



**HORRORSCAPES**

# Witchcraft in Salem

by Steven L. Stern

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by **Steven L. Stern**

Consultant: Alison D'Amario  
Director of Education  
Salem Witch Museum  
Salem, Massachusetts

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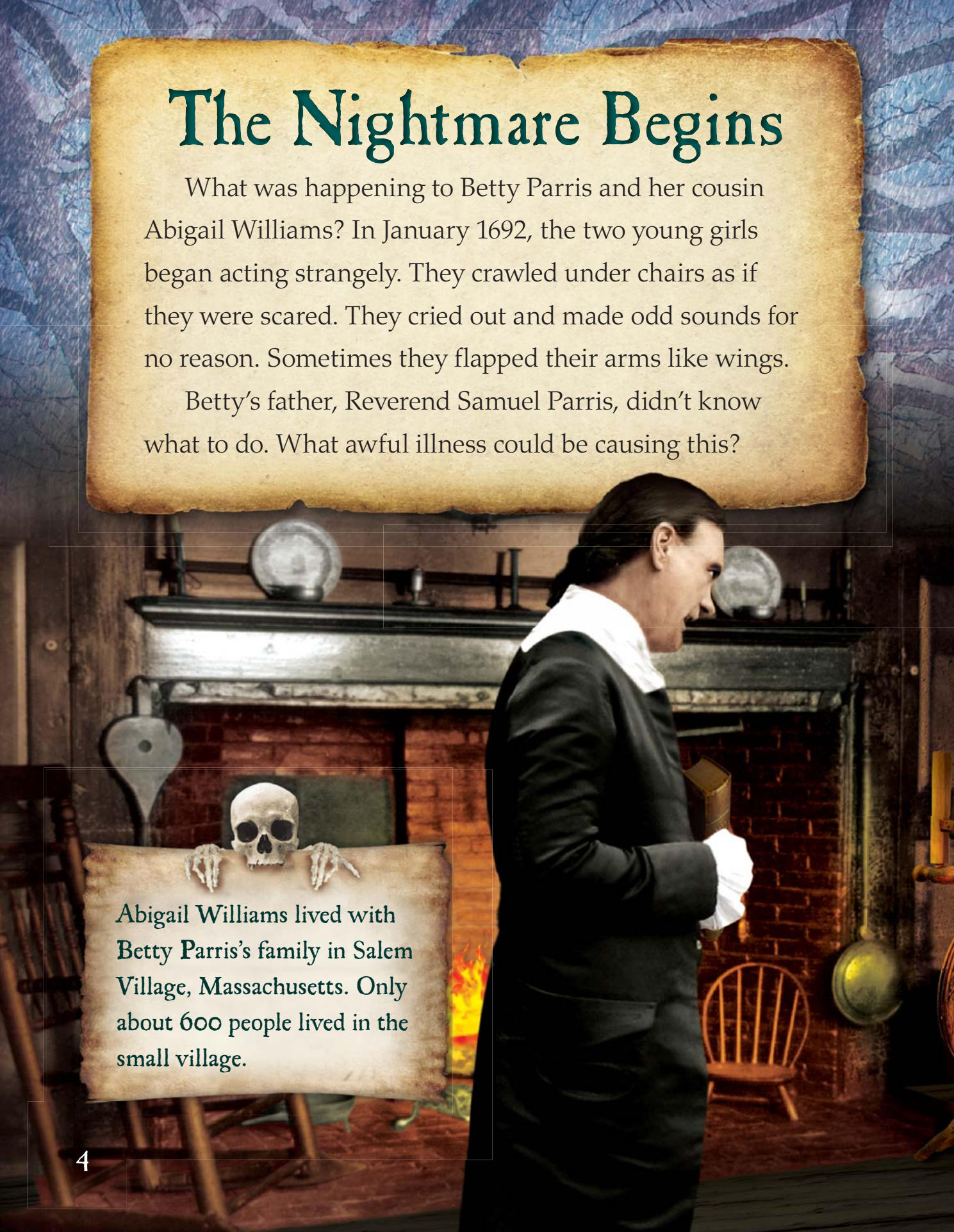




# The Nightmare Begins

What was happening to Betty Parris and her cousin Abigail Williams? In January 1692, the two young girls began acting strangely. They crawled under chairs as if they were scared. They cried out and made odd sounds for no reason. Sometimes they flapped their arms like wings.

Betty's father, Reverend Samuel Parris, didn't know what to do. What awful illness could be causing this?

A woman in a black dress with a white collar, holding a book, stands in a room with a fireplace. A skull is visible on a scroll in the foreground.

Abigail Williams lived with Betty Parris's family in Salem Village, Massachusetts. Only about 600 people lived in the small village.



Before long, things got worse. The girls started having **fits**. Their bodies would suddenly twist into crazy positions. They choked and screamed, as if under attack. Sometimes Betty would even bark like a dog!

Finally, in the middle of February, Reverend Parris asked Dr. William Griggs to examine the girls. Perhaps he could find the cause of their **bizarre** behavior. After observing them, Dr. Griggs said that the girls were “under an evil hand.” Betty and Abigail were victims of **witchcraft**!

The doctor blamed the girls' strange behavior on witchcraft.





# A Difficult Time

Unfortunately, the threat of witchcraft was not the only thing that made life difficult for the people of Salem Village in 1692. The winter that year was bitterly cold, and the dirt roads were often covered with snow. In addition, many people had recently died from **smallpox**. There was no cure for the deadly disease, and people feared that it might strike again.

