

PROCTOR I have known her, sir. I have . . . known her.

DANFORTH *(A pause. His eyes stare incredulously at PROCTOR.)* You . . . you are a lecher?

NURSE *(Horried.)* John, you cannot . . .

PROCTOR No, Francis, it is true, it is true. *(Back to DANFORTH.)* She will deny it, but you will believe me, sir; a man . . . a man will not cast away his good name, sir, you surely know that –

DANFORTH In what time . . . ? In what time, in what place?

PROCTOR *(Hanging head, turning front.)* In the proper place – where my beasts are bedded. Eight months now, sir, it is eight months. She used to serve me in my house, sir. A man may think God sleeps, but God sees everything. I know it now. I beg you, sir, I beg you – see her what she is. My wife, my dear good wife took this girl soon after, sir, and put her out on the high road. And being what she is, a lump of vanity, sir . . . *(Starts to weep.)* Excellency, forgive me, forgive me. She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave! And well she might! – for I thought of her *softly*, God help me, I lusted, and there is a promise in such sweat! But it is a whore's vengeance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands, I know you must see it now. My wife is innocent, except she know a whore when she see one.

DANFORTH *(Turns to ABIGAIL.)* You deny every scrap and tittle of this?

ABIGAIL *(Rising.)* If I must answer that, sir, I will leave and I will not come back again. *(Starts for D. R. exit.)*

HALE She does not deny it, Mr. Danforth. She does not deny it!

DANFORTH *(To ABIGAIL.)* You will remain where you are. Sit you down! *(Looking at ABIGAIL. Stops at U. S. of D. R. door, slowly turns to him.)* Mister Parris, go into the court and bring Goodwife Proctor out. *(PROCTOR crosses L. DANFORTH is peeved at PARRIS.)* Mister Parris. *(PARRIS stops.)* And tell her not one word of what's been spoken here. And let you knock before you enter. *(PARRIS goes out U. R.)* Now we shall touch the bottom of this swamp. *(To PROCTOR.)* Your wife, you say, is an honest woman?

PROCTOR In her *life*, sir, she have *never lied*. There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep – my wife cannot lie.

DANFORTH And when she put this girl out of your house, she put her out for a harlot

PROCTOR Ay, sir.

DANFORTH And knew her for a harlot?

PROCTOR She knew her for a harlot.

DANFORTH Good, then. *(To ABIGAIL, a threat.)* And if she tell me, child, it were for harlotry, may God spread His mercy on you! *(There is a knock at door R. He calls off.)* Hold! *(To ABIGAIL.)* Turn your back. Turn your back. *(She does, facing D. R. To PROCTOR.)* You do likewise. *(PROCTOR faces off L.)* Now let neither of you turn to face Goody Proctor. No one in this room is to speak one word, or raise a gesture ay or nay. *(He turns toward door U. R., calls.)* Enter! *(Elizabeth enters U. R., followed by PARRIS. She stands alone, her eyes looking for PROCTOR.)* Mister Cheever, report this testimony in all exactness. Are you ready?

CHEEVER Ready, sir.