

my speed, instinct made me throw myself deliberately and violently backwards. I landed on my head with my feet in the water. The shock of the blow knocked me unconscious, and I must have remained out cold for some little time. I was so chilled on coming to that I could hardly drag my near-frozen feet out of the menacing black hole, and crawl back to thicker ice and safety. When I finally reached the bonfire again, feeling a little sick, I was greeted with "Well, where'd you come from!" No one had missed me. I might still be at the bottom of the Thornapple if instinct hadn't acted in time to save me.

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Card playing was frowned upon by the church and the elders, but most of us had a pack of cards and had been taught a few simple games by one of the older boys--was it George Parmenter? We played "pedro" or similar games, innocently enough, and enjoyed them. I also knew a species of solitaire. When I was about twelve I had a severe case of "flu" although that name was not given to it at the time. One Sunday morning when I was convalescing, but still listless and weak, my mother established me out on the sunny porch while she went to church. She left beside me a glass of milk, some reading matter, and being more broadminded than most--a pack of cards.

All the rest of the morning I happily--and wickedly--played solitaire. All West Main Street went by to church. When I saw the raised eyebrows, frowns, disapproving stares, I fear I went all out to manipulate those cards so no one could fail to see what was taking place! By night everyone in town knew that Alma had started down the primrose path, with the Devil close behind.