

# SUNDAY MAGAZINE

## Of The Sunday Star

PART 3

20 PAGES

WASHINGTON, D. C. SEPT. 18, 1910



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*Title:* The Letter Patricia Wrote

*Date of first publication:* 1910

*Author:* L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery (1874-1942)

*Date first posted:* Mar. 14, 2017

*Date last updated:* Mar. 14, 2017

Faded Page eBook #20170324

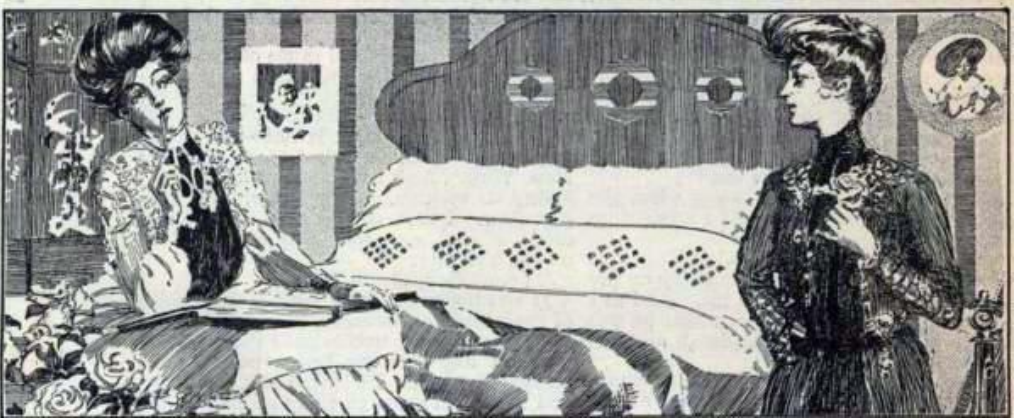
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SUNDAY MAGAZINE FOR SEPTEMBER 18, 1910

# The Letter Patricia Wrote

L. M. Montgomery

Author of "Kilmeny of the  
Orchard," "Ann of Green  
Gables," Etc.



“Do I look pretty nice, Pat?” asked Sally, posing. Patricia stopped gnawing her penhandle, laid it down carefully, and looked at Sally critically, as she was wont to look at beautiful pictures. She was curled up, Turk fashion, on the middle of the bed, with a ragged portfolio in her lap and her new yellow tea gown gathered gracefully about her. Out of its billows and laces rose her thin, eager little face, with the big, dark, long lashed eyes that were looking Sally over. Patricia’s only beauty was in her eyes, and she knew it. When her gaze had traveled from the tip of Sally’s satin slipper to the crown of her sleek brown head, Patricia drew a long sigh and dropped her pointed chin in her hands.

“Sally Fairfax,” she said, “do you know how pretty you are?”

Sally nodded. “Of course. What are looking glasses for, and men? That wasn’t what I meant. Are all my ends tucked in? Is my skirt straight? And would this rose look better lower down? I’m afraid it’s too high,—it will make me look lopsided,—but I do hate things tickling my ears.”

“Sally,” said Patricia again, ignoring the question, “there are times when I hate you fiercely, because you are beautiful and I am not. Just now is one of them. I would give anything in the world to be beautiful.”

“Oh, I don’t know,” said Sally absently, craning her head over her neck to see the back of her skirt in the mirror; “beauty isn’t everything. I’d be willing to give all I’ve got for your brains, Pat.”

“No, you wouldn’t. There isn’t a woman in the world that wouldn’t rather be beautiful than be—President. Not one! Sally, you are a little fool,—you haven’t an ounce of braininess to my pound,—but the men would give more for that southwest dimple of yours than for all my gray matter.”

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“There is one who wouldn’t—and the very one I am going to marry, at that!” declared Sally gloomily. “Stephen doesn’t care anything about my good looks. They only make him cross because I’m frankly pleased with them. He says a woman has no business to exist unless she’s clever—pictures can be bought. He’s always urging me to study and improve my mind. Just as if I had any mind to improve! He knows I haven’t, as well as you do. That was why I was so delighted when your aunt asked me up here for a long visit. It is jolly to be with you, Pat, of course; but I’d have come gladly even if I had detested you. Anything to get away from Stephen and his everlasting theories for a breathing spell! If he knew you, Pat, he’d adore you. You’re just the kind of elusive, clever, provoking creature he would worship.”

