

**Time Setting:** The Devil's Shadow by Clifford Lindsey Alderman took place in the late seventeenth century from 1692-1693. This is the time period that the Salem Witch Trials took place. The main plot of the story rested on the events leading up to the Salem Witch Trials, the trials themselves, and the aftermath of the trials. Detailed accounts of witch executions, the actual trials, and the events that caused the trials were discussed in the story.

**Place Setting:** Most of the action in this story took place in Salem, Massachusetts. This was the birthplace of the witchcraft hysteria and it was also the actual site of the Salem Witch Trials. The town of Salem, Massachusetts in the late seventeenth century was a small puritan community that was largely uneducated and very superstitious. Since many lacked education, they did not understand many events that happened in their daily lives. Many things that went wrong in their daily lives would be blamed on witchcraft or sorcery. Such common things as burnt bread or broken plates would be blamed on the supernatural. Many people, especially the uneducated, firmly believed in the existence of witches and warlocks. They believed that such individuals had the power to perform "black magic" that caused some kind of trouble. Every time something bad happened they would blame it on witches and witchcraft.

**Main Characters:** One of the main characters in this story was Tituba, an African slave woman from Barbados. She was purchased in Barbados by a merchant named Samuel Parris. She lived in Barbados until Samuel Parris brought her to Salem to work as his servant. She was known to practice Obeah, an African cult sorcery. People who performed or practiced Obeah were said to be able to predict the future, make magical charms, and drive away evil spirits. Tituba was accused of teaching witchcraft to a small group of girls in Salem.

Samuel Parris, another main character in this story, was a merchant who attended Harvard University. He was the owner of Tituba and her husband. He had studied to become a minister before he left Harvard. He was a business man who traded slaves, sugar, and rum in Barbados. Things began to not work out for him when he started making less and less money. He gave up his career as a merchant in 1689 and moved to Salem to become a minister.

Other main characters in this story include the girls that were taught witchcraft by Tituba, the judges in the courtroom, and the men and women who were accused of witchcraft.

**Two Important Events:** One important event in this story was when the hysterical girls are assumed to have been influenced by Tituba's witchcraft. This event fit into the story because it triggered the witchcraft hysteria that followed it. Many people suddenly became accused after the girls became associated with Tituba and witchcraft. This event gave a good illustration of life in the late seventeenth century by showing how paranoid people were about the presence of witchcraft in their society. They were ready to believe that people were witches at the drop of a hat, and because of this, they unjustly accused and murdered hundreds of people. This can be seen as the starting point of the witchcraft hysteria in Salem that killed so many people.

Another important event in this story was when everything began to get out of control and people were being accused of witchcraft by the dozens. It became a choice on whether or not you were going to accuse someone else in order to save yourself. People that were accused just accused different people in order to save themselves from hanging. Soon, everyone was accusing everyone else, and the trials had gone into utter chaos. This changed the course of history because it made people realize how pointless the while witchcraft hysteria really was. It was also

the first step towards the end of the hysteria.

Class Differences in Society: By reading this story, I learned about the class differences in the society of Salem in the late seventeenth century. The fact that all of the blame was put on an African American slave woman from the start shows that the higher class people tended to blame the lower class people for their problems. Also, people accused of witchcraft instantly became looked down on in society. This relates to the fact that people tended to accuse people that were already looked down on by society in order to lend credibility to their accusation. All of these things have helped me to realize that class differences are evident in every society. It has also led me to believe that class differences significantly affect the outcome of many historical events.