

DANFORTH Then there is a prodigious guilt in the country. Are you afraid to be questioned here?

HALE (*Not sure.*) . . . I may only fear the Lord, sir, but there is fear in the country, nevertheless.

DANFORTH (*He is angered now.*) Reproach me not with the fear in the country; there is fear in the country because there is a moving plot to topple Christ in the country!

HALE But it does not follow that everyone accused is part of it.

DANFORTH No uncorrupted man may fear this court, Mister Hale! (*Directly at PROCTOR.*) None! Mr. Corey, you are under arrest in contempt of this court. Now sit you down and take counsel with yourself, or you will be set in the jail until you decide to answer all questions. (*COREY goes for PUTNAM.*)

PROCTOR No, Giles!

COREY I'll cut your throat, Putnam! I'll kill you yet.

PROCTOR (*Puts GILES on bench L.*) Peace, Giles, peace! We'll prove ourselves, now we will.

COREY Say nothin' more, John. He's only playing you. He means to hang us all.

DANFORTH This is a court of law, Mister. I'll have no effrontery here.

PROCTOR Forgive him, sir, for his old age. Peace, Giles, we'll prove it all now. (*PUTNAM exits D. R.*)

PROCTOR (*Crossing to U. L. of MARY, puts hands on her arms.*) You cannot weep, Mary. Remember the angel what he say to the boy. Hold to it, now; there is your rock. (*MARY quiets. He takes out a paper and turns to DANFORTH.*) This is Mary Warren's deposition. I . . . I would ask you

remember, sir, while you read it, that until two week ago she were no different than the other children are today. (*He is speaking reasonably, restraining all his fears, his anger, his anxiety, like a young lawyer.*) You saw her scream, she howled, she swore familiar spirits choked her; she even testified that Satan, in the form of women now in jail, tried to win her soul away, and then when she refused . . .

DANFORTH We know all this.

PROCTOR Ay, sir. She swears now that she *never* saw Satan; nor *any* spirit, vague or clear, that Satan may have sent to hurt her. And she declares her friends are lying now.

HALE Excellency, a moment. I think this goes to the heart of the matter, sir.

DANFORTH It surely does.

HALE I cannot say he is an honest man, I know him little. But in all justice, sir, a claim so weighty cannot be argued by a farmer. In God's name, sir, stop here, send him home and let him come again with a lawyer . . .

DANFORTH (*Patiently.*) Now look you, Mister Hale . . .

HALE (*A plea of an honest man.*) Excellency, I have signed seventy-two death warrants; I am a minister of the Lord, and I dare not take a life without there be a proof so immaculate, no slightest qualm of conscience may doubt it.

DANFORTH Mister Hale, you surely do not doubt my justice?

HALE I have this morning signed away the soul of Rebecca Nurse, Your Honor. I'll not conceal it – I tell you true, sir, my hand shakes yet as with a wound! I pray you, sir, *this* argument let lawyers present to you.