

# THE DELINEATOR

MAY 1926



DESIGNED BY ELLIOTT CLAWSON

**"MARIGOLD"**—by the Author of "ANNE OF GREEN GABLES"

LATE SPRING AND EARLY SUMMER STYLES

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# Magic for Marigold

## The Serialized Version

A collection of the serialized stories which were assembled into the novel *Magic for Marigold*.

L. M. Montgomery

First published in various magazines from 1925 to 1929.

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*Good fairies arrive—though late—for her christening*

This story became Chapters 1 and 2 of *Magic for Marigold*.

They appeared in *The Delineator*, an American women's magazine, in May 1926. Illustrations by Charles R. Chickering (1891-1970) have been omitted, not yet in the public domain.

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It was Old Grandmother's birthday and all the Rexton members of the Lesley clan had assembled at Cloud of Pines to celebrate it as usual—also to name Lorraine's baby. It was a crying shame, as Cousin Flora pathetically said, that the little darling had been in the world four months without a name. But what could you do, with poor Leander dying in that terribly sudden way just two weeks before his daughter was born, and poor Lorraine being so desperately ill for weeks and weeks afterward? Not very strong yet, for that matter. And there was tuberculosis in her family.

All the Lesleys adored Lorraine's baby. It was ten years since there had been a little girl born in the connection. Too few babies of any sex were being born. Old Grandmother opined that the good old stock was running out. Even the last boy baby was five years old. So this small lady's advent would have been hailed with delirious delight if it hadn't been for Leander's death and Lorraine's long illness. Now that Old Grandmother's birthday had come, the Lesleys had an excuse for their long-deferred jollification. As for the name, no Lesley baby was ever named until every relative had had his or her say about the matter. And how much more in the case of a fatherless baby whose mother was a sweet soul enough—but—you know——

Cloud of Pines, the old Lesley homestead, where Old Grandmother and Young Grandmother and Mrs. Leander and the baby lived, was on the harbor shore, far enough out of Rexton village to be in the real country—a cream brick house, so covered with vines that it looked more like a heap of ivy than a house. Before it, the beautiful Rexton harbor. Behind it, an orchard that climbed the slope. And about it, always the soft sighing of the big pine wood on the hill.

The birthday dinner was eaten in Old Grandmother's room—a long, dim, green

apartment running the whole length of the house, with a glass door opening right into the orchard. It had always been eaten there since Old Grandmother had finally taken to her bed, ten years before, when Leander's first wife had died with *her* little unnamed daughter. Old Grandmother had been very fond of Leander's first wife. At least Lorraine thought so.

Old Grandmother was a gnomish dame of ninety-seven who meant to live to be a hundred—a tiny, shrunken, wrinkled thing, with flashing black eyes. She ruled the whole Lesley clan and knew everything that was said and done in it. To-day she was propped up on pillows, with a fresh, frilled, white cap tied around her face, eating her dinner heartily and thinking things not lawful to be uttered about her daughters-in-law and her granddaughters-in-law and her great-granddaughters-in-law.

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Young grandmother, a mere lass of sixty-five, sat at the head of the long table—a tall, handsome lady with bright, steel-blue eyes and white hair. There was nothing of the traditional grandmother of caps and knitting about *her*. She was like a stately old princess in her purple velvet gown with its wonderful lace collar. The gown had been made eight years before, but when Young Grandmother wore anything it was at once in the height of fashion.

Lorraine sat on her right, with the baby in her cradle beside her. Because of the baby she had a certain undeniable importance never conceded her before. All the Lesleys had been more or less opposed to Leander's second choice. Only the fact that she was a minister's daughter saved her. She was a shy, timid, pretty creature—quite insignificant except for her enormous masses of lustrous, pale-gold hair. Her small face was sweet and flowerlike and she had peculiarly soft, gray-blue eyes with long lashes. She looked very young and fragile in her black dress. But she was beginning to be a little happy again. The fields and hills around Cloud of Pines that had been so stark and bare and chill when her little lady came were green and golden now and the orchard was an exquisite bridal world by itself. One could not be altogether unhappy with such a wonderful, unbelievable baby.

The baby lay in the old heirloom Heppelwhite cradle where her father and her grandfather had lain before her—a quite adorable baby, with a saucy little chin, tiny hands as exquisite as apple-blossoms, eyes of fairy blue, and the arrogant, superior smile of babies before they have forgotten all the marvelous things they know at first. Lorraine could hardly eat her dinner for gazing at her baby—and wondering. Would this tiny thing ever be a dancing, starry-eyed girl—a white bride—a mother? Lorraine shivered. It did not do to look so far ahead. Aunt Anne got up, brought a shawl, and tenderly put it around Lorraine's shoulders. Lorraine was nearly melted,

for the June day was hot, but she wore the shawl all through dinner.

On Young Grandmother's left sat Uncle Klondike, the one handsome, mysterious, unaccountable member of the Lesley clan. Uncle Klondike's real name was Horace, but ever since he had come back from the Yukon with gold dropping out of his pockets he had been known as Klondike Lesley. His deity was the God of all Wanderers, and in his service Horace Lesley had spent wild, splendid, adventurous years. But finally he had come home, sated, to live the rest of his life a decent, home-abiding clansman.

Klondike Lesley was a woman-hater. He scoffed at all love, more especially the supreme absurdity of love at first sight. This did not prevent his clan from trying for years to marry him off. At first they were very obvious about it and, with the renowned Lesley frankness, recommended several excellent brides to him. But Klondike Lesley was very hard to please. Katherine Nichols? "But look at the thick ankles of her." Rose Osborn? "I can't stand a woman with pudgy hands." Lottie Parks? "Such a fat voice." Lucy Perkins? "I like her as a flavoring—not as a dish." Dorothy Porter? "She's pretty at night, but I don't believe she'd be pretty when she woke up." Olive Purdy? "Tongue—temper—and tears. Go sparingly, thank you."

The Lesleys gave it up. No use trying to fit this exasperating relative with a wife. Perhaps it was just as well. His nephews and nieces might benefit, especially Lorraine's baby, whom he evidently worshiped. So here he was, light-hearted and content, watching them with his amused smile.

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**T**he baby had to be talked all over again and Cousin William covered himself with indelible disgrace by saying dubiously:

"She is not—ahem—really a pretty child, do you think?"

"All the better for her future looks," said Old Grandmother tartly. "*You*," she added maliciously, "were a *very* pretty baby."

"Beauty is a fatal gift. She will be better without it," sighed Cousin Nina.

"Why do you cold-cream your face every night and dye your hair?" asked Old Grandmother, who knew everybody's secrets.

"We are all as God made us," said Cousin Ebenezer piously.

"Then God botched some of us," snapped Old Grandmother, looking significantly at Cousin Ebenezer's tremendous nose.

"She has a peculiarly shaped hand, hasn't she?" persisted Cousin William.

Aunt Anne bent over and kissed one of the little hands.

"The hand of an artist," she said. Lorraine looked at her gratefully and hated Cousin William bitterly for ten minutes under her golden hair.

“Well, we must give her a pretty name, anyhow,” said Aunt Florence briskly. “It’s simply a shame that it’s been left as long as this. Come, Granny, you ought to name her. What do you suggest?”

Old Grandmother affected the indifferent. She had three namesakes already, so she knew Leander’s baby wouldn’t be named after her.

“Call her what you like,” she said. “I’m too old to bother about it.”

“But we’d like your advice, Granny,” unfortunately said Cousin Leah, whom Granny detested.

“I have no advice to give. I have nothing but a little wisdom and I can not give you *that*.” Old Grandmother leaned back on her pillows disdainfully. She had insisted on having her dinner first, so that she might watch the others eating theirs. She knew it made them all more or less uncomfortable.

Lorraine sighed. She knew what *she* wanted to call her baby. But she knew she would never have the courage to say it. And if she did they would never consent to such a name. When you married into a family like the Lesleys, you had to take the consequences. It was very hard when you couldn’t name your own baby—when you were not even asked what you’d *like* it named. If Lee had only lived, it would have been different—Lee, who was not a bit like the other Lesleys—except Uncle Klon, a little—Lee, who loved wonder and beauty and laughter. Surely the jests of heaven must have more spite since he had joined in them. How he would have howled at this august conclave over the naming of his baby! How he would have brushed them aside! Lorraine felt sure he would have let her call her baby—

“I think,” said Mrs. Luther Lesley gravely and sadly, “that it would only be graceful and fitting that she should be called after Leander’s first wife.”

Mrs. Luther and Leander’s first wife had been chums. Leander’s first wife’s name had been Mehitable—never nicknamed. Lorraine shivered again and wished she hadn’t, for Aunt Anne’s eye looked like another shawl.

“Poor little Mehitable!” sighed Aunt Grace in a tone that made Lorraine feel she should never have taken poor little Mehitable’s place.

“She was *such* a sweet girl,” said Cousin Elizabeth.

“A sweet girl all right, but why condemn a sinless child to carry a name like that all her life?” said Uncle Klon. The clan with one exception felt grateful to him. The name simply wouldn’t have done, no matter how sweet Mehitable was.

“Will you have some more dressing, Alice?” inquired Young Grandmother graciously.

“No, thank you.” Mrs. Luther was not going to eat any more, by way of signifying displeasure.



"If Leander's name had been almost anything else she might have been named for her father," said Uncle Saul. "Roberta—Georgina—Johanna—Andrea—Wilhelmina—Stephanie—and so on. But you can't make anything out of a name like *Leander*. Whatever did you call him that for, mother?"

"His grandfather named him after him who swam the Hellespont," said Young Grandmother rebukingly.

"She might be called Hero," suggested Uncle Klon.

"We had a dog called that once," said Old Grandmother.

"Leander didn't tell you before he died that he wanted any special name, did he, Lorraine?" inquired Second Cousin Laura.

"No," faltered Lorraine. "He—he had so little time to tell me—anything."

The clan frowned at Laura as a unit. They thought she was very tactless. But what could you expect of a woman who wrote poetry and peddled it about the country? *Writing* it might have been condoned—and concealed. After all, the Lesleys were not intolerant, and everybody has some faults. But *selling* it openly!

"I should like baby to be called Gabriella," persisted Laura.

"There has never been such a name among the Lesleys," said Old Grandmother. And that was *that*.

"I think it's time we had some new names," said the poetess rebelliously. But every one looked stony and Laura began to cry. She cried upon the slightest provocation. Lorraine remembered that Leander had always called her Mrs. Gummidge.

"I think," began Uncle Klon, but Aunt Josephine took the road.

"I think——"

"*Place aux dames*," murmured Uncle Klon. Aunt Josephine thought he was swearing but ignored him.

"I think the baby should be called after one of our missionaries. It is a shame that we have three foreign missionaries in the connection and not one of them has a namesake. I suggest we call her Louise after the first one."

"But," said Aunt Katherine, "that would be slighting Harriet and Ellen."

"Well," said Young Grandmother haughtily—Young Grandmother was haughty because nobody had suggested naming the baby after *her*—"call her the whole three names, Harriet Ellen Louise Lesley. Then no missionary will be slighted."

The suggestion seemed to find favor. Lorraine caught her breath anxiously.

"Have you ever," said Old Grandmother with a wicked chuckle, "thought what the initials spell?"

They hadn't. They did. Nothing more was said about foreign missionaries.

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It's my opinion children shouldn't be named at all," said Uncle Klou. "They should be numbered until they're grown up, then choose their own names."

"But then you are not a mother, my dear Horace," said Young Grandmother tolerantly.

"Sylvia is a beautiful name," said Cousin Howard, whose first sweetheart had been a Sylvia.

"You couldn't call her that," said Aunt Madeline in a shocked tone. "Don't you remember Great-Uncle Marshall's Sylvia went insane? She died filling the air with shrieks. I think Bertha would be more suitable."

"Why, there's a Bertha in John C. Lesley's family over the bay," said Young Grandmother.

John C. was a distant relative who was "at outs" with his clan. So Bertha would never do.

"Wouldn't it be nice to name her Adela?" said Aunt Anne. "You know Cousin Adela is the only really distinguished person our clan has ever produced. A famous authoress——"

"I should like the mystery of her husband's death to be cleared up before any grandchild of mine is called after her," said Young Grandmother austere.

"Nonsense, mother! You surely don't suspect Adela?"

"There *was* arsenic in the porridge," said Young Grandmother darkly.

"I'll tell you what the child should be called," said Cousin Sybilla, who had been waiting for the psychic moment. "Theodora. It was revealed to me in a vision of the night. I was awakened by a feeling of icy coldness on my face and I heard a voice distinctly pronounce the name—*Theodora*. I wrote it down in my diary as soon as I arose."

John Eddy Lesley laughed. Sybilla hated him for weeks for it.

"I wish," said sweet old Great-Aunt Matilda, "that she could be called after my little girl who died."

Aunt Matilda's voice trembled. Her little girl had been dead for fifty years, but she was still unforgotten. Lorraine loved Aunt Matilda. She wanted to please her. But she couldn't—she *couldn't*—call her dear baby Emmalinza.

"It's unlucky to name a child after a dead child," said Aunt Josephine positively.

"Why not call the baby Jane?" said Aunt Josephine's husband briskly. "My mother's name—a good, plain, sensible name that'll wear. Nickname it to suit any age—Jenny, Janie, Janet, Jeanette, Jean—and Jane for old age."

"Oh, wait till I'm dead—*please*," wailed Old Grandmother. "It would always

make me think of Jane Puttkammer.”

Nobody knew who Jane Puttkammer was or why Old Grandmother didn't want to think of her. But nothing more was said about Jane.

“We're not really getting anywhere, you know,” said Uncle Paul desperately.

Uncle Klon uncoiled himself.

“Why not let Lorraine name her own baby?” he suddenly answered. “Have you any name you'd like her called, dear?”

Again Lorraine caught her breath. Oh, hadn't she! She wanted to call her baby Marigold. Years before she had had a dear friend called Marigold. The only girl friend she ever had. Such a dear, wonderful, bewitching, lovable creature! She had filled Lorraine's starved childhood with beauty and mystery and affection. And she had died. If only she might call her baby Marigold! But she knew the horror of the clan over such a silly, fanciful, outlandish name. Old Grandmother—Young Grandmother—no, they would never consent. She knew it. All her courage exhaled from her life in a sigh of surrender.

“No-o-o,” she said in a small, hopeless voice. Oh, if she were only not such a miserable coward!

“If it was only a boy it would be so easy to name it,” said Uncle Paul.

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Then for ten minutes they wrangled over what they would have called it if it had been a boy. They were beginning to get quite warm when Cousin Myra took a throbbing in the back of her neck.

“I'm afraid one of my attacks is coming on,” she said faintly.

“Why can't those attacks be cured?” said Uncle Paul. “Why don't you try a new doctor? Old Doctor Bertram is getting too slow.”

“Who is there to try? You wouldn't have me go to that woman, would you?” said Myra.

No, of course not. No Lesley would go to that woman doctor. Dr. M. Woodruff Richards had been practising in Rexton for two years, but no Lesley would have called in a woman doctor if he had been dying. A woman doctor was an outrageous portent. Not to be tolerated or recognized at all. One might as well commit suicide. Klondike Lesley was especially sarcastic about her. “An unsexed creature,” he called her. Klondike had no use for unfeminine women who aped men. But they talked of her through dessert and did not again revert to the subject of the baby's name. They were all feeling a trifle sore about *that*. Things were rather edgy in the Lesley clan for two or three weeks. As Uncle Peter said, they had their tails up. Cousin Clara was reported to have gone on a hunger strike—which she called a fast

—about it. Cousin Rose and Cousin Lily, two affectionate sisters, quarreled over it and wouldn't speak. There was a connubial rupture between Cousin Edgar and his wife because she wanted to consult ouija about a name. Obadiah Lesley, who in thirty years had never spoken a cross word to his wife, rated her so bitterly for wanting to call the baby Juanita that she went home to her mother for three days. An engagement trembled in the balance. Cousin Myra's throbbings in the neck became more frequent than ever. Uncle Peter vowed he wouldn't play checkers until the child was named. Cousin Teresa was known to be praying about it at a particular hour every day. Laura cried almost ceaselessly over the matter. Young Grandmother preserved an offended silence. Everybody was more or less cool to Lorraine because she had not taken his or her choice. It really looked as if Lorraine's baby was never going to get a name.

