

SLAVE SHIP

You are a sailor aboard a slave trader heading to the British North American colonies. The ship owner is a wealthy and respected member of a New England community. He, like most everyone else, thinks there is nothing wrong with enslaving non-Christians. You have heard that there have been more than 100 successful slave revolts at sea but know that most are unsuccessful. You feel that slavery is wrong and inhuman but need a job on a ship. Your task is to help sail the ship and inspect below deck each day to make sure the slaves are secured and that no pieces of iron, wood, or knives are hidden. Upon entering the hold, you surprisingly knock over an African and instinctively grab him and hold a knife to his neck. Looking up, you see that all the slaves are out of their chains. Many have knives and are momentarily stunned at what has happened. You can quickly and safely leave by locking the door and trapping everyone below. Or you can lead the revolt and hope to take over the ship. You hear another sailor coming, and the slaves are recovering from their surprise. What do you do?

RETURN THE RUNAWAY?

You have read advertisements in the paper about runaway slaves and servants. Sizable rewards are offered for their capture and return. You are having some pots and pans repaired and recently hired an itinerant tinker to do the work. He fits the description of a runaway. If you turn him in to the courthouse you will receive a reward of five pounds—a sizable amount. But you also know that he will probably be punished severely. You think people should obey the law but don't think that being a runaway is a serious crime. The tinker is bringing your pots and pans back tomorrow morning. Do you obey the law and receive a reward by turning him in, or do you warn him about the advertisement and perhaps help him escape?

WHICH WAY FOR WITCHCRAFT?

The people of your town believe that criminals have to be punished. If they are not, God will cause everyone to suffer from some natural disaster. The way to prevent everyone from being punished is to have the sinner repent—say he or she is sorry for the wrongdoing and change. And if the person does this there is really no reason for the townspeople to punish him or her. A few teenage girls claim that your image pinches them and causes them great pain. They become hysterical in your presence and say that you are a witch. You are brought to trial before the church leaders who, like yourself, believe that Satan can cause these strange happenings. You can escape punishment and probably death by confessing to being a witch, even though you know you are not. If you confess you will be expected to name other townspeople who are also witches. You can confess to something you know is not so and accuse others to save yourself, or you can tell the truth as you know it and face the consequences. The trial ends and you are asked to make a statement in your own behalf. What do you say?

PUBLISH OR PROTECT?

You have to defend the publisher of the *New York Weekly Journal* who has printed articles criticizing the governor for establishing special courts without approval from the legislature. The governor has also removed judges from the courts without any cause for doing so. The publisher you are defending wrote that the liberties of the people are in danger and they will be made slaves if the governor can do as he pleases. This angered the governor, of course, and the publisher was arrested and is being tried for libel. The judge in this case wants the jury to make its decision on whether the publisher did or did not publish the critical articles. His instructions to the jury state that no government can exist if people criticize those who are appointed to run its affairs. It is necessary for government that the people have a good opinion of it. To create distrust about the management of the government has always been a crime. No government can be safe without punishing the people who criticize it. It is now your chance to present the case for the defense to the jury. What do you say?