THE FRONTIER, O'NEILL, NEBRASKA



THE STORY THUS FAR: Jim Mac- | Tavish announced that Alicia was selling her place, and he was going to marry her. They would live with Megan. Again they quarreled, and Meg went out into the night to be alone on the ridge. Tom Fallon startled her as he walked into the moonlight near the rock. She told him of her father and Alicia, and the demands to sell the farm. He talked again of his wife and how she went to pieces when a son was born dead. She was sorry for him. The house was dark

and silent when she returned. She was half asleep when she heard a sound and tiptoed to her father's room. He had just returned from another "walk," and rudely commanded Meg to go to bed.

CHAPTER X

It was after one o'clock, so she knew that her father must be asleep by now.

She undressed in the dark and slipped into bed. She felt a little ashamed now of the violence of emotion that had sent her flying from the house to the Ridge; in the face of the grief and heartache that Tom carried with him twenty-four hours of the day, seven days a week, her own seemed trivial.

She was half asleep when she heard the downstairs door open and her father start up the stairs. There was something in the stealth, the furtiveness of his tread on the stairs, and the way he opened his door, inching it shut, that roused her more than noise would have done. He so seldom bothered to be careful about noise. He walked into the house and up the stairs and closed his door forcefully, no matter what time he came in; but tonight he had crept so cautiously that she was puzzled, and she slid out of bed, caught up her cotton crepe kimono, and stepped into her bedroom slippers.

She listened at her father's door, and when she heard only a soft, rustling sound, she tapped and asked, "Is that you, Father?"

"Who the blazes did you think it was?" he snapped at her. "I was afraid it might be a bur-

glar_" "Oh, for the love of-what the devil would a burglar want here? I fell asleep over my paper downstairs, and tried to get upstairs without waking you. Hereafter, I'll see to it that you are awakened." There was something odd about his voice

that she couldn't quite distinguish. He seemed to be breathing hard, as though he had been running or ere laboring under some

excitement. "Go to bed!" he called to her

sharply, and she turned and went back to her room. It was near noon the following

day and Megan was busy in her perennial border along the walk, resetting some clumps of phlox and thinning out some of the other perennials that were taking too much room for themselves, when a sudden sharp scream of terror rent the peaceful, mild air.

Megan jerked to her feet as the scream came again-from the direction of Alicia's house, and now she saw a girl whom she recognized as Betty Hendrix, whose father owned a dairy, come stumbling down the path from Alicia's house, wringing her hands and screaming.

"What in the world-" somebody asked. One of the men ran up the walk to the house, stepping over the milk pail, whose contents had splashed over the porch, and looked through the half-open door of Alicia's house.

He gave a yell and stepped back. Then others crowded close and looked in and instantly stepped back as though they had received a blow.

The first man who had reached the place-Bill Logan, it was-pulled the door shut and said sternly, "Mustn't anybody go in there till the police get here. Might mess up a clue or something. Somebody go call the law."

"But what is it? What's happened? Bill, for Pete's sake-" cried Mrs. Stuart, as usual one of the first at the scene of any catastrophe or unusual event in Pleasant Grove.

"Miz' Stevenson's been - murdered," said Bill, swallowing hard and looking a little green.

There was a stunned moment of silence and then a little buzz ran around the crowd, and the word "murder" was the only word that could be distinguished in that buzz.

"Murdered? Fiddlesticks, Bill Logan-you read too many o' them mystery stories," snapped Mrs. Stuart, thrusting her way forward. "Maybe Miz' Stevenson's got hurtan accident. Get away from that door and lemme see. We ought to see how bad hurt she is."

"She's dead!" Bill said grimly, and Mrs. Stuart saw the greenish tinge to his sallow face. "Ain't no mistake about that. And the police always want to be the first ones to get into a place where there's been a murder. So I'm standing right here till the cops get here and there ain't nobody going in till then."

Megan stood at the end of the walk, still holding the sobbing Betty close. Betty was stammering, her voice choked with sobs, "I brought her milk, like I always do, and I stopped at the door and I said 'yoohoo-it's me, Mrs. Stevenson-can 1 come in?' And when she didn't say | have thought it often enough."

