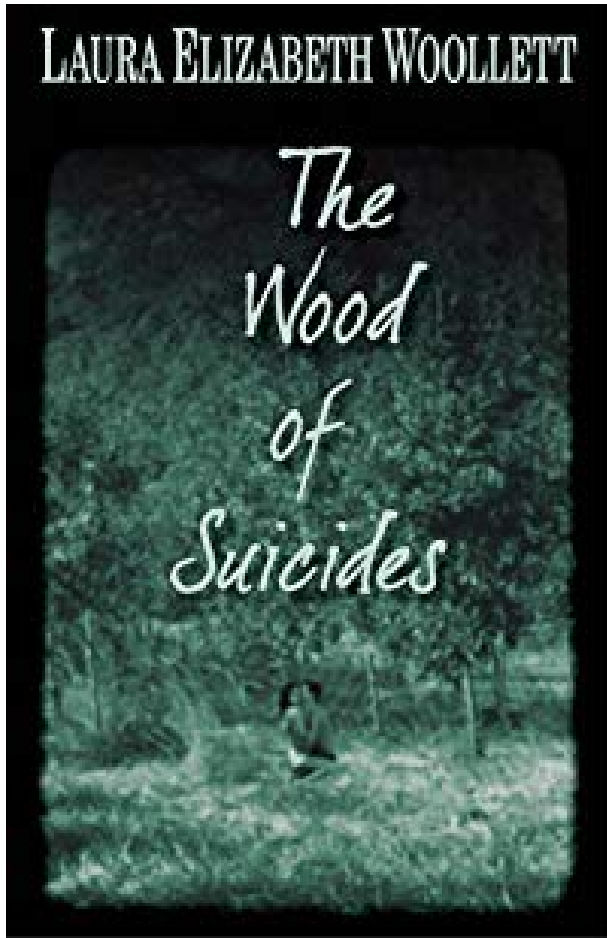


The Wood of Suicides



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Laurel Marks is a stunning, repressed 17-year-old schoolgirl. She also has a weakness for older men - most of all her father, whom she'll do anything to impress. After his sudden death, Laurel is sent off to a boarding school where she shortly latches onto a new love object: her English teacher, Mr. Hugh Steadman. Following an encounter in the woods, a flirtation develops between the two, marked by hopeful highs and suicidal lows, on Laurel's part. Their romance is eventually consummated one November afternoon, in the arbor where they first met. But Laurel's middle-aged teacher proves to be a more violent lover than she ever anticipated. Like the doomed chase between Daphne and Apollo, Steadman pursues and Laurel recedes. Laura Woollett charts the course of their obsession with an unswerving eye, describing their unbridled desire for one another and the reck and tortured course on which they have embarked - and of Laurel's unshed grief for her father, whose absence will be either her salvation or her undoing.