

Origins of a Previous Witch Hysteria

I thought it was fun and it felt good to talk about the other girls behind their backs and have my friends agree with me. Once we all were dismissed from our houses we met up outside the Courthouse across from the school. Abitha's father worked there when there was a high profile case and her mother brought her to observe.

"Phoebe?"

I turned around to find Lydia Smith, Elizabeth Johnson, and Epsie Miller all standing 20 feet away with Lydia's brother behind them urging them to hurry along and see me so he could go hear the end of the trial. Lydia, Epsie, and Elizabeth all looked very different. Lydia had blond straight hair that was tied up in a braid that went down to her mid-back. Her eyes sparkled in the sunlight that shown down on her. Epsie, on the other hand, had red curly hair that went to her shoulders and deep brown eyes. Elizabeth had curly black hair that just went below her chest. All three girls looked very different, but their personalities were very similar; talkative and what some might call bratty, and that's the way I like it.

"Oh, you startled me!" I called to them as they ran over to them and greeted them with a hug.

"Where is Abitha?" Elizabeth asked.

Lydia's brother came out with Abitha's father to his right and said "Sorry to disappoint you ladies, but Abitha won't be joining you today," said her father, "she had become tired during the trial and has gone home with her mother to rest."

Lydia looked at me and I looked at Elizabeth with the same frustrated look on our face. Abitha had skipped out on our "hangouts" for the past five days. Part of us was feeling concerned but other parts were feeling angry at her. As my mother always said, "Friendship isn't friendship unless you can always be there,"

Elizabeth cleared her throat and said, "Oh it's fine, we'll see her soon," she smiled.

As we walked into my house that was down the street from the Courthouse we went up to my bedroom that was on the third floor. Not all houses had three floors, so we were lucky.

"Well, apparently Abitha is too tired to join us today," Lydia says taking her hair out of her braid and beginning to rebraid it.

"How ignorant of her," I said picking up a piece of paper to draw Elizabeth as she had previously asked. As she began to pose she said, "Well you cannot blame her, her mother is as crazy as the old fool who lives in the alley next to the bar.

"Whatever do you mean?" I asked.

"Don't you know?" Lydia asked. "Ever since her husband went off with another, she has been tired and sick in the mind."

"My mother even caught her stealing herbs from her garden, but that old fool claimed it to be the starvation that drove her to do such a horrendous thing."

"She's such a witch," I said, and the girls started to break out laughing. Lydia sat straight up and pretended to be possessed by having a blank stare and mumbling inaudible as if she was a witch herself.

"Well if she seems to be possessed, why not make it official?" I asked.

"What do you mean?" Elizabeth asked.

"Why not tell the town that Lydia has been possessed? Then she'll slightly be fined and Abitha will feel how we have felt without her, angry and alone.

Elizabeth started to burst out laughing and nodded her head between the giggles.

"Lydia, what if your opinion on the matter?" I asked.

"Well, why not?" she said.

And so it was decided that we would play a joke on the town just as Abitha had been playing a joke on our friendship all this time.

And so it began.....