

# **The Sacrifice Study Guide**

## **The Sacrifice by Kathleen Benner Duple**

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# Plot Summary

"Sacrifice" by Kathleen Benner Duple is the story of the horrors that a family endured during the Salem witch hunts and subsequent trials in the late seventeenth century in Massachusetts. The main character is ten-year-old Abigail Faulkner. She is a free-spirited young girl who is strong and opinionated and is very much like her loving mother, Hannah. The story opens with this child being punished with a six-hour sentence in the stockades. The backdrop of the story is the stringent and judgmental society that existed at the time. The Puritanical tenets under which the people were required to live were harsh, unyielding and unreasonable. The "sin" that the ten-year-old committed was holding her skirt a few inches off the ground so she could run. Girls couldn't run in that community and they certainly couldn't pull up their dresses even if it only revealed their ankles.

Hannah, Abigail's mother, had the same high-spirited nature as her daughter. However, she had no choice but to endure her daughter's punishment even though she knew it was unfair. Abigail's Grandpappy, The Reverend Dane, was the minister at the meetinghouse. Abigail dreaded going to the Sunday service because she was certain she would be the focus of gossip and derision, and the main topic of her grandfather's sermon. But she was wrong: Grandpappy's sermon centered around lying and how it was a violation of the Ten Commandments.

Later, Grandpappy told his family that he decided to sermonize about lying because of an ominous trend that was occurring, one that was far more ominous than a ten-year-old running through a meadow. Young women in Salem, a short distance away from their community of Andover, were being accused of practicing witchcraft. The penalty for working in league with the devil was death or life imprisonment. The Faulkners were shocked but certain that this madness would not spread to Andover.

However, a disgruntled former maid of the family went to the authorities and claimed that Abigail and her older sister, Dorothy, were witches. And Abigail's Aunt Elizabeth was also allegedly a witch. The two young girls and their young aunt were all imprisoned in a horrific prison that was filled with bedbugs, louse and rats and were shackled to the wall with chains.

Hannah was outraged and would stop at nothing to win her daughters' and sister's freedom. Abigail's father, Francis, was a passive man who many perceived to be weak. He suffered from spells in which he heard voices and talked to invisible people. Hannah knew it was up to her to get her daughters back home where they belonged. She devised a scheme in which she won the liberty of her daughters by replacing them in prison with herself.

Although Hannah is still imprisoned when the story ends, there are signs that people, including the governor of the state and Grandpappy, are on the pathway that will end the madness that has taken over the community.



# Chapters 1 and 2

## Chapters 1 and 2 Summary

### Chapter One

As Abigail laid there in the rain, she was determined not to let anyone see her move. The parchment paper sign, "Sinner" hanging around her neck was getting wet. What was wrong with running? God wouldn't have given her legs if he didn't want her to run. But yet, she was locked in a stockade and being punished. In her mind, she tried to pretend her legs belonged to someone else. Her punishment was for six hours but she felt she'd been there for days.

Just when she reached the point of complete exhaustion, four elders came from town including her grandfather, Reverend Dane. Her punishment was ending. Just when she was about to say something that her grandfather, who she called Grandpappy, wouldn't like, her mother, Hannah, appeared to tend to her. Hannah rubbed her legs and helped the unsteady young girl up. Hannah called her "Abby." The first time Hannah called her "Abby" was when a black bear wandered into their garden where five-year-old Abby was playing. Against her mother's pleas, Abby grabbed a stick and banged the stick on the fence and surprisingly made the bear go away. It scared her mother but she hugged and kissed her and told her she was "fierce."

Hannah had to help Abby walk and encouraged her not to let the others see her cry. They made it up the hill to home. Hannah called to Dorothy - announcing that they were home. Abby laid in bed under thick covers and drank warm cider. Her mother comforted her calling her by another nickname, one she had earned - "Bear." She had to recover by the next day because it was the Sabbath. Abby didn't look forward to all the curious and judgmental eyes that would be upon her and her grandfather's fiery sermon which would be directed at her.

Dorothy, Abby's older sister, asked her mother if she was going to scold Abby. She did commit a sin, pulling her skirt up so she could run faster. Hannah told Dorothy not to be so serious. Perhaps she should take part in a footrace sometimes and "race with the devil for a fortnight." (9) Dorothy was shocked at first - she would never do that. Dorothy was concerned for Abby's welfare and so was her father who she sensed was very uncomfortable about the incident. Abby had placed her family in a bad light. But Hannah felt that the footrace might have been worth it because it had made her daughter happy if even for only a fleeting moment.

### Chapter Two

Abby woke up sore and stiff the next morning. Hannah let her sleep late so she had to hurry and get ready. Franny, her younger sister, was sitting in the kitchen. She told her that their mother had Dorothy water the garden for her so she could sleep longer. Abby



was certain that Dorothy would be complaining about doing her chores. Sarah Phelps, the family maid, handed out breakfast. Many townsfolk thought it was scandalous that the Faulkner's had a maid. It was excessive and a flaunting of their wealth. Sarah's family needed the money and Hannah kept her on for that reason alone. It bothered Abby that Sarah seemed cold toward her. Their father, Francis, entered carrying baby Edward with him. Dorothy came in from the garden followed by eight-year-old Paul. Hannah took a doll away from Franny because no playing was allowed on the Sabbath.

Mr. Faulkner held his head and began muttering to himself. It scared Franny. She whispered to Abigail, asking if he be okay this time. Hannah had the children prepare to walk to church without her and their father. Hannah was trying to calm her husband down. She knew that Abigail didn't want to face the congregation alone so she clutched her heart telling her that she'd be with her in spirit if not physically present. As the children neared the meetinghouse, Abigail shuttered and wished her mother was there.

## Chapters 1 and 2 Analysis

### Chapter One

Ten-year-old Abigail Faulkner is a high-spirited young girl. She wants to have fun and run free, but the strictures of the Puritanical community she lives in will not allow it. She has many forces against her. There is the congregation and her grandfather who is the minister and religious leader of the community. Her father is concerned for his daughter but feels at best "uncomfortable" with her free-wheeling behavior. Her older sister, Dorothy, loves her sister but is judgmental and thinks Abby is sinful and headed straight for hell. Her only true supporter is her mother, Hannah, who admires her daughter's fierceness and goal to have fun and be herself. It seems as though both Hannah and Abby are way ahead of their time. Perhaps Hannah, who has been forced to toe the line all her life, admires her daughter's spirit and, in a sense, lives vicariously through her.

### Chapter Two

Hannah has her hands full. Not only does she have five young children to care for, her husband is apparently having mental or emotional problems. He is muttering to himself and having hallucinations. In those days, there was probably no sympathy for the insane. People with mental problems were probably considered sinful and possessed by the devil. Abby has to face the resentment and judgment of her congregation without her mother by her side but she is a strong person and will probably be able to withstand what is sure to be an unpleasant experience.



# Chapters 3 and 4

## Chapters 3 and 4 Summary

### Chapter Three

As they neared the meetinghouse, Abigail saw her cousin, Steven, who had goaded her into racing with him. He stuck his tongue out at her and she did the same in return. There was silence as Abby and her siblings started to enter the meetinghouse. Dorothy whispered that her behavior was causing all of them to suffer. Abby felt relief when she saw her Aunt Elizabeth and Uncle Daniel who told her not to pay attention to the congregation. Dorothy claimed that their father was being punished for Abby's actions an idea which Aunt Elizabeth quickly dismissed. As Abigail entered the meetinghouse, she knew it would be a difficult day. The sermon would be long and it would all be directed at her.

Abigail was uncomfortable in more than just an emotional way. Her body ached and she couldn't find a comfortable position. After two hours, the congregation was given a break to eat lunch. Another two hours would follow after lunch. Abigail braced herself to be the target of her grandfather's sermon that afternoon but she was surprised. Grandpappy did not choose any Bible passages about indecency and sin. She feared that Grandpappy would be criticized by the congregation for sparing her. His sermon focused on the Commandments and on lying. He talked of salvation and damnation which always made Abigail shiver.

