I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem

INTRODUCTION

BRIEF BIOGRAPHY OF MARYSE CONDÉ

The youngest of eight children, Maryse Condé was born in Guadeloupe, a French-governed string of islands in the Caribbean. Condé's parents were academics, and she quickly followed in their footsteps: after getting her degree in comparative literature at the Sorbonne in Paris, she began to teach at universities the world over, from West Africa to the Upper West Side. Condé specializes in post-colonial history and theory, with a particular focus on women's place within the African diaspora. Her novels explore much of the same intellectual territory from a fictional perspective; her most important work includes the 1987 book *Segu*, about the rise of the slave trade in West Africa, and *Heremakhonon*, her debut, which follows a Caribbean woman who seeks to trace her roots back to Africa. Condé retired from teaching in 2005 and now lives with her second husband Richard Wilcox (who is also the English-language translator for many of her books). For her contribution to world literature, she has won the Prix Littéraire de la Femme (1986), the Prix de l'Académie Française (1988), the Prix Carbet de la Carïbe (1997), and the New Academy Prize in Literature (2018).

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The most important historical backdrop for *I, Tituba* is the Salem witch trials, a real-life crisis that happened in western Massachusetts in the year 1692. Led by Abigail Williams, niece of town minister Samuel Parris, many teenaged girls in the isolated village began to accuse various adult residents of consorting with the devil. Ultimately, these accusations led to 19 men and women being executed, with hundreds more accused and put on trial. No one is quite sure what catalyzed this bloodbath, though historians have suggested it might have been motivated by land disputes (Tituba's own theory), or that it might have arisen as a response to rampant sexual violence in the community. Either way, the Salem witch trials—which, as *I, Tituba* depicts, were repeated on a lesser scale in various nearby communities—remain one of the most fascinating and bizarre chapters in all of American history.

RELATED LITERARY WORKS

Condé's work is firmly grounded in her Caribbean roots and as such can be seen as an example of post-colonial literature. Condé has cited Jean Rhys (who wrote the Jamaican-set novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*) as a particular influence, and she is friends and contemporaries with Edwidge Danticat, a Haitian-American novelist. But beyond Condé's more general literary influences, *I, Tituba* specifically places itself in conversation with two famous works about colonial New England. The first is Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, which similarly focuses on the Salem witch trials; Condé repeatedly has her heroine interact with John and Elizabeth Proctor, the protagonists of Miller's piece, though she has stated that she is not a fan of Miller's work. And more importantly, Tituba's friend Hester is a clear allusion to Hester Prynne, the central character in *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne. The Proctors and Hester both represent a rebellion against the strictures of early Puritan America, and their inclusion in the story links Condé's narrative to a larger pattern in U.S. literature.

KEY FACTS

- **Full Title:** I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem
- **When Written:** 1980s
- **Where Written:** Los Angeles, California
- **When Published:** 1986
- **Literary Period:** Contemporary
- **Genre:** Historical Fiction
- **Setting:** The hills and plantations of Barbados; the Atlantic Ocean; Salem, Massachusetts, and various other cities and towns across New England
- **Climax:** Tituba is accused of witchcraft by the villagers of Salem, and she must choose between naming others as witches or facing execution herself.
- **Antagonist:** Samuel Parris (among others)
- **Point of View:** First Person

EXTRA CREDIT

Always Alluding. If *I, Tituba* makes prominent allusions to both *The Crucible* and *The Scarlet Letter*, Condé's referencing is even more overt in her more recent novel, the 1995 book *Windward Heights*. Continuing a long trend in Caribbean literature of responding to classic work with a post-colonial spin, *Windward Heights* retells the story of Charlotte Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*—but instead of being set on the English moors, the novel takes place in Cuba and Guadeloupe in the early 20th century.

Lost in the Library. When Condé was a lecturer at the University of California, Los Angeles, she spent much of her time in the giant stacks of the library. One day, she stumbled across a group of books about the witch trials, and she was drawn in by the spooky chaos. But rather than placing Tituba at

the margins of this story, as earlier works like *The Crucible* had done, Condé found Tituba to be the most fascinating historical character of all—and thus decided to devote an entire novel to her.

PLOT SUMMARY

Tituba tells the story of her early life: her mother Abena is an Ashanti woman who was captured, enslaved, and taken to Barbados. While on the ship, Abena is assaulted by a white sailor, resulting in Tituba's birth; Tituba is then raised by Abena and her lover, a gentle Ashanti man named Yao. When Tituba is 7, Darnell Davis, the owner of the plantation, assaults Abena, who uses a cutlass to defend herself. Darnell responds by publicly hanging Abena. Yao kills himself, and Tituba, traumatized, leaves the plantation.

Now an orphan, Tituba finds solace with Mama Yaya, a reclusive healer. Mama Yaya teaches Tituba how to use **tropical plants**, sacrifices, and incantations to cure illness and change others' behavior. She also shows Tituba how to communicate with the dead. Though Mama Yaya dies when Tituba is 14, Tituba continues to seek guidance from her spirit (as well as the spirits of Abena and Yao). After Mama Yaya's death, Tituba builds herself a small cabin on the edge of the plantation. She also begins to travel around the island, healing the sick as Mama Yaya once did.

A few months later, Tituba falls for John Indian, a charismatic man born to a Nago mother and an indigenous father. The spirits of Mama Yaya and Abena counsel Tituba against this attraction, because John has a reputation as a womanizer. Nevertheless, Tituba crosses the island to meet John Indian for a dance, and he affectionately calls her his "little witch." The two become a couple, but John refuses to live with Tituba in her cabin. Instead, he insists she join him on the Endicott plantation, where he has been enslaved for his entire life. Though Tituba cannot believe herself, her love is intense enough to motivate her to willingly rejoin "the white man's world."

After a brief honeymoon period, in which Tituba and John have lots of passionate sex, Susanna Endicott (the plantation owner) shows her true colors. Susanna forces Tituba to clean for hours on end; she also forcibly tries to convert Tituba to Christianity, introducing her to the terrifying concept of Satan. Over time, Tituba's resentment of Susanna grows, and finally, she poisons her. While Susanna slowly dies, she hints that Tituba is a witch—and then announces that she has sold both Tituba and John Indian to a man named Samuel Parris. Though Tituba protests that she was never Susanna's property, it is too late; Parris plans to bring both Tituba and John with him to New England.

While on board the ship that will bring her to America, Tituba gets to know Samuel Parris's sickly wife Elizabeth, bonding over their shared hatred of Parris. Tituba develops a fondness for Betsey, Elizabeth's young daughter, though she distrusts Parris's niece Abigail, a clever, manipulative teenager. When the family finally arrives in Boston, Elizabeth falls deathly ill. In a moment of quick thinking, Tituba finds New England herbs to substitute for the tropical plants she normally uses to heal—and she is able to bring Elizabeth back to health.

Tituba, John, and the Parris family spend the year in Boston while Parris, a minister, tries to find a parish that will hire him. John works in a tavern, where he notices the "hypocrisy" of the white Puritans. Meanwhile, Tituba meets a woman named Judah White, who knows Mama Yaya in the spirit world and who teaches Tituba how to use owls and **black cats** to conduct magic (because "nature changes her language according to the land"). During this time, Tituba gets pregnant, but not wanting to bring another child into slavery, she aborts the baby. Parris at last gets a job in the rural village of Salem, Massachusetts.

Once in Salem, Tituba is swarmed by Abigail and the other local teenaged girls. The girls beg Tituba to tell them stories about witchcraft, and they accuse specific women—poor Sarah Goode, pariah Sarah Osborne, and soft-spoken Elizabeth Proctor—of consorting with the devil. One day, Betsey begins to have seizures, and her parents worry that she is possessed. They immediately blame Tituba for Betsey's plight.

All of the townspeople, including those whom Tituba had been friends with, label her a witch. Parris, along with some other ministers from nearby towns, torture Tituba and sexually assault her in an attempt to make her confess. Tituba refuses to admit to crimes she did not do—or to falsely name others—and so she is taken to jail. She is placed in a cell with Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne, both of whom turn against her immediately. Tituba then is moved to a cell with a beautiful young woman named Hester, who has been imprisoned for adultery. Hester, an avowed "feminist," helps Tituba prepare for her trial.

The first-person account is interrupted by Tituba's real-life trial testimony, excerpted from the archival records. In her testimony, Tituba accuses Goode and Osborne, but nobody else. After the trial, Parris congratulates Tituba on a job well done, which horrifies her.

Tituba summarizes the rash of accusations that spreads across Salem and beyond. Some of the most respected people in the village are executed for witchcraft. To her dismay, Tituba learns that John Indian—determined to "survive" at any cost—has joined the ranks of the accusers.

Eventually, the chaos dies down, and Tituba is sold to a Jewish merchant named Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo. Benjamin has recently lost his wife, and in addition to caring for his nine children, Tituba uses her powers to allow him to commune with his wife's spirit. Eventually, Tituba and Benjamin become

lovers—though Benjamin refuses to grant Tituba her legal freedom. One night, the villagers, consumed by anti-Semitism and anti-Blackness, burn the d'Azevedo home to the ground. Benjamin and Tituba survive, but all the children perish. Benjamin blames himself for this tragedy, and he frees Tituba out of remorse, giving her a ticket back to Barbados. On the ship, Tituba befriends Deodatus, an enslaved man who knew of her mother.

Upon arriving in Barbados, Tituba realizes that she no longer knows anyone on the island. Deodatus introduces her to a group of maroons (former slaves who have escaped into the hills). Christopher, the leader of the maroons, has heard that Tituba has magical powers, and he hopes she will make him "invincible." The two become lovers. When Tituba tells Christopher that "death is a door nobody can lock," he becomes cold and cruel; she leaves him and returns to her old cabin. Soon after, Tituba realizes she is pregnant. Around the same time, she begins caring for a young, enslaved man named Iphigene, who has been nearly beaten to death by a white overseer.

Wanting a better world for her child, Tituba and Iphigene plot a revolt—but before their plan can come to fruition, the white slaveholders execute them both. Tituba reflects that though very little is written about her in archival history, she lives on in the memories of those she helped to heal, and that her "song" can be heard in "the crackling of a fire between four stones, the rainbow-hued babbling of the river, and the sound of the wind."

CHARACTERS

MAJOR CHARACTERS

Tituba – Tituba, the daughter of an Ashanti woman named Abena and the white man who assaulted her, is the protagonist of Maryse Condé's novel. After losing both her mother and her adoptive father Yao at a young age, Tituba finds a home in the swamps of Barbados with Mama Yaya, a local healer, who teaches her how to form potions and communicate with the dead. Tituba's life is disrupted when she falls in love with a handsome man named John Indian, who pulls her into plantation life; eventually, Tituba is forced into slavery and brought to Salem, Massachusetts by a minister named Samuel Parris. Because she is such a skilled healer and because of the prejudice that runs so deep in Salem, many of the villagers (led by the teenaged Abigail) immediately associate Tituba with the devil. After being accused and nearly executed as a witch in the infamous Salem witch trials, Tituba strikes up relationships with an outspoken woman named Hester and Benjamin d'Azevedo, a kindly Jewish merchant. Eventually, Tituba makes her way back to Barbados, where she is killed in the process of planning a slave revolt. Yet despite this life filled with trauma, Tituba remains gentle and forgiving, in part because she does not want to become like most of the white people around her, "knowing only how to do evil." Even amidst her growing awareness of anti-Blackness and misogyny makes it harder and harder for her to stay hopeful, Tituba is able to find moments of love, passion, and joy, however fleeting. And after her death, Tituba's loving presence remains in the memories of those she helped to heal, persisting in "the crackling of a fire between four stones, the rainbow-hued babbling of the river," and Condé's novel itself.

Mama Yaya – Mama Yaya is a Nago healer who lives on the outskirts of Darnell Davis's plantation in Barbados. After Tituba is orphaned at the age of 7, Mama Yaya takes her in, and she quickly educates the little girl about how to use **tropical plants** and incantations to heal and change behavior. Even more importantly, Mama Yaya also shows Tituba how to connect with the dead—so though Yaya dies when Hester is 14, she continues to be a mentor from the afterlife. Though Mama Yaya is consistently generous and kind, she is realistic about the challenges Tituba faces as a Black woman: she emphasizes that "there is no end to the misfortune of Black folks" and continually stresses that "men do not love. They possess." But to help Tituba survive these challenges, Mama instructs her about the necessity of community, explaining that building strong relationships with others allows for life beyond life. In that sense, Mama Yaya embodies two of the novel's major themes. On the one hand, she shows that through love and kindness, people can endure even beyond the grave. But in her healing and incantation, all of which she passes on to Tituba, she also proves that nature can (when used and appreciated correctly) be a critical source of knowledge.

John Indian – John Indian is Tituba's first lover, and despite his many flaws, he is also the love of her life. The two meet when John Indian, born to an indigenous father and a Nago mother, is enslaved on Susanna Endicott's plantation in Barbados; shortly after, the two marry, and John forces Tituba to come live with him on Endicott land. Though John is initially a good partner to Tituba, he is known for his womanizing, and (much to his wife's chagrin) he is consistently unfaithful. Unlike Tituba, John Indian has few qualms about cruel and dishonest behavior—instead, he believes simply that "the duty of a slave is to survive!" To do this, John Indian often plays into white people's stereotypes of Blackness, claiming that doing so allows him to "wear a mask" and be "free" underneath. John Indian's determination to "survive" at all costs—in contrast to Tituba's emphasis on goodness and generosity—is even more on display during the Salem witch trials; whereas Tituba is reluctant to testify against anyone, John becomes one of the main accusers (alongside Abigail and little Anne Putnam). John Indian thus illustrates both the need for a kind of proto-feminism and the pitfalls of putting survival above all.

Hester –Hester becomes Tituba's closest and most important friend after they meet in a jail cell near Salem. A prosperous

white woman who has been outcast from Puritan society for having a brief affair with a minister, she now self-identifies (perhaps anachronistically) as a "feminist"; frequently, she complains that "life is too kind to men, whatever their color." Hester is based on Hester Prynne, the heroine of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter* and one of the most important characters in all of American literature; in Hawthorne's text, she is jailed for committing adultery and made to wear a scarlet "A" on her breast as a reminder of her crime. While imprisoned, Hester—who, as the daughter of a minister, is both familiar with and scornful of Puritan ways of thinking—teaches Tituba how to testify to doing witchcraft in such a way that she exonerates herself. Though Tituba feels the stirrings of sexual attraction to Hester, Hester commits suicide before Tituba can act on these feelings. By alluding to *The Scarlet Letter* and linking her own protagonist to the protagonist of that much earlier work, Condé suggests that there is a pattern to the misogyny and hypocrisy of Puritan life.

Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo – Benjamin d'Azevedo is an older, wealthy, Jewish merchant from Portugal. He purchases Tituba after the conclusion of the Salem witch trials, because he distrusts the Puritans and so does not put stock in their accusations of people. As the father of nine children and a widower, Benjamin mostly relies on Tituba to do household chores, though she also uses her powers to connect him to his deceased wife Abigail d'Azevedo. Benjamin and Tituba become romantically involved, and though her new paramour is physically unattractive, Tituba thinks fondly of their sexual life together (which is "like a drunken boat on a choppy sea"). Benjamin reflects that "our God knows neither race nor color," and his own experiences as a Jew allow him some insight into the persecution Tituba faces as a Black woman; still, he initially refuses to grant Tituba her legal freedom. However, after his children are killed in a fire, Benjamin regrets his role as an enslaver, and he frees Tituba and buys her passage back to Barbados.

Abena – Abena is Tituba's mother. As an Ashanti woman enslaved by Darnell Davis, Abena lives in constant fear of violence and sexual assault. When Darnell does indeed try to rape her, she strikes back, which then leads Darnell to have her publicly hanged as punishment. In life, Abena struggles to show affection to her daughter—because she is the product of a white man's rape—but in death, Abena's spirit becomes an essential guide and source of solace to Tituba. Along those lines, Abena repeatedly tries (and fails) to steer Tituba away from sex, lamenting that women "can't do without men."

Yao – Yao is an Ashanti man who has been captured, enslaved, and brought to Barbados; now, he too works on Darnell Davis's plantation. Yao serves as both a mentor and a lover to Abena, and though he is not Tituba's biological father, he nevertheless treats her as his own daughter. After Abena is hanged, Yao kills himself, as he does not want to live in a world without his beloved wife. Fortunately, though, Mama Yaya shows Tituba how to contact Yao's spirit even after his death. Throughout *I, Tituba*, Yao is the model of a gentle and generous masculinity; both Mama Yaya and Abena encourage Tituba not to settle with any man unless he is as tender as Yao.

Christopher – Christopher is the leader of a group of maroons living high in the hills of Barbados. Having heard of Tituba's healing powers, and inspired by the legend of the invulnerable maroon Ti-Noel, Christopher hopes that Tituba will make him immortal; she agrees to try, and the two become lovers. But Tituba is unable to prevent Christopher from dying—because "death is a door nobody can lock"—and their relationship sours. Soon after, Tituba learns that she is pregnant with Christopher's child, though given his coldness towards her, she decides she does not want him in her child's life.

Iphigene – Iphigene is a young, enslaved man who, after being nearly beaten to death by a plantation overseer, ends up in Tituba's care. At first, Tituba views Iphigene like a son, and the two bond over having lost their mothers to white violence in childhood; by the end of the novel, however, Tituba and Iphigene (whom Tituba frequently describes as "beautiful") become lovers. With Tituba's urging, Iphigene also becomes the leader of a massive slave rebellion—but before he can successfully complete his plan, Iphigene is thwarted and killed by white soldiers. Fortunately, though, he and Tituba remain close, even in the afterlife.

Susanna Endicott – Susanna Endicott is an elderly widow and landowner in Barbados. Though she claims to be anti-slavery, she has kept John Indian in bondage since he was a little boy—and once he marries Tituba, she also claims Tituba as her property. Susanna repeatedly tries to convert Tituba to Christianity, and she frightens Tituba with concepts of Satan and inescapable evil. Susanna is also one of the first people to suggest that Tituba is a witch, capable only of evil magic. When Tituba grows tired of Susanna's gossip and frequent humiliations, she uses Mama Yaya's teachings to make her sick; soon after, Susanna dies, but not before selling Tituba and John Indian to Samuel Parris. As a profoundly racist, inhumane white woman, Susanna represents the limits of female solidarity.

Samuel Parris – Samuel Parris is the brutal, hypocritical minister of Salem. After purchasing Tituba and John Indian as slaves from Susanna Endicott, Parris brings them to New England; from the moment she meets him, Tituba is horrified by him, comparing him variously to a "bird of prey" and to Satan himself. Though he claims to be a man of God, Parris is actually more concerned with profiting off of the villagers of Salem than he is with saving their souls. Perhaps more than any other character in the novel, then, Parris epitomizes what John Indian calls "the hypocrisy of the white man's world," in which even the most outwardly religious people are capable of great prejudice and cruelty.

Elizabeth Parris – Elizabeth Parris is the quiet, sickly wife of Samuel Parris. As they travel to Boston and then to Salem, Elizabeth and Tituba connect over their shared hatred of Parris; Elizabeth is especially resentful of her husband's refusal to acknowledge sex and sexuality as vital parts of life. But though Tituba invests deeply in her friendship with Elizabeth—at one point, even saving her life when she is about to succumb to sickness—Elizabeth extends no such courtesy. Instead, once her daughter Betsey begins to have seizures, Elizabeth joins the ranks of the white Puritans accusing Tituba of witchcraft. Elizabeth's betrayal of Tituba is one of the most painful in the entire narrative.

Betsey Parris – Betsey Parris is the young daughter of Samuel and Elizabeth Parris. Initially, she and Tituba form a close bond, but Betsey is susceptible to the stories of witchcraft that Abigail circulates. Halfway through *I, Tituba*, Betsey turns against Tituba, blaming her mysterious seizures on her old friend. Ultimately, when Tituba tries to confront Betsey about this shift, Betsey reveals her virulent anti-Blackness: "you're a Negress," she tells Tituba. "You can only do evil. You are evil itself." Betsey Parris thus demonstrates that even the youngest, most seemingly innocent white people can hold tremendous bigotry.

Abigail – Abigail (whose full name, historical records reveal, is Abigail Williams) is the teenaged niece of Samuel Parris and the central figure behind the witchcraft panic. As the leader of the young women in Salem, Abigail presses Tituba for stories about the devil and then uses these stories to accuse Tituba and several other women in the town. Abigail often pretends to be possessed, causing Tituba to fear "the power of her imagination." In Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*, another famous text about the Salem witch trials, Abigail is the primary antagonist.

Sarah Goode – Sarah Goode is one of the poorest residents of Salem village, often begging for money and sleeping outside because she cannot afford a home. She is also the mother of little Dorcas Goode. Though initially Tituba feels sympathy for Goodwife Goode, that sympathy melts once—as soon they are placed in the same room—Sarah Goode begins to call Tituba a witch. Frustrated by this betrayal, Tituba ultimately accuses Sarah Goode of witchcraft in her trial.

