



Wizard's Glen

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Four miles from Pittsfield, Massachusetts, among the Berkshire Hills, is a wild valley, noted for its echoes, that for a century and more has been called Wizard's Glen. Here the Indian priests performed their incantations, and on the red-stained Devil's Altar, it was said, they offered human sacrifice to Hobomocko and his demons of the wood. In Berkshire's early days a hunter, John Chamberlain, of Dalton, who had killed a deer and was carrying it home on his shoulders, was overtaken on the hills by a storm and took shelter from it in a cavernous recess in Wizard's Glen. In spite of his fatigue he was unable to sleep, and while lying on the earth with open eyes he was amazed to see the wood bend apart before him, disclosing a long aisle that was mysteriously lighted and that contained hundreds of capering forms. As his eyes grew accustomed to the faint light he made out tails and cloven feet on the dancing figures; and one tall form with wings, around whose head a wreath of lightning glittered, and who received the deference of the rest, he surmised to be the devil himself. It was such a night and such a place as Satan and his imps commonly chose for high festivals.

As he lay watching them through the sheeted rain a tall and painted Indian leaped on Devil's Altar, fresh scalps dangling round his body in festoons, and his eyes blazing with fierce command. In a brief incantation he summoned the shadow hordes around him. They came, with torches that burned blue, and went around and around the rock singing a harsh chant, until, at a sign, an Indian girl was dragged in and flung on the block of sacrifice. The figures rushed toward her with extended arms and weapons, and the terrified girl gave one cry

that rang in the hunter's ears all his life after. The wizard raised his axe: the devils and vampires gathered to drink the blood and clutch the escaping soul, when in a lightning flash the girl's despairing glance fell on the face of Chamberlain. That look touched his manhood, and drawing forth his Bible he held it toward the rabble while he cried aloud the name of God. There was a crash of thunder. The light faded, the demons vanished, the storm swept past, and peace settled on the hills.

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