

ACT THREE

The vestry room of the Salem meeting house, now serving as the anteroom of the General Court.

As the curtain rises, the room is empty, but for sunlight pouring through two high windows in the back wall. The room is solemn, even forbidding. Heavy beams jut out, boards of random widths make up the walls. At the right are two doors leading into the meeting house proper, where the court is being held. At the left another door leads outside.

There is a plain bench at the left, and another at the right. In the center a rather long meeting table, with stools and a considerable armchair snuggled up to it.

Through the partitioning wall at the right we hear a prosecutor's voice, Judge Hathorne's, asking a question; then a woman's voice, Martha Corey's, replying.

Hathorne's Voice: Now, Martha Corey, there is abundant evidence in our hands to show that you have given yourself to the reading of fortunes, Do you deny it?

MARTHA CoREY's Voice: I am innocent to a witch. I know not what a witch is.

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HATHORNE's Voice: How do you know, then, that you are not a witch?

Martha Corey's Voice: If I were, I would know it.

HATHORNE's Voice: Why do you hurt these children?

Martha Corey's Voice: I do not hurt them. I scorn it!

Giles' Voice, *roaring*: I have evidence for the court!

Voices of townspeople rise in excitement.

Danforth's Voice: You will keep your seat!

Giles Voice: Thomas Putnam is reaching out for land!

Danforth's Voice: Remove that man, Marshal!

Giles' Voice: You're hearing lies, lies!

A roaring goes up from the people.

Hathorne's Voice: Arrest him, excellency!

Giles' Voice: I have evidence. Why will you not hear my evi-dence?

The door opens and Giles is half carried into the vestry room by Herrick.

Giles: Hands off, damn you, let me go!

Herrick: Giles, Giles!

Giles: Out of my way, Herrick! I bring evidence -

Herrick: You cannot go in there, Giles; it's a court!

Enter Hale from the court.

Hale: Pray be calm a moment.

Giles: You, Mr. Hale, go in there and demand I speak.

Hale: A moment, sir, a moment.

Act Three Giles: They'll be hangin' my wife!

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Judge Hathorne enters. He is in his sixties, a bitter, remorseless Salem judge.

Hathorne: How do you dare come roarin' into this court! Are you gone daft, Corey?

Giles: You're not a Boston judge yet, Hathorne. You'll not call me daft!

Enter Deputy Governor Danforth and, behind him, Ezekiel Cheever and Parris. On his appearance, silence falls. Danforth is a grave man in his sixties, of some humor and sophistication that does not, however, interfere with an exact loyalty to his position and his cause. He comes down to Giles, who awaits his wrath.

Danforth, *looking directly at Giles*: Who is this man?

pARRIS: Giles Corey, sir, and a more contentious -

Giles, *to Parris*: I am asked the question, and I am old enough to answer it! *To Danforth, who impresses him and to whom he smiles through his strain*: My name is Corey, sir, Giles Corey. I have six hundred acres, and timber in addition. It is my wife you be condemning now. *He indicates the courtroom.*

Danforth: And how do you imagine to help her cause with such contemptuous riot? Now be gone. Your old age alone keeps you out of jail for this.

Giles, *beginning to plead*: They be tellin' lies about my wife, sir, I -

Danforth: Do you take it upon yourself to determine what this court shall believe and what it shall set aside?

Giles: Your Excellency, we mean no disrespect for -

Danforth: Disrespect indeed! It is disruption, Mister. This is

the highest court of the supreme government of this province, do you know it?

GiLES, *beginning to weep*: Your Excellency, I only said she were readin' books, sir, and they come and take her out of my house for -

Danforth, *mystified*: Books! What books?

Giles, *through helpless sobs*: It is my third wife, sir; I never had no wife that be so taken with books, and I thought to find the cause of it, d'y'see, but it were no witch I blamed her for. *He is openly weeping*. I have broke charity with the woman, I have broke charity with her. *He covers his face, ashamed. Dan-forth is respectfully silent.*

Hale: Excellency, he claims hard evidence for his wife's de-fense. I think that in all justice you must -

Danforth: Then let him submit his evidence in proper affidavit. You are certainly aware of our procedure here, Mr. Hale. *To Herrick*: Clear this room.

HERRiCK: Come now, Giles, *He gently pushes Corey out.*

Francis: We are desperate, sir; we come here three days now and cannot be heard.

Danforth: Who is this man?

Francis: Francis Nurse, Your Excellency.

Hale: His wife's Rebecca that were condemned this morning.

Danforth: Indeed! I am amazed to find you in such uproar; I have only good report of your character, Mr. Nurse.

Hathorne: I think they must both be arrested in contempt, sir.

Danforth, *to Francis*: Let you write your plea, and in due time I will -

Francis: Excellency, we have proof for your eyes; God forbid you shut them to it. The girls, sir, the girls are frauds.

Danforth: What's that?

FRANcIs: We have proof of it, sir. They are all deceiving you.

Danforth is shocked, but studying Francis.

Hathorne: This is contempt, sir, contempt!

Danforth: Peace, Judge Hathorne. Do you know who I am, Mr. Nurse?

Francis: I surely do, sir, and I think you must be a wise judge to be what you are.

Danforth: And do you know that near to four hundred are in the jails from Marblehead to Lynn, and upon my signature?

Francis: I -

Danforth: And seventy-two condemned to hang by that signature?

Francis: Excellency, I never thought to say it to such a weighty judge, but you are deceived.

Enter Giles Corey from left. All turn to see as he beckons in Mary Warren with Proctor. Mary is keeping her eyes to the ground; Proctor has her elbow as though she were near collapse.

Parris, *on seeing her, in shock*: Mary Warren! He goes directly to bend close to her face. What are you about here?

Proctor, *pressing Parris away from her with a gentle but burnt motion of protectiveness*: She would speak with the Deputy Governor.