Sarah Osborne – Sarah Osborne is somewhat of a pariah in Salem; though she is wealthy, she has not attended church for many years, and as both Tituba and later historians suggest, she is dogged by rumors of sexual impropriety. Sarah Osborne is one of the first women to be accused of witchcraft—and almost immediately, in a bid to save herself, she tries to shove the blame onto Tituba. On the stand, Tituba accuses Goodwife Osborne (along with Goodwife Goode) as a witch.

Judah White – Judah White is an herbal healer and one of the few Black women living in New England. She connects with Tituba in the forest outside Salem, explaining that she and Mama Yaya know each other in the spirit world. She teaches Tituba how to substitute New England nature—like **black cats** and autumn leaves—for the **tropical plants** Tituba is used to using in her healing.

Deodatus – Deodatus is a sailor whom Tituba meets while on board the ship from New England back to Barbados. Deodatus remembers what happened to Tituba's mother Abena, and the two form a connection based on their shared trauma and loss; in particular, Deodatus makes Tituba reflect on "this ability our people have of remembering." Once Tituba arrives in Barbados, Deodatus remains a friend, introducing Tituba to Christopher and bringing her into the maroon colony.

Ti-Noel – Ti-Noel is legendary across Barbados for having founded the first maroon colony on the island. It is said that Ti-Noel is invincible, and his legacy inspires everyone from Tituba to Christopher. Though the factual details of Ti-Noel's life are never quite known, Tituba learns that he is Iphigene's father. Ti-Noel's presence in legends and stories gives weight to the idea that people can live on in loved ones' recollections.

Samantha – After helping Samantha's mother deliver her baby, Tituba becomes attached to the little girl—and even after Tituba dies, her love for Samantha lingers. It follows, then, that in the afterlife, Tituba chooses her as a kind of spiritual "descendent," and reflects that no "kind of motherhood could be nobler." As she grows older, Samantha keeps Tituba alive in her memory, learning to recognize her spiritual mother in the waving of **tropical plants** or "the sound of the wind."

Darnell Davis – Darnell Davis is a prominent white plantation owner and slaveholder in Barbados, who purchases both Abena and Yao and pairs the two of them together. He is a hateful man, who mistreats his wife Jennifer, and who torments the enslaved people on his land with constant work and violence. After he tries to assault Abena and she fights back, Darnell has her publicly hanged. Later, when Darnell returns to England, he separates all of the enslaved families on his plantation. In his cruelty, Darnell embodies white violence and disregard for Black life and connection.

Mary Sibley – Mary Sibley is a working-class resident of Salem. She is the first to greet Tituba and the Parris family upon their arrival, and she epitomizes the kind of casual racism and paranoia that Tituba will encounter for the rest of her time in New England. Like many other Puritans in the town, Goodwife Sibley wants Tituba to use her powers for cruelty. Later, Sibley herself comes under suspicion as a witch.

Goodwife Anne Putnam – As the wife of Thomas Putnam, one of the wealthiest men in all of Salem, Goodwife Putnam holds lots of social and political power within the village. Throughout the novel, she is shown to be gossipy and unkind; she also frequently claims to have visions of demons. In *I, Tituba*, as in history, Anne Putnam and her family are behind many of the

most rancorous accusations in Salem. Tituba believes the Putnams were motivated in their rancor by a desire to settle some land disputes.

Little Anne Putnam – Little Anne Putnam is Goodwife Putnam's daughter and one of Abigail's best friends. Anne helps to catalyze the frenzy in Salem when, while a crowd of villagers watches, she has a fit and claims to see the devil himself. Later, Anne Putnam (along with Abigail) becomes one of the most viciously vocal accusers.

Rebecca Nurse – Rebecca Nurse is one of the most widely beloved residents of Salem village, until she is charged with witchcraft and executed. Though she is usually kinder to Tituba than some of the other villagers, she, too, believes that Tituba is capable of evil magic—and she, too, tries to use this evil magic to her own ends.

John Proctor – John Proctor, the stoic, honorable protagonist of the 1957 play *The Crucible*, is also a minor character in *I, Tituba*. A well-respected farmer in Salem during the witch trials, Proctor is consistently a voice of reason and an ally of Tituba's; the fact that he falls under suspicion shows just how out of control the witch trials have become. In *The Crucible*, John Proctor sleeps with and then rejects the much-younger Abigail, sparking her desire to seek revenge and accuse the Proctor family.

Elizabeth Proctor – Elizabeth Proctor is the kind, quiet wife of John Proctor; though she is a minor character in *I, Tituba*, she is a major character (and the moral center) in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible*. She volunteers to take Dorcas Goode in when her mother Sarah Goode is jailed. Though Abigail tries to accuse Elizabeth of witchcraft, Tituba defends her.

Sarah – Sarah is a young, Black, enslaved woman in Salem. The woman Sarah works for is particularly violent, causing Sarah to seek Tituba's help in getting revenge. When Tituba encourages Sarah to be better than the white people who enslave her, Sarah pushes back, arguing that Tituba must change her values to respond to her situation; or as she puts it, "knowledge must adapt to society."

Dr. Griggs – Dr. Griggs is a doctor in Salem who also bills himself as a witchcraft expert. Initially, he and Tituba often collaborate to heal various residents of the village. But after Tituba is accused, Griggs turns against her, despite having no tangible evidence to point to any wrongdoing. Griggs exemplifies the racism and the mob mentality that allows so many of Tituba's neighbors to instantly accuse her.

Dorcas Goode – Dorcas Goode is the young daughter of Sarah Goode. Dorcas grows up with little money or stability, and when her mother is initially accused and jailed, the only people who will take her in are John and Elizabeth Proctor. Later, Dorcas is placed in Tituba's jail cell, and she becomes an object of sympathy for Tituba.

MINOR CHARACTERS

Jennifer Davis – Jennifer is the much younger wife of Darnell Davis. Because Jennifer fears Darnell almost as much as the enslaved people on his plantation do, she forms a friendship with Abena. Jennifer is in poor health, and after giving birth to an equally sickly baby boy, she passes away.

Mercy Lewis – Mercy Lewis is little Anne Putnam's servant girl. She is among the teenaged women who push Tituba for stories about consorting with the devil.

Sarah Hutchinson – Sarah Hutchinson is a middle-class villager in Salem. When Tituba steals Goodwife Hutchinson's sheep for a sacrifice, she is surprised that the seemingly proper woman hopes to use witchcraft to take revenge.

Giles Corey – Giles Corey is one of the most prominent farmers in all of Salem. Though initially Tituba resents him because he testified against her, she grows to respect him more when—even as he is stoned to death—he refuses to admit to the false accusations against him.

Noyes – Noyes is the superintendent of the jail in Ipswich, Massachusetts. He is a stingy and cruel man, and he forces Tituba back into slavery in order to pay for the meagre food and lodgings the jail provided her with.

Mary Black – Mary Black is one of the few other enslaved Black women in Salem. She breaks the news to Tituba that John Indian is sleeping with someone else.

Abigail d'Azevedo – Abigail d'Azevedo is the kindly wife of Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo. Though she is dead by the time Tituba meets Benjamin, the memory of Abigail's kindness and intimacy allows Benjamin to bond with Tituba—and using sacrifices, Tituba allows Benjamin to contact Abigail's spirit.

Metahebel d'Azevedo – Metahebel is the eldest daughter of Benjamin and Abigail d'Azevedo; she is also Tituba's favorite of the nine d'Azevedo children. Along with the rest of her siblings, she is killed when the New England Puritans, in a fit of anti-Semitism, set fire to Benjamin's home.

TERMS

Ashanti – The Ashanti people, also known as the Asante, are from the western coast of Africa (in what is today Ghana and Togo). In the novel, both **Yao** and **Abena** are Ashanti, meaning that **Tituba** is half-Ashanti. Moreover, by identifying her mother and adoptive father in this way, Tituba highlights the importance of diaspora (the community of people from a common homeland now scattered throughout the world) and continues to claim her African identity in the face of white supremacy and enslavement.

Nago – The word Nago stems from the word Anago, a Yoruba-speaking tribe that flourished in western Africa (near what is now Nigeria). **Mama Yaya** is Nago, and **John Indian** is born to

an indigenous father and a Nago mother.

Maroon – Maroons were enslaved people who escaped plantation life to go live in the mountains or forests; often, they would cohabitate with indigenous people in small settlements towards the center of Caribbean islands (while plantation owners tended to live near the sea). In the book, **Ti-Noel** is the legendary founder of the maroon settlement in Barbados; by the time **Tituba** arrives, the group is being led by a man named **Christopher**. Marronage could be an essential form of resistance to slavery, but as Tituba points out, some maroons would also cooperate with slaveholders to capture runaway slaves, preserving their own freedom at the expense of others.

Bossale – Bossale is a term for an enslaved person who was born in Africa and then brought to the New World (as opposed to someone who was born directly into slavery). Throughout the book, **Tituba** notices several bossales struggling to make sense of their new, deeply traumatic circumstances.

Obeah – Obeah is a kind of spiritual healing, rooted in deep knowledge of tropical plants and herbal medicines (or potions). Originating with the Ashanti people, obeah was particularly popular in the New World as both a form of care and as a means of resistance against white enslavers. Though **Tituba** does not identify as an obeah woman, such women and men were tremendously respected in Caribbean communities—indeed, it was believed they could make themselves and others immortal.

THEMES

In LitCharts literature guides, each theme gets its own color-coded icon. These icons make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. If you don't have a color printer, you can still use the icons to track themes in black and white.

SURVIVING VS. ENDURING

For Tituba, the novel's protagonist, every day is a struggle to survive: as a Black woman living in the 17th century, she faces the quotidian brutality of slavery, the constant threat of fatal white violence, and the ravages of disease and childbirth. John Indian, Tituba's husband, instructs Tituba to protect herself at any cost, whether that means playing into white people's stereotypes of her, changing her core beliefs, or betraying the other people in her life—"the duty of a slave," he argues, "is to survive." But while Tituba spends her time using **tropical plants** and incantations to help the people around her stave off injury and illness, she is often hesitant to look out for herself in the same way. This reluctance stems in part from Tituba's determination never to compromise her own goodness and integrity, even if she must sometimes put herself at risk to protect these values (as she does by refusing to name names during her time in the Salem witch trials). But it also comes from Tituba's knowledge, learned from her beloved teacher Mama Yaya, that people can live on after death in their loved ones' minds; indeed, Tituba has spent much of her time on earth being guided by the spirits of her mother Abena and her surrogate father Yao, both long deceased. Thus, rather than emphasizing flesh-and-blood survival above all else, the novel shows that there is more than one way to endure—and that remaining true to one's values can be just as important as remaining alive.

SLAVERY AND DAILY LIFE

Throughout much of her life, Tituba lives in slavery. Though the historical record says very little about Tituba—the real-life woman who played a central role in the 17th-century Salem witch trials—the novel works to fill in the blanks, imagining Tituba's interiority and her lived experience of enslavement. As it follows Tituba from her childhood in Barbados to her adulthood in New England, the novel shows just how much every aspect of daily life is impacted by the horrors of slavery. Enslaved families are constantly being ripped apart, as white planters can—on a whim—sell spouses away from each other or kill beloved parents (such that enslaved families are often "defeated, dispersed, and auctioned off"). Sex and romance, too, are transformed by enslavement: the story begins when Tituba's mother is raped by a white sailor and Tituba is "born from this act of aggression," leading her to live the rest of her life in fear of being assaulted by various white men. Anti-Black racism makes Tituba a source of suspicion for the mostly white communities of New England; frequently, Tituba is arrested, stoned, or threatened with execution. And even when there is no direct violence, it is difficult to create pleasure or meaningful connection, because white slaveholders demand so much brutal work—as Tituba and her husband John Indian learn, when the entire day is spent laboring, it is hard to find time for anything else.

On the one hand, therefore, *I, Tituba* demonstrates how profoundly and horrifically slavery shapes every aspect of Tituba's lived experience; even when Tituba starts to connect with people who have never been enslaved, she realizes that they can never fully understand each other because, having lived free, they do not "exist in the same universe." But on the other hand, if slavery as an institution works to disrupt every aspect of daily life, Tituba also discovers that finding everyday pleasure under slavery is itself an act of rebellion. Whether it is engaging in passionate sex, dancing with friends, or growing delicious food, Tituba and the people she influences are able to defy an unspeakably cruel institution with small moments of joy—to find moments of "uncertain happiness" despite being "constantly under threat."

NATURE AS KNOWLEDGE

I, Tituba: Black Witch of Salem is filled with descriptions of the natural world: Condé details "the shadow play of the flamboyant, calabash, and silk-cotton trees" of Tituba's native Barbados and contrasts this lushness with the sparse forests and "white mottled sky" of Salem, Massachusetts. From a young age, Tituba has learned from skilled healer Mama Yaya how to use **tropical plants**, alongside incantations and animal sacrifices, to heal others or to change their behavior. But when she arrives in Salem, she finds that none of the plants and animals she has long relied on exist in this new climate; she must substitute **black cats** and raw potatoes for the snakes and herbs she used on her native island. Thus Tituba learns that just as "nature changes her language according to the land," she must change her healing practices according to nature.

It follows, then, that the kind of natural magic that Tituba does in warm Barbados is very different from the kind she is able to accomplish in bitterly cold New England; as a young, enslaved woman named Sarah puts it, "knowledge must adapt itself to society." In addition to using different plants—and in addition to feeling less connected to the "invisible world"—Tituba finds that while spells said on the island are usually used to heal, spells said in America often do more harm than good. Ultimately, *I, Tituba* therefore demonstrates that there is tremendous knowledge to be found in nature, if (like Tituba) one knows where to look. But the novel also suggests that people are fundamentally shaped by their environments, and that an inhospitable environment can lead to inhospitable (or even cruel) people—as it does in Salem.

DESIRE, PATRIARCHY AND THE DIFFICULTY OF FEMINISM

Throughout the novel, Tituba is continually betrayed by men; as her mother Abena warns her, "men do not love. They possess." From Tituba's childhood, when a plantation owner tries to assault her mother, to her marriage, when her husband John Indian refuses to defend her against accusations of witchcraft, Tituba is consistently reminded that men are more likely to do harm than good. And yet while the men in her life hurt the people around them, they escape punishment, leaving the women around them to face the consequences; "life is too kind to men," Tituba often reflects, "whatever their color." But even when Tituba, spurred to action by her friendship with an outspoken woman named Hester, begins to think of herself as a feminist, she cannot fully separate herself from men. (Note that Condé's use of the word feminist is anachronistic, as the feminist movement had not yet formed in the 17th century). Instead, Tituba finds herself caught between her ideological frustration with patriarchal society and her intense carnal desire for various men (most prominently her husband John Indian). And if Tituba's sexual longing provides one obstacle to her burgeoning feminism, her complex relationships with white women are an even bigger stumbling block. Though Tituba initially believes she has found allies in people like Elizabeth Parris, who seems to resent her brutal husband Samuel just as much as Tituba does, Elizabeth is quick to turn on Tituba at the first sign of danger. By the end of the narrative, Tituba is convinced of the need for a unified feminist effort: because patriarchy is so prevalent and female desire is so complex, only by standing together (as she does with Hester) can women find solace and strength. But at the same time, the novel also stresses the importance—and the difficulty—of a truly intersectional feminism, where Black women are given the same rights and freedoms as their white counterparts.

ARCHIVAL HISTORY VS. MEMORY

I, Tituba: Black Witch of Salem is based on historical records surrounding the Salem witch trials of 1692; indeed, at one point during the novel, Condé reprints word-for-word the record of Tituba's testimony, pulled straight from the Essex County Archives. But though Condé herself draws from these archives, Tituba spends much of her own narrative fretting that she will not be accurately remembered in historical documents. And indeed, while many of the white people who were accused in Salem have been rehabilitated by large amounts of historical research, no such thing is true of Tituba, who is written about only as "a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.'"

At first, then, the novel shows how profoundly racist many historical archives are; they erase Tituba (and the other enslaved Black women in the town) almost entirely. But while archival history diminishes Tituba, she ends the novel by explaining that "there *is* a song about Tituba"—it just isn't written down. Instead, Tituba's memory lives on in the minds of her spiritual descendants (like a young girl named Samantha) and in the many people whom she helped heal. Moreover, in the book's closing paragraph, she reflects that she also lives on in the nature she loved so much: in "the crackling of a fire between four stones, the rainbow-hued babbling of the river, and the sound of the wind." And finally, Tituba lives on in the novel itself; all of *I, Tituba* can be viewed as a corrective to the faulty archives, as Tituba is finally granted the full, complex biography she deserves. The narrative thus demonstrates a new kind of history, contained not in the pages of an archive but in landscapes and loved ones' hearts.

SYMBOLS

Symbols appear in **teal text** throughout the Summary and Analysis sections of this LitChart.

TROPICAL PLANTS

Tropical plants symbolize appreciation of the natural world as a form of knowledge. In contrast to white slaveholders like Susanna Endicott, who stays indoors and eats only imported foods, Tituba embraces the vegetation in Barbados as a source of solace and power. And just as the tropical plants themselves are fundamentally nourishing—from the bright red flamboyant trees to the lush "patches of yam and furrows of cassava"—the medicines that Tituba (and Mama Yaya before her) are able to create from them are similarly healing. In addition to demonstrating Tituba's knowledge and medicinal skill, therefore, the recurring motif of tropical plants also illustrates one of the novel's central maxims: that "nature changes her language according to the land," and so flourishing, Caribbean vegetation leads to a particularly joyful natural "language."

BLACK CATS

To the Puritans of Salem, Massachusetts, **black cats** are an ominous symbol of witchcraft. For paranoid villagers like Samuel Parris and his family, the mere presence of such a creature near their home is a sign that Satan is near. But if black cats are deeply frightening to many of the white Puritans, Judah White (a local New England healer and a friend of Tituba's spiritual mentor Mama Yaya) sees them as important conduits of nature's power. Indeed, Tituba finds that—in a land devoid of the tropical plants and animals she grew up with—black cats are often some of the best substitutes when it comes time to work her healing magic. The polarizing symbolism of the black cat then reveals a deeper fissure between Tituba, who is half-Ashanti, and the white people who enslave and persecute her. Whereas the white Puritans fear black cats (a nonsensical terror that itself might symbolize their pervasive anti-Blackness), Tituba finds power and comfort in these cats. Moreover, her ability to draw power from black cats shows that, even far from home, Tituba is aware that her "knowledge must adapt itself to society"—while Parris and his ilk operate within a rigid set of symbols, Tituba is able to bend her perceptions as her environment changes.

QUOTES

Note: all page numbers for the quotes below refer to the University of Virginia Press edition of *I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem* published in 2009.

Part 1: Chapter 1 Quotes

❝ Mama Yaya taught me about herbs. Those for inducing sleep. Those for healing wounds and ulcers. Those for loosening the tongues of thieves. Those that calm epileptics and plunge them into blissful rest. Those that put words of hope on the lips of the angry, the desperate, and the suicidal.

Mama Yaya taught me to listen to the wind rising and to measure its force as it swirled above the cabins it had the power to crash.

Mama Yaya had taught me the sea, the mountains, and the hills. She taught me that everything lives, has a soul, and breathes. That everything must be respected. That man is not the master riding through his Kingdom on horseback.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Mama Yaya

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 9

Explanation and Analysis

As a young girl on the island of Barbados, Tituba is taken in by Mama Yaya, a respected healer. Though Mama Yaya's teachings will form the basis of Tituba's powers—the same powers that later cause the villagers of Salem to label her a witch—it is important to note the exact language Tituba uses to describe these lessons. Rather than telling Tituba to control the elements, Mama Yaya instructs her to respond to them: to "listen to the wind" and "measure its force," to distinguish the various herbs and to trust in them. In other words, Mama Yaya is less interested in altering the world around her than she is in "respect[ing]" it.

This early exchange thus shapes Tituba in two formative ways. First, she learns to pay attention to every element of the natural world, from the most delicate tropical plant to "the sea, the mountains, and the hills"; all have a soul, and all are worth "listen[ing]" to. But second, and perhaps even more radically, Mama Yaya models a kind of power based on deference and responsiveness. Slaveholders defined themselves through concepts of mastery, ownership, and brutal control—but by focusing on healing, and appreciation for all other living beings, Mama Yaya rebels against the ideology of slavery, showing Tituba a radically different way of conceiving of the world.

