

CHEEVER. No—no, I am forbid to leave her from my sight.
PROCTOR. You'll leave her out of sight and out of mind, Mister.
Fetch Mary, Elizabeth. (*Elizabeth goes out D. L.*)
HALE. (*Bewildered.*) What signifies a poppet, Mister Cheever?
CHEEVER. (*Turns doll over in his hands.*) Why, they say it may
signify that she... (*He has lifted doll's skirt, and his eyes widen in
astonished fear.*) Why, this, this...
PROCTOR. What's there?
CHEEVER. Why... (*Draws out a long needle from doll.*) It is a
needle! Willard, Willard, it is a needle!
PROCTOR. And what signifies a needle!
CHEEVER. Why, this go *hard* with her, Proctor, this... I had my
doubts, Proctor, I had my doubts, but here's calamity... (*Crosses to
Hale, shows needle.*) You see it, sir, it is a needle!
HALE. Why? What meanin' has it?
CHEEVER. The girl, the Williams girl, Abigail Williams, sir. She sat
to dinner in Reverend Parris' house tonight, and without word nor
warnin', she falls to the floor. Like a struck beast, he says, and screamed
a scream that a bull would weep to hear. And he goes to save her, and
stuck two inches in the flesh of her belly he draw a needle out. And
demandin' of her how she come to be so stabbed, she... (*To Proctor.*)
testify it were your wife's familiar spirit pushed it in.
PROCTOR. Why, she done it herself! I hope you're not takin' this
for proof, Mister Hale.
CHEEVER. 'Tis hard proof!—I find here a poppet Goody Proctor
keeps. I have found it, sir. And in the belly of the poppet a needle
stuck. I tell you true, Proctor, I never warranted to *see* such proof
of Hell, and I bid you obstruct me not, for I... (*Enter Elizabeth
with Mary.*)
PROCTOR. Here now! Mary, how did this poppet come into
my house?
MARY. What poppet's that, sir?
PROCTOR. This poppet, this poppet.
MARY. (*Looks at it, and evasively says.*) Why, I... I think it is mine.
PROCTOR. (*A threat.*) It is your poppet, is it not?
MARY. It... is, sir.
PROCTOR. And *how* did it come into this house?
MARY. Why... I made it in the court, sir, and... give it to Goody
Proctor tonight.
PROCTOR. (*To Hale.*) Now, sir—do you have it?

HALE. Mary Warren... a needle have been found inside this poppet.
MARY. Why, I meant no harm by it, sir...
PROCTOR. You stuck that needle in yourself?
MARY. I... I believe I did, sir, I...
PROCTOR. (*To Hale.*) What say you now?
HALE. (*Still kindly endeavoring to get at the truth.*) Child... you are certain this be your natural memory?—may it be, perhaps, that someone conjures you even *now* to say this?
MARY. Conjures me?—Why, no, sir, I am entirely myself, I think. Let you ask Susanna Wallcott—she saw me sewin' it in court. Ask *Abby*, Abby sat beside me when I made it.
PROCTOR. (*To Hale, of Cheever.*) Bid him begone, Mister. Your mind is surely settled now. Bid him out, Mister.
ELIZABETH. (*Bewildered.*) What signifies a *needle*?
HALE. Mary... you charge a cold and cruel murder on Abigail.
MARY. Murder! I charge no...
HALE. Abigail were stabbed tonight; a needle were found stuck into her belly...
ELIZABETH. And she charges *me*?!
HALE. Aye.
ELIZABETH. Why...!—The girl is murder! She must be ripped out of the world!
CHEEVER. You've heard that, sir!—Ripped out of the world! Willard, you heard it!...
PROCTOR. (*Suddenly snatches warrant out of Cheever's hands.*) Out with you!
CHEEVER. Proctor, you dare not touch the warrant...
PROCTOR. (*Rips warrant.*) Out with you!
CHEEVER. You've ripped the Deputy Governor's warrant, man!
PROCTOR. Damn the Deputy Governor! Out of my house!
HALE. Now, Proctor, Proctor...
PROCTOR. (*To Hale.*) Get y'gone with them! You are a broken minister.
HALE. Proctor, if she is innocent the court...
PROCTOR. If *she* is innocent! Why do you never wonder if Parris be innocent, or Abigail? Is the accuser always holy now? Were they born this morning as clean as God's fingers? I'll tell you what's walking Salem—vengeance is walking Salem. We are what we always were in Salem, but now the little crazy children are jangling the

keys of the kingdom, and common vengeance writes the law! This warrant's vengeance; I will not give my wife to vengeance!

ELIZABETH. I'll go, John...

PROCTOR. You will *not* go! (*Sweeps his gun up, pointing it at Cheever.*)

WILLARD. John, I have nine men outside. You cannot keep her. The law binds me, John, I cannot budge.

