

THE CRUCIBLE

Libretto by

Bernard Stambler

Music by

Robert Ward

from the play by

Arthur Miller

Act I

Left, the parlor of the Reverend Parris's house; extreme left, a door to the outside. Up center, fireplace and a door to the kitchen. Bookcase, chairs, a small table or two. Right, down, a shallow stairway to an upper landing which serves as Betty's bedroom: bed and small table; extreme right, wall and window.

(Rev. Parris is kneeling at the bed on which Betty lies immobile and scarcely breathing. Tituba enters.)

TITUBA—My Betty be hearty soon?

PARRIS—Out of here!

TITUBA—My Betty goin to die?

PARRIS—Out of here, Tituba, out of my sight. *(Tituba exits.)*

PARRIS—Oh, my God, help me. Child Betty child, will you wake, will you open your eyes? *(Betty doesn't move. Abigail enters.)*

ABIGAIL—Uncle, Uncle Parris, Susanna has come from the doctor. He says he has looked but cannot find no cure in his books for Betty. He bids you look to unnatural causes. *(Parris rises.)*

PARRIS—There be no unnatural causes here.

ABIGAIL—*(growing agitated)* Uncle, the common is packed with people chatterin of warlocks and witches. You'd best go out and deny it yourself.

PARRIS—And what do I say? What do I say? That I found my daughter and niece dancing in the forest like heathen?

ABIGAIL—Uncle, we did dance. And Tituba sang her songs. But there, outside, they're speakin of witchcraft. Betty's not witched.

PARRIS—Abigail, you've not opened with me. What did you in the forest?

ABIGAIL—We did dance, Uncle, and when you leaped so quick from the bush, Betty took fright and she fainted. That's what happened.

PARRIS—And Tituba waving her arms o'er the fire, screeching and gibbering — what of that? What of that? And the dress in the grass?

ABIGAIL—A dress?

PARRIS—Aye, and someone running naked through the trees.

ABIGAIL—*(frightened)* No, no—no, no—no one was naked.

PARRIS—Abigail, I have enemies in this miserly town. For three long years I have fought to make this stiff-necked parish respect and obey me. And now, you bring corruption to my doorstep and compromise my very character. . . . Child, I have given you bed and board and the clothes upon your back. Now I must have the truth before I leave this room. My ministry here's at stake; can you, do you understand? So give me an upright answer. . . . Why did Goody Proctor discharge you from her service? She comes but rarely now to church; she will not sit so close to something soiled, she says. What meant she by that?

ABIGAIL—That bitter woman, that snivelling woman — Goody Proctor hates me because I would not be her slave.

PARRIS—That may be. Yet since you left her house no other has sought your service. Tell me, why is that? Tell me.

ABIGAIL—They all want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. Do you begrudge me my bed, Uncle?

PARRIS—No, no.

ABIGAIL—I will not have it said my name is soiled. I'm clean, as clean as any woman in Salem. My name is good! Elizabeth Proctor is a liar!

(a knock at the outside door below.)

ABIGAIL—*(suddenly calm)* Oh, I'll go down.

PARRIS—No, stay. Watch Betty. *(he goes down)*

(Enter Thomas and Ann Putnam. Abigail moves to the bed.)

PARRIS—Oh, good evening, Ann. . . . Thomas.

THOMAS—Good evening, Mr. Parris. How is your Betty? Our Ruth is also taken.

PARRIS—Your Ruth sick?

ANN—Not sick, . . . not sick. The Devil's touch is heavier than sick. It's death-in-life. She never waked this morning, but her eyes is open. She walks, she eats, yet hears naught, sees naught. Her soul is surely taken — surely it is taken.

THOMAS—It's witchcraft. I've sent to Beverly for Reverend Hale.

PARRIS—To spy out witches? No, no. We have no need of him, not here; this is not witchcraft.

THOMAS—Not witchcraft? Now look you, look you, Mr. Parris —

PARRIS—Thomas, Thomas, we cannot leap so fast to witchcraft . . . and in my very house. Would you have them howl me out of Salem? Would you?

ANN—Would you have us all destroyed by the Devil? Would you? . . . Once he took only babies. Now it is girls, girls grown to womanhood.

THOMAS—We cannot tarry now. My daughter lies at death's door. She fades before our eyes, the last child of eight my Ann has borne. The doctor has no remedy, finds nothing in his books — and you — can you cure her? Can you?

(knocks at the door. Rebecca and Francis Nurse enter with Giles Corey.)

PARRIS—Ah, Rebecca, how good of you to come. Francis, Giles . . .

ALL—Good evening.

REBECCA—How does your Betty fare? We hear that she is ill.

ANN—Betty lies as dead as does our Ruth. It's Devil's work.

PARRIS—No, no. . . . We do not know the cause. Betty sleeps . . . this we know, and little more. But Thomas will see witchcraft here and sends to Beverly for Reverend Hale.

GILES—Ah! The Reverend Hale! And will he make Betty fly again? Old Collins says she flew high over his barn and come down light as a bird.

THOMAS—We can do without your foolish jests . . . *(pompously)* The Bible says, 'Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live,' and I say, there's witches now in Salem, as even you should see.

GILES—*(maliciously)* Aye, call 'em witches, hang 'em high as Haman, and before you know it — Thomas Putnam's got their land.

THOMAS—You slanderous old fool, you'll answer to the law. The Devil is abroad in the world. From the Bible we know the signs.

GILES—Depends on how you read the Word. Even the Devil has ways to quote Scripture.

THOMAS—Ah, now you're aping your friend, John Proctor, twisting the Scriptures to please his whim.

GILES—*(in a sudden fury)* Twisting, twisting! That's the word for you, the very word for you! Your father stole half of his neighbors' land and piously claimed it his duty. Now you sound the horn for a witch-hunt with an eye to grabbing the rest. . . . John Proctor is an honest man, straight as the oaks on Salem Walk. It little behoves the likes of you to libel the good name of John Proctor.

REBECCA—Gently, sirs, gently. These quarrels do not help us. Your Ruth will be well . . . as will your Betty. They will wake in their own time. I've had eleven children, am a grandma twenty-six times — and I know. . . . All children in their silly season play a game, an ancient game: 'Bedevil the old ones, outwit them, trip them, outwit them, trip them, and run them bowlegged.' And we, the old ones, must wait and trust. *(John Proctor enters quietly and stands without being noticed.)*

THOMAS—Humph! Popycock, old woman, a waste of time, and we've none to spare.

REBECCA—Not at all! Patient love is the gentle cure, and all that is needed here. I know, I know. A child's spirit is a runaway thing — you'll never, never catch it. But just stand still, just stand still. . . . For gentle love is the shining lure, the shining lure that brings the runaway home. Just stand still, and it will come home.

(John Proctor comes forward; at his words the others are aware of him for the first time. Abigail, upstairs, responds electrically to the sound of his voice. She moves toward the railing, where she can watch without being seen; then, as the scene progresses, she begins to pace nervously.)

JOHN—Well spoken, Goody Nurse. How very right you are.

(The others respond more or less at once.)

REBECCA—John Proctor! Good to see you.

GILES—Speak of the Devil, and he'll come afore ye.

FRANCIS—Evening, John.

PARRIS—This is a surprise, Mr. Proctor.

PUTNAM—Good evening.

JOHN—And speakin of poppycock, Mister Putnam, I hear you've sent for Reverend Hale. How is it that you act without the congregation's vote?

