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~~ANN. My mother told me that! When they cannot bear to hear the name of...~~

~~PARRIS. Rebecca, Rebecca, come to her... we're lost, she suddenly cannot bear to hear the Lord's name. (*Rebecca crosses to bed. Giles Corey enters. He is eighty-three, knotted with muscle, canny, inquisitive, and still powerful.*) There is hard sickness here, Giles Corey, so please to keep the quiet.~~

COREY. I've not said a word. No one here can testify I've said a word. Is she going to fly again? I hear she flies.

PUTNAM. Man, be quiet now! (*Rebecca stands by Betty, who becomes quiet.*)

ANN. What have you done?

REBECCA. Pray, calm yourselves. I have eleven children, and I am twenty-six times a grandma, and I have seen them all through their silly seasons, and when it come on them they will run the Devil bowlegged keeping up with their mischief. I think she'll wake when she tires of it. A child's spirit is like a child, you can never catch it by running after it, you must stand still, and for love it will soon itself come back.

PROCTOR. Aye, that's the truth of it, Rebecca.

ANN. This is no silly season, Rebecca. My Ruth is bewildered, Rebecca, she cannot eat.

REBECCA. Perhaps she is not hungered yet. Mr. Parris, I hope you are not decided to go in search of loose spirits. I've heard promise of that outside...

PARRIS. A wide opinion's running in the parish that the Devil may be among us, and I would satisfy them that they are wrong.

PROCTOR. Then let you come out and call them wrong. Are you our minister, or Mister Hale? Did you consult the wardens of the church before you called this minister to look for devils?

PARRIS. He is not coming to look for *devils*!

PROCTOR. Then what's he coming for?

PUTNAM. There be children dyin' in the village, Mister...!

PROCTOR. I see none dyin'...

REBECCA. Pray, John... be calm. Mister Parris, I think you'd best send Reverend Hale back as soon as he come. This will set us all to arguin' again in the society, and we thought to have peace this year. I think we ought rely on Doctor Griggs now, and good prayer...

ANN. Rebecca, the doctor's baffled.

REBECCA. If so he is, then let us go to God for the cause of it.

There is prodigious danger in the seeking of loose spirits, I fear it, I fear it. Let us rather blame ourselves and...

PUTNAM. How may we blame ourselves? I am one of nine sons; the Putnam seed have peopled this province. And yet I have but one child left of eight—and now she shrivels!

REBECCA. I cannot fathom that.

ANN. You think it God's work you should never lose a child, nor a grandchild either, and I bury all but one?

PUTNAM. When Reverend Hale comes you will proceed to look for signs of witchcraft here.

PROCTOR. You cannot command Mister Parris. We vote by name in this society, not by acreage.

PUTNAM. I never heard you worried so on this society, Mister Proctor. I do not think I saw you at Sabbath meeting since snow flew.

PROCTOR. I have trouble enough without I come five mile to hear him preach only hellfire and bloody damnation. There are many others who stay away from church these days because he hardly ever mention God anymore.

PARRIS. Why, that's a drastic charge...

REBECCA. It's somewhat true; there are many that quail to bring their children...

PARRIS. I do not preach for children, Rebecca. It is not the *children* who are unmindful of their obligations toward this ministry. Where is my wood? My contract provides I be supplied with all my firewood. I am waiting since November for a stick, and even in November I had to show my frost-bitten hands like some London beggar!

COREY. You are allowed six pounds a year to buy your wood, Mister Parris.

PARRIS. I am paid little enough without I spend six pound on firewood. The salary is sixty-six pound, Mister Proctor! I am not some preaching farmer with a book under my arm; I am a graduate of Harvard College.

COREY. Aye, and well-instructed in mathematic!

PARRIS. Mister Corey, you will look far for a man of my kind at sixty pound a year! I am not *used* to this poverty; I left a thrifty business in the Barbados to serve the Lord. I do not fathom it, why am I persecuted here?! I cannot offer one proposition but there be a howling riot of argument. I have often wondered if the Devil be in it somewhere; I cannot understand you people otherwise.