Then others crowded close and looked in and instantly stepped back as though they had received a blow.

of her own that she had, at the moment, no intention of revealing. Megan was too self-absorbed to be aware of Annie's curious, furtive glances as they went like automatons through their regular daily chores. Probably not a household in Pleasant Grove sat down to a where had he been? midday meal; what food was consumed was taken more or less on

the run. So it did not occur either to Megan or to Annie to wonder when Jim MacTavish did not appear for the meal. Tom, stopping on his way from

school to pick up his daily supply of milk and eggs, paused for a moment to say, distressed and unhappy, "It's a terrible thing. I can't help feeling terribly sorry for heralone there. She must have been terrified."

Megan said, in a small, strangled voice, one hand at her throat, "Oh -don't!"

"I'm sorry," Tom said compassionately. "It must have been very unpleasant for you all day with that mob-"

"I hated her-and now she's dead -and I'm so ashamed." Megan confessed humbly. "I didn't even try to help her. Maybe if I had-"

morbid."

"Oh, come now, for goodness sake," Tom protested. "You must not give way to such thoughts! You're on the verge of becoming "They say it happened before mid-

night," Megan told him thickly. "Perhaps she - she might have screamed-perhaps if I'd been at home-" Her voice broke and she was silent, her teeth sunk hard in

her lower lip, her eyes sick and frightened, dark with horror. Tom came into the kitchen and put his hand on her arm and gave

her a little shake. "Stop that!" he ordered sternly. "Even if you had been at home-even if you'd been down here in the living room, you could not have heard her. And in ened. your room upstairs at the back of the house-can't you see how foolish

you're being, darling?" The little endearment slipped out. Yet the moment, the second, after it had been spoken it seemed to crash in both their ears with the sound of of his eyes, and that when she doom. His face went white and set looked straight at him, his eyes and his eyes were tragic.

Megan caught her breath and looked up at him, her eyes wide and dazed, incredulous. There was a pause between them that could have been a matter of seconds; yet to thought was spreading through her each of them it seemed to stretch mind. Suddenly, almost as though endlessly.

Tom said, his voice harsh and very low, "Yes, I said 'darling'-I

Her father was equally silent. He even if you haven't done your own was pale and there were haggard gardening, you'll enjoy those handcircles beneath his eyes and his picked foods. hands were not quite steady. And

she did not know when the evil, staggering thought began to creep slyly into her mind; when she began to remember the unusual stealth and caution with which he had let himself into the house last night; the way he had climbed the stairs on tiptoe; the way his door had closed behind him. Suddenly the thought stood clear and hot in her mind:

She set her teeth hard to keep her hands tightly in her lap. She no longer could go through the mechanical motions of putting food into her mouth, of forcing herself to swallow, while the evil thought crept through her mind. He had said, when she called to him through his closed door, that he had fallen asleep over his paper in the living room; but she had known that he was not tell- equipment to make your canning vegetable to

ing the truth. For there had been no glimmer of light anywhere in the house when she had come in. When she had come in!

It had been after one o'clock when she had come in. That mysterious grapevine by which a secret whispered in the kitchen of a house at

with another woman's husband from | er- they are filled. eleven o'clock until almost one!

house a bit later.

Annie refused her help with the dishes, she went reluctantly into the living room, where her father had already established himself with the weekly newspaper, which he had read last night. When she came

into the room, he was sitting staring straight before him, his face white and still, his eyes bleak and fright-

She came then and sat down in the chair opposite him, in front of the small, cheerful fire, and took up her basket of mending. And then

she saw that her father was watching her covertly, out of the corners dropped almost guiltily to the paper. She put down the sewing basket.

Her mouth was dry, her throat felt constricted with horror, and a creeping fear bred of that slow, evil someone else spoke the words, she asked in a fearful whisper, "Father

-did you do it?" (TO BE CONTINUED) tched them grow by degrees, but

What Is Processing?

When we speak of canning vegetables, we often use the word processing. This simply means that you kill the botulinus bacteria. can the food, placing it in sterile jars and apply a high enough temperature to kill the micro-organisms and then seal the jars so no more can get in.

If you're new at this canning business, remember these two important points: get produce as fresh

as possible (this is where having a them from chattering, and locked garden of your own helps so much) and trying to observe to the letter the rule of getting the vegetables from garden to can in two hours. Rule No. 2 is to have all your equipment ready so that there will be no time lost once you start the vegetables on their way to the jars.