THOMAS—Me act without — (*sputtering indignantly*)

PARRIS—Thomas did well. It's what we need.

JOHN—And by whose decision, may I ask?

REBECCA—Hush, John. (*then to Parris and Putnam*) You see, Mr. Hale but gives us cause for bickering anew. Send him back and trust in prayer. And let us not see witches in silly girls.

JOHN—Aye, that's the truth.

THOMAS—The truth, indeed. The truth, indeed. The truth I hear is that some in this town have no belief in witches.

GILES—(*in mischievous high spirits*) Aye, Proctor here — he's one.

JOHN—(*to him*) I never spoke a word on witches, one way or another. (*then to Putnam*) But your acres do not command here, sir. This society acts on the vote of all.

PARRIS—John Proctor so worried on this society — that's a marvel. And yet, since snow began to fly, he's not been seen in church.

JOHN—I'll not come out these five mile for hellfire and damnation.

GILES—And sermons demanding the deed to this house and candlesticks of gold.

PARRIS—The simple needs of my high office. That is all I ask.

GILES—That's all, just his simple needs, John.

JOHN—Aye, what will the errant flock do when the shepherd is so greedy?

GILES—True, he preaches little that a decent man can follow.

THOMAS—Decent, is it? (*to Parris*) Did you hear that? Decent! What's the world come to when ignorant farmers rant of decency, and dare to reproach their betters?

JOHN—Ignorant farmers and their betters, eh? Put here by God for your kind to cheat? (*Abigail, her excitement now extreme, leans back against the wall and moves as though responding to a sexual stimulus.*) That may be the scheme of things as you and Parris see it. But you will not subjugate this town — never, never while I breathe. We live and vote as equals here. You wear no halo, Mr. Putnam!

PARRIS—Blasphemy, blasphemy!

REBECCA—Stop this! Stop this! Your quarrels tear the town asunder. And in this house of sadness . . .

PARRIS—Rebecca is right. We disgrace ourselves. Let us seek God's help in the singing of a psalm.

JOHN—Better soul-searchin than psalm-singin. I needs must go. I've things to do.

GILES—Wait, John. I'll come along. (*Proctor and Giles leave.*)

PARRIS—Let us sing now 'Jesus, my consolation,' for well it suits the hour.

ALL—

Jesus, my consolation,
Thee do I worship. Thee do I trust.
When Satan tempts me to vile corruption,
Smite Thou the Devil, crush him to dust.

Keep me from sin and folly,
Free me from bonds of earthly delight.
Give me the strength to conquer all evil,
Spare me the pain of Hell's endless night.

God heard our call
And sent Thee down —

(*Abigail upstairs joins in.*)
(*Betty writhes on the bed and moans.*)

(*Abby drops out. Betty moans more violently; Abigail notices and comes to her.*)

ABIGAIL—Betty, be quiet. Betty, Betty, for the love of God, Betty stop this!

(*Betty, with superhuman strength, breaks away from Abigail, emitting a blood-curdling scream. She is now fully possessed — claws at the walls and finally makes for the window, ready to fly. Abigail pursues and tries to subdue her. The psalm-singing below now completely stops, Parris having dropped out a moment earlier. He and the Putnams had already shown some awareness of the disturbance above.*)

ABIGAIL—Help! Uncle Parris! (*at Abigail's cry, all below rush upstairs, Parris and the Putnams more agile than the aged Nurses.*)

PARRIS—Oh, my God!

THOMAS—Get her to the bed!

ANN—It's a sign. She cannot bear the Lord's name.

FRANCIS—Send for the doctor.

REBECCA—Quiet, my darling. There . . . there . . .
(*the Reverend Hale had been knocking in vain at the door. Hearing the commotion within, he has entered and made his way upstairs. He carries a heavy book.*)

PARRIS—Ah Mr. Hale, you're here.

HALE—Forgive my coming right up. I knocked, but —

PARRIS—No, no . . . no . . . God has sent you to help us in this dreaded hour.

HALE—What faith and science can do shall be done. What is the trouble here?

THOMAS—She cannot hear the Lord's name.

ANN—It makes her scream and writhe.

THOMAS—She tried to fly, a fearful sign.

ANN—Sure proof of Devil's work.

PARRIS—Not wholly certain, Goody Ann — now is it, Mr. Hale?

HALE—That's true . . . not wholly certain. . . . For much in the world seems Devil's work, but only evidence hard evidence, only that can prove it. Here in my book (*holds it up*) stands Lucifer stripped — and all his familiar spirits. See, it's weighted with authority: incubi and succubi, witches and wizards of night and day, evil demons and ghoulish nightmares that haunt sleep and torment the soul. . . . But if Satan is truly abroad we shall seek him out; then we'll rip him out; and we'll crush him utterly. . . . Now, Betty child (*goes to bed and raises Betty to a sitting position*); waken; waken; waken, little one. Does someone send his spirit on you — a man, a woman? Tell me, child. Or perhaps a bird, a pretty bird, a bird unseen? Betty, Betty, do you hear me?

(*receiving no response, he lets her fall back on the bed, and turns to the others.*) Tell me, how and when did this affliction fall on the child?

PARRIS—Last night, after the girls had danced in the wood.

HALE—Danced? You permit dancing?

PARRIS—No, no, it were secret.

ANN—Betty, our Ruth, and Abby were there. Tituba, his slave, was there too. She knows conjurin.

PARRIS—Goody Ann, we cannot be sure of that.

ANN—I am. That's why I sent my Ruth to Tituba, to ask her dead sisters who had murdered them. (*commotion*) . . .

ALL—What? What's that?

REBECCA—Why, Ann Putnam, you sent a child to conjure the dead? But that's a sin!

ANN—Seven children dead, ere they lived a day; our Ruth smitten, at death's door — could aught be sin that saves a child? God shall judge me, Rebecca Nurse, not you.

HALE—Have no fear, Goody Putnam. . . . But we must ponder this new revelation. I must speak with Tituba.

PARRIS—Goody Ann, would you please fetch her? (*Ann goes.*)

HALE—Abigail Williams, you were there; you danced. What sort of dancing?

ABIGAIL—Why, common dancing — that were all.

HALE—You're sure?

ABIGAIL—Uncle Parris saw us.

PARRIS—Abby, that were not all. The girls, naked. The kettle, with the toads.

ABIGAIL—Oh, that — that were but a tiny frog jumped in. (*Tituba is brought in.*)

HALE—Abigail, tell the truth. Your cousin may be dying, afflicted by a witch. Did you compact with the Devil?

ABIGAIL—No, no, I never. (*lashing out in fear*) She did, Tituba did.

TITUBA—Abby, Abby, what you say? (*to the others*) What she say?

ABIGAIL—She made us drink babies' blood.

TITUBA—No, no, dat only chicken's blood.

ABIGAIL—She pleads with us to conjure the Devil.

TITUBA—No, you beg me to conjure.

ABIGAIL—She sends her spirit on me in church. She makes me laugh at prayer.

TITUBA—Why you say that?

ABIGAIL—She comes to me in the deep of night and makes me dream corruptions. At night I wake, naked in the open doorway — not a stitch of clothes, nothin, just my naked body in the moonlight. The ground trembles, a cold wind blows, and Tituba singin her Barbados songs, temptin me, temptin me . . .

