

THE CRUCIBLE - SIDE 02

INT. PROCTOR & ABIGAIL

*EXIT MERCY. Since PROCTOR's entrance, ABIGAIL has stood as though on tiptoe, absorbing his presence, wide-eyed. He glances at her, then goes to BETTY on the bed.*

ABIGAIL

Gah! I'd almost forgot how strong you are, John Proctor!

PROCTOR

*(Looking at ABIGAIL now, the faintest suggestion of a knowing smile on his face.)*

What's this mischief here?

ABIGAIL

*(with a nervous laugh)*

Oh, she's only gone silly somehow.

PROCTOR

The road past my house is a pilgrimage to Salem all morning. The town's mumbling witchcraft.

ABIGAIL

Oh, posh!

*(Winningly, she comes a little closer, with a confidential, wicked air.)*

We were dancin' in the woods last night, and my uncle leaped in on us. She took fright, is all.

PROCTOR

*(his smile widening)*

Ah, you're wicked yet, aren't y'?

*A trill of expectant laughter escapes her, and she dares come closer, feverishly looking into his eyes. You'll be clapped in the stocks before you're twenty. He takes a step to go and she springs in his path.*

ABIGAIL

Give me a word, John, a soft word.

*Her concentrated desire destroys his smile.*

PROCTOR

No, no, Abby. That's done with.

ABIGAIL

(tauntingly)

You come five mile to see a silly girl fly? I know you better.

PROCTOR

(setting her firmly  
out of his path)

I come to see what mischief your uncle's brewin' now. Put it out of mind, Abby.

ABIGAIL

(grasping his hand  
before he can  
release her)

John I am waitin' for you every night.

PROCTOR

Abby, I never give you hope to wait for me.

ABIGAIL

(now beginning to  
anger she can't  
believe it)

I have something better than hope, I think!

PROCTOR

Abby, you'll put it out of mind. I'll not be comin' for you more.

ABIGAIL

You're surely sportin' with me.

PROCTOR

You know me better.

ABIGAIL

I know how you clutched my back behind your house and sweated like a stallion whenever I come near! Or did I dream that? It's she put me out, you cannot pretend it were you. I saw your face when she put me out, and you loved me then and you do now!

PROCTOR

Abby, that's a wild thing to say-

ABIGAIL

A wild thing may say wild things. But not so wild, I think. I have seen you since she put me out; I have seen you nights.

PROCTOR

I have hardly stepped off my farm this seven month.

ABIGAIL

I have a sense for heat, John, and yours has drawn me to my window, and I have seen you looking up, burning in your loneliness. Do you tell me you've never looked up at my window?

PROCTOR

I may have looked up...

ABIGAIL

(now softening)

And you must. You are no wintry man. I know you, John. I know you.

(She is weeping)

I cannot sleep for dreamin'; I cannot dream but I wake and walk about the house as though I'd find you comin' through some door.

(She clutches him  
desperately.)

PROCTOR

(Gently pressing her  
from him, with  
great sympathy,  
but firmly.)

Child-

ABIGAIL

(with a flash of  
anger)

How dare you call me child!

PROCTOR

Abby, I may think of you softly from time to time. But I will cut off my hand before I'll ever reach for you again. Wipe it out of mind. We never touched, Abby.

ABIGAIL

Aye, but we did.

PROCTOR

Aye, but we did not.

ABIGAIL

(with a bitter anger)

Oh, I marvel how such a strong man may let such a sickly wife be-

PROCTOR

(angered at himself  
as well)

You'll speak nothin' of Elizabeth!

ABIGAIL

She is blackening my name in the village! She is telling lies about me! She is a cold, sniveling woman, and you bend to her! Let her turn you like a-

PROCTOR

(shaking her)

Do you look for a whippin'?

ABIGAIL

(in tears)

I look for John Proctor that took me from my sleep and put knowledge in my heart! I never knew what pretense Salem was, I never knew the lying lessons I was taught by all these Christian women and their covenanted men! And now you bid me tear the light out of my eyes? I will not, I cannot! You loved me, John Proctor, and whatever sin it is, you love me yet!

*He turns abruptly to go out. She rushes to him.*  
John, pity me, pity me!