> The dead only die if they die in our hearts. They live on if we cherish them and honor their memory, if we place their favorite delicacies in life on their graves, and if we kneel down regularly to commune with them. They are all around us, eager for attention, eager for affection. A few words are enough to conjure them back and to have their invisible bodies pressed against ours in their eagerness to make themselves useful.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Mama Yaya, Abena

Related Themes:

Page Number: 10

Explanation and Analysis

Tituba and Mama Yaya bond, in part, because they have both suffered such profound familial loss: Mama Yaya's entire family was beaten to death in front of her, while Tituba had to watch as her mother Abena was hanged. Mama Yaya's understanding that the dead "live on if we cherish them" is thus also informed by the violent anti-Blackness both women have had to contend with, which puts them and their loved ones in near-constant danger. To contend with this pervasive loss, Mama Yaya suggests that honoring the memories of family and friends allows them to remain "all around," part of the fabric of daily life.

On the one hand, then, Mama Yaya teaches Tituba a more expansive definition of community. Rather than merely seeking solace from the people directly beside her, Tituba relies on her loved ones across space and time; she "communes with" ancestors from her past and with "invisible bodies" adjacent to the physical world, building a network of guides that will follow her from Barbados to Salem and back again. And indeed, throughout the novel, Abena and Mama Yaya (who passes on when Tituba is 14) advise and comfort Tituba through even the most difficult moments, "mak[ing] themselves useful" whenever they can.

More than that, though, this passage also begins to suggest new ways of thinking about both history and survival. By honoring and consulting these deceased ancestors, Tituba is giving enduring life to them; she is allowing them to survive beyond the confines of their time on earth in her own memories, as she writes them into a kind of personal, deeply internal history.

Part 1: Chapter 2 Quotes

> "Mama Yaya," I said, panting. "I want this man to love me."
>
> She shook her head. "Men do not love. They possess. They subjugate."

Related Characters: Tituba, Mama Yaya (speaker), John Indian

Related Themes:

Page Number: 14

Explanation and Analysis

A few years after Mama Yaya's death, Tituba meets and finds herself desperately attracted to John Indian, a charismatic Nago man on the other side of the island. In this simple exchange, the two women get at one of the most complicated ideas in the novel: desire for men (which can range from sexual "want" to profound romantic "love" and intimacy) sometimes leads women into situations where they are mistreated, disempowered, or "subjugate[d]." This contradiction is especially fraught because, as Tituba quickly discovers, it can be difficult to approach sex and romance from a rational point of view; instead, John Indian affects Tituba on a visceral, physical level, causing her to "pant" and rush to action.

Moreover, the words Mama Yaya uses to describe the behavior of men ("possess," "subjugate") are also words that could be used to talk about slavery. By choosing this kind of language, then, Condé is asking her readers to think with an intersectional lens—to view white supremacy and male misogyny as related, intertwined forms of discrimination. This kind of intersectional view will be especially important as Tituba navigates romantic relationships with Black men and friendships with white women; in each case, solidarity co-exists with prejudice, reflecting the fact that race and gender identities cannot exist in isolation from each other.

> What is a witch? I noticed that when he said the word, it was marked with disapproval. Why should that be? Why? Isn't the ability to communicate with the invisible world, to keep constant links with the dead, to care for others and heal, a superior gift of nature that inspires respect, admiration, and gratitude? Consequently, shouldn't the witch [...] be cherished and revered rather than feared?

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), John Indian , Mama Yaya, Susanna Endicott

Related Themes:

Page Number: 17

Explanation and Analysis

While at a dance with John Indian, Tituba scratches him,

hoping to use a drop of his blood to make a love potion; the exchange, coupled with rumors that have already started to circulate across the island, causes John to label his new lover a "witch." Fascinatingly, though Tituba takes issue with this label, what bothers her is not the word itself but the tinge of "disapproval" that comes along with it. After all, if what she has learned from Mama Yaya is to respect nature and to care for other people—to preserve life and memory above all else—why should that be "feared"?

It is especially important to note that this first critical use of the word "witch" comes from John Indian. In addition to foreshadowing his later betrayal of Tituba in Salem, John's scornful comment also reflects the Christian worldview he has absorbed while working for Susanna Endicott. Whereas Tituba sees the dead and "the invisible world" as sources of wonder and comfort, the unseen is automatically suspect—even satanic—in the eyes of Susanna and her friends (perhaps because in Christianity, the dead are supposed to be sequestered in heaven, completely separated from the living and unreachable by them). And neither Susanna nor John nor (later) any of the Puritans can acknowledge Tituba's practices as stemming merely from another set of beliefs. Instead, these figures understand Tituba through their own lens, distorting her desire to heal to reflect their own prejudices and paranoias.

But if John Indian and many of the white characters in the novel use "witch" disparagingly, Maryse Condé uses the word with pride; it is not for nothing that her novel is subtitled "Black Witch of Salem." By choosing to remember and refer to her protagonist in this way, Condé emphasizes that Tituba *does* really have powers—and so it's up to readers to "cherish" and "revere" her even if her own contemporaries did not.

Part 1: Chapter 3 Quotes

❝ John Indian closed the door with a wooden latch and took me in his arms, whispering: "The duty of a slave is to survive! Do you understand? To survive!"

Related Characters: Tituba, John Indian (speaker), Susanna Endicott , Mama Yaya, Abena

Related Themes:

Page Number: 22

Explanation and Analysis

Almost as soon as John Indian and Tituba have settled on the Endicott plantation, Tituba is surprised to see that John puts on elaborate performances to get out of work or to gain favor with Susanna. Whereas Mama Yaya and Abena encourage Tituba to stand firm in her convictions, never stooping to white cruelty or dissimulation, John Indian shares no such belief. Instead, he feels that in a system that is so patently unjust and deadly, Black men and women must "survive" at all costs—because to survive under back-breaking, violent slavery is an incredible challenge, and so, as John Indian later implies, survival is its own kind of rebellion against white power structures.

There are two other details worth noting in this passage. First, though John asks Tituba if she "understands" his logic, the two will never see eye to eye on this principle (in part because, given her strong connections to people who have passed on, survival means something slightly different to Tituba). Instead, Tituba, raised to respect every life equally, will often struggle to weigh her own needs above those of other people, even when those other people would harm her.

And second, it is interesting that before he imparts this information to Tituba, John "close[s] the door" and pulls the wooden latch shut, ensuring that this conversation will remain unseen and unheard. Later, Tituba—who wears her heart on her sleeve, often to her own detriment—will be accused of secret dealings. But this passage reveals that it is actually John Indian, easily courting the favor of white people, who distinguishes so clearly between his public and private selves.

Part 1: Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ In the early afternoon a man came to see [Susanna], a man such as I had never seen in the streets of Bridgetown, nor for that matter anywhere else. Tall, very tall, dressed in black from head to foot, with a chalky white skin [...] I have already said much about the eyes of Susanna Endicott, but these! Imagine greenish, cold eyes, scheming and wily, creating evil because they saw it everywhere. It was as if I had come face to face with a snake or some evil, wicked reptile. I was immediately convinced that this Satan we heard so much about must stare in the same way at people he wishes to lead astray.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Samuel Parris

Related Themes:

Page Number: 34

Explanation and Analysis

Tituba, having recently learned about the Christian image of

Satan, lives in fear of this terrifying figure—so when she sees a tall man dressed in black (later revealed to be Samuel Parris), she assumes she has seen the devil himself. This passage is important for how it foreshadows Parris's character: in Salem, he will imagine evil and thus "create" it, as his fear of witches sparks a panic that destroys entire families and communities. But it is also vital to understand how Condé inverts the racist symbolism Tituba encounters amongst the Puritans, in which her Blackness makes her a "visible messenger" of Satan. Here, whiteness is frightening, as Tituba takes Parris's "greenish" eyes and "chalky white skin" as markers of the devil (an assessment that, given the horrific treatment he will later subject her to, is not far off).

Additionally, though it is not outright stated, this passage suggests the difference between Tituba's view of nature and that of white Christians like Parris and Susanna. Whereas Tituba finds peace, knowledge, and healing in the natural world, Parris is associated with "evil, wicked reptiles" (like the devilish snake in the Biblical story of Adam and Eve), aligning him with nature's harmful and deceptive side.

Part 1: Chapter 6 Quotes

❝ I cannot describe the effect this unfortunate black cat had on the children, as well as on Elizabeth and Samuel. Samuel Parris seized his prayer book and began to recite a seemingly endless prayer [...] Abigail asked, holding her breath: "Aunt, it was the devil, wasn't it?"

"What will you think up next? It was only an animal that was disturbed by our arrival. Why do you keep talking about the devil? The invisible world around us only torments us if we provoke it."

Related Characters: Tituba, Abigail (speaker), Elizabeth Parris , Samuel Parris

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 44

Explanation and Analysis

Upon arriving at their temporary home in Boston, the Parris family is horrified when a scraggly black cat crosses their path—to Parris and his wife and niece, black cats are an ominous sign of "the devil" (a symbolic trope that has carried through to today). But in the context of the novel, it becomes clear that the Parris' knee-jerk association is far from coincidental. Instead, the cat's black color is part of what makes it fearful—just as Tituba's Blackness will, later on, make her the first person suspected when rumors of witchcraft spread. The instant fear that Parris and Abigail display upon seeing this stray cat thus reflects the almost absurd extent to which anti-Blackness has colored every aspect of Puritan life.

By contrast, Tituba sees the cat as completely non-threatening, or perhaps even comforting. Because she has such respect for every natural life, whether plant, animal, or human, Tituba is able to recognize that the Parris family "disturbed" the cat, not the other way around; of course, a frightened animal would run. And more than that, even if the cat were a symbol or link to an "invisible world" (as Tituba will later discover), why should that world automatically be frightening? Unlike the Parris family, Tituba understands that if spirits are treated with kindness, they will be kind in return—it is only by being so fearful, retreating into their boarded-off houses and dusty books, that Samuel and his kin "provoke" anything worth being afraid of.

Part 1: Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ "There are two Indians working at the Black Horse. If you could see how they are treated. They told me how they were deprived of their land, how the white man destroyed their herds and gave them 'fire water,' which sends a man to his grave in next to no time period. Ah, white folks!"

These stories puzzled me and I tried to understand. "Perhaps it's because they have done so much harm to their fellow beings, to some because their skin is black, to others because their skin is red, that they have such a strong feeling of being damned?"

Related Characters: Tituba, John Indian (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 44

Explanation and Analysis

After John Indian gets a job working in Boston's Black Horse tavern, he is shocked to discover "the hypocrisy of the white man's world." In this exchange, John and Tituba zoom out, understanding their own oppression in the larger context of 17th- and 18th-century colonialism. This passage thus shows the multifaceted destruction wrought by white settlement: in addition to capturing and enslaving African peoples to work the land, white colonists also tried to destroy—either directly or through substances like alcohol

("fire water")—the indigenous men and women they found on that land.

By understanding how their day-to-day lives fit into a larger historical context, John Indian and Tituba are able to see even more clearly the difficulty of surviving in a time of damaging white supremacy. But the fear of damnation that Tituba has picked up on also reveals another important opposition. Whereas Tituba sees the afterlife as a place of comfort and companionship, where loved ones remember and are remembered, white enslavers see the afterlife only as a time of punishment—for the horrible things they have done while still flesh and blood.

Part 1: Chapter 8 Quotes

Lament for my lost child

The moonstone dropped into the water,
Into the waters of the river,
And my fingers couldn't reach it,
Woe is me!
The moonstone has fallen.
Sitting on a rock on the riverbank,
I wept and I lamented.
Oh, softly shining stone,
Glimmering at the bottom of the water.
The hunter passed that way
With his bow and arrows.
"Why are you crying, my lovely one?"
"I'm crying because my moonstone
Lies at the bottom of the water."
"If it is but that, my lovely,
I will help you."
But the hunter died and was drowned.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), John Indian , Hester , Mama Yaya

Related Themes:

Page Number: 55

Explanation and Analysis

While in Salem, Tituba becomes pregnant by John Indian—but rather than giving birth to a child who will grow up in slavery, Tituba decides to abort the baby, protecting her unborn family from the horrors she herself has suffered.

This lament (which she will later repeat when she learns that Hester, too, has aborted a child) gets at the indescribable loss Tituba feels at having refused motherhood. Formally, this chapter is completely different from those that have preceded it; the line breaks, lyrical tone, and metaphoric language reflect that in this moment, Tituba is dealing with a pain too gigantic to put into straightforward language.

The content of this lament is also deeply revealing. First, the reference to water perhaps links back to Mama Yaya's repeated warnings that Tituba's love for John Indian will lead her "across the water": literally to America, but also back into slavery (just as her mother was brought "across the water" of the Atlantic when she was initially forced into enslavement). Water, often associated with the womb or femininity more broadly, then becomes a site of tragedy—just as Tituba's now-empty womb has begun to represent profound maternal grief.

And second, this passage illustrates the particular loneliness Tituba feels as a woman. The male hunter cannot help her here; in fact, he only adds one more element to her already expansive pain. Similarly, Tituba keeps her abortion secret from John Indian, not trusting him to understand (or perhaps to even respect) her thinking.

Part 1: Chapter 9 Quotes

How could their yearning and nostalgia possibly be compared to mine? What they yearned for was the sweetness of a gentler life, the life of white women who were served and waited on by attentive slaves. Even if the reverend Mr. Parris had ended up losing all his wealth and hopes, the life they had spent there was composed of luxury and voluptuousness. And what did I yearn for? The subtle joys of being a slave. The cakes made out of crumbs from the stale bread of life. The fleeting moments of forbidden games.

We did not belong to the same universe, Goodwife Parris, Betsey, and I, and all the affection in the world could not change that.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Elizabeth Parris , Betsey Parris , Samuel Parris

Related Themes:

Page Number: 63

Explanation and Analysis

Bonded by their mutual hatred and fear of Samuel Parris, Tituba develops friendships with Betsey and Elizabeth

Parris. But while all three women detest the cold climate and closed-off culture of New England, Tituba reflects that though they are ostensibly from the same island, these white women's "yearning" cannot be compared to her own. While Tituba is nostalgic for the "fleeting moments" of joy she was able to carve out—despite the constant threat of violence she felt while enslaved—Elizabeth and Betsey long for a world in which their whiteness gave them "luxury," ease, and the ability claim as property even more human beings than they currently do. In other words, while Tituba has never known a world free from anti-Blackness, the Parris women crave a world in which their whiteness was a yet more powerful currency.

No wonder, then, that Tituba seeks companionship in the "invisible world"; though she lives only a few feet away from Elizabeth and Betsey, their lives are so different as to render them effectively in different "universes." And in spite of their solidarity as women—in spite of "all the affection" they initially show each other—Tituba will never feel fully understood by these two white women. This passage thus once more signals the importance of understanding Tituba (and the novel) through an intersectional lens, in which Tituba's identities (and those of the people around her) must always be seen in their full complexity.

Part 1: Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ There were two or three black servants in the community, how they got there I have no idea, and all of us were not simply cursed, but visible messengers of Satan. So we were furtively approached to try and assuage unspeakable desires for revenge, to liberate unsuspecting hatred and bitterness, and to do evil by every means. He who passed for the most devoted of husbands dreamed of nothing but killing his wife! She who passed for the most faithful of wives was prepared to sell the soul of her children to get rid of the father!

Related Characters: Tituba, John Indian (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 65

Explanation and Analysis

During Tituba's time there, the majority of people living in Barbados were enslaved Black folks; in Salem, by contrast, there are only "two or three black servants" in the entire village. In living so closely with white people, then, Tituba is able to more closely observe the nature of their prejudice. In particular, she notes how the Puritans use their theology as a justification for virulent anti-Blackness, linking her (and the other Black people in the town) to Satan merely through the "visible" color of their skin.

But even more importantly, Tituba is also realizing the role prejudice plays in the community's psyche. The Puritans may espouse godly rhetoric, but in reality, the townspeople are filled with base impulses—"unsuspecting hatred," "unspeakable desires for revenge," and "evil" of all kinds. The villagers project their worst instincts onto Tituba, burdening her with their secrets and their cruelty. And then, having forced their own private "evil" onto Tituba, the white Puritans feel "liberate[d]" from it—as if their own viciousness has come from an othered minority group and not from within themselves.

Indeed, this pattern holds true not only in the community of 17th-century Salem but in American life and literature as a whole. (A nice companion piece to this book would be Toni Morrison's essay *Playing in the Dark*, which explores this kind of white projection through a variety of canonical American novels by white authors).

❝ "I cannot do what your heart dares not disclose. The woman who revealed her science taught me to heal and console rather than to do evil. Once, when, like yourself, I dreamed of doing my worst, she warned: 'Don't become like them, knowing only how to do evil.'"

[Sarah] shrugged her frail shoulders under her wretched shawl. "Knowledge must adapt itself to society. You are no longer in Barbados among our unfortunate brothers and sisters. You are among monsters who are set on destroying us."

Related Characters: Tituba, Sarah (speaker), Mama Yaya

Related Themes:

Page Number: 68

Explanation and Analysis

While in the woods one day, Tituba finds Sarah, an enslaved Black woman in the town who works for a particularly brutal white woman. In this critical exchange, Tituba lectures Sarah about the importance of integrity; more than just surviving, Tituba (like Mama Yaya before her) knows the importance of surviving as oneself, holding onto key values instead of becoming like the cruel, white "them."

But Sarah feels that these values no longer apply amongst the "monsters" of Salem, Massachusetts. Instead, just as Tituba has had to change what kinds of plants she uses to heal in her new climate, Sarah now suggests that Tituba

must similarly "adapt" her value systems and way of relating to the world. And in a book that takes nature and natural environments so seriously, it is hard to argue with Sarah's logic; if Tituba's environment is such an important source of her knowledge, then her knowledge must indeed fit the "society" it draws from.

Ultimately, this critical exchange raises a larger question—is the impulse to "do evil" ever necessary (or even admirable)? In a world where the white woman Sarah works for can take out all of her own frustration and sadness on Sarah, where every aspect of Sarah's life (from her "frail shoulders" to her "wretched shawl") is inflected by pain, is it sometimes necessary to fight cruelty with cruelty?

Part 1: Chapter 11 Quotes

❝ "I have been watching you, my poor suffering wife, during all these years we have been together and I can see that you don't understand this white man's world in which we live. You make exceptions. You believe that some of them can respect and love us. How mistaken you are! You must hate without distinction!"

"Well, you're a fine one to talk, John Indian! You're like a puppet in their hands. I'll pull this string and you pull that one…"

"I wear a mask, my tormented wife, painted the colors they want […] and behind all that, I, John Indian, am free."

Related Characters: Tituba, John Indian (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 74

Explanation and Analysis

When Tituba is first accused of witchcraft by the teenaged girls of Salem, she refuses to play along; though Parris tries to feed her certain phrases or behaviors that would allow her to ensure her own safety at the expense of other people's, Tituba stays quiet. John Indian understands that Tituba's stubbornness is motivated in part by her basic belief that people can be good—that there can be some "exceptions" to the abject cruelty and violence that defines most of the white men and women Tituba knows. John's encouragement to "hate without distinction" therefore echoes his earlier claim that "the duty of a slave is to survive!"; in both cases, John believes that the unjust, brutal system in which he lives justifies any and all behavior.

This conversation is also notable because it helps to explain John Indian's actions from earlier in the novel. Though initially Tituba was horrified by the way John played into all of Susanna Endicott's worst stereotypes about Black people, now, John explains that by giving white people the stereotypes "they want," he is able to create a sort of "mask" for himself. In a system that denies Black people privacy and autonomy—from Darnell Davis's sexual violence to Parris's invasion of Tituba and John's intimate moments—John has figured out a way to give himself a hidden, separate life, and all of the freedom that comes along with it.

Part 1: Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ You may be surprised that I shiver at the idea of death. But that's the ambiguity of people like us. Our body is mortal and we are therefore prey to every torment of the common mortal. Like them, we fear suffering. Like them, we are frightened of the terrible antechamber that ends our life on earth. However certain we are that the doors will open before us onto another form of life, this time eternal, we are nevertheless wracked with anguish.

In order to bring peace back into my heart and mind I had to repeat Mama Yaya's words: "Out of them all, you'll be the only one to survive."

Related Characters: Tituba, Mama Yaya (speaker), John Indian

Related Themes:

Page Number: 86

Explanation and Analysis

As the witchcraft crisis intensifies, with Tituba remaining at the center of the accusations, "the idea of death" becomes a more and more urgent part of her thoughts. This passage gives some insight into Tituba's complex view of death and the afterlife: she knows firsthand how much the dead can remain present with the living, but she still has tremendous uncertainty about what happens at the end of life. Thus even as Tituba pushes back against John Indian's purely survivalist outlook, she is not by any means at peace with or resigned to death. Indeed, her own drive to "be the only one to survive" eventually motivates her to testify against some other women in Salem; though Tituba does not value survival above all else like John, she is still determined to preserve her flesh-and-blood form.

It is also vital to note the "ambiguity"—or contradiction—that Tituba here identifies within herself. Here, it shows up in the way she both distances herself from "common mortals" and admits to having many "common mortal" impulses: she is "like them" even as she is unlike

them. But Tituba's ability to embrace contradiction within herself is in fact a defining part of her character. Whether it means learning how to do harm even as she heals or embracing men romantically even as she tries to imagine life without them, one of Tituba's great strengths is her willingness to explore all the different sides of herself.