PROCTOR. (*To Hale.*) You will see her taken?

HALE. Proctor, the court is just...

PROCTOR. Pontius Pilate! God will not let you wash your hands of this!

ELIZABETH. John... (*She presses the rifle down.*) I think I must go with them. (*Taking off apron, handing it to Mary.*) Mary... there is bread enough for the morning; you will bake in the afternoon. Help Mister Proctor as you were his daughter... you owe me that, and much more. (*Takes Proctor's hand. To Proctor.*) When the children wake, speak nothing of witchcraft... it will frighten them...

PROCTOR. (*Taking her hands.*) I will bring you home. I will bring you soon.

ELIZABETH. Oh, John, bring me soon!

PROCTOR. I will fall like an ocean on that court! Fear nothing, Elizabeth.

ELIZABETH. I will fear nothing. (*Takes shawl from wash stand, he puts it on her. They cross R. Cheever and Willard exit R.*) Tell the children I have gone to visit someone sick... (*She breaks off, goes out R. Hale sits bench R. of table, head bowed in L. hand, his L. hand on table. After four seconds chains are heard off R.*)

PROCTOR. (*Running off R.*) Willard! Willard, don't chain her! Damn you, man, you will not chain her! (*Outside.*) Off with them! I'll not have it! I will not have her chained! (*And other men's voices against his. Corey calls to Hale.*)

COREY. And yet silent, Minister? It is fraud, you *know* it is fraud! What keeps you, man! (*Proctor is thrown into room by two guards, followed by Willard. Guards exit R. after Proctor pulls away.*)

PROCTOR. I'll pay you, Willard, I will surely pay you! (*Sits bench R., head in hands.*)

WILLARD. In God's name, John, I cannot help myself. I must chain them all. Now let you keep inside this house till I am gone! (*To Hale.*) Man, are you blind? (*He exits R.*)

HALE. Mister Proctor...

PROCTOR. (*His weeping heart pressing his words.*) Out of my sight!

HALE. (*Pleading.*) *Charity*, Proctor, *charity*—what I have heard in her favor I will not fear to testify in court. God help me, I cannot judge her guilty nor innocent... I know not. Only this consider—the world goes mad, and it profit nothing you should lay the cause to the vengeance of a little girl.

PROCTOR. You are a coward! 'Though you be ordained in God's own tears, you are a coward now!

HALE. (*Shaken. Greatly disturbed, trying to convince himself.*) Proctor, I cannot think God be provoked so grandly by such a *petty* cause. 'The jails are packed, our greatest judges sit in Salem now—and hangin's promised. Man, we must look to cause proportionate. Were there murder done perhaps, and never brought to light? Abomination? Some secret blasphemy that stinks to heaven? Think on cause, man, and let you help me to discover it. For there's your way, believe it, there is your only way, when such confusion strikes upon the world. (*Crossing to Nurse. Pleading with them.*) Let you counsel among yourselves; think on your village, and what may have drawn from heaven such thundering wrath upon you all. I shall pray God open up our eyes. (*Hale goes out R.*)

NURSE. I never heard no murder done in Salem.

PROCTOR. Leave me, Francis, leave me. (*Nurse slowly exits R.*)

COREY. John... tell me, are we lost?

PROCTOR. Go home now, Giles. We'll speak on it tomorrow.

COREY. Let you think on it; we'll come early, eh?

PROCTOR. Aye. Go now, Giles.

COREY. Good night, then. (*Corey goes out R. Long pause.*)

MARY. Mister Proctor, very likely they'll let her come home once they're given proper evidence.

PROCTOR. You're coming to the court with me, Mary. You will tell it in the court.

MARY. I cannot charge murder on Abigail...

PROCTOR. You will tell the court how that poppet come here and who stuck the needle in.

MARY. She'll kill me for sayin' that! Abby'll charge lechery on you, Mister Proctor!

PROCTOR. (*Stops.*) ... She's told you!

MARY. I have known it, sir. She'll ruin you with it, I know she will.

PROCTOR. (*Advancing on her.*) Good. Then her saintliness is done with. We will slide together into our pit. You will tell the court what you know.

MARY. I cannot. They'll turn on me.

PROCTOR. (*Grabs her.*) My wife will never die for me. I will bring your guts into your mouth, but that goodness will not die for me.

MARY. I cannot do it. I cannot.

PROCTOR. Make your peace with it. Now Hell and Heaven grapple on our backs, and all our old pretense is ripped away. Make your peace. (*Throws her down.*)

MARY. (*Sobs.*) I cannot.

PROCTOR. (*Crossing to door L.*) Peace! It is a providence and no great change. We are what we always were, but naked now. Aye, naked. And the wind, God's icy wind, will blow. (*Mary continues sobbing, "I cannot!"*)

CURTAIN