After the sermon ended, Aunt Elizabeth didn't know what to do. Her sister needed the support of her family but so did Grandpappy. There was already a lot of angry grumbling among the congregation. Uncle Dan said that Hannah needed them more. Grandpappy was a smart man and could defend himself.

### Chapter Four

The house was eerily silent when Abigail and the others arrived home. Aunt Elizabeth told Dorothy to go upstairs and look for her parents. Abigail was afraid. Had her father done damage to himself and maybe even to her mother? The doctors had repeatedly tried to chase away his demons but finally gave up. When Dorothy emerged from upstairs, she told the others that there were some shredded sheets and a turned over chair but her parents were nowhere to be found. Uncle Daniel left in the dark to look for them. He could give Abigail no comfort that everything would be okay.

The kids brought in wood and made a fire. Abigail and Dorothy prepared dinner. A knock at the door scared them all but it was Grandpappy wanting to know why they hadn't waited for him after the sermon. He was disturbed to hear that Francis and Hannah were missing. He asked what had occurred just before they left for the meetinghouse. Paul had been trapping and badger and Abigail was sleeping late. Dorothy volunteered



that Francis became upset when Hannah told him that Abigail would have to face harsh criticism when she appeared at the meetinghouse. Grandpappy said that he didn't speak of Abigail's sin during his sermon because there were more urgent matters that needed his attention. He told the others not to speak publicly of Francis' illness so that no one could associate it with Abigail's sin. He led everyone in a prayer that Francis and Hannah were safe.

Elizabeth asked what the urgent matter was. He told her that there was news that the devil had arrived in Salem Village and that the community was discovering a coven of witches there. Paul pointed out that there weren't any witches there in Andover. Grandpappy expressed his worry that Francis' illness could be the ruin of them all.

## Chapters 3 and 4 Analysis

### Chapter Three

Abby has the strong support of her aunt and uncle. They stood by her side and told her not to pay any attention to the gossips in the meetinghouse. Although everyone in the congregation expected Abby's grandfather to rail against her during his sermon, he chose a completely different subject. There was disappointment in the air among the narrow-minded people who didn't seem to think that six hours in the stockade was enough punishment for the sin of a ten-year-old girl running in a race. They wanted her to be scolded and humiliated publicly. Abby demonstrates that she has good values and puts her grandfather before her own concerns. She is worried about the criticism that will surely come for his not targeting her in the sermon.

### Chapter Four

Word has spread that the devil is in Salem and that there are witches there. This is a direct reference to the Salem witches who were burned at the stake for allegedly worshiping the devil. Grandpappy is fearful that Francis' behavior will be interpreted by the congregants as devilry and that his psychological problems will bring ruin to Andover. Grandpappy had not sermonized about Abigail's transgression because he had the news about witchcraft in Salem on his mind. There is much tension among the family members when Francis and Hannah are missing adding another layer of fear and suspense to the story.



# Chapters 5 and 6

## Chapters 5 and 6 Summary

### Chapter Five

In the middle of Sabbath dinner, there was a muffled noise outside. Hannah was on one side of Francis and Daniel on the other as they helped him toward the house. Francis was still mumbling and appeared dazed. Grandpappy was a big man and went outside and picked Francis up like he was a baby and carried him upstairs. Hannah was cold and wet and weary. Aunt Elizabeth insisted that Hannah warm herself by the fire and eat dinner. She would attend to Francis.

Hannah sat by the fire and ate. She wanted to know how Abigail fared at the Sabbath service. Dorothy told her that Abby got no tongue-lashing and that Grandpappy was worried about the witches in Salem Village. Grandpappy wouldn't discuss it but wanted to know if anyone else had witnessed Francis during his fit. Unfortunately, Francis had been hallucinating and thought he saw demons in widow Browning's windows and broke four of them. Daniel was sure that the widow would take payment for the repair of her windows. He added that everyone in town was aware of Francis' condition.

Hannah decided it was time for the children to be in bed and tucked them all in. After she saw that Franny and Dorothy were asleep, Abigail sneaked out of the room and sat on the stairs where she could hear the adults talk. Grandpappy was describing the horrible fits that the young girls were having in Salem Village. Grandpappy didn't believe that the girls were being possessed by the devil. He was convinced that the girls are just playacting. Abby knew that the girls had committed a sin if they had lied about being witches. That explained why Grandpappy focused his sermon on lying.

It was getting serious. Three girls had already been convicted of witchcraft in Salem: a slave named Tituba, an old beggar woman named Sarah Good and an ungodly woman named Sarah Osborne. Uncle Daniel was certain that this problem wouldn't spread to Andover where everyone was sensible and God-fearing. But if it would come to Andover, as the minister Grandpappy would have to speak out against any girls who would claim to be under the spell of witchcraft. The talk frightened Abby.

### Chapter Six

Francis woke Abby and Dorothy early the next morning. Although he looked worried and drawn, it seemed that his "fit" had passed. But now there was another problem. Hannah was very sick with a fever. Abby sensed that he felt it was his fault for having her out in the cold and rain the night before. Francis told Abby to sit with her mother until he returned from tending to the livestock.

Abby tried but failed to suppress the anger she felt for her father. It was his fault that her mother was sick. Hannah drifted off while Abby sat with her. But she tossed and turned





and moaned. Hannah was burning with fever. Abby wanted to send Sarah for Dr. Cushman but Sarah had announced that she was quitting. She didn't want to be part of a household where the master had strange fits and a daughter had behaved indecently. Hannah's condition worsened. She was hallucinating and her eyes were rolling back in her head. Sarah had come for her last day but ran off when she heard Hannah talking out of her head. Abby ran out across the field to her father. She raised her skirt so she could run fast but this time the running was not for pleasure.

## Chapters 5 and 6 Analysis

### Chapter Five

Grandpappy fears for his family and for his congregation. He feels that Francis is a conduit to either the devil or to the fear and suspicion that have arisen in and overwhelmed Salem. Since men weren't typically accused of being witches, Grandpappy knows that Francis' affliction could be blamed on the women in the house, most particularly Abby since she'd already brought on the wrath of the community. Half the people, especially nosy judgmental ones like Goody would jump to conclusions if they witnessed the fits that Francis is having. That's why Grandpappy warned the family not to tell anyone about Francis' condition. Grandpappy is forewarning the family that if one of them is accused of being a witch, he may have to speak out against them. Dorothy has already hinted that Abby's behavior was responsible for Francis' latest fit. If others heard that, they would connect the dots which would lead to Abby. Besides, certain congregants who were salivating for Abby to receive more punishment undoubtedly think she got off too easy for her behavior.

### Chapter Six

Hannah is delirious with fever but to Sarah, the family maid who already thinks Abby and Francis are evil, Hannah is under a spell. She is frightened and runs off. If she tells others about the behavior that Hannah and Francis are displaying, others in the community will think that the Salem curse has spread to Andover. And the finger of guilt would probably point at Abby.



# Chapters 7 and 8

## Chapters 7 and 8 Summary

### Chapter Seven

The children were all worried about their mother. Dr. Cushman told Francis that he could not guarantee that Hannah would make it. The child she was carrying might also be suffering. Abby was shocked. She didn't know that her mother was with child. Weeks passed and Abby and Dorothy took over all of their mother's chores. Aunt Elizabeth came by and helped, too. Grandpappy came by every night for dinner and to pray for his daughter's recovery. Francis was worried. He brought Hannah bouquets of wild flowers. Abby continued to fight the anger she felt for Francis. Hannah began to slowly recover. Abby was so relieved that she wouldn't be losing her mother that she vowed to never race again.