(*A quintet begins, started by Ann, then Thomas, Parris, and the Nurses.*)

ANN—That slave's a witch. She's joined the Devil's crew. Its hurtful, vengeful spirits layin hands on these children. My babies' blood, that's what she made them drink, a witches' brew of babies' blood. Tituba enlists them for the Devil. All this year they're turnin strange. She's the murderin witch, for sure. Mr. Hale, do you hear? She's the witch. Make her name the Devil's crew. Lift this curse, we beg of you.

FRANCIS—A piteous thing — she's haunted by the bloody massacre that left her an orphan child.

REBECCA—It's charity and love she needs. She's heard too much of witchcraft.

FRANCIS—That's true. I agree, but Putnam's crying witch-hunt.

REBECCA—I fear this seeking loose spirits. We should go to God. He will give us help, for sure.

FRANCIS—No good, I fear, can come of this. It's evil. It's silly girls, not witches here. It's charity and love we need.

PARRIS—She dreams corruptions, and in my very house. Those who hope to ruin me will feed on every word she says. She says her name is clean; I wonder. Oh, my God. Tituba is back of this.

THOMAS—She dreams corruption. What does she mean? She wakens naked. . . . Tituba is back of this.

HALE—Woman, woman — now answer me. Did you speak with the Devil?

TITUBA—No, no, I never speak wid no Devil.

PARRIS—Tell the truth, or you'll be whipped.

TITUBA—No, no, don whip Tituba. Tituba do nothin bad.

HALE—Open yourself to God, woman. Do you work for the Devil?

TITUBA—I no work for him. I no work for him, I tell that Devil I no work for him. (*suddenly realizes the import of her words*)

HALE—You tell that Devil you no work for him? So you *did* speak with the Devil!

PARRIS—She did, she did. Make her tell us who was with him.

THOMAS—Were it Sarah Good?

ANN—Or Goody Osburn?

ANN, PARRIS, THOMAS—Tell us, Tituba . . . Tituba must confess, or she will hang.

(*A clear vision of the gibbet appears to Tituba and she sobs violently.*)

TITUBA—It were black dark. Tituba no see.

HALE—Speak utterly, Tituba, and God will protect you.

TITUBA—Oh, God protect Tituba.

HALE—Have no fear.

PARRIS—Speak. Who did you see? (*Tituba looks long and venomously at Parris.*)

TITUBA—Oh, how many times, Mr. Parris, the Devil bid me kill you!

PARRIS—Kill me?

TITUBA—Yaa! Ya, he do. He say Mr. Parris a mean man. He bid me rise an cut yo throat. (*to Thomas*) Yo throat, too — an yo's, Goody Putnam. . . . But I say, 'No, I don wanna kill.' But he say, 'Yo work for me you get silk dress, big black wings, an I set yo free. You can fly down to Barbados, where the sun is big an bright, where dere's singing, where dere's dancin, where dere's feastin till de night.' (*A tiny sigh escapes her. Catches herself and quickly returns to earlier mood.*) But I said 'No.' I save yo throats. . . . Den one stormy night he come an say to me, 'Look, white people — dey's mine, too.' I peer into de blackness. . . . An ol woman dere — scraggy hair an a crooked nose. . . . Couldn make her out . . .

ANN—(*in great excitement*) Were it Sarah Good?

TITUBA—(*heartily glad to have the problem solved*) Ya, ya, Missus Putnam, it were Sarah Good.

ANN—I knew it, I knew it. She were midwife to me seven times. My babies shrivelled in her arms.

HALE—The heavens open, Tituba. Through you God Himself has spoken. Now His holy light shines forth, and Lucifer's bond is broken. (*Betty wakens, sits up. Gradually all become aware of her.*)

OTHERS—Is broken, is broken. Alleluia.

ALL except ABIGAIL—Jesus, my consolation,
Thee do I worship, Thee do I trust.
When Satan tempts me to vile corruption,
Smite Thou the Devil, crush him to dust. Alleluia.

Keep me from sin and folly,
Free me from bonds of earthly delight.
Give me the strength to conquer all evil,
Spare me the pain of Hell's endless night.

God heard our call
And sent down His Son to take on the sin
Of mankind's first fall.
Thy blood redeems us, sing we hosanna.
Now we adore Thee, Savior of all. Amen.

ABIGAIL—(*sings against this, starting at the third line of the psalm*)

They all rejoice that Tituba's saved,
Their faces beam with holy light.
I sold my soul, befouled my name,
I sinned and lied, drank Satan's brews,
For him, naked, danced, then signed his book,
Became his loving bride.

Now I want Thy love, O God,
Can You forgive my mortal fail?
Do you send a sign? Do I hear Thy voice?
I do, I do! 'Tis Thy sweet call!

(*The psalm has now come to its end, so that Abigail's next lines are in the clear, as she becomes increasingly ecstatic.*)

I open to Thee, oh Jesus,
Open, open Thy arms to me.
I kiss Thy hand, sweet Jesus,
Take me — take me up to Thee, my God!

CURTAIN

Act II

A week later. The kitchen, etc., of John Proctor's farmhouse. Fireplace, table, etc. The mantel of the fireplace is somewhat cluttered, but a rag poppet may be seen protruding; a musket hangs above. John enters from the outside. Elizabeth is preparing dinner.

ELIZABETH—What keeps you so late? It's nearly dark.

JOHN—Today I wanted to finish my planting out to the edge of the forest. This farm is the size of a continent when you go foot by foot sowing new seed. But soon I think we'll see green fields; beneath the clods it is warm as blood. So pray now for a warm and speedy summer.

ELIZABETH—Aye, for all the good that comes of any prayer of mine.

JOHN—You ought to bring some flowers in; it's still like winter in here. On Sunday let you come with me, and we'll walk the farm together. I never see such a crowd of flowers as is blooming everywhere. It's a good time is spring-time. . . . I think you're sad again, are you?

ELIZABETH—I thought you'd gone to Salem, you are so late today.

JOHN—(*withdrawing his warmth*) I changed my mind.

ELIZABETH—Mary Warren's there.

JOHN—What? She's gone again?

ELIZABETH—When I tried to stop her she raises up her chin like the daughter of a prince and says, 'I must go to Salem, Goody Proctor; I'm an official of the court.'

JOHN—Court? What court?

ELIZABETH—Aye, it is a proper court. They've sent a judge out of Boston. And he's a stern one, is Deputy Governor Danforth. And he promises hangin if they'll not confess.

JOHN—They're mad. No one will hang.

ELIZABETH—Abigail leads the girls into court, and the crowd parts like the sea for the Chosen People, they say. Suspected folks are brought before them, and then are clapped in jail if the girls scream and howl and fall to the floor.

JOHN—This is a black mischief.

ELIZABETH—John, you must go to Salem. You must tell them it is fraud. Tell them that she said so in her uncle's house.

JOHN—I'll think on it.

ELIZABETH—You cannot keep it, John.

JOHN—(*angry*) I say I'll think on it.

ELIZABETH—(*sarcastic*) Good, then let you think on it. . . . But if it were not Abigail that you must hurt, would you falter now?

JOHN—Woman, I'll not have your suspicion more.

ELIZABETH—Then let you not earn it.

