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Reverend Parris is freaking out. He is upstairs in his 9 year old daughter's bedroom. Betty, his daughter, is on the bed. She is not moving, not making a sound, her eyes shut and she doesn't open them; as if she is comatose. A rumor is spreading that Betty is bewitched, and was seen flying over the rooftops. Parris is more afraid that the people of Salem will think that dark forces have infiltrated his home than he is about his daughter's condition.

What really is happening is that Betty is faking it: her dad caught her and some older girls in the woods dancing around a fire that had a crucible hanging above the fire, bubbling with some strange concoction inside.

Parris' niece Abigail Williams enters the room. She is a major character; she will be significantly embroiled in the witch accusations. The playwright Arthur Miller describes her as a "strikingly beautiful girl, an orphan, with an endless capacity for dissembling" (define dissemble) (explain how she came to be an orphan).

Parris and Abigail have an interesting, long talk, which is finally interrupted by Mrs. Ann Putnam, described by the playwright as "a twisted soul...haunted by dreams." Mrs. Putnam is convinced there is witchcraft in the house. Parris pleads with her not to say that in public. Her husband Thomas Putnam enters; he is described as a man who "regarded himself as the intellectual superior of most of the people around him", a man with a "vindictive nature". Thomas Putnam will be a major influence behind the girls who make the accusations of witchcraft.

Thomas and his wife Ann convince Parris to come outside and pray with the growing crowd camped in front of his home. When the adults go outside, they leave Betty in the care of Abigail, Mercy Lewis, and Mary Warren. This is when Betty stops faking, and accuses Abigail of doing something bad in the woods. Abigail threatens all of them, telling them to keep their mouths shut about what went on in the woods or she will kill them in the dark of night; "and you know I can do it" she tells them. This is where we leave them for now.