KILMENY OF THE ORCHARD

LUCY MAUD MONTGOMERY

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Autobiographical sketch of Lisa Maud Montgomery

I WAS born on November 30, 1874, in Prince Edward Island, a colorful little land of ruby and emerald and sapphire. I came of Scotch ancestry with a dash of English, Irish, and French from various grands" and "greats."

My mother died when I was a baby and I was brought up by my grandparents in the old Macneill homestead at Cavendish. . . eleven miles from a railroad and twenty-four from a town, but only half a mile from one of the finest sea-beaches in the world. I went to the "district school" from six to seventeen. I devoured every book I could lay my hands on. Ever since I can remember I was writing stories and verses. My early stories were very tragic creations.

Almost everybody in them died. In those tales battle, murder, and sudden death were the order of the day.

When I was fifteen I had a "poem" published in a local paper. That gave me the greatest moment of my life. Then I qualified for a teacher's license at Prince of Wales College, Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, and taught three years. During those and the following years I wrote all kinds of stuff. Most of it was rejected but enough was accepted to encourage me. Eventually I won a place as a writer of stories for young people.

I had always hoped to write a book . . . but I never seemed able to make a beginning. I have always hated beginning a story. When I get the first paragraph written I feel as if it were half done. To begin a book seemed quite a stupendous task. Besides, I did not see how I could get time for it. I could not afford to take time from my regular writing hours. In the end I never set out deliberately to write a book. It just "happened." One spring I was looking over my notebook of plots for a short serial I had been asked to write for a certain Sunday School paper. I found a faded entry, written many years before. "Elderly couple apply to orphan asylum for a boy. By mistake a girl is sent them." I thought this would do. I began to block out the chapters, devise incidents, and "brood up" my heroine. "Anne" began to expand in such a fashion that she seemed very real to me. I thought it rather a shame to waste her on an ephemeral seven-chapter serial. Then the thought came: "Write a book. You have the central idea and the heroine. All you need to do is to spread it over enough chapters to amount to a book." The result was Anne of Green Gables.

I wrote it in the evenings after my regular day's work was done. I typewrote it myself on my old second-hand typewriter that never made the capitals plain and wouldn't

print "m's" at all. Green Gables was published in 1908. I did not dream that it would be the success it was. I thought girls in their 'teens might like it but that was the only audience I hoped to reach. But men and women who are grandparents, boys at school and college, old pioneers in the Australian bush, Mohammedan girls in India, missionaries in China, monks in remote monasteries, premiers of Great Britain, and red-headed people all over the world have written to me telling me how they loved Anne and her successors. Since then I have published sixteen books. Twenty-three years ago I married a Presbyterian minister, the Reverend Ewan Macdonald, and came to Ontario to live. I like Ontario very much, but anyone who has once loved "the only island there is" never really loves any other place. And so the scene of all my books save one has been laid there. And in my dreams I go back to it.

List of my books: Anne of Green Gables, Anne of Avonlea, Anne of the Island, Anne's House of Dreams, Rain- bow Valley, Rilla of Ingleside, Chronicles of Avonlea, Emily of New Moon, Emily Climbs, Emily's Quest, Kilmeny of the Orchard, The Story Girl, The Golden Road, Magic for Marigold, A Tangled Web, The Blue Castle, Pat of Silver Bush.

KILMENY OF THE ORCHARD

CHAPTER I. THE THOUGHTS OF YOUTH

The sunshine of a day in early spring, honey pale and honey sweet, was showering over the red brick buildings of Queenslea College and the grounds about them, throwing

through the bare, budding maples and elms, delicate, evasive etchings of gold and brown on the paths, and coaxing into life the daffodils that were peering greenly and perkily up under the windows of the co-eds' dressing-room.