### Chapter Eight

Edward began to walk that summer. Hannah was still weak and was learning to walk again herself. Francis took her for evening strolls. They would watch the sunset together. Hannah had not lost her baby and her stomach began to swell. One day, Hannah asked Abby to go for a walk with her and Edward. They sat in the grass and enjoyed the outdoors. Hannah could sense that Abby was restless so she told her to run, lift her skirt, and run. No one would see her. She told her mother of the vow she made to never run again but Hannah dismissed it. She convinced her to take a run. Abby ran a distance and turned around and looked at her mother. She seemed so far away. A sense of foreboding came over her. What if breaking her vow would actually bring harm to her mother or cause some other horrible disaster?

## Chapters 7 and 8 Analysis

### Chapter Seven

Abby is shocked to learn that her mother is pregnant again. The doctor tells Francis that mother and child might both be in danger. The news could not have set well with Abby, who already blames her father for her mother's illness. What if she and her baby both die? How will the anger in her heart for her father impact the story?

### Chapter Eight

It's curious why Hannah would convince Abby to run again, lift her skirt and run. Her daughter had wound up in the stockade last time and was the subject of gossip and harsh judgment. Perhaps she wants her daughter to feel free like she really never has. But with the Salem curse hanging over their head, it seems that Hannah wouldn't want

to take the chance that Abby could be seen in a bad or sinful way. But Abby is a risk taker and perhaps it's a case of like mother, like daughter.



# Chapters 9 and 10

## Chapters 9 and 10 Summary

### Chapter Nine

Hannah was washing clothes in a wooden bucket outside when Grandpappy called her inside. He had to talk to her. Later, Hannah told Abby and Dorothy what Grandpappy had told her. Joseph Ballard sent for the girls from Salem who claimed to be under the devil's spell. Ballard was blaming his wife's illness on the devil. The "witches" from Salem would be able to determine if there was a witch among the people of the community. The girls would be arriving the next day. Hannah was not going to allow her daughters to see the girls.

The next day was such a beautiful day that Hannah allowed the girls to do their sewing and mending outside. Francis was in a cheerful mood and had not experienced a fit since that dark night during the winter. As they sat outside, they suddenly saw Aunt Elizabeth heading for their house. She had news about the girls from Salem. When they visited the sick people, they saw a witch at the head and foot of each bed. Since they didn't know their names, all the people of Andover would be required to come to the meetinghouse and be presented to the Salem girls who could be able to recognize who the the witches were. Hannah was upset. What if the girls lied? That was something, Aunt Elizabeth said, that they had no control over.

### Chapter Ten

The family walked to town the next day. Franny was frightened that the girls would come for her but Abigail told her she had nothing to fear. Abigail was frightened, too, but tried to hide it. Mistress Stevens spoke with Hannah about the situation. She seemed to give Francis a long look when she said that strange things were happening in Andover. Abby spoke up that the Lord solved all problems through prayer. Dorothy was shocked by Abby's insolence but Hannah couldn't help but smile a bit. The family was surprised that Grandpappy was not there.

As Abby entered the meetinghouse, many thoughts went through her mind. Would she see hell and damnation? If the devil was there would he see evil in her and take her? The girls from Salem entered after everyone had taken a seat. They all looked normal, clean and well-groomed. But then the girls began to moan and pull at their hair and scratch themselves. Francis whispered that their claims were nonsense. Abby wondered to herself if the devil was there. Finally, she saw Grandpappy who entered by a side door and sat in the back, allowing the younger minister to lead the event. Abby recalled how her grandfather had said that the girls were playing a game. But, judging from their moans and behavior, they were good actors.



Reverend Barnard introduced the girls, Ann Putnam and Mary Walcott of Salem, to the congregation. Both girls claimed that they had been touched by the devil. Congregants would be selected randomly, blindfolded and presented to the girls. The blindfold would be used to keep them from giving the girls the evil-eye in case they were indeed possessed.

The girls touched the people presented to them and had no reaction until Mistress Osgood was brought to them. The girls became still and stopped moaning when they touched her, apparently a sign of the devil. Mistress Osgood was naturally upset, declaring that she was not a witch and wanted another chance. Another try brought the same result. Mistress Osgood dissolved into tears. But other people quieted the girls too, including men. So the significance of their reactions was not immediately clear.

Abby and her entire family were required to go before the girls. No one in the family calmed the girls. They made it through the test. Abby noticed Justice Bradstreet was signing petitions for the arrest of those who had been identified as witches by the girls. Influenced by Grandpappy's words, Abby questioned whether the accused people had really been touched by the devil.

## Chapters 9 and 10 Analysis

### Chapter Nine

The curse of Salem Village would be coming to Andover after all. It seemed that people were in a frenzy to hunt down witches. In fact, the witches themselves would be coming to Andover to name those in the community who were in league with the devil. The fact that a religious leader in the community, Abby's grandfather, thinks the girls are lying will surely have an impact on the situation that is growing more and more dire.

### Chapter Ten

The community is wrought with fear and suspicion. If Grandpappy is right and the girls are lying, they are the sinners because telling falsehoods is in violation of one of the Ten Commandments. But lies can lead to false assumptions and to tragic results if the townsfolk, already stirred up by thoughts of sin and the possibility that the devil is infiltrating them, are told that there are indeed witches among them.

Although "Sacrifice" is a novel and fiction, it is apparently inspired by the true events that took place during the witch hunts in Salem, Massachusetts. It is easy to understand how the stoking of fear and the fraying of raw emotions among the very religious and devout people of Salem led to the tragedies that occurred there. Out of fear that they themselves might be accused, people became judgmental of others and conveniently pointed the finger of guilt away from themselves to others who the congregants would readily accept as "odd" and vulnerable to possession by Satan.



# Chapters 11 and 12

## Chapters 11 and 12 Summary

### Chapter Eleven

Hannah did not want her children gossiping about the accused although they were all anxious to know what happened to them. Franny had been terrified that the "witches" would be after her. Abby told her that, in her opinion, Mistress Osgood was not working with the devil. Grandpappy was coming for dinner. Perhaps he would have news on the fate of the accused ones. Abby was tending to Edward upstairs when she heard Grandpappy's voice. She hurried down but stopped when she saw tears in her mother's eyes, Dorothy's hand was over her mouth and Francis was staring at the floor. Aunt Elizabeth had been accused of being a witch and there was a warrant out for her arrest.

Grandpappy said the girls were seeking revenge against him because he had been speaking out against them, calling them frauds. Grandpappy started crying. It was his fault that his daughter was being accused of witchcraft. Daniel was there and too upset to eat although Hannah tried to encourage him to. He told Grandpappy that he was determined to free Elizabeth and the rest of the accused and prove that the girls were lying. Hannah suggested that they go to Boston and appeal to the Governor. Grandpappy agreed and said they would leave in the morning.

The trip did no good as the governor refused to get involved. The trials started soon after their return from Boston. Daniel came by with news that Elizabeth was faring well in jail considering the circumstances. There was also some potentially frightening news. Sarah Phelps was seeking out the magistrate because she had information about witches in Andover. Of course, the entire family knew that Sarah thought the Faulkner house was filled with evil. There were Francis' fits, Abby's "sin" and Hannah's odd behavior when she was suffering from a high fever. They family prayed that night but it was for naught. The next day the Justice came to arrest Abigail and Dorothy Faulkner.

### Chapter Twelve

Abigail felt the floor swaying beneath her. Was she really being accused of being a witch? Hannah and Francis were angry and showed it. But Constable Ballard was merely the messenger. They would have their chance to prove themselves innocent at trial Ballard told Francis. Abigail saw the sheer anger on Paul's face. Francis gave up before Hannah did. Hannah told Ballard that he would take her before any of her children. He explained that Sarah had filed the complaint against the girls.

Hannah pleaded with Ballard that the girls be allowed to stay in Andover and not go to the prison in Salem. The law is the law, he told her, and advanced toward the girls. But Paul blocked him and said he would not be taking his sisters. Justice Bradstreet came up behind Paul and knocked him on the floor. Hannah became hysterical when Ballard



grabbed Dorothy. Bradstreet grabbed Abby and tied her hands in front of her. The girls were half-dragged to the Constable's wagon and forced on board. Hannah beat her fists on the constable's back then fell to the ground sobbing.