Then—the shadow fell. One day the little lady of Cloud of Pines seemed fretful and feverish. The next day more so. The third day Doctor Bertram was called. He was brisk and cheerful. Pooh-pooh! No need to worry—not the slightest. The child would be all right in a day or two.

She wasn't. At the end of a week the Lesley clan were thoroughly alarmed. Doctor Bertram had ceased to pooh-pooh. He came every day anxiously. Day by day the shadow deepened. The baby was wasting away to skin and bone. Anguished Lorraine hung over the cradle with eyes that nobody could bear to look at. Everybody proposed a different remedy, but nobody was offended if it wasn't used. Things were too serious for that. Only Cousin Laura was almost sent to Coventry because she asked Lorraine one day if infantile paralysis began like that, and Aunt Mildred was frozen out because she heard a dog howling one night. Also, when Cousin Flora said she had found a diamond-shaped crease in a clean tablecloth—a sure sign of death in the year—Uncle Klon insulted her. But Uncle Klon was forgiven because he was nearly beside himself over the baby's condition.

A specialist was brought from Charlottetown who looked wise and said Doctor Bertram was doing all that could be done. It was at that juncture that Great-Uncle Bryan made a bargain with God that he would go to church if the child's life was spared, and that Uncle Peter recklessly began playing checkers again. Better break a vow before a death than after it.

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A terrible day came when Doctor Bertram told Lorraine gently that he could do nothing more. After he had gone, Young Grandmother looked at Old Grandmother.

"I suppose," she said in a low voice, "we'd better take the cradle into the spare

room.”

Lorraine gave a moan of anguish. This was equivalent to a death sentence. At Cloud of Pines it was a tradition that dying people must be taken into the spare room.

“You’ll do one thing before you take her to the spare room,” said Old Grandmother firmly. “Bertram has given up the case. Send for that woman doctor.”

Young Grandmother looked thunderstruck. She turned to Uncle Klon.

“Do you suppose—I’ve *heard* she was very clever—they say she was offered a splendid post in a children’s hospital in Montreal but preferred general practise——”

“Oh, get her, get her,” said Uncle Klon savagely. “Any port in a storm.”

“Will *you* go for her, Horace?” said Young Grandmother quite humbly.

Klondike Lesley went. He had never seen Doctor Richards before—save at a distance or spinning past him in her smart little runabout. She was in her office and came forward to meet him, gravely sweet.

She had a little, square, wide-lipped, straight-browed face like a boy’s. Not pretty but haunting. Wavy brown hair with one teasing unruly little curl that *would* fall down on her forehead, giving her a youthful look in spite of her thirty-five years. What a dear face! So wide at the cheek-bones—so deep-gray-eyed! With such a lovely, smiling, generous mouth! Some old text of Sunday-school days flitted through Klondike’s dazed brain:

*“She will do him good and not evil all the days of her life.”*

For just a second their eyes met and looked—only a second. But it did the work of years. The irresistible woman had met the immovable man and the inevitable had happened.

“Will you come to see my little niece?” he heard himself pleading. “Our old family doctor has given her up. We are all very fond of her. Her mother will die if she can not be saved. Won’t you come?”

“Of course I will,” said Doctor Richards.

She came. She said little, but did some drastic things about diet and sleeping. Old and Young Grandmothers gasped when she ordered the child’s cradle moved out to the veranda. Every day for a week her light, steady footsteps came and went about Cloud of Pines. Klondike brought her and took her away. Her own car was laid up for repairs. But nobody paid much attention to Klondike those days.

At the end of a week it seemed to Lorraine that the shadow had ceased to deepen on the little wasted face. A few more days—was it not lifting—lightening? At the end of three weeks Doctor Richards told them that the baby was out of danger. Lorraine fainted and Klondike broke down and cried unashamedly like a schoolboy.

Two days later the clan had another conclave.

“This child must be named at once,” said Young Grandmother authoritatively. “Do you realize that she might have died without a name?”

The horror of this kept the Lesleys silent for a few minutes. Besides, every one dreaded starting up another argument so soon after those dreadful weeks. Who knew but what it had been a judgment on them for quarreling over it?

“But *what* shall we call her?” said Aunt Anne timidly.

“There is only one name you *can* give her,” said Old Grandmother, “and it would be the blackest ingratitude if you didn’t. Call her after the woman who saved her life, of course.”

The Lesleys looked at each other. A simple, graceful, natural solution of the problem—if only——

“But *Woodruff*,” sighed Aunt Anne.

“She’s got another name, hasn’t she?” snapped Old Grandmother. “Ask Horace there what *M* stands for.”

Every one looked at Klondike. In spite of the anxiety of the past weeks, nobody in the clan had been altogether blind to Klondike’s goings-on.

Klondike straightened his shoulders. It was as good a time as any to tell something that would soon have to be told.

“Her full name,” he said, “is now Marigold Woodruff Richards, but in two weeks’ time it will be Marigold Woodruff Lesley!”

***Little baby Marigold is destined to grow up to be L. M. Montgomery’s most captivating heroine. A story about her later adventures, complete in itself, will appear in the June DELINEATOR. “Better than Anne herself! Better than Emily of New Moon!” you will say when you read it.***

## LOST—A CHILD’S LAUGHTER

### *A tale of Marigold and the Magic Gate*

This story became Chapter 7 of Magic for Marigold.

They appeared in *The Delineator*, an American women’s magazine, in June 1926. Illustrations by Charles R. Chickering (1891-1970) have been omitted, not yet in the public domain.

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Marigold woke up on her birthday morning with stars of delight in her eyes. She was just eight years old and thought the world a charming place. Especially that part of it into which you entered through the Magic Door and the Green Gate.

To other people, this part of the world was only the orchard behind Cloud of Pines—the old Lesley homestead on Rexton Harbor—and the big pine wood on the hill above. They knew nothing of the lovely things that were there; but then, you could find those lovely things only if you went through the Magic Door and the Green Gate. And said the rime. The rime was a very important part of the magic, too.

Marigold thought it was the oddest, loveliest thing in the world that Gertrude’s birthday should be on the very same day as hers. And they were going to have a birthday picnic under the pines, with little frosted cakes—some with “M” on them in pink icing and some with “G.” And one gorgeous big cake with both “M” and “G” on it, intertwined. Mother had made them specially for the birthday. Mother was such a brick. Grandmother, now—but Marigold was not going to think of Grandmother and her attitude in regard to Gertrude on this wonderful morning of dawn-rosy meadows and sky-ey lures, of white young cherry-trees and winds dancing over the hills.

“Spring is *such* an exciting time,” thought Marigold blissfully, as she sprang out of bed and began to dress.

Grandmother and Mother had already begun breakfast when they heard Marigold on the stairs. Somehow, you generally heard Marigold before you saw her. Her laughter always seemed to go before her. Both Grandmother and Mother thought that golden trill of laughter, echoing through the somewhat prim and stately rooms of Cloud of Pines, was the loveliest sound in the world. Mother often said this; Grandmother never said it. That was the difference between Grandmother and

Mother.

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Grandmother, very stately and dignified as usual, with silver hair and sharp, steel-blue eyes, was looking displeased. She did not approve of this birthday picnic. She did not approve of Gertrude. She could not understand why Mother permitted Gertrude at all. It was absurd and outrageous and un-Christian.

“I could understand her devotion to a flesh-and-blood playmate,” said Grandmother coldly. “But this nonsensical, imaginary creature is beyond *me*. It’s worse than nonsensical. It’s positively wicked.”

“Almost all lonely children have these imaginary playmates,” pleaded Lorraine. “I had. And Leander had. He often told me about them. He had three chums when he was a little boy. He called them Mr. Ponk, Mr. Urt and Mr. Jiggles. Mr. Ponk lived in the well and Mr. Urt in the old poplar-tree and Mr. Jiggles ‘just roamed ‘round.’”

“Leander never told me about *them*,” said Grandmother, almost unbelievably.

“I’ve often heard you tell as a joke that one day when he was six he came running in out of breath and exclaimed, ‘Oh, Mother, I was chased up the road by a *pretending bull* and I ran without hope.’”

“Yes—and I scolded him well and sent him to bed without his supper,” said Grandmother righteously. “For one thing, he had been told not to run like that on a hot day; and for another, I had no more use then for ‘pretendings’ than I have now.”

“I don’t wonder he never told you about Mr. Ponk and Co.,” thought Lorraine. But she did not say it. One did not say those things to Grandmother.

“It’s not so much Gertrude herself I object to,” went on Grandmother, “as all the things Marigold tells us about their ‘adventures.’ She seems actually to believe them. Mark my words, Lorraine, it will teach her to lie and deceive. You should put your foot down on this at once and tell her plainly that there is no such person as Gertrude and that you will not allow this deception to go on.”

“I can’t tell her that,” protested Mother. “You remember how she fretted when her Sunday-school teacher told her her dead kitten had no soul? Why, she made herself ill for a week.”

“I was almost ill for a week after that fright she gave us the night she slipped out of bed and went off up the hill to play with her Gertrude by moonlight,” said Grandmother severely. “Never shall I forget my feelings when I went into her room at ten o’clock—ten o’clock, Lorraine!—and found her bed empty. And just after that kidnaping case in New Brunswick, too.”

“Of course she shouldn’t have done that,” admitted Mother. “She and Gertrude had made a plan to go across to the big hill and ‘catch the moon,’ when it came up



behind it.”

Grandmother sniffed.

“You talk as if you believed in Gertrude’s existence yourself, Lorraine. The whole thing is unnatural. Really, I think the child is bewitched. Remember the day of the school picnic. Marigold didn’t want to go to it. Said she’d rather play with Gertrude. They’d agreed to see if they could find the rainbow’s end that day. *That* was unnatural. And the other night when she said her prayers she asked God to bless Mother and Grandmother and Gertrude. I was shocked. And that story she came home with last week—how they had seen five enormous elephants marching along the pine hill and drinking at the White Fountain by moonlight—by which I suppose she meant the spring.”

“But that *may* have been true,” protested Mother timidly. “You know that was the very time the elephants escaped from the circus in Charlottetown and were found in Lower Rexton.”

“If five elephants paraded through Rexton somebody would likely have seen them besides Marigold. No, she made the whole thing up. And the long and short of it is, Lorraine, I tell you plainly that if you let your child go on like this people will think she is not all there.”

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This was very terrible—to Mother as well as Grandmother. It was a very disgraceful thing to have a child who was not all there. But still Mother was unwilling to destroy Marigold’s beautiful dreamworld.

“She told us the other day,” continued Grandmother, “that Gertrude told her ‘God was a very nice looking old gentleman.’ Fancy your child learning things like that from a playmate.”

“*You* talk now as if you thought Gertrude was real,” said Mother mischievously. But Grandmother ignored her.

“We’ll have to tell her to-day that you are going to the sanatorium to-morrow,” she said.

“Oh, no, no,” cried Mother, horrified. “Not to-day. Not on her birthday. Oh, we couldn’t. Not till the morning.”

“You are going in the afternoon. That will give her very little time to get used to it.”

“Oh, but not to-day,” pleaded Mother. Grandmother yielded. You couldn’t refuse the request of a woman who had to go to a sanatorium the next day, even if you did think it remarkably silly. And then Marigold came running in, with her little wild-rose face all alight.

“Isn’t it the most ‘stornary thing that Gertrude has the same birthday as me?” she said as she ate her porridge. Real porridge. Grandmother insisted on that. No imaginary porridges, called “cereals,” for Grandmother. “And she’s just eight years old, too. *More* ‘stornary. Why, it just makes us like twins, doesn’t it, Mother? We’re going to have such an elegant time to-day. After the picnic we’re going to find the echo that lives ‘way, ‘way back in the hilly land.”

“Don’t you go so far away that you can’t get back in time for dinner,” said Grandmother. “You were late twice last week.”

Marigold looked rather scornfully at Grandmother. Didn’t Grandmother understand that when you went through the Magic Door you stepped straight into Fairyland where there was no such thing as time?

“I think I’ll be a little scared to go so far back,” said Marigold confidentially to Mother. “But Gertrude won’t be. Gertrude won’t be afraid of anything. Why—” Marigold cast about for some statement to show how very brave Gertrude was —“why, she’d just as soon call the minister John as not, if she wanted to.”

“You see,” telegraphed Grandmother’s steel-blue eyes. But Mother only laughed.

“What jam do you want in your tarts, dear? Plum or gooseberry?”

Marigold liked gooseberry best; but——

“Oh, plum, Mother; Gertrude likes plum.”

The lunch basket was made up and Marigold trotted happily into the long parlor across the hall—and trotted back again.

“Please, where is the key of the orchard door?” she said.

“It’s up-stairs on my bureau,” said Grandmother. “Go out of the hall door.”

Marigold looked reproachfully at Grandmother, wondering if when *she* got to be seventy-four years old she could be so stupid.

“You know I *have* to go through the orchard door, Grandmother. It’s a Magic Door. None of the others are.”

“Run up-stairs and get the key for yourself, dear,” said Mother gently.

Grandmother sniffed but looked rather pleased. An idea had just come to her.

Marigold, happily unconscious of Grandmother’s idea, got the key and went through the Magic Door into The Land Where Wishes Come True. The first outpost of this land of faery was a big clump of pine-trees. Beyond it was what unimaginative people called the old orchard. To be sure, it was a very delightful and extraordinary orchard, where apple-trees and fir-trees and pine-trees were deliciously mixed up together. Between the trees, in the open spaces, were flower-beds. Thickets of sweet clover, white and fragrant; clumps of canterbury-bells, white, pink, purple;

plots of mint and southernwood; big blush roses. Winds soft as silk blew there. Elves lived in the currant bushes. Little fairy folk lived up on the old beech-tree.

You came then to the Green Gate about which grew the seven slim poplars that always turned into nymphs when she and Gertrude played there. Marigold opened the gate—shut her eyes—said a rime—opened them. Yes, there was Gertrude, with her floating dark hair and her dreamy eyes, her snow-white hands and feet. Marigold sprang forward with a cry of joy.

Grandmother did not carry out her idea as soon as Mother had gone away. That would have been cruel and Grandmother was never cruel—intentionally. She must wait until Marigold recovered from the grief of Mother’s going. At first Marigold thought she never could get over it. She was shocked the first day she laughed. She had never expected to be able to laugh again until Mother came home. But Gertrude did say such *funny* things. And a letter came from Mother every day—such a dear, jolly, understanding letter. Then——

“Grandmother, please, can I have the key of the Magic Door?” asked Marigold one morning.

Grandmother looked at her with cold eyes.

“I have locked that door and it is to remain locked,” she said deliberately. “I find that I often forget to lock it at night and that is very dangerous.”

“But, Grandmother,” exclaimed Marigold. “I *must* have the key. You *know* I can’t see Gertrude unless I go that way.”

“Then you must get along without seeing her,” said Grandmother immovably.

Marigold did not plead or coax. She knew quite well no pleading would avail with Grandmother—who had been one of “the stubborn Blaisdells” before she married into the Lesley clan. But she went away with eyes that were stripped of laughter. Grandmother gazed after her triumphantly. This would put an end to the nonsense.

It did. Marigold made one effort to find Gertrude. She went out through the hall-door, up through the orchard, and through the Green Gate. She shut her eyes—and said the rime—and opened them.

There was no Gertrude.

Marigold crept back to the house—a pathetic, defeated little figure.

For a week Marigold moped—so Grandmother termed it. Grandmother was very good to her. She let her help cook, shell nuts, seed raisins, slice citron; even—oh, bliss of other days—beat eggs, but Marigold seemed interested in nothing. She sat about a great deal in a big chair on the veranda looking out on the harbor, with a little smileless face. One night Grandmother discovered that Marigold had gone to

bed without saying her prayers. Horrified Grandmother made Marigold get right up and say them. But when Marigold got into bed again she looked at Grandmother with sad, defiant eyes.

