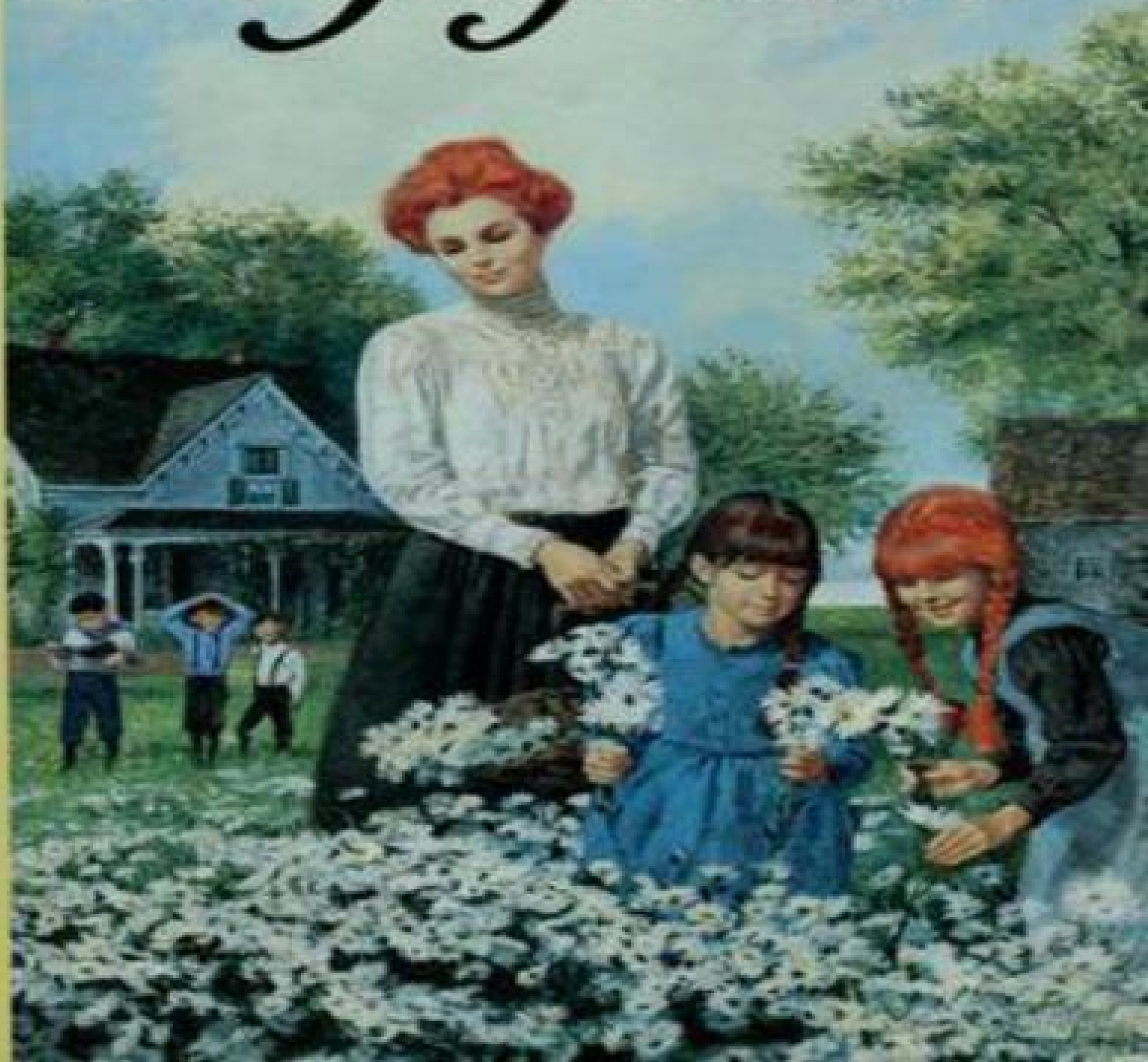


The Anne of Green Gables Novels #6

L.M. MONTGOMERY

Anne of Ingleside



PUFFIN CLASSICS

ANNE OF INGLESIDE

LUCY MAUDE MONTGOMERY (1874–1942) was born on Prince Edward Island, off the east coast of Canada. She lived there throughout her childhood with her grandparents (following her mother's death in 1876). Readers of the *Anne of Green Gables* series of books will find plenty of scenes drawn from the author's happy memories of the island and the farmhouse where she was brought up.