As the wagon took off, Francis called out to his daughters. He would follow them to Salem and provide enough money for them to live in comfort. Hannah got up and ran after the wagon. She touched each daughter's cheek and told them that Francis would look after them. Elizabeth was already in Salem and would comfort them. Hannah told her daughters to remember that they were innocent. Abby promised to take care of Dorothy who was sobbing and distraught. She cried all the way to Salem. Francis rode his horse alongside the wagon. Abby was full of anger over the weakness her father had displayed.

As they rode through Salem, people called them witches and other names and threw stones at them. They arrived at the prison, a massive wooden building where they were taken from the wagon and led up the prison stairs.

## Chapters 11 and 12 Analysis

### Chapter Eleven

Sarah Phelps is an example of a judgmental, self-righteous person who used the opportunity of the witch hunt in Andover to seek revenge on her former employers. She had a deep resentment for the Faulkners. She had witnessed some of Francis' fit, she knew about Abby's terrible sin of "running," and she was frightened by Hannah's behavior while she was hallucinating from a high fever. Sarah put all these unrelated events together and convinced herself that the devil was at work in the Faulkner house. Andover was in such chaos with the possibility that the devil himself was among them, that many were more than willing to believe that their neighbors were evil and in league with Satan. By pointing the finger of guilt at others, the accusers could feel a measure of relief that suspicious eyes would be diverted from them.

How will the family fight to free Elizabeth, Abby and Dorothy? Grandpappy had said he would have to speak out against the accusers but would he also be pressured to speak out against the accused?

### Chapter Twelve

Hannah put up a heartfelt fight to keep her daughters from being arrested and going to the prison in Salem. But it was to no avail. They were arrested on a complaint from Sarah who had resented them for other reasons. It was from revenge and perhaps petty jealousy that Sarah acted. Perhaps she didn't understand that she could be sending the girls to their deaths. She may have thought they'd be imprisoned or punished in the stockade.

Ostensibly, Francis put up less of a fight than his wife. He was more resolved to the reality of the situation. His inaction and tepid response causes Abby to have even more



resentment for her father. But everyone is different. Francis may be feeling as much pain and agony—even anger and fear—as his wife but it just manifests in a different way. He may have been raised, like many men are, not to show emotions. Paul is his mother's son. The young boy tries to stop the constables from taking his sisters.





# Chapters 13 and 14

## Chapters 13 and 14 Summary

### Chapter Thirteen

Francis was allowed to accompany his daughters into the prison. Abby stood up tall and proud and entered the foul smelling prison hall. Dorothy was overcome by the odor and could not stop coughing. Francis told the jailer he would pay for their comfort and wanted them to be lodged with Elizabeth. The jailer led them down the prison stairs to a lower level where the stench was even worse. The moans of the prisoners as they passed by the cells was frightening. Prisoners stood in crowded cells with no room to sit or lie. All witches were chained, the jailer told them.

They stopped at a cell where a dark figure emerged from the back. It was Elizabeth but she was unrecognizable. Her hair was filthy and hung in strands, she was thin and wasted and her eyes were lifeless. She was in such a state that she didn't know who Abby, Dorothy and Francis were at first. After embracing their father and telling him good-bye, the girls entered the cell where Elizabeth greeted them with hugs. Leg irons were clasped around their ankles with chains that were attached to the wall. Francis called to Elizabeth to watch over his daughters until the madness ends.

### Chapter Fourteen

Abby listened as the footsteps of her father and the jailer faded. The jailer had a torch when he had first brought them and now, without it, the cell was darker and gloomier than ever. There were other women in the cell with them besides Elizabeth. They warned Elizabeth that they would not share their space with her nieces. Elizabeth led them to the back of the cell to her cot. They both stumbled on their heavy chains. After sitting on the couch, Dorothy complained that she had been bitten. The cell was rife with bedbugs and louse. All Dorothy could do was cry. Elizabeth said that the most intolerable part of imprisonment was that there was absolutely nothing to do. Another woman said that not one woman accused of being a witch had ever been found innocent. One woman confessed to being a witch even though she wasn't. If she'd been convicted of being a witch she would have been executed. By confessing, she saved her life and received a life sentence.

Their meals were regular in this cell because families paid for their food. They had their first dinner that night. It was thin soup with a piece of bread. Abby's bread had mold on it but the jailer would not replace it. Eat it or not, he told her. Dorothy refused her meal because surely her father paid for more than watery soup. That enraged the jailer who told her she would not get her candle that night. She learned from Elizabeth that the candles were given to the prisoners to ward off the rats.



## Chapters 13 and 14 Analysis

### Chapter Thirteen

Francis shows that he loves and cares for his daughters. He doesn't want them in prison but feels helpless to stop it. He doesn't know how to help them other than make their stay in the horrible prison as comfortable as possible. For the girls, seeing Elizabeth in her declining condition is a terrifying harbinger of their own future. So many people seem to be thrown in the prison and forgotten. Although Abby is stronger and braver than her sister, she is just as frightened.

### Chapter Fourteen

Conditions were worse than the girls could have imagined. Being forced into such a horrid existence is unbearable, especially when one is innocent. Their options are ones that no one would want to choose from. There seems to be no hope. Although Abby is the strongest of the three women, her spirit is quite naturally being broken. To realize that this was the fate of many real girls during the Salem witch hunts should make every person in a democracy realize that the most wonderful words in the world truly are "innocent until proven guilty."



# Chapters 15 and 16

## Chapters 15 and 16 Summary

### Chapter Fifteen

Rats! The thought terrified the girls. They would sooner put up with the bedbugs. Elizabeth shared her small cot with her nieces. It was crowded but their body heat would keep them warm. It got very cold in the prison. Abby held Dorothy tight as she dissolved into tears. Dorothy drifted off but it was a long time before Abby fell into a fitful sleep.

Elizabeth's incessant cough woke Abby up. Her aunt had had the cough for a fortnight. Abby heard a scratching sound and was sure that the rats had arrived. Elizabeth admitted that she coughed up blood. Abby panicked. Elizabeth had to get out of there and get treatment.

The only way an accused could escape condemnation was to accuse another of being a witch. Elizabeth's dream was to hold Daniel in her arms again. She was hopeful that Abby and Dorothy's young age would convince the magistrates of their innocence. The next day just when Abby was thinking she could not survive there, Hannah was escorted to their cell. The girls hurried to the front of the cell hoping that their mother wouldn't notice that they were chained.

But Hannah saw the chains and went into an emotional rant that the girls had never seen their mother display before. Sadly, Francis was experiencing another spell and hearing voices again. Elizabeth scolded Hannah, telling her to calm down and focus on getting her daughters out. Hannah said that the Lord had deserted all of them. Hannah began to recover when her sister convinced her that God had not abandoned them, it was man who had wronged them. Hannah vowed to find a way to free them.

### Chapter Sixteen

Incredibly, the girls settled into their strange new routine. They spent August, September and then October imprisoned. Their arms were covered in bedbug bites, their hair greasy and filled with lice. Abby became accustomed to the odor and realized that she must smell the same herself. Dorothy had given up. She hardly spoke or ate - just stared into empty space. Aunt Elizabeth's health declined further. She coughed day and night and hardly ever left her bunk. Sometimes, she was too weak to sit up when she coughed leaving her covered in her own blood.

Hannah and Daniel came every other day. Hannah became more depressed with each visit. Francis' condition had worsened and he hardly left his bed. When the rains came, Aunt Elizabeth warned that the rain would raise the sea level and that the cell floors would be covered with sea water. After the floors were flooded, walking in the cold water made Elizabeth's condition worse. One morning, they woke to deeper water and a cell



full of rats swimming around in the water. Everyone was moaning and upset except for Elizabeth. Abigail felt her aunt's leg. She was lifeless. She told Dorothy that their aunt was dead.