JOHN—Let you not judge me. Let you look to your own improvement. I've forgotten Abigail, do you understand? I've forgotten. But you forget nothin, you forgive nothin. Learn charity, Elizabeth. I've gone tiptoe in this house since she is gone. I have not moved from here to there without I think and try to please you. And still an everlastin funeral marches round your heart. I cannot speak but I am doubted, every moment judged for lies, as though I come into a court when I come into this house. But you think: think on this. If I go to Salem and call Abigail fraud, she'll strike back. Surely she will. Then it's Proctor or lecher' — the name will be the same. Think of that, and then think of your sons — Besides, it's not so easy to prove that she is fraud. I have no hard evidence. What she told me she told me in a room alone.

ELIZABETH—In a room alone? Then it is not as you told me!

JOHN—Enough, enough I say. I'll plead my honesty no more. But look you sometimes for the goodness in me, and judge me not. I tell you, judge me not.

ELIZABETH—I do not judge you, John. The court that judges you sits in your own heart. I never thought you but a good man, though perhaps a little bewildered. That's all — But ah the dreams I had for our proud young love, a love that would never turn or falter. But now, it's shattered, lost and gone. And an icy hand closes round my heart. How could it be you turned from me to one like Abigail? How could it be, John? How could it be? . . . You say she'll call you lecher, but won't she fear to damn herself? Think of those who rot in jail, those whom you might save. Think of them — and then think on your sons . . . John, grant me this: you do not know a young girl's heart. A promise is made in any bed — spoken or silent, it's surely made. Now Abigail may dream on that. I know she does. Go to her, John, and break that promise — that she may dream no more. All this week I've been haunted by fear of what she may do next. She has an arrow in you yet, and she will twist it home. You must tear yourself free of her — you must, John, you must: you will tear yourself free of her. For know that I will be your only wife or no wife at all.

(Elizabeth turns away. She is torn between her proud resolution, her grief and her deep uncertainty. John, wishing somehow to convey his remorse, his love for her and his wish for conciliation, goes to her.) (John puts out his hand hesitantly to touch her, but at his touch Elizabeth recoils.) (John returns to his supper on the table.) (It is cold now, and he has no stomach for it anyway. He bitterly shoves it away and remains motionless until Mary Warren quietly lets herself in. She is a mousy girl and would like to sneak unseen to her room. She makes a noise, however, which awakens John and Elizabeth to her presence.) (John furiously turns his wrath upon her.)

JOHN—Mary Warren, how do you go to Salem when I forbid you? Do you mock me? I'll whip you if you go again.

MARY—Pray, pray hurt me not. I am sick, Mr. Proctor, please. I am weary, I must sleep. (*she starts to go to her room*)

ELIZABETH—Mary, is it true? There be fourteen women jailed?

MARY—No, Ma'am, it's thirty-nine now — and . . . (*sobs*)

ELIZABETH—Child, what ails you?

MARY—Goody Osburn will hang!

JOHN—What? Judge Danforth will permit this?

MARY—He will. He sentenced her . . . but not Sarah Good — for Sarah Good confessed that she compacted with the Devil, and that she bound herself to torment Christians till God's thrown down. Then Goody Osburn stumbles in. 'That poor old woman,' I think to myself; how can I ever accuse her, such a sorry soul she be. But the stubborn thing, she won't confess — she sit there denyin, denyin, and then I feel a coldness a-climbin; the skin on my skull begins to creep, and I choke, I cannot breathe, and then I hear a voice screamin, screamin, and it's my voice . . .

JOHN—And so Judge Danforth condemned her to die. . . . You will not go to that court again. Hangin old women is no work for a Christian girl.

MARY—(*becoming agitated*) But they will not hang if they confess. It's the holy work of God we do. And if the Devil's loose in Salem — we must seek him and rip him out.

JOHN—(*John strides to wall and takes down whip.*) He's loose indeed — I'll whip him out of you.

MARY—(*shrieks in fear*) I saved her life today. (*points at Elizabeth.*)

JOHN—What?

MARY—I saved her life today.

ELIZABETH—I am accused? Who accused me?

MARY—I am bound by law. I cannot say.

ELIZABETH—It was Abigail. She wants me dead, John. She thinks to take my place.

JOHN—No, no, she cannot.

ELIZABETH—(*with great urgency*) John, you must go to Salem, you must now. (*voices outside, and then a heavy knock on the door. John goes to door.*) What's that? (*Enter John Cheever, Reverend Hale, and others with muskets.*)

JOHN—Mr. Hale, John Cheever — what brings you here?

HALE—Business of the court, Mr. Proctor. We've a warrant for your wife. Goody Proctor, it's a serious charge. But your name be good in the town; I've come to see that you're fairly treated.

JOHN—But, a warrant? Who makes the charge?

CHEEVER—The Williams girl. (*reads from the warrant*) Abigail Williams, duly sworn, doth warrant as follows: 'I was sitting at supper with Judge Danforth and Reverend Parris when suddenly I felt a great stab under my heart. Uncle Parris, coming to help me, finds a needle stuck two inches deep into my belly. Asked how I came to be so stabbed, there came a whisper in my ear that this were done by Elizabeth Proctor, with the devilish help of a poppet—'

ELIZABETH—What?

JOHN—What's this?

HALE—Goody Proctor, do you keep poppets?

ELIZABETH—Why no, not since I was a child.

HALE—(*relieved*) Well, then, our business here is done.

CHEEVER—(*who has been peering about the room, now points dramatically at the mantel*) But I spy a poppet!

ALL—What? What is it?

CHEEVER—(*goes to the mantel and takes down poppet*) The very poppet! Your wife's poppet! The needle in the belly here, the belly of her poppet.

ELIZABETH—I do not understand. . . . What signifies this child's poppet? And this needle?

CHEEVER—This needle signifies murder — your murder of Abigail Williams.

ELIZABETH—The girl herself is murder — she should be ripped out of this world!

CHEEVER—'Ripped out of this world,' — you heard that — everyone — you heard that! 'Ripped out of this world,' — the court must hear this.

JOHN—I'll give you somewhat to tell the court, John Cheever. Mary. Tell the truth now: how came this poppet here, into my house?

MARY—(*frightened*) I — I think it is mine. Yes, yes, I made it, sir.

JOHN—And did you stick the needle in?

MARY—I did — why, Abby saw me do it, she sat next to me. You can ask — her — (*she stops in sudden realization*)

HALE—(*directly at her*) You made the poppet? (*she cannot speak, but nods*) You stuck the needle in? (*again she nods*) And Abigail saw you do it? (*the nod is weaker*) You speak your own mind now, not that of another? (*the nod is weaker yet*)

JOHN—There it is. Your mind is surely settled now.

HALE—I've not the power to decide this now. Goody Proctor, you're under charge and must come to be examined. But trust to the judgment of the court. For Judge Danforth is a stern but just man. (*to John*) If only she be innocent the court will send her home.

JOHN—(*in agony*) But I will not let you take her. (*to Elizabeth*) You will not go. (*to the others*) Out of here!

CHEEVER—Hold, man!

HALE—Take heed!

ELIZABETH—No, John, I must go, John. I must, John. Mary, there is bread enough for morning. You will bake in the afternoon. Help Mr. Proctor as though you were his daughter — you owe me that. (*then to John*) When the children wake speak nothin of this. It will frighten them. But John, bring me home soon. I am afraid . . . (*they lead her out*)

JOHN—(*almost weeping*) I will bring you home . . . I will bring you. (*left alone with Mary he stands a moment . . . then his rage triumphs*) If she be innocent! They shall not take her! (*he rushes to the wall, tears down the musket, and starts for the door.*) (*Mary runs to him and holds his arm. He turns to her and looks deeply at her. It is not clear for a moment that he does not mean to use the gun on her.*) (*Mary shrinks back in fear. He puts down the gun and comes toward her, pointing a finger at her.*) Mary Warren —

MARY—(*fearfully*) Mr. Proctor . . . Mr. Proctor . . .

