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Dramatic Publishing

Afflicted: Daughters of Salem



Drama by
Laurie Brooks

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“Dramatically riveting ... This show really packs a punch.”

—*The Kansas City Star*

“Intriguing ... completely compelling as a snapshot of how social pressures and fear can cause unconscionable actions.” —*KCMetropolis.org*

“A deep look into the psychology of the girls who so deeply affected the innocent inhabitants of Salem.” —*BroadwayWorld.com*

Afflicted: Daughters of Salem

Drama by Laurie Brooks. *Cast: 6w.* In 1691 Puritan New England, fear and superstition are rampant. Singing, dancing and amusement of any kind are forbidden. The devil is everywhere. Five girls coming of age in Salem Village, desperate for release of their thoughts and feelings, find an ally in Tituba, a black slave who longs for freedom. Deep in the woods the girls make a pact and build a sisterhood. *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem* tells the story of the Salem girls—Abigail Williams, the leader, Ann Putnam, Mercy Lewis, Mary Warren and Betty Parris, and the events that led up to the infamous Salem witch trials. This original story examines how these teenage girls became accusers and caused 20 people to be put to death for witching. An interactive forum exploring the accusers and their community is built into the play and is ideal for enriching classroom work. This play is a must for enhancing any study of the Salem witch trials. *Afflicted: Daughters of Salem*, supported by the National Endowment for the Arts, explores not only the history and causes of the trials but also how girls raised in oppression have negotiated alliances and power throughout history just as they do today. Commissioned and premiered by the Coterie Theatre. *Unit set. Approximate running time: 75 minutes. Code: AK9.*

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Afflicted: Daughters of Salem

By

LAURIE BROOKS



Dramatic Publishing Company

Woodstock, Illinois • Australia • New Zealand • South Africa

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For my family,
Terry and Judine, Joanna, Liz and Stephanie.
I love you all.
And for Jeff Church and the Coterie Theatre.
You are my family, too.

Afflicted: Daughters of Salem and the play's post performance forum were commissioned by The Coterie Theatre, Kansas City, Mo.; Jeff Church, artistic director; Joette Pelster, executive director. It received its equity premiere on January 31, 2014, and was performed as a co-production with the theatre program at University of Missouri, Kansas City.

Cast:

Abigail Williams	Nicole Greenberg
Ann Putnam	Emily Shackelford
Mercy Lewis	Emily Nan Phillips
Betty Parris.....	Hannah Thompson
Mary Warren	Jessica Jensen
Tituba	Alisha Espinosa
Voice of Reverend Parris	Logan Black

Artistic and Production Company:

Director	Jeff Church
Set Designer	Jeff Ridenour
Lighting Designer	Kristopher Kirkwood
Costume Designer	Tyler Wilson
Sound Designer	Sarah Putts
Properties	Bret Engle
Production Stage Manager.....	William J. Christie
UMKC Technical Director.....	Kaleb Krahn
Coterie Technical Director.....	Scott Hobart
Dialect Coach	Erika Bailey
Movement Consultant.....	Jennifer Martin
Production Assistant	Kelsey Brennan

Afflicted: Daughters of Salem

CHARACTERS

ANN PUTNAM: accuser.

MERCY LEWIS: accuser.

ABIGAIL WILLIAMS: accuser.

MARY WARREN: accuser.

BETTY PARRIS: accuser.

TITUBA: a slave in the Parris household. Speaks with a strong Caribbean accent.

VOICE OF REVERENT PARRIS: always a voice over.

PRODUCTION NOTES

All scenes flow from one to the other with light shifts and sound changes. Since music was forbidden in Puritan New England, drumming is used for transitions and underscoring. Tituba should be pronounced *tee-tyuo-bah*. Obatala is pronounced *Oh-bah-ta-la* with the emphasis on the second syllable. Mercy Lewis has a nervous tic, a result of the Wabanaki attack.

This play is based on history, especially regarding the society, politics, religious practices and daily lives of Salem Village. Since not much information is available about the Salem girls and the specific reasons they became accusers, the playwright has used her imagination.

This play includes an interactive forum that is designed to invite the audience to think deeply about and respond to the ideas, characters and their actions in the play. All actors remain in character for the entire forum.

Afflicted: Daughters of Salem

(Salem Village, Mass., winter, 1691/92. Deep in the woods.

Drumming. Dim light.

TITUBA enters, and, as she coaxes a fire to life, we hear the VOICE OF REVEREND PARRIS.)

VOICE OF REVEREND PARRIS. “There is in all children a stubbornness of mind arising from natural pride. Children are both wayward and full of passion. They hath a great heart that is altogether inclined to evil and must be bent to the ways of God.”

