

The Crucible
Audition
Elizabeth Proctor

DANFORTH. Come here, woman. (Elizabeth crosses to R. of Danforth, looking toward Proctor.) Look at me only, not at your husband. In my eyes only. (She looks at him.)

ELIZABETH. Good, sir.

DANFORTH. We are given to understand that at one time you dismissed your servant, Abigail Williams.

ELIZABETH. That is true, sir.

DANFORTH. For what cause did you dismiss her? (Elizabeth tries to glance at Proctor.) You will look in my eyes only and not at your husband. The answer is in your memory and you need no help to give it to me. Why did you dismiss Abigail Williams?

ELIZABETH. (Not knowing what to say, sensing a situation, she wets her lips to stall for time.) She. . . dissatisfied me . . . (Adding.) and my husband.

DANFORTH. In what way dissatisfied you?

ELIZABETH. She were. . . (She glances at Proctor for a cue.)

DANFORTH. Woman, look at me! Were she slovenly? Lazy? What disturbance did she cause?

ELIZABETH. Your Honor, I . . . in that time I were sick. And I . . . My husband is a good and righteous man. He is never drunk, as some are, nor wastin' his time at the shovel board, but always at his work. . . . But in my sickness-you see, sir, I were a long time sick after my last baby, and I thought I saw my husband somewhat turning from me. And this girl. . . (She turns to Abigail.)

DANFORTH. (*Shouting.*) Look at me!

ELIZABETH. (*Weeping.*) Aye, sir. Abigail Williams. . . (*She breaks off.*)

DANFORTH. (*Slightly impatient.*) What of Abigail Williams?

ELIZABETH. I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and put her out on the high road.

DANFORTH. Your husband. . . did he indeed turn from you?

ELIZABETH. (*A plea.*) My husband. . . is a goodly man, sir. . .

DANFORTH. Then he did not turn from you!

ELIZABETH. (*She starts to glance at Proctor.*) He . . .

DANFORTH. Look at me! To your own knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery? (*On a crisis of indecision she cannot speak.*) Answer my question! Is your husband a lecher!

ELIZABETH. (*Faintly.*) No, sir.