JOHN—You will go to that court with me. You will tell them all you know. And you'll make them believe you.

MARY—I cannot . . . I am afraid . . .

JOHN—(*with awful calm*) No, you will not be afraid. You will explain this poppet and expose this fraud.

MARY—Abby will kill me if I do. And she will charge lechery on you!

JOHN—What? What's that?

MARY—I know all about it — Abigail told me everything. She will ruin you, ruin you completely.

JOHN—(*suddenly*) — Good! We will slide together into our own pit of Hell . . . Her saintliness is done forever. . . . But my wife will never die for me. You will come with me and tell this story in court, or I'll tear your tongue from your head. (*he grasps her by the throat, then hurls her to the ground, where she moans 'I cannot, I cannot'*) Now Hell and Heaven grapple on our very backs, and all pretense is ripped away. We are what we always were, but now we are naked. Our sins walk by our side. (*he walks forward as though to a great horror*) Aye, naked. And the wind will blow, the wind will blow, God's icy wind will blow.

CURTAIN

Act III

Scene 1. Two days later. Woods, misty moonlight. The edge of Reverend Parris' house is barely visible. Abigail and John enter, she with a cloak thrown over a nightdress. She is tender and amorous. He is serious and under strain.

ABIGAIL—John, John, I knew you'd come back to me. Night after night I been waitin for you. (*she comes to be embraced. He extends his arms to hold her off, but she only nestles within them.*)

JOHN—No, no, you could not —

ABIGAIL—I cannot sleep for dreamin. I cannot dream but I wake and walk about, thinkin I'd find you comin through some door. Oh, John, my love, come to me now as you came before, like some great stallion wildly pantin for me. We are free now, free to love.

JOHN—No, Abby, we are not free.

ABIGAIL—John, surely you sport with me.

JOHN—You know me better. We are not free, I say. Elizabeth lies in jail, accused by you. The village lies under a curse, your curse. That is why I'm here, to tell you you must free them. You can, and you must.

ABIGAIL—Free them? But I am freeing them — from their own corruption. I am possessed by the Spirit. I open them to God — these psalm-singin hypocrites who say I danced for the Devil. Let them suffer for it now who must, but some day they will come to me and thank me on their knees.

JOHN—Abby, Abby, what do you say? You become a monster of evil. You whelp of the Devil, how can you do these things? Are you lookin to be whipped?

ABIGAIL—(*She looks him full in the face and as she moves toward him drops her cloak from her shoulders.*) No, no. I look only for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart. For him that awakened me and taught me to love. Oh, John, John, you too are possessed of the Spirit of God!

JOHN—The Spirit of God?

ABIGAIL—Leave Elizabeth, your sickly wife!

JOHN—Speak nothin of Elizabeth.

ABIGAIL—Together let us do our holy work.

JOHN—'Holy work' you call it! It's fraud, pretense and fraud — and I shall expose it.

ABIGAIL—Call it what you will. . . . Do what you like. But if your snivelling Elizabeth dies — remember, remember, it is you who kill her.

CURTAIN

Scene 2. The next morning. The town meetinghouse used as courtroom. Townspeople and Cheever are already seated, Cheever, the court clerk, at his desk. Enter Giles Corey and Francis Nurse. Giles speaks angrily and gesticulates excitedly to Francis and others.)

(Enter Mary Warren and John Proctor. Both are outwardly calm, but Mary clearly neither feels nor acts like 'an official of the court,' and John cannot completely hide the strain he feels.)

(Abigail leads the girls into court, and the 'crowd parts like the sea for the Chosen People.')

CHEEVER—Hear ye, hear ye! By the will of God, and their Majesties, the King and Queen, under the laws of the Province of Massachusetts, this court is now in session.

(Danforth strides in with Thomas Putnam at his side. Parris comes next, followed by Hale, who looks deeply troubled. All rise for the judge's entrance.)
(Danforth raises his hands, and all heads are bowed for his invocation.)

DANFORTH—

Open Thou my lips, O Lord,
And let my mouth show forth Thy praise.
Make Thy spirit speak through me
Thy judgment on these evil days.

The people groan, but heed them not!
Let them wail, let them cower.
We may not let this foulness fester
And yield our world to Satan's power.
Never, never!

Thy government and central church
Be now, O Lord, within this hand:
Let it falter not to punish those
Who spread this plague throughout our land . . .

And now, Mr. Clerk, the order of business.

CHEEVER—Giles Corey! (Giles comes to the witness chair, places his hand on the Bible held out to him.) This is the statement of Giles Corey: 'I do hereby swear and depose that Thomas Putnam did prompt his daughter Ruth to cry out witchery on Rebecca Nurse and on Martha Corey. And that he did this not from any godly motive, but only that he might acquire the land to which these women hold title.' Sworn and attested . . .

DANFORTH—A serious accusation. (turning to Putnam) Is it true?

THOMAS—It is not. Your Honor, it is falsehood.

DANFORTH—(to Giles) What proof do you submit for this?

GILES—Why, the proof is in the thing itself. If my wife hang, she forfeit land.

DANFORTH—Yes, that is the law. Go on.

GILES—But is it then not clear to you? Who here in Salem has the coin to buy it up? None but Putnam, Thomas Putnam.

DANFORTH—But proof, man. Where's the proof?

GILES—It was his girl Ruth that cried out on my wife. This made him a fair gift of her land, he said. Three honest townsmen heard him say it. They will swear it.

DANFORTH—And what are their names?

GILES—I'll give you no names. You'll send them off to jail to rot, just as you have the others.

DANFORTH—What? What's that you say? You criticize this court?

PARRIS—His vicious tongue stirs rebellion.

THOMAS—An honest man would gladly tell the court all he knows — unless, of course, that man himself is part of the Devil's conspiracy.

DANFORTH—You're right, sir. Arrest this man in contempt of court.

GILES and the CROWD—Arrested in contempt of court!

GILES—Thomas Putnam, this is your doing. You've made this a court of Hell that twists at your beck and call. I'll have your life, I'll cut your throat. (Giles lunges at Putnam and gets him by the throat.) (Cheever, Francis Nurse, and others pull him off. General hubbub, with Danforth violently rapping the gavel.)

DANFORTH—Order! Order! (Giles is subdued, and quiet is restored.) Take him away. (sadistically) Let heavy persuasion press him to tell the names. (Crowd mutters, aghast at this brutal torture for Giles, who is now forcibly removed.) (John Proctor rises and comes forward with Mary.)

PARRIS—John Proctor brings a deposition from Mary Warren. (While they are being seated and sworn, Danforth turns to Parris.)

DANFORTH—Did you not tell me she were sick?

PARRIS—So I did, for Mr. Proctor told us.

JOHN—Sick at heart she was, your Honor. But not now. . . . She comes to tell you this: these girls never saw a spirit, nor were they ever touched by a witch. Your Honor — the girls are frauds. (hubbub and gavel)

PARRIS—Beware this man. He'd overthrow the court.

THOMAS—It's Heaven's voice speaks through these girls.

DANFORTH—(calmly) Mr. Proctor, you say the girls are frauds.

JOHN—I do — and here's one will swear it.

