



- 285 **Danforth.** You are charging Abigail Williams with a marvelous cool plot to murder, do you understand that?
- 286 **Proctor.** I do, sir. I believe she means to murder.
- 287 **Danforth** (*pointing at Abigail, incredulously*). This child would murder your wife?
- 288 **Proctor.** It is not a child. Now hear me, sir. In the sight of the congregation she were twice this year put out of this meetin' house for laughter during prayer.
- 289 **Danforth** (*shocked, turning to Abigail*). What's this? Laughter during—!
- 290 **Parris.** Excellency, she were under Tituba's power at that time, but she is solemn now.
- 291 **Giles.** Aye, now she is solemn and goes to hang people!
- 292 **Danforth.** Quiet, man.
- 293 **Hathorne.** Surely it have no bearing on the question, sir. He charges contemplation of murder.
- 294 **Danforth.** Aye. (*He studies Abigail for a moment, then.*) Continue, Mr. Proctor.
- 295 **Proctor.** Mary. Now tell the Governor how you danced in the woods.
- 296 **Parris** (*instantly*). Excellency, since I come to Salem this man is blackening my name. He—
- 297 **Danforth.** In a moment, sir. (*to Mary Warren, sternly, and surprised*) What is this dancing?
- 298 **Mary Warren.** I—(*She glances at Abigail, who is staring down at her remorselessly. Then, appealing to Proctor.*) Mr. Proctor—
- 299 **Proctor** (*taking it right up*). Abigail leads the girls to the woods, Your Honor, and they have danced there naked—
- 300 **Parris.** Your Honor, this—
- 301 **Proctor** (*at once*). Mr. Parris discovered them himself in the dead of night! There's the "child" she is!
- 302 **Danforth** (*It is growing into a nightmare, and he turns, astonished, to Parris*). Mr. Parris—
- 303 **Parris.** I can only say, sir, that I never found any of them naked, and this man is—
- 304 **Danforth.** But you discovered them dancing in the woods? (*Eyes on Parris, he points at Abigail.*) Abigail?
- 305 **Hale.** Excellency, when I first arrived from Beverly, Mr. Parris told me that.
- 306 **Danforth.** Do you deny it, Mr. Parris?
- 307 **Parris.** I do not, sir, but I never saw any of them naked.

LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS

Annotate: Mark words in the dialogue in paragraphs 295–310 that relate to a central problem of the play—whether there was witchcraft done in the forest.

Interpret: How does this dialogue illustrate a complication in the plot?



NOTICE & NOTE

ANALYZE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

Annotate: Mark what is asked of Mary Warren and how she responds to the request.

Analyze: Consider what you have learned about Mary Warren up to this point. Why is placing great importance upon her testimony an effective way of creating suspense?

- 308 **Danforth.** But she have *danced*?
- 309 **Parris** (*unwillingly*). Aye, sir.
- 310 (Danforth, *as though with new eyes, looks at Abigail.*)
- 311 **Hathorne.** Excellency, will you permit me? (*He points at Mary Warren.*)
- 312 **Danforth** (*with great worry*). Pray, proceed.
- 313 **Hathorne.** You say you never saw no spirits, Mary, were never threatened or afflicted by any manifest of the Devil or the Devil's agents.
- 314 **Mary Warren** (*very faintly*). No, sir.
- 315 **Hathorne** (*with a gleam of victory*). And yet, when people accused of witchery confronted you in court, you would faint, saying their spirits came out of their bodies and choked you—
- 316 **Mary Warren.** That were pretense, sir.
- 317 **Danforth.** I cannot hear you.
- 318 **Mary Warren.** Pretense, sir.
- 319 **Parris.** But you did turn cold, did you not? I myself picked you up many times, and your skin were icy. Mr. Danforth, you—
- 320 **Danforth.** I saw that many times.
- 321 **Proctor.** She only pretended to faint, Your Excellency. They're all marvelous pretenders.
- 322 **Hathorne.** Then can she pretend to faint now?
- 323 **Proctor.** Now?
- 324 **Parris.** Why not? Now there are no spirits attacking her, for none in this room is accused of witchcraft. So let her turn herself cold now, let her pretend she is attacked now, let her faint. (*He turns to Mary Warren.*) Faint!
- 325 **Mary Warren.** Faint?
- 326 **Parris.** Aye, faint. Prove to us how you pretended in the court so many times.
- 327 **Mary Warren** (*looking to Proctor*). I—cannot faint now, sir.
- 328 **Proctor** (*alarmed, quietly*). Can you not pretend it?
- 329 **Mary Warren.** I—(*She looks about as though searching for the passion to faint.*) I—have no sense of it now, I—
- 330 **Danforth.** Why? What is lacking now?
- 331 **Mary Warren.** I—cannot tell, sir, I—
- 332 **Danforth.** Might it be that here we have no afflicting spirit loose, but in the court there were some?
- 333 **Mary Warren.** I never saw no spirits.