Danforth, *shocked by this, turns to Herrick*: Did you not tell me Mary Warren were sick in bed?

Herrick: She were, Your Honor. When I go to fetch her to the court last week, she said she were sick.

Giles: She has been strivin' with her soul all week, Your Honor; she comes now to tell the truth of this to you.

Danforth: Who is this?

Proctor: John Proctor, sir. Elizabeth Proctor is my wife.

Parris: Beware this man, Your Excellency, this man is mischief.

Hale, *excitedly*: I think you must hear the girl, sir, she -

Danforth, *who has become very interested in Mary Warren and only raises a hand toward Hale*: Peace. What would you tell us, Mary Warren?

Proctor looks at her, but she cannot speak. Proctor! She never saw no spirits, sir.

Danforth, *with great alarm and surprise, to Mary*: Never saw no spirits!

Giles, *eagerly*: Never.

Proctor, *reaching into his jacket*: She has signed a deposition, sir -

Danforth, *instantly*: No, no, I accept no depositions. *He is rapidly calculating this; he turns from her to Proctor.* Tell me, Mr. Proctor, have you given out this story in the village?

Proctor: We have not.

Parris: They've come to overthrow the court, sir! This man is -

Danforth: I pray you, Mr. Parris. Do you know, Mr. Proctor, that the entire contention of the state in these trials is that the voice of Heaven is speaking through the children?

Proctor: I know that, sir.

Danforth, *thinks, staring at Proctor, then turns to Mary War-ren*: And you, Mary Warren, how came you to cry out people for sending their spirits against you?

Mary Warren: It were pretense, sir.

Danforth: I cannot hear you.

Proctor: It were pretense, she says.

Danforth: Ah? And the other girls? Susanna Walcott, and - the others? They are also pretending?

Mary Warren: Aye, sir.

Danforth, *wide-eyed*: Indeed. *Pause. He is baffled by this. He turns to study Proctor's face.*

Parris, *in a sweat*: Excellency, you surely cannot think to let so vile a lie be spread in open court!

Danforth: Indeed not, but it strike hard upon me that she will dare come here with such a tale. Now, Mr. Proctor, before I decide whether I shall hear you or not, it is my duty to tell you this. We burn a hot fire here; it melts down all concealment.

Proctor: I know that, sir.

Danforth: Let me continue. I understand well, a husband's tenderness may drive him to extravagance in defense of a wife. Are you certain in your conscience, Mister, that your evidence is the truth?

Proctor: It is. And you will surely know it.

Danforth: And you thought to declare this revelation in the open court before the public?

Proctor: I thought I would, aye - with your permission.

Danforth, *his eyes narrowing*: Now, sir, what is your purpose in so doing?

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Proctor: Why, I - I would free my wife, sir.

Danforth: There lurks nowhere in your heart, nor hidden in your spirit, any desire to undermine this court?

Proctor, *with the faintest faltering*: Why, no, sir.

Cheever, *clears his throat, awakening*: I - Your Excellency.

Danforth: Mr. Cheever.

Cheever: I think it be my duty, sir - *Kindly, to Proctor*: You'll not deny it, John.
To Danforth: When we come to take his wife, he damned the court and ripped your warrant.

Parris: Now you have it!

Danforth: He did that, Mr. Hale?

Hale, *takes a breath*: Aye, he did.

Proctor: It were a temper, sir. I knew not what I did.

Danforth, *studying him*: Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: Aye, sir.

Danforth, *straight into his eyes*: Have you ever seen the Devil?

Proctor: No, sir.

Danforth: You are in all respects a Gospel Christian?

Proctor: I am, sir.

Parris: Such a Christian that will not come to church but once in a month!

Danforth, *restrained - he is curious*: Not come to church?

Proctor: I - I have no love for Mr. Parris. It is no secret. But God I surely love.

Cheever: He plow on Sunday, sir.

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Danforth: Plow on Sunday!

Cheever, *apologetically*: I think it be evidence, John. I am an official of the court, I cannot keep it.

Proctor: I - I have once or twice plowed on Sunday. I have three children, sir, and until last year my land give little.

Giles: You'll find other Christians that do plow on Sunday if the truth be known.

Hale: Your Honor, I cannot think you may judge the man on such evidence.

Danforth: I judge nothing. *Pause. He keeps watching Proctor, who tries to meet his gaze.* I tell you straight, Mister - I have seen marvels in this court. I have seen people choked before my eyes by spirits; I have seen them stuck by pins and slashed by daggers. I have until this moment not the slightest reason to suspect that the children may be deceiving me. Do you 'understand my meaning?

Proctor: Excellency, does it not strike upon you that so many of these women have lived so long with such upright reputation, and -

PARRIS: Do you read the Gospel, Mr. Proctor? Proctor: I read the Gospel.

PARRIS: I think not, or you should surely know that Cain were an upright man, and yet he did kill Abel.

Proctor: Aye, God tells us that. *To Danforth:* But who tells us Rebecca Nurse murdered seven babies by sending out her spirit on them? It is the children only, and this one will swear she lied to you.

Danforth considers, then beckons Hathorne to him. Hathorne leans in, and he speaks in his ear. Hathorne nods.

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Hathorne: Aye, she's the one.

Danforth: Mr. Proctor, this morning, your wife send me a claim in which she states that she is pregnant now.

Proctor: My wife pregnant!

Danforth: There be no sign of it - we have examined her body.

Proctor: But if she say she is pregnant, then she must be! That woman will never lie, Mr. Danforth.

Danforth: She will not?

Proctor: Never, sir, never.

Danforth: We have thought it too convenient to be credited. However, if I should tell you now that I will let her be kept another month; and if she begin to show her natural signs, you shall have her living yet another year until she is delivered - what say you to that? *John Proctor is struck silent.* Come now. You say your only purpose is to save your wife. Good, then, she is saved at least this year, and a year is long. What say ' you, sir? It is done now. *In convict, Proctor glances at Francis and Giles.* Will you drop this charge?