DANFORTH—Mary, do you so swear?

MARY—Yes.

DANFORTH—How came this turnabout? Did Mr. Proctor threaten you?

MARY—(a bit uncertainly) No . . . no, sir.

DANFORTH—Are you sure?

MARY—Oh, yes, yes.

DANFORTH—Then you sat in my court day after day and callously lied? (she is mute) Child, answer me!

MARY—I lied, but I cannot lie no more. I am with God, I am with God.

DANFORTH—Abigail Williams, rise. Now ponder this carefully: if you've been pretending, you'd best confess it now. Does Mary speak the truth?

ABIGAIL—She lies.

DANFORTH—(to Mary) You'd still go on with this?

MARY—Yes, your Honor . . . yes, sir.

DANFORTH—(reading from Mary's deposition) She swears the charge against Elizabeth Proctor is based on a poppet of hers, and that you saw her make it and put the needle in. . . . What say you to this?

ABIGAIL—It is a lie.

JOHN—It is no lie — it is the truth.

DANFORTH—(to John) You would charge upon this child a plot to murder your wife?

JOHN—It is not a child. I tell you, it is not a child. (the conviction in his voice impresses Danforth, who now turns back to Mary.)

DANFORTH—When those accused as witches confronted you, you would faint, choked by their spirits.

MARY—Oh, sir, that were pretense — we were all marvels at pretense.

PARRIS—Your Honor, if that be true, then let her faint now. (to Mary) Faint!

MARY—Faint?

DANFORTH—Aye . . . faint!

MARY—I . . . cannot faint.

DANFORTH—Why? What is lacking?

MARY—I . . . cannot tell. Then, I heard the girls screamin . . . and you seemed to believe them . . . and I — it were only sport at first, but then the whole world cried spirits, spirits. . . . But I only thought I saw them, but I did not. I tell you, I did not.

DANFORTH—Abigail Williams, let you remember that to God every life is precious. His vengeance is terrible on them that take life without cause. . . . Were the spirits which you saw but an illusion? Tell me, Abigail, tell me now before it is too late.

ABIGAIL—Mr. Danforth! I have seen my blood runnin out in this courtroom, for doin my duty, my sacred duty, to mark out the Devil's crew. And this is my reward — to be questioned, mistrusted, denied.

DANFORTH—Child, no one denies you.

ABIGAIL—Let even you beware. The power of Hell may yet turn even your wits. Beware, beware, there is . . . (Abigail is suddenly shocked from fury into fear: her face turns wildly upwards.)

DANFORTH—What is it?

ABIGAIL—A wind . . . I freeze (Still looks upward; then shivers and clasps her arms about herself. Her eyes fall on Mary; the other girls pick up the cue from long practice.)

GIRLS—I freeze, I freeeze . . . And cold winds blow . . .

ABIGAIL—Oh, Mary, do you send this shadow on me?

JOHN—Pretense, pretense!

MARY—Oh, God, — oh, God.

ABIGAIL—*(kneels in prayer)* Oh, heavenly Father, take away this shadow!

GIRLS—*(kneel in prayer)* Oh, heavenly Father, take away this shadow!

JOHN—*(moves rapidly to Abigail, grabs her by the hair and pulls her to her feet. She screams in mortal fear and pain.)* How do you call heaven? Whore! Whore! *(great outcry and commotion)*

PARRIS—What?

DANFORTH—What's that?

JOHN—I have known her, sir. I have known her.

DANFORTH—*(shocked)* You are a lecher?

JOHN—Yes, with her, in my own house. And now she thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave. And well she might, for once I thought on her softly. But this, your Honor, is a whore's vengeance.

DANFORTH—*(to Abigail)* Do you deny this?

ABIGAIL—I shall not answer it.

JOHN—I have ruined my name, but now you know the truth. Now you know why my wife is accused. *She* knew a whore when she saw one, and put her out on the highroad.

DANFORTH—*(looks hard at Abigail)* Mister Parris, bring me Goodwife Proctor, and knock before you enter. *(Parris goes)* We shall touch the bottom of this swamp today. *(to John)* Is your wife a truthful woman?

JOHN—In her life she have never lied.

DANFORTH—Good, then. *(to Abigail)* And if she tell me, child, you be a harlot, then may God help you. *(a knock)* Let neither of you face the witness. . . . Enter! *(Elizabeth is brought in; her eyes search for John.)* Come here, woman, look at me . . . in my eyes only. Why did you dismiss Abigail Williams? *(Elizabeth looks wildly about.)* Look at me. The answer's in your memory. Why did you dismiss her?

ELIZABETH—She . . . she displeased me . . . and my husband.

DANFORTH—How displeased you?

ELIZABETH—*(looks desperately toward John)* She were . . .

DANFORTH—Slovenly? Lazy?

ELIZABETH—Oh sir, in that time I were sick . . . and she were not a proper servant.

DANFORTH—And did your husband turn from you to her?

ELIZABETH—*(tries to see John's face)* He . . .

DANFORTH—Look at me. To your knowledge did John Proctor commit the crime of lechery with Abigail Williams?

ELIZABETH—*(after agonized hesitation)* Oh, no, sir . . . no.

DANFORTH—Remove her, remove her, Mr. Parris.

JOHN—Elizabeth, tell the truth.

DANFORTH—*(gavel)* Remove her.

JOHN—Elizabeth, Elizabeth, I have confessed it.

ELIZABETH—Oh, John . . . Oh, John . . . my God! *(she is led off)*

HALE—No, no, it is a natural lie to tell. I beg you, stop now before it is too late. Do not condemn another innocent, I beg you. I signed away the life of Rebecca Nurse this morning, and my hand quivers yet. I can shut my eyes no more. There is private vengeance working in these trials.

DANFORTH—But she spoke nothing of lechery. This man has lied.

HALE—I believe him, I believe him. *(pointing at Abigail)* This girl has always struck me false. She has —

ABIGAIL—*(with a wild, weird, chilling cry, screams up at the ceiling)* Yellow bird! Yellow bird! Begone, begone . . . *(cowers in fear)* Oh, Mary, do not tear my face.

MARY—Abigail, what are you saying?

JOHN—*(frantic)* Mr. Danforth, they pretend again . . .

GIRLS—Her claws . . . her claws . . .

ABIGAIL—*(to the ceiling)* Oh, Mary, please don't hurt me. You cannot want to tear my face, for God made my face.

MARY—*(to Danforth)* I'm here. I'm not hurting her.

DANFORTH—*(to Mary)* But why does she see this vision?

MARY—She sees nothin.

ABIGAIL—*(now hypnotized into exactly mimicking her)* She sees nothin.

GIRLS—*(following Abigail)* She sees nothin.

MARY—Abby, you mustn't.

ABIGAIL—Abby, you mustn't.

GIRLS—Abby, you mustn't.

DANFORTH—*(to Mary)* *(growing alarmed)* Why can they only repeat you?

MARY—*(turning on them and stamping her foot)* Abby, stop it!

ABIGAIL—*(stamping her foot)* Abby, stop it.

GIRLS—*(stamping their feet)* Abby, stop it

JOHN—Give me a whip and I'll stop it.

HALE—*(to Danforth)* Sir, you cannot believe them.

