



Emily's Quest

L.M. Montgomery

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Emily knows she's going to be a great writer. She also knows that she and her childhood sweetheart, Teddy Kent, will conquer the world together. But when Teddy leaves home to pursue his goal to become an artist at the School of Design in Montreal, Emily's world collapses. With Teddy gone, Emily agrees to marry a man she doesn't love ... as she tries to banish all thoughts of Teddy. In her heart, Emily must search for what being a writer really means....

Emily's Quest Details

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From Reader Review Emily's Quest for online ebook

Kate says

Emily's Quest was just so incredibly depressing and frustrating, I really found it difficult to read with any pleasure. The misunderstandings between Emily and Teddy (and Ilse) are so very obvious, and could have been so easily sorted out. Instead, the creepy Dean Priest steps in and persuades Emily to marry him after she is badly hurt in an accident (which Priest unwittingly precipitated, but then used to his advantage).

The final third of the book was the hardest to read as the misunderstandings are compounded, and the friends grow apart. It is only in the final chapter that things are made right, but even this is rushed and doesn't actually feel like the redemption of the star crossed lovers in the way it should.

Unlike the other LMM books, I can't actually see myself reading this again, as it actually made me feel uncomfortable and sad.

Michelle says

Oh, God, Emily, shut up.

I am only giving this two stars because I'm really proud of Emily for writing and gaining success with her short stories, and eventually, a novel! She works so hard, and goes through a lot of struggles (late, depressing nights, being on death's door, etc.). But damn, girl, your love life is a mess, and you are making it so.

(1) Dean. And ****SPOILERS**** (Though I guess the novel thing was already a spoiler, but if you didn't know that was happening, that's a bit more on you.) He proposes when Emily feels like she no longer has a chance with Teddy. Emily accepts and they buy a house and decorate it and then she pulls out of it all. Which thank goodness she did! But still, *Emily*, how could you be so dumb?? Dean? For real? He is such an ass, and reveals himself to be even more so when he tells her that her first book was actually fabulous (you know, the book she *threw in the fire* b/c at first he said it wasn't good at all. *I hate you, Dean, with the fire of a thousand suns.*

(2) Ilse. Emily, your best friend is horrible. For most of the book I was convinced she knew you loved Teddy (b/c DUH) and she was just trying a bunch of clever ways to pull it out of you. But, nope, that's not it. She gives up on Perry and becomes engaged to Teddy. WHHHAAAAATTTT? I hated this so much. Not as much as I hate Dean, but I felt like, Girls? Are you really best friends? Your friendship is horrible. And you are partly to blame, Emily. Communicate your feelings maybe????

(3) Teddy. I cannot even with you.

(4) Emily. You are just as dumb as Teddy. I suppose it's good you do end up together after all (after three or four opportunities to admit their love; honestly, it was maddening); you really deserve each other.

Everybody talks about how great this book is because it's dark, depressing, mature, etc., and that can be quite a departure from the usual Montgomery books. But I didn't feel like that at all. It just felt like a giant lesson in why you should just express your feelings. And, yes, I understand this was a different time, but Emily was

really just being silly to me. Teddy is whistling for you--just go. Teddy is trying to hold your hand--just hold hands. You feel like it's weird that he didn't write you a letter. You can just, I don't know, say that in a letter to him? Stop being so Victorian and weird, Emily. It's exhausting.

Jennis Andelin says

This was the worst of the whole series. It was dark and depressing the whole time. The plot was really sad, and all through this book I just HATED Ilse. She was portrayed as a shallow, silly girl with no feelings for Emily or Teddy. She's obsessed with something the whole time. I liked the first two because of Emily and Ilse's good friendship. They both trust and stick up for each other. However, in the third, it seems as though she doesn't care for anything or anyone. And it's weird how Emily and Ilse are supposed to be such good friends, but Ilse doesn't sense Emily's love for Teddy EVER. How could someone be so stupid? And she's so malicious and it seems like she wants to ruin Emily's life. Finally she's engaged to Teddy and then runs off to Perry while he's in the hospital supposedly "dying." How could someone so shallow and mean and uncaring love anyone like that? I just hated her, which was sad because in the other two I really liked her personality. The third book ruined all her good characteristics and her bad ones took over.