## Chapters 15 and 16 Analysis

### Chapter Fifteen

If there is anyone who can free the girls, it is their mother, Hannah. Although she almost went off the deep-end in her despair over her daughter's arrest and imprisonment, her sister convinced her to stay focused on getting the girls out. Hannah is a strong person. Perhaps her rant allowed her to vent her anger and frustration to a degree so that she can put all her efforts in freeing Abby, Dorothy and Elizabeth.

Elizabeth may not survive. She is coughing up blood which is a sign of serious disease. And, of course, there is no medical treatment available to the prisoners. The arrest of the girls and their aunt has destroyed the family. Francis is in such a state that he will probably never fully recover.

### Chapter Sixteen

The human being has a resilient nature and amazingly Abby adapts, to a degree, to her new reality. However, Elizabeth and Dorothy are not faring so well. Sadly, Elizabeth dies and Dorothy appears to be going mad. It's been months now and with every visit Hannah makes, she becomes more depressed. It seems that the devil is having his way with the Faulkner family - but it's really the devilry created by man not by a demon.



# Chapters 17 and 18

## Chapters 17 and 18 Summary

### Chapter Seventeen

Elizabeth had only been twenty-four years old. Abby felt an overwhelming sadness. She cried and said prayers for Daniel, her mother and Grandpappy. They would all have to live the rest of their lives without their lovely Elizabeth. Dorothy yelled for help and surprisingly a jailer responded. She asked him to send for her family because Elizabeth had passed away. Dorothy waded back in the rat-infested water and gave a good swift kick to a rat that swam up to her.

Aunt Elizabeth's death seemed to have given Dorothy new courage, at least temporarily. Dorothy told Abby to tear a piece of her under garment off so they could clean the blood from Elizabeth's face. Next Dorothy combed and arranged her hair. She was gaunt and pale but at least the girls made her presentable. The next day, Hannah, Uncle Daniel, Grandpappy and Paul came. The jailer let them in the cell and Daniel came and laid a hand on Elizabeth's forehead and bent down by her.

Paul told Abigail that Francis had never recovered. Paul was sure that their father's condition had been brought on by the arrest and imprisonment of his daughters. Everyone bowed their heads while Grandpappy said his prayer. Daniel and Paul carried Elizabeth's body out. Grandpappy vowed that he and Hannah would get the girls out.

### Chapter Eighteen

Abby began to deteriorate. She thought all was hopeless and that she'd die in that horrific place. She began to sit and stare all day like Dorothy. When Hannah came to see her she had to shake her daughter because she seemed to be in a trance. Hannah had found a way to free her and Dorothy. Abby was still unresponsive so Hannah slapped her hard. They took Elizabeth but Hannah wasn't going to let them take Abby from her. Hannah had arranged to have her trial the day after tomorrow. Abby and Dorothy would be acquitted because they would formally accuse another of witchcraft. Who was she to accuse so that she could go free she asked mother. "You will accuse me," Hannah said. (163)

## Chapters 17 and 18 Analysis

### Chapter Seventeen

The tragic death of Elizabeth brings home to Abby and Dorothy their new reality. Dorothy who had always been emotional and weak like her father discovered a new strength after Elizabeth died. Perhaps she knew that her aunt's death was too much for a ten-year-old to cope with and understand. Although she eventually returned to her



passivity, she was strong just when her younger sister needed her to be and she felt it her duty to honor her Aunt Elizabeth's death.

### Chapter Eighteen

Incarceration has finally begun to destroy Abby's spirit. The death of her aunt and the seemingly dismal chance that she and her sister would ever be free have taken their toll on the young girl. When Hannah tells Abby that she wants Abby to accuse her of witchcraft so she can be free, Abby's first instinct is to refuse to lie. She would rather endure imprisonment than see her beloved mother behind bars. As usual, Abby puts the welfare of those she loves above herself.



# Chapters 19 and 20

## Chapters 19 and 20 Summary

### Chapter Nineteen

Abigail refused. She would not accuse her mother. But both Hannah and Dorothy insisted that the plan would work. But their mother would be imprisoned, Abby said. What would she do when she came to trial, accuse someone else? Dorothy said that Hannah would not admit to being a witch but they would not be able to condemn her because she was with child. But they could hang her after her baby was born. Grandpappy was speaking out against the madness. By the time her baby was born, surely she would be able to have her freedom. Still Abby refused but her mother gave her no choice.

The day of their trial came and Abby and Dorothy were led from the cell. They were taken to a small room where Hannah waited for them. She helped them bathe and wash their hair. She brought clean clothes for them to wear. Both Abby and Dorothy told their mother they did not want to accuse her but Hannah told them it would break her heart if they didn't do as she asked.

They walked outside into the fresh air for the first time in months. It was glorious to be outside once again. They climbed into the wagon that would take them to the meetinghouse. Grandpappy greeted the girls there. He hugged them and praised them for agreeing to Hannah's plan. He was worried about how it would turn out but if the girls stayed in prison it would kill Hannah. Abby said what they were about to say at their trial would be all lies. He said they were lies that the Lord would forgive.

### Chapter Twenty

The meetinghouse was filled with both familiar and unfamiliar faces. Francis, Hannah and Grandpappy were in the front pew. Hannah made the other children stay home. Francis looked drawn and tired and seemed to not know what was going on. The girls whispered to each other about the packed house. Many who came just had ghoulish interest in the case. Sarah Phelps was brought down the aisle by the constable. Dorothy had bitter resentment for Sarah but Abby said they should forgive her. She was afraid of something she didn't understand. The three magistrates, all dressed in black, entered last and took a seat at the large table in front of the room.

Sarah testified about Francis' fits and Hannah's hallucinations during her sickness. Sarah claimed that Abby was chasing her when Abby ran to get her father. Then she swore to the most outlandish lie. She claimed that both Abby and Dorothy had flown about her for six nights asking her to join them in the work of the devil.

Abby and Dorothy were aghast. The girls felt there was no hope. There was no way to disprove what Sarah had testified to. Dorothy testified and followed her mother's plan.



Sarah interjected that Hannah was the witch because she could always calm Francis. It was the mother who was in league with the devil.

## Chapters 19 and 20 Analysis

### Chapter Nineteen

Abby has seen and learned too much in prison to believe that they will be able to free her mother. She can recall vividly how her aunt died and how the forgotten women in the cell with them were hopelessly imprisoned forever. Abby is being forced to choose between freedom for herself or freedom for her mother. Her instinct is to save her mother. Yet, she is torn when Grandpappy, who is against the lie, tells her that if Abby doesn't accuse Hannah it will break her mother's heart. Even though Grandpappy tells Abby that the Lord would forgive her lying in this case, Abby doesn't think it's right to lie and certainly doesn't want her lie to put her mother in prison. She is in an impossible situation.

### Chapter Twenty

Abby shows her magnanimous and forgiving nature when she tells Dorothy that they should forgive Sarah. Dorothy is of no mind to forgive the person who is responsible for the predicament they are in. But Abby wants to move forward and focus on what they can do to end the madness now, especially since it will involve their own mother.





# Chapters 21, 22 and 23

## Chapters 21, 22 and 23 Summary

### Chapter Twenty-One

It was Abby's turn to testify. The magistrate prompted her repeatedly to speak. Hannah spoke up and told Abby to answer the questions. She kept hesitating until the entire meetinghouse was chanting for her to speak. She finally admitted that her mother had told her to do it. She fell in the pew sobbing. She told Dorothy that she didn't lie because her mother had told her to "do it" - to stand there and testify. Hannah was immediately arrested. Abby worried about her and the baby and whether they could withstand the horrible conditions in prison. Would her mother die like Elizabeth did?