A young April wind, as fresh and sweet as if it had been blowing over the fields of memory instead of through dingy streets, was purring in the tree-tops and whipping the loose tendrils of the ivy network which covered the front of the main building. It was a wind that sang of many things, but what it sang to each listener was only what was in that listener's heart. To the college students who had just been capped and diplomad by "Old Charlie," the grave president of Queenslea, in the presence of an admiring throng of parents and sisters, sweethearts and friends, it sang, perchance, of glad hope and shining success and high achievement. It sang of the dreams of youth that may never be quite fulfilled, but are well worth the dreaming for all that. God help the man who has never known such dreams —who, as he leaves his alma mater, is not already rich in aerial castles, the proprietor of many a spacious estate in Spain. He has missed his birthright.

The crowd streamed out of the entrance hall and scattered over the campus, fraying off into the many streets beyond. Eric Marshall and David Baker walked away together. The former had graduated in Arts that day at the head of his class; the latter had come to see the graduation, nearly bursting with pride in Eric's success.

Between these two was an old and tried and enduring friendship, although David was ten years older than Eric, as the mere tale of years goes, and a hundred years older in knowledge of the struggles and difficulties of life which age a man far more quickly and effectually than the passing of time.

Physically the two men bore no resemblance to one another, although they were second cousins. Eric Marshall, tall, broad-shouldered, sinewy, walking with a free, easy stride, which was somehow suggestive of reserve strength and power, was one of those men regarding whom less-favoured mortals are tempted seriously to wonder why all the gifts of fortune should be showered on one individual. He was not only clever and good to look upon, but he possessed that indefinable charm of personality which is quite independent of physical beauty or mental ability. He had steady, grayish-blue eyes, dark chestnut hair with a glint of gold in its waves when the sunlight struck it, and a chin that gave the world assurance of a chin. He was a rich man's son, with a clean young manhood behind him and splendid prospects before him. He was considered a practical sort of fellow, utterly guiltless of romantic dreams and visions of any sort.

"I am afraid Eric Marshall will never do one quixotic thing," said a Queenslea professor, who had a habit of uttering rather mysterious epigrams, "but if he ever does it will supply the one thing lacking in him."

David Baker was a short, stocky fellow with an ugly, irregular, charming face; his eyes were brown and keen and secretive; his mouth had a comical twist which became sarcastic, or teasing, or winning, as he willed. His voice was generally as soft and musical as a woman's; but some few who had seen David Baker righteously angry and heard the tones which then issued from his lips were in no hurry to have the experience repeated.

He was a doctor—a specialist in troubles of the throat and voice—and he was beginning to have a national reputation. He was on the staff of the Queenslea Medical College and it

was whispered that before long he would be called to fill an important vacancy at McGill.

He had won his way to success through difficulties and drawbacks which would have daunted most men. In the year Eric was born David Baker was an errand boy in the big department store of Marshall & Company. Thirteen years later he graduated with high honors from Queenslea Medical College. Mr. Marshall had given him all the help which David's sturdy pride could be induced to accept, and now he insisted on sending the young man abroad for a post-graduate course in London and Germany. David Baker had eventually repaid every cent Mr. Marshall had expended on him; but he never ceased to cherish a passionate gratitude to the kind and generous man; and he loved that man's son with a love surpassing that of brothers.

He had followed Eric's college course with keen, watchful interest. It was his wish that Eric should take up the study of law or medicine now that he was through Arts; and he was greatly disappointed that Eric should have finally made up his mind to go into business with his father.

"It's a clean waste of your talents," he grumbled, as they walked home from the college. "You'd win fame and distinction in law—that glib tongue of yours was meant for a lawyer and it is sheer flying in the face of Providence to devote it to commercial uses—a flat crossing of the purposes of destiny. Where is your ambition, man?"

"In the right place," answered Eric, with his ready laugh. "It is not your kind, perhaps, but there is room and need for all kinds in this lusty young country of ours. Yes, I am going into the business. In the first place, it has been father's cherished desire ever since I was born, and it would hurt

him pretty badly if I backed out now. He wished me to take an Arts course because he believed that every man should have as liberal an education as he can afford to get, but now that I have had it he wants me in the firm."

"He wouldn't oppose you if he thought you really wanted to go in for something else."