PRocToR: I - I think I cannot.

Danforth, *now an almost imperceptible hardness in his voice:* Then your purpose is somewhat larger.

Parris: He's come to overthrow this court, Your Honor!

Proctor: These are my friends. Their wives are also accused -

Danforth, *with a sudden briskness of manner:* I judge you not, sir. I am ready to hear your evidence.

Proctor: I come not to hurt the court; I only -

Danforth, *cutting him off:* Marshal, go into the court and bid

Judge Stoughton and Judge Sewall declare recess for one hour. And let them go to the tavern, if they will. All witnesses and prisoners are to be kept in the building.

Herrick: Aye, sir'. *Very deferentially*: If I may say it, sir, I know this man all my life. It is a good man, sir.

Danforth - *it is the reflection on himself he resents*: I am sure of it, Marshal. *Herrick nods, then goes out*. Now, what deposition do you have for us, Mr. Proctor? And I beg you be clear, open as the sky, and honest.

Proctor, *as he takes out several papers*: I am no lawyer, so I'll -

Danforth: The pure in heart need no lawyers. Proceed as you will.

Proctor, *handing Danforth a paper*: Will you read this first, sir? It's a sort of testament. The people signing it declare their good opinion of Rebecca, and my wife, and Martha Corey. *Danforth looks down at the paper*.

Parris, *to enlist Danforth's sarcasm*: Their good opinion! *But Danforth goes on reading, and Proctor is heartened*.

Proctor: These are all landholding farmers, members of the church. *Delicately, trying to point out a paragraph*: If you'll notice, sir - they've known the women many years and never saw no sign they had dealings with the Devil.

Parris nervously moves over and reads over Dan forth's shoulder.

Danforth, *glancing down a long list*: How many names are here?

Francis: Ninety-one, Your Excellency.

PaRRis, 'sweating: These people should be summoned. *Danforth Looks up at him questioningly*. For questioning.

Francis, *trembling with anger*: Mr. Danforth, I gave them all my word no harm would come to them for signing this.

Parris: This is a clear attack upon the court!

Hale, *to Parris, trying to contain himself*: Is every defense an attack upon the court? Can no one - ?

Parris: All innocent and Christian people are happy for the courts in Salem! These people are gloomy for it. *To Danforth directly*: And I think you will want to know, from each and every one of them, what discontents them with you!

Hathorne: I think they ought to be examined, sir.

Danforth: It is not necessarily an attack, I think. Yet -

Francis: These are all covenanted Christians, sir.

Danforth: Then I am sure they may have nothing to fear. *Hands Cheever the paper*. Mr. Cheever, have warrants drawn for all of these - arrest for examination. *To Proctor*: Now, Mister, what other information do you have for us? *Francis is still standing, horrified*. You may sit, Mr. Nurse.

Francis: I have brought trouble on these people; I have -

Danforth: No, old man, you have not hurt these people if they are of good conscience. But you must understand, sir, that a person is either with this court or he must be counted against it, there be no road between. This is a sharp time, now, a pre-cise time - we live no longer in the dusky afternoon when evil mixed itself with good and befuddled the world. Now, by God's grace, the shining sun is up, and them that fear not light will surely praise it. I hope you will be one of those. *Mary Warren suddenly sobs*. She's not hearty, I see.

Proctor: No, she's not, sir. *To Mary, bending to her, holding her hand, quietly*: Now remember what the angel Raphael said to the boy Tobias. Remember it.

Act Three Mary Warren, *hardly audible*: Aye.

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Proctor: "Do that which is good, and no harm shall come to thee."

Mary Warren: Aye.

Danforth: Come, man, we wait you.

Marshal Herrick returns, and takes his post at the door.

Giles: John, my deposition, give him mine.

Proctor: Aye. *He hands Danforth another paper.* This is Mr. Corey's deposition.

Danforth: Oh? *He looks down at it. Now Hathorne comes behind him and reads with him.*

Hathorne, *suspiciously*: What lawyer drew this, Corey?

Giles: You know I never hired a lawyer in my life, Hathorne.

Danforth, *finishing the reading*: It is very well phrased. My compliments. Mr. Parris, if Mr. Putnam is in the court, will you bring him in? *Hathorne takes the deposition, and walks to the window with it. Parris goes into the court.* You have no legal training, Mr. Corey?

Giles, *very pleased*: I have the best, sir - I am thirty-three time in court in my life. And always plaintiff, too.

Danforth: Oh, then you're much put-upon.

Giles: I am never put-upon; I know my rights, sir, and I will have them. You know, your father tried a case of mine - might be thirty-five year ago, I think.

Danforth: Indeed.

Giles: He never spoke to you of it?

Danforth: No, I cannot recall it.

Giles: That's strange, he give me nine pound damages. He were a fair judge, your father. Y'see, I had a white mare that tinge, and this fellow come to borrow the mare - *Enter Parris with Thomas Putnam. When he sees Putnam, Giles' ease goes; he is hard.* Aye, there he is.

Danforth: Mr. Putnam, I have here an accusation by Mr. Corey against you. He states that you coldly prompted your daughter to cry witchery upon George Jacobs that is now in jail.

Putnam: It is a lie.

Danforth, *turning to Giles*: Mr. Putnam states your charge is a lie. What say you to that?

Giles, *furious, his fists clenched*: A fart on Thomas Putnam, that is what I say to that!

DANFORTH: What proof do you submit for your charge, sir?

Giles: My proof is there! *Pointing to the paper*. If Jacobs hangs for a witch he forfeit up his property - that's law! And there is none but Putnam with the; coin to buy so great a piece. This man is killing his neighbors for their land!

Danforth: But proof, sir, proof.

Giles, *pointing at his deposition*: The proof is there! I have it from an honest man who heard Putnam say it! The day his daughter cried out on Jacobs, he said she'd given him a fair gift of land.

