



SYNOPSIS

Barbara Clarke, belle of Puritan Salem village falls in love with dark, handsome Roger Coverman, a fugitive from Virginia with a price on his head. At a rendezvous behind the village church, Coverman impersonates the devil to frighten a youngster who was spying on them in the dark. The youngster imagines that he has seen the real thing. Swiftly, the news circulates among the superstitious villagers that the Devil had trusted with an unidentified woman. Barbara keeps meeting Roger secretly and he teaches her to dance a few steps of the gavotte. She goes through the steps at home alone. When questioned, she mockingly tells her family that she is dancing with a handsome gallant. This adds fuel to the witch scare that is burning up the village.

CHAPTER V

Shrieks and gibberings roused Barbara from a happy sleep. The terrified face of Abigail Goode was thrust in at her door. "My Ann is sorely taken." Barbara jumped from her bed. "Send for Dr. John." Nathaniel had gone for him. And for the minister. I misdoubt it is a possession." The child was rigid on her bed, her eyes open and fixed. From time to time she uttered choked words of jargon. When Tibuba approached her she howled, and Barbara's approach was her cue to perform a quite expert spasm. Little Ann had well learned her lesson from the Rev. Mather's treatise on bewitchment, which she had filched. Dr. John, arriving and making examination, was at first puzzled. Not so the Rev. Parris who came in accompanied by Elder Morse; his diagnosis was instant and positive. The child was bewitched. Symptom after symp-

tom had aduced and as he recited them the patient gave a convincing exhibition of each. It was just a little too faithful to the text for Dr. John's suspicions. He sent Barbara from the room, whereupon the supposed victim concentrated on Tibuba, until the physician dashed cold water upon the performance by whispering: "If you don't quit this foolery I'll leather the devil out of your tender hide with a saddle-strap." But the damage was done. The Rev. Parris and the two elders Morse and Goode had reached a decision. A church meeting was to be called at once to handle the emergency. When the trio left they took with them the blackwoman bound and moaning. There was little sleep in Salem. It was after three when Jeremiah Adams, leaving the adjourned session, brought the news to his guest. "There has been Hell's own work this night, Roger. Neither reason nor pity is in them; only fear and the cruelty that it breeds. They so broke the spirit of the old blackamoor that she confessed to witchcraft and will try to shift the burden of guilt by testifying that others lured her to it and so save her wretched neck." "Others?" What others? demanded Roger. "She did not name—" "None is named as yet. But I fear. All the women of Salem are to be convened on the Common next Sunday to confront her." Roger leapt from his bed. "I ride tonight." Go without bidding his love farewell Roger would not. Still watching over the patient, those of the Goode household heard a weird tap-tapping on the clapboards, about the first light. "Witch-raps," whimpered Abigail Goode. Ann obligingly threw a fit. While her mother and Dr. John were at work over her, Barbara, who had recognized the rhythm of the gavotte, crept to a window. Briefly Roger told

her of his plan of finding a ship. He would be back for her in a few days. Would she trust him and go with him? "Anywhere. Whenever you call me. For all my life." She reached out to cling to him for a moment, before he left. Black rumors filled the town in the days following; no reputation was clear enough to escape. Every man, woman, and child in the settlement, not bedridden, was on the Common when the Rev. Samuel Parris prayed, and called upon Elder Morse to inform the people of the situation. "My friends," began the harsh-faced churchman, "His Majesty's Province of Massachusetts has been sorely afflicted in many localities and at divers times, but never so dangerously as now. The people of Cape Ann have barricaded their houses against the terror by night. Fearsome apparitions have been seen in mid-air. A flight of winged witches in this direction has been attested by godly witnesses, occurring a few nights ago. The scourge is upon us. The child of a pious household has been smitten. The witch has confessed and craves mercy that she was misled by others to her downfall. Tibuba, slave of Nathaniel Goode, name your accomplices. Withhold nothing at peril of your neck." Standing with John Harding near the speaker, Barbara indignantly watched poor Tibuba's anguished eyes move slowly around the mass of white faces as she twisted in her bonds. A hand plucked at the girl's skirts. She turned to find Susan Abbott, a pale, unsightly little hunchback of seventeen, covering at her shoulder. "Oh Barbara! She looked at me. What shall I do! What shall I do!" "Hush, child," the older girl soothed her. "No one could suspect you." But she was far from feeling any certainty of anything. Still old Tibuba was silent. "Speak!" thundered the minister. "Name the associates of Satan."

"Oh, mas'r; Tituba don't know. Tituba on'y a po' slave. How she know?" Her eyes, hypnotized, were drawn to the fierce gaze of Elder Morse. He curved his fingers, claw-like, in a hideous gesture, at his throat. She wrenched her look away from his; forced it to explore, checked it on the face of a tall girl who was choking hysterically. "M-m-mary Watkins," she stammered. The girl's shriek rose above the roar of the crowd. "Who else?" Tibuba's roped arms writhed, as if she were striving to point.

"Elizabeth Hopkins," she shrieked. This time it was a woman's wail as those near-by shrank from the contamination of the accused.

There was a pause, Elder Morse shouted: Full confession. Satan's chosen must be revealed to the last foul offender."

The deformed girl's terrified visage peered up across Barbara's shoulders. The confessor's roving look fixed upon it.

"Susan Abbott," she babbled. The girl collapsed with a broken moan. Barbara, carried away with dread and pity, cried out: "No; no! It's a cruel lie. You've frightened her into accusing innocent people."

Through the shocked hush Elder Morse's harsh bass sounded. "Only a witch defends a witch." The blood spattered from his mouth as Dr. John's fist crashed into it. Martha Harding's laughter, high, insane, rose. "He defends her. My husband defends the witch. She has made him hers."

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The stricken man crawled to his feet. His eyes burned upon the wretched negro. "Go on. Go on. Who else?" His fingers formed the hangman's loop. In the grip of deadly fear, Tituba still recognized what was expected of her. "Barbara Clarke, Chris' forgive me," she sobbed and fell to the earth, convulsed.

The Rev. Parris raised her. "She is delivered of her evil spirit," he proclaimed in solemn exaltation.

(To Be Continued)

BURNING CAR HONKS ITS HORN MALAGA, Wash.—Carl Harle of this community was awakened about 2 o'clock Saturday by the honking of his car's horn. Rushing out to the garage, he found the car on fire. A hole had been burned from the car floor through the garage roof. A short circuit caused by melting wires caused the horn to blow which woke Harle. A few buckets of water from the nearby goldfish pond extinguished the fire and saved the building and car, but was fatal to the goldfish.

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