“My soul didn’t pray a bit,” she said.

When another week had passed Grandmother began to worry about Marigold. All was not well with the child. She was growing thin and pale.

“It’s the heat,” said Grandmother. “If it would only get cooler she would be all right.”

Grandmother would not even let herself look at the idea that Marigold was fretting for Gertrude. It was absurd to suppose that a child would become ill because of the imaginary loss of an imaginary playmate.

She went into Rexton and bought Marigold a magnificent doll. Marigold thanked her, played with it and then laid it aside.

“Why don’t you like your doll?” asked Grandmother severely.

“It’s a very nice doll,” said Marigold listlessly. “But it isn’t alive. Gertrude was.”

It was the first time she had spoken of Gertrude. Grandmother’s brow grew dark.

“You are a very ungrateful little girl,” she said curtly.

Marigold sighed. She was sorry Grandmother thought her ungrateful. But she did not really care very much. When you are horribly tired you don’t care about anything. There was no joy in waking up any longer. The bluebells in the orchard had no message for her and she had forgotten the language of the roses. The days seemed endless and the nights—the lonely, black, dreadful nights when the windows rattled so terribly and the wind sang and sobbed so lonesomely in the tree-tops around Cloud of Pines—worse than endless. There was nothing then but a great, empty, aching loneliness. No sweet medicine of Mother’s kisses. No Gertrude. But one night Marigold heard distant music.

“I think it is Gertrude singing on the hill,” she said, when Grandmother asked her sharply what she was listening to.

Grandmother was really alarmed by now. The child was going to skin and bone. She hadn’t laughed for a month. The house seemed haunted by her sad face. What was to be done? Lorraine must not be worried.

Grandmother got Marigold a lovely new dress of silvery pongee silk and a necklace of beautiful pale-green beads. Nobody in the whole Lesley clan had such a beautiful necklace. Marigold put them on and thanked Grandmother dutifully and then went away and sat in her chair on the veranda. Grandmother gave Marigold her own way about everything—except the one thing that really mattered. And Marigold

pined and paled more visibly every day. Grandmother was at her wit's end.

"If only Horace's wife were home," she said helplessly.

But Horace's wife—the Aunt Marigold for whom Marigold had been named—who was a doctor and a very dear, delightful woman, was far away in England; so Doctor Jasper of Rexton was called in. And Doctor Jasper couldn't find anything wrong with the child. A little run down. The weather was so hot. He left some pills for her. Marigold took them patiently but grew no better.

"I'll soon be sleeping in the spare room, won't I, Grandmother?" she said one night.

Grandmother's old face grew suddenly older. The spare room! It was a custom in that family that when death was approaching the dying person was taken to the spare room. But how did Marigold know?

"Don't be foolish, dear," she said very gently. "You are not going to die. You'll soon be all right."

"I don't want to be all right," said Marigold. "When I die I can go through the Magic Door."

Grandmother could not sleep that night. She recalled what old Great-Aunt Charlotte had said once of Marigold: "She is too glad to live. Such gladness is not of earth."

But then, Aunt Charlotte had always been an old pessimist. Always predicting somebody's death. There was no need to worry over Marigold. The child had always been perfectly healthy. Though not exactly robust. Rather too sensitive. Like Lorraine. The weather was so hot. As soon as it cooled her appetite would come back. But still Grandmother could not sleep.

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**D**r. Adam Clow, professor of psychology in a famous university, sat opposite Grandmother on the veranda of Cloud of Pines, looking out into a dim, blue darkness that was the harbor. He was a very old friend of Grandmother's and this visit was a great event to her. There was nobody on earth for whose opinions she had such respect as she had for Adam's.

He was an old man, with very beautiful hands and very keen blue eyes that were yet softly luminous. His face was thin and very finely wrinkled, but his smile was vivid and youthful. He had a mouth that connoted strength and tenderness and humor.

Grandmother—proud, reserved Grandmother—was telling him all about Marigold. She *had* to tell somebody. Adam's coming seemed providential. She had always found it easy to tell things to him—always, until now. Somehow, Grandmother found it incredibly hard to tell Adam Clow that *she* had locked the

Magic Door.

“She doesn’t seem to *want* to get better,” she concluded helplessly.

“‘A wounded spirit who can bear?’” quoted Adam Clow softly.

“I don’t understand,” said Grandmother in a hurt tone. “I—I think I’ve been very kind to Marigold.”

“And *I* think,” said Adam Clow rather sternly, “that she is dying of a broken heart.”

Grandmother began to say “nonsense” and stopped. “You don’t really mean that you think she has got so ill because she can’t see that Gertrude of hers any more? Or imagines she can’t?”

Doctor Adam put his finger-tips together.

“I think I might talk a great deal of wise nonsense about a neurosis caused by a suppressed desire for her playmate,” he said. “But I won’t. I simply advise you to give her the key of the orchard door.”

“But—Adam!” Grandmother couldn’t give in so easily. “Is it *right* to encourage her in those pretenses—those falsehoods——”

“They are not falsehoods. They are truths to her. She sees things invisible to us. She is a queen in the lovely Kingdom of Make-Believe. She is not trying to deceive you. She has the wonderful gift of creation in an unusual degree. It is such a pity that she will lose it as she grows older—that she will have to forego its wonder and live like us, in the light of common day. Has this never occurred to you, Marian?”

No, it had not. But the next morning, after breakfast, Grandmother silently laid the key of the orchard door by Marigold’s plate. Marigold lifted incredulous eyes.

“Oh, Grandmother! May I—may I?”

“Yes,” said Grandmother curtly.

Marigold stood still for a moment, transfigured. Her face was blithe as the day. It was as if a little shower of joy had rained down upon her out of the sky. She flew through the parlor—through the Magic Door—through the orchard—through the Green Gate. For another moment she stood in a hesitation of ecstasy. Then she shut her eyes and said her rime.

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Grandmother stood in the Magic Door at twilight. There was a pale moonglow behind the cloud of pines. There was a dance of great, plummy boughs in the western wind. And there was a sound in the orchard not heard for a long time—the sound of Marigold’s laughter as she waved goodnight to Gertrude over the Green Gate.

*Emily, queen of make-believe, meets a really-truly princess—  
and the fur flies! L. M. Montgomery tells this priceless story for  
you next month in THE DELINEATOR.*

## BOBBED GOLDBLOCKS

*A princess plays barber to Marigold*

This story became Chapter 10 of *Magic for Marigold*.

They appeared in *The Delineator*, an American women's magazine, in July 1926. Illustrations by Charles R. Chickering (1891-1970) have been omitted, not yet in the public domain.

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Gertrude has bobbed hair," said Marigold rebelliously.

Grandmother sniffed a little. Grandmother was apt to sniff when Gertrude was mentioned. When all was said and done, she was secretly doubtful of the propriety of imaginary playmates like Gertrude who lived among the pines on the hill and could only be found if you went through Magic Doors and Green Gates. But she only said,

"Well, you are not going to have yours bobbed, so you can make up your small mind to that. In after years you will thank me for it."

Marigold didn't look or feel very thankful just then. *Everybody* had bobbed hair. All the girls in school and Sunday school. Even Mrs. Trent's little home girl across the road. But she, Marigold Lesley of Cloud of Pines, had to be hopelessly old-fashioned because Grandmother so decreed. Mother would be quite willing for the bob. But Grandmother! Marigold knew it was hopeless.

"I don't know if we should do it," said Grandmother—not alluding to bobbed hair. "She has never been left alone before. Suppose something should happen."

"Nothing ever happens here," said Marigold pessimistically—and untruthfully. But this was Marigold's blue day. She could not go with Grandmother and Mother to Cousin Mary's golden wedding because Cousin Mary's grandchildren had measles. And Marigold did so want to see a golden wedding.

"You can get what you like for supper," said Grandmother. "But remember you are not to touch the chocolate cake. That is for the missionary tea to-morrow. Nor cut any of my Killarney roses. I want them to decorate my table."

"Have a good time, honey child," whispered Mother. "Why not ask Gertrude down to tea with you?"

But Marigold did not brighten to this. For the first time she felt a vague discontent with Gertrude—her fairy playmate of two dream years.



"I *almost* wish I had a real little girl to play with," said Marigold, as she stood at the gate watching Grandmother and Mother drive off up the Rexton road.

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Perhaps this was a Magic Day. Who knows? At all events, when Marigold turned to look down the other road—the road that led along the harbor shore to the big Summer hotel by the dunes—there was the wished for little girl, standing at her very elbow and grinning at her.

Marigold stared in amazement. She had never seen the girl before—or any one just like her. The stranger was about her own age—Perhaps or a year or two older. With ivory outlines, a wide, red mouth and long, narrow, green eyes. Bareheaded, with blue-black hair, beautifully bobbed, as Marigold perceived with a sigh. She wore an odd, smart, green dress with touches of scarlet embroidery, and she had wonderful, slim, white hands—very beautiful and very white. Marigold glanced involuntarily at her own little sunburned paws.

Who could this girl be? She had appeared so suddenly, so uncannily. She looked so different in every way from the Rexton little girls. Could it be possible——

"I'm Princess Varvara," said the girl suddenly, as if she had read Marigold's thoughts. "I'm staying at the hotel down there with Aunt Clara. My uncle is the Duke of Cavendish and Governor-General of Canada. He is visiting the island and to-day they all went out to visit Cavendish because it was called after my uncle's great-great-grandfather. All except Aunt Clara and me. She had a headache and they wouldn't take me because there's measles in Cavendish. I was so mad I ran away. I wanted to give Aunt Clara the scare of her life. She's mild and gentle as a kitten, but oh, such a darned tyrant! I can't call my soul my own. So when she went to bed with her headache, I just slipped off. I'm going to do as I like for one day anyhow. I'm fed up with being looked after. What's the matter?"

"You are telling me a lot of fibs," said Marigold. "You are not a princess. There are no princesses in Prince Edward Island. And you wouldn't be dressed like that if you were a princess."

Varvara laughed. There was some trick about her laugh. It made you want to laugh, too. Marigold had hard work to keep from laughing. But she wouldn't laugh. You couldn't laugh when anybody was trying to deceive you with such yarns.

"She must be one of the Americans at the hotel," thought Marigold. "And she thinks it is fun to fool a silly little down-caster like me if she can. But she *can't*."

"How do you think a princess should be dressed?" demanded Varvara. "In a crown and a velvet robe? You're darned silly. I am a princess. My father was a Russian prince and he was killed in the Terror. Mother is English. A sister of the

duke's. We live in England now, but we came out to Canada with Aunt Clara to visit uncle."

"I'm not a bad hand at making up things myself," said Marigold. She had an impulse to tell this girl all about Gertrude.

Varvara shrugged her shoulders. "All right. You needn't believe me if you don't want to. All I want is somebody to play with. You'll do nicely. What is your name?"

"Marigold Lesley."

"How old are you?"

"Ten. How old are *you*?" said Marigold, determined that the questions should not be all on one side.

"Oh, I'm just the right age. Come, ask me in. I want to see where you live. Will your mother let you play with me?"

"Mother and Grandmother have gone to a golden wedding," explained Marigold. "I'm all alone."

The stranger suddenly threw her arms about Marigold and kissed her rapturously on both cheeks.

"How splendid! Let's have a good time. Let's be as bad as we like. Do you know I *love* you? You are so pretty. And that sleek, parted gold hair makes you look like a saint in a stained-glass window. But why don't you have it bobbed?"

"Grandmother won't let me."

"Cut it off in spite of her."

"You don't know Grandmother," said Marigold.

She couldn't decide whether she liked this laughing, tantalizing creature or not. But she was fascinating—oh, yes, she was fascinating. Something had happened with a vengeance. Would she tell her about Gertrude? And take her up to the hill? No, not yet—somehow, not yet. There was the playhouse in the currant bushes first.

"What a darling spot," cried Varvara. "But how do you play here all by yourself?"

"I pretend I am the Lady Gloriana Fitzgerald and I sit in the parlor and tell my servant what to do."

"Oh, don't let's have a servant. Let's just be two nice old maiden ladies doing our own work. I'll arrange the dishes. *You* sweep the floor."

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**T**hey had a very good time for a while. When they got tired of it they went picking raspberries in the bush behind the pighouse. Varvara kept telling wonderful stories. Certainly she was a crackerjack at making up. But they suddenly found all their clothes filled with sticktights, which was decidedly unpleasant.

“What would you think if I said damn?” demanded Varvara explosively.

Marigold didn’t say what she would think but her face said it for her.

“Well, I won’t,” said Varvara. “I’ll just say ‘lamb’ in the same tone and that will relieve my feelings just the same. What berries are those? Eat some, and if they don’t kill you I’ll take some too.”

“They are poisonous,” said Marigold. “I *did* eat some once and they made me *awful* sick. The minister prayed for me in church,” she concluded importantly.

“When *I* was sick the Archbishop of Canterbury prayed for me,” said Varvara.

Marigold wished she had made her minister the moderator of the General Assembly at least.

“Let’s go and sit down on that seat in the orchard and pick these things out of our clothes,” suggested Varvara. “And play ‘I see’ while we do it. The game is which will see the most wonderful things. *I* see a china cat with diamond whiskers walking over the lawn.”

“*I* see a bear with wings,” said Marigold, who felt she could see things quite as marvelous as any girl from the States trying to pass herself off as a princess.

“*I* see five angels sitting in that apple-tree.”

“*I* see three little gray monkeys on a twisted bough with four moons rising behind them.”

Varvara drew her black brows together in a scowl. She didn’t like being outseen.

“*I* see the devil squatting over there in your garden with his tail curled up over his back.”

Marigold was annoyed. She felt *she* couldn’t see anything more amazing than this.

“You don’t,” she cried. “That—that person never comes into *our* garden.”

Varvara laughed scornfully.

“It’d be a more interesting place if he did. Do you know”—confidentially—“I pray for the devil every night.”

“Pray for him! *For* him.”

“Yes. I’m so sorry for him. Because he wasn’t always a devil, you know. If he *had* been, I suppose he wouldn’t mind it so much. Well, we’ve got all the sticktights out. What will we do now?”

Again Marigold thought of introducing her to Gertrude. And again for some occult reason she postponed it.

“Let’s go and fire potato-balls. It’s great fun.”

“I don’t know how to fire potato-balls. What are they?”

“I’ll show you. And then it will soon be time for supper.”

Varvara insisted on helping Marigold to get supper, though Marigold would have preferred being alone. Company did not help to get supper at Cloud of Pines. But Varvara was out to do as she liked and she did it. She even went to the spare room with Marigold to get the fruit-cake. Marigold decided that for company she must cut some fruit-cake. Grandmother always did. And it was kept in a box under the spare-room bed—the sleek, smooth, terrible spare-room bed where so many people had died.

“Oh!” squealed Varvara. “Is that a feather bed? A *real* feather bed?”

“Yes.”

Varvara took one wild leap and landed squarely on the middle of it, bounding up and down in ecstasy right on Grandmother’s famous spread of crocheted filet.

“I’ve always wanted to see what a feather bed was like.”

Marigold was horrified. That sacred spare-room bed! *What* would Grandmother say?

“Every dead person in our family has died in that bed,” she said.

Varvara turned pale and hastily slid off the bed.

“Why didn’t you tell me that before I jumped on it, you little beast?” she cried, excitedly.

“I’m not a little beast,” said Marigold.

“Of course you’re not.” There was another wild hug and kiss. Marigold emerged from it somewhat disheveled. The Lesleys were not so emotional.

But when Varvara saw the chocolate cake in the pantry she must have *that* for supper. She must.

“We can’t,” said Marigold. “Grandmother said I wasn’t to touch it.”

Varvara stamped her foot.

“I don’t care what your grandmother said. I *will* have it. I’m keen on chocolate cake. And they never let me have more than two tiny pieces. Just put that cake right on the table. At once.”

“We are not going to have this cake,” said Marigold. There was no one by to see it, but at that moment she looked like a pocket edition of Grandmother.

Varvara clenched her hands.

“If I were my grandfather, I’d order you to be knouted to death——”

“If I were *my* grandmother, I’d turn you over my knee and spank you,” said Marigold intrepidly.