“And yet you are going to marry him!” said Patricia, frowning darkly at a photograph of Stephen on the table.

“Family arrangement, dear Pat. Stephen and I have been brought up to it. We are both pretty well reconciled to the idea now. If only Stephen would give up trying to make me over, I dare say we should get on very comfortably. To be sure, there are times when I think I should like Charlie Roland ever so much better—and he’d be willing to take Sally Fairfax as she is.

“Pat, you little brown monkey, why have you made me think of Stephen? It reminds me that I should have written to him to-night. And now I haven’t time, and he’ll scold me. I can’t write a decent letter, anyway; my scrawls can’t be a scrap of pleasure to him. But Stephen is conscientious, and he is bound that I shall be conscientious too. He writes me a great long, stupid—you’d call it clever, but it’s all the same thing—epistle every week, and insists that I shall do the same. I ought to have written yesterday; but I forgot all about going to the opera to-night, and put it off.”

“If I had a lover like Stephen Avery,” said Patricia scornfully, “I’d write to him every day—I’d glory in it! Oh, Sally Fairfax, I’d love to shake you!”

“Oh, do it!—write the letter, I mean, Pat. It’s an inspiration. He’ll never know the difference, your handwriting is so much like mine. I’ve often wondered why Providence ordained it so, and now I understand. Just a note; that’s all I ever send. You know all that I’ve been doing since Sunday.”

“It would serve you right if I did,” said Patricia.

“But, Pat dear, I’m in earnest. You don’t want me to be scolded, do you? And it would be so easy! I never put any love nonsense in them, you know. Dear me! there’s the bell. Patsy darling, by-by. There, kiss me and don’t look so fierce. You’re so horribly intense in everything! Isn’t it uncomfortable? I believe I’d rather be stupid, after all.”

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When Sally had gone Patricia scrambled off the bed and sat frowning before the photograph on the table. “I’ve always liked you,” she said, shaking her finger at the likeness. “You have such a good, strong, stubborn face. You’ll go on trying to make Sally over all your life, and never succeed, won’t you?”

“I’ve half a mind to write that letter for Sally to you to-night, Stephen Avery—to give you something satisfying for once in your life. You would think you had wakened up Sally at last. I will, too! I’ll write to you as if you were that dream lover of mine. Such letters as he has had written to him, deep down in my soul! You shall have one of them, Stephen, for the sake of that big heart of yours that dear, little, pretty, stupid Sally can’t fill.”

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Two days afterward Stephen Avery received a plump letter addressed in the handwriting of his absent fiancée. He carried it about unread in his pocket all day; for he did not believe in mixing love letters with business. Besides, Sally's letters kept well. In his den that night Stephen read the letter Patricia had written:

Heart of My Heart.—I am alone to-night, and am going to write you a letter right out of my soul, out of the real me whom nobody in the world knows, such a letter as I have never written to you before, dear love o' mine. Will you like to read it, I wonder, this page from a woman's heart? Will you only be coldly curious over it? Or perhaps only contemptuously tolerant? Or will you kiss each word as I could kiss it, just because it is to be read by your eyes?

You will understand me, because you are clever. If you were not clever, you would think all that was in this letter was just the black and white of it, and even that would puzzle you. But a woman can say anything she likes to a man like you and be sure that she will not be misunderstood.

I am all alone—and I am not alone, because my thoughts of you are all around me like benedictions, and I sit among them enqueened because of them. Dear heart, the thought of you would make a woman better and nobler if she was in the dust at your feet. When I think of you, I am a glorious creature, loving and aspiring and reverencing with all my heart and soul and mind. I am better and higher than myself in the glamour of your love.