"Not he. But I don't really want to—that's the point, David, man. You hate a business life so much yourself that you can't get it into your blessed noddle that another man might like it. There are many lawyers in the world—too many, perhaps—but there are never too many good honest men of business, ready to do clean big things for the betterment of humanity and the upbuilding of their country, to plan great enterprises and carry them through with brain and courage, to manage and control, to aim high and strike one's aim. There, I'm waxing eloquent, so I'd better stop. But ambition, man! Why, I'm full of it—it's bubbling in every pore of me. I mean to make the department store of Marshall & Company famous from ocean to ocean. Father started in life as a poor boy from a Nova Scotian farm. He has built up a business that has a provincial reputation. I mean to carry it on. In five years it shall have a maritime reputation, in ten, a Canadian. I want to make the firm of Marshall & Company stand for something big in the commercial interests of Canada. Isn't that as honourable an ambition as trying to make black seem white in a court of law, or discovering some new disease with a harrowing name to torment poor creatures who might otherwise die peacefully in blissful ignorance of what ailed them?"

"When you begin to make poor jokes it is time to stop arguing with you," said David, with a shrug of his fat shoulders. "Go your own gait and dree your own weird. I'd as soon expect success in trying to storm the citadel single-

handed as in trying to turn you from any course about which you had once made up your mind. Whew, this street takes it out of a fellow! What could have possessed our ancestors to run a town up the side of a hill? I'm not so slim and active as I was on MY graduation day ten years ago. By the way, what a lot of co-eds were in your class—twenty, if I counted right. When I graduated there were only two ladies in our class and they were the pioneers of their sex at Queenslea. They were well past their first youth, very grim and angular and serious; and they could never have been on speaking terms with a mirror in their best days. But mark you, they were excellent females—oh, very excellent. Times have changed with a vengeance, judging from the line-up of co-eds to-day. There was one girl there who can't be a day over eighteen—and she looked as if she were made out of gold and roseleaves and dewdrops."

"The oracle speaks in poetry," laughed Eric. "That was Florence Percival, who led the class in mathematics, as I'm a living man. By many she is considered the beauty of her class. I can't say that such is my opinion. I don't greatly care for that blonde, babyish style of loveliness—I prefer Agnes Campion. Did you notice her—the tall, dark girl with the ropes of hair and a sort of crimson, velvety bloom on her face, who took honours in philosophy?"

"I DID notice her," said David emphatically, darting a keen side glance at his friend. "I noticed her most particularly and critically—for someone whispered her name behind me and coupled it with the exceedingly interesting information that Miss Campion was supposed to be the future Mrs. Eric Marshall. Whereupon I stared at her with all my eyes."

"There is no truth in that report," said Eric in a tone of annoyance. "Agnes and I are the best of friends and nothing more. I like and admire her more than any woman I

know; but if the future Mrs. Eric Marshall exists in the flesh I haven't met her yet. I haven't even started out to look for her—and don't intend to for some years to come. I have something else to think of," he concluded, in a tone of contempt, for which anyone might have known he would be punished sometime if Cupid were not deaf as well as blind.

"You'll meet the lady of the future some day," said David dryly. "And in spite of your scorn I venture to predict that if fate doesn't bring her before long you'll very soon start out to look for her. A word of advice, oh, son of your mother. When you go courting take your common sense with you."

"Do you think I shall be likely to leave it behind?" asked Eric amusedly.

"Well, I mistrust you," said David, sagely wagging his head. "The Lowland Scotch part of you is all right, but there's a Celtic streak in you, from that little Highland grandmother of yours, and when a man has that there's never any knowing where it will break out, or what dance it will lead him, especially when it comes to this love-making business. You are just as likely as not to lose your head over some little fool or shrew for the sake of her outward favour and make yourself miserable for life. When you pick you a wife please remember that I shall reserve the right to pass a candid opinion on her."

"Pass all the opinions you like, but it is MY opinion, and mine only, which will matter in the long run," retorted Eric.

"Confound you, yes, you stubborn offshoot of a stubborn breed," growled David, looking at him affectionately. "I know that, and that is why I'll never feel at ease about you until I see you married to the right sort of a girl. She's not hard to find. Nine out of ten girls in this country of ours are

fit for kings' palaces. But the tenth always has to be reckoned with."

