

INT. REV PARRIS & ABIGAIL

PARRIS

There is a faction that is sworn to drive me from my pulpit. Do you understand that?

ABIGAIL

I think so, sir.

PARRIS

Now then in the midst of such disruption, my own household is discovered to be the very center of some obscene practice. Abominations are done in the forest...

ABIGAIL

It were only sport, Uncle!

PARRIS

You call this sport?

(Pleading)

Abigail, if you know something that may help the doctor, for God's sake tell it to me. I saw Tituba waving her arms over the fire when I came on you; why were she doing that? And I heard a screeching and gibberish comin' from her mouth...

ABIGAIL

She always sings her Barbados songs, and we dance.

PARRIS

She were swaying like a dumb beast over that fire! I cannot blink what I saw, Abigail for my enemies will not blink it. I saw a dress lying on the grass.

ABIGAIL

(Innocently.)

A Dress?

PARRIS

Aye, a dress. And I thought I saw a... someone naked running through the trees!

ABIGAIL

No one was naked! You mistake yourself, Uncle!

PARRIS

I saw it! Now tell me true, Abigail. Now my ministry's at stake; my ministry and perhaps your cousin's life... Whatever abomination you have done, give me all of it now, for I dare not be taken unaware when I go before them down there.

ABIGAIL

There is nothin' more. I swear it, Uncle.

PARRIS

Abigail, I have fought here three long years to bend these stiff-necked people to me, and now, just now when there must be some good respect for me in the parish, you compromise my very character. I have given you a home, child, I have put clothes upon your back now give me upright answer; your name in the town it is entirely white, is it not?

ABIGAIL

Why, I am sure it is, sir, there be no blush about name.

PARRIS

Abigail, is there any other cause than you have told me, for Goody Proctor dischargin' you? I have heard it said, and I tell you as I heard it, that she comes so rarely to the church this year for she will not sit so close to something soiled. What signified that remark?

ABIGAIL

She hates me, uncle, she must, for I would not be her slave. It's a bitter woman, a lying, cold, sniveling woman, and I will not work for such a woman.

PARRIS

She may be. And yet, it has troubled me that you are now seven months out of their house, and in all this time no other family has ever called for your service.

ABIGAIL

They want slaves, not such as I. Let them send to Barbados for that. I will not black my face for any of them!

(With ill-conceived resentment.)

Do you begrudge my bed, uncle?

PARRIS

No No.

ABIGAIL

(In a temper.)

My name is good in the village! I will not have it said my name is soiled! Goody Proctor is a gossiping liar!