Varvara at once grew calm—deadly, stonily calm.

“If you don’t let me have that chocolate cake for my supper, I’ll go out and climb up on what you call the apple-barn roof and jump down.”

“You can’t scare me with that,” said Marigold scornfully.

Varvara turned without another word and marched out. Marigold followed her a little uneasily. Of course she was only bluffing. She wouldn’t do *that*. Why, it would kill her. Even this wild creature couldn’t really do a thing like that.

Varvara was nimbly running up the ladder. In another second she was on the high, flat, apple-barn roof.

“Now, will you let me have the chocolate cake?” she cried.

“No,” said Marigold resolutely.

Varvara jumped. Marigold screamed. She shut her eyes in anguish and opened them expecting to see Varvara broken and dead on the stones below. What she saw was Varvara hanging shrieking on the pine-tree by the apple-barn. Her dress had billowed out and caught on the stub of a lopped branch.

Marigold ran to her frantically.

“Oh, you can have the chocolate cake—you can have *anything*!”

“How am I to get down?” moaned Varvara, whose temper and determination had evaporated between heaven and earth.

“I’ll bring up the step-ladder. I think you can reach it,” gasped Marigold.

Varvara managed to escape by the grace of the step-ladder, though she tore her dress badly in the process.

“I always do just what I say I’ll do,” she remarked coolly.

Marigold was trembling in every limb as she went into the pantry. Suppose Varvara had really fallen on those stones. Grandmother had said those girls from the States would do *anything*. Marigold believed it.

“Just look how beautifully I’ve decorated the table,” cried Varvara proudly.

Marigold looked. Grandmother’s Killarney roses were drooping artistically in the big green vase. Oh, yes, artistically! Varvara had the knack.

“Grandmother told me I wasn’t to pick any of those roses,” wailed Marigold.

“Well, you didn’t, did you, you darling donkey? Tell her *I* did it.”

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The real quarrel did not come until after supper. They had had quite a jolly supper. Varvara was so funny and interesting and enjoyed everything so much. She ate about half the chocolate cake and said it was topping.

Well, reflected Marigold complacently, Mother’s and Grandmother’s cooking was good enough for anybody, even if she had been the princess she pretended to be. Varvara certainly was—nice. One couldn’t help liking her. Marigold decided that

after the dishes were washed she would take Varvara through the Magic Door and the Green Gate and introduce her to Gertrude.

But when she went out to the garden after washing the dishes she found Varvara tormenting her toad—her own pet toad, who lived under the yellow rose-bush and knew her. Marigold was certain he knew her. And here was this abominable girl poking him with a sharp stick that must hurt him terribly.

“You stop that!” she cried.

“I won’t. It’s fun,” retorted Varvara. “I’m going to kill it—poke it to death.”

Marigold darted forward and wrenched the stick out of Varvara’s hand. She broke it in three pieces. She confronted her self-invited guest in a true Lesleyan anger.

“You shall not hurt my toad,” she said superbly. “I don’t care what you threaten. Not one bit. You can jump off the apple-barn or down the well or go and throw yourself into the harbor. But you sha’n’t kill my toad, Miss Varvara.”

Varvara suddenly was in a most terrible temper. She was almost like an animal in her rage. She bared her teeth and dilated her eyes. Her hair seemed to bristle.

“Pig! Louse! Flea!” she snarled. “Mooncalf! Whelp!” Oh, the venom she contrived to put into her epithets! “You’d make God laugh. Cry-baby! Sniveling thing!”

Marigold was crying, but it was with rage. Russian princesses, real or pretended, had no monopoly of temper.

“You have the face of a monkey,” Marigold cried.

“I’ll—pull—your—ears—out—by—the—roots,” said Varvara with a horrible kind of deliberate devilishness.

She hurled herself against Marigold. She pulled Marigold’s hair and she slapped Marigold’s face. Marigold had never been so manhandled in her life. She, Marigold Lesley. She struck out blindly and found Varvara’s nose. She gave it a fierce, sudden tweak.

Varvara gave a malignant yowl and tore herself loose.

“You—you—do you think you can use me like this—*me*?”

“Haven’t I done it?” said Marigold triumphantly.

Varvara looked around. On a garden seat lay Grandmother’s shears. With a yell like a demon she pounced on them. Before Marigold could stir or run there was a sudden fierce click—another—and Marigold’s two pale-gold braids were dangling limply in Varvara’s beautiful hand.

“Oh!” shrieked Marigold, clapping her hands to her shorn head.

Suddenly Varvara laughed. Her brief insanity had passed. She dropped the

shears and the golden tresses and flung her arms around Marigold.

“Let’s kiss and make up. Mustn’t let a little thing like that spoil a whole day. Say you forgive me, darlingest.”

Darlingest said it dazedly. She didn’t want to—but she did it. This wild girl of laughter and jest had a hundred faults with the one great virtue of charm. She would always be forgiven anything.

But Marigold, in spite of her shorn tresses, was almost glad to see Grandmother and Mother driving into the yard. They had come home early because they were a little uneasy over Marigold being alone.

“Why? What?” began Grandmother, staring at Marigold’s head.

“I did it,” interposed the ragged, flushed Varvara resolutely. “You are not to blame her for it. It was all my doings. I did it because I was fine and mad, but I’m glad. You’ll have to let her have it trimmed decently now. And *I* ate the chocolate cake and picked the roses and jumped on the spare-room bed. She is not to be scolded at all for it. Remember that.”

Grandmother made an involuntary step forward. The Princess Varvara had the narrowest escape of her royal life.

“Who are you?” demanded Grandmother. Mother had her arms about Marigold.

Varvara told her, as she had told Marigold. With this difference. She was believed. Grandmother knew all about the vice-regal visit to Prince Edward Island and she had seen Varvara’s picture in the Charlottetown *Patriot*.

Grandmother set her lips together. One couldn’t, of course, scold the daughter of a Russian prince and the niece of the Duke of Cavendish. But oh, if one only could!

An automobile stopped at the gate. A young man and an elderly lady got out of it and came across the lawn. A very fine, stately lady. Her hair snow-white, her face long, her nose long. She could never have been beautiful, but she was not under any necessity of being beautiful.

“There’s Aunt Clara and Lord Percy,” said Varvara to Marigold. “I can see she’s mad all over—and there’s so much of her to get mad. Won’t I catch it!”

Marigold stiffened in horror. A dreadful conviction came over her that Varvara really was the princess she claimed to be. And she had pulled her nose!

The wonderful great lady walked past Varvara without even looking at her—without looking at anything, indeed. Yet one felt she saw everything and took in the whole situation, even to Varvara’s dangling rags.

“I am sorry,” she said to Grandmother, “that my naughty little runaway niece should have given you so much trouble.”

“She has not been any trouble to *us*,” said Grandmother graciously, as one queen to another. “I am very sorry I was not at home this afternoon”—combining truth with courtesy to a remarkable degree.

The great lady turned to Varvara.

“Come, my dear,” she said softly and sweetly.

Varvara disregarded her for a moment. She sprang past her and embraced Marigold tempestuously.

“Promise me you’ll always love me even if you never see me again. Promise—as long as grass grows and water runs. Promise.”

“I will—oh, I will!” gasped Marigold sincerely. It was very odd, but in spite of everything she felt that she did love Varvara devotedly.

“I’ve had such a satisfying time to-day,” said Varvara. “I’ve had one day I did as I liked, anyhow. They can’t take *that* from me. I didn’t really want to kill your old toad. And you’ve got your hair bobbed. You can thank me and God for *that*.”

She danced off toward the gate, ignoring Lady Clara but throwing an airy kiss to Grandmother. Lord Percy smiled at Mother. Mother was a very pretty woman.

“An incorrigible little demon,” he said.

“I think,” said Grandmother quite quietly, when she had heard the whole tale, “that princesses are rather too strenuous playmates for you. Perhaps, after all, your imaginary Gertrude is really a better companion.”

Marigold thought so, too. She ran happily through the dreamy peace of the orchard to meet the twilight that was creeping out of the pine-grove. Back to Gertrude, her comrade of starshine and moon-mist, who did not pull hair and slap—nor provoke pulling and slapping—Gertrude, who was waiting for her in the shadows beyond the Green Gate. She was very well satisfied with Gertrude again. It was just as Grandmother had said. Princesses were too—what was it? Too *it*, anyhow.

And yet she felt sure she could never forget Princess Varvara—the magic of her mirth and storms—the tang of her.

“But I’m glad I didn’t tell her about Gertrude,” thought Marigold.

*But some one is coming soon into Marigold Leslie’s life who is important enough to be given a share of Gertrude. He is Budge Walker, a thin young boy, with sandy hair and fine, clear gray eyes. You will like him. So did Marigold! The story, “Playmate,” the last of this Marigold series, contains a key to the secret of women’s power over mere man. It is the best story by L. M.*



*Montgomery that we have ever published. You can read it next month in the August DELINEATOR*

## PLAYMATE

*Marigold discovers "what every woman knows"—*

This story became Chapter 21 of *Magic for Marigold*.

They appeared in *The Delineator*, an American women's magazine, in August 1926.

Illustrations by Charles R. Chickering (1891-1970) have been omitted, not yet in the public domain.



Grandmother solemnly decreed that Marigold might play with John Walker. Grandmother would not, of course, call him Budge, as everybody else did. His mother was a Randolph from Charlottetown, so he was a quite permissible playmate for a Lesley of Rexton. And he seemed a nice-mannered little boy. Rather thin and scrawny as to looks, with sandy hair, but fine, clear, gray eyes.

The only thing Grandmother was seriously afraid of was that they might poison themselves in some of their prowls and rambles. Not an ill-founded fear at all. For in spite of all warnings they ate, or tried to eat, nearly everything they came across.

Marigold had never had a *real* playmate before. Cloud of Pines was too far away from every other house except Mr. Holman's across the road and Mr. Burnaby's next to it. There were no children in either house. She went to school in the village and had a superficial companionship with the little girls of her class. But none of them went home her way and there was no one of them for whom Marigold cared beyond the others.

Perhaps Gertrude had spoiled her for other little girls, as Mother sometimes thought rather anxiously. Gertrude, that imaginary comrade of the hill of pines, with whom Marigold had foregathered ever since she was eight years old. Mother had always defended Gertrude sympathizingly against a grandmother who did not understand some things. But sometimes lately she wondered if she had been wise in so doing. It would not be a good thing if the wild, secret charm of fairy playmates spoiled Marigold for the necessary and valuable companionship of her kind. She was very glad when, just at the beginning of vacation, the Walkers bought the Holman place and Marigold and Budge took a prompt liking to each other. For weeks Marigold's hitherto rather placid existence became one of hair-raising

excitement. She did things to win Budge's approval that she had never dreamed of doing—and found she liked them. They went trouting up the Walker brook and Marigold was such a sport in regard to worms that Budge thought in his heart—but did not say—she was almost as good as a boy. They climbed to the ventilator on top of the big Walker barn—they waded under the bridge. They played pirate on an old green boat—the *Daisy Dean*—stranded on the harbor shore, with a black flag decorated by a skull and cross-bones. In it they sailed on amazing voyages hunting for gold and glamour and adventure. They fixed up a stove of stones and cooked mussels and potatoes over it. With Budge, Marigold could explore all the pretty playlands far down the harbor where she could never have dared to go alone. They even went as far as that gray misty end of the world known as the harbor's mouth, where the silver-and-lilac sand-dunes stretched in all their wild, sweet loneliness of salt-withered grasses and piping sea-winds. Nobody ever knew *that*, or that they got caught by the tide and had to climb the banks and come home through dripping wet meadows. 'Twas a guilty, triumphant secret. And another was the driftwood fire they made on the shore one twilight. They had both been told never to play with fire, but that did not spoil their enjoyment of it one bit. Rather heightened it, I am afraid. This secret, forbidden thing had a charm all its own. And some days they fairly lived in the froggy marsh. Marigold had a deadly horror of frogs, but she never let Budge know it, and she compelled herself to carry a dead snake—on a stick—to win his admiration. She also brought herself to say "Holy Moses," but try as she would she could never compass a "darn." Which was just as well. Because in his heart Budge did not care for girls who said "darn." She was never able to learn to whistle on a blade of grass as he did. But she could do one thing he couldn't do—make the dearest pudding-bags out of the fat, live-forever leaves. Budge tried and tried, but his thumb pressure was always too heavy, so the balance of respect was kept true. And when Budge sat down on a hot oven door one day in trousers that needed a patch Marigold never even asked him how his burns were getting on. By such tact is friendship preserved.

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**B**udge patted Marigold's kitten Pops, and Marigold loved his dog Dix. But Gertrude she could not yet share with him. Budge had somehow got the idea that Marigold had some pet mystery connected with the hill of pines and often teased her to tell him what it was. But Marigold always refused. Not yet! Not yet! Gertrude was so much her own. Although—Marigold owned it to herself with a sorrowful sigh—somehow Gertrude wasn't just the same. Not so vivid—so living—so *real*. The change came about so slowly that Marigold did not yet realize how far her jolly

chumship with Budge had replaced that goblin comradeship of her lonely years. Almost every day, some time of it, she went through the magic door and the green gate and summoned Gertrude. Gertrude always came—still. But there was a difference.

Marigold sometimes wondered how Budge would take Gertrude if he knew about her. Marigold knew of a side of his nature which made her think he would understand Gertrude. Rarely, Budge gave her glimpses of this side. When they grew tired of prowling and pirating and sat on the wharf watching the ghostly sails of outgoing ships in the twilight, Budge would recite to her shyly the queer little verses of poetry he sometimes made up. Marigold thought they were wonderful. And he was a crackerjack at make-believe yarns. She liked his scarlet-boy stories better than her rose-pink and moon-blue girl fancies. That one of the wolf-skin rug on the Walker parlor floor coming alive and prowling at night with burning eyes! Marigold couldn't sleep when she went to bed for the delicious horror of it. Was it coming across the road now—snuffing through the lawn—padding up the stairs? Marigold screamed aloud and Grandmother came in and said she had a nightmare.

And then! The Austins bought the Burnaby place and moved in. Tad Austin was a boy of Budge's age. And Marigold found herself deserted.

'Tis an old tale and often told.

Tad Austin's parents, for some inscrutable reason, had seen fit to christen him Romney, but he never got anything but Tad. He was really not a bad-looking boy, with a chubby, agreeable brown face, although Marigold, who naturally could see nothing attractive about him, thought that his round, prominent eyes looked absurdly like the fat, blue plums on the tree by the apple barn.

The world was suddenly a cold, lonely, empty place for our poor Marigold. Always hitherto she had taken her troubles to her mother. But she couldn't take this; she couldn't. Not even Mother could understand. Certainly Grandmother couldn't. Grandmother who, passing Marigold sitting disconsolately on the twilight steps, had remarked humorously:

“Don't sigh but send

And if he doesn't come let him be hanged.’ ”

Send, indeed! Marigold would have died the death before she would have made the slightest effort to get Budge back. The cat could have him! She got an immense satisfaction out of picturing to herself how haughty and implacable she would be if he *did* come back. At least this was how she felt about it at first.

“Perhaps he'll be sorry when I'm dead,” thought Marigold darkly. But she

would show Budge—show everybody—*she* didn't care. She went and made candy and sang like a lark.

But there was nobody to share the candy with when it was made.

Life was a howling wilderness for Marigold the next few weeks. It seemed to her that Budge and Tad literally flaunted their intimacy and fun in her face—though the shameful truth was that neither of them thought about her at all. They got up a show and all the boys of Rexton could see it for a cent, but no girls. Oh, it was *mean!*

Budge and Tad went fishing up the brooks. Budge and Tad dug for pirate gold. Budge and Tad had a smugglers' rendezvous in the cave Marigold had discovered on the harbor shore. Budge and Tad had the kitten hunt in the barn which Marigold and Budge had planned to have in the fulness of time when there should be kittens to hunt.

This was the last straw that broke Marigold's pride. She did so love kitten hunts with Budge in the great, dusky, hay-scented old barns.