ABIGAIL—She walks the beam, she's coming down. Her wings are spreading . . . please, don't . . . oh, Mary. *(She runs to a corner of the room, shielding her eyes from the swooping bird.)*

DANFORTH—*(to Mary)* You've compacted with the Devil. Open with me, child, open or you will hang, Mary. *(Mary is utterly confounded and can only whimper, hands half-raised and powerless; the girls do the same.)*

ANN—Cast the Devil out. Trample, trample him, Mary.

PARRIS—Aye, trample, trample him, Mary.

THOMAS—Aye, open, or you will hang.

GIRLS—She walks the beam, her wings are spreading, oh, Mary.

JOHN—God punishes those who lie. Never tell a lie, Mary.

HALE and FRANCIS—God punishes those who lie. Never tell a lie, Mary.

(The girls follow Abigail, emitting a piercing scream. Suddenly Mary is infected and joins them.)

ANN—She's coming down, she's coming down . . .

ABIGAIL and MARY—Oh, oh, oh . . .

GIRLS—She's coming down, she's coming down . . .

DANFORTH—She's coming down, she's coming down . . .

PARRIS—She's coming down. she's coming down . . .

THOMAS—She's coming down, she's coming down . . .

JOHN—Lies. It's lies, lies.

HALE—I see nothing. There's nothing at all.

FRANCIS—I see nothing. There's nothing at all.

(All but Mary leave off. She continues, staring up at the 'bird,' singing wildly. All watch her, horrified by this evident fit. Proctor strides to her.)

JOHN—Mary, Mary.

MARY—Ah . . . ah . . . *(As Mary sees John coming for her she rushes out of his reach and screams.)* Don't touch me. Don't touch me. *(points at John)* For you are the Devil's man.

DANFORTH—What's that? Does he bid you do the Devil's work?

MARY—*(with terrible intensity)* 'My wife will never hang; we will overthrow the court,' he say. He come and wake me every night, his eyes like burning coals.

JOHN—*(turning in desperation)* Mr. Hale . . .

MARY—His icy fingers claw my back. 'Sign the book; sign the book; sign the Devil's book,' he say . . . And I sign.

HALE—Your Honor, the girl is mad; stark raving mad.

JOHN—(pleading) Mary! Mary!

MARY—No, I love God. I'll go your way no more. I love God. Oh, Abby, I'll never hurt you more. (breaking into sobs)

ANN
GIRLS } —Allelujah! She loves God, and goes his way no more.
THOMAS }
PARRIS }
HALE } —She's gone mad; she's stark raving mad.
FRANCIS }

(Mary runs to Abigail, who out of her infinite charity draws the weeping child to her bosom.)

DANFORTH—Proctor, what are you? Are you the Devil's man?
(Proctor, his arms held out pleadingly and uncertainly, moves toward Mary. Mary, safe and secure now, soars with Abigail and Ann Putnam, who has obsessively moved to join the girls in their chant.)

ABIGAIL } —Ah . . . ah . . .
MARY } —Ah . . . ah . . .
ANN }
GIRLS } —Devil's man, Devil's man. John Proctor's the Devil's man. Beware,
DANFORTH } —beware! He is the Devil's man. Beware!
PARRIS }
THOMAS }
HALE } —Madness, madness. This is madness, madness.
FRANCIS }

(Abigail, Mary, and Ann Putnam on the one hand and Hale and Francis Nurse on the other stand apart from the rest, who make up a howling mob focussed on John Proctor.)

HALE and FRANCIS—This is no trial.

HALE—I quit this court. (He rushes out.)

CURTAIN

Act IV

A month later. The dreary center court of the blockhouse-jail. Flambeaux on the walls cast a murky light. A number of barred doors: to the corridor containing Proctor's cell; to the corridor of the women's cells; to the rooms serving as offices, to the outside.

(It is an hour before dawn; Tituba and Sarah Good sit in the shabby gloom.)

TITUBA—
The Devil say he's coming, to set his people free,
He'll fit us out wid feathers, black wings for you and me;
He'll fly aroun dis jail an de walls'll come tumblin down,
An we'll fly away forever from dis ole Salem town.

He'll lead us to Barbados, where de sun is big an bright,
Where dere's singin, where dere's dancin, where dere's feastin
till de night;
Where de fun an sport begin when de sun goes down,
For the Devil is a pleasureman in ole Barbados town.

(Cheever enters with lantern and bottle, lurching a bit.)

CHEEVER—Come on, come on, up, my pretties. There'll be great doins here today. (He shoos Tituba and Sarah Good through a gate to a dark corner.) (Sarah Good reaches for his bottle.) What? (He gives it to her.) Here, then, and now clear out. (Abigail, hooded and cloaked enters from outside unseen by Tituba and Sarah Good. Cheever holds out his hand for moneybag which Abigail carries, weighs it a moment, then walks over to call through the most heavily barred gate.) Proctor. Proctor. (The remainder of the scene till Abigail's exit is sung and acted under the fear of discovery.) (With a large key Cheever unlocks the gate and leaves it ajar. Abigail crosses rapidly to gate. Cheever exits. John comes slowly forward to gate. He is heavily manacled and looks gaunt and desperately ill from his months of torture in the dungeon.)

ABIGAIL—John, my darling, I've money and clothes for you. Look, look, John, you are free. (John does not move or even seem to hear or see her as she sings and shows him the clothes and money.) (more intense now) John, do you hear me? There's a boat at the dock waiting for us. The wind is in the sails. (with great urgency) John, we cannot delay. (John remains as though dead.) John, listen — I forgive you. I have come to save you, only you, to take you away from this town of spite and hate. (Cheever reenters, unseen by the others.) To a land where it's sunny and warm, where there's nothin but our love forever. (For the first time John looks at Abigail. He slowly shakes his head, then lifts his manacled hands and shuts the gate between them. He then shuffles back into the darkness. Cheever motions the stunned Abigail to leave. Struck by another idea he looks about to see that he is alone with Abby. As she passes him to leave, he catches her arm and then with a sensual leer attempts to kiss her. Abby fights him off and rushes out sobbing. Cheever laughs harshly for a moment, then suddenly ceases. His face becomes a mask of evil — brutal, heavy, and dissolute.)

CHEEVER—Sarah Good! (He wants his bottle. Takes his lantern. Discovers Tituba and Sarah Good, who have been roused by his laugh.)

TITUBA—
The Devil said he comin, but he lie to you and me;
He'll never give us feathers, he'll never set us free.
We pray to him for help, but he don make no soun—
We gonna rot and die in dis ole Salem town.

(Cheever takes the last draught from the bottle and shoos Tituba and Sarah off.) (Cheever hears someone coming, hastily hides the bottle, wipes his mouth, and looks more alert.) (Danforth strides in, followed by Hale, who is haggard and deeply troubled.)

HALE—But sir, you stir rebellion.

DANFORTH—(to Cheever) Bring Goody Proctor.

HALE—Beverly has already thrown out the court. Orphans wander from house to house, abandoned cattle bellow on the highroads — and no man knows when these young harlots' outcries will put an end to his life.
(Parris rushes in in great excitement.)

DANFORTH—Mr. Parris, what's the trouble?

PARRIS—Abigail has fled — she has broken into my moneybox. She is nowhere to be found.

DANFORTH—What?

HALE—What, indeed! Now where's your case against the Proctors? Who now stands against them?

DANFORTH—I do, by God. Beguile yourselves no more. For they shall confess, or they shall hang. Till justice is done, I shall remain.