Teddy and Emily's relationship? Stupid. Stupid, stupid, stupid. They didn't know how to communicate, and they can't read each other at all. I was mad at both of them the whole time for being so dumb. I guess people are really like that, but still...

Dean? I hated him. Sorry to be a hater...but he was so self-absorbed, selfish, and cynical. When he lies to Emily about her story and then she goes and burns it...I wanted to put the book down. Why did she trust him so much?? Emily was such a bad judge of character.

The plot was SO SAD. oh....my...goodness. Emily loses her good outlook on life and I feel like she becomes sarcastic and cynical. And I get sick of all the writing. It seems like her life is only this: writing, get up, walk in the garden with Dean, talk, eat, sleep, write. I mean, it gets to a point where I hate her life. And when it says that she was content and happy with her cats and her life at new moon, everyone knew that she was going to be an old maid now, the only times that she was sick of her life was when she was reading Teddy and Ilse's letters and adventures, yada yada yada. How can you not hate her life? And all these sad things happen and the happy parts are few and far between. Mr. Carpenter dies, Emily falls down the stairs and cuts open her foot with sewing scissors (*shudder*), Emily has a horrible life...etc. The humor is really weird sometimes...like the one part where the man comes and proposes to her because he falls madly in love with her picture...and during his proposal he talks about how she ruined his story but he still loves her...what the...?

I cried during this book. I cried because Emily had a horrible, boring, depressing life. Everyone judged her wrongly and she NEVER tried to defend herself! Sure, the ending is happy, but that's like what...five pages of happiness? The rest is really depressing and hard to get through. I hate almost all the characters at some point in the story. The only reason I kept reading was because I had to see how it ended. I couldn't stand how the whole time the tone was depressing and nostalgic, and the story just ends with tons of loose ends. It was my least favorite L.M. book so far.

Tracey says

Reading *Emily of New Moon* I began to have an idea of why I've never loved and spent time with Emily Byrd Starr as I have with Anne Shirley or Pat Gardiner. I began to suss it out then, but I loved the book and it still seemed strange to me. With *Emily Climbs* it began to seem clearer – that dark streak running through it, I said, and left it at that. But it is only on finishing *Emily's Quest* that I fully understand – and that is partly because I know, on closing this book, I will be leaving it closed for possibly another twenty years. Whether I have the moral courage to read it then will be interesting to see – almost like Emily's fortitude in reading her letter from her fourteen-year-old self to herself at twenty-four, except unlike the very young Emily I know the pain within the pages aimed twenty years ahead.

There is pain in the other books, deep and seemingly impassible, and I always cry over the other books (*Matthew...*). I recognize myself in Valancy, heaven knows, and Anne and Pat, and so their pain is very real to me. But it is their pain. The pain that laces through Emily is personal. I have never read L.M. Montgomery's journals or memoirs or letters, so I don't know if my reading is true, but it feels as though a great deal of Emily comes from Lucy Maude. I find it hard to believe, for one thing, that the snippets of reviews Emily reads to her staunchly supportive family aren't true to life. My feeling is that while the specifics of the circumstances of the years spanned in *Quest* are wholly fictional, wholly Emily's own, the emotions are not in the least fictional. Fictionalized.

After decades loving Anne and Pat and Valancy, still I can't help but identify most strongly of all with Emily – and it is the Emily in this book that brings me to tears. Alone, and left alone, and in no small way responsible for that aloneness, but knowing that there was no other action or set of actions that would have ever been tolerable in any given situation. "I have not heard even from Ilse for a long time. She has forgotten me, too." I know that feeling well. That was the feeling – of having been forgotten in general, compounded with actually being told by someone I held dear that he had forgotten about me, that caused me to – as someone wise recently said – be still and lock the gate from the inside. I walked away then and made some decisions and will hold to them. My locks might get a bit rusty.

Facing the daily struggle against the inner demon editor who insists that every word written is trash, or worse, that no one will read this nonsense, that ... well. She was, obviously, far more successful in ignoring or silencing that voice than I ever have been, or, at times, ever hope to be. It's funny, though, and I apologize for a spoiler, but even Emily's greatest literary triumph to date was painful to me; I haven't finished a book, much less had it rejected by uncounted publishers, but I know that if I did, and gave up as Emily does, there is no Uncle Jimmy figure in my life to pull it out of storage and send it out again.