Part 2: Chapter 2 Quotes

❝ "What does Satan look like? Don't forget he has more than one disguise up his sleeve. That's why after all this time nobody's caught him yet. Sometimes he's a black man..."

There I interrupted her in a worried voice. "If I say that, won't they think of John Indian?"

She shrugged her shoulders irritably. Hester got irritated easily. "Don't talk to me about your wretched husband! He's no better than mine. Shouldn't he be here to share your sorrow? Life is too kind to men, whatever their color."

Related Characters: Tituba, Hester (speaker), John Indian

Related Themes:

Page Number: 100

Explanation and Analysis

After Tituba befriends a lovely, pregnant, white woman named Hester in jail, Hester helps Tituba prep for her impending witchcraft trial. On the one hand, this exchange again echoes the importance of viewing each character and relationship in *I, Tituba* through an intersectional lens. Hester, currently being punished for adultery even as her male counterpart roams free, is keenly aware of misogyny: she knows firsthand how men can escape sharing women's "sorrow," and she is firm that "life is too kind to men" of every race. But even as Hester remains Tituba's truest and wisest female friend, Hester's whiteness prevents her from seeing the prejudiced undertones of the advice she gives Tituba (like telling her to describe Satan as "a black man"). So though Tituba and Hester are able to empathize with each other, Hester fails to give weight to Tituba's racial concerns—and so fails fundamentally to understand Tituba's experience and needs.

It is also important to note that Hester is a literary allusion to Hester Prynne, the hero of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel *The Scarlet Letter*. By putting Tituba in conversation with Hester—one of the most famous women in all of American fiction—Condé is both acknowledging and complicating the feminism of that earlier, canonical work. Moreover, because Hester is perhaps the bluntest character in the novel, she often acts to spell out the various ideological questions that Tituba thinks of from a more experiential, lyrical viewpoint.

Part 2: Chapter 4 Quotes

❝ I was wracked by a violent feeling of pain and terror. It seemed that I was gradually being forgotten. I felt that I would only be mentioned in passing in the Salem witchcraft trials about which so much would be written later, trials that would arouse the curiosity and pity of generations to come as the greatest testimony of a superstitious and barbaric age. There would be mention here and there of "a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.'" There would be no mention of my age or my personality. I would be ignored. As early as the end of the 17th century, petitions would be circulated, judgments made, rehabilitating the victims, restoring their honor, and returning their property to their descendants. I would never be included! Tituba would be condemned forever! There would never, ever, be a careful, sensitive biography recreating my life and its suffering.

And I was outraged by this future injustice that seemed more cruel than even death itself.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 110

Explanation and Analysis

After several months, the chaos in Salem subsides, and the community begins to think about how it will record and move on from this dark period in its history. But Tituba zooms out, assuming—quite accurately—that though she was at the center of the trauma when it happened, white supremacist narratives will relegate her to become a side character in the archives, mentioned only in "passing" and flattened beyond recognition. Indeed, in famous histories of the witch trials and in Arthur Miller's play *The Crucible* (arguably the best-known work about Salem), Tituba is minimized exactly as she predicts: there is no mention of her "personality," of the thoughts and expertise and contradictions that make her such a rich character.

By giving readers access into Tituba's inner life, therefore, Condé accomplishes two things. First, she demonstrates that the archives themselves can be a place of violence (a theory that would later be explored by scholars like Saidiya Hartman). Indeed, when Tituba thinks about being erased from history, she is overcome with a "violent feeling of pain and terror," as if she has been physically attacked. And in

addition to the emotional burden of being "forgotten," there are also crucial material consequences; whereas the other victims of the panic receive legal and financial restitution, such resources are denied to Tituba.

But second, and perhaps even more importantly, this passage reveals a larger purpose for Condé's novel: by giving Tituba the "careful, sensitive biography" she was initially denied, *I, Tituba* helps rectify the injustice of the archives. And so when readers of Condé's novel encounter all of Tituba's nuance—her contradictions, her questions, and her often poetic, deeply metaphoric point of view—they are ensuring that though she suffered profoundly in life, she will not be "condemned forever" to the margins of history.

Part 2: Chapter 7 Quotes

❝ That night Hester lay down beside me, as she did sometimes. I laid my head on the quiet water-lily of her cheek and held her tight. Surprisingly, a feeling of pleasure slowly flooded over me. Can you feel pleasure from hugging a body similar to your own? For me, pleasure had always been in the shape of another body whose hollows fitted my curves and whose swellings nestled in the tender flatlands of my flesh. Was Hester showing me another kind of bodily pleasure?

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Hester

Related Themes:

Page Number: 122

Explanation and Analysis

Before Tituba leaves the prison cell she has shared for months (on and off) with Hester, the two women spend a final night together. But on this final night, what has been a friendship based on sympathy and support takes on sexual undertones, as Tituba begins to find erotic, "bodily pleasure" in the feminine "curves" and "swellings" of Hester's body. For the first time, Tituba is able to separate her sexual longing from men and the complicated feelings she has about them, instead finding "pleasure from hugging a body similar" to her own.

Interestingly, Tituba expresses her desire for Hester not with the certainty she used to talk about John Indian ("I wanted that man as I had never wanted anyone else") but with question marks—if Tituba begins this process of exploring a new facet of her sexuality, Hester dies before she is able to fully come into her queerness.

And finally, it is good to note the natural imagery Tituba uses to describe her attraction to Hester: Hester's cheek is a "quiet water-lily," and Tituba's own body appears to her as a "tender flatland." By using these metaphors from nature (and particularly from the nature of Barbados), Tituba is emphasizing the naturalness of all sexual desire, whether heterosexual or same-sex. And since nature is consistently a source of solace for Tituba, sex can similarly be viewed as a vessel for comfort and wisdom.

Part 2: Chapter 10 Quotes

❝ Having someone recognize me after ten years of absence brought tears to my eyes. I had forgotten this ability our people have of remembering. Nothing escapes them! Everything is engraved in their memory!

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Deodatus

Related Themes:

Page Number: 136

Explanation and Analysis

Though Tituba is legally no longer enslaved, on the ship back to Barbados, most of the white crew refuse to acknowledge the reality of a free Black person. It is especially meaningful, then, when an enslaved Black man named Deodatus not only recognizes Tituba's full personhood but also remembers her mother, Abena. Because this is a time of transition for Tituba (both emotionally and geographically, as she leaves behind her life in New England), Deodatus's recognition serves to demonstrate the strength and expansiveness of the Black diaspora: whether Tituba is in Salem, Barbados, or in the middle of the Atlantic, her "people" will be there to guide and support her.

And in addition to recognition, "memory" is a much-needed thing for Tituba. After having been written out of the legal documents and historical records of the Salem witch trials, Tituba now finds another kind of history—one that is more relational, grounded in Black love and community. In particular, the use of the word "engraved" signals that Tituba has found a way to be permanent outside of written words; "everything" that matters will live on through the bonds she makes and the loved ones she leaves behind.

Part 2: Chapter 12 Quotes

❝ Maroons? 10 years earlier, when I had left Barbados, maroons were few and far between. There was merely talk of a certain Ti-Noel and his family, who held Farley Hill. Nobody had ever seen him. He had been living in everyone's imagination for so long that he must have been an old man by now. Yet he was said to be young and bold and his exploits had become household legends.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Ti-Noel , Deodatus

Related Themes:

Page Number: 143

Explanation and Analysis

When Tituba struggles to figure out her place in Barbados upon her return to the island, Deodatus promises to introduce her to the group of maroons he has been living with. The term "maroon" (which comes from the French word "marron," or fugitive) refers to enslaved people who escaped Caribbean plantations and set up colonies in the mountainous centers of islands. Maronnage was an essential, complicated part of 17th- and 18th- century Caribbean life. On the one hand, maroons provided safety and crucial inspiration in the form of "household legends"; on the other, maroon colonies sometimes cooperated with white planters to preserve their own safety at the expense of those who were still enslaved. As Tituba mentions in this passage, maronnage was gaining steam in Barbados at the tail end of the 1600s—so her decision to join a maroon colony brings her, once again, face-to-face with a major historical event.

There are a couple of critical details that merit analysis. First, the legendary Ti-Noel demonstrates the ability for people to live on through communal stories; though no one has ever "seen" him in his flesh-and-blood form, Ti-Noel is forever "living in everyone's imagination." Moreover, though flesh must always succumb to age and illness, figures who live on in oral tradition are able to remain "young and bold," inspiring others to heroism even in old age or death.

Second, Farley Hill is a real place, located in the low mountains at the northern tip of Barbados—on the opposite side of the island from the colonial capital of Bridgeport. By placing Ti-Noel and his followers near Farley Hill, Condé also opposes the maroon life of nature, freedom, and "imagination" with the oppressive, over-developed, colonial streets of Bridgeport.

❝ At one moment the rain fell in soft whispers, drenching plants, trees, and roots, unlike the hostile, icy rains I recalled in the land I had left behind. Yes, nature changes her language according to the land, and curiously, her language harmonizes with that of man. Savage nature, savage men! Protecting, well-meaning nature, open hearted and generous men!

My first night on my island!

The croaking of the frogs and agua toads, the trill of the night birds, the cackling of the chickens frightened by the mongooses, and the braying of the donkeys tied to the calabash trees, the spirits' resting place, kept up a continual music. I never wanted the morning to come.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker)

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 147

Explanation and Analysis

After several years spent in the freezing, barren climate of Salem and the surrounding towns, Tituba celebrates her "first night" back on Barbados by paying careful attention to all of the plants and animals around her. It is important to note the shift in tone as Tituba lapses into a kind of poetry, her writing mimicking the "music" of nature itself; the language becomes onomatopoeic, as readers are asked to conjure the "whispers," "trills" and "cackles" for themselves. For while rainstorms and night both felt threatening in New England, on the island, they provide "rest" and beauty.

This lyrical passage also gives Tituba an opportunity to state one of the novel's most important thematic ideas outright. She has previously recognized that "knowledge must adapt itself to society," but now she realizes just how much the natural environment—and the animals that thrive within it—impact her and the people around her. When nature is lush and lovely, as it is in Barbados, it is easier for Tituba to find kindness and comfort; when it is harsh and "savage," as it is in the cold forests of Salem, it is easy for cruelty and panic to thrive. Fascinatingly, this theory of Tituba's is shared by many historians: in recent decades, Salem experts have paid particular attention to the role extreme temperature and geographic isolation played in the psychology of the witchcraft panic.

Part 2: Chapter 13 Quotes

"Tituba, a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.' A few lines in the many volumes written on the Salem witch trials. Why was I going to be ignored? This question too had crossed my mind. Is it because nobody cares about a Negress and her trials and tribulations? Is that why?

I can look for my story among those of the witches of Salem, but it isn't there.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 149

Explanation and Analysis

After Tituba meets with an *obeah* man (a spiritual healer), he asks her why she did not embrace the rumors about her; why, he wonders, did she name only enough names to exonerate herself instead of going full force, presenting herself as "the demon of Salem" and thus earning notoriety that way? Though Tituba to some extent regrets not having made such a name for herself, her refusal to prioritize survival (whether physical or archival) over all is again a testament to the values she learned from her mother and Mama Yaya. Just as Tituba balances her own drive to survive with her attention to the needs and wishes of others, she also understands that making history is not worth causing harm.

Even more importantly, for much of the novel, Tituba has fretted about being "forgotten" in historical records about "the witches of Salem." In this passage, Tituba lays out concretely *why* this archival bias exists. She is "ignored" because of the color of her skin—because white historians' anti-Blackness causes them to flatten Tituba's interiority, to skip over her "trials and tribulations" even as they devote whole books to the inner workings of Salem's white residents. So Tituba gets only "a few lines": in the judicial record, the sole note made of her is that stereotyping, reductive phrase ("Tituba, a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo'"). And just as white people like Elizabeth Parris ignored Tituba's motivations and preferences in the present moment, the archives render Tituba as a collection of facts and assumptions instead of as the complicated, multi-faceted person she was.

The reader may be surprised that at a time when the lash was constantly being used, I managed to enjoy this peace in freedom. Our islands have two sides to them. The side of the masters' carriages and their constables on horseback, armed with muskets and savage, baying hounds. And the other, mysterious and secret side, composed of passwords, whispers, and a conspiracy of silence. It was on this side that I lived, protected by common collusion. Mama Yaya made a thick vegetation grow up around my cabin and it was as if I lived in a fortified castle. An inexperienced eye could only make out a tangle of guava trees, ferns, frangipani, and acoma trees, specked here and there by the mauve flower of a hibiscus.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Mama Yaya

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 156

Explanation and Analysis

After Tituba leaves the maroons, she returns to the little cabin she lived in as a teenager, where she finds peace and comfort in the presence of Mama Yaya's spirit. While the violence and brutality of a white supremacist slave society continue, Tituba becomes privy to (or even creates) another "side" of the island, one immersed in "thick vegetation" and a "tangle" of tropical plants. And though she is one of the few Black residents of Barbados who is both legally free and spatially separated from plantation life, Tituba never truly isolates herself, instead remaining profoundly connected to those still in slavery: through her natural healing practices and through "passwords, whispers, and a conspiracy of silence." In other words, the enslaved men and women keep the "secret" of Tituba's "fortified castle," and in return, she gives them as much care and knowledge as she possibly can.

Moreover, the idea of expertise is particularly salient in this excerpt. Where "an inexperienced eye" might see only a mess of trees, Tituba has learned to pay attention, to observe the tiniest details of nature's hidden messages. So for Tituba and (to some extent) for the people she cares for, natural knowledge extends beyond the power to heal or change behavior—indeed, nature is here a site of rebellion and refuge, a place for "collusion" and for gathering strength. But to work with nature in this way requires respect; whereas the white colonists travel with man-made "muskets" and non-native animals like "horses" and "dogs," Tituba embraces indigenous plants like guava and frangipani, protecting the landscape as it is and receiving its protection in turn.

Part 2: Chapter 14 Quotes

❝ When I got to the burning of Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo's house, he interrupted me with a frown: "But why? Wasn't he white like the others? [...] Do they need to hate so much that they hate each other?"

Related Characters: Tituba, Iphigene (speaker), Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo

Related Themes:

Page Number: 160

Explanation and Analysis

As Tituba recounts her life story to Iphigene, including her time spent with her beloved Jewish merchant Benjamin, she gains this younger person's perspective on her time in New England. Whereas Benjamin understood himself as completely separated by his Jewishness, doomed to be persecuted forever, Iphigene sees anti-Semitism as an almost absurd invention, another form of prejudice and restriction in a society already overflowing with them. On the one hand, then, Iphigene's comment reflects once more the importance of intersectionality. Benjamin views himself as oppressed because of Jewishness, but to Iphigene he is "white like the others"—and Benjamin's whiteness then grants him material advantages (he is a prosperous merchant) and aligns with his status as a slaveholder.

But more than that, Iphigene's comment helps to elucidate why prejudice exists and grows so potent. Though Iphigene is being a little facetious, Tituba has actually seen firsthand that the Puritans do feel the "need to hate"—they repress so many of their own urges and desires that they are desperate to find an "other," someone separated by race or religion whom they can project all their own worst impulses onto. In a largely white society like Puritan Salem, that spurs white people to turn to anti-Semitism; in a slave society like Barbados, white slaveholders like Darnell Davis and Susanna Endicott seek to take out all their rage and cruelty on enslaved folks. By contrast, Tituba, who gives weight and credence to all her own needs and desires, feels no such "need to hate"—and instead tries to find empathy for even some of the least sympathetic characters in the text.

Part 2: Chapter 15 Quotes

❝ I was not really worried about the outcome of the plot. In fact, I tried not to think about it. I let my mind blur and color dreams and I concentrated above all on my baby. She had started to move in my womb; a sort of slow, gentle creeping as if she wanted to explore her confined quarters. [...] A little longer and we would be looking at each other and her fresh gaze would make me ashamed of my wrinkles and my stumps of teeth. My daughter would settle old scores for me! She would know how to win the love of a man with a heart as warm as cornbread. [...] They would have children they would teach to see beauty in themselves. Children who would grow straight and free toward the sky.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker)

Related Themes:

Page Number: 167

Explanation and Analysis

While Iphigene works to plan a massive slave uprising, Tituba focuses on imagining another aspect of her future: one in which the baby she conceived with Christopher grows up to be a beautiful, peaceful girl. As the novel comes to a close, this passage adds a new valence to the idea of survival that Tituba has struggled with throughout the narrative. Here, she begins to accept old age (her "wrinkles" and her "stumps of teeth") because she will live on in the love of her daughter; even when Tituba meets death, her child will continue to "grow" towards the sky and into the future.

Moreover, while Iphigene tries to change the world through a fiery revolt, this idyllic vision of her not-yet-born child's life provides Tituba her own way of imagining justice. Whereas Tituba spent her time on earth being mistreated by men, her daughter will find someone gentle, "with a heart as warm as cornbread." And whereas Tituba was forced into slavery over and over again, tried and tormented for the color of her skin, she hopes that her daughter will live "free" and feel only her own "beauty." In addition to leaving behind a tangible, living legacy, then, Tituba wants to give birth to a new person in a new world, creating change by creating life.

Epilogue Quotes

Sometimes I become a fighting cock in the pit and the clamor of the crowd sends my head spinning […] Oh how I love to give this slave the excitement of winning! Off he goes, dancing and brandishing his fists, a gesture that will soon symbolize other victories. […] Sometimes I become a goat and caper around Samantha, who is no fool. For this child of mine has learned to recognize my presence in the twitching of an animal's coat, the crackling of a fire between four stones, the rainbow-hued babbling of the river, and the sound of the wind as it whistles through the great trees on the hills.

Related Characters: Tituba (speaker), Samantha

Related Themes:

Related Symbols:

Page Number: 175

Explanation and Analysis

In the epilogue to her story, Tituba explains that despite her death at the hands of white slaveholders, her spirit (her "song") persists; she continues to guide and heal enslaved men and women across Barbados, and in turn, her mentees keep her spirit alive. These lovely closing lines make clear the full scope of Tituba's legacy. In addition to helping care for Samantha, the young girl she has chosen as her spiritual descendant, Tituba finds a way to be a source of joy and encouragement amidst the violence of enslavement. With each new form she takes, Tituba is able to give enslaved men and women the "excitement of winning"—and in doing so, provides strength to the people who need it most.

Equally important, however, is the way this ending once more unites Tituba with nature. Tituba may have been written out of archives and history books, but she lives on in the Barbados environments she loved so much. If Mama Yaya began the novel by teaching Tituba to respect every element of the world around her, by the end of the book, Tituba has learned so much about those elements that she is inextricable from them (what she earlier has called "extraordinary symbiosis"). In life, Tituba gained solace from plants and landscapes, and it now becomes clear that those plants and landscapes have always contained ancestral spirits—just as they now give Tituba's spirit another form.

Finally, by ending her narrative with the various ways in which Tituba remains "present," Condé encourages all those who encounter this novel to see and hear Tituba in their daily life: to notice her in "babbling" rivers and "crackling" fires and windswept trees. Condé thus hopes to change how her readers move through the world—and ensures that Tituba's memory will be revived each time someone new picks up the book or puts it down, looking at the nature around them.

SUMMARY AND ANALYSIS

The color-coded icons under each analysis entry make it easy to track where the themes occur most prominently throughout the work. Each icon corresponds to one of the themes explained in the Themes section of this LitChart.

PART 1: CHAPTER 1

Tituba tells the story of her birth. Her mother Abena was an Ashanti woman who was captured, enslaved, and brought from West Africa to Barbados on a slave ship. While on board the ship, Abena was raped by a white English sailor. Tituba reflects that she was "born from this act of aggression." But though eventually Abena would give birth, her pregnancy was not showing by the time she landed in Barbados.

By beginning her narrative in this way, Tituba shows that no chapter in her life (even the very beginning) can be separated from the horror of enslavement. Moreover, as she focuses in on this "act of aggression," Tituba links the twin evils of white supremacy and patriarchy—and amplifies the historical fact that enslaved Black women were often the targets of white men's sexual violence.

Once on the island, Abena is sold to a brutal slaveholder named Darnell Davis. Initially, Darnell assigns Abena to be his wife Jennifer's companion—and because Jennifer is similarly young and similarly terrified of Darnell, the two women become friends. But after it becomes clear that Abena is pregnant, Darnell flies into a rage. He then sends Abena to go live with Yao, another Ashanti enslaved man.

The friendship between Abena and Jennifer foreshadows the (deeply compromised) bond that will later form between Tituba and Elizabeth, another sickly white woman who resents her husband. And though Darnell is only a minor character, it is critical to note his sense of immense power over the lives of others; in particular, Darnell's anger over Abena's pregnancy demonstrates the extent to which white slaveholders tried to snatch bodily agency from enslaved Black men and women.