(Lights shift.

TITUBA beats out a rhythm on a homemade drum. The girls [ANN PUTNAM, MERCY LEWIS, ABIGAIL WILLIAMS and MARY WARREN] enter cautiously then join in the drumming, playing crude rhythm instruments they have made from found objects. A final drum beat, and they settle down near the fire. The following storytelling is joyous, a respite from the drab world of Salem Village.)

TITUBA. When the sky black as tar and good people are in their beds, the evil Loup-Garoo flies through the woods.

(The girls respond with their instruments.)

GIRLS. The Loup-Garoo!

TITUBA. The Loup-Garoo is a woman. She hide in the village at daytime, disguised as feeble old beggar. But come night, the Loup-Garoo shed her skin. She light her body on fire!

(The girls respond with their instruments.)

TITUBA (*cont'd*). Like a torch, she burns. In the dark, she fly.
She swoop down and snatch up the victim.

ANN. The victim struggles.

ABIGAIL. But it is too late.

TITUBA. Once she catch them, they are dead. The Loup-Garoo sucks the blood. First dies the body ...

MERCY. ... and then the soul.

(The girls respond with their instruments.)

TITUBA. Now the Loup-Garoo, she have magic powers. She work spells and conjure spirits. The Devil's handiwork.

ABIGAIL. I do believe Goody Osborn is the Loup-Garoo.

ANN. Shed her skin! She would do well to shed her face!

(Laughter.)

TITUBA. Listen to Tituba! If you find the skin of the Loup-Garoo, keep it safe and hidden. It is worth more than gold. If you have the skin, you have the power. You will be free!

ABIGAIL. I would find such a skin. I would have the power.

TITUBA. If Tituba had the skin she would fly away. To freedom!

ANN. I call for secrets!

ALL. Secrets!

ABIGAIL. If I had the skin, I would never again empty the Reverend's chamber pot.

(Laughter.)

ANN. I would have the power to keep our sisterhood together forever and ever.

MERCY. If I had the skin, I would bring down a reckoning on the Wabanaki Indians and they would all die.

MARY. Mercy!

ANN. I agree with Mercy. Let them all die. Then we could sleep soundly in our beds.

ABIGAIL. Mary?

MARY. I would better serve God, of course.

ANN. That were no secret, Mary. We already know that.

ABIGAIL. It is not worthy of our sisterhood.

MERCY. Tell us your secret desire. I know you have one.

MARY. You will not laugh?

ABIGAIL. Not if it be truthful.

MARY. Then I will tell it. I know it is not decent, but I wish to be thought of as ... learned.

ABIGAIL. A learned woman!

MARY. Think of it. I love the Bible, but I ache to know the world and all the stories in it. I would have forbidden books all around me.

MERCY. It is a noble secret.

ABIGAIL. If only we knew who is the Loup-Garoo we might find the skin.

TITUBA. No one knows. But she is there. The Loup-Garoo be here in Salem Village, waiting ...

(TITUBA suddenly grabs ANN.)

TITUBA *(cont'd)*. ... to catch you!

(Laughter. TITUBA hugs ANN.)

TITUBA *(cont'd)*. Bad spirits, be gone from this place. Come near us, good spirit Obatala. Come near these children. Come near Tituba.

(TITUBA drums a rhythm. The girls rise and spin wildly around the fire. ABIGAIL howls and yips like the wolves)

and coyotes that live in the woods. The girls follow her lead and howl. The girls pull back their sleeves to reveal matching red yarn bracelets. They lay their arms together, bracelets touching in a ritual.)

ABIGAIL. Before God and my sisters I take this oath.

ALL. I will be true to this circle of sisters. I will never break our covenant nor reveal our secrets. If I should prove false, I will burn in the fires of eternal damnation. Forever and ever.

(Drums. Lights shift.

Night. ABIGAIL appears in the dim light, wearing her cloak. BETTY enters. Throughout the following scene, BETTY and ABIGAIL keep their voices low for fear of discovery.)

BETTY *(whispering)*. Abigail? Abigail!

ABIGAIL. Betty! You should be in bed.

BETTY. As should you.

ABIGAIL. I . . . I thought I heard a noise.

BETTY. That is a lie. You went out last night as well. The moon was near full. I did see you running across the meadow.

ABIGAIL. Go back to your bed, Betty, and do not concern yourself with what you do not understand.

BETTY. I am not a child. I understand more than you know.

ABIGAIL. What do you understand?

BETTY. I know you have yarn dyed red hidden under your bedclothes.

ABIGAIL. You have searched my room?

