



a rumor that there "is something mighty peculiar" about Mrs. Fallon's sickness. It is discussed in the neighborhood and Megan hears it. She learns that a "Miss Martha," a sister of Mrs. Fallon, lives with the principal and his wife. Megan felt sorry for Tom Fallon, and she thought a great deal about the gossip about him and his wife when she started to her favorite resting place on the top of a low hill beyond the meadow. Tom Fallon was sitting on the rock she used as a bench when she arrived. When she inquired about his wife's health, he replied: "She is mentally ill." When Meg went to a quilting party at Mrs.

CHAPTER III

"I dunno as any of us think the 'fessor's exactly hidin'," she said curtly. "An' I dunno's any of us think Pleasant Grove is such a hick place, come to think of it. Some folks seem to like it. If they didn't I reckin they could go somewhere's else."

Alicia colored darkly and shrugged. "I'm sorry I even mentioned the fact that I saw you," she said ungraciously. "But after all, the Ridge is public property. It's not posted or anything. I had as much right to be there as you and Mr. Fallon! I was merely gathering a few Autumn leaves and some bittersweet berries to put in the blue pottery bowl in my front window."

Megan was trembling a little, though she knew she was being silly. The little scene with Tom Fallon had been so absurdly innocent; yet there was something in the sly, furtive manner of Alicia's mentioning it that had made it seem evil and scheming.

Megan, still furious with Alicia and her nasty tongue, got away from the quilting party as early as she decently could. At least Mrs. Stuart understood, when, at the door she drew Megan aside and said forthrightly, "Now look here, Megan, don't pay no attention to that woman. Someone ought to take a gun to her and blow her to Kingdom Come, and that's a fact!"

Halfway down the road, she heard a cheerful voice and turned as a pretty girl of seventeen, her arms laden with schoolbooks, came running towards her.

"Hi, Meggie," said the girl, flushed and smiling, and very pretty in a childish, round-f

bright-eyed way. "Hello, Susie-you're late getting home from school!" said Megan lightly.

"Had to stay after school and write a composition. Like a fool, I thought I could get away with not doing one-according to the law of averages, I shouldn't have been called on today, but the darned law let me down. Miss Pound's a holy terror-seems to look at you and know without asking a question whether you've done your homework," answered Susie bitterly.

They walked together in companionable silence down the wide, unpaved road, until suddenly Susie said bitterly, "I hear the Alicia dame dug her little stiletto into you and Professor Fallon today! That makes you a member, in good standing, of my own club." Megan caught her breath and

stopped still. "How on earth did you hear-"

she began in amazement. Susie's little chuckle was dry and

quite without mirth. "Oh it's all over the place," she said. "By supper time, there won't be a man, woman or child within a mile of the place that won't know you've been meeting the professor secretly in the woods-"

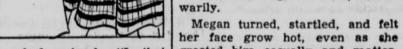
"Susie." Megan wailed. "That's not true-"

"Of course not-but d'you think for a minute that's going to stop the story? Don't be a twerp, Meggie-you know it won't!" said Susie. "It wasn't true that I was sneaking off to meet Bill Esmond eitherbut you'd have a hard time convincing anybody in this town that it isn't! Just because one afternoon I happened to run into him at the county seat and had a soda with him. My mother hit the roof, on account of because Bill's folks are not-well, not quite as high hat as mother thinks we ought to be-" Her young voice trembled a little and she blinked hard to clear her eyes of threatened tears.

Megan asked curiously. "Is that all there is to that story, Susie?" Susie flushed and her eyes were stormy.

"Absolutely! Up to then," she added. "Oh, sure, I liked Bill-we all did! He was an honor student, and the kids were crazy about him and he played football like nobody's business-but I'd never had a date with him in my life. How could I, when dad and mother practically lock me up nights? But that afternoon, mother was sick with a headache, and she wanted some stuff from the county seat that Burns didn't have, and I took the car and drove over. And I ran into Bill. He'd just had his physical and was all but ready to be taken into the Cadet Air Corps, and we celebrat-

ed by having a soda." Susie drew a deep breath and said quietly, "Bill's-quite a fellow!" She laughed and said, "May- trees surrounding it. It was a be I ought to be grateful to the square, boxlike house, never paint-Stevenson wench-if she hadn't ed, so that its walls were a rough,



greeted him casually and matter-Megan asked curiously, "Is that of-factly. all there is to that story, Susie?"

He waited for her to come to the fence before he said anxiously. "I know-the dickens of it is that "I've been a little worried—and most folks agree that the Stevendeeply puzzled. I've tried my son's not a liar-but that she just darnedest to think what I could has an unholy capacity for scattering damaging truth about where it have done to upset you-" can do the most harm!" she admit-Megan laughed and hated herself ted. "It's just that-well, I'd hate because the laugh sounded artificial. "What nonsense, Professor!" to think he'd be mixed up in anything like that-"

circus, and quite by accident, Mr.

