

INT. ELIZABETH & DANFORTH

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 off.)

DANFORTH

What of Abigail Williams?

ELIZABETH

I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and out 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 knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery?

In a crisis of indecision ELIZABETH cannot speak.
Answer my question! Is your husband a lecher!

ELIZABETH

(Faintly)

No, sir.

DANFORTH

Remove her, Marshal.