

# But What About Jane?

JEAN LITTLE

Lucy Maud Montgomery was directly responsible for a heinous crime I committed when I was ten. Grandma was reading *Anne of Ingleside* aloud. Young Walter Blythe had just walked "all the way from Lowbridge" because a child there had told him that his mother was sick, probably dying. When Walter, after a nightmare journey, finally reached home, he found the house in darkness. Anne was obviously dead. And there the chapter ended.

"Go ON, Grandma!" we begged.

Grandma, serenely aware that Anne could not succumb with so much of that book and a couple of sequels yet to go, refused, put down the closed book on the dresser, said good-night and left. As much an abject slave to my imagination as Walter was to his, I could not bear it. The moment it was safe, I took the book to the window through which moonlight helpfully poured, found the place with trembling hands and READ AHEAD! Anne lived!! Back in bed, I felt miraculously freed of dread for a few moments. Then an awareness of my horrendous wrongdoing oppressed me. Nobody ever read ahead. The next day, I went about haunted by the conviction that the instant Grandma picked up the book, she would somehow guess my full guilt. When, with no word or look of accusation, she calmly launched into Chapter 10, my relief was so evident that she apologized for not reading more the night before. I knew I should confess; I said not a word. I did not tell until I was safely a grown-up myself. But I did not forget what I had done or why or how it all felt.

Montgomery also remembered exactly how it was to be a child. More than that, she was able to record the experience of being a child so faithfully and vividly that reading children, years later, find themselves in her stories. These two linked gifts, first the almost total recall and second the craft which enabled her to use this rich material, are what keep L. M. Montgomery alive. Her writing is flawed. She is overly sentimental and whimsical, although these qualities were welcome in children's fiction at the time when she wrote her books. She has an irritating preoccupation with matchmaking. She revels in describing whole clans of eccentric relations who have little or nothing to do with the plot. As a matter of fact, she seems to find it extremely difficult to leave any place, person or thing without giving it a full description. She frequently loses control of her "minor" characters. In *Pat of Silver Bush*, for example, the heroine is thoroughly upstaged by the family servant

who gets to say at least fifty words to Pat's one. Montgomery's sense of humour saves her time and time again but also deserts her sometimes when she is badly in need of it. All of these weaknesses and more are to be found in Montgomery's many, many pages. Yet they are cancelled out to a great extent by the fact that Lucy Maud Montgomery knows about children.

She understands exactly what humiliates a child and how that child responds to it. She knows the way a child's conscience will magnify a small misdeed into a Sin of major proportions, a torment to be wrestled with in the darkness. The terrors children suffer in her books are gargantuan and usually the child perceives them as something that will pursue him forever. Montgomery is always aware that, for her heroes and heroines, the present is all that has actuality. She knows, too, the fatal ease and rapidity with which an adventure can become a disaster and how powerless and angry a child feels as adults manipulate his life without thought of consulting him. That sounds like enough but there is so much more this author understands. How confusing it is for children to be well-behaved in a world where the rules keep changing! How bitterly a child can resent casual well-meant teasing! And how sweet, how passing sweet, are the moments of victory, revenge, and eventual understanding! In *Emily of New Moon*, the child Emily Starr writes:

A good many things I don't understand but I will remember them and find out about them someday.

This vow each of us made and, later, kept. But how many of us would remember without writers with Montgomery's perceptive memory to remind us?

As I have already indicated, much of L. M. Montgomery's awareness reaches us through mediocre writing. I could devote the rest of this article to outlining the limitations of her talent as a creative writer and as an objective editor and rewriter of her own work, giving chapter and verse as proof. I would find this a pointless exercise. Given these limitations, plus the handicap of writing in a time when sentimentality was not only accepted but immensely popular, Montgomery still did achieve something memorable. What was it?

Or would the question be better put Who were they?

Anne Shirley is, of course, Montgomery's famous heroine. Whether or not you personally like, love or loathe Anne, I think it is safe to say that she will outlive anybody now reading this article. Recently I lived in Japan for a couple of years. Whenever I said I was a Canadian, a Japanese would invariably respond with obvious excitement, "Are you from Prince Edward Island? Do you know Anne of the red hair?" More than one schoolgirl or young woman told me, in deep seriousness, "It is my life's dream to go to Canada and see this Prince Edward Island." I have tried asking children, so far only Canadian children, "Have you read the Anne books?" One would claim to have read the entire series eleven or so times, another to have given up after the first chapter of *Anne of Green Gables*. Not a child looked blank and asked "What Anne books?" Then I tried "Have you read the Emily books?" Granted there

are not so many of them. Still, instant recognition on the part of children just was not there. Yet, in spite of Anne's popularity or perhaps because of it, I plan to ignore her, as much as possible, for the remainder of this article. I was devoted to her once and I have not lost my fondness for her during her harumscarum childhood, though I find her less engaging as she matures. But she was never my favourite among Montgomery's heroines. Jane was, in *Jane of Lantern Hill*. And, after rereading masses of Montgomery, I find I remain partial to Jane.