The moment some one speaks of you is a golden moment to me, and I wonder what I have ever done to deserve such happiness as your love. I have done nothing—and I am nothing. It is just life's most beautiful gift to me, a gift that I take, thanking God for it, and praying that it may never be taken from me, though I am not worthy of it.

You dear one! Did I ever tell you how much I like the way your hair grows over your forehead? Almost as much as I like your crooked mouth. And that one little curl at the point always looking as if it was just going to drop down on your eyebrow but never dropping. How much I want to poke my finger through it and have it glistening there like the gold of a ring of troth! I love your hair because it is curly. But if it was straight I should love it because it was straight. You dear one!

Do you know that you went a walking with me in the park yesterday?

Yes, you did. We were there together, you and I, and nobody knew it but me. It was my dear secret, and I kept it close in my heart and warmed me with it. You walked by my side under the pines, and the echo of your footsteps rang true to mine and made me dizzy with the joy of it as you tramped sturdily along. And once, when we were in a lonely road where nobody could see, we walked hand in hand. And I told you dear, foolish things and you listened with your quizzical smile, a smile that would have made me think you were laughing at me if it hadn't been for your eyes. And we went down to the point to watch the sunset together. You liked the music that came drifting over the harbor from a boatload of picnickers: but all the music I cared for was just in your voice saying common sensible, everyday things. But once, just as a big white star came out over the hills across the harbor, you bent over me and said something tender that nobody else would say, as nobody else could say it; and it has made a song in my heart ever since to which every fiber of me beats delicious time. The foolish folk around me think that I was alone in the park. They don't understand; but you do.

How I hoard up your looks and tones in my memory, as if they were jewels beyond price! When I am away from you, I count them over and revel in them. Yes, even in some cold or impatient words you once spoke,—they hurt me then, and they hurt me yet,—but I love the pain because you inflicted it. I love better your coldest, cruelest words than all the tender, loving things that any other man could say. Am I spoiling you by this? I dare say. But what is the good of loving people if you don't spoil them? I like to spoil you; I shouldn't half love you if you were not spoilable.

And you understand this too,—you understand all about me, you clear sighted one.

And now that you have read what I have written, I leave you to read what I have not written,—the dear, subtle undercurrents of thought that cannot be expressed in anything so clumsy as human speech; in the unworded messages of soul to soul across whatever may divide them.

Heart of My Heart, goodnight. I go to dream of you.

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“So you wish our engagement broken?” said Stephen Avery.

Sally nodded. “I know you don't mind, Stephen. Of course all our families will

have a grouch about it; but that needn't matter. If you back me up, they will soon reconcile themselves. And I'm so fond of Charlie! You'll set me free, won't you?"

"On one condition," said Stephen gravely.

"Of course," agreed Sally recklessly.

Stephen produced a letter from his pocket-book and held it out that Sally might see the address and postmark. "You may marry anybody you like, if you will tell me who wrote that letter, and introduce me to her," he said.

Sally had the grace to blush. "It's one of mine, isn't it?" she asked guiltily.

"No. You couldn't have written that letter, Sally, any more than you could have composed a sonnet. The writing is like yours; but that is all. Own up, Sally!"

"It must be the letter I got Patricia Wyndham to write to you one night last winter when I was in a hurry. I just asked her for a joke. She never would tell me what she put in it. Pat can be so provoking by spells! What did she write, Stephen?"

"Little girls mustn't be curious," said Stephen, restoring the letter to its resting place. "Aren't you ashamed of yourself, Sally, getting another girl to write your love letters for you?"

"I did it only once," protested Sally. "And Patricia isn't like any other girl. I didn't suppose you'd ever know or care. You're not going to be nasty to her about it, are you?"

"Certainly not; but I mean to make her own up to it. Don't forget your promise, Sally."

"I'll have Pat down for my bridesmaid. But you are not to scold her, remember. It was all my doing."

When Stephen was alone he read Patricia's letter over again. When he folded it up there was a twinkle, half of amusement, half of tenderness, in his eyes. "Little girl, you shall write me other letters like this some day!" he said determinedly.



## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

[The end of *The Letter Patricia Wrote* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]