

PARRIS Surely your Excellency is not taken by this simple lie.

DANFORTH (*A threat.*) Abigail Williams! (*She holds her chin up.*) I bid you now search your heart, and tell me this – and beware of it, child, to God every soul is precious and His vengeance is terrible on them that take life without cause. Is it possible, child, that the spirits you have seen are illusion only, some *decepton* that may cross your mind when . . .

ABIGAIL (*Indignant.*) Why, this . . . this . . . is a base question, sir.

DANFORTH Child, I would have you consider it –

ABIGAIL (*A step to him. Unafraid.*) I have been hurt, Mister Danforth; I have seen my blood runnin' out! I have been near to murdered every day because I done my duty pointing out the Devil's people – and this is my reward? To be mistrusted, denied, questioned like a . . .

DANFORTH (*He weakens.*) Child, I do not mistrust you . . .

ABIGAIL (*NOW it pours. She does not wait for his speech.*) Let you beware, Mister Danforth – think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn your wits!? – beware of it! (*She shivers and looks at MARY, then folds her arms around her.*) – there is . . .

DANFORTH (*Apprehensively.*) What is it, child?

ABIGAIL (*Backing away to bench R. and sits. Claspng her arms about her as though cold.*) I . . . I know not. A wind, a cold wind has come. (*Her eyes fall on MARY.*)

MARY (*Terrified, pleading.*) Abby!

MERCY Your Honor, I freeze!

PROCTOR They're pretending!

HATHORNE (*Touching ABIGAIL's hand.*) She is cold, your Honor, touch her!

MERCY (*Rises. A threat.*) Mary, do you send this shadow on me? (*Sits slowly.*)

MARY Lord save me! (*SUSANNA rises looking at MARY, then slowly sits.*)

ABIGAIL (*She is shivering visibly.*) I freeze – I freeze. (*MERCY hugs her as they shiver.*)

MARY (*With great fear.*) Abby, don't do that! (*PROCTOR crosses to her, grabs her.*)

DANFORTH (*Himself engaged and entered by ABIGAIL.*) Mary Warren, do you witch her? I say to you, do you send your spirit out!

MARY (*Almost collapsing. Putting her in seat.*) Let me go, Mister Proctor, I cannot, I cannot . . .

ABIGAIL (*Shouting.*) "Oh, Heavenly Father, take away this shadow."

PROCTOR Whore! How do you dare call Heaven!

DANFORTH Man! What do you – ?

PROCTOR It is a whore.

PARRIS Now here, here . . . !

DANFORTH You charge –

ABIGAIL Mister Danforth, he's lying!

PROCTOR Mark her, now she'll suck a scream to stab me with, but –

DANFORTH You will prove this, this will not pass.