PROCTOR. Mister Parris, you are the first minister ever did demand the deed to this house—

PARRIS. I am your third preacher in seven years. I do not wish to be put out like the cat, whenever some majority feels the whim. You people seem not to comprehend that a minister is the Lord's man in the parish; a minister is not to be so lightly crossed and contradicted...

PUTNAM. Aye!

PARRIS. There is either obedience or the church will burn like hell is burning!

PROCTOR. Can you speak one minute without we land in hell again? I am sick of hell!

PARRIS. It is not for you to say what is good for you to hear!

PROCTOR. I may speak my heart, I think!

PARRIS. What, are we Quakers? We are not Quakers here yet, Mister Proctor. And you may tell that to your followers!

PROCTOR. My followers!

PARRIS. There is a *party* in this church; I am not blind; there is a faction and a party.

PROCTOR. Against *you*?

PUTNAM. Against him and all authority.

PROCTOR. Why, then I must find it and join it.

REBECCA. He does not mean that...

PROCTOR. I mean it solemnly, Rebecca; I like not the smell of this "authority," I have a crop to sow, and lumber to drag home. What say you, Giles? Let's find that party. He says there is a party.

COREY. I've changed my opinion of this man. Mister Parris, I beg your pardon. I never thought you had so much iron in you.

PARRIS. Why, thank you, Giles.

COREY. It suggest to the mind what the trouble be among us all these years. Think on it, wherefore is everybody suing everybody else. I have been six times in court this year.

PROCTOR. Is it the Devil's fault that a man cannot say you Good Morning without you clap him for defamation? You're old, Giles, and you're not hearing as well as you did.

COREY. John Proctor, I have only last month collected four pound damages for you publicly saying I burned the roof off your house, and I—

PROCTOR. I never said no such thing, but I paid you for it, so I hope I can call you deaf without charge. Come along, Giles, and help me drag my lumber home.

COREY. I'll be damned first!

PUTNAM. A moment, Mister Proctor. What lumber is that you're draggin' home, if I may ask you?

PROCTOR. My lumber. From out my forest by the riverside.

PUTNAM. Why, we are surely gone wild this year: what anarchy is this?—that tract is in my bounds, it's in my bounds, Mister Proctor.

PROCTOR. In your bounds! I bought that tract from Goody Nurse's husband five months ago.

PUTNAM. He had no right to sell it. It stands clear in my grandfather's will that all the land between the river and...

PROCTOR. Your grandfather had a *habit* of willing land that never belonged to him, if I may say it plain.

COREY. That's God's truth; he nearly willed away my north pasture but he knew I'd break his fingers before he set his name to it. Let's get your lumber home, John, I feel a sudden will to work coming on.

PUTNAM. You load one oak of mine and you'll fight to drag it home!

COREY. Aye, and we'll win, too, Putnam—this fool and I. Come on!

PUTNAM. I'll have my men on you, Corey! I'll clap a writ on you!

*(Enter Reverend John Hale, thirty-five, a ruddy, bright young man. He is loaded down with half a dozen heavy books.)*

HALE. Pray you, someone take these! *(Putnam crosses to Hale's L., helps him.)*

PARRIS. Mister Hale! Oh, it's good to see you again! *(Helping him as they cross D. to table.)* My, they're heavy!

HALE. *(Putting books on table.)* They must be, they are weighted with authority.

PARRIS. Well, you do come prepared!

HALE. We shall need hard study, if it comes to tracking down the Old Boy. You cannot be Rebecca Nurse?

REBECCA. I am, sir. Do you know me?

HALE. It's strange how I knew you, but I suppose you look as such a good soul should. We have all heard of your great charities in Beverly.

PARRIS. Do you know this gentleman?—Mister Thomas Putnam. And his good wife Ann.

HALE. Putnam! I had not expected such distinguished company, sir.

PUTNAM. It does not seem to help us today, Mister Hale. We look to you to come to our house and save our child.

HALE. Your child ails, too?!

ANN. Her soul, her soul seems flown away. She sleeps and yet she walks...