

PROCTOR How may that mouse frighten you, Elizabeth? You . . .

ELIZABETH It is no mouse no *more*. I forbid her go, and she raises up her chin like the daughter of a prince, and says to me, "I must go to Salem, Goody Proctor, I am an official of the court!"

PROCTOR Court! What court?

ELIZABETH Ay, it is a proper court they have now. They've sent four judges out of Boston, she says, weighty magistrates of the General Court, and at the head sits the Deputy Governor of the Province.

PROCTOR (*Astonished.*) Why, she's mad.

ELIZABETH I would to God she were. There be fourteen people in the jail now, she says. And they'll be tried, and the court have power to hang them too, she says.

PROCTOR Ah, they'd never hang . . .

ELIZABETH The Deputy Governor promise hangin' if they'll not confess, John. The town's gone wild, I think – Mary Warren speak of Abigail as though she were a saint, to hear her. She brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel. And folks are brought before them, and if Abigail scream and howl and fall to the floor – the person's clapped in the jail for bewitchin' her. (*He can't look at her.*)

PROCTOR Oh, it is a black mischief.

ELIZABETH I think you must go to Salem, John. I think so. You must tell them it is a fraud.

PROCTOR Aye, it is, it is surely.

ELIZABETH Let you go to Ezekiel Cheever – he knows you well. And tell him what she said to you last week in her uncle's house. She said it had naught to do with witchcraft, did she not?

PROCTOR (*In thought. Sighing.*) Aye, she did, she did.

ELIZABETH (*Quietly, fearing to anger him by prodding. A step L.*) God forbid you keep that from the court, John; I think they must be told.

PROCTOR Ay, they must, they must . . . It is a wonder that they do believe her.

ELIZABETH I would go to Salem now, John . . . let you go tonight.

PROCTOR I'll think on it.

ELIZABETH (*With her courage now.*) You cannot keep it, John.

PROCTOR (*Angering.*) I know I cannot keep it. I say I will think on it!

ELIZABETH (*Hurt and very coldly.*) Good then, let you think on it.

PROCTOR (*Defensively.*) I am only wondering how I may prove what she told me, Elizabeth. If the girl's a saint now, I think it is not easy to prove she's fraud, and the town gone so silly. She told it to me in a room alone – I have no proof for it.

ELIZABETH You were alone with her?

PROCTOR For a moment alone, aye.

ELIZABETH Why, then, it is not as you told me.

PROCTOR For a moment, I say. The others come in soon after.