Hathorne: And the name of this man?

Giles, *taken aback*: What name?

Hathorne: The man that give you this information.

Giles, *hesitates, then*: Why, I - I cannot give you his name.

Hathorne: And why not?

Giles, *hesitates, then bursts out*: You know well why not! He'll lay in jail if I give his name!

Hathorne: This is contempt of the court, Mr. Danforth!

Danforth, *to avoid that*: You will surely tell us the name.

Giles: I will not give you no name, I mentioned my wife's name once and I'll burn in hell long enough for that. I stand mute.

Danforth: In that case, I have no choice but to arrest you for contempt of this court, do you know that?

Giles: This is a hearing; you cannot clap me for contempt of a hearing.

Danforth: Oh, it is a proper lawyer! Do you wish me to declare the court in full session here? Or will you give me good reply?

Giles, *faltering*: I cannot give you no name, sir, I cannot.

Danforth: You are a foolish old man. Mr. Cheever, begin the record. The court is now in session. I ask you, Mr. Corey -

Proctor, *breaking in*: Your Honor - he has the story in confidence, sir, and he -

Parris: The Devil lives on such confidences! *To Danforth*: Without confidences there could be no conspiracy, Your Honor!

Hathorne. I think it must be broken, sir.

DANFORTH, *to Giles*: Old man, if your informant tells the truth let him come here openly like a decent man. But if he hide in anonymity I must know why. Now sir, the government and central church demand of you the name of him who reported Mr. Thomas Putnam a common murderer.

Hale: Excellency -

Danforth: Mr. Hale.

Hale: We cannot blink it more. There is a prodigious fear of this court in the country -

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

Hale: I may only fear the Lord, sir, but there is fear in the country nevertheless.

Danforth, *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, Mr. Hale! None! *To Giles*: 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.

Giles Corey makes a rush for Putnam. Proctor lunges and holds him.

Proctor: No, Giles!

Giles, *over Proctor's shoulder at Putnam*: I'll cut your throat, Putnam, I'll kill you yet!

Proctor, *forcing him into a chair*: Peace, Giles, peace. *Re-leasing him*. We'll prove ourselves. Now we will. *He starts to turn to Danforth*.

Giles: Say nothin' more, John. *Pointing at Danforth*: He's only playin' you! He means to hang us all!

Mary Warren bursts into sobs.

Danforth: This is a court of law, Mister. I'll have no effron-tery here!

Proctor: Forgive him, sir, for his old age. Peace, Giles, we'll prove it all now. *He lifts up Mary's chin*. 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.* 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 hex soul away, and then when she refused -

Danforth: We know all this.

Proctor: Aye, 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.

Proctor starts to hand Danforth the deposition, and Hale comes up to Danforth in a trembling state.

Hale: Excellency, a moment. I think this goes to the heart of the matter.

Danforth, *with deep misgivings*: 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, Mr. Hale -

Hale: 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: Mr. 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, my hand shakes yet as with a wound! I pray you, sir, *this* argument let lawyers present to you.

Danforth: Mr. Hale, believe me; for a man of such terrible learning you are most bewildered - I hope you will forgive me. I have been thirty-two year at the bar, sir, and I should be con-founded were I called upon to defend these people. Let you consider, now - *To Proctor and the others*: And I bid you all do likewise. In an ordinary crime, how does one defend the accused? One calls up witnesses to prove his innocence. But witchcraft is *ipso facto*, on its face and by its nature, an invisible crime, is it not? Therefore, who may possibly be witness to it? The witch and the victim. None other. Now we cannot hope the witch will accuse herself; granted? Therefore, we must rely upon her victims - and they do testify, the children certainly do testify. As for the witches, none will deny that we are most eager for all their confessions. Therefore, what is left for a lawyer to bring out? I think I have made my point. Have I not?

Hale: But this child claims the girls are not truthful, and if they are not -

Danforth: That is precisely what I am about to consider, sir. What more may you ask of me? Unless you doubt my probity?

Hale, *defeated*: I surely do not, sir. Let you consider it, then.

Danforth: And let you put your heart to rest. Her deposition, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor hands it to him. Hathorne rises, goes beside Danforth, and starts reading. Parris comes to his other side. Danforth looks at John Proctor, then proceeds to read. Hale gets up, finds position near the judge, reads too. Proctor glances at Giles. Francis prays silently, hands pressed together. Cheever waits placidly, the sublime official, dutiful. Mary Warren sobs once. John Proctor touches her head reassuringly. Presently Danforth

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lifts his eyes, stands up, takes out a kerchief and blows his nose. The others stand aside as he moves in thought toward the window.

Parris, *hardly able to contain his anger and fear*: I should like to question -

DANFoRtH - *his first real outburst, in which his contempt for Parris is clear*: Mr. Parris, I bid you be silent! *He stands in silence, looking out the window. Now, having established that he will set the gait*: Mr. Cheever, will you go into the court and bring the children here? *Cheever gets up and goes out up-stage. Danforth now turns to Mary*. Mary Warren, how came you to this turnabout? Has Mr. Proctor threatened you for this deposition?

Mary Warren: No, sir.

Danforth: Has he ever threatened you?

Mary Warren, *weaker*: No, sir.

Danforth, *sensing a weakening*: Has he threatened you?-

Mary Warren: No, sir.

Danforth: Then you tell me that you sat in my court, callously lying, when you knew that people would hang by your evidence? *She does not answer. Answer me!*

Mary Warken, *almost inaudibly*: I did, sir.

Danforth: How were you instructed in your life? Do you not know that God damns all liars? *She cannot speak. Or is it now that you lie!*

Mary Warren: No, sir - I am with God now.

Danforth: You are with God now.

Mary Warren: Aye, sir.

Danforth, *containing himself*: I will tell you this - you are either lying now, or you were lying in the court, and in either case you have committed perjury and you will go to jail for it. You cannot lightly say you lied, Mary. Do you know that?

