



Directions: Below are a series of primary and secondary source statements about witches and witchcraft. Analyze each source to better understand how bias, prejudice, and scapegoating influenced the witch trials. Then answer the questions after each source.

**Source A: Excerpt from the Trial of Sarah Good, Salem Witch Trials (1692)**

"Sarah Good, what evil spirit have you familiarity with?" *Sarah*: "None." *Judge*: "Why do you hurt these children?" *Sarah*: "I do not hurt them. I scorn it." *Judge*: "Who do you employ then to do it?" *Sarah*: "I employ nobody. I am falsely accused."

**Questions:**

1. What evidence, if any, is used against Sarah Good?
2. What biases can you detect in the way the questions are asked?
3. How might the public's perception of Sarah Good have influenced the trial's outcome?

**Source B: Letter from Reverend Samuel Parris to the Authorities (1692)**

"The afflictions of our children are growing more extraordinary; some of them do bark like dogs, others seem to be stricken by unseen forces. We must discern the work of the Devil and root out his servants, lest these horrors spread further."

**Questions:**

1. What kind of language does Reverend Parris use to describe the events, and how does it reflect his beliefs?
2. How might letters like this one have influenced the perception of witchcraft in the community?
3. What role do you think religious leaders played in escalating the witch trials?

**Source C: From "The Discovery of Witches" by Matthew Hopkins, 1647**

"These witches have ordinarily a familiar, or spirit which appeareth to them... in the shape of a dog, a cat, a mouse, or some other creature, and this familiar doth nourish and feed on their bodies..."

**Questions**

1. What does this description suggest about common beliefs surrounding witches and their supposed abilities?
2. How might such beliefs contribute to fear and scapegoating within a community?
3. What impact do you think these ideas had on the treatment and prosecution of accused individuals?

**Source D: Excerpt from "The Devil in the Shape of a Woman" by Carol F. Karlsen**

"Women were particularly vulnerable to witchcraft accusations due to their subordinate status in a patriarchal society, economic dependency, and association with domestic conflicts. The trials reflected deep-seated gender biases and served as a method to control those who deviated from societal norms."

**Questions:**

1. What does this source suggest about the role of gender in witchcraft accusations?
2. How does Karlsen's analysis help explain the prevalence of accusations against women?
3. What examples from the primary sources support Karlsen's claims?

Imagine you are living in a community that is in the grip of witchcraft hysteria. Use the insight that you gained from analyzing the sources above to write a diary entry about your concerns with the inevitable trials that will occur. Your entry should be at least two full paragraphs.

You may want to include people who you believe will be targeted, ways in which specific community members will react (men/women, religious leaders, rich/poor, etc.), examples of how to prove innocence, what you think should be done to stop the hysteria, or even your fears of being someone who is accused.

Use the space below to write your diary entry.

*Dear Diary,*