So I wonder, in a way, that I didn't love these books more when I was the age of Emily (book two). An artist of extraordinary talent, when I wanted to be, planned to be an artist; a writer heroine, when I already was scribbling a little here and there; hard work leading to success and happiness. It should all have appealed, then. Now ... the pain is too real, and the abruptly happy ending not as easy to swallow. It's a beautiful book, and a beautiful trilogy ... but not for the young and hopeful, or the ... what? Not-so-young and futile-feeling. Perhaps it's for those who have been through the pain and persevered better than I have. For me? I think Emily is going to go into a box, and the box is going to be set at the back of a shelf, and the dust will collect on it, and – no. I won't even express the hope that one day I'll read them again without the ache. On the shelf they'll stay.

Els says

Oh, what was this? A love *kite*? A crooked square with a starburst projecting from our heroine? Oh no. It's a love *squid*. Good grief. And the whole second sight thing really became a bit much.

It looked like this. Horror.

I beg thee, friends, let no such love appendages squirm their way into your writing. No purple eyes with flaked gold sprinkled atop, either.

Pshaw, I like Montgomery. But why, why must she insert an Unbelievable? Her characters are my friends (or enemies) because they're breathing. Emily is stardust

Duane says

Another wonderful book by Lucy Maud Montgomery. What an underrated writer, and what a shame. There are millions of readers, especially young readers, that would love these wonderful books. Emily's Quest is the third and final book in the series, Emily of New Moon. Emily Byrd Starr is just as precocious and loveable as Anne Shirley of Anne of Green Gables. But she is more serious minded and determined than Anne, and reading of her ups and downs, her hopes and dreams, and her undying love of Teddy, has been a joy and a privilege. If I had to find a fault, it would be the ending. It ended well, that was fine, but it ended to abruptly. There should have been an epilogue, maybe even another book. But alas, not to be.

Danielle says

This was probably my least favorite of the three books. That being said, it was completely necessary for the course of the story to play out. This book is more full of mental hardship than previous books (Emily is growing up after all), which makes for a more difficult read. Not that difficult is bad, but after coming to love such a vibrant, positive character and then see that character mentally anguished for some period of time. No one wants to see someone they care about in pain, and I definitely do care about Emily. My one real complaint is that the very end of the book (and series) seems almost anti-climactic. After an entire book full of waiting, seemingly lasting forever at times, and then the conclusion is all of two pages long! I need details woman! L.M. seems perfectly happy to give us a million details of the scenery and the knickknacks on the shelves, but the culmination of a three book series is wrapped up in just 2 pages! L.M. mocks me! And probably with a slow blooming, magnificent smile at that.

Leslie says

This was my first time rereading this book since high school, and I had some major issues with it that I don't remember from earlier readings. Emily was driving me crazy with her pride and stubbornness - I kind of felt like she didn't really deserve to get the guy if she was so unwilling to sacrifice even the tiniest bit of pride and admit to her feelings. Same with Ilse - if she had ever given Perry the slightest indication that she even liked him a little bit as a person instead of ragging on him all the time, maybe it would have occurred to him

to consider her as a romantic prospect.

I also felt like Dean didn't deserve the sympathy that Emily and L.M. Montgomery gave him - they may have forgiven him for his need to possess Emily completely, but I certainly didn't! It wasn't just the lie that caused her to burn her book that I had issues with - it was his constant belittling of Emily's writing and ambitions. That was emotional abuse right there, I don't care how stimulating his conversation was.

I still gave it three stars for nostalgia's sake. I do still think it's a pretty good read, even if I was tearing my hair out at the way these people were acting.

Andrea says

This book is painful. Why do they all torture themselves??? My advice is read the last chapter first. Then you can have your happy ending to the other two books. At that point you can decide if you even want to know what happened in the first of the book. You may be better off not knowing.

Helene Jeppesen says

This conclusion to the Emily trilogy was in my opinion the best book in this series. Emily fascinated me because she made some questionable decisions that I didn't immediately understand, but as the story continued I grew to understand and appreciate her.

This series has all in all been such a great surprise to me because it beats "Anne of Green Gables" in so many ways. We get a main character who develops, who has hopes and who grows up over the span of three books. Emily goes from being a young orphan to an adult, reflective woman who doesn't just go with the flow. The setting changes throughout the trilogy as well as the characters, and all of that is what makes it the better series in my opinion.