Like many a future writer, Lucy Maude Montgomery was not only an avid reader as a child, but also composed numerous short stories and poems. Her first published piece was a poem that appeared in the local paper when she was fifteen years old. Later, after she had finished school and university, she turned her love of books to good effect by becoming a teacher.

She continued to write, and was once asked to contribute a short story to a magazine. She dusted off an idea for a plot she had jotted down when she was much younger – and turned it into one of the most popular books ever written for children. *Anne of Green Gables* was first published in 1908.

Lucy herself said about *Anne of Green Gables*: 'I thought girls in their teens might like it. But grandparents, school and college boys, old pioneers in the Australian bush, girls in India, missionaries in China, monks in remote monasteries, premiers of Great Britain, and red-headed people all over the world have written to me, telling me how they loved Anne and her successors.'

The 'successors' are nine further *Anne* books, all of which are now published in Puffin Classics. Lucy Maude Montgomery continued to write under her maiden name after marrying a Presbyterian minister, Ewan MacDonald, in 1911. And, despite moving with him to Toronto, she continued to set her stories on 'the only island there is', and where her heart always remained.

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L. M. MONTGOMERY

Anne of Ingleside



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To W. G. P.

‘How white the moonlight is tonight,’ said Anne Blythe to herself, as she went up the walk of the Wright garden to Diana Wright’s front door, where little cherry blossom petals were coming down on the salty, breeze-stirred air.

She paused for a moment to look about her on hills and woods she had loved in olden days and still loved. Dear Avonlea! Glen St Mary was home to her now and had been home for many years, but Avonlea had something that Glen St Mary could never have. Ghosts of herself met her at every turn... the fields she had roamed in welcomed her... unfading echoes of the old sweet life were all about her; every spot she looked upon had some lovely memory. There were haunted gardens here and there where bloomed all the roses of yesteryear. Anne always loved to come home to Avonlea even when, as now, the reason for her visit had been a sad one. She and Gilbert had stayed for a week. Marilla and Mrs Lynde could not bear to have her go away too soon. Her old porch gable room was always kept for her, and when Anne had gone to it the night of her arrival she found that Mrs Lynde had put a big, homely bouquet of spring flowers in it for her, a bouquet that, when Anne buried her face in it, seemed to hold all the fragrance of unforgotten years. The Anne-who-used-to-be was waiting there for her. Deep, dear old gladnesses stirred in her heart. The gable room was putting its arms around her, enclosing her, enveloping her. She looked lovingly at her old bed with the apple-leaf spread Mrs Lynde had knitted and the spotless pillows trimmed with deep lace Mrs Lynde had crocheted... at Marilla’s braided rugs on the floor... at the mirror that had reflected the face of the little orphan, with her unwritten child’s forehead, who had cried herself to sleep there that first night so long ago. Anne forgot that she was the joyful mother of five children... with Susan Baker again knitting mysterious bootees at Ingleside... and was Anne of Green Gables once more. Mrs Lynde found her still

staring dreamily in the mirror when she came in, bringing clean towels.

‘It’s real good to have you home again, Anne, that’s what. It’s nine years since you went away, but Marilla and I can’t seem to get over missing you. It’s not so lonesome since Davy got married. Millie is a real nice little thing... such pies!... though she’s curious as a chipmunk about everything. But I’ve always said and always will say that there’s nobody like you.’

‘Ah, but this mirror can’t be tricked, Mrs Lynde. It’s telling me plainly, “You’re not as young as you once were,” ’ said Anne whimsically.

‘You’ve kept your complexion very well,’ said Mrs Lynde consolingly. ‘Of course you never had much colour to lose.’

‘At any rate I’ve never a hint of a second chin yet,’ said Anne gaily, ‘and my old room remembers me, Mrs Lynde. I’m glad. It would hurt me so if I ever came back and found it had forgotten me. And it’s wonderful to see the moon rising over the Haunted Wood again.’

‘It looks like a great big piece of gold in the sky, doesn’t it?’ said Mrs Lynde, feeling that she was taking a wild, poetical flight and thankful that Marilla wasn’t there to hear.

‘Look at those pointed firs coming out against it... and the birches in the hollow still holding their arms up to the silver sky. They’re big trees now... they were just baby things when I came here; that *does* make me feel a bit old.’