I want, therefore, to look more closely at Jane and at some of the other children Montgomery created, for I believe it was the children who kept us reading all those books, except for the one small space in time when we were twelve or so and became captivated by *The Blue Castle*.

This one lapse is easily understood by those of us who remember ourselves as reading twelve-year-olds. The book is purely and simply a dream, more literate and enchanting than those found in Love Comics. When dreaming is the biggest part of life, *The Blue Castle* is more than satisfactory. The current booming sales of Harlequin Romances and their ilk show that many people do not grow beyond the need for the fantasy world in *The Blue Castle*. Montgomery's effort is much better than some, which is not to heap praises upon her head but merely to give her her due. She at least spices it with humour.

Often, throughout all her books, Lucy Maud Montgomery's sense of the ridiculous or her abrupt return to the mundane saves her from banality. Also her wit is delightful when she does not exploit it. This bit, from *Magic for Marigold*, is one illustration chosen from among hundreds.

Gwennie stuck out her tongue at Grandmother. It gave Marigold a shock to realize that anybody could do that and live.

To return to the children! Not every child coming from Montgomery's busy pen does her credit. She seems, to me, to have written about four types of children: Stock Children, Non-Children, Exaggerated Children and Real Children. These classifications are not as neat and airtight as I make them sound because Montgomery occasionally loses track of what kind of child she has in hand and lets him or her slip momentarily into being somebody else. This does not trouble child readers unduly since they too step out of character every so often. Critical adults accept such lapses with less equanimity.

The best illustrations of Stock Children are to be found in *The Story Girl* and its sequel *The Golden Road*. Since these two books are in no way separate stories, I shall discuss them as one. Eight children are involved and every one is what I call a Stock Child. Each is early given certain identifying characteristics which never vary. Felix is fat and sensitive about it. Felicity, more complex, is pretty, vain, a good cook, and a snob. She is also always jealous of her cousin Sara and at odds with her brother Dan. Dan is sarcastic. (I read this story carefully less than two months ago and I honestly cannot remember another thing about Dan.) Cecily, sister to Dan and Felicity, is almost a carbon copy of

Beth in *Little Women* (although Beth will be remembered long after Cecily is forgotten). Cecily is good, gentle, timidly brave, and patient throughout. We are given to understand, after making our way through seven-hundred-and-nineteen pages, that dear Cecily will not live to grow up and we feel not the slightest twinge of shock at the news. Peter, the hired boy, is lively, irreverent, and smitten with Felicity. (When Montgomery writes about hired boys, she makes it crystal clear that they are not made of the same stuff as The Family, but she gives them gumption and intelligence and hints, if she does not spell it out, that they will rise in the world and make their mark. An interesting essay could be written on her whole treatment of class distinctions. Anne, for instance, although definitely an orphan, is discovered to have sprung from genteel stock. By their relatives shall ye know them.) Sara Ray, a neighbour child, cries. Always! Sara Stanley, the fabled Story Girl herself, is a heroine who is not a heroine because Montgomery never gives her a plot within which she can develop into a real person. She remains another Stock Child, although the most complicated. She is always vivid, mysterious, charming, slightly humanized by her inability to learn to cook, and so ever ready with a story that I, for one, sometimes longed to tape her mouth shut. Beverley, the narrator of the whole thing, is pompous and ordinary. He also, for a very good reason, sounds middle-aged.

In *The Alpine Path* Lucy Maud Montgomery declares:

*The Story Girl*. . . is my own favourite among my books, the one that gave me the greatest pleasure to write, the one whose characters and landscape seem to me most real.<sup>1</sup>

When she wrote this, she had not reached the end of her career as a writer, but she had had seven novels published. Why, one wonders, was she so partial to this early effort? I suspect the reason lies, in part at least, in the fact that the book took so little effort to write. She did not have to struggle with plot or search for ways to reveal change and growth in her characters. There is no sustained plot and nobody changes. At the same time, through the handy vehicle of the babbling Story Girl, Montgomery was able to relish retelling all the family and local legends to which she had listened with fascination during her own childhood. And she provided herself, alias the Story Girl, with a highly satisfactory audience, always ready to drop everything and listen spellbound. She failed to realize that a story told has an immediacy which is missing in that same story written down, unless the writer is someone with a storytelling gift far exceeding Montgomery's. It is only fair to say that few and far between are the writers who can successfully interject the telling of a tale which is not vitally linked to the plot of the characters. It has been tried, time and again, by the ablest of authors, and it has been my observation that children invariably simply skip to where "the real story" picks up again.