Jessica says

Poor Emily. Poor, poor Emily. I picked up this book again last night, meaning to read a few chapters over dinner, and found myself ripping right through it again, back in PEI with silly, proud, devastating Emily.

This book guts me every time, probably because I am also a writer who has experienced major depression. Emily's Quest is one of the most honest, accurate depictions of the illness I've ever read, and gave me, as a child and adolescent, if not a name for what I was experiencing, then at least a feeling that it was real. Other reviewers have criticized the bleak and mundane first half of the book, but that is what depression is - bleak, mundane, seemingly unending.

I appreciated growing up, and still do, the fact that Emily doesn't go insane and cut her hair off, or brood poetically in her own sadness - she's deeply and quietly suffering from being "an outcast from her own starry kingdom", suddenly shunted from a world of creative faculty and imagination into a tedious grind in which no lightness or fancy can enter. Her suffering is boring, which is a dramatic risk but about as true to experience as you can get.

Rereading it, I also have an increased sympathy for Dean Priest - not a popular opinion around these parts, but there it is. He's just such a fascinating and tragic character. He's wealthy, intelligent, and travelled, but instead of settling into a fulfilling intellectual life in London or Paris, returns again and again to a provincial town in Canada where he is mocked for his minor disability and is spiritually and intellectually isolated.

What is it that drives this choice? We are given at least an insight into Emily's compulsion to make poor choices and then punish herself for them, but we never see what leads Dean into his own personal bell jar. Don't get me wrong, his actions are pretty reprehensible, but if you are in love with a child? What then? Wait for her to become an adult, and cheat your way into a facsimile of happiness? Of all of Emily's silly choices, I find her resolution to marry Dean the cruelest - she knows what it means to him, and that he is so desperate for a real connection that he'll settle for a second-rated, watered down version of her love. It's just horrible all around, and one of the hardest chapters of the book to read.

I've never really been that invested in Teddy, only wanting him for Emily because she wanted him so desperately. The happy ending I can take or leave - for me the real happy ending is Emily's recovery or her ability to write, her "coming alive" again after her own spiritual death. I know that coming alive, too, and I am every thankful to L.M. Montgomery for giving Emily the grace to recover her sense of creativity and self.

Kate says

This is the third and final book of a lesser-known series by the author of *Anne of Green Gables*. The Anne books are more popular, but the Emily books are deeper and darker, and some of my favorite young adult literature. Like Anne, Emily is an orphan, and goes to live with conservative relations. The three books chart her coming of age, her college years and her professional endeavors, and are excellently written. Emily is a character of ups and downs -- people who dismiss L.M. Montgomery as a flowery girl's writer have never read the Emily books (or are idiots). When she finally achieves hard-won and often bittersweet success (in life, in work, in love), you are soaring with her.

Montgomery's work is constantly under-estimated, and the way the books are marketed doesn't help (the flowery script, the swoony illustrations). There are many layers at work in her stories, and some pioneering feminist concepts tucked in between the deep appreciation of nature, the commentary on the stuffy contemporary society of her day, and the delightful, well-drawn characters.

Laurence R. says

I ABSOLUTELY ADORE THIS BOOK.

Adrian says

After two strong books, L.M. Montgomery ruins the finish in this book. People do horrible things to her and break her heart, and she finishes as a very weak version of herself. I can only take so many "miscommunications" as plot devices, and this story has a few too many. Also, we are presented with the fact that Emily loves only Teddy Kent, and can't possibly marry anyone else, but in spite of the fact that Emily really is a well written character, we know very little about Teddy Kent, and so it's hard to believe the fact

that they were meant to be together in the end. The first two books deserved a better ending than this.

Kristy says

My least favorite of the three Emily books, now that I've read them all about seven times. We have to have this book because it winds up the love story, but it takes us briefly through some harrowing, depressing events to get there. No one dies, but it's rough. Scratch that. People die, all right, but Emily doesn't. I still love Emily's story even though, as an adult, I no longer believe it's a good story for me to read. I don't need any more encouragement to judge, be introverted, and stay away from people. I need encouragement to go and DO things. Anne of Green Gables is still the best book of Montgomery's, chock full of perfect sentences, stories, and antics. Emily is more tragic and melodramatic. And this time around, I thought the ending gave short shrift to the resolution the reader deserved.