As Abby saw her mother being taken away and looked at her father who was praying but did not try to stop them. Abby realized she was her mother's daughter. She stood and cried out. She stopped the constable. She declared that she had not been honest. Abby told the magistrates that her mother was not a witch and that she and her sister were not witches either. She also proclaimed that there were no witches period - none in Massachusetts or in all of the land. Abby reasoned with the magistrates. Sarah could not prove that she and her sister were flying about any more than she could prove they weren't. It was her word against Sarah's. She begged the magistrates to end this madness. Each and everyone in the courtroom could be falsely accused as she had been. The girls who got into trances and claimed they were witches were merely playacting. Sarah stood and claimed that Hannah's spirit was flying above them but no one else could see it.

The magistrate told the constable to take Hannah away and sentenced Abby to spend a day in the stocks as punishment for lying to the court.

### Chapter Twenty-Two

Dorothy slumped to the floor. Abigail ran to her mother and apologized. Hannah told her she should have never asked her to lie. They both vowed to try to put an end to this horror. Grandpappy stood by Abby as the wagon took Hannah away. Francis, like a lost child, watched her go. Grandpappy told Abby he was proud of her for telling the truth. But Abby responded that it had done her no good to be honest. She had failed her mother. A man's voice behind her questioned whether she had really failed. Grandpappy turned and recognized the man as the governor. The governor's own wife had been accused of witchcraft and he had her taken safely away. The governor announced that he was going to join Grandpappy to end the madness.

Francis was devastated. He wished he could be more like Hannah and Abigail, brave and courageous. With those words, it dawned on Abby how hard life had been for her father. She had lived in fear for a few months in prison. Her father had lived in fear all



his life. She felt overwhelming compassion for her father and hugged and comforted him. Abby and Dorothy were going home at last.

### Chapter Twenty-Three

Abby reacted emotionally when she saw her home again. But she knew she would not have complete happiness until her mother was back home. The girls had a joyful reunion to see Edward, Paul and Franny again. Uncle Daniel took Abby and Dorothy to Elizabeth's grave. Paul and Abby walked in the meadow. He was glad Abby was back but wished their mother didn't have to be imprisoned. Abby explained that she didn't have to be imprisoned but that she sacrificed herself for her daughters. Paul wished he could help his mother but he feels as weak as his father. Abby told her brother that their father fights for their mother in his own way. Abby promised Paul that they would get their mother out. She wasn't sure how yet but she knew they would do it. Suddenly, Abby lifted her skirt a bit and challenged Paul to a race. She flew across the field and knew that no one could beat her.

## Chapters 21, 22 and 23 Analysis

### Chapter Twenty-One

In the end, Abby could not continue with the lie. She didn't care about her own fate. She desperately wanted to free her mother. She tried to appeal to the magistrates with simple logic. As in today's court system, the competing testimony of two witnesses is discounted when neither one can be proven or corroborated. But in the frenzied atmosphere that existed in Massachusetts during the witch hunts, citizens and magistrates alike were open to and even eager to believe that someone was a witch. Although Abby alluded to this reasoning, the magistrates were set in their opinions and not about to be swayed by a ten-year-old.

### Chapter Twenty-Two

Abby is finally able to deal with her father's perceived weakness. She understands that he cares as much as she does about their mother but that he has fewer tools with which to fight. He knows that himself as witnessed by his expression that he wishes he could be brave like Abby and Hannah. Abby is able to have resolution about her father and embraces him for who he is not for who she wants him to be.

### Chapter Twenty-Three

Abby takes a leadership role in the family. She convinces Paul, who is more like she and Hannah, that their father fights for his family in his own way. Although Hannah has not returned home when the story concludes, there is no doubt that Abby - who can run faster than anyone - will do whatever it takes to free her mother and bring her home where she belongs.



# Characters

## Abigail Faulkner

Abigail Faulkner is the ten-year-old protagonist of "The Sacrifice." She lives with her family in Andover, Massachusetts, in the late seventeenth century. She is a high-spirited and opinionated little girl and is much like her mother. The story opens with Abigail locked in a stockade for committing the egregious crime of participating in a foot race. Girls were not allowed to run in the first place. More important, when Abigail ran she pulled her skirt up a few inches so she wouldn't trip. But it was a sin for a girl to pull her skirt up even if it was only enough to reveal her ankles.

Abby dreads going to the meetinghouse the next day following her punishment. Her grandfather is the minister and she is certain that he will center his sermon on her terrible sin. However, she is wrong and is surprised that Grandpappy instead focuses his sermonizing on the sins of lying. Later, it makes sense to Abigail when Grandpappy tells her that girls in nearby Salem are being accused of witchcraft and that he is certain that the accusations are based on lies.

Abby and her family are appalled at the goings on in Salem especially hearing that the girls are being sent to their death over the accusations. They are certain that the same pattern won't emerge in Andover. However, it is not long before Abby, her sister, Dorothy, and her Aunt Elizabeth are all accused of witchcraft, arrested and shackled and chained to the wall of a cell in a prison with horrific and inhumane conditions.

Eventually, Abby and Dorothy win their freedom but it is not without dire ramifications. Hannah, Abby's beloved mother, sacrificed herself and replaced her daughters in prison so that they could be liberated. But Abby is very much like her mother and vows to win her freedom and end the madness that has taken over the community.

## Hannah Faulkner

Hannah Faulkner is Abigail's mother. She is the mother of five children and the wife of Francis Faulkner, a gentleman farmer, in the rural area that encompassed Andover, Massachusetts, in the latter part of the seventeenth century. Hannah is a loving and strong-willed woman. She would do anything for the sake of her husband and children. She has her hands full with the chores necessary to run a large home and a farm. She does a good portion of the chores herself and dispatches the rest to her children. Her world is turned upside down when her two older daughters, Abigail and Dorothy, are accused of working with the devil and performing witchcraft. The accusations are utter lies but the environment at the time was so supercharged with suspicion and fear of Satan that it was fertile ground for these senseless charges to seem worthy.

Hannah literally beat the constable who came to arrest her daughters. When she visited them in prison she assured them that she would get them out. The plan she devised



was foolproof. She instructed her daughters to swear to the magistrates at their trial that they were not witches but it was their mother, Hannah, who was. By doing this, Hannah would literally take their place in prison and they would be free to go home. It would have broken Hannah's heart to think of her daughters in prison the rest of their lives. And to her there was no choice. She was eager to make the sacrifice because it would save their lives.

## **Francis Faulkner**

Francis Faulkner was Abigail's father. He was a passive person who did not show much emotion. He was plagued with "fits" during which he would hear voices and hallucinate.

## **Dorothy Faulkner**

Dorothy Faulkner was Abigail's older sister. She was passive and weak like her father and thought that Abigail misbehaved. Dorothy was accused of witchcraft along with Abigail. They were arrested and imprisoned. They were freed during the trial before the magistrates.

## **Reverend Dane**

Reverend Dane was Abigail's grandfather who she called "Grandpappy." He was the minister of the Puritanical congregation that met at the meetinghouse in Andover. He was concerned about the girls in Salem who playacted and claimed to be witches. Their "innocent" chicanery led to many the imprisonment and deaths of many girls and young women.

## **Aunt Elizabeth**

Elizabeth was Hannah's younger sister. She was accused of witchcraft and imprisoned in Salem. She died in prison of a lung disease which was probably tuberculosis.

## **Paul Faulkner**

Paul was Abigail's younger brother. He was strong like his mother and Abigail. He tried to fight off the constable when he came to arrest his sisters.

## **Franny Faulkner**

Franny is Abigail's younger sister. She was frightened that there were witches in Andover and that they would come to get her some night.



## **Sarah Phelps**

Sarah was the Faulkner's maid. Sarah was a judgmental and narrow-minded woman who put a few unrelated facts together and decided that Dorothy and Abigail were witches and shared her suspicions with the magistrate.

## **Uncle Daniel**

Uncle Daniel was married to Elizabeth. He was devastated when Elizabeth was accused of witchcraft and imprisoned. He was heartbroken when she died a miserable death in the horrid prison.

## **Goody Sprague**

Goody Sprague was a harsh member of the meetinghouse congregation. She told Elizabeth that a man's firm hand could have stopped Abby from her sinful ways.