> Essential Equipment. You will need these pieces of umn. Pre - cook

> > program run as smoothly as possible: clean jars more attractive with caps, tongs with which to re-

move the jars from the canner; towels; newspaone end of town will reach the far- pers, a large kettle for pre-cooking thermost house on the other side of the vegetables, spoons, small partown, in any small place like Pleas- ing knife, pot holders, and of course ant Grove, reported that the doc- the canner, preferably a pressure tor felt Mrs. Stevenson had been cooker. You may also find a funkilled sometime between ten o'clock nel essential, and it's nice to have and midnight! And she, Megan a teakettle with a spout so that you MacTavish, had been on the Ridge can pour hot water into the jars aft-

The day before you actually decide to do your canning check Her father had come into the over the above equipment list and see that everything is laid out and The silent meal ended and she ready. The jars should be checked

helped Annie clear the table. When for nicks and cracks by running a

LYNN SAYS:

Make canning time run smoothly: Have the jars ready by figuring as closely as possible the number you will need for the amount of fresh vegetables you use. These amounts of fresh vegetables give approximately 1 quart of canned produce:

4 pounds of asparagus; 21/2 pounds beets (whole); 21/2 pounds of carrots; corn (cut from the cob), 8 ears; 6 pounds of greens; 4 quarts unshelled lima beans; 4 pounds green beans; 2 pounds of string beans; 21/2 to 3 pounds of tomatoes; 4 pounds of tomatoes (for juice).

After filling jars, always run a spatula down the sides of the jar to eliminate air bubbles.

Use large pans of water and colanders to make washing and preparing the vegetables easy for canning.

Released by Western Newspaper Union,

of poisoning comes from the soil, rinse, and dry body briskly with and when present in the food and a towel. not destroyed by processing, they produce a toxin which is a deadly Save lemon halves after juice is

poison. A pressure canner is reextracted for use in cleaning garded as the only means of prowooden drain and mixing boards, viding temperatures high enough to and in removing stains from porcelain. You may also ask why the pres-

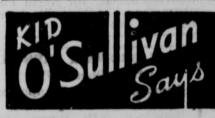
sure canner is recommended for Tests show that rinse water vegetables and not considered essenabout as hot as the wash water tial (though it is desirable) for towill remove soap and loosen dirt matoes and fruits. The answer is more easily. that vegetables, and also meats and

fish belong to the non-acid group. It usually pays to cap the brick In acid foods, the bacteria can be chimney with concrete. This needn't be done at the time the flue is built. Simply fasten boards outside and inside the chimney top so their edges project 4 inches above, then fill with concrete. Woven wire or iron rods should be bent at right angles and placed in the corners for reinforcing. Such

> from loosening the top bricks. Here's a camper's treat to try next time you have bacon. When bacon is done, remove from skillet, pour off most of the bacon grease, and let bread brown in skillet, first on one side, then on the other. The toast, which is soft inside, needs no butter. If you like, sprinkle it with sugar and cinnamon.

capping prevents active gases

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at the top of each jar except in the

case of corn, peas and shell beans which need 1 inch because they swell more during cooking. Also add salt if desired, about 1 teaspoon to each quart.

Pour boiling water into canner to a level of about 2 inches, or follow manufacturer's directions. Seal or partially seal the covers on the jars. then place them on rack in pressure canner.

Adjust cover of canner and fasten tightly with clamps. Leave the petcock open until a jet of steam comes from it for 7 minutes. Check to see that no steam escapes from anywhere else except the petcock. Then close the petcock and allow the pressure to rise to designated temperature. Then, and only then, begin to count your processing time, checking often to see that the temperature does not fluctuate. When processing is finished, turn off the heat and let the pressure gauge come down to zero. Open petcock gradually, remove lid away from you and set jars on several thicknesses of cloth towels or newspapers, away from a draft.

Never taste home canned vegetables which you think may be spoiled. Your sense of smell is the best guide in telling you if the vegetables are good or not.

If you are still using the hotwater bath for processing, follow the cooking times as directed, and always boil the vegetables in an open sauce pan for 10 minutes before tasting or using when ready to serve.

top of this colshrink it somewhat and make a pack. Save the cooking liquid to fill the jars. Allow head space of about 1/2 inch

killed in a reasonably short length of time by boiling-water bath temperature, but in non-acid foods, much higher temperatures, as you get in the pressure cooker, are necessary.

Use of Pressure Cooker.

Prepare the raw vegetable as directed on the chart given at the

