end of the story.

**JUDGE SAMUEL SEAWALL** is a decent man who will find his strength by siding with the story's protagonists. As a jurist in Salem past, he expressed his disapproval of the trials. A subordinate to Hawthorne and Danforth in the Boston Courts, he resents their condescension and questions their integrity. He is tired of life in the colonies and plans to return to England. His character presents a contrast between the corrupt sphere of his colleagues and the idealism and honesty of Reverend Hale and the other *conspirators*.

**REV. SAMUEL PARRIS** like the conspirators, is looking for some measure of redemption. He is a man of average intelligence, but of low self-esteem. In Salem, he failed to inspire his congregation and failed his niece, Abigail Williams by never showing her kindness. He showed little gratitude to Tituba for her loyalty and her care for his ailing daughter, Betty. In Boston he hopes to shed his past rigidity and he secures Tituba's release from the workhouse not for simply a want of a housekeeper, but rather hoping she will become a sympathetic companion, she, having also experienced Salem's dark trials. He has been a cold, isolated person and, realizing this, wants to become kinder, gentler and liked by others. By the end of the story, he will be close to achieving this end.

**SAIBA** is a young teen with motive, energy and aspirations. She wants to initiate social reforms. She has learned much from her Barbados experience and her experience at the Cory's school. Her reunion with her sister and mother, and her interaction with Abby, Hale and the others will further shape her destiny. She will eventually return to Barbados, reviving her mother's role as a teacher and savant to the community.

**VIOLET** is a simple, but ambitious, happy spirit who wants to stay near her mother and eventually become the head housekeeper in a rich colonial Boston home. She may not be the most complex character in the story, but she provides an up-beat element of normalcy in a story filled with more sharp-edged characters.

**ELIAS VEER** will not find any redemption. He is a white-collar criminal of his era. Outwardly he tries to appear respectable, in charge, self-assured and stern. On the inside, he is a frightened child, afraid of intimacy and rejection. He'd rather be successful at being evil and hated, than fail at being *liked*. Abby at some point senses this and actually feels a brief moment of empathy for him. His troubled hedonism is eroded by the contempt shown him from every quarter. The only person to show him any warmth is his companion and henchman, Mr. Todd.

**MR. TODD** is a bully and a want-to-be thug; he's tough on the outside, Jell-O inside.

**REVEREND HALE** is perhaps the story's most complex character, caught between the worlds of the sacred and profane, religion and politics, idealism and pragmatism. If there were a single hero in the story it would be Hale. He wants to make right the injustices of the Salem trials and the society-at-large. Although he sympathizes with the anti-English sentiments of the time, he distains politics. He champions the causes of the downtrodden and eventually may enter the political scene as a reformer. Hale will eventually marry Abigail Williams.