She must get Budge back. She *must*. Existence was quite impossible without him. But how? What could she do? Marigold knew she must not show her hand too plainly. Instinct told her that. Besides, had she not heard Grandmother saying once to Janet Lesley:

"If you run after a man, he'll run away. It's instinct. We *have* to run when anything chases us."

Wherefore she, Marigold, would not run after Budge. Was there any other way?

"I wonder if it would do any good to pray about it," she thought. Then decided she couldn't try it anyway.

"I don't want him to come back because God made him come. I want him to come back because he *wants* to."

Like an inspiration came the thought of Gertrude. She would tell him all about Gertrude. He had always been so curious about Gertrude. He might come back then.

It was a fortunate coincidence that Mother wanted her to go across to the Walker place on an errand that very afternoon. Budge was sitting on the side doorstep packing fishworms in a tin can. He grinned at her cheerfully and absently. It had never occurred to Budge that he had treated Marigold shamelessly. She had simply ceased to count.

"I have something to tell you," whispered Marigold.

"What is it?" said Budge indifferently.

Marigold sat down beside him and told him all about Gertrude at last. About the

magic door and the green gate and the land of butterflies and the rime. She had a curious, unpleasant sense of loss and disloyalty as she told it. As if she were losing something that had been very precious.

And she had her reward.

“Aw, that sounds awful silly,” said Budge.

Marigold went away without another word. She would *never* speak to Budge Walker again. She would go back to Gertrude—darling, neglected Gertrude. Through the magic door—up the slope of fern—through the green gate. Then the rime.

And no Gertrude!

Marigold stared helplessly around her with a quivering lip. No Gertrude! Gertrude would not come. Would never come again. Marigold felt this as we feel certain things irrevocably. Was it because she had told Budge about her? Or was it because she had grown too old and wise for fairyland? Were the “ivory gates and golden,” of which Mother sometimes sang, closed behind her forever? Marigold flung herself down among the ferns in the bitterest tears she had ever shed—ever would shed, perhaps.

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**I**t was the next day that Budge came back—an indignant Budge, avid to pour out his wrongs to somebody. And that somebody was the disdained and disdainful Marigold who had vowed afresh the night before that if Budge Walker ever spoke to her again she would treat him with such scorn and contempt that even his thick hide would feel it.

Budge and Tad had fought because their dogs had fought.

“My dog won,” gulped Budge. “And Tad got mad. He said Dix was only a *mongrel cur*.”

“He’s jealous,” said Marigold comfortingly. “And he has an awful temper. I heard that long ago from a girl who knew him *well*.”

“I dared him to fight *me* then—and he said he *wouldn’t* fight me, because I was such a sissy.”

“He wouldn’t fight you, because he knew he’d get licked worse than his dog did,” said Marigold, oh, so scornfully. But the scorn was all for Tad.

“He *wouldn’t* fight—but he kept on saying mean things. He said I wore a *nightcap*. Well, I did once—when I was little, but——”

“Everybody wears nightcaps when they’re *little*,” said Marigold.

“And he said that I was a coward and that I wouldn’t walk through the graveyard at night.”

“Let’s go through it to-night and show him,” said Marigold eagerly.

“Not to-night,” said Budge hastily. “There’s a heavy dew—you’d get wet.”

Happiness flowed through Marigold like a wave. Budge was thinking of *her* welfare. At least, so she believed.

“He said his grandfather had whiskers and mine hadn’t. *Should* a grandfather have whiskers?”

“It’s ever so much more aristocratic not to have them,” said Marigold with finality.

“And he said *I* wasn’t tattooed and couldn’t stand tattooing. He’s always been so conceited about that snake his sailor uncle tattooed on his arm.”

“What if he is tattooed?” Marigold wanted to know. She recalled what Grandmother had said about that tattooed snake. “It’s a barbaric disfigurement. Didn’t *you* say anything to *him*?”

Budge gulped.

“Everything *I* said he said it over again and *laughed*.”

“There’s something so insulting about *that*,” agreed Marigold.

“And he called me a devilish pup.”

“*I* wouldn’t mind being called a devilish pup,” said Marigold, who thought it sounded quite dashing and romantic.

But there was something yet worse to be told.

“He—said—I was *unladylike*.”

This was a bit of a poser for Marigold. It would never do to imply that Budge *was* ladylike.

“Why didn’t you tell *him* that he eats like a rhinoceros?” she inquired calmly.

Budge was at the end of his list of grievances. His anger was ebbing and he had a horrible feeling that he was going to—cry. And back of that a delicious feeling that even if he did Marigold would understand and not despise him. What a brick of a girl she was! Worth a million Tad Austins.

As a matter of history, Budge got off without crying, but he certainly never forgot that feeling.

“I’m never going to have anything to do with him again,” he said darkly. “Say, do you want one of them gray kittens? If you do, I’ll bring it over to-morrow.”

They sat there for an hour eating nut-sweet apples, entirely satisfied with themselves. To Marigold the tiny roses on the bush by the steps seemed like the notes or echoes of the little song that was singing itself in her heart. All that had formerly made magic made it again. And she asked Budge if he had told Tad about Gertrude.

“Course not. That was your secret,” said Budge grandly.

When Budge went home it was agreed that he should bring the kitten next afternoon and that they should go on a quest for the Holy Grail up among the pines.

“I’ll *never* forget to-night,” said Marigold.

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**B**ut the next morning it seemed as if the night before had never been. When a little girl with bobbed hair had sprung eagerly out of her pink-and white bed, slipped into her clothes and ran liltily down to the front door—what did she see? Budge and Tad walking amiably down the road with fishing-poles and worm-cans, while two dogs trotted along behind in entire amity.

Marigold stood as if turned to stone. She made no response when Budge waved his pole gaily at her and shouted hello. Her heart, so full of joy a moment ago, was lead-heavy and cold.

That was a doleful forenoon. Her new dress of primrose silk came home, but Marigold was not interested in it. A maiden forsaken and grieved in spirit has no vanity.

But just let Budge Walker come to *her* again for comfort!

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**B**udge came that afternoon, but not in search of comfort. He was cheerful and grinful, and he brought an adorable clover-scented kitten with a new kind of pattern in stripes. But Marigold was cold and distant. Very.

“What’s biting you?” asked Budge.

“Nothing,” said Marigold.

“Look here,” expostulated Budge, “I came over to go Grailing with you. But if you don’t want to go just say so. Tad wants me to go to the harbor mouth.”

For a moment pride and—something else—struggled fiercely in Marigold’s heart. Something else won.

“Of course I want to go Grail hunting,” she said.

They did not find the Grail, but they found one of Grandmother’s precious, pink-luster cups which had been lost for two years, ever since a certain Lesley reunion picnic held on the pine hill. Found it safe and unharmed in a crevice by the hill spring. And Grandmother was so pleased that she gave them a whole plateful of date-filled cookies to eat. Which was symbolic. She would not have given them the cookies if it had really been the Grail they found.

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**B**udge went home. He had a tryst with Tad for the evening. Marigold sat down on the veranda steps. The little streak of yellow sky above the dark hill was very



lonely. The sound of breakers tumbled on the faraway outside shore was very lonely. Everything was very lonely. She was very lonely—in spite of her jolly afternoon with Budge.

Mother, coming out, noted Marigold's sad little face and sat down beside her. Lorraine Lesley knew her mothercraft. In a short time she had the whole story. If she smiled over it, Marigold did not see it.

“You must not expect to have Budge wholly to yourself, dear, as you had Gertrude. Our earthly house of love has many mansions and many tenants. Budge will be always coming back to you. He finds something in your companionship that Tad can't give him. He'll come for it, never fear. But you must share him with others. We—women—must always share.”

Marigold sat a while longer after Mother had gone away. But she was no longer unhappy. The twilight wrapped her round. Robber winds came down out of the cloud of pines to rifle spices from the flowerbeds in the orchard. There was gold of primroses all along the dusk of the walk. The tree-toads sang uproariously. The stars twinkled through the fir-trees, and right and left the harbor range-lights shone like great earth stars. Presently a moon rose and the harbor waters grew silver under it.

Yes, she must share Budge. But after all there were compensations. For one thing, she could be as big a coward as she wanted to be. No more hunting snakes and chivvying frogs. No more pretending to like horrible things that squirmed. She was no longer a boy's rival. She stood on her own ground.

“And I'll always be here for him to come back to,” she thought.

## “IT”

*And its effect on the pride of the Lesleys*

This story became Chapter 8 of *Magic* for Marigold.

It appeared in *Chatelaine*, in April 1929.

Illustrations by Eileen Wedd (1899-1978) have been omitted, not yet in the public domain.

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Marigold Lesley was going to Blue Water Beach to stay from Friday evening to Sunday night. In other words, a week-end, though that expression had not penetrated to Cloud of Pines. And Marigold Lesley was delighted for several good reasons. The best reason was that she would see Nancy—fascinating Nancy of the brown eyes and red-gold hair; and not only see her, but sleep with her for two whole nights and talk delicious little secrets which nobody in the world but their small selves knew. Then there was to be a party on Saturday afternoon at Lily Johnson’s just across the road from Aunt Zella’s, to which Marigold was invited; and she had the loveliest new dress for it.

Moreover, Blue Water Beach was in that realm of magic, “over the bay,” where at sunset were dim old lands of faded gold and dusk. Of course, you never found those lands when you did go over the bay. But who knew what might happen sometimes? And who knew but that sometime she might actually get down to Blue Water Point and see what was beyond it—which was what she had longed all her life to see? She had never dared to ask anybody, for fear she would be told there lay beyond it only the same red coves and headlands and blue silk water that were on this side of it. For surely there must be something more wonderful than that if one could only reach that far, purple, misty outpost of “fairylands forlorn.”

Standing on the verandah of Cloud of Pines, Marigold could see three houses in a row over the bay. Three little white dots, only six miles away as the crow flies, but nearly fifteen when you had to drive around the head of the harbor. Though there was a delightful possibility that Uncle Klou would have his new motor boat in time to run her over Friday evening.

The middle white dot was Aunt Zella’s house, an unexpected kind of house; like one of those houses in dreams where you are forever discovering new, fascinating rooms; a house where there was red flannel in the lamps, a house with a delightful

uncared-for garden where gnarled old apple-trees bent over plots of old-time flowers; thickets of sweet clover, white and fragrant beds of mint and southernwood, honeysuckle and blush roses; and where there was an old mossy path running up to the ivy-grown front door. Oh, Blue Water Beach was a charming spot, and Marigold couldn't eat or sleep properly for a week because of looking forward to her week-end there.

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Of course, this world being as it is, there were a few small flies in the ointment. Aunt Zella herself, for example. Marigold always felt a little frightened of Aunt Zella—who wasn't really an aunt but only a cousin; Aunt Zella of the tragic, wrinkled face where nothing was left of her traditional beauty but her large dark eyes; Aunt Zella who always wore black and a widow's veil and never, never smiled. Marigold supposed you couldn't smile if, just a few minutes after you had been married, your husband had been killed by a flash of lightning. But Marigold sometimes wondered, supposing such a thing happened to her, if she wouldn't have to smile now and then—after years and years had passed, of course. There were so many things in the world to smile at.

Then, too, Aunt Zella was fussy. In spite of her romantic story and tragic airs, Aunt Zella was very fussy. A crumb on the carpet unfitted her for the day. A fly on the ceiling sent her to bed with a headache. If you got a spot on the tablecloth Aunt Zella looked at you as if you had broken all the Ten Commandments at once. Marigold knew she would have to be exceedingly proper and perfect at Blue Water Beach if she did not want to smirch the honor of Cloud of Pines.

She liked gentle, kitteny Cousin Teresa better. Cousin Teresa was Aunt Zella's sister, but she was never called Aunt. There was nothing auntish about her. When Aunt Zella wasn't around, Cousin Teresa could be just like a little girl herself. But then Aunt Zella mostly was around.

Take, also, Beulah. Beulah and Nancy were sisters, Aunt Zella's nieces—real nieces, the children of a dead sister. But whereas Marigold loved Nancy, she did not like Beulah at all. Not at all—not the least little bit! Beulah, she thought in her secret soul, was a mean, spiteful little cat.

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Marigold was sent from Cloud of Pines spick and span, with her new dress and her best nightgown in her bag. She arrived at Blue Water Beach spick and span, just in time for supper, to which they at once sat down. Aunt Zella had welcomed her kindly, though with the usual remote, haunting sound of tears in her voice. Cousin Teresa had kissed and purred; Nancy had given her an ecstatic hug;

even Beulah had shaken hands in her superior way and proffered a peck on the cheek. Marigold was hungry and the supper looked simply gorgeous. Nancy was smiling happily and significantly at her across the table, as if to say, “Just wait till we get to bed. I’ve heaps to tell you.”

Altogether, in spite of Beulah and Aunt Zella and the terrible spotlessness of everything, Marigold was rapturously happy—too happy. The gods didn’t like it.

Then—it happened.

Marigold was sitting just where a burst of evening sunshine shone straight down on her shining, pale-gold hair, with its straight, milk-white parting. Suddenly Aunt Zella bent forward and looked with awful intentness at Marigold’s head. An expression of profound horror came into her eyes. She gasped and looked again. Then looked at Teresa, bent forward and whispered agitatedly in her ear.

“Im-possible,” said Cousin Teresa.

“See for yourself,” said Aunt Zella.

Cousin Teresa rose and came around the table to the petrified Marigold who was just realizing that something perfectly awful had happened, but couldn’t imagine what.

“Oh, dear me,” wailed Cousin Teresa. “What can we do? What can we do?”

Cousin Teresa did something. Marigold felt a light touch on her head. Cousin Teresa dashed out of the room and came back a moment later looking ready to faint.

“Do you suppose—there are any more?” demanded Aunt Zella hollowly.

“I don’t see any more,” said Cousin Teresa.

Beulah was snickering. Nancy was wirelessly sympathetic.

“What is the matter with me?” cried Marigold.

No attention was paid to her.

“Is there—a *comb*—in the house?” asked Cousin Teresa in a low, shamed voice.

Aunt Zella shook her head forcibly.

“No—never was. There has never been any need of one here, thank Heaven.”

Marigold was hopelessly bewildered. No comb at Blue Water Beach? Why, there was abundance of them—one in every bedroom and one in the kitchen.

“I’ve a comb of my own in my bag,” she said with spirit. Aunt Zella looked at her.

“A comb! Do you mean to say that they sent you here—knowing . . .”

“It isn’t that kind of a comb,” whispered Cousin Teresa. “Oh, Zella, what can we do?”

“Do? Well, we must keep her away from Nancy and Beulah at all events. Take

her up to the spare room, Teresa, until we have consulted over the matter. Run along with Teresa, child—at once. And mind you don't go near the bed. Sit on the hassock by the window. If you haven't finished your supper take a piece of cake and a cookie with you."

Marigold did not want cake or cookie. She wanted to know what was the matter with her. She dared not ask Aunt Zella, but she indignantly demanded of Cousin Teresa on the stairs what she had done to be put away like this with such scorn and contumely. Marigold didn't use those words but she felt them.

"Hush," said Cousin Teresa nervously, as if the walls around had ears. "The less said about It the better. Of course, I don't suppose it is your fault. But it's simply terrible."

Marigold found herself alone in the southeast chamber, humiliated, frightened, and a little angry. All the Lesleys had a bit of temper, and this was no way to treat a "visitor." What a hateful grin she had seen on Beulah's face as Cousin Teresa walked her out of the room! She went to the dim mirror and scrutinized her countenance carefully and as much of her sleek head as she could see. Nothing was wrong, apparently. Yet that look of horror in Aunt Zella's eyes!

She must have some terrible disease. Yes, that must be it. Leprosy was an awful thing. Suppose she had leprosy—or smallpox. Or that dreadful thing Uncle Klon flippantly called T.B. What was it she had heard "ran" in the Lesleys? Agatha Lesley had died of it. Something about the heart. But this had to do with the head, evidently. She wondered if and how soon it would prove fatal. She thought pathetically that she was very young to die. Oh, she must get home right away if she had anything dreadful. Poor Mother, how terribly she would feel . . .