*The Story Girl-Golden Road* succeeds seldom, but that is not due simply to the fact that the children are Stock Children. Such boys and girls are the heroes and heroines of many excellent books. Arthur Ransome's characters, to a much lesser extent than Montgomery's, are

Stock Children much of the time. John and Susan are consistently dependable and in charge, Nancy always up to deviltry, Peggy a born follower, and so on. But so much happens in his books and his writing draws you on with its magic so skilfully that you do not notice, mind, or even believe that the children remain static in character. Montgomery, also, can make her Stock Children come alive. Before I reread the books, I found I remembered only one incident clearly, but I did remember one and at least thirty years had passed since I had read the story. It was the time when the children learned that the coming of the end of the world had been prophesied and the date had been printed in the newspaper! The group grew more and more terrified as the fateful hour approached. I shared their terror. What child has not spent uneasy minutes pondering over this eventuality? The children in the book plagued adults with questions which sought reassurance but brought upon them nothing save amusement and teasing. I found I still recalled their solemn vows to reform their entire lives if only the world be permitted to remain as always. I felt with them intense relief, joy, and freedom when the hour passed and the Last Trumpet had not sounded. Why did I recollect this when every single story Sara Stanley told had vanished from my memory leaving no trace? It was not because the eight acted unpredictably; it was because they acted. Something dramatic was actually happening instead of being recounted. We read other L. M. Montgomery books till they were in tatters; we left these two looking almost as untouched as the day they were purchased.

The author made two other major mistakes with this book. - The worst was that the entire story is told in retrospect by an adult forty years or so after the action, what there was of it, took place. Yesterday is not the world children inhabit, not unless an artist can, like Hester Burton or Geoffrey Trease, turn "the olden days" into now. Sentences like the following, which comes fairly early in *The Story Girl*, destroy the reader's feeling of being himself right in the thick of things.

Never had I heard a voice like hers. Never, in all my life since, have I heard such a voice.

Compulsive readers or devoted Montgomery fans will keep going. The others, and there are far more of them, will drop the book and look for something offering more involvement.

Montgomery also gave in to the temptation to help fill up her manuscript by including examples of writing ostensibly done by her child characters. This is fun for an author to do. Do you really know your characters so well and do you have the skill necessary to do their writing for them, allowing each his or her individual style? Style or idiosyncrasy? Many authors, often unconsciously I would guess, end up with one eye on their adult audience who will enjoy grammatical absurdities, flowery or wildly inappropriate descriptions, and hilarious spelling errors. I remember shrinking inside as my grandmother laughed heartily over these parodies. "Do they laugh like that at the things I show them, when I'm not there?" a sensitive child asks. The answer is clearly "Yes".

I must make clear, before leaving this point, that there are times when a child's writing forms an integral part of the book itself. Emily Starr, in *Emily of New Moon* is a child in the first apprenticeship stages of becoming a writer. She has to fight her formidable Aunt Elizabeth for her right to keep what amounts to a journal and to keep what she writes in it private. From her schoolmates, she wins both praise and mockery for her efforts. She suffers cruel ridicule from one teacher and, later, accepts severe yet encouraging criticism from another about her writing. The reader needs evidence of Emily's ability or lack of it to make all this plausible. Also Montgomery uses Emily's writing to reveal something of her inner longings, aloneness, resolution, despairs, and so on. Still, Emily's outpourings, while often delightful, should have been cut in half, I think, for here again Montgomery falls back on Emily's telling about things happening instead of letting the reader be there at the very instant. A different sort of example of a child's writing being important to a book is Faith Meredith's open letter to her father's congregation in *Rainbow Valley*. Instead of slowing the plot, this frank epistle sends it forward with alacrity.

