

The States Collection – Massachusetts – Bewitched
By Claudia Haas
Claudiahaas12@gmail.com
www.claudiahaas.com

CAST: 3 females

Rebecca (female) 16-18, student, descendant of Rebecca Nurse

Sasha (female) 16-18, student

Abigail Williams (female) 13; comes across as older and more worldly; an accuser during the Salem Witch Trials

PLACE: Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, MA

TIME: Now

SYNOPSIS: Rebecca wanders the museum where relics of the Salem witch trials are kept and comes across a surprise.

Costumes: Abigail is an apparition. There is no need to dig up some Puritan type outfit for her. Dress her as suits your fancy.

The States Collection – Massachusetts – Bewitched

LIGHTS up on REBECCA and SASHA wandering a room in the Peabody Essex Museum.

SASHA

It's cool that they let you in this room.

REBECCA

I've spent so many days here with my parents poring over the transcripts from the Salem Witch Trials that the administration trusts me. Even if they still say "Don't touch anything." I come here every Halloween. I'll be here now more than ever when I start my paper on Abigail Williams. I'd really like to know what happened to her. She just disappeared.

SASHA

Like a ghost?

REBECCA

Something like that. Nobody disappears. Somewhere, somebody must have encountered her. I am going to dig until I find the truth of her.

SASHA

Were you really named after a witch?

REBECCA

You really are new here, aren't you? Many of us were named after witches. Actually, an accused witch. Another way of looking at it as I was named after a murdered old lady. I'm one of the many great-great-so many greats grandchildren of Rebecca Nurse. They killed her body but they couldn't murder her blood. Look – the name of the accusers.

SASHA

Ann Putnam, Elizabeth Hubbard, Mary Warren, Abigail Williams. All women.

REBECCA

Hardly women. Look at their ages. Twelve, eighteen, eight, twelve. Why would children plot to murder people?

SASHA

Sounds like a spooky movie. "The Witch Children." How appropriate for today.

(A noise is heard.)

What was that?

REBECCA

An old house. It creaks.

(Another sounds – maybe wind, maybe creaking – you decide.)

SASHA

Is this place haunted?

REBECCA

Probably. Every building is haunted in Salem. Especially on Halloween.

SASHA

We're not alone in here, are we?

REBECCA

Lots of workers outside.

SASHA

Good. (Beat.) Maybe we should come back tomorrow. Is there a window open? I'm getting cold.

REBECCA

It did get chilly.

SASHA

Why do I think being here is not the best idea? It was – like fun for five minutes – not amusement park fun – but like Stephen King fun and I want to get out of here before a clown pops out of the closet.

REBECCA

Sasha – I've been here a thousand times and have never seen a clown.

(And we hear something. Maybe to do with a clown? Maybe lights flicker. Whatever you can do.)

SASHA

I'm out of here. Meet you outside.

(SASHA exits. ABIGAIL appears.)

ABIGAIL

I thought she'd never leave.

REBECCA

What are you – some sort of actress re-enacting the past?

ABIGAIL

Abigail. Williams.

(All through this exchange, REBECCA will be careful to maintain distance. To disbelieve and believe again.)

REBECCA

I'm not afraid.... I'm so not afraid.... I'm not/

ABIGAIL

You should be.

(ABIGAIL comes close and touches REBECCA who strongly reacts.)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)

Glad to know I can still shock people. Amazing. You look like Rebecca. I would have thought those strong features would have changed by now.

REBECCA

You play your part well.

ABIGAIL

“Play?” You think I'm playing? Would you like another ghostly touch?

REBECCA

Don't come near me. Murderer!

ABIGAIL

I was a child.

REBECCA

A child responsible for the deaths of twenty people.

ABIGAIL

A child who took sick with fever, had nightmares and then was pronounced stricken by the devil by a doctor who knew nothing.

REBECCA

The whole episode was sick.

ABIGAIL

It started out innocently. I ran a fever. And then we all took sick. We got attention from the town – and it was time. Time to take advantage. Remember, I was an orphan. A servant. Abused. I was pretty and I thought – someone in town would take pity on me. They'd see my pathetic situation. And adopt me. (Beat.) Maybe even love me.

REBECCA

You seriously thought that by accusing people of being witches you would get adopted?

ABIGAIL

We did not start the witchcraft theory. The doctor did.

REBECCA

And you played along.

ABIGAIL

I was a girl! In the hands of powerful men. It's so easy to blame the girls, isn't it? But the lawyers, the judges – they manipulated us. All of us were just trying to get away from our tawdry lives.

REBECCA

That's no excuse for sending people to their deaths.

ABIGAIL

(Circling REBECCA - coming closer and closer. REBECCA is nervous.)

Look at you. So clean. Dressed smartly. Fed. Sheltered. I bet you even have people who love you. You do, don't you? *Don't you?*

REBECCA

... yes.

ABIGAIL

Who knows what you would have done if you were in my circumstances?

REBECCA

I wouldn't accuse others of being witches. Unless, *you're* the witch!

ABIGAIL

Stop! You have no idea. So don't play judgment day with me. Let me give you a whiff of those times.

(ABIGAIL sends off an aroma of old Salem to REBECCA. Perhaps we see a whiff of smoke. Perhaps the lights flicker The wind blows. Feel free to introduce any supernatural element to this moment. Make sure there is wind sound.)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)

Look at you now – “Miss High and Mighty.” “Miss, I'm going to find out what happened to Abigail Williams.” “I'm going to find the truth.” Whose truth you will find? A long ago stranger's truth of encountering me? A theory you make up and then declare true? But my truth? It will never be found. It disappeared when I did. Just like I will do again.

(REBECCA is physically affected by all of this. She passes out.)

ABIGAIL (cont'd)

We're all a little bewitched, aren't we?

(ABIGAIL raises her arms and REBECCA gets up. With her arms, ABIGAIL seems to manipulate REBECCA like a marionette. REBECCA does a short dance.)

(We hear SASHA'S voice. REBECCA hides.)

SASHA (O.S.)

Rebecca! REBECCA!

(SASHA enters.)

The winds have picked up. Listen to the windows rattle.

REBECCA

It's the witching hour.

(REBECCA closes in on SASHA and puts her arms around her neck.)

SASHA

Your hands are cold.

(REBECCA just holds steady looking at SASHA. SASHA breaks free and runs.)

I don't want to play anymore.

(In a corner we see ABIGAIL maybe lit by a candle. SHE stares down REBECCA.)

ABIGAIL

You belong to me now.

END OF PLAY