Fortunately, as soon as Abena steps into Yao's cabin, she realizes that they are old friends. Yao has tried to kill himself many times, preferring death to the horror of a life in slavery. But Yao and Abena find courage in each other, and Yao agrees to raise Abena's baby (Tituba) as his own. Initially, the pair feels a familial bond, but over time they become lovers. Four months later, Tituba is born.

This passage begins to ask one of the novel's key questions: since slavery as an institution deforms every aspect of daily life, is survival under slavery always preferable to death? At the same time, however, this passage also shows that family—like the kind Yao and Abena form with each other—can provide deep meaning and solace even within the constraints of enslavement.

Yao is overjoyed by his new daughter—but Abena is upset that her baby is a girl, because she feels that women are so much more vulnerable than men. Instead of naming the child a standard Ashanti name, Yao invents the name of "Tituba"; Tituba feels that her names signals that she is "the daughter of [Yao's] will and imagination." Though the first years of Tituba's life are happy, as she learns to walk and talk, she begins to understand her family's enslavement.

Abena's concern again reflects the narrative's intersectional lens: Tituba is both Black and a woman, and the intersection of those two identities carries with it a whole new slate of dangers (particularly the white sexual violence that Abena has already experienced). It is also worth noting the origin story of Tituba's name. More than once, Tituba and her loved ones will gain strength from imagining an alternative future, in which slavery no longer exists; now and in these later moments, "will and imagination" are crucial keys to endurance.

Tituba also comes to terms with her mother's lack of affection—because Tituba reminds Abena of the man who assaulted her, it is hard for Abena to show her daughter love. Still, Yao is deeply caring, teaching Tituba to love her environment and to use **tropical plants** to feed and heal herself. As Tituba matures, she sees moments of joy and rebellion among the slaves, but she also witnesses terrifying scenes of slaveholders' brutality.

There are several important ideas here. First, the complex relationship between Tituba and her mother shows how pervasive white violence can impact even the most familial relationships—Abena's trauma makes it difficult for her to connect with her daughter. Second, Yao's use of tropical plants to care for Tituba paints the natural world as a source of love and care. And finally, Tituba begins to understand the remarkable creativity and tenacity of people in enslaved communities, able to find joy despite near-constant violence.

One day, while Tituba is walking with her mother, Darnell stops Abena in her tracks and tries to rape her. Abena instructs her daughter to hand her a cutlass, which Tituba does. Abena stabs Darnell—but he does not die. Instead, a few weeks later, he hangs Abena in front of all of the enslaved people on his plantation, including Tituba. Darnell also tries to sell Yao to a neighboring planter, but this time, Yao's suicide attempt is successful.

Abena is still deeply scarred by what happened on the ship, so when another white man attempts to assault her, it re-traumatizes her; the fact that she is hanged for fighting back is the ultimate injustice. Moreover, Yao's suicide, in addition to being an expression of his pain over losing Abena, can also be seen as a form of protest against a profoundly awful system.

A deeply traumatized Tituba, only seven years old, is driven off the plantation. She goes to live with a formerly enslaved Nago woman named Mama Yaya. Mama Yaya watched her husband and children be tortured to death, and so she has cultivated an ability to communicate with the dead. She tells young Tituba that "you will suffer during your life. A lot. A lot […] But you will survive."

Mama Yaya will become one of Tituba's most important mentors, in part because she, too, has experienced great familial loss. But because death has been such a part of Mama Yaya's life, she has figured out how to blur the boundary between the living and the dead. And so when Mama Yaya affirms Tituba's ability to "survive," she is also giving her the framework to do so—to maintain contact with her loved ones even after death separates her from them.

Mama Yaya teaches Tituba to use herbs and **tropical plants** to heal and change others' behavior; she also teaches her how to sacrifice animals for the two essential liquids, "blood and milk." Soon after, Tituba dreams that her mother has come back to life. When she tells Mama Yaya, Mama Yaya assures Tituba that it was not a dream after all; instead, it was Abena's way of reaching out to her still-living daughter.

Again, nature (and particularly the lush, tropical nature of Barbados) is a healing force. It is especially crucial that "blood and milk"—the two liquids most associated with femininity—are also, in Mama Yaya's teaching, the most essential healing substances.

Mama Yaya explains that "the dead only die if they die in our hearts. They live on if we cherish them […] and if we kneel down to regularly commune with them." From that point on, Yao and Abena become regular fixtures in Tituba's life. Mama Yaya also shows Tituba how to change form and how to make sacrifices. When Tituba is 14, Mama Yaya dies, but her spirit continues to act as a guide.

This passage marks a critical turning point in the novel—from here on out, Tituba is never fully alone, as she is always guided by the spirits of Yao, Abena, and Mama Yaya. This guidance reflects one of the most important concepts in the novel: that memory and love can preserve the dead in a meaningful way, even if they cannot return in physical form.

Around this time, Darnell's wife dies—and his infant son, despite being tenderly nursed by an enslaved woman, seems destined for a similar fate. In a panic, Darnell sells the plantation, which results in all of the various enslaved families being separated. In Darnell's absence, Tituba builds herself a "cabin on stilts" at the edge of a river. She gardens, raises animals, and continues to make drugs and potions. Later, she will realize that this was the happiest time of her life, in part because she was "far from men, and especially white men."

Family separation was another horrific facet of slavery; at any moment, slaveholders could exercise their brutal power by separating parents from children or husbands from wives. Darnell's return to England demonstrates his complete disregard for the lives of other people, a complete contrast to Tituba, who values every person, plant, and animal she comes into contact with.

After a few years, Tituba encounters a group of enslaved men and is surprised to learn that she is viewed with fear all over the island. Out of a need to be loved instead of feared, Tituba starts visiting the plantations, offering to heal the enslaved people working on them.

Not for the last time, Tituba wants to do good things and to be loved for doing them—and not for the last time, this desire, while admirable, will bring her away from safety and towards danger.

PART 1: CHAPTER 2

Tituba meets and flirts with John Indian, a handsome man born to an indigenous father and a Nago mother. John explains that he is enslaved by Susanna Endicott, an old widow. He invites Tituba to a dance at Carlisle Bay the following Sunday, and Tituba—desperate to see him again—promises to attend. After he leaves, she sacrifices a chicken and summons Mama Yaya.

Tituba's attraction to John Indian quite literally reshapes her geography; instead of confining herself to the edges of plantations, she now is willing to traverse the island, putting herself at greater risk by being in proximity to white enslavers.

Tituba wants to make John love her, but Yaya cautions that "men do not love. They possess." She also warns that John is notorious for having slept with many of the women on the island. Still, Yaya promises that if Tituba brings her a drop of John's blood, the old woman will ensure his love. Tituba finds herself overcome with desire, and she masturbates thinking about John. For the first time, Tituba considers what her body and face look like, and she cuts her hair. Abena's spirit arrives, lamenting that women "can't do without men" and ominously warning Tituba that her love for John Indian will bring her "across the water."

Mama Yaya and Abena here illustrate a central pitfall of Tituba's life: though men are often oppressive and harmful, attraction is a natural, inescapable (and sometimes wonderful) part of life. Already, though, it is clear that Tituba's feelings for John Indian are changing how she moves through the world, as she grows self-conscious for the first time in the novel. Also worth noting: the ominous phrase "across the water" has ties to the very beginning of the novel, when Abena was captured and taken across the Atlantic Ocean into slavery.

On Sunday, Tituba goes to the dance, and she learns that it is Carnival: the only time of year when enslaved people are able to have celebrations of their own. Though John is dancing with another woman, Tituba interrupts, and they share a special moment. When Tituba scratches John to get a drop of his blood for Yaya, John calls her a witch. Tituba wonders why it is a bad thing to be thought of as a witch, since "the ability to communicate with the invisible world" is a "superior gift of nature."

Carnival occurs in late February/early March, and it is a time of celebration before Lent, or the period in Christianity that focuses on sacrifice and fasting; Tituba is thus starting to understand that many enslavers also claim to be observant Christians. This is also the first time Tituba hears herself described as a "witch"—a term that confuses her, given that she sees her skills merely as "natur[al]," a way of connecting the physical world to the intangible one.

John and Tituba become a couple, but he refuses to live with her in her house in the woods. Instead, he wants her to convert to Christianity and come live with him at Susanna Endicott's house. Tituba reflects on just how cruel white men have been to her family, raping and then killing her mother. Yet her desire for John Indian is strong enough to make her willingly rejoin "the white man's world."

Whereas Tituba wants to live in nature, avoiding whiteness as much as she can, John Indian is in some ways drawn to the colonial world. And once more, Tituba must contend with her own desire as a powerful force, capable of shaping her behavior even more than some of her most traumatic memories do.

A week later, after feeling shame, panic, and remorse, Tituba sets her animals free and packs up her mother's dresses. As she thinks gratefully of all the food these animals have provided for her, she begins to head to Susanna Endicott and Carlisle Bay.

Symbolically, this passage shows that in moving to Susanna Endicott's house and the world of slavery, Tituba is also moving away from nature and all of its gifts (animals and food, for example).

PART 1: CHAPTER 3

Susanna is a bitter, cruel, and deeply racist woman. As soon as she meets Tituba, she gives her a list of tasks and orders her to convert to Christianity. John Indian acts like a child, dancing around and pleading with Susanna for two days off to celebrate his marriage. Susanna eventually grants the time off, but the whole exchange leaves Tituba feeling horrified.

It is not only white men who are capable of great brutality—Susanna shows that white women have their own forms of violence. And John Indian's response is to play into Susanna's expectations, a tactic that will continually baffle and frustrate Tituba.

Susanna claims not to believe in slavery, so she has sold all the other enslaved people on her plantation besides John Indian. Now, he lives in an "attractive" little colonial house on the Endicott plantation. Tituba is baffled by her new lover's friendliness towards Susanna, but John explains that "the duty of a slave is to survive!"

Susanna's belief system is patently hypocritical: she is a Christian who embodies no Christian values, and she does not believe in slavery unless it is convenient for her. More important, though, is John Indian's insistence on "surviv[al]" as his primary purpose. Whereas Yao prioritized "will and imagination" above physical life, John Indian values his own flesh and blood above all.

For two days, John and Tituba have passionate, satisfying sex; John also cooks delicious meals with **tropical plants** for Tituba. As soon as the two days are up, however, Susanna (who eats only bread and gruel) commands Tituba to start cleaning the main house at 6 a.m. At the end of the day, Tituba is on her way out of the house when she encounters Susanna and her friends having a tea party.

Here, again, tropical plants are a form of care and love; like sex, the fruits John feeds Tituba provide great bodily pleasure. Furthermore, the fact that Susanna eats bread and gruel, foods that don't really fit in the ecosystem of Barbados, shows the unnaturalness of Susanna's world.

The white women cruelly talk about Tituba as if she did not exist—making Tituba feel that "they were striking me off the map of human beings." One of them suggests that Tituba is a witch. Tituba then complains about her situation to her mother's spirit, and Abena recalls that while Yao was kind and respectful, she is not sure John Indian will be the same way. Tituba regrets that unlike the rest of the enslaved people in Barbados, she had entered Susanna Endicott's home "of her own accord."

As this exchange demonstrates, slavery attempts to dehumanize enslaved peoples in several ways. In addition to ignoring Tituba and making her feel as if she is literally on a separate planet ("off the map"), Susanna and her friends accuse Tituba of consorting with the devil. On the one hand, then, Susanna denies Tituba basic human courtesy, while on the other hand, she associates Tituba with the demonic.

Both John and Susanna try to force Tituba to believe in Christianity and the Holy Trinity, but Tituba cannot find meaning in the words. Susanna humiliates Tituba, forcing her to recite prayers in English, which is not a language Tituba knows well. In one of these prayer sessions, Susanna asks Tituba about Abena and Mama Yaya. Susanna believes Mama Yaya is a witch.

In this section, conversion becomes another tool of colonialism; whereas Tituba wants to live in her own language and practice her own belief system, Susanna refuses to acknowledge the validity of Tituba's culture, instead dismissing it as witchcraft.


Tituba tells John Indian about this exchange, and he panics, explaining that white people define witchcraft as dealing with Satan; Tituba has no idea what Satan even means. John tells Tituba that witches are burned at the stake in English colonies—and for the first night since they got married, they do not have sex. Tituba decides that Susanna Endicott has to die.

How can Tituba be associated with Satan if she has never heard of him? Yet this bizarre conversation—and the divide it creates between Tituba and John—foreshadows the role foreign ideas about Satan will later play in their marriage.


PART 1: CHAPTER 4

Though Tituba wants to kill Susanna, both Abena and Mama Yaya counsel her against doing so. "Even if she dies," Yaya explains, "you cannot change your fate. And you will have perverted your heart in the bargain." Again, both women criticize John Indian, and both hint that Tituba will have to "cross the water." Tituba decides instead to afflict Susanna with a mysterious illness.

Mama Yaya's questions force Tituba to think about her own integrity—what is the point of self-preservation above all if Tituba loses the goodness that is so central to her idea of herself? Also worth noting: though Mama Yaya has lots of power to heal, neither she nor Tituba can change the future.



John and Tituba make up, and a few days later, Susanna gets very sick. A witchcraft expert is summoned, but he can find no evidence of a spell being put on Susanna. While Susanna is bedridden, John hosts friends from all over the island on the plantation. Tituba is worried these parties will get them in trouble, but John explains that he is just living up to the expectation of what a slave should do when a slaveholder is absent.

While Tituba copes with the trauma Susanna inflicts in one way, John does so in another. Just as he did when he danced around and asked Susanna for more time off, he again uses slaveholders' stereotypical expectations of Black folks to maximize his own rest time. Tituba's more spiritual worldview is thus clearly at odds with John's practical, strategic one.


At one point, some of the partygoers conduct a marriage ceremony between John and Tituba. One woman objects, claiming that John has fathered two children with her. But the crowd instead insists that "where we come from everyone is entitled to his share of women, as many as his arms can hold." John begins to kiss both Tituba and the other woman, causing Tituba to feel intense anger.

Even in a space completely free of white people and their ideas about gender divides, men's needs (and particularly men's sexual desires) are given much more weight than women's—suggesting that patriarchal views can be found just about anywhere.

Two days later, Susanna tells John and Tituba that she believes Tituba is a witch—and that she feels Tituba is responsible for this strange illness. Soon after, Tituba sees a tall man dressed in black; she is frightened by his eyes, "scheming and wily, creating evil because they saw it everywhere." Tituba believes that this man is Satan, but John assures her this is not the case. Tituba begins to be overcome with fear for her future.

Both Susanna and this man dressed in black are so consumed with paranoia that they actually "create" the evil they imagine. For example, Susanna was so cruel to Tituba (and so insistent that Tituba was a witch) that Tituba actually did, for the first time in her life, use her powers to inflict harm.

Susanna announces that she is dying, and that she is planning to sell John and Tituba to a new master. Both are horrified by this thought: John because he had thought that Susanna would free him on her death, and Tituba because she never viewed herself as Susanna's slave.

Susanna has no descendants, so the fact that she sells John and Tituba is pure vindictiveness—and perhaps reflective of her white supremacist desire to keep all Black folks in slavery, even when it has no personal profit.

Still, Susanna is firm that John and Tituba will belong to this new slaveholder, Samuel Parris—and worse still, that they will follow him to America. And even if Tituba could avoid this fate, she is unable to bear the thought of separating from John Indian. In the kitchen, Tituba meets Parris, and realizes with fear that he is the man she had mistaken for Satan.

Now, Tituba finally understands that "cross[ing] the water" means going to America. It is also worth catching that whereas Susanna and her ilk believe Tituba is linked to the devil, the figure who most matches Satanic imagery is Parris (a minister, so ostensibly a man of God).

PART 1: CHAPTER 5

On board a ship, Parris pours ice-cold water on Tituba and John and formally marries them. Tituba feels that she is going to be ill. As the ship sets off, Tituba avoids Parris's gaze, looking instead at her surroundings. She notes that the water of "the sea was a bright blue and the uninterrupted line of the coast, a dark green."

Whereas Parris tries to make Tituba and John conform to his ideas of propriety by baptizing Tituba into Christianity (pouring the water) and marrying them, Tituba again seeks solace in nature (the sea and the coast). These particularly short sections also provide a clue to form: though I, Tituba *is primarily a novel, Condé is also experimenting with more lyrical, stream-of-consciousness forms of writing.*

PART 1: CHAPTER 6

While she travels to America, Tituba gets to know Parris's sickly wife Elizabeth; they bond because Elizabeth seems to hate Parris almost as much as Tituba does. But Parris is deeply prejudiced against Black people and forbids his wife from spending time with Tituba. Tituba wonders what is at the root of Elizabeth's constant sickness.

Like Jennifer Davis before her, Elizabeth is always ill—which implies that part of what ails these women is their relationships with these racist, cruel men. Keeping an eye toward the book's intersectional lens, Tituba's friendship with Elizabeth—based in female solidarity—is disrupted by a white man's anti-Blackness.

Tituba meets Abigail, Parris's teenaged niece, and Betsey, his young daughter; she reflects that these girls have lost their childhood to the sternness of Parris's religious life, and this allows Tituba to empathize with them. Meanwhile, John is back to his usual self, making jokes and playing games with the sailors on board.

Here, Tituba begins to feel a connection to all of the Parris women, especially because she sees them as linked to her in their shared fear of Samuel. This is another moment in which Tituba and John's differences come through: Tituba is tender and reflective whereas John seeks out distraction.

At night, Parris interrupts Tituba and John when they are about to have sex to force them to pray (alongside Elizabeth, Betsey, and Abigail). When Tituba does not want to confess her private thoughts, Parris slaps her—and when Elizabeth tries to stand up for Tituba, Parris slaps his wife as well.

Parris refuses to let Tituba have any kind of privacy, interrupting her intimate moments with John and forcing her to share even her most interior self. This denial of privacy was another major way in which slaveholders tried to disrupt and claim control over Black life.

Though Tituba feels an instant distrust for Abigail, she forms strong friendships with Elizabeth and Betsey. Tituba tells the two women stories, braids their hair, and helps them deal with their various sicknesses. Eventually, Tituba realizes that Elizabeth is pregnant, which Parris does not seem aware of. Elizabeth explains that Parris never looks at her body, and that he does not even take off his clothes when they have sex. Tituba cannot understand this because in her mind, nothing is more "beautiful than a woman's body! Especially when it is glorified by a man's desire!"

Tituba braids Elizabeth's hair just as her mother braided Jennifer's, further strengthening the parallel between the two friendships. More important, though, is Tituba's insight into the Parris' sex life. While John and Tituba embrace sex as a "glorious," natural, form of tenderness, Samuel Parris fears it. Perhaps part of Elizabeth's sense of illness and disconnection from her body stems from Parris's refusal to be truly intimate with her.

At last, they all arrive in Boston. Tituba is surprised both by how busy the city is and by how rainy and grey it seems to be; she also notices that here, too, there are enslaved Africans. When the family arrives at their house, they are horrified to see a **black cat** run across the entry. Tituba is amused to find that these Christians view the black cat as a symbol of witchcraft.

This is another moment in which Condé toys with the contrast between Tituba's beliefs and those of her enslavers. Whereas Tituba sees the black cat as a harmless animal, the Parris' are terrified by it—in part because they seem to fear the very idea of blackness.

That night, Parris wakes Tituba up, informing her that he believes Elizabeth is about to die. Tituba decides to use some of Mama Yaya's techniques to bring Elizabeth back to health—but since she is in a very different climate, she has to substitute New England greenery for **tropical plants**. Still, with her skills and prayers, Tituba is able to heal Elizabeth, and Elizabeth credits Tituba with saving her life.

There are two key occurrences to note in this passage. First, Tituba must adapt her healing practices to the climate she is in; knowledge, the book frequently suggests, is shaped by the world around you. Second, Tituba saves Elizabeth's life, further cementing their closeness.

PART 1: CHAPTER 7

Tituba and John spend the year in Boston while Parris tries to find a parish that will hire him. John gets a job at a tavern, and he is shocked to find how much many of the town's citizens curse and have sex and drink; "you can't imagine," he tells Tituba, "the hypocrisy of the white man's world." John also learns that the slave trade is intensifying, and that more and more indigenous people are having their lands stolen.

Tituba lived at the end of the 17th century, when the United States was not yet an independent country and the slave trade was only just beginning. This passage foreshadows the immense death and brutality that white people would inflict on Black and indigenous people in the centuries to come—and highlights the fact that many of the most violent colonizers also claimed to justify their actions through religion.

Back in the house, Parris is always around, making all the women quiet and anxious. Only when he goes for a midday walk do Abigail and Betsey get to be their full selves, playing games and dancing. Sometimes, Tituba takes them to the ocean, which makes her think of Barbados.

Though once the ocean seemed ominous (as it was when Tituba dreading having to "cross the water"), it now symbolizes home. This shift shows how the same landscapes and experiences can hold different meanings depending on context.

