

The editorial practises which inform the volume are set out clearly in the Introduction. Some descriptions, for example, which are available in Montgomery's memoir, *The Alpine Path*, are deleted here for the sake of simplicity. But in addition, "some entries about the war" (xx) and some detailing Montgomery's many ailments are deleted. Given what I have described as the journal's considerable contribution to what we know of Montgomery and her political milieu, the former choice needs elaboration: what sorts of war news entries were left out? A social historian might also prefer that details of everyday maladies be retained, or at least summarized briefly in notes.

One feature of this edition which deserves special mention is the creative use of photographs. In Volume One, relevant photographs from Montgomery's collection appear on separate pages, at intervals. In this volume, the editors have combined text and photograph exactly as Montgomery tended to do when assembling her journal, placing appropriate photos, upon which she would sometimes comment specifically, between the leaves. This technical feat adds greatly to the reader's enjoyment of the journal – to the feeling, as Lucy Maud Montgomery herself expressed it, of having "relived" those years "more vividly and intensely than . . . in reading them" (405).

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ANNE: THE BOOK FROM THE FILM

The Anne of Green Gables storybook. Based on the Kevin Sullivan film of Lucy Maud Montgomery's classic novel. L.M. Montgomery. Adapted by Fiona McHugh. Firefly Books, 1987. 79 pp., \$16.95 \$9.95 cloth, paper. ISBN 0-920668-43-7, 0-920668-42-9.

The back cover of this latest production of the *Anne* industry announces that "younger readers (and grown-ups who have a heart-felt affection for the story) can enjoy a briefer, illustrated version [of *Anne of Green Gables*] based on the Kevin Sullivan production that thrilled millions. *The Anne of Green Gables* storybook contains simpler language for young readers, the storyline and 76 lovely full colour photographs from the Emmy award-winning television production." The publicity writer also assures us that this edition "is a book that every lover of 'Anne' will treasure." I for one, demur. The language is not significantly simpler than in the original novel, the storyline in following the film deviates from Montgomery's novel, and the 76 lovely photographs serve merely as expensive decoration for those who do not own a VCR. This 79 page

book is an attractive object for those, young and old, who do not have powers of attention sufficient to read the original 300 and more page novel. It does not, however, do justice either to Montgomery's book or to the Sullivan film. It shuffles scenes from the original novel and interlaces passages from Montgomery with passages she did not write and no doubt would not have written.

Take for example the presentation of Marilla. In Montgomery's novel she is austere, hard working, and deeply conservative; yet she is also warm, understanding, and independent. She works alongside Matthew milking the cows and she knows the value of both hard work and of play. She is dignified and controlled. *The Anne of Green Gables* storybook attempts to convey these qualities and highlight her warmth, humour, and independence; the feminist possibilities are spotted. But when Matthew and Marilla discuss Anne's future at Green Gables, Marilla does not milk the cows with her brother and she speaks words which Montgomery had attributed to Matthew. "I wouldn't give a dog I liked to that Blewett woman," Marilla says defensively in the *Storybook*. These are Matthew's words in the original, and they have a more authentic ring coming from him. Marilla does not have the coarseness these words suggest. Nor does she have the ironic edge evident in her parting shot to Matthew: "She can talk the hind leg off a mule. And won't that be a nice change around here!"

The "simpler language" the *Storybook* cover mentions is really a paring away of what gives Montgomery's book its strength. Lyric passages, references to fairy tales, literary allusions, and flower symbolism (especially the narcissus) are gone. What remains is the skeleton of Montgomery's prose, complete with her penchant for the elaborate adverb. As in the original, Gilbert speaks "contritely" or "stoutly," Anne walks "disdainfully" or speaks "tearfully," and so on. If this book is to appeal to "younger readers," then I wonder why syntax and diction imitate Montgomery's late Victorian rhythms. Passages such as the following seem to me to demand a sophisticated grasp of prose: "Pausing only to skewer her hat to her head, she set out for Green Gables, where Marilla Cuthbert lived with her brother, Matthew," or "Marilla looked like a woman of narrow experience and rigid conscience, which she was." I know from experience that Montgomery's books may be read with pleasure and enthusiasm by nine-year-olds, and I must question the ingenuousness of the publisher's pitch that the audience for this Anne book is "younger readers".

In shortening the novel, McHugh has, of course, been constrained by the film. But where the film can rely on the visual image to imply much of what the writer communicates in words, this shortened version can offer neither the richness of the novel nor the richness of the film. Marilla notes that Anne "prattles on without stopping for breath," but at this point in the *Storybook* Anne has not prattled on at length. Whereas Anne takes nineteen lines to speak of the White Way of Delight in the novel, she takes only seven in the

Storybook. This is representative. Never does she babble with the enthusiasm and headlong rush of the novel's Anne. And because so much is condensed into 79 pages, we have strangely unprepared changes, especially Anne's change from a chattering thirteen-year-old to a thoughtful and sober sixteen-year-old about to take on the responsibility of teaching at Avonlea Public School and caring for the aging Marilla. Motivation also changes. Anne colours her hair green because Gilbert has called her "Carrots".

The switch in motivation indicates the direction of the *Storybook* (and the Sullivan film). The focus here is not so much on Anne's personality as it is on Anne's relationship to Gilbert. Clearly, the story, despite its nod to feminism, is about the romance between Gilbert and Anne. By the end, Gilbert can "teasingly" call Anne "carrots" and not receive rebuke from her. And Anne can tell Diana that she will pray "someone wonderful comes to Avonlea and sweeps you off your feet." The two girls go on to speak of Gilbert, and Diana asks Anne whether he is "fair game." The words grate and seem inappropriate to Montgomery's sensibility.

Of course, many abridged versions of the classics have appeared over the years, and perhaps these bring works to readers who might not have read the originals. Yet, I confess dislike for this kind of thing. *Anne of Green Gables* can and does appeal to readers younger than the book's protagonist. Why we need a "simplified" version for younger readers escapes me. As for the book's older readers, they must miss the tensions, the passion, and the complexity of the original novel in this short and recast version. A venture such as the *Storybook* intends to capitalize on the popularity of the *Anne* film. If it serves as a substitute for some readers who might well have read Montgomery's novel, then I lament. If, however, there is any chance that this work may bring readers to Montgomery's novel, then I am pleased. I fear the former is more likely than the latter.

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THE DEGRASSI STREET KIDS IN PRINT

The Kids of Degrassi Street: Casey draws the line. Kit Hood and Linda Schuyler with Eve Jennings. Lorimer, 1987. 139 pp., \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-88862-866-8; **Karen keeps her word**. Kit Hood and Linda Schuyler with Eve Jennings. Lorimer, 1987. 110 pp., \$4.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-009-0; **Martin meets the pirates**. Kit Hood and Linda Schuyler with Eve Jennings. Lorimer, 1987. 111 pp., \$4.95 paper. ISBN 1-55028-003-1; **Griff gets a hand**. Kit Hood and Linda