BETTY. There were a strand hanging down among the bedclothes and I did mark the color. Red is forbidden. Red is the Devil's color.

ABIGAIL. I know that! It is nothing. Only sport.

BETTY. What sport be a woven bracelet?

ABIGAIL. Betty! It were a diversion. That is all. I pray you, do not speak of this to your Reverend Father.

(Silence.)

BETTY. I would have a red bracelet.

ABIGAIL. Whining will not get you what you want.

BETTY. If I tell Father, he will whip you.

ABIGAIL. If you would betray me, why did you not tell when you first saw the bracelet?

BETTY. I am praying on it.

(ABIGAIL contains her anger.)

ABIGAIL. If you go back to bed and speak of this to no one, I will make you a yarn bracelet.

BETTY. The same one?

ABIGAIL. Aye. Red as blood. But you must keep it hidden under your sleeve. If your father sees it, he will rip it from you and blame the wearing of it on me.

BETTY. The wearing of it were my choice.

ABIGAIL. Your father finds you blameless in all things and me at constant fault. You could not protect me and you know it.

BETTY. I will not tell, not about the bracelet, not any of it if only you will take me with you where you go at night.

ABIGAIL. Is the bracelet not enough? Greed is a sin, cousin. Now go back to bed before I change my mind about the bracelet.

BETTY. When will I have it?

ABIGAIL. When I find the time to weave it.

BETTY. That is too long to wait.

ABIGAIL *(sighs)*. Very well. Take mine.

(ABIGAIL takes off her bracelet and gives it to BETTY.)

BETTY. Why do you not love me, Abby? I am your blood, your own dear cousin.

ABIGAIL. Save your false sweetness for the others. It will not work on me.

BETTY. I am not false. And I would never tell! Even if they put me in the stocks!

ABIGAIL. The Reverend's daughter in the stocks! Your birthright keeps you safe, as you well know. It is I you will answer to if you tell. Now, go. Off to bed!

(BETTY fades. ABIGAIL takes out another red yarn bracelet hidden in her sleeve and ties it around her wrist. As she exits, the village bell rings the hour.

Lights shift.

In the darkness, we hear the sounds of the wind and the woods at night. ANN sits near the fire. ABIGAIL enters.)

ANN. Abigail! What kept you? I near froze to death with the cold.

ABIGAIL. Betty caught me downstairs in my cloak. She knows I go out at night.

ANN. Does she know where? And with whom?

ABIGAIL. Be calm, Ann. She knows nothing beyond what I have said.

ANN. What if she tells?

ABIGAIL. She is a nuisance. That is all.

ANN. She might be worse than that.

ABIGAIL. Do you think I want a hole bored through my tongue? Or the hot sting of the lash? Betty will not tell.

ANN. Her mother does dote on her. And Tituba, too.

ABIGAIL. Never mind Betty. She will keep quiet. I have seen to it. Tell me the news. What of Goodwife Parris and her visit last night? Was it endless praying? Did they say much of the child's death?

ANN. Goodwife Parris says that Mother must have faith and bear her loss, that God will grant her another child. Mother says that God takes away her babes to punish her. That God has left her with only me.

ABIGAIL. God did give you life, Ann. Your mother should be grateful for that, as am I.

ANN. I am a poor substitute for eight boy babes born dead. Do you suppose the same fate will befall me, my boy babes born dead?

ABIGAIL. Never. Your mother is frail and melancholy, but Ann, you have the strength of ten.

ANN. I try hard to be a good daughter. Say my prayers, do my chores, respect her wishes. Even so I cannot please her even a little.

ABIGAIL. Whatever happens to me, I never will treat my daughter with such disrespect. Are we worth nothing?

(Silence.)

ANN. I wish I had been born a boy. Then I would have value.
(Pause.) Such a bitter cold night.

ABIGAIL. Here. The fire will warm you.

(The girls huddle together. ANN pulls back her sleeve to reveal the red yarn bracelet. ABIGAIL shows her matching bracelet and they lay their arms together.)

ANN. Sisters.

ABIGAIL. Forever.

ANN. Will you knot my bracelet tighter? I fear its loss.

(ABIGAIL ties ANN's bracelet.)

ANN. What would I do without you, Abigail?

ABIGAIL. Without me? You will have a fine dowry and marry well. You will have land and a house of your own.

ANN. Father will chose some smelly farm boy with hair growing from his nose and crossed eyes.

ABIGAIL (*laughing*). Like Benjamin Wilkins! No one will sit near him at meeting for the stench of pig.

(*Laughter.*)

ANN. I would rather die than be wed to a smelly farmer like Benjamin Wilkins.