The Non-Children, among whom neither Faith nor Emily belong, are hardly worth commenting upon since no child believes in them for an instant. Little Elizabeth, in *Anne of Windy Poplars*, is one. Paul Irving is another. There are others sprinkled here and there. Montgomery fails to give them life. They have not one redeeming flaw. They are always small for their age and they have huge wistful eyes with long lashes and they make impossible speeches:

"You are the only person who loves me in the whole world," said Elizabeth. "When you talk to me I smell violets."

Words like that, issuing from the mouth of a supposed child, made me cringe even when I was a child, and a most uncritical child, myself. I doubt that Montgomery herself was excessively fond of these creatures. They seem to be the type of child appearing least often in her books, and almost never in her best. The Stock Children have fun; the Non-Children may have heard of it but certainly never take part in any.

The Exaggerated Children, on the other hand, usually know far more about fun than is needful. *Magic for Marigold* has two such in rapid succession, Princess Varvara and Marigold's cousin Gwendolen. They are wild, almost amoral children. They are diabolical and outrageous. They are occasionally repentant for the moment or two, but this is never convincing and does not last. Children read about them with awe-struck delight. They are so impossibly wicked and yet they often escape unscathed. But these Exaggerated Children are so busy being bad that they have no time left in which to think or feel, respond or question. The shocks come at one with the staccato quality of the Sesame Street commercials. To have number facts presented in rapid fire succession is one thing; to be so introduced to a person is another. It may leave the reader gasping with a combination of horror and pleasure, but it also leaves him definitely on the outside, looking on. On the other hand, all children have exaggerated days or wish they dared, so these "holy terrors" of Montgomery's have their place.

"But what about Jane?" a voice demands with pardonable impatience.

Jane is one of the Real Children. Yet among the Real Children there are further divisions. There are the inferior Real Children, those lacking in Imagination but strong on faithfulness like Diana Barry in *Anne of Green Gables* or those who begin as irritating prigs but become people like Cousin Phyllis in *Jane of Lantern Hill*. And there are the superior Real Children who experience "The Flash" like Emily Starr or have Imagination like Anne Shirley. These superior beings, the ones who really matter, usually talk a blue streak, often astonish and/or shock their elders with their precocity, suffer agonies--but believable ones which the reader suffers with them--are humiliated, misunderstood and misjudged, but come out victorious over all in the end. They are totally alive, exceedingly human, and yet possess an added something. Could it be that this plus factor, whatever it may be, removes them just slightly from the rest of us? Are they, maybe, every so often, too wonderful?

Saying so is heresy because we love them, Anne and Emily at least. Marigold might have fared better if she had been allowed into the story before page forty. Pat, in *Pat of Silver Bush*, was, as far as I was concerned, close to being a Non-Child. I could not understand her stifling fear of change. It seemed not only excessive but silly. So what if her father shaved off his moustache! As a niece of mine, an ardent Montgomery fan, succinctly put it, "Pat's really quite dumb." That this feeling of dread stemmed from real emotion Montgomery herself vividly remembered feeling is a matter of record, but most children's only memory of their mother is not the sight of her lying in her coffin.<sup>2</sup> There can be little doubt that the child Lucy Maud was had more reason to be apprehensive about life than most.

Emily and Anne, however, remain strong heroines, not allowing themselves to be overshadowed or pushed aside by other characters. Ilse Burnley, Emily's friend, is a girl who is both Exaggerated and Real, fiery, unpredictable and interesting, but she never usurps Emily's position as central figure. These Real Children change. They get into trouble and learn how to get out again. They suffer consequences and experience both deep joy and sorrow. They are all heroines should be, if only they were not quite so . . . super-sensitive?

And now, Jane! Jane is the heroine of L. M. Montgomery's last novel and Jane was not met with quite the acclaim her predecessors had won.<sup>3</sup> Why not? Nobody seems to have wondered. Could it be simply that people were startled to encounter a child who was just a child?

I do not for one moment claim that *Jane of Lantern Hill* is a book without flaws. Jane's parents are two of the most far-fetched creatures Montgomery ever concocted. Mother is so fluttery and ineffectual that one longs to swat her. Jane's loyalty to her surprises the reader and even Jane has her moments of doubt. Dad is easier to take because he is cast as the hero with Jane as his heroine. His problem is that he is far too good to be true. He is always ready to spend time with his beloved

daughter (even though his love is a trifle late in manifesting itself; for years, Jane does not know she has a father), so handsome that Jane, still unaware of his identity, cuts his picture out of a magazine and fantasizes over it, and so willing to go along with Jane's least whim that it is a good thing for all concerned that Jane is a child with sense. Dad is given only one character defect, and one feels that Montgomery hated to mar him even this much and only did so because it was necessary to the plot. He has a blind faith in and fondness for his sister who, with Jane's maternal grandmother's help, managed to wreck Mother and Dad's marriage before Jane was old enough to set things straight. As I reread the book, I found Mother and Dad as foolish as ever and concluded that Jane was going to have uphill work holding the marriage, mended at the book's happy ending, together.