One day, while walking along the wharf, Tituba sees an old woman being hanged. The sight throws her back into a panic, as she recalls her own mother's fate. But when Tituba breaks down, Abigail calmly states that the hanging woman "only got what she deserved. She's a witch." Tituba is shocked by this "barbarity."

It is telling that the punishment for witchcraft is the same as the punishment Abena faced for fighting back against assault; to different extents, both slavery and accusations of witchcraft allow white men to retain power through intimidation.

Tituba realizes she is pregnant, but she decides to abort the baby—slavery is too cruel for her to want to bring someone into it. Indeed, Tituba explains that back in Barbados, it was common for enslaved women to abort their children. But while she would have known all the right plants to use in Barbados, she has no such clarity in Boston.

Yao's suicide was one testament to the incomprehensible brutality of slavery; Tituba's decision to abort her child is another. The fact that this practice was common speaks to how many enslaved women felt that a life in slavery was an impossible trap.

While Tituba is getting to know her environment, she meets an old woman named Judah White; Judah recognizes Tituba immediately. Judah explains that though she has never left Boston, she is friends with Mama Yaya in the spirit world. The old woman then teaches Tituba about a variety of herbal remedies, and instructs Tituba to pay attention to new animals (like owls and **black cats**) as conduits of nature's power.

Tituba's relationship with Judah White speaks to the importance of legacy, memory, and community; because Tituba loved and stayed connected with Mama Yaya, she now has a new mentor all the way across the ocean. Moreover, Tituba now learns that—contrary to the Parris' belief—black cats can be used for healing, not for harm.

Without telling John her plan, Tituba successfully aborts her baby, though she feels very conflicted about this decision. Summer approaches, and Parris announces that he has gotten a job in the small village of Salem. Unfortunately, Salem is notorious for underpaying its ministers and for its conflicts between white settlers and indigenous people. At the tavern, John learns that Parris has not actually finished all his theological studies.

Even if Tituba wants to spare her unborn child pain, it is hard to overcome her instinctive care and maternal feelings. Also of note: Parris is not really qualified for the religious status he claims, which is why he ends up with one of the least desirable ministry jobs in New England.

PART 1: CHAPTER 8

Tituba creates a "lament" for her aborted child; in this poem, she sings about losing a moonstone at the bottom of a lake. Tituba teaches the tune to Betsey, and she is surprised to hear Abigail humming it as well. However, Tituba reflects that Abigail is indeed "but a child," and she comforts herself that "a child could not be dangerous."

As with the earlier short section, whenever Tituba slips into real grief, the form of the novel changes, reflecting Tituba's pain and confusion. This passage also shows how generous Tituba is, as she tries to find ways to empathize with Abigail even after Abigail's repeated cruelties.

PART 1: CHAPTER 9

Compared to Boston, Salem is extremely rural; there are less than 2,000 people, and cows wander the streets. Tituba, John, and the Parris family arrive at their new home, and Abigail runs into the house, excited to explore. Parris chastises her for this burst of energy, causing Tituba to feel some sympathy for the teenager.

It is striking just how rural Salem was; in addition to having minimal infrastructure, the residents lived in isolation and in fear of animals, blistering cold and scorching heat. Indeed, scholars have suggested that harsh climates magnified the town's hysteria.

An older woman named Mary Sibley greets them on behalf of the congregation. Goodwife Sibley is surprised to learn that Parris has Black people working for him, and she is also curious about what makes Elizabeth so ill. Goodwife Sibley tells Tituba that two women (the wives of the previous ministers) have died in this house, and Tituba feels a sense of foreboding.

Right away, Mary Sibley reveals two things about the town. One, there are not very many Black people in Salem, though the townspeople have a great deal of prejudice. And two, every detail of other people's private life (from marital troubles to illness) is viewed as public knowledge.

All the villagers from Salem, including John Proctor and Anne Putnam, come to greet (and do some snooping around) Parris. While Parris hems and haws over the specifics of his salary, Tituba and John celebrate having the attic all to themselves.

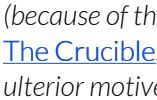
Parris is more concerned with his salary than his religious duties, which is further evidence of his hypocrisy. In better news, Tituba and John can at last be alone; sex is an important part of their relationship, so the ability to have real intimacy is meaningful.

Quickly, Tituba becomes a point of interest for many of the teenage girls in the town (especially Anne Putnam and her servant, Mercy Lewis). Led by Abigail, these girls push Tituba for stories about the devil. Tituba pities these girls, because she feels they are not being allowed to express themselves or experience the joys and hardships of puberty. But she also distrusts them, especially Abigail; Tituba fears "the power of [Abigail's] imagination" and the "hatred she had for the adult world, as if she could not forgive it for building a coffin around her youth."

In isolated, patriarchal Salem, none of the teenagers have much to keep their minds occupied, and their budding sexual desires and feelings are suppressed. Abigail and the other pubescent girls thus seize on Tituba, one of the few Black women in the town, as someone onto whom to project their wildest, most carnal fantasies.

Eventually, more and more girls gather in Tituba's kitchen to ask about people in league with the devil. As a joke, Tituba mentions the name of Sarah Goode, a local beggar; someone then asks about Sarah Osborne, a wealthy woman who is mocked because of a sexual incident in her past. Abigail presses Tituba to name Elizabeth Proctor, but Tituba will not.

More of the town dynamics now come into view. Like Tituba, Goode and Osborne are also regarded as conspicuous "others" in the town (because of their poverty and sexuality, respectively). And in the play The Crucible, Abigail has had an affair with John Proctor, and her ulterior motive for the accusations is to have Proctor's wife Elizabeth killed.



When Betsey begins to feel disturbed by these stories, Tituba assures her that "Tituba can do anything. Tituba knows everything. Tituba sees everything." But Betsey tells some of the older girls about this, which makes them wonder if Tituba is a witch. Life begins to feel more and more frightening for Tituba, and she finds herself unable to be calm.

In a painful turn of events, the very knowledge that Tituba uses to comfort Betsey is twisted and used against her by Abigail and her friends. And in general, it is paradoxically Tituba's capacity to heal—to do good—that the white residents of Salem use as evidence of her "witchcraft."

To ease her homesickness, Tituba fills a bowl with water and imagines the bowl is Barbados. The sympathy she feels for Elizabeth and Betsey fades when she realizes that their pain is different; they long for an easy life where they are waited on hand and foot, whereas even in Tituba's happiest memories, she remains enslaved. No matter how much affection they show each other, Tituba comes to terms with the fact that she, Betsey, and Elizabeth "do not exist in the same universe."

This vital passage illustrates just how profoundly damaging enslavement is. Even Tituba's happiest memories—of the only home she has ever known—are marked by captivity, violence, and a lack of bodily autonomy. Thus, even though she has some degree of female solidarity with Elizabeth and Betsey, slavery and anti-Blackness cause the women to have more differences than similarities.

As Betsey gets increasingly anxious, Tituba decides to give her a magic bath, plunging her into water meant to replicate amniotic fluid; this ritual makes her feel some sort of closure around her recent abortion. After the bath, Betsey sleeps soundly, while Tituba goes to pour the hot water on the ground. As she reflects on how different night is in Salem than in Barbados, Tituba feels the presence of Mama Yaya and Abena.

Tituba has had wonderful female mentors and guides, and so she tries to extend the same to Betsey—even while Betsey betrays her. Again, Tituba's instinctive desire to heal is evident in this moment, as she shows Betsey some of the kindness she would have shown to her unborn child.

PART 1: CHAPTER 10

Tituba learns more about Parris's religion, in which every strange occurrence or mishap is blamed on Satan. Tituba recalls from her experience with Susanna that many white people believe that Tituba's Blackness makes her a "visible messenger" of Satan. Indeed, many of the residents of Salem come up to Tituba asking her to harness Satan's power against their friends and family. Sometimes, Tituba even notices villagers trying (and failing) to use plants to do magic of their own.

Earlier, John has remarked on the hypocrisy he observes in white Puritan Christianity; now, the Puritans try to use religious ideas of Satan to justify their own anti-Blackness. And at the same time, the very people who claim to live in fear of Satan try to harness devilish magic for their own purposes (though they lack all of Tituba's knowledge of the natural world).

Tituba's knowledge of the villagers' worst impulses unsettles her. Worse still, Parris hires John out to a neighbor, meaning Tituba barely ever gets to see or sleep with him. Unable to relax, Tituba begins frequenting the woods late at night. As she stops sleeping and eating, Tituba feels alienated from herself, and her appearance changes; John complains that she is "neglecting" to take care of how she looks.

The only source of comfort for Tituba now is the nature that surrounds her—John Indian is hardly ever around, and when he is, he is more focused on misogynistically critiquing Tituba's appearance than he is on empathizing with her anxiety.

One night, Tituba encounters Sarah, another enslaved Black woman. Sarah is routinely beaten by the woman she works for, and she hopes Tituba will help her kill this cruel slaveholder. But Tituba refuses, citing the words of Mama Yaya and Abena: "don't become like them, knowing only how to do evil."

Tituba's notion of personal integrity (her desire to distinguish herself from the cruel, white "them") comes directly from the women who raised her—and also, perhaps, from her sense that there is a very active, almost tangible spirit world, able to give comfort when reality becomes difficult to bear.

Sarah pushes back, insisting that "knowledge must adapt itself to society"—and so, now that Tituba is in a majority-white society instead of a largely Black one, she must change her mental framework. Tituba is tempted by Sarah's argument, but she still refuses to do evil.

Tituba resists Sarah's framework to some extent, but there is also lots of truth in Sarah's words. Just as Tituba must use new plants and animals in a new location, she must also change her approach to life in a new town with a new kind of people.

On her way home, she passes Goodwife Rebecca Nurse, a kindly older woman. At first, Goodwife Nurse seems to want simply to chat—but then, she asks Tituba to punish her neighbors with magic. Tituba is furious that everyone views her in this way, and even more angry that everyone wants to force her to do evil.

Historical records show that Goodwife Nurse was one of the wealthiest, most respected women in town. But even community pillars like Goodwife Nurse try to enlist Tituba for their own ends, showing just how backstabbing the village really is.

After a few weeks in which Abigail, Betsey, and their friends become increasingly obsessed with magic, Betsey turns rigid and falls ill. Tituba is horrified to see that, even after all the care she has showered on young Betsey, Elizabeth blames her for this sickness.

Elizabeth's quick turn affirms what Tituba has already begun to sense—that any notion of female friendship or solidarity with Elizabeth (or perhaps any white woman) is ultimately undermined by prejudice.

The next morning, when Tituba approaches to serve the Parris family breakfast, Betsey begins screaming inhuman screams. Abigail takes in the situation for a moment, and then she makes a calculated decision to join Betsey in the screaming. When Elizabeth outright accuses Tituba, Tituba reminds her of all the times she has been a healing force.

Tituba has saved both Elizabeth and Betsey from the brink of death, but conveniently, neither of the Parris adults seems able to recall that information. Also, Abigail's calculated decision ties back to her role in The Crucible, in which she is the primary instigator of the witchcraft panic.

The screaming disturbs the neighbors, who rush over to see what is going on in the Parris house. As Parris tries to reassure them that nothing is wrong, Tituba resolves to give up on Mama Yaya's "humanitarian" outlook; instead, she will accept that "those around me were as ferocious as the wolves [...] and I had to become as ferocious as they were." However, it feels difficult for Tituba to do evil, since she believes she was born a fundamentally good person.

Whereas only a few weeks ago, Tituba refused to take Sarah's advice about adapting to her environment, now she wants to become as "ferocious" as the people around her. But once again, Tituba's innate kindness gets in the way of her drive to survive.

PART 1: CHAPTER 11

John tells Tituba that she does not know how to survive in the white man's world. Tituba wears her heart on her sleeve, but John "wears a mask," playing directly to white people's stereotypes of Black men. "Behind all that," though, he explains, "I, John Indian, am free." Tituba expresses her regret for having tried to cure and explain things to Betsey.

Again, Tituba's determination to maintain integrity and a sense of self—passed down to her by her ancestors and Mama Yaya—contrasts with John Indian's desire to "survive" at any cost. In particular, it is worth noting his idea that by play-acting a stereotypical vision of Blackness, he maintains personal privacy and "freedom."

Parris tells Tituba that he has brought in a witchcraft specialist named Dr. Griggs to assess the situation—and that if Tituba is found guilty of magic, she will be hanged. But before Griggs can arrive, Betsey and Abigail have another fit, once again drawing the attention of all of the neighbors. When Tituba insists that everything she did for Betsey was for her own good, Parris gets even more suspicious.

Whereas Tituba's knowledge is treated as satanic and untrustworthy, a white man like Dr. Griggs—who presumably has similar forms of knowledge—is only lauded for his expertise, underlining the community's racist, patriarchal assumptions.

Tituba goes to Betsey's room with the naïve hope that she will be able to connect with the little girl again. Instead, Betsey asks Tituba questions about Satan. When Tituba repeats that she was only trying to do good, Betsey says, "you, do good? You're a Negress, Tituba! You can only do evil. You are evil itself."

In this crushing exchange, Betsey—the youngest, most seemingly innocent white person in the book—reveals that she has already learned vitriolic anti-Blackness. Thus all the tangible good that Tituba has done for Betsey and her mother is written off because of her race.

Tituba is deeply wounded by these words, especially coming from someone she is so attached to. As she tries to recover, she runs into Goodwife Sibley, who at first offers support. Like Goodwife Nurse, however, Goodwife Sibley then encourages Tituba to use evil magic against her enemies. When Tituba gets frustrated, Goodwife Sibley reminds her of the horrible things that happen to witches. John begs Goodwife Sibley to help them.

Sibley inadvertently points out a strange contradiction here: if Tituba really were as evil as she was accused of being, wouldn't she be able to just do away with her accusers? But while John Indian wants to follow Sibley's advice, Tituba refuses to try to enact pain even on those who would have her executed.

That evening, all of the teenage girls come into Tituba's home; she notices that their fervor has made them almost attractive, even though many of them are quite ugly. Tituba dreams of Susanna Endicott, and she wonders if this was her revenge. But slowly, the nightmare fades into a better dream, and Tituba gets to revisit (in her mind) her cabin in Barbados.

The fact that the witchcraft crisis literally makes the Puritan teenagers appear more attractive suggests, once again, that this panic, in part, offers a way for these young girls to express the sexual drives they have thus far repressed.

PART 1: CHAPTER 12

Though Dr. Griggs and Tituba had often worked together to help various residents of Salem, now he, too, has turned against her. When Griggs goes to investigate the situation, he asks Betsey and Abigail to take off their clothes, which is very difficult for both of them. However, Griggs sees no marks of witchcraft on their bodies. He therefore asks Parris to bring in a more qualified expert to consult with.

Dr. Griggs is one more person who turns on Tituba when she is no longer a convenient ally, reflecting the town's racist mob mentality. Also worth noting is the continued discomfort with female nudity; even in a non-sexual context, Betsey and Abigail struggle to show their natural forms.

Parris again threatens Tituba with hanging, and she tells him to accuse Mary Sibley, not her; she then reflects that "I had begun to behave like an animal up against a wall, biting and scratching whoever she can." Tituba reflects that these accusations are taking over the entire village, as parents fear for their children and servants panic. Even Parris feels the situation is out of his control, and he resolves to seek help in Boston.

The general climate of panic grows, as even Tituba—normally so in control of herself—feels that she is acting against her better instincts. Moreover, since there is no logic behind these accusations, no one is safe; anybody could be accused or an accuser, adding to the sense of doom.

Tituba runs to the Putnam household, recalling that Goodwife Putnam often has visions of demons. Currently, her daughter Anne is having a fit in which she claims to see the devil in front of her. All of the villagers take this young child seriously, except for Sarah Goode, who makes a joke out of it.

Sarah Goode is one of the poorest residents in the town, and so she is often treated as a pariah. Here, her sense of otherness allows her some clarity on the absurdity of the situation—but it also makes her vulnerable to attack.

One by one, the women of the town begin to accuse Tituba of witchcraft; only the mild-mannered Elizabeth Proctor stands up for her. When Tituba responds to the accusations with a taunt of her own, the white residents become more explicitly racist in their shouts.

It is clear here that Tituba is singled out not so much for her actions as she is for the color of her skin. It is also worth catching the mention of Elizabeth Proctor, the heroine and moral center of Arthur Miller's The Crucible.

Tituba reflects on the hypocrisy of Salem, "a community that stole, cheated, and burgled while wrapping itself in the cloak of god's name." Desperate to connect with Mama Yaya and Abena, and fed up with her neighbors, Tituba steals a sheep to sacrifice. At last, Mama Yaya appears, ensuring Tituba that though the hardship will continue, she will be "the only one to survive."

Interestingly, Mama Yaya's use of the word "survive" means something slightly different than when John uses it. The vast majority of people survived the Salem witch trials—indeed, only 19 people were ultimately executed. But Mama Yaya seems to suggest here that Tituba will be the "only one to survive" as herself, with all her goodness and integrity intact; the rest may live on, but they will do so having compromised themselves.

As Tituba heads home, she is stopped by Sarah Hutchinson, whose sheep she had stolen. Goodwife Hutchinson implores Tituba to use witchcraft to find and punish the person who has taken the sheep. Tituba scolds her for this impulse, and Goodwife Hutchinson responds by telling Tituba she will be hanged. Tituba "shivers" at the idea of death, reflecting on the fact that despite her connection to the spirit world, death is still something that frightens her.

Tituba knows that there is life after death; after all, her most constant companions are Mama Yaya, Yao, and Abena, all in their spirit forms. But the tension between that understanding and Tituba's real desire to continue earthly life is a recurrent problem for her (especially whenever she is in immediate danger).

PART 2: CHAPTER 1

Three ministers, each from a different corner of Massachusetts, gather to try Tituba. Tituba defends her innocence, but her anxiety makes her voice sound shaky. Parris presents the youngest and most seemingly vulnerable of the accusers to the ministers. They begin to accuse Tituba, Sarah Goode, and Sarah Osborne of witchcraft.

Earlier, Tituba opined that Parris was so paranoid that he was capable of "creat[ing] evil." Here, he does just that, setting up a scene that suggests witchcraft when there is none. And by doing this, Parris is able to slander three of the most vulnerable women in the community (Tituba, Goode, and Osborne).

Like "birds of prey," Parris and the other ministers tie Tituba down and command that she confess to witchcraft and name her accomplices. When she insists that she has not done anything, they begin to hit her and sexually assault her with a sharp stick. Through it all, Tituba continues to insist that she will "never! Never!" cast suspicion on others. John Indian comes in and begs Tituba to accuse others and save herself. He then asks her to think of their unborn child, which only upsets her more.

Parris, who cannot look at his own wife's nude body, now reveals himself to be capable of great sexual violence—once more reflecting how the bigoted white Puritans also seek to use Black women as an outlet for the sexual feelings they normally repress. Also, this debate between John and Tituba once more reflects the differing emphasis they place on survival vs. personal integrity.

Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne are also arrested. While she is being chained, Goodwife Goode asks who will take care of her daughter Dorcas, and John Proctor volunteers; this then causes suspicion to fall on the Proctor family.

John Proctor (the protagonist of The Crucible) is doing the Christian thing by showing charity, but in cruel Salem, what is ostensibly an act of goodness causes the villagers only to view him as suspect.

As Tituba is dragged to the jail in Ipswich through the cold February air, she decides that she will take her revenge and name names. When she finally arrives, she is put in the same cell as Goode and Osborne. Later that night, both women begin to fall into fits themselves, accusing Tituba of being a witch. Tituba thinks, once again, about the hypocrisy of the villagers.

Though the decision to name names takes a toll on Tituba, the same is not true for Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne, both of whom turn against Tituba as soon as they can. Once more, white women are a source of betrayal and disappointment for Tituba.

PART 2: CHAPTER 2

In the week that she is in prison, Tituba makes friends with her new cellmate, a beautiful, young, pregnant white woman named Hester. Hester asks questions about Tituba's past, and she expresses her disgust at Salem society. When Tituba admits that she is accused of witchcraft, Hester is shocked, knowing that Tituba can do no evil. Hester then explains that she is in jail for adultery, even though the man who impregnated her continues to roam free.

Hester is based on Hester Prynne, the (fictional) main character from Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel The Scarlet Letter; in that book, Hester is ostracized and forced to wear a scarlet "A" after it is revealed that she has committed adultery. By pairing Tituba and Hester, Condé highlights the feminist themes in her novel, zooming in on the sexual repression and hypocrisy that she believes defined early America.

Hester explains that she was forced into marriage with a man she despised, and that she actively strove to abort all of their children with a variety of potions and home remedies. Tituba shares that she has done a similar thing. Bonded by their shared experiences, Hester confesses that she is still in love with the minister who got her pregnant. She also tells Tituba that she will likely be forced to wear a scarlet letter on her breast for the rest of her life, so that the whole town will always remember her as an adulterer and a pariah.

