

**Proctor.** This farm's a continent when you go foot  
40 by foot droppin' seeds in it.

**Elizabeth** (*coming with the cider*). It must be.

**Proctor** (*drinks a long draught, then, putting the glass down*). You ought to bring some flowers in the house.

**Elizabeth.** Oh! I forgot! I will tomorrow.

**Proctor.** It's winter in here yet. On Sunday let you come with me, and we'll walk the farm together; I never see such a load of flowers on the earth. (*With good feeling he goes and looks up at the sky through the open doorway.*) Lilacs have a purple smell. Lilac is the  
50 smell of nightfall, I think. Massachusetts is a beauty in the spring!

**Elizabeth.** Aye, it is.

(*There is a pause. She is watching him from the table as he stands there absorbing the night. It is as though she would speak but cannot. Instead, now, she takes up his plate and glass and fork and goes with them to the basin. Her back is turned to him. He turns to her and watches her. A sense of their separation rises.*)

**Proctor.** I think you're sad again. Are you?

60 **Elizabeth** (*She doesn't want friction, and yet she must*). You come so late I thought you'd gone to Salem this afternoon.

**Proctor.** Why? I have no business in Salem.

**Elizabeth.** You did speak of going, earlier this week.

**Proctor** (*He knows what she means*). I thought better of it since.

**Elizabeth.** Mary Warren's there today.

**Proctor.** Why'd you let her? You heard me forbid her go to Salem any more!

70 **Elizabeth.** I couldn't stop her.

**Proctor** (*holding back a full condemnation of her*). It is a fault, it is a fault, Elizabeth—you're the mistress here, not Mary Warren.

**Elizabeth.** She frightened all my strength away.

**Proctor.** How may that mouse frighten you, Elizabeth? You—

**Elizabeth.** It is a mouse no more. I forbid her go, and she raises up her chin like the daughter of a

prince and says to me, "I must go to Salem, Goody  
80 Proctor; I am an official of the court!"

**Proctor.** Court! What court?

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

**Proctor** (*astonished*). Why, she's mad.

**Elizabeth.** I would to God she were. There be fourteen people in the jail now, she says. (*Proctor simply looks at her, unable to grasp it.*) And they'll be tried,  
90 and the court have power to hang them too, she says.

**Proctor** (*scoffing, but without conviction*). Ah, they'd never hang—

**Elizabeth.** The Deputy Governor promise hangin' if they'll not confess, John. The town's gone wild, I think. She speak of Abigail, and I thought she were a saint, to hear her. Abigail brings the other girls into the court, and where she walks the crowd will part like the sea for Israel. And folks are brought before them, and if they scream and howl and fall to the floor—the  
100 person's clapped in the jail for bewitchin' them.

**Proctor** (*wide-eyed*). Oh, it is a black mischief.

**Elizabeth.** I think you must go to Salem, John. (*He turns to her.*) I think so. You must tell them it is a fraud.

**Proctor** (*thinking beyond this*). Aye, it is, it is surely.

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

110 **Proctor** (*in thought*). Aye, she did, she did. (*now, a pause*)

**Elizabeth** (*quietly, fearing to anger him by prodding*). God forbid you keep that from the court, John. I think they must be told.

**Proctor** (*quietly, struggling with his thought*). Aye, they must, they must. It is a wonder they do believe her.

**Elizabeth.** I would go to Salem now, John—let you go tonight.