As I earlier indicated, however, I believe the children, not the adults in Montgomery's books, were what held us. The story of Jane, pitted against adult forces she does not understand, being undermined and nearly destroyed as an independent person by a grandmother who is all the wicked witches and selfish stepmothers rolled into one, and yet somehow managing to keep fighting for her selfhood, still found me involved. I was delighted all over again when, with some help but largely through her own tenacity and maturation, Jane wins through to becoming a person with whom others must reckon.

Jane is described in a few sentences early in the book:

. . . Jane was not very good at games. She always felt awkward in them. At eleven she was as tall as most girls of thirteen. She towered among the girls of her class. They did not like it and it made Jane feel that she fitted in nowhere.

Does this sound like the same writer who, years before, wrote of Anne Shirley:

Her face was small and white and thin, also much freckled; her mouth was large and so were her eyes, that looked green in some lights and gray in others.

. . . an extraordinary observer might have seen that the chin was very pointed and pronounced; that the big eyes were full of spirit and vivacity; that the mouth was sweet-lipped and expressive; that the forehead was broad and full; in short . . . that no commonplace soul inhabited the body of this stray woman-child . . .

Or who wrote concerning Emily Starr:

She put the faded blue hood on over her long, heavy braid of glossy, jet-black hair, and smiled...The smile began at the corners of her lips and spread over her face in a slow, subtle, very wonderful way...In all else...she was like the Starrs--in her large purplish-grey eyes with their very long lashes and black brows, in her high, white forehead...in the delicate moulding of her pale oval face and sensitive mouth, in the little ears that

were pointed just a wee bit to show that she was kin to tribes of elfland.

Whom do most eleven-year-old girls see when they look in their mirrors? Anne? Emily? I saw Jane.

The theme of *Jane of Lantern Hill* is similar to that of the other two, *Anne of Green Gables* and *Emily of New Moon*. At the beginning, the child is found unacceptable as she stands and the adults, or most of them, try to kill, figuratively, the unacceptable person and create another made their liking. All three girls resist. All have allies: Anne in Matthew, Emily in Cousin Jimmy and Aunt Laura, Jane in her father. But the outcomes or solutions differ. Anne and Emily eventually win love for their true selves from those who earlier sought to reshape them, and the two girls, without conscious effort, succeed in softening the harshness and implacability of Marilla and Aunt Elizabeth. As the children gain in power, the adults lose. Jane wins no love from her antagonists nor does she want to, since they are essentially evil rather than merely old-fashioned and strong-willed. Instead Jane becomes strong enough to be herself in spite of them. As she gains self-confidence, her grandmother and her Aunt Irene lose much of their power to hurt her but they are, in no way, redeemed, nor are they reconciled to her as Jane. She is still unacceptable at the end of the book, but their acceptance has become of no importance to her. She has outgrown them.

Jane's position at the outset of the book is shown clearly in the names by which she is called. Jane was christened Jane Victoria, the names of her two grandmothers. Grandmother, who longs to be rid of Jane, calls her Victoria which is her own name. She gives a great deal of herself in an effort to obliterate anything in Jane which suggests that Jane was fathered as well as mothered. Her mother, who loves her child but cannot stand up to her own mother's corroding possessiveness, calls her Jane Victoria. Her father and Jane herself, both of whom want her to be the person she really is, call her Jane. Montgomery's feeling for the importance of names to children is interesting. Anne's insistence that her name be spelled with an 'e' is now famous. Also every book with a strong heroine in it has her name in the title.

Ways of attacking and diminishing a child's sense of her own worth have not changed. The following scene demonstrates this and also shows Montgomery at her best:

"Tut, tut," said Uncle William, "Victoria could get her grade easily enough if she wanted to. The thing is to study hard. She's getting to be a big girl now and should realize that. What is the capital of Canada, Victoria?"

Jane knew perfectly well what the capital of Canada was but Uncle William fired the question at her so unexpectedly and all the guests stopped eating to listen . . . and for the moment she couldn't remember for her life what the name was. She blushed . . . stammered . . . squirmed. If she had looked at mother she would have seen that mother was forming the word silently on

her lips, but she could not look at any one. She was ready to die of shame and mortification.