Like Tituba, Hester has tried to abort a child, and like Tituba, Hester struggles to balance her frustration with men with her lingering desire for a specific man. Rather than dismissing Hester's sexual and romantic needs, however, Tituba takes them seriously, understanding that feminism must always consider female desire as a vital part of life.

Tituba begins to tell the story of her life to Hester's pregnant belly, and the two women lament the trouble men have brought into their lives. However, despite their increasing intimacy, Tituba does not tell Hester all of the details of her personal history.

Hester and Tituba are forming a friendship based in part on their shared plight as women in a repressive, patriarchal society—but Tituba has been continually betrayed by white women like Hester, which perhaps explains her hesitance to fully share.

Hester helps Tituba prepare her testimony for the court; "trust a minister's daughter," Tituba scoffs, "to know a thing or two about Satan." In her coaching, Hester explains how Tituba should describe the (made-up) meetings of witches and encourages Tituba to "make them scared." But Hester does not want Tituba to name too many names, because she does not want Tituba to stoop to the villagers' level. Still, both women agree that it is alright to accuse Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne, as they each directly betrayed Tituba.

Now, forced to choose between hewing entirely to her beliefs about personal integrity and her flesh-and-blood survival, Tituba is able to split the difference by naming only those women (Goode and Osborne) who have directly accused her.

Tituba begins to worry that if she describes Satan as a "black man" (a common descriptor for the devil), suspicion will fall on John Indian. Hester has little patience for Tituba's continued love for her husband, especially because both women know that John flirts with women of all races in Salem.

Just as Mary Sibley and Betsey Parris made it known that Blackness was seen as a concrete sign of Satan's presence, Tituba now encounters the anti-Blackness baked into every aspect of the Puritans' devil mythology. Tituba's desire to protect herself by discussing Satan in terms that the Puritans understand is therefore in tension with her desire to protect the Black man she loves.

Hester dreams of a model society, in which women can write books and give their children their own last names. Though Tituba is on board with the ideas, Hester teases her that she loves love too much to ever be a "feminist."

"Feminist" is an anachronism; that term did not exist until the 20th century. But in having Hester look towards the future and use the word "feminist," Condé is giving readers a way to connect Tituba's ideological questions more directly with their own.

But while Tituba appreciates this new friendship, she is still paralyzed by fear of her trial and hopelessness about what comes next. Most of all, she is reminded of the fact that even if she returns to Barbados, there will still be slavery. On February 29th, Tituba, Sarah Goode, and Sarah Osborne are released from prison to return to Salem for their trial. The entire way home, Sarah Goode harasses Tituba.

Salem is frightening for women like Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne, but if they can make it through the accusations, they will return to freedom. The same is not true for Tituba, who faces near-certain enslavement in any of the places she has ever called home. Even among people who are similarly accused, then, it is difficult for Tituba to feel real solidarity or solace.

PART 2: CHAPTER 3

A footnote explains that the following chapter is taken from the actual archival records of Tituba's testimony. In her testimony, Tituba explains that she never hurt any children, even though the devil asked her to do so; instead, she insists that Sarah Goode and Sarah Osborne hurt the young girls. Tituba testifies that she was threatened by these women and two others, as well as "a tall man of Boston."

Later, Tituba will worry that history will remember her incorrectly, flattening her interiority and defining her in terms of her trial. Here, Condé's use of the archival records proves that history did just that. There is no record of the good Tituba did, the expertise she possessed, or the pain she felt; the only thing noted beyond her testimony is the fact that she was enslaved.

Tituba then admits to hurting some of the children, but she swears she will do so no longer. She also mentions some other symbols of the devil: she claims to have seen a black dog, two rats, and a pretty yellow bird. Lastly, she testifies to having pinched and hurt other villagers (including Anne Putnam).

In addition to accusing the two women who turned against her, Tituba now recites almost word-for-word what she practiced with Hester. Interestingly, she does not bring up having seen "a black man," probably out of fear for John Indian.

The archival record ends, and Tituba resumes her own narration. When she is pressed to give more names, she fakes sudden blindness, just as Hester had instructed her to do. At the end of Tituba's testimony, Parris congratulates her on a job well done, telling her, "you understood what we expected of you." Tituba feels hatred for both Parris and herself.

This is the closest Tituba ever gets to becoming even a little "like them" (the hypocritical, oppressive white Puritans). Though she has saved herself from execution, Tituba has also to some extent betrayed herself, acting against Mama Yaya's advice. That betrayal then causes her to feel a great deal of self-loathing.

PART 2: CHAPTER 4

After her deposition, Tituba is jailed in a villager's barn, so she does not see the wave of accusations that sweep Salem. A few weeks later, Elizabeth Parris comes to apologize. As soon as she has said sorry, however, Elizabeth shares her view of the panic: "I can only compare it to a sickness that first of all is thought to be benign because it effects the lesser parts of the body." Tituba is shocked by this phrasing.

Though Elizabeth recognizes her accusations of Tituba were false, she only continues to reveal the depths of her prejudice. In particular, by saying that false accusations were okay when they only affected Tituba, Elizabeth suggests that she finds Black life completely expendable. Again, Elizabeth ignores the life-saving role Tituba played in her own family.

From Elizabeth, Tituba learns that even Rebecca Nurse—one of the most respected villagers in the entire parish—has been accused by Abigail and young Anne Putnam. If Goodwife Nurse can be taken down, Tituba fears even more greatly for her husband. Yet John Indian seems to be getting along just fine, causing Tituba to recall Hester's complaint that "life is too kind to men, whatever their color."

Historians agree that Rebecca Nurse was accused and executed because she refused to name other names; her integrity, in other words, is the very thing that destroyed her. But Tituba also sees misogyny at work here, reflecting that her particular identity as a Black woman made her much more vulnerable than her husband, a Black man.

One day, John visits Tituba in her makeshift jail. Tituba is horrified to see that he has changed, becoming cunning and manipulative. He reveals that he has joined with Abigail in accusing townspeople of witchcraft. Tituba is "appalled," but she also has to face the fact that she, too, lied to save herself. She begins to fall out of love with John Indian, largely because she cannot stop imagining him as one of her accusers.

Now, Tituba sees the results of John's single-minded emphasis on survival: he is again playing into white people's expectations, but this time, he is doing so in a way that causes great harm to others. Though Tituba continues to think of him (often with desire), this exchange permanently damages their marriage.

John Indian stops visiting, and Tituba is taken back to the jail in Ipswich. On the journey, Tituba fears that she will be "forgotten," written out of records or mentioned only in passing; while other descendants of the accused will have their property restored to them, no such reparations will be made to Tituba's descendants.

Tituba does not state it outright, but her claim here is clear: the archives themselves are unreliable, giving priority to white voices and grievances and erasing Black ones. Indeed, that can be seen in both the archival snippet Condé includes and in the various popular histories that have been written about Salem. The idea of the "violence of the archive" is also a prominent one in Black feminist thought.

Back at the jail, Tituba requests to be placed with Hester, but she learns that Hester has hanged herself. In great pain, Tituba thinks of drowning in her mother's womb and wishes for death ("Hester, I would have gone with you"). Wracked with grief, Tituba is labeled insane, and she is taken to the almshouse in Salem.

If John Indian has chosen to prioritize flesh-and-blood survival, Hester prefers to follow Yao's path, taking her own life (and that of her child) rather than bending to the Puritans' will. This marks a divergence from Hester's trajectory in The Scarlet Letter (where she remains alive).

At the almshouse, Tituba is studied by a male doctor, who offers her various potions made of blood and milk to calm her down. Gradually, Tituba is sedated, and she is moved back to the prison in Ipswich. As her speech and memory come back, Tituba is transferred to the prison in Salem town, which is larger and less terrible than the one in Ipswich. Still, Tituba cannot avoid the pervasive sense of gloom that seems to hang over all of Massachusetts.

Blood and milk were the two liquids Mama Yaya taught Tituba were essential. But when Tituba used these liquids to heal, it was seen as witchcraft—whereas when a white doctor does it, it is viewed as a legitimate form of expert knowledge.

PART 2: CHAPTER 5

Tituba thinks with sadness about the children she and Hester each aborted; she sings her old moonstone lament for them. Around the same time, Dorcas (Sarah Goode's daughter) is placed in Tituba's cell. When Dorcas asks Tituba where Sarah Goode is, Tituba is unable to answer. Filled with pity, Tituba begins to include Dorcas in her lament.

Once more, Tituba's decision to protect her unborn child from the horrors of slavery conflicts with her own loving, motherly nature. Tituba's kindness to Dorcas perhaps also reflects a certain amount of guilt she feels over accusing Sarah Goode (even though Goode accused her first).

PART 2: CHAPTER 6

The "plague" of accusations spreads through more and more towns across Massachusetts, and so many people are accused that the jails run out of space. Tituba is forced out of her cell to make room for prisoners of higher status; all of the accused children are housed in a shoddily built thatched shack. Tituba learns that Rebecca Nurse has been arrested, and that Sarah Goode is still alive.

There is something almost humorously absurd in applying the same rigid rules of Puritan status even within overflowing jail cells. It is also telling that so many children have been accused—clearly, all of the most vulnerable members of society are being targeted.

Tituba thinks of Mama Yaya and her own survival, but this thought no longer cheers her; instead, she feels that time stretches "endlessly," and she contemplates the idea that "human beings refuse to admit that they are beaten." Stories start to spread that vindicate the accused women who have been executed: a sweet-smelling rose has grown in Rebecca Nurse's grave, for example, and the judge who had accused Sarah Goode has himself suddenly died.

Though the tide is beginning to turn—and the residents of Salem are starting to feel some guilt about what they have done to people like Rebecca Nurse—Tituba is running out of hope. Unlike John Indian, who just wants to keep going, Tituba begins to question the value of life in a world so patently backwards and cruel.

Still, the accusations continue, and prominent farmer Giles Corey is stoned to death. Though Corey had testified against Tituba, she is still upset to hear of his death—especially because, rather than admit to witchcraft, Corey just kept asking for "more stones" to be placed on his chest. Tituba also learns that a former minister was arrested and accused.

Tituba's feelings about Giles Corey, like her feelings about Rebecca Nurse, are mixed, because the people themselves are deeply flawed. Though both Nurse and Corey have principles they are willing to die for, they are also racially prejudiced—which shows just how completely pervasive anti-Blackness is in Salem.

Knowing that the situation is out of control, the governor of Massachusetts writes to England, asking for advice; the English write back to the colony suggesting a new kind of court system. Though this novel court system helps to calm the situation (or at least that's what Tituba can understand from her cell), she is still too disillusioned to care much about this change.

The governor's letter would be a major plot point in any traditional history of the Salem witch trials. But for Tituba, who is focused on lived, interior experience, such an event is almost beside the point; too much damage has already been done in her life, and the new system presumably won't impact her life for the better.

PART 2: CHAPTER 7

Most of the accusers were rich, but many of the accused were poor—and yet, the colonial government still refuses to pay for their prison costs. Instead, Tituba is forced to work off the cost of her own imprisonment in the jail's kitchens. Though the food is sparse and often rotting, Tituba remembers some old recipes, and she quickly gains a reputation as an excellent cook.

Again, Tituba takes in the absurdity of her situation: the state is forcing her to pay for being imprisoned by the state, for a crime she did not commit, in a country she did not want to come to. But as always, Tituba finds comfort in plant life, learning how to cook with the New England vegetation.


To get a moment of respite, Tituba begins walking to the sea, as she feels the water is a saving force. But the sea cannot prevent her from learning that John Indian is now one of the town's main accusers, often being even more aggressive than Abigail and Anne.

Earlier, Tituba has explained that the sea reminds her of home. But though she finds comfort in these memories, she no longer finds comfort in the only other person actually from her native island, as John Indian has now fully embraced his role as an accuser.

In May 1693, the governor declares a general pardon, and all of the accused witches left alive are set free. But prison superintendent Noyes informs Tituba that in order to pay off her prison debts, she will have to sell herself into slavery and use the money to pay the prisons. "If one day I am born again," she vows, "let it be in the steely army of conquerors!"

This new development—like the fact that Susanna sold Tituba to Samuel Parris despite never having purchased her—highlights the complete illogic of slavery. Merely by virtue of how she was "born," then, Tituba must live in constant fear of enslavement and all the brutality that comes with it.

After being inspected by a series of slaveholders—who comment on her body, age, and skin-tone—Tituba encounters a small, hunched older man who walks with a limp. There is something generous in the man's eyes, so Tituba asks about him and learns that he is a wealthy Jewish merchant who does business in the West Indies. Seeing her chance to return to Barbados, Tituba calls on Mama Yaya and Abena to help her wind up in the hands of this merchant.

Just as she did in Susanna's kitchen, Tituba feels how slavery is designed (at every juncture) to dehumanize Black people. And though this Jewish merchant is a kindly figure, it is important to note that he is still, at base, a slaveholder, looking to purchase human beings at an auction; kindness, in this context, is only relative.

That night, amidst dreams of Barbados, Tituba connects with Hester's spirit and feels the stirrings of sexual longing. Tituba wonders if it is possible for her to access "another kind of bodily pleasure" with a woman.

Tituba's desire has always been laser-focused on men (primarily John Indian), and that desire has sometimes complicated her burgeoning feminism. But in considering a queer form of desire, Tituba may also be expanding her political imagination.

The Jewish merchant purchases Tituba, and Noyes smashes her chains. After months of imprisonment, Tituba no longer knows how to interact with other people or how to take care of herself. As she readjusts to the world around her, she reflects that "few people have the misfortune to be born twice."

Each time that Tituba has been "born" (first literally and now metaphorically in her re-entry process), she has been born into slavery—and so has received life as "misfortune." Moreover, Condé might be commenting on the difficulty of re-entry after time in prison, a problem that is especially salient in modern times.


PART 2: CHAPTER 8

Tituba learns that the Jewish merchant is named Benjamin Cohen d'Azevedo; his wife and youngest children have recently passed away, but he still has nine kids he needs a woman's help with. As Jews, the family's life has been marked by persecution: they have fled from Portugal to Holland to Brazil to New England. Benjamin is not suspicious of Tituba, because he views the Gentiles who accused her as inherently evil. Instead, he introduces her to his network of Jews across the New World.

Though Benjamin seems to be white, his own experience of persecution—and the recent loss he has suffered—allows him some measure of empathy with Tituba. His life also reveals rampant anti-Semitism as another aspect of Puritan, and more broadly majority European, prejudice.

Over time, Benjamin begins to treat Tituba with great kindness, giving her clothes or little treats that had belonged to his deceased, "beloved" wife Abigail d'Azevedo. As a thank-you, Tituba agrees to put Benjamin in contact with Abigail d'Azevedo's spirit. At night, she sacrifices a goat and says the familiar incantation; sure enough, Abigail appears, and the two share a lovely reunion in Hebrew.

In contrast to Puritan Christianity, which is portrayed in the novel as rigid and completely closed-off to other forms of spiritual knowledge, Benjamin's reunions with his wife represent a kind of open-minded syncretism: Tituba's natural expertise is blended with Hebrew (the traditional language of Judaism) to allow for a lovely, almost holy moment outside the bounds of traditional Jewish practice.

After several weeks of these late-night meetings, Benjamin asks if his oldest daughter Metahebel can join. Metahebel is Tituba's favorite of the children, though Metahebel believes that those who are persecuted should not fight their circumstances, instead waiting until the afterlife for peace. Tituba disagrees, asking "isn't it time the victims changed sides?"

Tituba's exchange with Metahebel shows that her own thought is beginning to diverge from Mama Yaya's teachings. Rather than trying to merely separate herself from "the white man's world," Tituba now wants some measure of revenge. But this is not John Indian's worldview, either—Tituba wants to survive not by playing into white people's hands but by fighting back against them.

Benjamin and Tituba eventually end up sleeping together; "why," Tituba wonders, "must any relationship with the slightest hint of affection between a man and a woman necessarily end up in bed?" The sight of Benjamin's body cannot compare to the beauty of John Indian's, but Tituba nevertheless finds great pleasure and comfort with him.

Again, Tituba's view of male-female relationships is complicated and confused by sexual desire. Though her relationship with Benjamin is perhaps more mature and more deeply founded than the bond she shared with John, Tituba also misses the passion that prevailed in her first marriage.

Benjamin educates Tituba about the history of the Jews, and he introduces her to the contemporary struggles and triumphs of Jewish people in the New World. But while Tituba begins to see everything through Benjamin's eyes, he extends no such empathy—when Tituba mentions wanting her freedom to go back to Barbados, Benjamin refuses, arguing that "if you leave, I'll lose her a second time."

In prior chapters, white women like Elizabeth revealed the limits of their solidarity with Tituba. Now, Benjamin does the same thing—though they are both members of oppressed groups, Benjamin is still white, still an enslaver, and still cruel, taking advantage of the power he has over Tituba. This shifting, unreliable alliance again calls attention to the various ways identities intersect with each other.

One day, Tituba runs into Mary Black, one of the few other enslaved women from Salem (who had also been accused of witchcraft). Mary tells Tituba that the truth has come out: the girls were being manipulated by their parents to settle land disputes, and the entire panic has been revealed as a hoax. All of the accused not yet executed have been pardoned, but Tituba reflects that it is too late to undo all the damage.

This is another moment in which Tituba's lived experience is at odds with the more popular, archive-based version of history. Many historians have spent decades trying to trace the land disputes behind the accusations—but to Tituba, that speculative background is much less important than the concrete loss and trauma she and others experienced.

When Tituba asks about John Indian, Mary tells her that he has moved to a nearby town to live with a wealthy white woman. Tituba gets back just in time to hear Benjamin and his children doing their evening prayers, but she runs to her room in a panic.

John's romance with a white woman—plus the news that he has gotten through the trials unscathed—is perhaps the ultimate proof that, as Hester says, "life is too kind to men, whatever their color."

PART 2: CHAPTER 9

Tituba recovers from the news of John Indian, and she has four happy months with Benjamin and his children; her new lover declares that "our God knows neither race nor color," and urges her to convert to Judaism. But even as Tituba finds a brief moment of peace, she waits in fear for tragedy to return to her life—as it always has.

Once more, Benjamin's stated beliefs—that he does not notice or care about Tituba's race—is at odds with his actions, as he continues to act as an enslaver. This passage also shows how deeply Tituba has been traumatized: she automatically distrusts happiness because all of her previous moments of peace have been interrupted by (white) violence.

PART 2: CHAPTER 10

Eventually, the villagers turn against Benjamin and Tituba, ripping the family's mezuzahs off the door and throwing stones at anyone who leaves the house. One night, the townspeople set fire to the d'Azevedo home—and though Benjamin and Tituba are able to escape, all nine children are killed in the flames.

Here, anti-Semitism and anti-Blackness act in concert to fuel the villagers' violence. The deaths of the nine children demonstrate again that it is usually the most vulnerable people in any group who suffer the most.

Benjamin believes that God is punishing him, not for having had sex outside of marriage but for refusing Tituba her freedom. He buys Tituba a ticket on a boat back to Barbados, and asks only that before she leaves, she connect him with the spirits of his children. Tituba does so, and the children assure their father that they are reuniting with their mother Abigail d'Azevedo in the afterlife.

At last, Benjamin realizes the profound injustice of his ways—though Tituba's departure is complicated by the desire and even love she has developed for this man. Ultimately, however, both Benjamin and Tituba are able to give the other the thing they most want, modeling a different (and more tender) kind of love than the one Tituba shared with John.

Though Tituba has been formally emancipated, once on board the ship, she still faces racism and suspicion—especially once the captain learns that she was an accused witch of Salem. Even as her magic is feared, however, the crew also insists that Tituba should use magic to heal sickness and "ward off storms." Tituba thinks of her own pain and of Benjamin's, and she craves revenge.

The treatment Tituba receives on the ship is similar to her experience in Salem: the white crewmates project onto her their fears and their desires, in part because of the rumors surrounding her and in part merely because of the color of her skin.

While Tituba wonders what awaits her in Barbados, she bonds with an enslaved Black sailor named Deodatus. Deodatus knew of Abena, and Tituba is amazed by "this ability our people have of remembering." As the ship sails through the Atlantic, Deodatus tells Tituba simple stories about how the world was made, bringing her back to her childhood.

The bond Deodatus forms with Tituba allows for solace despite the anti-Blackness of the ship. And crucially, Deodatus models another kind of historical preservation: rather than keeping Abena alive in the archives, Deodatus keeps her alive in his mind.

Deodatus pushes Tituba to think about what she will do as a free woman while most of her people are still enslaved; he also shares his own life story with her, in which he was sold into slavery by an African king for some brandy, gunpowder, and a silken parasol. Tituba reflects on the horrible things people do out of greed.

Now that Tituba is returning home to a changed Barbados, her knowledge and way of life must "once again adapt itself to society." It is also important to note that even in this moment of distress, Tituba is thinking of her people as a whole, never of only herself.