Still. I love Emily.

Stephanie Sun says

"Well, I never could have believed that a pack of lies could sound as much like the real truth as that book does."

Like the handsome, ambitious boys-next-door that L.M. Montgomery's heroines love to love, Emily Byrd Starr had the bald luck of getting there first. She is *the* author avatar for me, and I will accept no substitutes until the day I die: Nate Zuckerman, Grady Tripp, Charlie Citrine, Harriet Vane, Briony Tallis, Stephen Daedalus, Buddy Glass, Leo Gursky, Tom Healy... it was fun, but you can let yourselves out.

There is no faster way for my eyes to glaze over reading a book synopsis than to read that the MC "is secretly writing what he hopes will be his masterwork." Mostly because writing about writing has already been done a dozen times well and a few thousand times badly, but also because none of these other writer-characters seem half as alive or full of single-minded drive and joy for their vocation as Montgomery's precocious, proud, witty yet dreamy young Canadian authoress.

All three books of the Emily series were written in the 1920s, and although they take place prior to what was then known as the Great War, this provenance shows between the lines. Book 3, **Emily's Quest**, is, despite the happy ending, one of Montgomery's darkest, rivaling even her devastating World War I novel, *Rilla of Ingleside*.

Lucy Maud Montgomery (god-fearing Christian, minister's wife, creator of plucky heroines who teach uptight spinsters How To Love) writes knowingly here of the secret pleasures and warped mind games of codependent relationships, of sleepless nights spent staring into the abyss of one's own future, of arrogance, of death, of bitterness, and of the claustrophobia of compromise.

Handsome, ambitious, boy-next-door Teddy Kent spends much of the book painting and flirting his way through Montreal and Europe, leaving Emily to figure out how to build a life around the day to day grind of writing fiction alone. **Emily's Quest** ends up being a pretty straightforward hero's quest, but Montgomery always finds just the right detail or spin on things to meld the rigorous structure of the hero's quest

seamlessly to her rural Canadian late Victorian milieu.

We begin with an enthusiastic, optimistic bite of the apple, "*No more cambric tea*," Emily declares, explaining that she has finally been deemed by her head guardian, Aunt Elizabeth, old enough to have caffeine.

Soon enough Emily's enthusiasm and optimism are tested, and tested, and tested. Emily loses two of her biggest mentors and champions—one to death and one to disappointed passion. The rejection slips "damning with faint praise" pile up, and inspiration is increasingly hard to come by. Emily begins to believe that she is just a moderately successful scribbler of pot-boilers, and nothing more.

I love how quiet and slow the turnaround is, how ironic and bittersweet and true to Emily's personality and values. When Emily's first book is published, we are treated to a delightful rundown of the critical responses, paired with her relations' pricelessly folksy attempts at interpretation:

"This book lacks spontaneity. It is saccharine and melodramatic, mawkish and naive."

'I know I fell into the well,' said Cousin Jimmy pitifully. 'Is that why I can't make head or tail out of that?'"

There is so much great writing advice in this book, both of the page-level and existential kind. Montgomery gets writing. She knows how to describe writing, how to show us that Emily is a great writer, how to show us what kinds of success are attainable and what are not for a great writer, and how lonely writing has to be despite its occasional thrills of connection.

Montgomery gets *people* too, all different kinds: bad fathers, brides with cold feet, solicitous women who want to make you in their own image, young men on the make.

And if you don't like her happy ending, well, Montgomery has already had some fun with you some 100 pages back, via the character of loony fellow writer Mark Greaves:

"[Y]ou must learn never to write happy endings—never. I will teach you. I will teach you the beauty and artistry of sorrow and incompleteness."

Teach ~~Lucy Maud Montgomery~~ Emily Byrd Starr about writing? Ha! Montgomery's prose can be purple as a plum, but there is nothing left to teach a writer who knows just how much rope to give her characters to hang themselves with.

Katie Ziegler (Life Between Words) says

Loved it. But am giving it 4 stars because Emily drove me BONKERS for like 3/4 of the book. She was so stubborn and proud and so much could have been avoided if she'd just employed some basic communication with everyone. So annoying. But amazing storytelling, amazing writing, and amazing characters as per usual. I just love LM Montgomery so very much.