"Phyllis," said Uncle William, "tell Victoria what the capital of Canada is."

Phyllis promptly responded.

"Ottawa."

"O-t-t-a-w-a," said Uncle William to Jane.

. . . Jane dropped her fork and writhed in anguish when she caught grandmother's eye. Grandmother touched her little silver bell.

"Will you bring Miss Victoria *another* fork, Davis," she said in a tone implying that Jane had had several forks already.

Every child has sat at that dinner table and not known the right answer. Every child has dropped her fork when all she had left was her dignity. Every child has not been Emily or Anne for they were children with something special about them. We all hope we possess that magic extra ingredient that sees Emily and Anne through, but underneath that hope lies the hard knowledge that we are fork-droppers.

The happy ending to *Jane of Lantern Hill* when the butterfly mother and the perfect father are reunited was not the part I reread and treasured most. I lingered over and loved Jane's times of personal triumph. When Cousin Phyllis, she who was so ready with the capital of Canada, comes to the Island on vacation with her family, she spends a day with Jane. First Jane cooks well. Phyllis gasps. Then Jane swims capably. Phyllis, once more, is suitably impressed. (Notice that Jane does NOT read Phyllis a poem which is wonderful beyond anything Phyllis or I could ever produce. Jane does things anybody who cared enough could learn to do.) Then the two girls set out to walk Phyllis back to her hotel. Phyllis is afraid of the dark; Phyllis falls climbing over a fence; Phyllis is reduced to quivering terror at the sight of some cows. That Jane has had to conquer some trepidation over cows herself, a while before, lends a beautifully realistic touch.

"Oh, what's that?" Phyllis clutched Jane.

"That? Only cows."

"Oh, Victoria, I'm so scared of them. I can't pass them. I can't . . . Suppose they think . . ."

"Who cares what a cow thinks?" said Jane superbly.

Who cares what a cow thinks? Who cares what the capital of Canada is, Phyllis? Not Jane. Never again. Phyllis, to the reader's intense pleasure, sobs pitifully,

"Will you . . . walk between me . . . and the cows?"

Jane consents. She is comforting, protective, kindness itself -- and very humanly delighted with her own performance.

Did Montgomery, in writing this last book, deliberately turn away from writing about the special children who had made her famous? Was she looking for more reality?

I doubt that she was consciously doing so for the reality is always there even when it is less easy to find than in *Jane of Lantern Hill*. The burning embarrassment of having to wear the wrong clothes to school, the shock of betrayal when your "best friend" turns out to be a snake in the grass, the desolation of homesickness, the impossibility of communicating the urgency of childhood to adults who never doubt that tomorrow will be soon enough, the naming of special places with private names, the fear of Judgement Day and of cows, all of these and so much more Lucy Maud Montgomery records faithfully and with complete identification. So children will continue to find themselves in her pages. They will have to skip because there is a lot of waste space there too, but rage, wonder, laughter, misery, resentment, panic, ecstasy, failure, love, and insight wait therein between the inconsequential parts. And the dreams are there! Because if Anne, who was taken in by mistake, if Emily, who was given a home by the drawing of lots, and if Jane, who did not know the capital of Canada, can all make it through to victory, maybe we can too.

Is it Canadian Children's Literature though?

. . . In a recent letter to Rosemary Sutcliff, I mentioned getting ready to write this article. One paragraph in her reply answers that question so much better than I can that I will let her, the writer she is now and the child, albeit English, she so clearly remembers being, finish for me:

. . . About the L. M. Montgomery books, this Emily you mention among her heroines, isn't by *any* chance, *Emily of New Moon* is she? Because I read that in hospital, aged about twelve, -- sleeping out-of-doors in part of the Ward, and reading in the summer dusk with the stars pricking out, and the bugles from the distant barracks sounding 'Lights Out'. And it remains magic in my mind, and I have never been able to trace it because of not knowing who it was by. If it *is* one of hers, it's probably one of the bad ones but, oh, how I loved it!

#### NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Lucy Maud Montgomery, *The Alpine Path* (Toronto: Fitzhenry & Whiteside, 1917), p. 78.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> Helen M. Ridley, *The Story of L. M. Montgomery 1874-1942* (Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson, 1956), p. 130.

*Jean Little is the internationally translated author of many children's novels -- Mine for Keeps, One to Grow On, From Anna, Kate, and others -- and winner of the Little, Brown Canadian Children's Book Award. Her most recent book is Stand in the Wind, published this Autumn.*