Marigold was suddenly aware that Aunt Zella and Cousin were talking together in the parlor below the spare room. There was a little grating in the floor under the window where a small "heat hole" penetrated the parlor ceiling. Marigold had been trained not to eavesdrop. But there were, she felt, exceptions to every rule. She must find out what was the matter with her head. Deliberately she lay down on the rag carpet and laid her ear to the grating. She found she could hear tolerably well, save at such times as Aunt Zella dropped her voice in a fresh access of horror, leaving tantalizing gaps which might hold who knew what of ghastly revelation.

"We can't let her go to the party," said Aunt Zella. "What if anyone were to see—what we saw. I don't believe such a thing ever happened to a Lesley before."

"Oh, yes—once—to Charlotte Lesley when she went to school."

Now, Charlotte Lesley was dead. Marigold shuddered. Of course, Charlotte had died of It.

“And Dan,” continued Cousin Teresa. “Remember Dan?”

“A boy is different. And, besides, you know how Dan turned out,” said Aunt Zella.

How had Dan turned out? Marigold felt as if she would give anything to know.

“Such a disgrace,” Cousin Teresa was wailing, when Marigold could hear again. “Her hair will have to be shingled to the bone. I suppose we could get a—comb.”

“I will not be seen buying a—comb,” said Aunt Zella decidedly.

“And where is she to sleep?” asked Cousin Teresa. “In the spare room? We can’t take her home to-night.”

“No, no; She can’t sleep there. I’d never feel sure of the bed again. We must put her in Annabel’s room.”

“But Annabel died there,” objected Cousin Teresa.

“Marigold doesn’t know that,” said Aunt Zella.

Oh, but Marigold did—now. Not that it mattered to her how many people had died in Annabel’s room. But she would not be able to sleep with Nancy. This was a far more bitter disappointment than not going to the party.

“There was only one,” Cousin Teresa was saying hopefully, when their voices became audible again.

“There are sure to be more of them,” said Aunt Zella darkly.

Them! Marigold had a flash of awful illumination. Germs, of course. Those mysterious, terrible things she had heard Aunt Marigold speak of. She was—what was it? Oh, yes—a germ-carrier. Germs that perhaps she would never get rid of. She must be an outcast all her life!

Aunt Zella and Cousin Teresa were going out of the parlor. Marigold got up and crept pathetically to the window, feeling as if it were years since she had left home that morning. Away beyond the harbor a little lonely ship was drifting over the edge of the world. The lonely red road wound past Blue Water Beach in the twilight. A lonely black wind was blowing. Marigold always felt that winds had color, and this one was certainly black. Everything was black. No party, no night of soul-satisfying exchange of thought with Nancy; Nothing but—germs!

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Marigold slept—or did not sleep—in Annabel’s room. The rain began to pour down, the fir boughs tapped against the windows. The blankets, which Cousin Teresa had thoughtfully put on because the June night was cold, simply reeked of moth balls. Marigold thought the night would never end. In the morning she had her breakfast at a little table by herself in the corner of the kitchen. Once Nancy slipped in and snuggled down beside her.

“I don’t care if you have got them—I love you just the same,” said Nancy loyally.

“Nancy Walker! You come right out of there,” said Beulah’s sharp voice from the door. “Aunt Zella said you weren’t to go near her.”

Nancy went out, crying.

“Oh, I’m so sorry for you,” said Beulah before she turned away.

The pity of Beulah was wormwood and gall. Marigold went dismally back to Annabel’s room, where the bed had already been stripped to the springs. She could see Cousin Teresa busy over tubs in the washhouse. Nancy was carrying a great sheaf of mauve and gold irises across the road to the Johnson’s, to help decorate for the party. Away across the harbor was a soft blur that was Cloud of Pines—dear Cloud of Pines, dear home. If she were only there! But Aunt Zella had told her they could not take her home until after the party. A fog was creeping up to Blue Water Beach. It crept on and on, it blotted out the harbor, it blotted out the distant shore of Cloud of Pines, it blotted out the world. She was alone in the universe with her terrible, mysterious shame. Marigold Lesley’s spirit failed her at last. She broke down and cried.

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Cousin Teresa drove her home that evening. And when they reached Cloud of Pines, Mother was away. Thinking Marigold would not be home until Sunday evening she had gone to Upper Rexton for a visit. Marigold felt she simply could not bear it.

Cousin Teresa whispered mysteriously to Grandmother.

“Impossible,” said Grandmother peevishly.

“We found one,” said Cousin Teresa positively.

One what? Oh, if Marigold only knew what.

“Only one!” Grandmother’s tone implied that Zella had made a great deal of fuss over a trifle. Grandmother herself would have made enough fuss about It if she had discovered It. But when Zella made the fuss, that was a cat of a different stripe.

“Have you—a comb?” whispered Cousin Teresa.

Grandmother nodded haughtily. She took Marigold upstairs to her room and gave her head a merciless combing with an odd little kind of comb such as Marigold had never seen before. Then she brought her down again.

“No results,” she said crisply. “I believe Zella simply imagined It.”

“I saw It myself,” said Cousin Teresa a trifle shrewishly. She drove away a little offended. Marigold sat down disconsolately on the verandah steps. She dared not ask Grandmother anything. Grandmother was annoyed, and when Grandmother was

annoyed she was very aloof. Moreover, she had contrived to make Marigold feel that she was in some terrible disgrace—that she had done something no Lesley ever should do. And yet what she had done or how she was responsible Marigold hadn't the slightest idea. Oh, if Mother were only home!

Then Aunt Marigold came, almost as good as Mother, almost as gentle and tender and understanding. She had been talking with Grandmother.

"So you've been and gone and got into a scrape, Marigold," she said, laughing. "Never mind, precious. There seems to have been only one."

"One what?" demanded Marigold passionately. She simply could not stand this hideous suspense and ignorance any longer. "Aunt Marigold, please, please do tell me what is the matter with my head?"

Aunt Marigold stared.

"Marigold, you dear funny thing, do you mean you don't know?"

Marigold nodded, her eyes full of tears.

"And I've just got to know," she said.

Aunt Marigold very gently explained.

"It's apt to happen to any child who goes to school," she concluded comfortingly.

"Pshaw, is that all?" said Marigold. "I guess I got it when I changed hats with that new girl day before yesterday."

She was so happy she could have cried for joy. Had there then ever been such a starry sky? Such a dear, misty, new moon? Such dancing northern lights over the harbor? And down in the beeches where the owls lived, laughter that was merry but not mortal. No germs! No leprosy! And Aunt Zella had made all this fuss about so small a matter. Marigold thought a little bitterly of the party, the unworn dress, the lost two nights with dear Nancy.

"Aunt Zella is . . ." began Aunt Marigold. Then she suddenly snapped her lips together. After all, there was such a thing as clan loyalty, especially in the hearing of the rising generation.

"An old fool," said Marigold sweetly and distinctly.



## *One Clear Call*

This story became Chapter 15 of *Magic for Marigold*.  
It appeared in *The Household Magazine*, in August 1928.

Illustrations are by Diana Thorne (1895-1963).

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### *The Author*

*In response to our request, “Would you like to write a story for The Household Magazine,” Mrs. L. M. Macdonald—known to the world as L. M. Montgomery, and endeared to the hearts of many through her “Anne of Green Gables” and its sequels, and the “Emily” series—replied (from The Manse, Norval, Ontario, Canada) with the story on these pages. She also replied with a letter to the effect that she liked The Household Magazine and considered it a pleasure to write for a magazine that “hasn’t gone mad with sophistication.”*

*“I am a minister’s wife,” writes Mrs. Macdonald. “As such my*

*time is very full—I scarcely find time to write my books.” (Her newest book is “Emily’s Quest” which follows “Emily of New Moon” and “Emily Climbs.”)*

*Many of our readers have asked for stories about children. We hope you will enjoy this little story. We asked Mrs. Macdonald to write something for us because of the unpretentious charm we’ve appreciated in her books for girls. We agree with her publisher that they are like the fresh, honest sweetness of white clover honey.—The Editor.*



I am afraid that, if Annabel Page could have defined her state of mind when her mother told her she must go to missionary meeting in the church that evening she would have said she was bored at the prospect. For Annabel, foreign missions and missionaries were something that grown-ups and ministers naturally took to but which were far removed from her sphere of thought and action. So she didn't see why she should be dragged out to hear a foreign missionary speak. She had heard one once—a grim, sun-burned, spectacled man, tremendously in earnest and dreadfully dull. And Annabel considered that she had had enough of it.

But Father was away; Aunt Beatrice could not go out on account of her rheumatism and Mother was set on going. It seemed that the speaker of the evening was a lady and an old schoolmate of hers. She wanted Annabel for company. So Annabel trotted resignedly along the pleasant star-lit road and thought mainly about the new dress of apricot georgette that Mother had promised her for Willa Rogers' birthday party.

Annabel got her first shock when the missionary rose to speak. Could that wonderful creature be a missionary? Annabel had never seen anyone so entrancingly beautiful in her life. What deep, dark, appealing eyes! What cheek of creamy pallor despite India's suns! What a crown of burnished, red-gold hair! What exquisite, out-reaching hands, that seemed to draw you magnetically whither they would! What a haunting voice, full of pathos and unnamable charm! And what a lovely, lovely white dress with a pale, seraphic-blue girdle hanging to the hem of it!

Dr. Violet Meriwether had not been speaking for ten minutes before Annabel was yearning thru all her soul to be a foreign missionary, with the uttermost ends of the earth for her inheritance. The only thing that surprised her was that there was no visible halo around Dr. Violet's head.

Oh, what a thrilling address! Annabel had a moment of amazed wonder at herself for ever supposing foreign missions were dull before she was swept out on that flood-tide of eloquence to a realm she had never known existed—a realm where self-sacrifice and child widows and India's coral strand were all blended together into something indescribably fascinating and appealing. Nay, more than appealing—demanding. Before Dr. Violet was half thru her address Annabel Page, sitting entranced in the old Page pew, was dedicating her life to foreign missions.

It was a sudden conversion but a very thoro one. Already Annabel felt that she was cut off forever from her old life—her old companions—her old dreams. She was not the silly, wicked little girl who had come unwillingly to the missionary meeting an hour ago, thinking of apricot dresses. Not she. Consecrated. Set apart. All the rest of her life to follow the shining, upward path of glorious service that Dr. Violet Meriwether pointed out.

Who knew? Some day *she* might be Dr. Annabel Page—standing there in a white dress with a blue girdle.

She hated a little girl at the back who giggled. She looked with scornful contempt at the minister's four grown-up daughters. Why weren't they in the foreign mission field? She almost died of shame when she sneezed rapidly three times in succession just when Dr. Violet was making her most impassioned appeal to the young girls. Was there not one in this church tonight who would answer, "Here am I" to the "one clear call?" And Annabel, who longed to spring to her feet and say it, could only sneeze until the great moment had passed and Dr. Meriwether had sat down.

Rev. Mr. Andrews, who presided, followed with a few words. He lacked entirely the fascination of Dr. Meriwether, but one of his sentences struck burningly across Annabel's thrilled soul. A foreign missionary, he said, must be calm, serene, patient, tactful, resourceful and consecrated. Annabel remembered every one of his adjectives. It was a large order, but Annabel in her uplift had no doubt she could fill it eventually. And she would begin at once to prepare herself for her life work. At once. She went down the aisle as if she trod on air. Oh, how wicked and foolish she had been before this wonderful night! But now her face was—what had been Dr. Meriwether's phrase?—"set toward the heights"—distant, shining heights of service and sacrifice. Annabel shivered in ecstasy.



*“Darling, what a terrible time you have had!” said Mother, and Annabel thought how nice it was to feel safe again*

Tommy Blair was going down the opposite aisle. Annabel had hated Tommy Blair bitterly for three weeks. Had he not set his dog on her kitten? But she must forgive him—a missionary must forgive everybody. She smiled at him so radiantly across the church that Tommy Blair went out and told his cronies that Annabel Page was “gone” on him.

Annabel could not tell Father or Mother of her great resolve. It would make them feel so badly. She was all they had. That was where part of the self-sacrifice lay. As for telling Aunt Beatrice, Annabel never dreamed of it. But she plunged with all her might into the preparation for her life work. Aunt Beatrice and Mother knew there was something in the wind tho they couldn’t imagine what. I do not know if they thought Annabel calm, serene, patient-and-the-rest-of-it, but I do know they thought her rather funny.

“Whatever it is I suppose it will run its course,” said Aunt Beatrice resignedly.

But Mother was secretly a little bit worried. Something must be the matter when Annabel said she would rather not have the new apricot dress—her old one was quite good enough. And she didn't even want to go to Willa's party—only Mother insisted because the Rogers would be offended. Annabel went under protest and condescended to the other little girls, pitying them for the dull, commonplace lives before them. Pitying Algie Rogers, too. Everyone knew his mother had vowed he should be a minister when he wanted furiously to be a carpenter. How different from her high, self-elected lot.

“My, but ain't Annabel Page getting stuck-up,” said Willa Rogers.

Annabel laid aside the tiny diamond ring Aunt Beatrice had given her on her last birthday. Consecrated people should not, she felt, wear diamond rings. Father offered to get her one of the new striped parasols she had craved; but Annabel thanked him firmly and serenely and would he please give her a concordance instead. Father chuckled and gave it to her. He did not know what particular magic Annabel was making now, but he knew she was getting a tremendous lot of satisfaction out of it.

She was. It was positive rapture to refuse the new ribbon hat streamers, for which her soul had once longed, and wear her old hat to Cousin Clara's wedding. Once Annabel had been interested in weddings. Who knew—when one grew up—? But that was past. She must never even think of being married. Annabel was nothing if not thoro. Naught but counsels of perfection for her. She washed dishes and beat eggs and weeded her garden rapt as a saint.

She gave up imagining fairies into the pine wood and trysting with dryads among the bushes. That was not half so thrilling as imagining yourself rescuing a child widow from burning at the risk of your own life. To be sure, it was said that widows were no longer burned. But no doubt something just as dreadful was done to them. And Annabel rescued them by the dozen. Oh, I fancy Father was right.

She pored over the missionary books in the Sunday School library—especially one fascinating volume; the biography of a missionary who had “prepared” herself from the age of six. Annabel felt that she had wasted four precious years. But she would do her best to catch up. She rose at five o'clock—once—to read the Bible. *That* would sound well in a memoir. The said missionary had arisen at five o'clock every morning of her life after her sixth birthday. But said missionary did not sleep with an Aunt Beatrice. That made all the difference.

It was difficult to decide where she would go as a missionary. She shuddered for days between Japan's earthquakes and India's snakes. Until she got a book about lepers in India. The lepers carried the day. *They* must be attended to, snakes or no

snakes. She would be a missionary to the lepers. And meanwhile Aunt Beatrice was horribly cross because Annabel had forgotten to water the geraniums. She couldn't explain to Aunt Beatrice that she had forgotten because she was bringing an Indian village single-handed thru a famine. But she was calm and serene under Aunt Beatrice's disapproval. Very.

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For two or three weeks this was all very well. Then Annabel yearned for what Alexander the Great would have called more worlds to conquer and Dr. Violet Meriwether might have termed a wider field of service. The heroine of the memoirs was always visiting someone who was sick or in trouble, and working wonders of consolation. There was nobody who was sick or in trouble in Rexton that Annabel knew of.

Unless it might be Mrs. Delagarde. The thought of her came to Annabel like an inspiration. Mrs. Delagarde of the black robes and the sad, sad face. Who never went anywhere, but wandered about in her big garden all day long. Annabel had heard that Mrs. Delagarde was a "little off." She did not know what that meant exactly but she felt sure anyone with that sorrowful face was in need of comforting. She would go to her and—and—what? Read the Bible to her as the Lady of the Memoirs did? Annabel could not see herself doing that. But she would just go to see her—and perhaps the way would be opened up. In the memoirs a way always opened up. Annabel went up to her room before she went and said a special little prayer. A very earnest, sincere little prayer, in spite of the fact that it was couched largely in the language of the memoirs. Then she slipped away in the fragrant evening.