- 334 **Parris.** Then see no spirits now, and prove to us that you can faint by your own will, as you claim.
- 335 **Mary Warren** (*stares, searching for the emotion of it, and then shakes her head*). I—cannot do it.
- 336 **Parris.** Then you will confess, will you not? It were attacking spirits made you faint!
- 337 **Mary Warren.** No, sir, I—
- 338 **Parris.** Your Excellency, this is a trick to blind the court!
- 339 **Mary Warren.** It's not a trick! (*She stands.*) I—I used to faint because I—I thought I saw spirits.
- 340 **Danforth.** *Thought* you saw them!
- 341 **Mary Warren.** But I did not, Your Honor.
- 342 **Hathorne.** How could you think you saw them unless you saw them?
- 343 **Mary Warren.** I—I cannot tell how, but I did. I—I heard the other girls screaming, and you, Your Honor, you seemed to believe them, and I—It were only sport in the beginning, sir, but then the whole world cried spirits, spirits, and I—I promise you, Mr. Danforth, I only thought I saw them but I did not.



**NOTICE & NOTE**

- 344 (Danforth *peers at her*.)
- 345 **Parris** (*smiling, but nervous because Danforth seems to be struck by Mary Warren's story*). Surely Your Excellency is not taken by this simple lie.
- 346 **Danforth** (*turning worriedly to Abigail*). Abigail. I bid you now search your heart and tell me this—and beware of it, child, to God every soul is precious and His vengeance is terrible on them that take life without cause. Is it possible, child, that the spirits you have seen are illusion only, some deception that may cross your mind when—
- 347 **Abigail**. Why, this—this—is a base question, sir.
- 348 **Danforth**. Child, I would have you consider it—
- 349 **Abigail**. I have been hurt, Mr. Danforth; I have seen my blood runnin' out! I have been near to murdered every day because I done my duty pointing out the Devil's people—and this is my reward? To be mistrusted, denied, questioned like a—
- 350 **Danforth** (*weakening*). Child, I do not mistrust you—
- 351 **Abigail** (*in an open threat*). Let you beware, Mr. Danforth. Think you to be so mighty that the power of Hell may not turn *your* wits? Beware of it! There is—(*Suddenly, from an accusatory attitude, her face turns, looking into the air above—it is truly frightened.*)
- 352 **Danforth** (*apprehensively*). What is it, child?
- 353 **Abigail** (*looking about in the air, clasping her arms about her as though cold*). I—I know not. A wind, a cold wind, has come. (*Her eyes fall on Mary Warren.*)
- 354 **Mary Warren** (*terrified, pleading*). Abby!
- 355 **Mercy Lewis** (*shivering*). Your Honor, I freeze!
- 356 **Proctor**. They're pretending!
- 357 **Hathorne** (*touching Abigail's hand*). She is cold, Your Honor, touch her!
- 358 **Mercy Lewis** (*through chattering teeth*). Mary, do you send this shadow on me?
- 359 **Mary Warren**. Lord, save me!
- 360 **Susanna Walcott**. I freeze, I freeze!
- 361 **Abigail** (*shivering visibly*). It is a wind, a wind!
- 362 **Mary Warren**. Abby, don't do that!
- 363 **Danforth** (*himself engaged and entered by Abigail*). Mary Warren, do you witch her? I say to you, do you send your spirit out?
- 364 (*With a hysterical cry Mary Warren starts to run. Proctor catches her.*)
- 365 **Mary Warren** (*almost collapsing*). Let me go, Mr. Proctor, I cannot, I cannot—