Mary Warren: I cannot lie no more. I am with God, I am with God.

But she breaks into sobs at the thought of it, and the right door opens, and enter Susanna Walcott, Mercy Lewis, Betty Parris, and finally Abigail. Cheever comes to Danforth.

CHEEVER: Ruth Putnam's not in the court, sir, nor the other children.

Danforth: These will be sufficient. Sit you down, children. *Silently they sit.* Your friend, Mary Warren, has given us a deposition. In which she swears that she never saw familiar spirits, apparitions, nor any manifest of the Devil. She claims as well that none of you have seen these things either. *Slight pause.* Now, children, this is a court of law. The law, based upon the Bible, and the Bible, writ by Almighty God, forbid the practice of witchcraft, and describe death as the penalty thereof. But likewise, children, the law and Bible damn all bearers of false witness. *Slight pause.* Now then. It does not escape me that this deposition may be devised to blind us; it may well be that Mary Warren has been conquered by Satan, who sends her here to distract our sacred purpose. If so, her neck will break for it. But if she speak true, I bid you now drop your guile and confess your pretense, for a quick confession will go easier with you. *Pause.* Abigail Williams, rise, *Abigail slowly rises.* Is there any truth in this?

Abigail: No, sir.

Danforth, *thinks, glances at Mary, then back to Abigail*: Children, a very augur bit will now be turned into your souls until

your honesty is proved. Will either of you change your positions now, or do you force me to hard questioning?

Abigail: I have naught to change, sir. She lies.

Danforth. *to Mary*: You would still go on with this?

Mary Warren, *faintly*: Aye, sir.

Danforth, *turning to Abigail*: A poppet were discovered in Mr. Proctor's house, stabbed by a needle. Mary Warren claims that you sat beside her in the court when she made it, and that you saw her make it and witnessed how she herself stuck her needle into it for safe-keeping. What say you to that?

Abigail, *with a slight note of indignation*: It is a lie, sir.

Danforth, *after a slight pause*: While you worked for Mr. Proctor, did you see poppets in that house?

Abigail: Goody Proctor always kept poppets.

Proctor: Your Honor, my wife never kept no poppets. Mary Warren confesses it was her poppet.

Cheever: Your Excellency. Danforth: Mr. Cheever.

Cheever: When I spoke with Goody Proctor in that house, she said she never kept no poppets. But she said she did keep poppets when she were a girl.

Proctor: She has not been a girl these fifteen years, Your Honor.

Hathorne: But a poppet will keep fifteen years, will it not?

Proctor: It will keep i~~it~~ it is kept, but Mary Warren swears she never saw no poppets in my house, nor anyone else.

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Parris: Why could there not have been poppets hid where no one ever saw them?

Proctor, *furious*: There might also be a dragon with five legs in my house, but no one has ever seen it.

Parris: We are here, Your Honor, precisely to discover what no one has ever seen.

Proctor: Mr. Danforth, what profit this girl to turn herself about? What may Mary Warren gain but hard questioning and worse?

Danforth: You are charging Abigail Williams with a mar-velous cool plot to murder, do you understand that?

Proctor: I do, sir. I believe she means to murder.

Danforth, *pointing at Abigail, incredulously*: This child would murder your wife?

Proctor: It is not a child. Now hear me, sir. In the sight of the congregation she were twice this year put out of this meetin' house for laughter during prayer.

Danforth, *shocked, turning to Abigail*: What's this? Laughter during - !

Parris: Excellency, she were under Tituba's power at that time, but she is solemn now.

GiLEs: Aye, now she is solemn and goes to hang people! Danforth: Quiet, man.

Hathorne: Surely it have no bearing on the question, sir. He charges contemplation of murder.

Danforth: Aye. *He studies Abigail for a moment, then*: Con-tinue, Mr. Proctor.

Proctor: Mary. Now tell the Governor how you danced in the woods.

Parris, *instantly*: Excellency, since I come to Salem this man is blackening my name. He -

Danforth: In a moment, sir. *To Mary Warren, sternly, and surprised*: What is this dancing?

Mary Warren: I - *She glances at Abigail, who is staring down at her remorselessly. Then, appealing to Proctor*: Mr. Proctor -

Proctor, *taking it right up*: Abigail leads the girls to the woods, Your Honor, and they have danced there naked -

Parris: Your Honor, this -

Proctor, *at once*: Mr. Parris discovered them himself in the dead of night! There's the "child" she is!

Danforth - *it is growing into a nightmare, and he turns, as-tonished, to Parris*: Mr. Parris -

Parris: I can only say, sir, that I never found any of them naked, and this man is -

Danforth: But you discovered them dancing in the woods? *Eyes on Parris, he points at Abigail*. Abigail?

Hale: Excellency, when I first arrived from Beverly, Mr. Parris told me that.

Danforth: Do you deny it, Mr. Parris?

Parris: I do not, sir, but I never saw any of them naked.

Danforth: But she have *danced*?

Parris, *unwillingly*: Aye, sir.

Danforth, as though with new eyes, looks at Abigail.

Hathorne: Excellency, will you permit me? *He points at Mary Warren.*

Danforth, *with great worry*: Pray, proceed.

Hathorne: You say you never saw no spirits, Mary, were never threatened or afflicted by any manifest of the Devil or the Devil's agents.

Mary Warren, *very faintly*: No, sir.

Hathorne, *with a gleam of victory*: And yet, when people ac-cused of witchery confronted you in court, you would faint, saying their spirits came out of their bodies and choked you -

Mary Warren: That were pretense, sir.

Danforth: I cannot hear you.

Mary Warren: Pretense, sir.

Parris: But you did turn cold, did you not? I myself picked you up many times, and your skin were icy, Mr. Danforth, you -

Danforth: I saw that many times.

Proctor: She only pretended to faint, Your Excellency. They're all marvelous pretenders.

