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We Danced. That Is All.

The woods at night are not meant for little girls who flee there with their friends to dance and chant and sport in the Devil’s Last Preserve, this untamed wilderness reserved for conjuring, incantations, and spells.

And now the whole town is wondering why you won’t wake and they say they’ve seen you flying over Ingersol’s barn.

And your father, the minister, sent for the doctor but he says it might be spirits.

And so your father, the minister, sent for Rev. Hale but he says, “Let’s not look to superstition in this.”

And Tituba, your father’s slave, who left her Barbados songs and knowledge of conjuring in the forest last night, is summoned. And her only defense, amidst whippings, accusations, and threats, is: “I love me Betty.”

And before this all ends, 19 people will hang.

Farms and names and families will be ruined, all because you wanted to sneak out to the woods at night and dance.

—Matthew Johnson

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