

outside at night. (HALE enters. They look at him for an instant in silence. He is steeped in sorrow, exhausted, and more direct than he ever was.)

DANFORTH Accept my congratulations, Reverend Hale; we are gladdened to see you returned to your good work.

HALE You must pardon them. They will not budge.

DANFORTH You misunderstand, sir; I cannot pardon these when twelve are already hanged for the same crime. It is not just.

PARRIS Rebecca will not confess?

HALE The sun will rise in a few minutes. Excellency, I must have more time.

DANFORTH Now hear me, and beguile yourselves no more. I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement. Them that will not confess will hang. Twelve are already executed; the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die at dawn. Postponement, now, speaks a . . . a floundering (WILLARD enters.) on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now. While I speak God's law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering. If retaliation is your fear, know this – I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law, and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes. Now draw yourselves up like men and help me, as you are bound by heaven to do. – Have you spoken with them all, Mister Hale?

HALE All but Proctor. He is in the dungeon.

DANFORTH (To HATHORNE.) What's Proctor's way now? (HALE sits bench R.)

WILLARD (In doorway. Drunkenly.) He sits like some great bird; you'd not know he lived except he will take food from time to time.

DANFORTH (Thinks.) His wife . . . his wife must be well on with child now.

WILLARD She is, sir.

DANFORTH What think you, Mister Parris? – You have closer knowledge of this man; might her presence soften him?

PARRIS It is possible, sir – he have not laid eyes on her these three months. I should summon her.

DANFORTH (To WILLARD.) Is he yet adamant? – Has he struck at you again?

WILLARD (Smiling drunkenly.) He cannot, sir, he is chained to the wall now.

DANFORTH Fetch Goody Proctor to me. Then let you bring him up. (Sits bench U. S. of PARRIS.)

WILLARD Ay, sir. (WILLARD goes out. Silence.)

HALE Excellency, if you postpone a week, and publish to the town that you are striving for their confessions, that speak mercy on your part, not faltering.

DANFORTH Mister Hale, as God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment.

HALE (Rising, crossing up to door.) If you think God wills you to raise rebellion, Mister Danforth, you are mistaken.

DANFORTH You have heard rebellion spoken in Salem?