Hathorne: Then can she pretend to faint now? Proctor: Now?

Parris: Why not? Now there are no spirits attacking her, for none in this room is accused of witchcraft. So let her turn herself cold now, let her pretend she is attacked now, let her faint. *He turns to Mary Warren.* Faint!

Mary Warren: Faint?

Parris: Aye, faint. Prove to us how you pretended in the court so many times.

MARY Warren, *looking to Proctor*: I - cannot faint now, sir. Proctor, *alarmed, quietly*: Can you not pretend it?

Mary Warren: I - *She looks about as though searching for the passion to faint.* I - have no *sense* of it now, I -

DANFoRth: Why? What is lacking now?

MARY Warren: I - cannot tell, sir, I -

Danforth: Might it be that here we have no afflicting spirit loose, but in the court there were some?

Mary Warren: I never saw no spirits.

PARRis: Then see no spirits now, and prove to us that you can faint by your own will, as you claim.

Mary Warren, *stares, searching for the emotion of it, and then shakes her head:*
I - cannot do it.

Parris: Then you will confess, will you not? It were attacking spirits made you faint!

Mary Warren: No, sir, I -

Parris: Your Excellency, this is a trick to blind the court!

Mary Warren: It's not a trick! *She stands.* I - I used to faint because I - I thought I saw spirits.

Danforth: *Thought* you saw them!

Mary Warren: But I did not, Your Honor.

Hathorne: How could you think you saw them unless you saw them?

Mary Warren: I - I cannot tell how, but I did. I - I heard the other girls screaming, and you, Your Honor, you seemed to believe them, and I - It were only sport in the beginning, sir, but then the whole world cried spirits, spirits, and I - I promise you, Mr. Danforth, I only thought I saw them but I did not.

Danforth peers at her.

PARRIs, *smiling, but nervous because Danforth seems to be struck by Mary Warren's story*: Surely Your Excellency is not taken by this simple lie.

Danforth, *turning worriedly to Abigail*: Abigail. 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 deception that may cross your mind when -

Abigail: Why, this - this - is a base question, sir.

Danforth: Child, I would have you consider it -

Abigail: I have been hurt, Mr. 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, *weakening*: Child, I do not mistrust you -

Abigail, *in an open threat*: Let you beware, Mr. Danforth. Think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn *your* wits? Beware of it! There is - *Suddenly, from an accusa-tory attitude, her face turns, looking into the air above - it is truly frightened.*

Danforth, *apprehensively*: What is it, child?

Abigail, *looking about in the air, clasping her arms about her as though cold*: I - I know not. A wind, a cold wind, has come. *Her eyes fall on Mary Warren.*

Mary Warren, *terrified, pleading*: Abby!

Mercy Lewis, *shivering*: Your Honor, I freeze!

Proctor: They're pretending!

Hathorne, *touching Abigail's hand*: She is cold, Your Honor, touch her!

Mercy Lewis, *through chattering teeth*: Mary, do you send this shadow on me?

Mary Warren: Lord, save me!

Susanna Walcott: I freeze, I freeze!

Abigail, *shivering visibly*: It is a wind, a wind!

MARY Warren: Abby, don't do that!

Danforth, *himself engaged and entered by Abigail*: Mary Warren, do you witch her? I say to you, do you send your spirit out?

With a hysterical cry Mary Warren starts to run. Proctor catches her.

Mary Warren, *almost collapsing*: Let me go, Mr. Proctor, I cannot, I cannot -

Abigail, *crying to Heaven*: Oh, Heavenly Father, take away this shadow!

without warning or hesitation, Proctor leaps at Abigail and, grabbing her by the hair, pulls her to her feet. She screams in pain. Danforth, astonished, cries, "What are you about?" and Hathorne and Parris call, "Take your hands off her!" and out of it all comes Proctor's roaring voice.

PRocToR: How do you call Heaven! Whore! Whore!

Herrick breaks Proctor from her.

Herrick: John!

DAnFoRTH: Man! Man, what do you -

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Proctor, *breathless and in agony*: It is a whore! Danforth, *dumfounded*:
You charge - ? Abigail: Mr. Danforth, he is lying!

Proctor: Mark her! Now she'll suck a scream to stab me with, but -

Danforth: You will prove this! This will not pass!

Proctor, *trembling, his life collapsing about him*: I have known her, sir. I have known her.

Danforth: You - you are a lecher?

Francis, *horrified*: John, you cannot say such a -

Proctor: Oh, Francis, I wish you had some evil in you that you might know me! *To Danforth*: A man will not cast away his good name. You surely know that.

Danforth, *dumfounded*: In - in what time? In what place?

Proctor, *his voice about to break, and his shame great*: In the proper place - where my beasts are bedded. On the last night of my joy, some eight months past. She used to serve me in my house, sir. *He has to clamp his jaw to keep from weeping*. 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 highroad. And being what she is, a lump of vanity, sir - *He is being overcome*. Excellency, forgive me, forgive me. *An-grily against himself, he turns away from the Governor for a moment. Then, as though to cry out is his only means of speech left*: She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave! And well she might, for I thought of her softly. God help me, t lusted, and there *is* a promise in such sweat. But it is a whore's venge-ance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands, I know you must see it now.

Danforth, *blanched, in horror, turning to Abigail*: You deny every scrap and tittle of this?

Aalu.: If I must answer that, I will leave and I will not come back again!

Danforth seems unsteady.

Proctor: I have made a bell of my honor! I have rung the doom of my good name - you will believe me, Mr. Danforth! My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw one!

Abigail, *stepping up to Danforth*: What look do you give me? *Danforth cannot speak. I'll not have such looks! She turns and starts for the door.*

Danforth: You will remain where you are! *Herrick steps into her path. She comes up short, fire in her eyes.* Mr. Parris, go into the court and bring Goodwife Proctor out.