‘Trees are like children,’ said Mrs Lynde. ‘It’s dreadful the way they grow up the minute you turn your back on them. Look at Fred Wright. He’s only thirteen, but he’s nearly as tall as his father. There’s a hot chicken-pie for supper and I made some of my lemon biscuits for you. You needn’t be a mite afraid to sleep in that bed. I aired the sheets today, and Marilla didn’t know I did it and gave them another airing... and Millie didn’t know either of us did and gave them a third. I hope Mary Maria Blythe will get out tomorrow, she always enjoys a funeral so.’

‘Aunt Mary Maria – Gilbert always calls her that although she was only his father’s cousin – always calls me “Annie”,’ shuddered Anne. ‘And the first time she saw me after I was married she said, “It’s so strange Gilbert picked you. He could have had so many nice girls.” Perhaps that’s why I’ve never liked her, and I know Gilbert doesn’t either, though he’s too clannish to admit it.’

‘Will Gilbert be staying up long?’

‘No. He has to go back tomorrow night. He left a patient in a very critical condition.’

‘Oh, well, I suppose there isn’t much to keep him in Avonlea now, since his mother went last year. Old Mr Blythe never held up his head after her death... just hadn’t anything left to live for. The Blythes were always like that... always set their affections too much on earthly things. It’s real sad to think there are none of them left in Avonlea. They were a fine old stock. But then, there’s any amount of Sloanes. The Sloanes are still Sloanes, Anne, and will be for ever and ever, world without end. Amen.’

‘Let there be as many Sloanes as there will, I’m going out after supper to walk all over the old orchard by moonlight. I suppose I’ll have to go to bed finally, though I’ve always thought sleeping on moonlight nights a waste of time... but I’m going to wake early to see the first faint morning light over the Haunted Wood. The sky will turn to coral and the robins will be strutting around... perhaps a little grey sparrow will alight on the window-sill, and there’ll be gold and purple pansies to look at...’

‘But the rabbits has et up all the June lily bed,’ said Mrs Lynde sadly, as she waddled downstairs, feeling secretly relieved that there need be no more talk about the moon. Anne had always been a bit queer that way. And there did not any longer seem to be much use in hoping she would outgrow it.

Diana came down the walk to meet Anne. Even in the moonlight you saw that her hair was still black and her cheeks rosy and her eyes bright. But the moonlight could not hide that she was something stouter than in years agone... and Diana had never been what Avonlea folks called ‘skinny’.

‘Don’t worry, darling, I haven’t come to stay...’

‘As if I’d worry over *that*,’ said Diana reproachfully. ‘You know I’d far rather spend the evening with you than go to the reception. I feel I haven’t seen half enough of you and now you’re going back the day after tomorrow. But Fred’s brother, you know... we’ve just got to go.’

‘Of course you have. And I just ran up for a moment. I came the old way, Di... past the Dryad’s Bubble... through the Haunted Wood... past your bowery old garden... and along by Willowmere. I even stopped to watch the willows upside down in the water as we always used to do. They’ve grown so.’

‘Everything has,’ said Diana with a sigh. ‘When I look at young Fred! We’ve all changed so, except you. You never change, Anne. How *do* you keep so slim? Look at me!’

‘A bit matronish, of course,’ laughed Anne. ‘But you’ve escaped the middle-aged spread so far, Di. As for my not changing... well, Mrs H. B. Donnell agrees with you. She told me at the funeral that I didn’t look a day older. But Mrs Harmon Andrews doesn’t. *She* said, “Dear me, Anne, how you’ve failed!” It’s all in the beholder’s eye – or conscience. The only time I feel I’m getting along a bit is when I look at the pictures in the magazines. The heroes and heroines in them are beginning to look *too young* to me. But never mind, Di, we’re going to be girls again tomorrow. That’s what I’ve come up to tell you. We’re going to take an afternoon and evening off and visit all our old haunts... every one of them. We’ll walk over the spring fields and through those ferny old woods. We’ll see all the old familiar things we loved and hills where we’ll see our youth again. Nothing ever seems impossible in spring, you know. We’ll stop feeling parental and responsible and be as giddy as Mrs Lynde really thinks me still in her heart of hearts. There’s really no fun in being sensible *all* the time, Diana.’

‘My, how like you that sounds! And I’d love to. But...’

‘There aren’t any buts. I know you’re thinking, “Who’ll get the men’s supper” – ’