"You are as bad as *Clever Alice* in the fairy tale who worried over the future of her unborn children," protested Eric.

"*Clever Alice* has been very unjustly laughed at," said David gravely. "We doctors know that. Perhaps she overdid the worrying business a little, but she was perfectly right in principle. If people worried a little more about their unborn children—at least, to the extent of providing a proper heritage, physically, mentally, and morally, for them—and then stopped worrying about them after they ARE born, this world would be a very much pleasanter place to live in, and the human race would make more progress in a generation than it has done in recorded history."

"Oh, if you are going to mount your dearly beloved hobby of heredity I am not going to argue with you, David, man. But as for the matter of urging me to hasten and marry me a wife, why don't you"—It was on Eric's lips to say, "Why don't you get married to a girl of the right sort yourself and set me a good example?" But he checked himself. He knew that there was an old sorrow in David Baker's life which was not to be unduly jarred by the jests even of privileged friendship. He changed his question to, "Why don't you leave this on the knees of the gods where it properly belongs? I thought you were a firm believer in predestination, David."

"Well, so I am, to a certain extent," said David cautiously. "I believe, as an excellent old aunt of mine used to say, that what is to be will be and what isn't to be happens sometimes. And it is precisely such unchancy happenings that make the scheme of things go wrong. I dare say you

think me an old fogy, Eric; but I know something more of the world than you do, and I believe, with Tennyson's *Arthur*, that 'there's no more subtle master under heaven than is the maiden passion for a maid.' I want to see you safely anchored to the love of some good woman as soon as may be, that's all. I'm rather sorry Miss Campion isn't your lady of the future. I liked her looks, that I did. She is good and strong and true—and has the eyes of a woman who could love in a way that would be worth while. Moreover, she's well-born, well-bred, and well-educated—three very indispensable things when it comes to choosing a woman to fill your mother's place, friend of mine!"

"I agree with you," said Eric carelessly. "I could not marry any woman who did not fulfill those conditions. But, as I have said, I am not in love with Agnes Campion—and it wouldn't be of any use if I were. She is as good as engaged to Larry West. You remember West?"

"That thin, leggy fellow you chummed with so much your first two years in Queenslea? Yes, what has become of him?"

"He had to drop out after his second year for financial reasons. He is working his own way through college, you know. For the past two years he has been teaching school in some out-of-the-way place over in Prince Edward Island. He isn't any too well, poor fellow—never was very strong and has studied remorselessly. I haven't heard from him since February. He said then that he was afraid he wasn't going to be able to stick it out till the end of the school year. I hope Larry won't break down. He is a fine fellow and worthy even of Agnes Campion. Well, here we are. Coming in, David?"

"Not this afternoon—haven't got time. I must mosey up to the North End to see a man who has got a lovely throat. Nobody can find out what is the matter. He has puzzled all the doctors. He has puzzled me, but I'll find out what is wrong with him if he'll only live long enough."

CHAPTER II. A LETTER OF DESTINY

Eric, finding that his father had not yet returned from the college, went into the library and sat down to read a letter he had picked up from the hall table. It was from Larry West, and after the first few lines Eric's face lost the absent look it had worn and assumed an expression of interest.

"I am writing to ask a favour of you, Marshall," wrote West. "The fact is, I've fallen into the hands of the Philistines—that is to say, the doctors. I've not been feeling very fit all winter but I've held on, hoping to finish out the year.

"Last week my landlady—who is a saint in spectacles and calico—looked at me one morning at the breakfast table and said, VERY gently, 'You must go to town to-morrow, Master, and see a doctor about yourself.'

"I went and did not stand upon the order of my going. Mrs. Williamson is She-Who-Must-Be-Obeyed. She has an inconvenient habit of making you realize that she is exactly right, and that you would be all kinds of a fool if you didn't take her advice. You feel that what she thinks to-day you will think to-morrow.

"In Charlottetown I consulted a doctor. He punched and pounded me, and poked things at me and listened at the other end of them; and finally he said I must stop work 'immejutly and to onct' and hie me straightway to a climate