Parris, *objecting*: Your Honor, this is all a -

Danforth, *sharply to Parris*: Bring her out! And tell her not one word of what's been spoken here. And let you knock before you enter. *Parris goes out.* 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. I have paid much to learn it, sir.

Danforth: And when she put this girl out of your house, she put her out for a harlot?

Proctor: Aye, sir.

Danforth: And knew her for a harlot?

Proctor: Aye, sir, she knew her for a harlot.

Danforth: Good then. *To Abigail*: And if she tell me, child,

End of
Reading
THREE

Start
of
Reading
FOUR

it were for harlotry, may God spread His mercy on you! *There is a knock. He calls to the door.* Hold! *To Abigail:* Turn your back. Turn your back. *To Proctor:* Do likewise. *Both turn their backs - Abigail with indignant slowness.* Now let neither of you turn to face Goody Proctor. No one in this room is to speak one word, or raise a gesture aye or nay. *He turns toward the door, calls:* Enter! *The door opens. Elizabeth enters with Parris. Parris leaves her. She stands alone, her eyes looking for Proctor.* Mr. Cheever, report this testimony in all exactness. Are you ready?

Cheever: Ready, sir.

Danforth: Come here, woman. *Elizabeth comes to him, glancing at Proctor's back.* Look at me only, not at your husband. In my eyes only.

Elizabeth, *faintly:* Good, sir.

Danforth: We are given to understand that at one time you dismissed your servant, Abigail Williams.

Elizabeth: That is true, sir.

Danforth: For what cause did you dismiss her? *Slight pause. Then Elizabeth tries to glance at Proctor.* You will look in my eyes only and not at your husband. The answer is in your memory and you need no help to give it to me. Why did you dismiss Abigail Williams?

Elizabeth, *not knowing what to say, sensing a situation, wetting her lips to stall for time:* She - dissatisfied me. *Pause.* And my husband.

Danforth: In what way dissatisfied you?

Elizabeth: She were - *She glances at Proctor for a cue.*

Danforth: Woman, look at me! *Elizabeth does.* Were she slovenly? Lazy? What disturbance did she cause?

Elizabeth: Your Honor, I - in that time I were sick. And I - My husband is a good and righteous man. He is never drunk as some are, nor wastin' his time at the shovelboard, but always at his work. But in my sickness - you see, sir, I were a long time sick after my last baby, and I thought I saw my husband somewhat turning from me. And this girl - *She turns to Abigail.*

Danforth: Look at me.

Elizabeth: Aye, sir. Abigail Williams - *She breaks up.*

Danforth: What of Abigail Williams?

Elizabeth: I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and put her out on the highroad.

Danforth: Your husband - did he indeed turn from you?

Elizabeth, *in agony*: My husband - is a goodly man, sir.

Danforth: Then he did not turn from you.

Elizabeth, *starting to glance at Proctor*: He -

Danforth, *reaches out and holds her face, then*: Look at me! To your own knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery? *In a crisis of indecision she cannot speak*, Answer my question! Is your husband a lecher!

Elizabeth, *faintly*: No, sir.

Danforth: Remove her, Marshal.

Proctor: Elizabeth, tell the truth!

Danforth: She has spoken. Remove her!

Proctor, *crying out*: Elizabeth, I have confessed it!

Elizabeth: Oh, God! *The door closes behind her.*

Proctor: She only thought to save my name!

Hale: Excellency, it is a natural lie to tell; I beg you, stop now before another is condemned! I may shut my conscience to it no more - private vengeance is working through this testimony! From the beginning this man has struck me true. By my oath to Heaven, I believe him now, and I pray you call back his wife before we -

Danforth: She spoke nothing of lechery, and this man has lied'

Hale: I believe him! *Pointing at Abigail:* This girl has always struck me false! She has -

Abigail, with a weird, wild, chilling cry, screams up to the ceiling.

Abigail: You will not! Begone! Begone, I say!

Danforth: What is it, child? *But Abigail, pointing with fear, is now raising up her frightened eyes, her awed face, toward the ceiling - the girls are doing the same - and now Hathorne, Hale, Putnam, Cheever, Herrick, and Danforth do the same. What's there? He lowers his eyes from the ceiling, and now he is fright-ened; there is real tension in his voice. Child! She is transfixed - with all the girls, she is whimpering open-mouthed, agape at the ceiling. Girls! Why do you - ?*

Mercy Lewis, *pointing:* It's on the beam! Behind the rafters

Danforth, *looking up:* Where!

Abigail: Why - ? *She gulps.* Why do you come, yellow bird?

Proctor: Where's a bird? I see no bird!

Abigail, *to the ceiling:* My face? My face?

Proctor: Mr. Hale -

Danforth: Be quiet!

Proctor, *to Hale:* Do you see a bird?

Danforth: Be quiet!!

Act Three

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Abigail, *to the ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the "bird," as though trying to talk it out of attacking her*: But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary.

Mary Warren, *on her feet with a spring, and horrified, plead-ing*: Abby!

Abigail, *unperturbed, continuing to the "bird"*: Oh, Mary, this is a black art to change your shape. No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth; it's God's work I do.

Mary Warren: Abby, I'm *here*!

Proctor, *frantically*: They're pretending, Mr. Danforth!

Abigail - *now she takes a backward step, as though in fear the bird will swoop down momentarily*: Oh, please, Mary! Don't come down.

Susanna Walcott: Her claws, she's stretching her claws!

Proctor: Lies, lies.

Abigail, *backing further, eyes still fixed above*: Mary, please don't hurt me!

Mary Warren, *to Danforth*: I'm not hurting her!

Danforth, *to Mary Warren*: Why does she see this vision?

Mary Warren: She sees nothin'!

Abigail, *now staring full front as though hypnotized, and mimicking the exact tone of Mary Warren's cry*: She sees nothin'!

Mary Warren, *pleading*: Abby, you mustn't!

Abigail AND All THE Girls, *all transfixed*: Abby, you mustn't!