Annabel had a moment of panic when she found herself really inside Mrs. Delagarde's gate, facing a grim little house that looked black against the sunset. But a missionary must be self-reliant. With a gallant smile Annabel marched down the aisle of daffodils to where Mrs. Delagarde was standing among the pale gold of lemon lilies in the shadows, with an amber sky and dark hills behind her, staring unseeingly before her with her strange, agate-grey eyes.

Mrs. Delagarde surprised Annabel. Her whole sad face lighted up with a wonderful radiance of joy. She stepped forward and held out her hands. Annabel was to be haunted for weeks by those long, pale hands held out in supplication.

"You have come back to me, Delight—Delight," she said.

Annabel let Mrs. Delagarde take her hands—put her arms around her—press her lips to her forehead. She suddenly felt very queer—and frightened. There was something about Mrs. Delagarde—and she was being drawn into the house. What was Mrs. Delagarde saying—in that quick, strange, passionate voice of hers?

"I've often seen you walking before me—with your face turned away. You'd never wait for me. But now you have come back, Delight. So you must have forgiven me. Have you forgiven me, Delight?"

"Oh—yes—yes." Annabel would have said yes to any question. She did not know what she was saying. She was no brave missionary—no ambitious candidate for memoirs—she was only a very badly frightened little girl—shut up in a strange house with a strange—a very strange woman.

Again that wonderful flash of joy crossed Mrs. Delagarde's face.

"Come up to your room, Delight. It is all ready for you. I have kept it all ready. I knew you would come back to me some time—when I had been punished enough. So I have kept it ready for you."

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Annabel was being drawn up the stairs by that insistent arm—across the hall—into a room. A large, shadowy room with four great windows. And in the midst a huge white bed with something lying on it. Annabel felt a pricking in the roots of her hair. Was it—was it—?

"There is your big doll, Delight," said Mrs. Delagarde, laughing a little wildly. "I've kept it for you, you see. Take it up and play with it. I want to see you play, Delight. It's so long since I have seen you play. And your dresses are all in the closet for you. See."

She opened the closet door and Annabel saw them—rows of dainty dresses hanging there, awfully like Bluebeard's wives in a picture book she had.

Annabel found her voice—a shaky, panicky voice.

"Please may I go home now?" she gasped. "I—I think Mother will be wanting me. It's getting late."

A look of alarm crossed Mrs. Delagarde's pale face—followed by a look of cunning.

"But you are here, Delight. You are my child—tho you have left me so long. Now you have come back. You must never leave me again. Never. I am going to find your father and tell him you have come back. I have never spoken to him since you went away—but I will speak now. Oh, Delight, Delight!"

Annabel eluded the outstretched arms.

"Please, please let me go," she entreated desperately. "I'm not your little Delight—really I'm not—my name is Annabel Page. Please, dear Mrs. Delagarde, let me go home."

"You are still angry with me," said Mrs. Delagarde sorrowfully. "That is why you talk so. Of course you are Delight. Don't you think I know your golden hair? But

you are angry with me because I whipped you that day before you went away. I will never do that again, Delight. Tell me again that you forgive me, dearest—tell me again you forgive me.”

“Oh—I do—I do.” If only Mrs. Delagarde would let her out. But Mrs. Delagarde was coming to her with outstretched arms.

“Oh, we will be so happy now that you have come back, Delight.”

Annabel eluded her and darted towards the door. But Mrs. Delagarde caught her as she reached it—pushed her aside with a strange little laugh and slipped out. Annabel heard the key turn in the lock. She was alone, in the grip of a monstrous terror—a prisoner in the house of a crazy woman. She knew now. *That* was what people meant who called Mrs. Delagarde “a little off.”

What could she do? Nothing. Nobody knew where she was. Alone in this horrible, big, darkening room with the shadowed windows. With those dreadful dresses of dead Delight hanging in the closet! With that terrible big doll lying on the bed like a dead thing. With a huge, black, bear-skin muff on a little stand by the bed. What wild tale had she once heard about those big, old-fashioned bear-skin muffs? That they were really witches who went out on moonlight nights and danced in the snow. There was a moon tonight—already its faint radiance was stealing into the room—suppose the muff began to dance around before her!

Annabel stifled the scream that rose to her lips. It might bring Mrs. Delagarde back. Nothing would be so dreadful as that—not even a bewitched bear-skin muff. She was afraid even to move—but she managed to tiptoe to window after window. They were all nailed down—every one of them. Anyway, all of them opened on a steep bare wall. No chance of escape there. And thru one of them she saw the home light at Cloud of Pines. Had they missed her? Were they searching for her? But they would never think of coming here.

She sat down in an old cretonne-covered wing chair by the window—as far as possible from the bed and the muff. She sat there thru the whole of the chilly, incredible, everlasting night. Nobody came. At first there was only a dreadful silence. There did not seem to be a sound in the whole earth. Then the wind rose and the moonlight went out and the windows rattled unceasingly. Once she was sure the muff moved. Once the dresses in the closet surely stirred. Twice she heard footsteps in the hall.

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**M**orning came—a cloudy morning with a blood-red sunrise sky. The windows all looked out on green, wide-spread fields. There was no way in which she could attract attention. No way of escape. She would die here of starvation and Mother



would never know what had become of her. Again and again she heard footsteps passing along the hall—again and again she held her breath with fear lest they pause at the door. She suffered with thirst as the day wore on but she felt no hunger. A queer, numb resignation was stealing over her. Perhaps she would die very soon—that seemed no longer terrible. The only terrible thing was that Mrs. Delagarde might come back.



*Dr. Violet Meriwether had not been speaking ten minutes before Annabel was yearning to be a foreign missionary, with the uttermost ends of the earth for her inheritance*

Evening again—moonlight again—wind again. A snarling, quarrelsome wind that tossed a vine at the window and sent a queer shadow flying across the room to the bear-skin muff. It seemed to move—it was moving—Annabel suddenly went to pieces. She shrieked madly—she flew across the room—she tugged frantically at the

locked door. It opened so suddenly that she nearly fell over backward. She did not stop to reflect that it could never have been locked at all, in spite of the turned key—she was past thinking or reflecting. She fled across the hall—down the stairs—out—out into freedom. She never stopped running until she stumbled into the hall at home—a hall full of wild, excited people amid whom she caught one glimpse of Mother’s white, anguished face before she fainted.

“Good God,” said Father, “here she is!”

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It was next day and Annabel was in bed with Mother sitting by her bedside and Aunt Beatrice coming in and out trying to look disapproving but too relieved and thankful to make a success of it. How nice to feel safe again. To feel taken care of! The whole story had been told—and much more. Annabel knew all about Mrs. Delagarde now—poor Mrs. Delagarde who had lost her only little child a year ago and had not been right in her mind ever since. Who had sat for hours by her little girl’s side entreating her to speak to her once more—just one word. Who could not forget for one moment that she had whipped Delight the day before her sudden illness.

“The poor unhappy lady is greatly to be pitied,” Mother said. “But, oh, darling, what a terrible time you have had.”

“Some of the rest of us have had a terrible time, too,” said Aunt Beatrice grimly. “Mrs. Stacy was sure she saw you at dusk in an automobile with two strange-looking men. And Toff LeClerc’s boat is missing and we thought you had floated out into the channel in it. The whole countryside has been combed for you, Miss.”

“I’m afraid I’m not fit to be a missionary, Mother,” sobbed Annabel when Aunt Beatrice had gone out. “I wasn’t brave—or resourceful—or serene—or anything!”

Mother cuddled her—compassionate, tender, understanding.

“It’s a very splendid thing to be a missionary, dear, and if, when you grow up, you feel called to that particular form of service nobody will try to hinder you. But the best way to prepare for it is just to learn all you can and be a normal, pleasant, happy small girl meanwhile. Dr. Violet Meriwether was the jolliest little tomboy in the world when we were girls together.”

The doctor made Annabel stay in bed for a week. On the day when she was allowed to get up Mother came in smiling.

“After all, your missionary effort seems to have done some good. Mrs. Delagarde’s doctor says she is very much better. She has ceased to talk about Delight and she has forgiven her husband. Dr. Ryan says she is quite rational in many ways and he thinks if she is taken away for a complete change of scene and

association she will recover completely. He says she told him she was ‘forgiven’ and this conviction seems to have cured some sick spot in her soul.”

“Isn’t it funny she never came back to the room?” said Annabel.

“She probably forgot all about you the minute you were out of her sight.”

“I was so afraid she would. I thought I heard her outside all the time. That was why I never dared go near the door. And it wasn’t locked at all—tho I *know* I heard the key turn.”

“I suppose it didn’t turn all the way. Keys sometimes stick like that.”

“Wasn’t it silly to think I was locked in when I might have got out right away? I guess I’ve been silly right thru. But—”

Annabel sighed. After having been consecrated and set apart for three weeks it was somewhat flat and savorless to come back to ordinary, memoirless life.

But visions of a new apricot dress were again flickering alluringly before her eyes.

## TOO FEW COOKS

*Wherefore Emily saves the broth—and something else*

This story became Chapter 17 of *Magic for Marigold*, and Chapters 7-8 of *Emily of New Moon*.

It appeared in *The Delineator*, in February 1925.

Illustrations are by Joseph M. Clement (1894-1956).

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*“She will love deeply—she will suffer deeply—she will have glorious moments to compensate.” Emily’s dear writer-father made this prophecy just before he died. And how lonely Emily was in her little Prince Edward Island world after he left her! Gone, the one person who could understand her budding ambition to write, her sensitiveness to all beauty. Then came her proud Murray aunts, and they—but that has already been told by Miss Montgomery in the January DELINEATOR. Now she gives us a new and complete short story about the same winsome heroine—a story packed with charm and laughter as only this spokesman for the beauty spot of Canada knows how. “Even better than her ‘Anne of Green Gables,’ ” you’ll agree, after you have read it.*



When Emily Byrd Starr came from the little house in the hollow at Maywood to New Moon Farm at Blair Water, she thought for the first few weeks that she was going to die of homesickness and loneliness and almost wished she could. Everything, so it seemed, had been torn out of her little life at once—her father, her home, her dreams, her pet pussy, her beloved lady birches, her nooks of fancy and fairy-led roaming. She was alone in a strange new world where there were only Aunt Laura Murray, of the kind blue eyes, and Cousin Jimmy, of the elfish face and rosy cheeks, to comfort her—and where there was a bewildering number of Murray traditions that must be lived up to.

Not but that she admired many things about New Moon. Cousin Jimmy’s old-world garden, where the prim lombardies kept guard, was very beautiful; the great white house, with its Grecian columns, its old-fashioned furniture and deep-silled

windows, was very splendid in her childish eyes; the outdoor Summer cook-house and the dairy, girdled with its great pans of cream, were intriguing places; the sundial against the fir wood was a fascinating thing; and the orchard, full of white and purple, blue and pink columbines, looked as if fairies might live there if they still lingered anywhere in the world. In fact, Cousin Jimmy said: "We grow columbines on purpose for the fairies."

But not all the splendors of New Moon could stifle the anguished ache of longing for her father and the shabby little house in the hollow where they had loved each other so. If it had not been for the little black note-book Cousin Jimmy had given her—her "Jimmy-book," as she called it—she did not think she could have lived at all. When her pain and longing grew unbearable, she wrote it all out in her "Jimmy-book" and so won relief.

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**B**ut at eleven one can not grieve for ever. Though her pillow was often wet with secret, nightly tears, Emily insensibly became happy again. Aunt Laura and Cousin Jimmy loved her; even Aunt Elizabeth, of the iron-gray hair and stern mouth, was not unkind, though very strict. Emily began to be a little glad again in sunset and bird song, early white stars, moonlit nights and singing breezes, fields creamy with clover, the gray mist of rain over the spruce barrens down by the harbor; in the great old trees around New Moon—no mushroom growth of yesterday, but trees that had loved and been loved by three generations; in the madcap music the Wind Woman made among the firs behind the barn when she blew straight up from the great blue St. Lawrence Gulf.

She found herself liking her background of old ancestral acres—meadows and woods where her mother had played when a child; she liked the old house, with its goblin firelight and its candles, its old clock that for a hundred years had struck for funerals and weddings, goings and comings, its closets full of silk dresses of a day when it was an encomium for silk to say it would stand alone. Her days became vivid and interesting, full of little pleasures and delights like tiny opening buds on the tree of life. There was a certain charm about the old house which Emily felt keenly and responded to, although she was too young to understand it. It was a house which aforetime had had vivid brides and mothers and wives, and the atmosphere of their loves and lives still hung around it, not yet banished by the old-maidishness of the régime of Laura and Elizabeth Murray. "Why—I'm going to *love* New Moon," thought Emily one day, quite amazed at the idea.

If she could only have written stories, she would have been fully content.

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Emily had always written stories and verses ever since she could handle a pencil. She had a stack of little note-books filled with them. Aunt Elizabeth was horrified when she discovered this. Fiction of any kind was an abominable thing. Elizabeth Murray had been trained up in this belief in her youth, and in her age she had not departed from it. She honestly thought it a wicked and shameful thing to read or write novels. No Murray of New Moon had ever been guilty of writing stories or wanting to write them. This was the Starr coming out. It was an alien growth that must be pruned off at once. Aunt Elizabeth issued an ultimatum. Emily must, at once and forever, give up “this scribbling nonsense.”

“But, Aunt Elizabeth,” gasped Emily, “I *have* to write. You see——”

“No; don’t argue. You ought to have learned by this time, Emily, that when I say a thing I mean it.”

“I am not arguing—only explaining,” persisted Emily. “You see, it’s this way. It is *in* me—I can’t help it. Father said I would be famous some day. Wouldn’t you like to have a famous niece, Aunt Elizabeth?”

“If you *must* talk, Emily, talk sense. Novels are wicked books and have ruined many souls.”

“Oh, I’m not writing novels *yet*. I can’t get enough paper. These are just short stories,” said Emily.

“They are lies,” said Aunt Elizabeth sternly. “Once and for all I command you to give up entirely this writing nonsense of yours.”

Emily sat very still and cold. No more air-born fancies in verse—no more tales of wonder and horror—no more sketches of delightful hodge-podge, humorous or tragic as the notion took her. Oh, bitterness! Emily could not keep her tears back. The dead and gone Murrays seemed to look down accusingly from their dark frames on the wall. *They* had no sympathy with “Jimmy-books”—with the pursuit of unwon, alluring divinities.

“I won’t have tears and repining, Emily,” said Aunt Elizabeth. “You are to be grateful and obedient. What would you have done if you had had no friends to take you in when your father died? Answer me that.”

“I suppose I would have starved to death,” admitted Emily, instantly beholding a dramatic vision of herself lying dead, looking exactly like the pictures she had seen in a missionary magazine depicting famine victims.



Illustrating by Joseph M. Cleveland

"DON'T YOU DAST!" SHOUTED ANDY IN A FURY. "DON'T YOU GO TELLING GOD ON ME! I WON'T BE PRAYED FOR!"

"DON'T YOU DAST!" SHOUTED ANDY IN A FURY. "DON'T YOU GO TELLING GOD ON ME! I *WON'T* BE PRAYED FOR!"

"Not exactly. But you would have been sent to some orphanage where you would have been *half*-starved probably. You have come to a good home where you will be well cared for and properly educated. You will do exactly as I say about this matter. I *will* be obeyed. I am mistress here."

Emily folded her slender hands on the table and looked straight at Aunt Elizabeth



with the steady, unblinking gaze that Aunt Elizabeth called “unchildlike.”

“Anyway, Aunt Elizabeth,” she said gravely, “you can’t boss God.”

For weeks Emily was a most unhappy little creature. To tingle with the delight of some swift conception and be forbidden to write it out—to be suddenly seized with an idea for a poem and realize immediately that you could not clothe it in words—all this was a torture which nobody who has not been born with the fatal “itch for writing” can comprehend. The Aunt Elizabeths of the world can never understand it. To them it is foolishness. There were times when Emily felt that she must fly into little pieces if she couldn’t write out some of the things that came to her.