- 366 **Abigail** (*crying to Heaven*). Oh, Heavenly Father, take away this shadow!
- 367 (*Without warning or hesitation, Proctor leaps at Abigail and, grabbing her by the hair, pulls her to her feet. She screams in pain. Danforth, astonished, cries, "What are you about?" and Hathorne and Parris call, "Take your hands off her!" and out of it all comes Proctor's roaring voice.*)
- 368 **Proctor**. How do you call Heaven! Whore! Whore!
- 369 (*Herrick breaks Proctor from her.*)
- 370 **Herrick**. John!
- 371 **Danforth**. Man! Man, what do you—
- 372 **Proctor** (*breathless and in agony*). It is a whore!
- 373 **Danforth** (*dumbfounded*). You charge—?
- 374 **Abigail**. Mr. Danforth, he is lying!
- 375 **Proctor**. Mark her! Now she'll suck a scream to stab me with, but—
- 376 **Danforth**. You will prove this! This will not pass!
- 377 **Proctor** (*trembling, his life collapsing about him*). I have known her, sir. I have known her.
- 378 **Danforth**. You—you are a lecher?
- 379 **Francis** (*horrified*). John, you cannot say such a—
- 380 **Proctor**. Oh, Francis, I wish you had some evil in you that you might know me! (*to Danforth*) A man will not cast away his good name. You surely know that.
- 381 **Danforth** (*dumbfounded*). In—in what time? In what place?
- 382 **Proctor** (*his voice about to break, and his shame great*). In the proper place—where my beasts are bedded. On the last night of my joy, some eight months past. She used to serve me in my house, sir. (*He has to clamp his jaw to keep from weeping.*) A man may think God sleeps, but God sees everything, I know it now. I beg you, sir, I beg you—see her what she is. My wife, my dear good wife, took this girl soon after, sir, and put her out on the highroad. And being what she is, a lump of vanity, sir—(*He is being overcome.*) Excellency, forgive me, forgive me. (*Angrily against himself, he turns away from the Governor for a moment. Then, as though to cry out is his only means of speech left.*) She thinks to dance with me on my wife's grave! And well she might, for I thought of her softly. God help me, I lusted, and there is a promise in such sweat. But it is a whore's vengeance, and you must see it; I set myself entirely in your hands. I know you must see it now.
- 383 **Danforth** (*blanched, in horror, turning to Abigail*). You deny every scrap and tittle¹² of this?

¹²every scrap and tittle: every tiny bit.

ANALYZE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

Annotate: Mark the climax of the play.

Predict: How might Proctor's confession change the outcome of the plot?

**NOTICE & NOTE**

- 384 **Abigail.** If I must answer that, I will leave and I will not come back again!
- 385 (Danforth *seems unsteady.*)
- 386 **Proctor.** I have made a bell of my honor! I have rung the doom of my good name—you will believe me, Mr. Danforth! My wife is innocent, except she knew a whore when she saw one!
- 387 **Abigail** (*stepping up to Danforth*). What look do you give me? (Danforth *cannot speak.*) I'll not have such looks! (*She turns and starts for the door.*)
- 388 **Danforth.** You will remain where you are! (*Herrick steps into her path. She comes up short, fire in her eyes.*) Mr. Parris, go into the court and bring Goodwife Proctor out.
- 389 **Parris** (*objecting*). Your Honor, this is all a—
- 390 **Danforth** (*sharply to Parris*). Bring her out! And tell her not one word of what's been spoken here. And let you knock before you enter. (*Parris goes out.*) Now we shall touch the bottom of this swamp. (*to Proctor*) Your wife, you say, is an honest woman.
- 391 **Proctor.** In her life, sir, she have never lied. There are them that cannot sing, and them that cannot weep—my wife cannot lie. I have paid much to learn it, sir.
- 392 **Danforth.** And when she put this girl out of your house, she put her out for a harlot?¹³
- 393 **Proctor.** Aye, sir.
- 394 **Danforth.** And knew her for a harlot?
- 395 **Proctor.** Aye, sir, she knew her for a harlot.
- 396 **Danforth.** Good then. (*to Abigail*) And if she tell me, child, it were for harlotry, may God spread His mercy on you! (*There is a knock. He calls to the door.*) Hold! (*to Abigail*) Turn your back. Turn your back. (*to Proctor*) Do likewise. (*Both turn their backs—Abigail with indignant slowness.*) Now let neither of you turn to face Goody Proctor. No one in this room is to speak one word, or raise a gesture aye or nay. (*He turns toward the door, calls.*) Enter! (*The door opens. Elizabeth enters with Parris. Parris leaves her. She stands alone, her eyes looking for Proctor.*) Mr. Cheever, report this testimony in all exactness. Are you ready?
- 397 **Cheever.** Ready, sir.
- 398 **Danforth.** Come here, woman. (*Elizabeth comes to him, glancing at Proctor's back.*) Look at me only, not at your husband. In my eyes only.
- 399 **Elizabeth** (*faintly*). Good, sir.

¹³for a harlot: as a woman of low morals.



