

11. DANFORTH, HALE, PARRIS (pp.77-78)

DANFORTH. Accept my congratulations, Reverend Hale; we are gladdened to see you returned to your good work.

HALE. You must pardon them. They will not budge.

DANFORTH. You misunderstand, sir; I cannot pardon these when twelve are already hanged for the same crime. It is not just.

PARRIS. Rebecca will not confess?

HALE. The sun will rise in a few minutes. Excellency, I must have more time.

DANFORTH. Now hear me, and beguile yourselves no more. I will not receive a single plea for pardon or postponement. Them that will not confess will hang. Twelve are already executed; the names of these seven are given out, and the village expects to see them die at dawn. Postponement, now, speaks a... a floundering on my part; reprieve or pardon must cast doubt upon the guilt of them that died till now. While I speak God's law, I will not crack its voice with whimpering. If retaliation is your fear, know this — I should hang ten thousand that dared to rise against the law, and an ocean of salt tears could not melt the resolution of the statutes. Now draw yourselves up like men and help me, as you are bound by heaven to do. — Have you spoken with them all, Mister Hale?

HALE. All but Proctor. He is in the dungeon.

DANFORTH. His wife... his wife must be well on with child now. What think you, Mister Parris? — You have closer knowledge of this man; might her presence soften him?

PARRIS. It is possible, sir — he have not laid eyes on her these three months. I should summon her.

DANFORTH. Fetch Goody Proctor to me. Then let you bring him up

HALE. Excellency, if you postpone a week, and publish to the town that you are striving for their confessions, that speak mercy on your part, not faltering.

DANFORTH. Mister Hale, as God have not empowered me like Joshua to stop this sun from rising, so I cannot withhold from them the perfection of their punishment.

HALE. (*Rising, crossing up to door.*) If you think God wills you to raise rebellion, Mister Danforth, you are mistaken.

DANFORTH. You have heard rebellion spoken in Salem?

HALE. Excellency, there are orphans wandering from house to house; abandoned cattle bellow on the highroads, the stink of rotting crops hangs everywhere, and no man knows when the harlots' cry will end his life — and you wonder yet if rebellion's spoke? Better you should marvel how they do not burn your province!

DANFORTH. Mister Hale, have you preached in Andover this month?

HALE. 'Thank God they have no need of me in Andover.

DANFORTH. You baffle me, sir. Why have you returned here?

HALE. Why, it is all simple. I come to do the Devil's work. I come to counsel Christians they should belie themselves. There is blood on my head! Can you not see the blood on my head!!