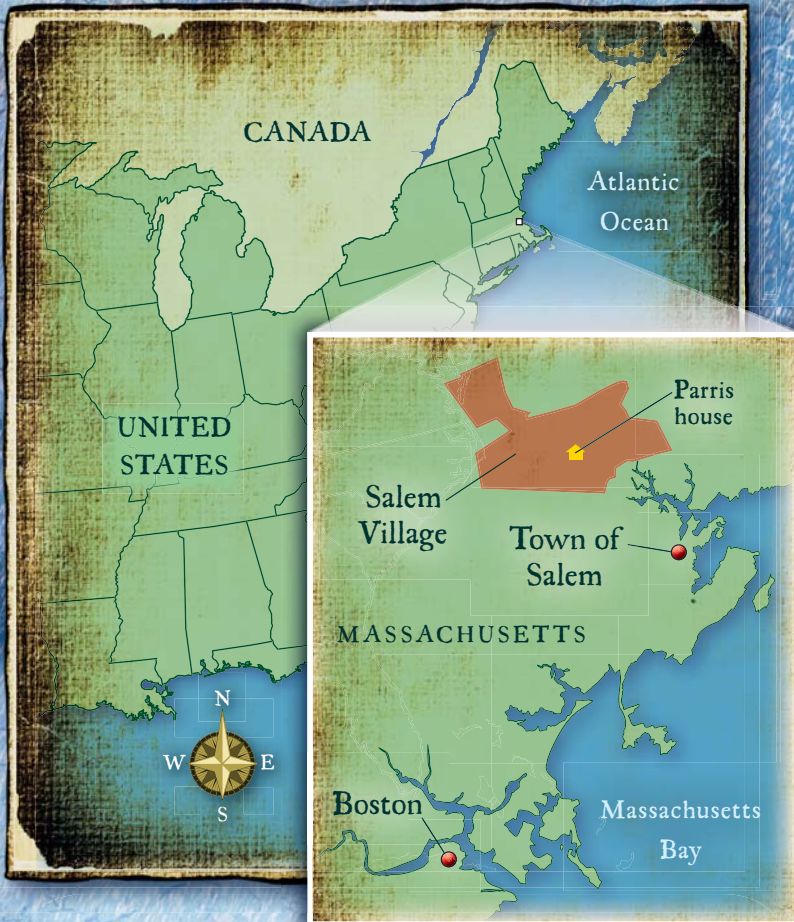
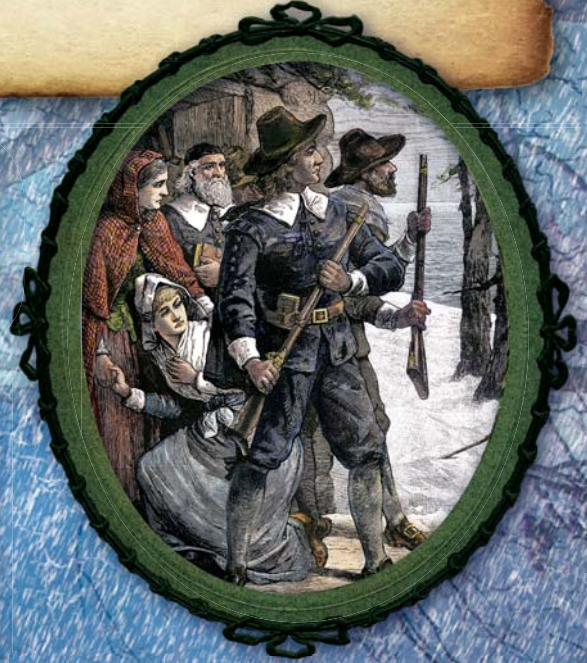
Life was not easy in the 1600s. There was no electricity, running water, or cars. Families made almost everything they needed themselves, from houses and clothes to bread and butter.






Just as scary was the threat of an attack by **Native Americans**. The villagers lived on farms that were spread far apart. With no one close by to help, a deadly attack could come at any time.

The people of Salem were afraid that they might be attacked by Native Americans who lived in the nearby woods.



Salem Village was about 5 miles (8 km) away from the town of Salem and 20 miles (32 km) north of Boston.



In 1692, Salem Village was part of the nearby town of Salem. Most of the people who lived in Salem Village were poor farmers. Many of the people in the town of Salem were rich **merchants** who traded **goods** with other merchants in England.



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## About the Author

Steven L. Stern has more than 30 years of experience as a writer and editor developing textbooks, learning materials, and works of nonfiction and fiction for children and adults.

He is the author of 22 books as well as numerous articles and short stories. He has also worked as a teacher, a lexicographer, and a writing consultant.



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# Witchcraft in Salem

In 1692, young girls in Salem Village, Massachusetts, began acting strangely. They crawled under chairs as if they were scared. They cried out and made odd sounds for no reason. Sometimes they flapped their arms like wings or screamed out as if under attack. Had they been bewitched by an evil spell? The people of Salem were terrified. Rumors of witchcraft quickly spread throughout the village. Were seemingly ordinary people actually witches with supernatural powers? Look inside to discover the truth behind these dark and spooky events.

**Dracula's Dark World**

**Ghostly Alcatraz Island**

**Tut's Deadly Tomb**

**Voodoo in New Orleans**

**Witchcraft in Salem**

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