Fallon was also there and we ex-

changed a few words. But this

afternoon, Alicia let drop the infor-

mation that since he and I'd spent

hours together on the Ridge I must

"Sure-that's why I said you were

now a member in good standing of

shut Alicia Stevenson up?'" an-

swered Susie. "It's composed of

practically every man, woman and

child within a radius of ten miles of

Pleasant Grove. Personally, I'd

china prettiness, her young, smooth

flesh and shining blue eyes and

"Sure-and when she sticks that

barbed tongue of hers into their

own affairs, they say, 'But of

course, that's not true.' But when

she's stabbing somebody else they

say, "Now, I wonder-'" Susie

pointed out, with such truth that

Megan could only agree with her

For a little while they stood in

silence, both of them looking uneas-

Susie nodded meaningfully.

know him pretty well!"

my club!" she answered.

from ear to ear!"

knows what she's like."

golden hair.

soberly.

"But you have avoided me, and Megan said forcefully, "Well, I thought possibly something I said or did-" he began anxiously. from my own personal experience, I'd say Alicia Stevenson has a fatal

Megan looked up at him and said ability to pick one tiny shred off quietly and frankly, "I see you and embroider it to an incredible dehaven't heard the news, Mr. Falgree! I went for a walk on the lon!" Ridge, with my usual three-ring Puzzled, noting her use of the for-

mal prefix rather than the careless friendly "Professor" that was almost a nickname, he said quickly, "News? No, I am afraid I haven't-"

"I feel very silly to be relaying it to you-but I know Pleasant Grove so well---the attitude toward teachers, especially towards the principal of the school-" She floundered miserably and was silent.

Megan laughed a little. "What Tom said quietly, "I think you club is that?" she wanted to know. had better tell me straight, Miss "The Club of 'Why the devil MacTavish-" doesn't somebody do something to

"There seems to be a rumor about that you and I have been meeting secretly on the Ridge-" She let him have it almost in a single breath.

Tom stared at her as though he like to see her with her throat cut thought she had lost her mind. And then his face hardened and his eyes "Susie!" gasped Megan, between blazed and he said through his shock and pity for the girl whose teeth, "Where in blazes-who'd try bloodthirsty words were at such to start a lie like that?" comical variance with her Dresden Megan made a weary little ges-

ture. "It's too silly-and too-cheap to

notice," she pointed out to him. "Oh, it won't happen, of course," "Except that since you are new said Susie ruefully. "People like here and this is your first year-oh. that live to a ripe old age-and I feel an utter fool about the whole then turn into hen's teeth! They thing. But I thought it would be never die-or have accidents!" better if we-well, we've done noth-Megan put an arm about the slim ing to start gossip, so it seems a

shoulders and gave Susie a little little difficult to know how to stop hug. "Well, don't let her get you it-" down, Susie. After all, everybody Tom said sternly, "Who started this talk?"

"Mrs. Stevenson," answered Megan frankly. "She happened to be on the Ridge the afternoon we met by accident, and chose to believe that we were meeting there regu-

larly-and as secretly as possible-" "But that's nonsense-she could not possibly believe anything so-

so-darned silly!" Tom exploded. "I don't think she really believes it, but she seems to get quite a lot of pleasure out of dropping little

ily across the road and to the shabsignificant remarks." by little old cottage where lighted Puzzled, Tom said, "Who is this windows proved that Alicia was at Mrs. Stevenson? I suppose she has home. The cottage set well back

a child in school, but I don't seem from the road and there were a few to recall the name, though it's not unusual, of course." (TO BE CONTINUED)

is necessary to support this combustion of the decomposing organic matter.

"Thus changes in the compaction of the soil from 6 to 12 or 18 inches in depth due to heavy equipment, interfere with these gas exchanges, and often contribute to the creation of oxygen deficiencies that result in remainder of the evening. the suffocation of the roots, or in the possible accumulation of carbon dioxide and other materials toxic to

the roots." Correction of these soil compactions which occur immediately be- Grease and mud comes with it.

low the plow furrow lies very probably in the use of deeper plowing equipment. One new type of plow breaks the compacted soil in the 6 to 12 inch zone and permits better aeration and the deeper placement of fertilizers.

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Fold household linens over the | clothesline with hems together. when removing buttons, slide a Prevents their tearing in the wind.

A light dessert is best after a full, substantial evening meal. Keeps you from feeling groggy the

Make a paste of cornstarch and rub into the grease or mud spot on dress. the rug. When paste is dry, brush it out with swift, strong strokes.

Have a place in the kitchen where you can sit down to do your

work-and use it. A pretty decorative effect may be achieved by slipping pressed leaves under the cellophane cover

Equal parts of linseed oil and vinegar will remove ink stains from wool.

of the lamp shade.

Moon Formations

While hundreds of formations on the moon, such as craters, mountains and seas, have been named and renamed in the past 300 years, only 520 of these names have been retained, 200 of the most commonly used having been chosen by one man, the Italian astronomer, Riccioli, in 1651.

To avoid cutting the material comb under the button and cut the thread with a razor blade.

When making a cotton dress for little daughter, hem a square of the material for a hanky to match. Later this may provide the matching patch if daughter tears her

the shade.

Cellophane from a lampshade should be removed as soon as the shade is put in use. Otherwise, heat from the bulb may shrink the cellophane and bend the frame of

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Hay Waxing Treatment

Conserves Carotene Alfalfa and cereal grass can be stored with little loss of carotene

if they are autoclaved, pressed into blocks, and the blocks sealed with flexible wax, according to the University of Wisconsin. While expensive, it offers possibilities for vitamin supplements such as alfalfa leaf meal of dried cereal grass. No other satisfactory method has been found to conserve the carotene in forage