PARRIS—(in fear) But your Honor, those we hang this morning are a very dangerous sort. These people carry great weight in the town. Rebecca Nurse upon the gibbet will wake a vengeance against us. Today . . . today, when I open my door, a glittering dagger clatters to the floor.

DANFORTH—(with contempt) What are you asking? Come to the point.

HALE—Postpone these hangings. Say you strive for confessions.

DANFORTH—I'll do no such. And know you this: to quell rebellion in this land I'd draw and quarter ten thousand men. While I speak God's law, I will not crack His voice with whimpering. (As he stands quivering with rage Elizabeth is brought in, but he does not see her.)

CHEEVER—Goody Proctor, sir.

DANFORTH—What? Oh . . . Mr. Hale, would you . . . (he goes to the side)

HALE—Goody Proctor, your husband is marked to hang this morning.

ELIZABETH—What do you want of me?

HALE—Persuade him, make him confess.

ELIZABETH—To witchcraft? I shall not, and could not, persuade him to such a lie.

HALE—(passionately) Let him lie, but let him save his life. God asks no man to take a life.

ELIZABETH—I cannot make him lie.

DANFORTH—(seeing her turn away in refusal, strides to her) Be there no wifely tenderness in you, woman? Your husband will die with the sunrise. Do you understand? What say you? Will you strive with him?

ELIZABETH—I promise nothing, but let me speak with him.

DANFORTH—(to Cheever) Fetch him here. (Cheever leaves) (to Parris and Hale) I do not understand this woman. Calamity surrounds her, and yet she weeps no tear. (John is brought in. He is seen first by Elizabeth and then by Parris, who points him out to Danforth.) Mr. Proctor, there is light in the sky. Counsel with your wife, Mister, and may God turn you from Hell. (Danforth, Parris, Cheever, and Hale move off, leaving John and Elizabeth alone.)

JOHN—What word of the children?

ELIZABETH—They are well. And you . . . have you been tortured?

JOHN—Aye . . . And now they come for my life . . . Have any confessed?

ELIZABETH—A hundred or more, they say. But not Rebecca. Nor poor Giles Corey. He would not say them aye or nay. Great stones they lay upon his chest, but two words only he gave them. 'More weight,' he says. 'More weight,' and dies.

JOHN—Elizabeth, I've been thinkin that I would confess. What say you?

ELIZABETH—As you will, so I would have it . . . But John, I want you living.

JOHN—(alive now, in response to Elizabeth's warmth) I cannot mount the gibbet like a saint. Will you forgive me if I lie?

ELIZABETH—John, oh John, it was my lie that brought you here. I, not you, should ask forgiveness. It's a cold wife that drives her man to lechery.

JOHN—No, no, I will not hear it.

ELIZABETH—I counted myself so very plain, so poorly made, that no honest love could come to me. Suspicion kissed you when I did; I never knew how I should say my love. But know this now — as I know it — whatever you do, it's a good man's doing.

JOHN—Whatever I will do, will you forgive me?

ELIZABETH—Whatever you will do, whatever way you go, oh John, I will go by your side.

JOHN—Elizabeth, Elizabeth . . .

JOHN—(a great triumphant shout) Mr. Danforth, Mr. Danforth. I want my life. (a crescendo of voices backstage; then Hale, Parris, Danforth, and Thomas Putnam come on, followed shortly by a jailkeeper bringing a desk, ink, and quill pen.)

HALE—Oh, God be praised; he will confess.

PARRIS—It is a marvel; he will confess.

{ HALE
PARRIS
THOMAS } —Praise to God. You shall be blessed in Heaven. Praise to God.

DANFORTH—(handing John a pen and a document, which he accepts blankly) Praise be to God, Mr. Proctor. Let you now sign this. (Cheever brings in Rebecca, who is barely able to walk.)

REBECCA—Oh, John, are you well then? (She sees the document and involuntarily recoils.)

PARRIS—Mr. Proctor has confessed.

REBECCA—Confessed? Oh John, God send His mercy on you.

DANFORTH—Now, surely, you see it profit nothing to keep this conspiracy further. Goody Nurse, will you confess yourself with him?

REBECCA—It is a lie. I may not damn myself. It is a lie, Mr. Danforth.

DANFORTH—Mr. Proctor — when the Devil came to you, was this woman in his company?

JOHN—No.

DANFORTH—Martha Corey?

JOHN—No.

DANFORTH—Mary Easty?

JOHN—No.

DANFORTH—Or any others?

JOHN—No. I speak my own sins, but I cannot judge another.

HALE—It is enough that he shall confess himself. Let him sign it. (Hale takes the pen from John and dips it into the ink.) Come, man, sign. (John only stands.)

DANFORTH—Do you sport with me? Sign, or there is no confession.

JOHN—But why must I sign? All of you have heard my confession.

PARRIS—The village must have proof.

JOHN—Damn the village! You came to save me. I have confessed myself. It is enough. God does not need my name nailed up on the church door. God sees my name, He knows how black my sins are. It is enough.

DANFORTH—Mr. Proctor —

JOHN—It is enough. You will not use me. I am no Sarah Good or Tituba. I am John Proctor. I have three sons. If this is nailed to the church on the very day Rebecca hangs for her silence, how may I teach my sons to walk like men? With my sins I blacken them forever. . . . You may tell them I confessed myself. Tell them Proctor broke his knees. Tell them what you will, but I shall not sign.

DANFORTH—Do you mean to deny this confession when you are free?

JOHN—I mean to deny nothing — but this is my name. I have given you my soul, leave me my name.

DANFORTH—Is that document a lie? I do not deal in lies. You will give me your honest confession (holds out his hand), or I cannot keep you from the rope. Which way do you go, Mister? Which way do you go? (His breast heaving, John tears the paper and crumples it; he is weeping in fury, but erect.) Marshal! Marshal!

PARRIS—(hysterically) Proctor! Proctor!

HALE—Man, you will hang. You cannot.

JOHN—I can. And there's your first marvel, that I can. You have made your magic now, for now I do think I see some shred of goodness in John Proctor. It's not enough to weave a banner with, but white enough to keep it from such dogs. (In a burst of terror, Elizabeth rushes to him and weeps against his hand.) Give them no tear! Tears pleasure them! Show honor now; show a stony heart, and with it sink them. (John raises Elizabeth and kisses her with great passion.) (The great gate of the blockhouse is opened, and, in the rising light of the dawn, villagers become gradually visible lining the path to the gallows.)

REBECCA—Let you fear nothing. Another judgment waits us all.

DANFORTH—Hang them high over the town! Who weeps for these weeps for corruption. (Danforth sweeps out past them. Cheever starts to lead Rebecca, who almost collapses, but John catches her.)

REBECCA—(apologetically to John) I've had no breakfast. (They are led out.)

PARRIS—(in deadly fear) Go to him, go to him, Goody Proctor, there is yet time.

HALE—(with increasing agitation) Plead with him, plead with him, woman. It is vanity.

PARRIS—(rushing after John frantically) Proctor! Proctor!

{ HALE —Be his helper. What profit him to die? Shall, the dust praise him?
Shall the worm declare his truth? Go to him, go to him, woman,
take away his shame. Go to him, go to him.
CHORUS OF
VILLAGERS —Ah . . . weep, weep for them. Weep for them. Weep, weep.

ELIZABETH—He have his goodness now. God forbid I take it from him. (As the drumroll sounds, Hale falls to his knees and weeps in frantic prayer. The new sun is pouring down upon Elizabeth's face.)