MARY Warren, *to all the girls*: I'm here, I'm here!

Girls: I'm here, I'm here!

DAnFoRth, *horrified*: Mary Warren! Draw back your spirit out of them!

Mary Warren: Mr. Danforth!

GiRLs, *cutting her op*: Mr. Danforth!

Danforth: Have you compacted with the Devil? Have you?

Mary Warren: Never, never!

Girls: Never, never!

Danforth, *growing hysterical*: Why can they only repeat you?

PRoctoR: Give me a whip - I'll stop it!

Mary Warren: They're sporting. They - !

Girls: They're sporting!

Mary Warren, *turning on them all hysterically and stamping her feet*: Abby, stop it!

Girls, *stamping their feet*: Abby, stop it!

Mary Warren: Stop it!

Girls: Stop it!

Mary Warren, *screaming it out at the top of her lungs, and raising her fists*: Stop it!!

Girls, *raising their fists*: Stop it!!

Mary Warren, *utterly confounded, and becoming overwhelmed by Abigail's - and the girls' - utter conviction, starts to whimper, hands half raised, powerless, and all the girls begin whimpering exactly as she does.*

Danforth: A little while ago you were afflicted. Now it seems you afflict others; where did you find this power?

Act Three Mary WARREN, *staring at Abigail*: I - have no power. Girls: I have no power. Proctor: They're gulling you, Mister!

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Danforth: Why did you turn about this past two weeks? You have seen the Devil, have you not?

Hale, *indicating Abigail and the girls*: You cannot believe them! -

Mary Warren: I -

Proctor, *sensing her weakening*: Mary, God damns all liars!

Danforth, *pounding it into her*: You have seen the Devil, you have made compact with Lucifer, have you not?

Proctor: God damns liars, Mary!

Mary utters something unintelligible, staring at Abigail, who keeps watching the "bird" above.

Danforth: I cannot hear you. What do you say? *Mary utters again unintelligibly* You will confess yourself or you will hang! *He turns her roughly to face him.* Do you know who I am? I say you will hang if you do not open with me!

Proctor: Mary, remember the angel Raphael - do that which is good and -

Abigail, *pointing upward*: The wings! Her wings are spreading! Mary, please, don't, don't - !

Hale: I see nothing, Your Honor!

Danforth: Do you confess this power! *He is an inch from her face.* Speak!

Abigail: She's going to come down! She's walking the beam!

Danforth: Will you speak!

Mary Warren, *staring in horror*: I cannot! Girls: I cannot!

Parris: Cast the Devil out! Look him in the face! Trample him! We'll save you, Mary, only stand fast against him and -

Abigail, *looking up*: Look out! She's coming down!

She and all the girls run to one wall, shielding their eyes. And now, as though cornered, they let out a gigantic scream, and Mary, as though infected, opens her mouth and screams with them. Gradually Abigail and the girls leave op, until only Mary is left there, staring up at the "bird," screaming madly. All watch her, horrified by this evident fit. Proctor strides to her.

Proctor: Mary, tell the Governor what they - *He has hardly got a word out, when, seeing him coming for her, she rushes out of his reach, screaming in horror,*

Mary Warren: Don't touch me - don't touch me! *At which the girls halt at the door.*

Proctor, *astonished*: Mary!

Mary Warren, *pointing at Proctor*: You're the Devil's man!

He is stopped in his tracks.

Parris: Praise God!

Girls: Praise God!

Proctor, *numbed*: Mary, how - ?

Mary Warren: I'll not hang with you! I love God, I love God.

Danforth, *to Mary*: He bid you do the Devil's work?

Mary Warren, *hysterically, indicating Proctor*: He come at me by night and every day to sign, to sign, to -

Danforth: Sign what?

Act Three Parris: The Devil's book? He come with a book? 119

Mary Warren, *hysterically, pointing at Proctor, fearful of him*: My name, he want my name. "I'll murder you," he says, "if my wife hangs! We must go and overthrow the court," he says!

Danforth's head jerks toward Proctor, shock and horror in his face.

Proctor, *turning, appealing to Hale*: Mr. Hale!

Mary Warren, *her sobs beginning*: He wake me every night, his eyes were like coals and his fingers claw my neck, and I sign, I sign...

Hale: Excellency, this child's gone wild!

Proctor, *as Danforth's wide eyes pour on him*: Mary, Mary!

Mary Warren, *screaming at him*: No, I love God; I go your way no more. I love God, I bless God. *Sobbing, she rushes to Abigail*. Abby, Abby, I'll never hurt you more! *They all watch, as Abigail, out of her infinite charity, reaches out and draws the sobbing Mary to her, and then looks up to Danforth.*

Danforth, *to Proctor*: What are you? *Proctor is beyond speech in his anger*. You are combined with anti-Christ, are you not? I have seen your power; you will not deny it! What say you, Mister?

Hale: Excellency -

Danforth: I will have nothing from you, Mr. Hale! *To Proctor*: Will you confess yourself befouled with Hell, or do you keep that black allegiance yet? What say you?

Proctor, *his mind wild, breathless*: I say - I say - God is dead!

Parris: Hear it, hear it!

Proctor, *laughs insanely, then*: A fire, a fire is burning! I hear

the boot of Lucifer, I see his filthy face! And it is my face, and yours, Danforth! For them that quail to bring men out of ignorance, as I have quailed, and as you quail now when you know in all your black hearts that this be fraud - God damns our kind especially, and we will burn, we will burn together!

Danforth: Marshal! Take him and Corey with him to the jail!

Hale, *starting across to the door*: I denounce these proceedings!

Proctor: You are pulling Heaven down and raising up a whore!

Hale: I denounce these proceedings, I quit this court! *He slams the door to the outside behind him.*

Danforth, *calling to him in a fury*: Mr. Hale! Mr. Hale!

THE CURTAIN FALLS

↑
end of
Reading Four