Also, can we just talk about how Dean is a big ol' manipulative predatory creeper?!?!?

Ahmad Sharabiani says

Emily's Quest (Emily of New Moon #3), L.M. Montgomery

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Beth says

This book is dragged down by Dean, who is The Worst.

I always give Dean my stories to read. I can't help doing it, although he always brings them back with no comment, or, worse, than no comment - faint praise. It has become a sort of obsession with me to *make* Dean admit I *can* write something worthwhile in its line. *That* would be a triumph. But unless and until he does, everything will be dust and ashes. Because - he *knows*.

THE ABSOLUTE WORST.

I don't think I've ever thought Montgomery was writing a series about abuse or depression before. I'm not entirely sure she is - this reads as more specific tortured-artist to me - and yet I could be persuaded of it.

It's not just that I don't like Dean. This book is oddly distant because of its diary format - something I didn't find true in the two previous books. But here there's more of a sense that Emily is censoring herself. And that reminds me of all the reasons I don't like the artificial, telling-the-story-to-a-diary point of view.

I also find this to be uneven. It's not that it documents the ups and downs of life as much as it gets the tragedy out of the way before the happily-ever-after, which means all of it loses its power a little; the most evocative moments happen earlier on, and then the narrative deflates a little. Mrs. Kent is the one redeeming factor toward the end of the book, and even that is less memorable to me this time around.

Mr. Carpenter does still give great writing advice:

No use trying to please - critics. Live under your own hat. Don't be - led away - by those howls about realism. Remember - pine woods are just as real as - pigsties - and a darn sight pleasanter to be in.

Emily's loneliness *should* be relatable - look at her letter to herself at 24! The comments from her relatives about her age! Dean's "You've never *lived*" comment (MONSTER) - but instead she's positioned as a tortured artist and her loneliness as unique and special. She gets critical raves (and sniffy negative reviews)

and delightful congratulations from Miss Royal and petty congratulations from Dean, and all of it makes her a more distant character. I *want* to rejoice with her and cry for her but instead I can't quite feel what she's feeling. She lives so much in her head and her writing is so solitary by design that Montgomery almost backs herself into a corner here. Somehow the events in Emily's life lose their immediacy and impact.

It's deliberate, of course: this is the book where she loses almost everyone close to her. But she feels less like Emily as a result. That beginning - "Emily was a chaser of rainbows" - is so pitch perfect, and I can't find that Emily in the rest of the book.

I feel so out-of-sorts writing this: it clashes so much with my memory of this book, which I remember liking so much. This is still one of the saddest sentences in the English language -

But oh, for her unborn *Seller of Dreams*!

- DEAN, YOU ARE THE WORST - and yet my main reaction this time around is: Teddy, why did you whistle again?

PS: I felt so prescient when I read this:

Something nice happened today. I feel pleasantly exhilarated. Madison's took my story, *A Flaw in the Indictment*!!!! Yes, it deserves some exclamation points after it to a certainty. If it were not for Mr. Carpenter I would write it in italics. Italics! Nay, I'd use capitals.

Emily says

I know in my heart that I cannot adequately express how I feel about this book.

The series as a whole is amazing. I have never read a story where I so wholly absorbed a character's feelings as I did Emily Starr's. And I must say, the final book in the trilogy broke my heart over, and over, and over. I felt so much anguish over this book.

But L.M. Montgomery done something special. Reading this alongside *Anne of Green Gables*, it is evident how much her writing has evolved since the *Anne* series (1908 versus the 1920s). Montgomery cut back a lot of her flowery passages seen in *Anne* and brought forth challenging and bold themes into the *Emily* books. You can see how the changing attitudes of the Roaring Twenties influence Montgomery's ideals in that the books contain new themes like sexuality, depression, and human cruelty. This book particularly introduces a number of characters that are not to be simplified. I don't think I will ever be able to figure out how I feel about Dean Priest.

There are so many things I wish I could say about this book and this series, but reading it was honestly kind of overwhelming in a way that makes it difficult for me to find words for why it hit me the way it did. That phenomenon is a particular gift of Montgomery's because it is evident that she felt things keenly in her life. Her ability to manifest those feelings in her characters is all too effective. While I think this is possibly her strongest work, I don't think it would appeal to a wide audience, especially if one enters into it expecting something with the levity of *Anne of Green Gables*.