## **Steven**

Steven was Abigail's cousin. He was the one who goaded her into participating in a foot race which landed her in the town stockades.



## Objects/Places

### Andover, Massachusetts

The story takes place in Andover, Massachusetts, which at the time was a semi-rural area surrounding a small town.

### Salem, Massachusetts

Salem was a larger town not far from Andover. Witch hunts and witch trials first took place in Salem where some innocent women were put to death.

### Salem Prison

Abigail, Dorothy and their Aunt Elizabeth were all accused of witchcraft and were incarcerated in the prison in Salem. The conditions of the prison were unfit for animals.

### Faulkner Family Home and Farm

The Faulkner family lived in a large country home where they had enough acreage to raise livestock and farm.

### The Meetinghouse

The Puritanical community met at the meetinghouse for Sunday Sermons. The meetinghouse was also used for other public meetings including trials.

### The Trial

The trial of Abigail and Dorothy was held at the meetinghouse before a panel of three visiting magistrates. The girls had to publicly declare whether they were innocent or guilty of the witchcraft charges against them.

### Witchcraft

Abigail and Dorothy were accused of being witches. Witchcraft was the practice of evil deeds at the direction of the devil.



## **Stockade**

Abigail Faulkner was punished for taking part in a foot race. She was placed in a stockade for six hours.

## **Francis Faulkner's**

Francis Faulkner suffered from either a mental or emotional condition. The doctors could never help him or figure out what was wrong with him. When he displaying aberrant behavior, people referred to him as having "fits."

## **The Sabbath**

The entire Sabbath was devoted to God. The children could not play and no one could talk while eating. Everyone had to attend the Sunday sermon at the meetinghouse which lasted at least four hours.



# Themes

## Compassion and Empathy

Abigail Faulkner was a strong-willed and high-spirited young girl. She closely identified with her mother who had many of the same traits. Abigail often showed her compassion for other people and demonstrated her willingness to put the interests of others before her own. After going through a grueling punishment in the stockade for a minor offense, she was worried that her grandfather, the minister at the meetinghouse, would build his sermon around her indiscretion.

However, Grandpappy focused his sermon on a different topic, one that he felt was more important. But the congregants were expecting him to show no favoritism and rail against against his granddaughter. At first, Abigail was relieved but after hearing criticism about his action, she began to worry that she had put him in bad light for not making her the target of his words. She would have sat through a sermon about her sin rather than have her grandfather's credibility questioned.

Even though Sarah Phelps was the one who reported to the magistrates her suspicion that Abigail and Dorothy were witches, Sarah told Dorothy, who wanted to scratch Sarah's eyes out, that they should forgive Sarah. She was confused and her fear had driven her to the wrong conclusion.

When her mother wanted to sacrifice herself for her daughters at the conclusion of the story, Abigail could not, in the end, go along with the scheme her mother had devised to free her daughters from prison. She did not want to see her mother suffer in prison or worse. She would rather endure imprisonment or execution rather than have her mother take her place.

There was one person for whom Abigail had a shortage of compassion and empathy. It was her own father who she resented. She saw him time after time be reluctant to speak up and protect and defend his family. She thought him weak and uncaring. Her father had spells during which he hallucinated and heard voices. To Abigail it just confirmed his weakness.

Near the conclusion of the story, her father expresses his wish that he was more like Abigail and Hannah - brave and courageous. His sincerity struck her and she realized something about him that had never occurred to her before. While she was in prison, she felt weak and scared. Her heart went out to him. She had lived in fear for just a few months. Her father had lived in fear his entire life. At that moment, her understanding and compassion grew for him. She realized that she needed to love her father for who he was not for who she wanted him to be.





## Truth and Lies

Abigail Faulkner dreads going to the meetinghouse after she was punished in the stockades for participating in a foot race. She is sure that her grandfather, who is the minister, will focus his sermon on her sins. She'd already been embarrassed enough by feeling like an animal in that awful wooden stockade. Now she would face more humiliation. But to her surprise and joy, Grandpappy sermonized about something completely different - lies and lying and how damaging they can be.

Grandpappy preaches that the Lord does not like lies. One of the Ten Commandments states "thou shalt not bear false witness against your neighbor." Lies not only tear at the Lord's heart, they can bring much harm and pain to people. Although he does not say specifically why he focused on "lies" in his sermon, the Faulkner family later learns that girls in Salem are being accused of performing witchcraft and working for the devil. It's serious business because the girls are either being imprisoned or executed.

Grandpappy is convinced that the girls who were the cause of this problem - girls who claimed to be witches - were playacting, in other words, lying. Why they lied was anyone's guess. The most obvious motivation was that the girls wanted attention or to make people think they had other worldly powers. Their lies not only backfired on them, the introduction into Salem's society the possibility that witches and the devil himself lived among them, made the townsfolk salivate for more witches to punish. The original silly lies that brought the girls a dubious popularity ballooned into a full-scale tragedy during which many innocent girls and women were imprisoned for the rest of their lives or executed.

There is a final sequence about lying in the story. Hannah insists that Abby and Dorothy tell a lie. She wants them to swear that she, Hannah, is actually the witch. That way, they could be freed and she would take their place in jail. At first Abby feels forced to go along with the lie. But in the end, she knows it's wrong and that it will hurt her mother and confesses to the magistrates at her trial that she lied about her mother. She tells them what the truth is: Her mother is not a witch, she and her sister are not witches and in fact no one in Salem or in the entire state of Massachusetts is a witch.

God likes the truth but it seems that not everyone agrees. Even though Abigail told the truth as she was sworn to do and as her religion taught her to do, the gossip mongers and busybodies in the town would have preferred a lie.

## Oppression

Throughout history, there have been many forms of oppression inflicted upon men by other more powerful men. They each are egregious in their own ways. And there are a plethora of examples. The slavery imposed on some men by others is certainly one of the worst. However, how does it compare to the attempted genocide of the Jews by the Nazis? Both occurred not that long ago in historic terms. How could these two forms of oppression be compared? Which is worse? It's impossible to choose because they both



are examples of indefensible and outrageous ways in which some human beings treated other human beings.

Oppression didn't end with the abolition of slavery and the defeat of the Nazis. It exists today in regions of Africa where young girls are mutilated and legs and arms of albinos are taken for their "value" to witchdoctors. In some modern societies, a father is honor-bound to murder or have his daughter murdered if she violates religious laws or marries the wrong man.

In "Sacrifice," the reader learns about a form of oppression that existed in the late seventeenth century in New England. Just as many forms of oppression are fueled by religious fanaticism, the witch hunts and witch trials of Salem were sparked by overzealous Puritanical teachings. Young girls were accused and arrested for conducting witchcraft without evidence or proof. In this story, because Abigail's father is afflicted with a mental or emotional condition, a maid suspects that his daughters brought his condition on. When Abigail runs to get her father because her mother's illness has worsened, the maid claims that the ten-year-old was chasing her and giving her the "evil eye."

Abigail, her sister and her aunt were all imprisoned because they were accused of being witches. There were only three options and outcomes for a girl accused of being a witch: Confess and be sentenced to life imprisonment; accuse someone else of witchcraft and win release; or, deny being a witch and face the executioner. Many girls were unfairly imprisoned and sent to their deaths because of groundless charges and a fervor to eradicate Satan from their midst.

The only good that oppression can bring is that hopefully others will learn from it and not let it happen again. "Those who cannot learn from history are doomed to repeat it." ~ George Santayana, philosopher.



# Style

## Point of View

"The Sacrifice" by Kathleen Benner Duple is written in the third person narrative, limited omniscient, and from the point of view of the protagonist, ten-year-old Abigail Faulkner. In this format, the reader is aware of the protagonist's thoughts and motivations as they pertain to the story. The reader is able to definitively see the growth and character arc of the main character. Although she matured and developed, it was her stay in the horrific prison that went a long way in making her grow up beyond her years.