- 400 **Danforth.** We are given to understand that at one time you dismissed your servant, Abigail Williams.
- 401 **Elizabeth.** That is true, sir.
- 402 **Danforth.** For what cause did you dismiss her? (*Slight pause. Then 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?
- 403 **Elizabeth** (*not knowing what to say, sensing a situation, wetting her lips to stall for time*). She—dissatisfied me. (*pause*) And my husband.
- 404 **Danforth.** In what way dissatisfied you?
- 405 **Elizabeth.** She were—(*She glances at Proctor for a cue.*)
- 406 **Danforth.** Woman, look at me! (*Elizabeth does.*) Were she slovenly? Lazy? What disturbance did she cause?
- 407 **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 shovelboard, 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.*)
- 408 **Danforth.** Look at me.
- 409 **Elizabeth.** Aye, sir. Abigail Williams—(*She breaks off.*)
- 410 **Danforth.** What of Abigail Williams?
- 411 **Elizabeth.** I came to think he fancied her. And so one night I lost my wits, I think, and put her out on the highroad.
- 412 **Danforth.** Your husband—did he indeed turn from you?
- 413 **Elizabeth** (*in agony*). My husband—is a goodly man, sir.
- 414 **Danforth.** Then he did not turn from you.
- 415 **Elizabeth** (*starting to glance at Proctor*). He—
- 416 **Danforth** (*reaches out and holds her face, then*). Look at me! To your own knowledge, has John Proctor ever committed the crime of lechery? (*In a crisis of indecision she cannot speak.*) Answer my question! Is your husband a lecher!
- 417 **Elizabeth** (*faintly*). No, sir.
- 418 **Danforth.** Remove her, Marshal.
- 419 **Proctor.** Elizabeth, tell the truth!
- 420 **Danforth.** She has spoken. Remove her!
- 421 **Proctor** (*crying out*). Elizabeth, I have confessed it!
- 422 **Elizabeth.** Oh, God! (*The door closes behind her.*)
- 423 **Proctor.** She only thought to save my name!

ANALYZE DRAMATIC ELEMENTS

Annotate: Mark dialogue during Elizabeth's interrogation that tells you she is trying to protect Proctor.

Analyze: Explain how the interrogation of Elizabeth presents a plot complication.



NOTICE & NOTE

- 424 **Hale.** Excellency, it is a natural lie to tell; I beg you, stop now before another is condemned! I may shut my conscience to it no more—private vengeance is working through this testimony! From the beginning this man has struck me true. By my oath to Heaven, I believe him now, and I pray you call back his wife before we—
- 425 **Danforth.** She spoke nothing of lechery, and this man has lied!
- 426 **Hale.** I believe him! (*pointing at Abigail*) This girl has always struck me false! She has—
- 427 (*Abigail, with a weird, wild, chilling cry, screams up to the ceiling.*)
- 428 **Abigail.** You will not! Begone! Begone, I say!
- 429 **Danforth.** What is it, child? (*But Abigail, pointing with fear, is now raising up her frightened eyes, her awed face, toward the ceiling—the girls are doing the same—and now Hathorne, Hale, Putnam, Cheever, Herrick, and Danforth do the same.*) What's there? (*He lowers his eyes from the ceiling, and now he is frightened; there is real tension in his voice.*) Child! (*She is transfixed—with all the girls, she is whimpering open-mouthed, agape at the ceiling.*) Girls! Why do you—?
- 430 **Mercy Lewis** (*pointing*). It's on the beam! Behind the rafter!
- 431 **Danforth** (*looking up*). Where!
- 432 **Abigail.** Why—? (*She gulps.*) Why do you come, yellow bird?
- 433 **Proctor.** Where's a bird? I see no bird!
- 434 **Abigail** (*to the ceiling*). My face? My face?
- 435 **Proctor.** Mr. Hale—
- 436 **Danforth.** Be quiet!
- 437 **Proctor** (*to Hale*). Do you see a bird?
- 438 **Danforth.** Be quiet!!
- 439 **Abigail** (*to the ceiling, in a genuine conversation with the "bird," as though trying to talk it out of attacking her*). But God made my face; you cannot want to tear my face. Envy is a deadly sin, Mary.
- 440 **Mary Warren** (*on her feet with a spring, and horrified, pleading*). Abby!
- 441 **Abigail** (*unperturbed, continuing to the "bird"*). Oh, Mary, this is a black art¹⁴ to change your shape. No, I cannot, I cannot stop my mouth; it's God's work I do.
- 442 **Mary Warren.** Abby, I'm here!
- 443 **Proctor** (*frantically*). They're pretending, Mr. Danforth!
- 444 **Abigail** (*Now she takes a backward step, as though in fear the bird will swoop down momentarily*). Oh, please, Mary! Don't come down.
- 445 **Susanna Walcott.** Her claws, she's stretching her claws!

¹⁴a black art: sorcery.