

9. PARRIS, HALE, REBECCA NURSE, ANN PUTNAM (pp.19-20)

PARRIS. Will you look at my daughter, sir? She has tried to leap out the window; we discovered her this morning on the highroad, waving her arms as though she'd fly.

HALE. Tries to fly?

ANN. She cannot bear to hear the Lord's name, Mister Hale; that's a sure sign of witchcraft afloat.

HALE. No — no... Now let me instruct you. We cannot look to superstition in this. The Devil is precise; the marks of his presence are definite as stone and we must look only for his proper signs and judge nothing beforehand, and I must tell you all that I shall not proceed unless you are prepared to believe me if I should find no trace of hell in this.

PARRIS. It is agreed, sir — it is agreed — we will abide by your judgment.

HALE. Good then. Now, sir, what were your first warning of this strangeness?

PARRIS. Why, sir... I discovered her... and my niece Abigail and ten or twelve of the other girls, dancing in the forest last night.

HALE. You permit dancing?!

PARRIS. No — no, it were secret...

ANN. Mister Parris' slave has knowledge of conjurin', sir.

PARRIS. We cannot be sure of that, Goody Ann...

ANN. I know it, sir. I sent my child... she should learn from Tituba who murdered her sisters.

REBECCA. Goody Ann! You sent a child to conjure up the dead...?

ANN. Let God blame me, not you, not you, Rebecca! I'll not have you judging me any more! Mr. Hale, is it a natural work to lose seven children before they live a day?

PARRIS. Sssh!

HALE. (*Leafing through the book.*) Seven dead in childbirth?

ANN. Aye. (*Hale looks in book.*)

PARRIS. What book is that?

ANN. What's there, sir?

HALE. (*With a tasty love of intellectual pursuit. Looking at open book.*) Here is all the invisible world, caught, defined and calculated. (*Now looking at them. They are all enthralled with this.*) In these books the Devil stands stripped of all his brute disguises. Here are all your familiar spirits — your incubi and succubi, your witches that go by land, by air, and by sea; your wizards of the night and of the day. Have no fear now — we shall find him out if he has come among us, and I mean to crush him utterly if he has shown his face! (*Corey crosses near bed, looking at Betty.*)

REBECCA. Will it hurt the child, sir?

HALE. I cannot tell. If she is truly in the Devil's grip we may have to rip and tear to get her free.

REBECCA. I think I'll go then. I am too old for this.

PARRIS. Why, Rebecca, we may open up the boil of all our troubles today!

REBECCA. Let us hope for that. (*Up toward door.*) I go to God for you, sir.

PARRIS. (*Opens door.*) I hope you do not mean we go to Satan here!

REBECCA. I wish I knew.