ABIGAIL. I do wonder what trade my husband will be. Above all else ... I should like to be in love. Love, love, love! I want to be loved.

ANN. I would be married to a merchant and live in a fine house in Boston.

ABIGAIL. Ah! Your father hates the merchants.

ANN. He says they love goods more than God. But I do covet the fine clothes the merchant wives wear.

ABIGAIL. I pray you will have your merchant husband and your finery, Ann. I care only for love. I would have my husband dote on me, like Reverend Parris dotes on Betty.

ANN. They do hold her high.

ABIGAIL. And me as low as a servant. Goodwife Parris leaves all to me as if I were a slave like Tituba. I am sick of washing and sweeping and emptying chamber pots.

ANN. Mercy's words exact. She complains of the work, but that is her place.

ABIGAIL. Her place, but not mine. Mercy is bound out. I am blood to the Parris family. But still I am an orphan and so will have no dowry and no prospects for a good marriage. What is left for me but love?

ANN. My mother says it is as easy to love a rich man as a

poor one. Then you will have servants of your own.

ABIGAIL. I swear I will be free of the Parris household if it is the last thing I do.

ANN. Let us run away and set up house together as sisters.

(Silence. Then the two girls erupt with laughter.)

ABIGAIL. If your father heard you say that, he would whip us both! I am bound to the Parris household until I am married. Or die.

ANN. Die! Do not say such a thing.

(ABIGAIL laughs.)

ANN. I hate Reverend Parris.

ABIGAIL. And his whole family.

(A sound.)

ANN. Who is there?

(MERCY and MARY appear.)

MERCY. You might have waited for me, Ann.

ANN. I thought you too tired to come to the woods after your chores.

MERCY. You might have helped me.

ABIGAIL. It is not Ann's place to do your chores.

MARY. Shhht. Does someone come? I thought I heard ...

ANN. Hush, Mary. None know we meet, save ourselves.

(TITUBA appears.)

MERCY. You see? It is only Tituba.

TITUBA. Only Tituba!

MARY. I do fear we will be discovered.

ABIGAIL. Mary, you are afraid of your own shadow.

MARY. I have reason to be wary and so do you. What of poor Martha Shipley?

ANN. No one knows what were the cause of her death.

MARY. We know that she went into these woods and never returned.

MERCY. Her husband did find her dress hung from a tree. It were covered in blood.

ANN. But she were never found.

MARY. It were the Wabanakis took her.

MERCY. Or killed her.

ABIGAIL. Where are we to meet if not in the woods? The village square?

(Silence.)

ABIGAIL. Would you have us abandon the one joy we have?

MARY. No. But my mind is troubled.

ABIGAIL. Tell me, Mary. How many times have we met without incident? Nothing has changed.

MARY. I am changed.

TITUBA. Tell Tituba. What troubles Mary?

MARY. This night before I left my bed, there were a fearful scratching at my window. Two yellow eyes did peer in at me. I was so frightened, my speech was stolen from me, and I could not cry out.

ANN. Did the dogs set to barking?

MARY. No. I did lock them in the barn so they would not hear me pass by.

ANN. Perhaps your eyes were playing tricks on you.

MARY. It were no trick. I did see those yellow eyes, staring

at me. What if it were the Loup-Garoo?

TITUBA. No one sees the Loup-Garoo and lives to tell it.

MERCY. We must thank Almighty God you are safe.

(MARY and MERCY cling to each other.)

MARY. The Reverend Parris says the Devil is about in Salem, that a great war between good and evil is coming and we must be vigilant lest he catch us unawares. He means to steal our souls.

ANN. If you seek to avoid the Devil in Salem stay away from Goody Osborn. She has not been to church in near two years.

MERCY. I do believe John Proctor has the Devil in him. He does take his anger out on Mary with an iron spoon.

MARY. And Sarah Good.

MERCY. She mutters spells under her breath. I have heard her.

ANN *(imitating Sarah Good)*. Two acorns, a lock of hair and the blood of a chicken.

ABIGAIL. Remember when she did dance and shout outside the meeting house?

MERCY. Perhaps her dancing unleashed the devil among us.

MARY. Or our dancing in the woods.

MERCY. And the telling of stories.

TITUBA. No, child. The stories is teachers. The stories keep us safe.

ABIGAIL. We say our prayers and behave as we should in all else but this bit of harmless sport.

MARY. The Reverend Parris says the Devil is in all of us, waiting for his chance.

ABIGAIL. Must you forever repeat the sermons, Mary? Do we not have enough of that every Sunday?

ANN. Four. Long. Hours.