“But I must obey Aunt Elizabeth,” she thought. “It is a Murray tradition that the head of the house must be obeyed.”

There were other traditions of New Moon. One was that there must always be cake in the pantry—fresh, flawless cake—lest unexpected company come to tea. No company had ever found New Moon cakeless. Elizabeth and Laura Murray would both have died of horror on the spot if such a thing had happened. Kingdoms of Europe might rise and fall—famines might ravage India and China—Liberals and Conservatives, Republicans and Democrats might crash down to defeat—but so long as cake-box and cooky-jar were filled there was balm in Gilead.

Yet one day this unthinkable thing occurred. On Wednesday three buggy-loads of company came from Shrewsbury and found cake in the pantry—but left none. Early Thursday morning Aunt Elizabeth betook herself to the vine-hung cook-house at the northeast corner of New Moon to make another cake. But she had only got as far as getting out her mixing-bowl when Cousin Robert Murray of Derry Pond arrived, “bloody with spurring, fiery red with haste,” or the modern equivalent for it. Great-uncle William Murray was dying—or thought he was—at Derry Pond. He wanted to see Laura and Elizabeth. They must lose no time if they were to get there before he died.

Go they did; but it was a tragedy. “I have never,” said Aunt Elizabeth in a tone of anguish, as she tied on her bonnet, “gone away from home and left no cake in the house.”

“Surely no one will come to-day,” moaned Laura, equally wretched.

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Emily liked being alone very well at first. She felt quite important over being in charge of New Moon. She skimmed six lovely big pans of milk; she made up the spare-room bed, which had been disorganized by Cousin Margaret’s sleepy twins; she got the dinner for herself and Cousin Jimmy; she washed the dishes. Then the end of the world came. Two buggies stopped at the gate; seven people descended

therefrom and marched past Cousin Jimmy's platoons of hollyhocks with the air of people coming to stay. Emily, staring aghast through the window, recognized them. She had met them all at a clan funeral two weeks ago. Second Cousin Marcus Carter, his wife, son and daughter; Second Cousin Olivia Peake—and Third Cousin Doctor Palmer of Knox College, Toronto, with *his* wife.

And there was no cake at New Moon!

Something rose up in Emily and took possession of her, some inheritance from the good old stock behind her. She accepted the situation—she knew what she would do.

As graciously as any dear dead lady of New Moon could have done, Emily welcomed the guests at the door.

"Elizabeth and Laura away? Then I don't suppose we'll stay," exclaimed Cousin Marcella Carter, who had a long thin face, a long thin nose and a long thin mouth.

"You must stay for supper, of *course*," said Emily resolutely.

"Have you got anything good for us to eat?" asked Cousin Marcus with a chuckle. He had a square face, with a spiky white mustache, and neither of his eyebrows looked like the other. Emily thought she did not like him.

"I know the New Moon pantry is always well supplied," said Mrs. Doctor Palmer, smiling. She was a massive, handsome, dignified lady. In her smooth gray silk dress she looked, Emily decided, just like a nice, sleek gray cat.

"Well, give us something that will stick to our ribs," said Cousin Marcus. "We've had dinner at a place—I won't say where—but there was heaps of style and precious little comfort."

"Marcus!" said Cousin Marcella rebukingly.

"Fact. And now, Emily, I'll give you a quarter for a kiss."

Cousin Marcus was quite genial. A joke was his idea of being kind and sympathetic. But Emily did not know this and she resented it. Lifting her head as haughtily as any Murray of them all, she said haughtily:

"I don't sell my kisses."

The visitors laughed. Andy Carter said:

"She's saving her kisses for *me*, dad."

There was another laugh. Emily shot a furious glance at Andy. He was about twelve, with a fat, round face, uneven, straight, whitish hair, staring china-blue eyes and spectacles. Under ordinary circumstances Emily could and would have annihilated him with ease and pleasure; but a New Moon hostess must not show discourtesy to any guest.

"She's got a nice mouth for kissing, anyhow," said Cousin Marcus.

Emily left her guests in the parlor and flew to the cook-house. She was breathless with excitement, but she knew exactly what was to be done. There was plenty of cold boiled chicken and ham left over from the previous day; there was plenty of cookies, and the New Moon jam-pots were full. But hot biscuit—there *must* be hot biscuit—and cake!

If Emily had been asked if she could cook, she might have answered like the canny Scot when asked if he could play the violin: he couldna say; he'd never tried. Emily had never tried. But she was going to try now. She had the New Moon recipe-book and she had watched Aunt Laura and Aunt Elizabeth scores of times.

Emily clasped floury hands over the cake-bowl.

“Oh, God, I think I can manage the biscuits, but You *must* help me with the cake.”

Then she proceeded to mix, measure and beat. To make matters worse, Andy appeared. Andy was not happy unless he was teasing something. He proceeded to tease Emily, not having the least idea what a dangerous pastime it was, even when protected by the traditions of New Moon.

“I’m a terrible fellow,” he declared. “I throw dead cats into wells. S’pose I throw *yours*?”

“I’ll call my new pig after you,” said Emily scornfully, and cracked an egg with violence.

Andy stared. What kind of a girl was this?

“I’m just over the measles,” he said. “*Black* measles. Ever had measles?”

“No.”

“Mumps?”

“No.”

“I’ve had mumps—and whooping-cough and scarlet fever and chicken-pox and pneumonia. I’m a terrible fellow to have things. *You* ever had any of them?”

“No.”

“Did you ever have anything?” Andy was plainly contemptuous.

“Yes,” said Emily, suddenly remembering something her father had said. “I’ve had *cacoethes scribendi*.”

Andy stared again—but more respectfully.

“Golly! Is it bad?”

“Incurable,” said Emily solemnly. “You never get over it.”

Andy edged away. “Is it catching?”

“*You* couldn’t catch it.” There was that in Emily’s tone Andy didn’t like.

“Look here,” he said furiously, “you give yourself airs that don’t belong to you.

You're only *half* Murray. And *you've got cats' ears.*"



Emily crimsoned to the tips of her pointed ears. But tradition held. She spared Andy's life.

"But if I ever meet you away from New Moon, I'll tell you what I think of you," she thought, as she measured her baking-powder.

"What you thinking of?" queried Andy, resenting her silence.

"I'm imagining how you'll look in your coffin," answered Emily deliberately.

This gave Andy to think. Was it safe to be alone with a girl who could imagine such things? But to leave her was to confess defeat.

"In five minutes by that clock I'm going to kiss you," he said with a fiendish grin.

Emily shuddered and shut her eyes. Then she had a diabolical inspiration.

"If you do, I'll pray for you every single night," she said.

"Don't you dast!" shouted Andy in a fury. "Don't you go telling God on *me!* I *won't* be prayed for!"

"How are you going to prevent me?"

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**H**ow indeed! This was a poser. Andy wished he was well out of the cook-house and the presence of this exasperating creature. He shifted to a new point of attack.

"Why does Cousin Elizabeth burn nothing at Mew Moon but candles? S'pose it's because she's so mean?"

Emily was suddenly very angry. She herself often criticized Aunt Elizabeth in secret, but it was intolerable that an outsider should do it. She had one of her visitations of beauty. Anger brought a rose-hue into her cheeks and darkened her eyes. She looked so pretty it was almost a pity she couldn't have been angry all the time.

"Aunt Elizabeth can see farther by candlelight than *you* can by sunlight," she said.

But Andy was staring at her in amazement.

“Say, you’re handsome after all. Look here, can I be your beau when we grow up?”

“No!” said Emily—and had her moment of triumph.

“What—what you got against me, Cats’ Ears?” said Andy, his face falling.

Emily cast tradition to the winds. “You don’t keep your nails clean,” she said, beating her cake batter terrifically.

“What are you two young devils up to?” demanded Cousin Marcus, peering in at the door. “Come along, Andy; Jimmy is going to show us his colts.”

Andy, as relieved to be rid of Emily as she was to be rid of him, vanished. Emily breathed a sigh of thanksgiving. Oh, would her cake be all right? That wretched boy had bothered her so. Had she remembered everything?

The cake was a gorgeous success. Remember that Emily was half a Murray. Then, too, there was Providence—or luck. It was a delicious feathery concoction with creamy filling and creamy frosting with golden orange crescents on it—the special company cake of New Moon. Emily had just as good luck with her biscuits. Then she set the table with the hemstitched cloth and Great-grandmother Murray’s blue willowware set. Every domestic rite of New Moon was properly performed. The ham was sliced thin, the chicken-platter was parsley-fringed, the water in the tumblers was ice cold. She made the tea and carved the chicken. At the last moment she flew to her room and put on her Venetian beads.

“I want to show them I’ve got something,” she thought.

Emily sat on the ladder-backed chair, facing the ordeal before her gallantly. She could feel her pulses beating to her finger-tips. If only her hands would not tremble! She steadied her legs by twisting them around the rungs of the chair. Cousin Marcus did what in him lay to rattle her by conjuring her not to fill the cups so full of tea that there wasn’t room for cream, as mean old Fourth Cousin Mary Pendleton always did; and Cousin Jimmy helped the chicken so lavishly that she broke out in cold perspiration lest there shouldn’t be enough to go around. Mrs. Doctor Palmer took cream and no sugar, and Doctor Palmer took sugar and no cream, and Cousin Marcella took neither, and Cousin Olivia took cambric tea. It was very difficult to remember everything; but eventually everybody got something to drink and the chicken *did* go around.

“I would know Elizabeth Murray’s cake if I met it in Central Africa,” said Cousin Marcella, helping herself to a second piece.

Emily glowed with pride. But not a word did she say, and she hoped devoutly that Andy would not either. For the honor of New Moon, no one of those guests

must ever dream that the cake had been made after they arrived.

Andy said nothing, being occupied in gorging, and presently it dawned on Emily that supper was almost over and all had gone well. But at this moment Cousin Olivia took it into her head to bait Emily a little. Cousin Olivia was a thin, middle-aged person with a colorless face, prominent teeth, most of which she showed when she laughed, and cold, watchful gray eyes.

“Can you sew, Emily?” asked Cousin Olivia.

“No.”

“Can you knit?”

“No.”

“Can you sing?”

“No-o-o.”

“Can you play the organ?”

“No.”

Little Cousin Muriel Carter giggled.

“Then what *can* you do?” said Cousin Olivia.

“I can write poetry,” said Emily in exasperation.

“You bet she can,” spoke up Andy. “I’ve got one of her note-books here. It’s full of poetry. Want to hear some of it?”

Andy produced the note-book from his pocket. He must have stolen it from her school-bag. Emily felt as if she were in a dreadful dream. She *must* not make a scene, she could not leave the table—Cousin Marcella hadn’t finished her preserves. Yet that awful boy was going to read some of her poems aloud.

Nothing was more terrible than the thought of having her beloved verses read aloud to stranger ears—cold, unsympathetic stranger ears. Yet it was happening. Andy was reading a poem—reading it with absurd intonations and gestures that made it seem a very ridiculous thing. The lines Emily thought the finest seemed to be most ridiculous. The little fancies that had seemed so beautiful to her were bruised and shattered now, like torn and mangled butterflies.

“Oh,” thought Emily, clenching her hands under the table, “I wish the bears that ate the naughty children in the Bible would come and eat *you*.”

But there were no nice, retributive bears about New Moon.

*“Lilies lifted up while cu-u-ps  
For the bees to dr-r-ink,”*

chanted Andy, shutting his eyes and wagging his head from side to side. Little Cousin Muriel Carter giggled again. Emily hated her.

“That doesn’t sound much like poetry,” said Cousin Olivia.

“It’s blank verse,” said tortured Emily.

“*Very* blank,” said Cousin Olivia, and smiled.

Suddenly Doctor Palmer leaned forward and took the little black book from Andy.

“That will do,” he said quietly. He was a tall gray-haired man with a scholarly face and an indisputable way of speaking. He carried the note-book off with him, and Emily did not see it again until she was washing the willowware cups in the kitchen. Then she glanced up to see him smiling down at her.

“Here is your note-book, Emily. I confess I’ve read all the poems in it—and the little story at the back.”

Emily blushed scorchingly, dried her hands, and put the note-book away. But when she returned, Doctor Palmer was still leaning against the dresser.

“Keep on—keep on, Emily,” he said. “I think you’ll be able to do something by and by. Something—I don’t know how much. But keep on.”

Emily was suddenly so happy she wanted to cry. It was the first word of commendation she had ever received except from her father—and a father might have too high an opinion of one. *This* was different.

“There are some good lines in your verses,” went on Doctor Palmer. “And your story shows promise. You’ve got a sense of humor and a feeling for words.”

[Illustration]

“But Aunt Elizabeth won’t let me write,” said Emily wistfully. “She says it’s nonsense to write poetry and wicked to write stories.”

“Hm-m-m,” said Doctor Palmer reflectively.

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**I**f you change your mind about having me for a beau, let me know,” whispered Andy, when they went away. “It’ll be all right, if I haven’t changed mine.”

Emily laughed at him. Her little, gay, bewitching face was very bright. She was too happy to mind Andy. She had kept the Murray flag flying and Doctor Palmer had told her to “keep on.”

When Aunt Laura and Aunt Elizabeth came home—slightly annoyed, though they did not know it, that Great-uncle William Murray had not died after all the bother—they had already heard the news. They had met the cousins on the road.

“Emily,” said Aunt Elizabeth, looking very imposing in her black lace bonnet and beaded silk mantle, “*did you make the cake?* Cousin Marcella said she wanted the recipe of our cake.”

“Yes,” said Emily.

Aunt Elizabeth sat down on a chair.

“Thank goodness! When I heard there was cake, I thought you must have *borrowed* it. Bring me a bit of it.”

Aunt Elizabeth tasted the “bit” grimly. Emily waited tremulously. The big, black-raftered kitchen looked spookish and weird, as it always did by candlelight. Outside, elfish “rabbits’ candles” were flickering among the orchard boughs.

Aunt Elizabeth looked at Emily with a new respect in her gulf-blue eyes.

“Well,” she said, “you *have* got *some* Murray in you anyhow.”

“That is the first compliment you’ve ever paid me,” thought Emily.

“But I suppose the spare room wasn’t made up,” sighed Aunt Elizabeth.

“Yes. I made it this morning.”

“And you didn’t forget to put pickles on?” demanded Aunt Elizabeth anxiously.

“No. I put pickles and chow both.”

“And you didn’t—you’re sure you didn’t—slop any tea over in the saucers?”

“I’m sure.”

“Tell Emily what Doctor Palmer said,” suggested Aunt Laura.

“You can tell her,” said Aunt Elizabeth, getting up and stalking out.

“Doctor Palmer advised Aunt Elizabeth to let you write what you wanted to,” said Aunt Laura. “He said you had a gift that should be encouraged.”

“And will she?” Emily was white with suspense.

“Yes. She thinks what a reverend professor of theology approves of can’t be wrong. You can write stories if you want to, Emily.”

“But mind you don’t put much silly love-making in them,” said Aunt Elizabeth, suddenly sticking her head out of the sitting-room door.

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Emily went up to her room and looked out of her window with eyes that were satisfied and loving. How beautiful was New Moon, embowered in its twilight of old trees. The tips of the lofty spruces came out in purple silhouette against the northwestern sky of rose and amber. Down behind them Blair Water lay in the sunset, like a great, golden lily. Below her was the quiet and dusk and dreams of New Moon garden, full of a faint blue twilight with the ghostly blossoms of the white phlox here and there in it. The wind of the September night was blowing trumpets of fairyland on the hills.

There seemed to be a bubble of joy in her heart—a shimmering, prismatic bubble. Life tasted good—“tasted like more,” as Cousin Jimmy would say.

“I feel,” said Emily to herself, “like a little bird that has just got out of a cage.”



## TRANSCRIBER NOTES

Mis-spelled words and printer errors have been fixed.

Inconsistency in hyphenation has been retained.

Unfortunately, newsprint yellows greatly over a century. We've cleaned up the illustrations as best as we can, but they are still somewhat lacking.

[The end of *Magic for Marigold—The Serialized Version* by L. M. (Lucy Maud) Montgomery]