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~~SUSANNA. Aye, sir. He bid me tell you.~~

~~ABIGAIL. Speak nothin' of it in the village, Susanna.~~

~~PARRIS. Go directly home and speak nothin' of unnatural causes.~~

~~SUSANNA. Aye, sir, I pray for her. (Goes out.)~~

ABIGAIL. Uncle, the rumor of witchcraft is all about; I think you'd best go down and deny it yourself. The parlor's packed with people, sir. —I'll sit with her.

PARRIS. And what shall I say to them? That my daughter and my niece I discovered dancing like heathen in the forest?!

ABIGAIL. Uncle, we did dance; let you tell them I confessed it. But they're speakin' of witchcraft; Betty's not witched.

PARRIS. Abigail, I cannot go before the congregation when I know you have not opened with me. What did you do with her in the forest?

ABIGAIL. We did *dance*, Uncle, and when you leaped out of the bush so suddenly, Betty was frightened and then she fainted. And there's the whole of it.

PARRIS. Child. Sit you down.

ABIGAIL. I would never hurt Betty, I love her dearly, I...

PARRIS. Now look you, child—I have no desire to punish you; that will come in its time. But if you trafficked with spirits in the forest, I must know it, for surely my enemies will, and they'll ruin me with it...

ABIGAIL. But we never conjured spirits.

PARRIS. Then why can she not move herself since midnight? This child is desperate! It must come out—my enemies will bring it out. Let me know what you done there. Abigail, do you understand that I have many enemies?

ABIGAIL. I know it, Uncle.

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. 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. I cannot blink what I saw, Abigail—for my enemies will not blink it. I saw a dress lying in the grass.

ABIGAIL. 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 my name.

PARRIS. Abigail, is there any other cause than you have told me, for Goody Proctor dischargin' you? 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! ~~(Enter Mrs. Ann Putnam. She is a twisted soul of forty-five, a death-ridden woman, haunted by dreams.)~~

PARRIS. No—no, I cannot have anyone. Why, Goody Putnam, come in.

ANN. It is a marvel. It is surely a stroke of hell upon you...

PARRIS. No, Goody Putnam, it is...

ANN. How high did she fly, how high?

PARRIS. No—no, she never flew...

ANN. Why, it's sure she did; Mister Collins saw her goin' over Ingersoll's barn, and come down light as bird, he says!

PARRIS. Now, look you, Goody Putnam; she never... ~~(Enter Thomas Putnam, a well-to-do, hard-handed landowner near fifty.)~~
Oh, good morning, Mister Putnam...

~~P. PUTNAM. It is a providence the thing is out now! It is a providence.~~