

rying of many feet along the dusty road, silence, and last of all, the trailing whistle of a boy signaling good-night — sound saying good-by to a happy day.

Hours passed before the moon popped into the sky, hurrying just at first as though she knew she were forty minutes late again. One by one lights went out. Other lights gleamed from upper windows; then they, in turn, went out. Red Hill had gone to bed.

From Maple House Alan slipped out to smoke a last cigar. He hesitated a moment and then strode through the long grass laden with seed and just decking itself with dewy jewels for the night. He crossed to the old church. The door was open. He entered and climbed the crumbling stairs to the belfry. He jumped into one of the arches and sat down, his legs dangling.

His eyes wandered slowly over the familiar scene. From behind their trees Maple House, The Firs and Elm House blinked up at him dreamily. Before them ran the ribbon of road, white under moonlight, dipping at each end into the wide world. Up and down the road before The Firs, paced two figures — Gerry and Alix. Gerry's arm was around her. Long black shadows, all pointing to the west, like fallen silhouettes cut the moonlight. Above them, the autumn-painted trees gave out a golden echo of light.

Alan drew a great, quivering breath. "My boy, you have been far, far away," J. Y. had said and he had answered, "Yes, but I have come back." But it was only now, to-night, that he had really come back.

Alan's wandering eyes settled on Maple House.