One of the biggest changes in her character is that she finally comes to a resolution about her relationship with her father. She had always considered him weak and uncaring. When he expressed his wish that he was more like Abigail and Hannah who were strong and brave, Abigail realized that she had been harsh and unfair with him. She also came to the understanding that she needed to love her father for who he was not for who she wanted him to be.

Kathleen Benner Duple is an accomplished writer having written two other books for children: "Bridging Beyond" and "Pilot Mom." Duple was inspired to write "The Sacrifice" after she researched her family's background and found that family ancestors had some involvement in the Salem witch trials; and, that ironically she was living on the same land that her ancestors had lived on hundreds of years before.

## Setting

"The Sacrifice" by Kathleen Benner Duple is set in the late seventeenth century in what was, at the time, the semi-rural community of Andover, Massachusetts. The family has a farm with livestock and chickens. The story begins with the protagonist, ten-year-old Abigail Faulkner, serving a six-hour sentence in the stocks which were located in a public part of town. Abigail's sin was participating in a foot race in a meadow near the family home. She had to pull her skirt up slightly so she wouldn't trip. But that was the sin. A female was not allowed to pull her skirt up even if all it revealed were her ankles.

The Faulkner two-story home is the setting of many of the episodes in the book. In addition to the parents, Hannah and Francis Faulkner, there are five children. The house is large enough to accommodate the large family. There is a fireplace in the living room that keeps the family warm at dinner time.

The family and the entire community attend Puritanical services in a meetinghouse in town. Abigail's grandfather is the minister of the meetinghouse. The family hears that in Salem, which is not far away, girls are being accused of being witches and working with the devil. They are being imprisoned and even executed. Soon, the craziness spreads to Andover and the Faulknors are among the accused. After the Faulkner girls are accused of witchcraft and arrested, they are imprisoned in a horrible, rat-infested prison



in Salem. The conditions aren't fit for animals. Their cots are host to colonies of bedbugs and their hair, unwashed for months, is a safe harbor for head lice.

Abby and her sister, Dorothy, are put on trial which takes place at the meetinghouse which is jam-packed with gossips and the curious. Abby stands before a three-member panel of magistrates to plead her case. In the end, Abby and Dorothy are freed and have an emotional return home and vow to never complain about doing chores again.

## Language and Meaning

"The Sacrifice" by Kathleen Benner Duple takes place in New England in the last seventeenth century. With that in mind, there are hints of an old-fashioned way of speaking but not to a degree that is distracting or that slows the pace of the story. The society is a Puritanical one. They do not attend church; rather, they gather at the meetinghouse in town. When efforts do not produce the desired results, the characters will say that it was for "naught."

Witchcraft and the devil play a key role in this story. The characters discuss devilry and the work of Satan in connection with the behavior of those who are suspected of being witches. When Abigail is running to the field to fetch her father, the maid thinks that she is chasing her and giving her the evil eye. When the "real" witches of Salem come to determine who the Andover witches are, those who they observe are blindfolded so that, in case they are witches, they will be unable to give the girls the evil eye.

Francis Faulkner, Abigail's father, apparently has a mental or emotional problem which the others term as "fits." Hannah has a bad experience when she is very ill with a high fever. Her fever shoots up so high that she begins to hallucinate. When the maid sees her rolling her eyes and talking gibberish, she is sure that Hannah's daughters cast a spell on their mother.

Descriptions of the prison where Abigail and Dorothy are forced to stay present a horrific image that the modern Humane Society wouldn't allow dogs to stay in. Conditions were so awful that the prisoners were given tallow, or candles, each evening so that they would have a light to ward off the advancing rats.

When people talk about the "good old days" they might want to look deeper into what the good old days were really like.

## Structure

"The Sacrifice" by Kathleen Benner Duple is comprised of twenty-three medium-sized chapters. The tale of witch hunting and oppression in old New England is told in a chronological order. The story begins with the central character, ten-year-old Abigail Faulkner, being punished in a stockade for participating in a footrace. It is a foreboding of worse things to come for the young girl and her family.



The backdrop of the story is the strict Puritanical influence that the people must live under in their Massachusetts community. The story progresses in a dark direction when Abigail, her sister, Dorothy and her Aunt Elizabeth are all accused of being witches. Of course, the charges are groundless but in the environment that existed at the time - one of suspicion and harsh judgment - the acceptance that members of the community are in league with the devil was all too easily attained.

The conclusion of the book pits the truth against lies and suspicion. Although it looks as though many people prefer lies and fantasy to reality and the book ends with one member of the Faulkner family still imprisoned for witchcraft, there is a positive tone which leads the reader to believe that in the end the "truth will out."

Following the story is a brief section "Author's Note" in which Duple describes her discovery of a distant relatives, Abigail Faulkner and the Faulkner family, who were involved in the witch trials of Salem in 1692. "Sacrifice" was inspired by these real people and actual events. The book is concluded with a "Bibliography" which lists resource material used by the author.



## Quotes

"Already, she could feel the stares of the congregation and the fiery sermon her grandfather would deliver for her benefit alone." (Chapter One, page 7)

"It seems anything that is pleasurable is sinful, dear one, and as for Abby's soul, she is as innocent as you are. Do not take things so seriously, Dorothy. Life is hard enough without some joy at times. Perhaps I shall have you join Abigail here, and let you race with the devil for a fortnight." (Chapter One, page 9)

"She remembered all the times the doctors tried to figure out what was wrong with Pap. They had bled him, changed his diet, and prayed over him. Finally they had shrugged their shoulders and told Mama that there was nothing they could do to remove these strange, dark fits he had." (Chapter Four, page 34)

"Abigail realized how as torn up inside, and yet she could not forgive him his fits. She knew he could not stop them from coming, and he was paying the price for them now. But still she wished he could try to be stronger and battle the dark thoughts that consumed him at times." (Chapter Seven, page 63)

"As they approached the meetinghouse, their steps slowed, until at last it seemed to Abigail that they were like earthworms crawling toward the doom." (Chapter Ten, page 79)

"Tears will do Eliza no good, Father. You and I know that she is no witch. What we must do now is find a way to prove this to the town. But first, we just eat. Full bellies make strong minds." (Chapter Eleven, page 97)

"Abigail felt as if the ground beneath her were swaying back and forth. Had she heard Constable Ballard correctly? Had he accused her of being a witch?" (Chapter Twelve, page 102)

"Child, I had little choice. Either I denied it and was hanged, or I confessed to it and was imprisoned for life. What choice is that?" (Chapter Fourteen, page 126)

"No one wished them luck nor said good-bye, but Abigail was not surprised. Friendships in places full of suspicion were not easy to make." (Chapter Nineteen, page 167)

"Lies or more lies. And today Abigail Faulkner had had a hand in continuing the river of madness. She who had withstood the stocks. She who had braved the rats and the cold of the prison cell. She had given in to fear today." (Chapter Twenty-One, page 186)

"He might not be the strongest of fathers, but perhaps he did try harder than most. When he was well, Papa was kind, and Mama loved him much." (Chapter Twenty-Two, page 196)

"Abigail flew across the fields. She could hear her brother running hard behind her. But he would not beat her. No one could." (Chapter Twenty-Three, page 203)



## Topics for Discussion

As the story opens, why is Abigail Faulkner being punished? What is her form of punishment, and why was it humiliating and painful?

What attitude did Dorothy, Abigail's older sister, have about Abigail's behavior? What was her mother's attitude toward Dorothy? How were the sisters different?

Which parent is Abigail, Dorothy, Franny and Paul most like? Why?

Why did Sarah Phelps claim that Abigail and Dorothy were witches? What part of her testimony was based in fact and what part was not?

Why did Sarah feel so much anger and resentment for her father? How did she finally resolve these feelings about him?

Why didn't Abigail want to go along with her mother's "plan" to get her daughters out of prison? Why did she do the right thing in the end?

Near the end of the story, what character emerges as someone who could help "end the madness" in Andover? Although Hannah is still in prison when the story ends, what are the chances that she would win her freedom? Why or why not?