Many sailors, including Deodatus, develop a fever, and Tituba is able to heal almost all of them. But rather than thanking Tituba, the captain only asks more from her. Specifically, one day when the ship stalls because of poor wind conditions, the captain orders Tituba to change the wind. She attempts to do so by sacrificing a few animals, but she neglects to kill a sheep without horns, so the incantation goes awry. Though the ship gets to Barbados, the end of the journey is chaotic, and Tituba does not get to say goodbye to Deodatus.

Though Tituba is skilled with many kinds of plants and animals (and in many different environments), this passage acts a reminder that she is by no means omnipotent—a strong wind or a wrong ingredient can still throw her off. Tituba is more aware of her limits, however, than the white people around her, as this scene makes clear.

PART 2: CHAPTER 11

Tituba reflects on how happy she was for her few months with Benjamin: "we used to pitch and plunge like a drunken boat on a choppy sea." Hester would be angry at her for caring so much about a man, but Tituba cannot help feeling that Benjamin's weakness makes her desire him.

Fascinatingly, it is the very fact that Benjamin is non-threatening—that he is gentle and approachable, much as Yao was—that makes Tituba desire him. Tituba is thus also beginning to formulate a feminism that leaves room for men (or at least some men), in contrast to Hester's beliefs.

PART 2: CHAPTER 12

When Tituba arrives in Bridgetown, Barbados, she is gratified to be greeted by the spirits of Mama Yaya, Abena, and Yao. But the city itself is rainy and crowded, and Tituba no longer feels the same affection for it that she once did (it now appears "small" and "petty," "a colonial outpost of no distinction"). She takes in a group of bossales at a horrifying slave auction and passes by Susanna Endicott's house, which makes her again long for John Indian.

Tituba's world has been reshaped by her time in America—though Barbados still feels like home, it no longer appears to be the center of the world as it once did. Moreover, slavery and the slave trade are much more present here than they are in Salem, as can be seen in the group of bossales (African-born people who've been enslaved and brought to the New World).

After longing to go home for so many years, Tituba realizes that she no longer knows anyone on the island, and she is about to despair—until she runs into Deodatus and some of his female friends. The group invites her to go live with them in Belleplaine, on the other side of the island. Tituba is encouraged by the beautiful **tropical plants** and bird songs she encounters on the journey.

Tellingly, in a moment of panic, Tituba finds solace in community (Deodatus and his friends) and nature—the two things that Mama Yaya instructed her to love.

When Tituba asks what plantation Deodatus works on, he explains that he does not work on any plantation. Instead, he and his friends are maroons, meaning they are formerly enslaved people who have escaped to the hills. He was inspired to do this by the legend of Ti-Noel, a maroon who "had been living in everyone's imagination for so long that he must have been an old man by now." When the English tried to enlist slaves as soldiers against the French, Deodatus refused, instead heading for the mountains.

There are two critical points in this passage. First, this is the first mention of maroons, a force that was growing in numbers and power at the end of the 17th century. Second, Ti-Noel's legacy lies in shared stories and communal "imagination," extending his life and letting him endure in the minds of those that admire him.

Tituba is blindfolded and taken to the maroon camp, but she has mixed feelings about entering yet another conflict; all she really wants is peace. Still, she greets the maroons (there are about 15 of them in total), and she tells them about her life in Salem and the horrors she endured.

Because her whole world (and beyond) has been infected by colonialism and anti-Blackness, Tituba is beginning to realize that her desire to live peacefully and quietly is impossible unless she engages in some kind of conflict first.

Christopher, the leader of the maroons, asks Tituba if she does have powers, and she explains that she does, but that she only uses them for good. Later that night, Christopher comes to Tituba's hut and asks her to make him invincible, like Ti-Noel is in the legend. Christopher tells Tituba that if she can make him bulletproof, he will sleep with her and fulfill all her desires for him.

The previous chapter showed that Tituba was not all-powerful, but Christopher has bought into the legends about her (many of which are highly prejudicial). And once again, desire complicates what could exist as a largely political or familial relationship.

Tituba explains to Christopher that "death is a door that nobody can lock," and she fights her desire for him; Abena's spirit also weighs in, opining that Tituba wants Christopher's cause more than his body. Reflecting that "nature changes her language according to the land," Tituba falls asleep to the soothing sounds of the frogs and birds on the island. In her dreams, Hester, Metahebel, and Benjamin sit around her bed.

In this crucial passage, Tituba reflects that though it is possible for her to maintain contact with the afterlife, it is not possible for her to stop death or change the future in any way. Even more importantly, Tituba once more affirms that the nature she feels so close to changes dramatically based on where in the world she actually is—thus showing how much an environment has the capacity to shape the people within it.

PART 2: CHAPTER 13

Tituba is determined to increase her powers, so she begins asking local obeah men and women for their secrets. When one of the men learns that Tituba was an accused witch at Salem, he wonders why she did not try to bewitch the entire village—that way, she would be remembered forever as the "demon of Salem." Instead, she will be written down in history only as "Tituba, a slave originating from the West Indies and probably practicing 'hoodoo.'"

Obeah refers to a practice of spiritual healing originating with the Ashanti people; it is rooted in the use of tropical plants and herbal medicines. And fascinatingly, though Tituba has often shied away from accusations of witchcraft, the local obeah practitioners encourage Tituba to use her powers to rewrite her historical legacy beyond the reductive phrase she gets in the archives.

Before Tituba returns to the maroon camp, the obeah man reminds her that there are certain natural secrets she can never learn while still living; after all, "only death brings supreme knowledge." On her way home, Tituba is stopped by a group of enslaved women, who inform her that some of the white planters in Barbados believe she is trying to plan slave revolts. Because of this, they are trying to kill her.

This passage represents a central contradiction in Tituba's life. On the one hand, she is reminded of the limits of her powers—no matter how much she learns, she will never reach "supreme knowledge" while still on earth. And on the other hand, white people attribute all kinds of nefarious power to Tituba (and then use those rumors as an excuse to persecute her).

Once again, Tituba cannot believe the evil that permeates so much of human society. She heads home, where she informs Christopher that she is unable to make him invincible. But while Tituba wants to fight the white people on the island, Christopher feels that "a woman's duty" is only "to make love."

In a striking parallel to John Indian, Christopher, too, views Tituba not as an equal partner but as a vessel for his own sexual pleasure. This exchange once more demonstrates how all of Tituba's romances are colored by misogyny.

Despite the threat of the planters, Tituba spends the next few months happily. First, she helps save a dying baby, which makes her think of the babies she and Hester aborted. Then, a few weeks later, Tituba and Christopher become lovers, though she cannot quite shake her pleasurable memories of John Indian.

Tituba frequently thinks about the present moment in terms of large-scale historical memory—but here, it is also clear how much her present is affected by her more intimate, more personal history. Each experience in Barbados now makes her think of a moment in Salem, whether pleasurable (like sex with John) or awful (like aborting her baby).

Christopher begins to confide in Tituba, revealing that the maroons do not have enough weapons to successfully fight back against the white plantation owners. One night, he sings a song about himself, and Tituba asks him, "is there a song for me? A song for Tituba?" Christopher replies that there is not. Frustrated, Tituba reflects on the gender dynamics within the group of maroons; though the women rely on her as a healer, they also resent her because of her relationship with Christopher.

Though Christopher may not be written about in history books, he is determined to persist in oral history (like his hero Ti-Noel). But while he is invested in his own "song," he gives no such courtesy to Tituba, who again frets about being forgotten. Even in a group focused on Black rebellion and liberation, then, Tituba struggles against the constraints of sexism.

As Tituba gets to know the female maroons more, they begin to question her about the scope of her powers. Tituba points out that if she were really all-powerful, she would have done much more, including ending slavery entirely. These comments are reported back to Christopher, who demeans Tituba, telling her she does not deserve to be treated as "special." After some urging from Mama Yaya and Abena, who criticize her continued reliance on men, Tituba decides to leave the maroons. The other women help her pack up her things, while Christopher does nothing.

Finally, Tituba is able to make the limits of her powers known to those around her. But rather than finding sympathy and understanding, Tituba finds cruelty; Christopher's words, in particular, feel like a gendered form of criticism. Tituba's decision to leave—without help from her former lover—can thus be seen as a feminist act, in which she finally chooses her own needs over her male lover's.

At long last, Tituba returns to her old cabin, which is more or less as she has left it. Though the plantation has changed many times, many of the slaves still know Tituba, and they bring her an ewe to sacrifice upon her return. Tituba then gets to work, planting a garden for all the **tropical plants** she needs to heal people across the island. While there is incredible violence against enslaved people at this time, Tituba manages to hide amongst the foliage. One day, she discovers an orchid in her backyard, and she names it after Hester.

Amidst violence and massive amounts of prejudice, Tituba again finds solace and meaning in the natural world. Crucially, though, Tituba does not isolate herself—instead, as always, she uses her knowledge of plants and spirits to help the people in her community to endure.

PART 2: CHAPTER 14

Tituba, to her surprise, realizes that she is pregnant. Although she is not happy about the fact that Christopher is the father, she is very excited to have a baby, and she immediately begins to take care of herself and her unborn child. She also decides that if she is to bring a baby into the world, she needs to first make the world a better place.

The fact that Tituba receives the news of her pregnancy with joy this time—instead of feeling that she needs to protect the baby by aborting it—indicates a changed outlook on life. Though there is still tremendous cruelty, Tituba now seems more hopeful and more determined to survive.

Soon after, an enslaved man named Iphigene who has been beaten by a white overseer is brought to Tituba's door; he is on the verge of death, and she is the only one who can heal him. Using toad spit, Tituba is able to bring Iphigene back into consciousness. When he revives, he mistakes Tituba for his dead mother, and a strong friendship forms.

Once more, Tituba's natural knowledge comes to the fore as she brings yet another person back from near-death. Iphigene's mistaken belief that Tituba is his mother also models a way in which the dead can live on after death—Iphigene recalls his beloved parent through his relationship with Tituba.

Tituba learns that Iphigene's father is the famed Ti-Noel; his mother was enslaved, and like Abena, she was raped and killed by white slaveholders. This shared trauma—and Iphigene's youthful beauty—prompts Tituba to ask him if he has ever thought about inciting a rebellion against the white plantation owners. Iphigene replies that many people on the island will follow Tituba if she leads a revolt; he, personally, is ready to burn everything to the ground.

Iphigene's suggestion that Tituba is influential enough to lead a large-scale revolt reveals just how much she has become a fixture of her community in Barbados. For the first time, in other words, it appears that Tituba might become a legendary figure like Ti-Noel, capable of living on in "imaginations" as he does.

Iphigene begins to plan this revolt. Though she supports the idea, Tituba takes a backseat to the actual planning, wanting instead to focus on her pregnancy. But when Tituba learns that Iphigene intends to kill white children, she is dismayed: "do we have to become like them?" Iphigene seems to think there is no other way.

The central question of the novel gets a new layer here: to make the world better—to ensure not only her child's survival but her success—does Tituba first have to participate in some of the violence she so abhors? Interestingly, Iphigene's outlook on this question is more flexible than Mama Yaya's—but also much more community-oriented than John Indian's selfish view.

Iphigene also asks Tituba to go to Christopher to prevent the maroons from interfering; he explains that the maroons actually benefit from a "tacit agreement" with the planters, and so they are likely to spy on or stop any slave revolts. Tituba gets Christopher to promise to stay out of things, and Iphigene announces the massacre is planned for four days' time.

Condé draws on history here: in real life, maroons sometimes did reach secret agreements with white slaveholders, protecting themselves at the expense of enslaved people's safety and freedom.

That night, Tituba dreams that Christopher, John Indian, and Samuel Parris come into her room like "three birds of prey" and assault her. She wakes up to Iphigene comforting her. But when Tituba wants to consult the spirits for guidance, Iphigene gets frustrated. He believes that the future can only be shaped "through actions," not through communication with the invisible world.

Iphigene is focused on changing the future, but Tituba also seems to understand the need to heal from the past—especially given how much trauma she has both lived through and inherited from her mother. In particular, Tituba's memories of the "birds of prey" demonstrate the extent to which this moment of sexual violence continues to haunt and disturb her.

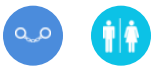
Nevertheless, Tituba gets in touch with Yao, Abena, and Mama Yaya to ask if the slave revolt is coming at a good time. All three are pessimistic, and Mama Yaya opines that "there's no end to the misfortune of black folks." That night, Tituba ventures to a garden of **tropical plants**, and she prays as hard as she can.

Mama Yaya's pessimistic outlook is based on the reality of the lives she, Yao, Abena, and Tituba have lived. In a fundamentally colonial, white supremacist, violent world, it is difficult for even a healer like Mama Yaya to promise hope.

PART 2: CHAPTER 15

Tituba does not want to go on with her story, as she feels that it is "predictable." But she continues anyway: Iphigene has planned well, staking out the various plantations and getting the necessary guns and fighters. The day before the attack, he confesses his attraction to Tituba, telling her he does not want to be thought of "as a son." Tituba does not know how to respond, so instead she imagines her unborn daughter's future, hoping that the child will "settle old scores" for her.

There are two big ideas in this passage. First, after sustaining an optimistic outlook for much of the novel, Tituba is starting to agree with Mama Yaya that "there's no end to the misfortune of black folks." And second, the sexual undertones in Tituba's relationship with Iphigene parallel the connection between Abena and Yao, whose romance similarly felt familial at the start.



That afternoon, Iphigene brings Tituba a rabbit to sacrifice. When she goes to kill the animal, however, she is horrified to find that it is rotting from the inside; in her shock, she drops the knife and cuts her own foot open. The smell of blood causes Tituba to think about Susanna Endicott, dying in a puddle of her own urine.

Usually, the natural world is a place of comfort and beauty for Tituba. So the fact that this rabbit is rotting—and the fact that Tituba is brought back to memories of Susanna—cannot be anything but a bad omen.

The spirits of Mama Yaya, Yao, and Abena return to comfort Tituba (and to chastise her, once again, for always focusing on men). Around 8 o'clock, Iphigene brings Tituba dinner. After they eat, Iphigene touches her, and they begin to make love; Tituba is surprised by the extent of her own desire. "Blessed is the love," she muses, "that makes [man] forget he is a slave."

Over and over again, Tituba has explained that because slavery is such a brutal institution, even her moments of happiness are undercut by fear. The fact that she is able to "forget" the fact of enslavement, then, even for a moment, testifies to the wonderful intensity of her union with Iphigene.

After she and Iphigene have sex, Tituba begins to feel guilty, as the young boy could be her son. She also wonders if Hester was right; is she too fond of sex and love? As she falls asleep, she thinks about the members of the Parris family and John Indian, whom she has never gotten over. She wonders if Susanna Endicott is still trying to get her revenge, and if she is "more powerful." But then Tituba feels her baby kick, and she is able to get some rest.

Rather than giving into Tituba's self-doubt (about whether she desires men too much), the novel instead affirms the necessity of sexuality. Susanna and the Parris family had no patience with sex or desire—but the baby kicking within Tituba reminds readers that sexuality (including female desire) is the very bedrock of the future.

Tituba has another nightmare, in which the forest has turned against her. She realizes that the smoke in her dream is real, and that her cabin is burning; she and Iphigene have been betrayed. She is reminded of her time in New England, when the house she shared with Benjamin was set on fire.

Like the rabbit, the forest being set on fire represents a dramatic break in Tituba's normal trust in nature. And as with her memories of the "three birds of prey," Tituba's flashback to the fire at Benjamin's house signals how much she must still struggle to process the violent anti-Blackness she has experienced.

Since this was going to be the second major slave revolt in three years, the planters have English troops spy on all of the enslaved people on the island. Then the planters are able to round up every suspect Black person, taking them to a clearing filled with dozens of makeshift gallows. Iphigene is the first to be hanged, but before he is killed, Tituba promises him they will be together in the afterlife.

Though it is difficult to trace what Tituba describes to a particular historical event, there are definite similarities between this revolt and the First Maroon War (which took place in Jamaica). That war was led by Nanny, a legendary female Maroon rumored (like Tituba) to have supernatural powers. Also worth noting: though Tituba cannot make anyone immortal, she can give solace to Iphigene by promising him a reunion in the afterlife (as Mama Yaya once did for her).

As the slaveholders prepare to hang Tituba, they read out a list of her alleged crimes, focusing on the accusations of witchcraft. But they also blame her for the fire that destroyed the d'Azevedo home, which makes Tituba especially angry. Rather than contest the accusations, however, Tituba instead focuses on the afterlife, where she knows Mama Yaya, Yao, and Abena will be waiting for her and where "the light of truth burns bright and unrelenting."

Tituba's entire experience on earth, from Darnell Davis's assault of Abena to the bogus trials in Salem, has been marked by injustice and untruth. It is difficult to overstate, then, the true joy of an afterlife where "truth burns bright"—especially when that afterlife also involves a reunion with all of Tituba's most beloved figures.

EPILOGUE

Tituba has finished her "bitter" story, but she wants readers to know that Christopher was incorrect—"there is a song about Tituba!" She hears this song in the plants rustling and in the mouths of children and "wherever" else she goes. From the afterlife, Tituba continues to heal and cure. But she also now works to encourage revolution, "nourishing" Black men and women with "dreams of liberty." Indeed, she claims to be behind every slave revolt since the mid-1700s.

In this essential epilogue, Tituba corrects two records: both the archival one, which minimizes her role, and the masculinist oral history that Christopher tried to present. Instead, by talking about her "song," Tituba emphasizes that despite her death, she lives on in the memories and liberation efforts of her community. And readers of this novel, too, are listening to Tituba's "song" (and thus extending her spiritual life).

Tituba explains that she has no need for the written word: "my people will keep my memory in their hearts." But because she was never able to have a baby, she is able to choose a spiritual descendant. After much thought, Tituba decides to adopt a young woman named Samantha. From the afterlife, Tituba teaches Samantha how to use **tropical plants** to heal and change minds, and the two meet up late at night (a time Tituba has taught Samantha to love).

After fretting for years about not being written about, Tituba now finds peace and joy by embracing this more relational model of legacy. Though it is not directly addressed, it can be argued that Tituba's spiritual adoption of Samantha also helps her to heal from the loss of two children (one aborted, one killed by white soldiers while still in utero).

Tituba reflects that in the afterlife, she is never alone; she is joined by the spirits of Mama Yaya, Yao, Abena, and Iphigene. But more than that, Tituba has at last "become one" with Barbados itself, in a kind of "extraordinary symbiosis." Her affection for the landscape of the island stands in stark contrast to her distaste for the "vast, cruel land" of America, where she rightly predicts that anti-Blackness will only grow more pervasive and more brutal with time.

Tituba always knew that death would bring new knowledge—and sure enough, in the afterlife, Tituba feels that there is no longer any divide between herself and nature (there is only "extraordinary symbiosis"). Her reflection on the harsh climate of North America, however, once more shows that "nature changes her language according to the land."

Tituba's only regret is that she can no longer commune with Hester, as each woman remains on her own side of the water. Though both continue to work for the rights of women, Tituba still craves the love of men—and every so often, she slips into the bed of a living man to satisfy her desires.

On the one hand, Tituba's continued fondness for Hester symbolizes her desire for feminist (or proto-feminist) solidarity. But at the same time, Tituba continues to feel desire and seek out pleasure, showing that her view of female liberation includes (and even emphasizes) sex.

Tituba reflects that she now knows "why there is so much suffering and why the eyes of our people are brimming with water and salt." But she also believes there will be an end to this pain, though not in the immediate future. Still, she has hope—after all, "what is one life in relation to the immensity of time?"

The mention of "water" and "salt" here can be seen as a symbolic reference to the profound trauma of the Middle Passage, as African men and women were captured, enslaved, and brought across the saltwater of the Atlantic.

Sometimes, Tituba cannot save the people around her; just a week earlier, a young bossale girl had successfully committed suicide after a number of failed attempts. But often, she is able to prevent these tragedies by reminding young, enslaved people that one day, the beautiful island, with "furrows of yams and patches of cassava," will belong to them.

Despite the tragedy and violence that is around her every day, Tituba continues to find comfort in her lush, tropical environment. And even more importantly, with the mention of "furrows and yams and patches of cassava," Tituba models a new kind of call to action: one in which Black folks in Barbados, most of whom had been enslaved in her lifetime, tend the ground of their island—and in doing so, begin to create a more hopeful future for themselves.

Finally, Tituba confesses that sometimes she changes into mortal form. In these moments, she will become a rooster in a cock fight, because she loves to "give the slave the excitement of winning!" Or she will become a goat and play with Samantha. She is proud that the young girl can now recognize her presence in "the crackling of a fire between four stones, the rainbow-hued babbling of the river, and the sound of the wind as it whistles through the great trees on the hills."

In addition to living on in the memories of her community, here, Tituba links two of the major themes of the novel together, suggesting that she lives on in the very natural world itself. In this beautiful closing passage, then, Condé reveals that the care Tituba has shown the natural world has always been about loving and protecting her community—for now and for the future.

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